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UMI
THE ANTEBELLUM COLLEGE IN THE OLD NORTHWEST:
HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE DEFINING OF THE MIDWEST

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Kenneth H. Wheeler, A.B., M.A.

The Ohio State University
1999

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Randolph A. Roth, Adviser
Professor Warren Van Tine
Professor Andrew R. L. Cayton

Approved by
Randolph A. Roth
Adviser

History Graduate Program
ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the origins of a regional Midwestern culture through the study of the particular ways an institution, the college, developed during the antebellum decades. Working within the structure created by the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, town promoters and denominational leaders founded a large number of denominational colleges in towns throughout the Old Northwest (Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio). The founders of these colleges showed entrepreneurial ingenuity. In addition to more conventional forms of support, they used land speculation, agriculture, and manual labor education programs to fund their colleges and to allow poor students access to a collegiate education. College leaders emphasized a mental, moral, and physical education that frequently deviated from a classical curriculum, included religious revivals, and promoted productive manual labor.

Students at these Old Northwest colleges differed from their counterparts in other American regions. While college students in other regions frequently rioted, Old Northwest college students never did, preferring, instead, to use
negotiations, strikes, and even outright withdrawal as means of settling conflicts. Old Northwest college students were, on average, the oldest college students in the nation. Further, almost all coeducational colleges were located in the Old Northwest and greater Midwestern states, which meant that by 1861 a significant portion of Old Northwest college students were female.

These colleges played a significant role in the growth of the region. Just as the towns in which the colleges were located influenced the colleges, the colleges also shaped the towns, by supplying civic and religious leadership, and by inducing people who valued education to move to these towns. Further, the influence of the colleges extended beyond the students who attended, as college students routinely taught common schools.

Overall, people in the antebellum Old Northwest developed a regional self-identity that stressed their independent willingness to entertain new ideas, debate them vigorously, and act on their convictions. The ways in which these people built their colleges demonstrates that in many respects, self-identity became reality.
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VITA

September 19, 1968 ... Born - Iowa City, Iowa

1991 .................. A.B., History, Earlham College

1993 .................. M.A., History, The Ohio State University

1993 - 1997 ........... Graduate Teaching Associate, The Ohio State University

1998 - 1999 ........... Instructor, State University of West Georgia

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: History
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Between 1636 and 1776, American colonists founded nine colleges. After independence the pace of college-founding accelerated, and by the onset of the American Civil War Americans had established over three hundred colleges. In the history of American higher education and, indeed, higher education throughout the world, the creation of such a large number of colleges over such a small period of time was phenomenal. Significantly, the colleges that people built during these decades were not spread evenly throughout the nation. While the majority of Americans lived in the original thirteen states, people built most of the new colleges in the South and the West, particularly in the West. In this area, later called the Old Northwest, people founded scores of colleges in the decades following the 1803 admission of Ohio into the Union. By 1861 Ohio had two dozen colleges, the most of any state; other Old Northwest states were not far behind.
The colleges of the Old Northwest differed from their colonial predecessors. While most colonial colleges were located in large cities, most Old Northwest colleges were in small towns. While colonial colleges were invariably affiliated with dominant religious denominations, such as the Congregationalists or Episcopalians, colleges in the Old Northwest often drew sponsorship from new or small denominations, such as the Disciples of Christ or the Free Will Baptists. Because of the disestablishment of religion following the creation of the United States, denominations in the Old Northwest operated within a relatively unrestricted environment, which allowed a previously unknown degree of latitude in denominational actions.

The structure of higher education in the antebellum Old Northwest not only differed from the system of higher education during the colonial period, but also differed from the patterns of higher education in other antebellum American regions. In New England and, to a lesser extent, in the Middle Atlantic states, established churches were disestablished over a period of decades. The lingering influence of an established church continued to retard the rate of the founding of colleges. In the American South, this same process had some effect along the Atlantic seaboard. Also, Southern state leaders generally preferred state universities to private colleges, with the result that Southern state universities set the standards in higher
education.

In the Old Northwest, private colleges dominated the educational landscape. Old Northwest state legislators generally favored private colleges, and while they founded state universities, the state legislatures did not fund their operation. The state universities followed the lead of the denominationally-affiliated and private colleges in their methods of attracting funds and students.¹

The importance of these variations goes much further than simple regional differences in structures of higher education. Historians have long considered how institutional structures manifest, and transfer, the values of the people who build and maintain those structures. This dissertation examines the reciprocal relationship between institutions and the societies and peoples who create those institutions. Specifically, this dissertation studies the growth of colleges in the antebellum Old Northwest as a means of identifying and explaining characteristics that distinguished the regional culture in the Old Northwest from the culture of other regions. The dissertation presents institutions as mediators between individuals and society. Institutions not only aggregate individual choices into social choices, they also help to conform individual actions to social rules and norms. Thus the dissertation not only looks at the ways in which the people of the Old Northwest described themselves and were described by others, but at
the ways in which these elements of regional self-identity were or were not incorporated into institutions of higher education within the region.

Historiography

Historiographically, this dissertation engages a debate about the structure of higher education in the United States. For decades after 1932, Donald G. Tewksbury provided the dominant historical interpretation of antebellum higher education in *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War*. Tewksbury, a Columbia University professor, presented the antebellum years as a time of a proliferation of unstable, inefficient, poorly financed, small, rural, and sectarian colleges. These colleges, Tewksbury claimed, failed at a rate of over eighty percent. In his search for the failure rate of antebellum colleges, Tewksbury's conclusions flowed from the method he employed. First, Tewksbury counted the number of colleges that legislators of each state chartered during the antebellum period. Tewksbury also counted how many of those chartered schools were still in existence by 1927-28. He then did simple calculations for each state to find the failure rate of the antebellum colleges.¹

Tewksbury supported his conclusions by relying heavily on the writings of the Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West
The Western Education Society was a nineteenth-century society of Presbyterians and Congregationalists, primarily from New England, who opposed the rapid expansion of collegiate education in the religiously pluralistic Old Northwest. The members wanted higher education in the Old Northwest to develop as collegiate education had in colonial New England, where an established church provided an orderly system of collegiate development. The Western Education Society criticized the rapid growth of numerous denominational colleges. Tewksbury used these fulminations to buttress his claims about the disorderliness and wastefulness of college-building during the antebellum years.

No scholar questioned Tewksbury's method or findings until Natalie Naylor, in 1973, published "The Antebellum College Movement: A Reappraisal of Tewksbury's Founding of American Colleges and Universities," which examined Tewksbury's method critically. Naylor studied colleges in Pennsylvania and showed how misleading Tewksbury's method was. She found that most of the colleges Tewksbury designated as failures had never actually functioned as colleges. Some of these schools had received a charter but never went into operation, while others never operated above the level of an academy and thus disappeared in the late nineteenth century when the academies evolved into or were displaced by public high schools.
Since the 1930s, numerous historians of education had accepted Tewksbury's ideas uncritically. The most notable among these historians was Columbia University professor Richard Hofstadter. Hofstadter published a number of influential works, often co-written, on higher education, including *The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States* (1952), *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* (1955), *American Higher Education: A Documentary History* (1961), and "The Revolution in Higher Education" (1963). Hofstadter's interpretation was consistent throughout. While he averred that his criticisms were not a "total indictment" of the antebellum colleges or "a denial of their right to exist," Hofstadter's characterization of the antebellum years as "The Great Retrogression" imparted a clear message.

Hofstadter described the antebellum colleges as "feckless" institutions "in various stages of inanition." The Americans "weakly founded" far too many colleges, which led to stunning failure rates of eighty percent. Even surviving colleges "were frequently too small to be educationally effective; they lacked complexity, they lacked variety." The professors of these schools were "uninspired" and "backward" in their teaching methods, and because the "provincial colleges" of "the West and South" were not attuned to the changing nation, the education students gained was not useful. Hofstadter also frowned on
antebellum colleges because of their involvement with reform movements such as abolitionism. Such involvement was "not a desirable development," according to Hofstadter, "for academic freedom implies that there shall be no binding corporate commitment on controversial issues."

Rhetorically, Hofstadter presented the growth of the antebellum college through the metaphor of disease and madness. "The great retrogression," insisted Hofstadter, "was in good part the outcome of the epidemic of revivals, the rise of fundamentalism, and the all but unchecked ragings of the denominational spirit." Another important factor was "feverish local rivalries." The result was "denomination-ridden, poverty-stricken" colleges, "full of episodes of almost hysterical rebellion." The stricken antebellum colleges, Hofstadter informed his readers, were the product of an epidemic of feverish ragings.

Hofstadter's analysis of higher education and the spread of colleges in the American South and Midwest was consonant with his general interpretations of these regions. As Hofstadter portrayed Southern Populism and Midwestern Progressivism in his landmark work, The Age of Reform, "the village mind" was provincial, nativistic, nationalistic, anti-Semitic, and revivalistically emotional. Note, too, that Hofstadter associated the spread of the antebellum colleges with the "rise of fundamentalism." At the very least, Hofstadter applied the word "fundamentalism"
anachronistically, as the word did not enter the English language until the 1920s. This ahistorical interpretation was characteristic of Hofstadter. Whether one spoke of McCarthyism in the 1950s or the small-town colleges of the antebellum years, in Hofstadter's mind, one was talking about the products of the same mentality, one Hofstadter abhorred.18

According to Hofstadter, although the leaders and supporters of the small denominational colleges "tried to cripple or destroy" improved forms of higher education, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries an "educational revolution" took place. The public university became the dominant force in American higher education. Research now ranked equally with teaching, and "methods and concepts of science displaced the authority of religion." Professionalization and "bureaucratization," including "tenure rules," buttressed academic freedom, and "those who would oppose and limit freedom were now for the first time in our history put upon the moral and intellectual defensive."11

Hofstadter dichotomized intellectual bondage and intellectual freedom, religion and science, denominational college and secular university. He posited a discontinuous relationship in American higher education, a disjuncture between the ages of the American college and university. Later historians were more likely to emphasize the
connections between college and university, and to think in new ways about the antebellum colleges.

**Revisionists**

In 1965, Daniel J. Boorstin published *The Americans: The National Experience*, in which he included a chapter entitled "Culture with Many Capitals: The Booster College." For Boorstin, the small-town colleges were a product of optimistic town boosters and missionary-spirited denominational members who hoped to extend their influence to all corners of civilization. These numerous colleges, according to Boorstin, helped to entrench the "diffuseness" of American civilization. While Boorstin accepted Tewksbury's attrition statistics, Boorstin remained upbeat about these colleges and deemed them a positive aspect of American society. Yet, in part because Boorstin's book was an unfootnoted work of synthesis, Boorstin did not attack Hofstadter's interpretation's directly.  

Finally, in 1971 trenchant criticisms of Hofstadter reached publication when James Axtell wrote "The Death of the Liberal Arts College," in which he mounted a full-fledged attack on Hofstadter's work. Axtell criticized Hofstadter's easy division of American higher education into two eras, the age of the college, and the age of the university--the first age so terribly regressive, the second so admirably progressive. For Axtell, Hofstadter's work was
not only "Whig history," but "bad Whig history," "short-cut history . . . unencumbered with the complexities of change and continuity, flux and flow." Axtell criticized Hofstadter for Hofstadter's neglect of source materials from the friends of the antebellum colleges, and for comparing educational institutions of two different periods. Axtell, for example, wondered why Hofstadter did not compare the antebellum colleges with the antebellum state universities. Axtell was also concerned about Hofstadter's assumption that a "one-way relationship" existed between the twentieth-century university and college, in which the university influenced the college, but the college had no influence upon the university. Axtell argued that important traditions of the college had found expression in the modern university. The university retained, for example, a centrally important college of arts and sciences, residential living for students, and, through much of the twentieth century, ministerial presidents and chapel services."

Accordingly, Axtell believed that a reassessment of the liberal arts college in American history was necessary. The foremost question that needed answering was "what were the antebellum colleges really like?" Axtell also wondered about the role of region in producing different sorts of colleges. To be sure, a few of such studies appeared subsequently. David Almendinger's 1974 study of the liberal
arts colleges and their students in antebellum New England represented a willingness to examine how those colleges actually operated. Likewise, in 1978, Timothy L. Smith published an essay about the positive influence of Illinois and Indiana colleges. Smith described the colleges as places where evangelical Protestantism and a pragmatic idealism intersected in a fashion particular to the Old Northwest.

The frontal assault on the Tewksbury and Hofstadter interpretations, however, occurred in 1982, when Colin B. Burke published *American Collegiate Populations: A Test of the Traditional View*. Burke, using substantial quantitative evidence, refuted the Tewksbury/Hofstadter critique of antebellum higher education. Burke showed that the antebellum colleges were not unstable, and they served educational needs in the places people founded them. Enrollments did not grow steadily, but enrollments did climb during the antebellum years. Far from marching uniformly into the ministry, antebellum college graduates went into an array of careers, particularly in business, government, law, medicine, and education, as well as religion.

Burke's study, however, was not universally acclaimed. Some reviewers of *American Collegiate Populations* were not convinced by his evidence or presentation, and criticized Burke for claiming that his book refuted all aspects of the Tewksbury/Hofstadter view, when his evidence only countered
some of their ideas." This author believes that Burke's study, while not above criticism, had great value as a means of confronting a biased and inaccurate presentation of antebellum higher education. While the antebellum college differed from region to region, in no place was the college what Tewksbury or Hofstadter had described. The end result is that Burke's study, like Axtell's, raised questions about how higher education developed in various American regions. This dissertation's examination of higher education in the Old Northwest advances this line of inquiry and intersects with another historiographic vein.

**Regionalism and the Old Northwest**

As the 1950s began, a generation of scholarship on the Old Northwest reached maturity. The first work to appear was R. Carlyle Buley's *The Old Northwest: Pioneer Period, 1815-1840*. In two extensive volumes, Buley detailed the region as no other work to that point had done. At the same time, Buley advanced no explicit interpretation. He even admitted in his introduction that "at times I have chosen merely to hurl the chronicle at the reader." Implicitly, Buley focused on two aspects of the Old Northwest: the rapid growth of a materially prosperous region, and an attempt at the same time to create a free and peaceful society. Buley believed the key to understanding the Old Northwest lay in the interaction between the material world
and the ideals of the people who lived there.

In 1953, two additional significant books appeared: Richard Lyle Power's *Corn Belt Culture: The Impress of the Upland Southerner and Yankee in the Old Northwest*, and John D. Barnhart's Pulitzer prize-winning *The Valley of Democracy: The Frontier versus the Plantation in the Ohio Valley, 1775-1818*. Each book examined the influence upon the Old Northwest of settlers from other regions. Power highlighted the conflicts between the Yankee and the Southerner in the region, which he believed eventually resolved themselves in the formation of a new culture, *Corn Belt Culture*. Barnhart pursued similar themes in a work that vigorously defended Turnerian ideas. Significantly, both authors were more interested in the constituent elements of the Old Northwest than in the Old Northwest itself. Neither was an attempt actually to describe a regional culture of the Old Northwest, and each thus avoided the overall question of what united the region, what various immigrant strains had created in common.

Two other works of importance appeared the following year, 1954. Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick published "A Meaning for Turner's Frontier: Democracy in the Old Northwest," which differentiated the Old Northwest from other regions by pointing out significant regional institutions in the Old Northwest, especially the large number of towns and the high degree of political
participation. The same year, Lewis Atherton, in *Main Street on the Middle Border*, similarly discussed the importance of the town to the history of the Old Northwest and larger Midwest. Both works described the Old Northwest by identifying characteristic institutions that defined the region.38

These five studies advanced historical knowledge of the Old Northwest impressively between 1950 and 1954, but the contributions were the final significant works on the culture of the Old Northwest to appear for over thirty years. After 1954, interest in the Old Northwest as a cultural region waned. One indication of that shift occurred in 1964, when the major historical journal for the region, the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, became the *Journal of American History*. In that change, Midwestern scholars lost a traditionally important forum for the discussion of historical issues relating to the region. Scholars attempted to fill this void in 1975 when they launched a new journal, *The Old Northwest*. This journal, however, during an eighteen-year existence, carried few articles that dealt with the Old Northwest as a historical region—many articles were suitable for state historical journals; few addressed the region as a whole.

This downturn of interest in the Old Northwest and Midwest was indicative of a general decline of American inquiry into regional matters. In 1993 Robert Dorman, in
Revolt of the Provinces: The Regionalist Movement in America, 1920-1945, described how after World War I numerous Americans attempted to articulate new ways for the nation that would save both folk and regional culture from the "acids of modernity." Despite their labors, especially in art and literature, the regionalists failed when they attempted to translate their harsh criticisms of modern American society into political action. When atomic bombs exploded in 1945, Dorman believes the regionalists went from powerlessness to irrelevancy, as new fears about the possibility of the end of human civilization rendered the concerns of regionalists moot.

Certainly the decline of interest in the Old Northwest and Midwest was concurrent with a decline in interest about regions generally. As historians and other scholars during the 1950s emphasized consensus, the study of regions seemed out of date. Within the historical profession, not until the 1970s and 1980s did a revived interest in American regions emerge, led by a vigorous historiographical debate about the American West. A renewed interest in the Old Northwest also unfolded. The bicentennial of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 particularly prompted new thinking and discussion among historians about the Old Northwest. Subsequently, in 1990, Andrew R. L. Cayton and Peter S. Onuf published The Midwest and the Nation, the most notable study of the Midwest since the early 1950s. The authors
synthesized secondary literature about the region since the 1950s and advanced their own ideas about Midwestern development. The authors' interpretation, based primarily upon the study of political behavior, described the rise of a vigorously capitalistic and bourgeois middle class in the nineteenth-century Old Northwest."

Method and Findings

This dissertation views Midwestern culture through the lens of the college as an institution, and surveys a score of Old Northwest colleges with a focus on six schools that reflected the diversity of antebellum higher education: Hillsdale, located in Michigan; Jubilee of Illinois; Indiana Asbury and Hanover in Indiana; and Oberlin and Farmers' of Ohio. The research is based primarily on the papers of college students and faculty, college publications, newspapers, and institutional records such as faculty and trustee minutes. These primary materials describe vividly how the colleges functioned and the extent to which they reflected and shaped regional priorities and values.

The inquiry begins with the creation of the Northwest Territory through passage of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, and the application within the region of the federal land policy contained in the Land Ordinance of 1785. The land policy enacted in most of the Old Northwest that entailed a systematic and rectangular survey worked, in
tandem with the anti-slavery provision of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, to encourage compact settlement, small family farms, and a remarkable growth of roads, small towns, and, eventually, colleges.

By the middle 1820s, state legislators in the Old Northwest began to be receptive to requests for charters for private colleges supported by local constituencies and by religious denominations, and people founded scores of colleges. Most of these schools appeared in small towns of the region; almost all operated under the influence, if not outright support, of a religious denomination. Because of the lack of an established church, because of the unparalleled variety of religious denominations in the region, and because an optimistic spirit pervaded so many of the towns of the region, small town promoters and religious denominations, with the blessing of state legislators, began to found colleges.

Generally, the founders wanted their schools to be non-elitist, accessible to students from a variety of social backgrounds. Accordingly, they built their colleges in ways that utilized the fertile soil of the Old Northwest and the rural origins of many students. The three founders studied in the third chapter displayed a production-oriented practicality through the manual labor, farming, and scientific agriculture programs they instituted in their colleges.
Manual labor programs, with denominational and small-town support, provided the context for the education that college leaders imparted as they guided these colleges and their students. Old Northwest college leaders believed that education should be moral and physical, as well as mental, and they incorporated religious revivals and concern for the spiritual welfare of their students into an educational system that already emphasized the need for students to develop both mind and body while in college. Moreover, the manual labor emphasis of these colleges reflected the middle-class and production-minded populace of the region, and helped to generate support for the colleges.

Like the colleges, college students in the Old Northwest differed from their counterparts in other regions. Most notably, unlike students in all other regions, Old Northwest college students did not riot against college authorities. When disagreements arose, as they did in a number of institutions, students and college leaders negotiated non-violently. Significantly, Old Northwest college students were, on average, the oldest college students in the nation. Many students went through college while in their twenties and some in their thirties. This age difference helped to shape the Old Northwest college student experience. Also, the ways students dealt with disagreements between students and college leaders reflected the student adherence to the standards of conduct inculcated
in the student-run literary societies of each college, in which students learned to orate, debate, and compose essays. Surrounded by their peers, they studied for eventual entry into public life as ministers, politicians, lawyers, teachers, business owners, and other varieties of civic leaders.

By no means did disagreements concerning the college occur only internally; college leaders sometimes engaged in vigorous disputes with people from outside the college, especially in the small towns in which the colleges were located. These clashes reflected the economic, political, religious, and civic connections between colleges and towns, but also revealed differences between town and college values and priorities.

The influence of the college reached further than the immediate towns in which most colleges were located. College leaders and students were involved in the promotion of public and common school education in the Old Northwest. College leaders were always among the foremost proponents of the advance of education in the region. Just as important, like their New England counterparts, Old Northwest college students routinely spent three months each winter teaching school in order to earn money for their education. The colleges structured their vacations to allow for this annual occurrence. The experience of the college leaders and students with non-collegiate education emphasizes the
involvement of college leaders and students in civic life and reveals a vision of what those associated with the college wanted the region to become.

Overall, the college reflected particular characteristics of the region. The people of the Old Northwest were action-oriented people. Again and again in relation to the colleges, they showed an exaggerated desire to do things at once, to build colleges, or to change existing ways. This expression of vigor was not aimless. Rather, the people of the Old Northwest believed in what they called "usefulness." When they sent their children to college or attended themselves, they desired that the college education result in a useful citizen, a concept that normally had Christian as well as civic meaning. College students often expressed their desire to be useful in God's service, even if that usefulness would become manifest in a secular vocation such as law.

One way this culture of usefulness, with the added prescription of action, shaped the college was through the active involvement of many of the Old Northwest colleges in antebellum reform movements. More than in any other region, Old Northwest college leaders and students were involved in reform, particularly anti-slavery and abolitionist reform. People associated with Southern colleges were not associated with reform, and neither, to any great extent, were students and professors at Middle Atlantic or New England colleges.
There, the lessened influence of a middle-class earnestness and vigor, particularly the lessened effects of an evangelical Christianity that provided much of the impetus for antebellum reform, dictated the less active response.

Another way this culture of usefulness shaped the Old Northwest colleges was through the advent and spread of coeducation. Coeducation began in the 1830s at Ohio's Oberlin College, and by the eve of the Civil War had spread to many other schools, almost all within the Old Northwest and the greater Middle West. By 1861 no colleges in New England or the South were coeducational. Part of the basis for this Old Northwest educational innovation, one that would become nationally dominant in the twentieth century, is that the ideal of usefulness applied to women as well as to men. Other factors, such as the rural background of many of these college founders and the rural location of the colleges themselves, played a role, particularly in emphasizing production as a way of organizing one's life. But a most important factor was the demand that people prepare themselves for a useful life. People believed that women could benefit from a college education. Women's paths after college might differ from men's (coeducation did not mean equal education), but a college education could nonetheless prepare women for usefulness as teachers, missionaries, minister's wives, and social workers.

This heterogeneous region contained a wealth of ideas,
and overall, people in the region were open to new ways of thinking. With little weight of tradition, the people of the Old Northwest built institutions to accommodate their needs. The people believed that the needs of their region differed from those of other regions, and that as a result their institutions had to be constructed differently. If educating women with men in colleges served the region, then few people would oppose such an innovation simply because traditions in other regions worked against that arrangement. Overall, the outcome of these structural traits and cultural negotiations among Old Northwest inhabitants was the formation of a culture of the Old Northwest, and the foundation of a culture of the American Middle West.

A word about definitions is in order. By "West," I refer to the area that people would later call "the Old Northwest," meaning the five states, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, that came from the Northwest Territory that the United States Congress established in 1787. During the first third of the nineteenth century, some people south of the Ohio River, particularly Kentuckians, thought of themselves as Westerners. As sectional tensions increased notably in the 1840s, however, and slavery or the absence of slavery became a defining characteristic, fewer people thought of Kentucky as belonging to the West and more people viewed the Ohio River as a cultural boundary rather than a conduit through a united region. This point is discussed more thoroughly below.

By "Midwest," I refer to a cultural region. As James Shortridge, in *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1989) 17, 22-25, has demonstrated, the term "Midwest" originated in the 1880s as a description for the Kansas and Nebraska area. Not until the early twentieth century did the term expand to include much of middle America, including the Old Northwest states. Technically, then, one would be speaking anachronistically to refer to a Midwestern culture prior to the late nineteenth century. Yet Shortridge also mentions the notable resemblance between the cultural traits people thought characterized the Old Northwest and the Midwest. While Shortridge stopped short of investigating the connections fully, I believe that whatever the geographical origins of the term "Midwest," the cultural origins may be found in the antebellum Old Northwest, and thus one may speak of an incipient Midwestern culture in the Old Northwest during the early and middle nineteenth century.
2. A few historians have studied higher education in the Old Northwest. Joe Strickler, "Colleges of the New West, 1830-1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1917), focuses on practical matters of curriculum and how the colleges operated. Vernon Franklin Schwalm, "The Historical Development of the Denominational Colleges in the Old Northwest to 1870" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1926), remains quite useful on a number of points. Michael G. Brock, "Religiously Affiliated Colleges in the Old Northwest, 1800-1861" (M.A. thesis, Illinois State University, 1966), included useful maps, but did not discuss a number of colleges that have not survived to the present. Also, Brock's denominational categories were too broad. On this point, see Doris Kalkmus, "Small Towns, Small Sects, and Coeducation: The Origins of Midwestern Rural Gender" (unpublished paper presented to the History of Education Society, Chicago, Illinois, October 30, 1998).


11. Hofstadter and Metzger, *Development of Academic Freedom*, 211, xii. In all fairness, Hofstadter did believe that the twentieth-century university lost some attributes of the college when the university became overspecialized, showed more interested in vocational training than intellectual inquiry, allowed students to take any courses they desired, and demonstrated a lack of institutional purpose. Still, Hofstadter, overall, drew sharp dichotomies. Hofstadter, "The Revolution in Higher Education," 288-289.


15. Colin B. Burke, *American Collegiate Populations*. Other significant scholarship in this revisionist vein includes David B. Potts, "American Colleges in the Nineteenth Century: From Localism to Denominationalism," *History of Education*


CHAPTER 2

STRUCTURE, CULTURE, AND THE COLLEGE

The structure of higher education in the antebellum Old Northwest would be difficult to understand without considering the political and governmental forces that brought the region into being. Originally, the Northwest Territory was a political construction, rather than a cultural region. Congressional lawmakers created the Northwest Territory through the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and applied federal land policy in the Northwest Territory through the Land Ordinance of 1785. In tandem, the ordinances of 1785 and 1787 significantly influenced the development of Old Northwest society and contributed to the founding of colleges.

Whereas the Southern survey system of indiscriminate location fostered low-density settlement, the rectangular and systematic survey of the Ordinance of 1785 caused relatively compact settlement in the Northwest Territory. The illegality of slavery in the Northwest Territory, which
encouraged the growth of smaller farms than in the plantation-dominated South, also generated compact settlement. These influences stimulated the construction of roads, the growth of towns, and, ultimately, the erection of colleges.

These structural factors combined powerfully with cultural factors that also promoted colleges. Many people who lived in or near the small towns of the Old Northwest exhibited an optimistic belief in progress and improvement, and eagerly supported educational institutions in their midst. College leaders also engaged in these often vigorous and speculative attempts to improve their colleges, and in dozens of small towns throughout the region, the college leaders succeeded. One key to their success was the aid and support that denominational ties brought to the college through the support of individual church members, churches, and religious denominations. This conjunction of town and denominational forces worked partly because both groups sought to use the college to produce capable and appropriate leaders for society.

Allied in this cooperation between the town promoters and the denominational members were the state legislatures, whose members chartered, generally willingly, a myriad of private colleges. The period before 1860, however, was not without conflict. Two forces, the governing bodies of the state of Michigan, and the Society for the Promotion of
Collegiate and Theological Education at the West, worked to implement their own models of collegiate development within the Old Northwest. Ultimately, both of these groups, although not without influence, failed to derail the dominant features of the Old Northwest collegiate structure. By 1860, a system of decentralized control over private, local, and denominational colleges was complete throughout the region.

The Ordinance of 1785

The end of the American War for Independence gave the American states nominal control over the Northwest Territory. Four states, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, and Virginia, laid overlapping claims to areas within the Northwest Territory, but by 1784 these states ceded their claims to the federal government, which organized Northwest Territory settlement. The following year, members of Congress provided for the administration of these federally-controlled public lands through the Land Ordinance of 1785. Historians who have examined how the Ordinance of 1785 related to education have normally focused on the provision that set aside one section of each township for the support of public schools. Few scholars, however, have studied the impact of the township-based rectangular system of survey that the Land Ordinance of 1785 ordained. To understand the importance of this system of survey, this
essay discusses the Virginia Military District of Ohio, which developed in a significantly different fashion. The Virginia Military District reveals one largely unrealized alternative possibility for how the region might have developed.¹

The Virginia Military District of Ohio

When the states relinquished their claims to land within the Northwest Territory, a few exceptions to federal control remained. The Virginia state government, which needed to satisfy land warrants granted to war veterans, retained the land in southern Ohio between the Scioto and Little Miami rivers. This area became the Virginia Military District. The men who surveyed the Virginia Military District were not bound by the requirements of the Land Ordinance of 1785 and subdivided the Virginia Military District using the standard Southern method, known as "indiscriminate location." Indiscriminate location allowed surveyors to plot tracts of land in any shape, rather than in the rectangular shapes required by the Land Ordinance of 1785. The first surveyors, who also sold land, understandably included the best lands in their parcels. As a result, a plot of land sometimes curved intricately with creeks and streams to keep the rich bottomlands within the parcel and avoid steep hillsides. The first surveyors avoided prairie lands, which people at the time believed to
be infertile, and focused on providing a mixture of wooded land and meadow. Later surveyors had to plot parcels that were sometimes sandwiched between and around original plots; everywhere some tracts of land went unsurveyed and unclaimed. In contrast, areas surveyed under the dictates of the Land Ordinance of 1785 left no land uncharted. The grid system of survey, in which no land went unsurveyed and consequently unpurchased, provided for compact settlement of the region.²

The Virginia Military District did not only have relatively dispersed settlement because of the surveyors' preference for the system of indiscriminate location. The Virginia Military District contained the largest individual landholdings in the state because Military District lands were not dispensed equally to all Revolutionary War veterans. Privates received 300 acres, while Major Generals collected 15,000 acres. Because of these disparate initial grants, and the work of speculators who purchased and combined small claims from Virginians who did not move west, the Virginia Military District was characterized by unusually large landholdings. Despite the legal system of the Northwest Territory, which tended to break up substantial acreages, farms in the Virginia Military District remained large. Of the approximately four million acres within the District, twenty two partnerships or persons patented over one million acres. Because such a
small number of people controlled vast amounts of land, tenant farming emerged more prominently in the Virginia Military District than anywhere else in the Old Northwest.3

Geographer Norman Thrower examined the effects of the different survey systems on the subsequent development of the Old Northwest. Comparing the development of two adjoining areas, one within and one beyond the Virginia Military District, Thrower found striking differences. Despite similarities between the two areas in geography and in the origins of their settlers, property ownership differed dramatically. In 1875, the systematically-surveyed area (as called for by the Land Ordinance of 1785) had twice as many landowners as the unsystematically-surveyed area (using indiscriminate location). The average farm in the systematically-surveyed area was ninety acres, compared to two hundred and thirty acres in the area originally surveyed using indiscriminate location. When Thrower compared land ownership in these same areas for 1955, he found lessened, but still substantial, disparities in landholding patterns, suggesting the long-term effects of original settlement patterns.4

Thrower also observed significant differences in road construction. In 1875, the systematically-surveyed area had a much more extensive network of roads than the area within the Virginia Military District. Only 1.5% of the systematically-surveyed area lay further than one half of a
mile from a public road; in the unsystematically-surveyed area, the figure was 18%. The area outside the Virginia Military District contained 200 miles of public roads, compared to only 125 miles within. When Thrower compared other sections of the Virginia Military District with other areas outside the District, he found differences in similar proportions. Consistently, the systematically-surveyed areas contained about 60% more miles of public roads than the corresponding area within the Virginia Military District. Differences remained even when rural populations within the Virginia Military District were higher than the areas to which Thrower compared them.

While Thrower attributed all differences to survey method, rather than the inequitable system of land grants, he nonetheless showed how important survey method could be in subsequent development. Thrower did not examine collegiate development inside and outside the Virginia Military District, but the differences that Thrower charted in land ownership and road construction extended also to colleges. Although in a region in which many colleges appeared, no full-fledged colleges emerged in the Virginia Military District during the antebellum period. Some people did attempt to found colleges in the Virginia Military District, most notably in the town of Chillicothe. In the 1830s, Thomas King described to his mother the course of study at his Chillicothe school. "I date my letter from
Trinity college," he noted, as "that is the name Mr. Garrett has given it." The Ohio state legislators, King reported, had granted a charter so that Trinity College "should be enlarged at pleasure." Ultimately, however, a Trinity College never appeared in Chillicothe or elsewhere in the region. In 1855, Catholics opened St. Peter's College in Chillicothe, but the school closed within the year.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787

Because Virginians administered the initial settlement of the Virginia Military District and because the surveyors there used the system of indiscriminate location, the Virginia Military District, more than any other portion of the Old Northwest, resembled Southern states. One important difference, however, was that the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 barred slavery from the territory, a barrier the Ohio Constitution continued. While the Land Ordinance of 1785 was a crucial ingredient in the distinctive development of the Old Northwest, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 complemented that ingredient.

The provision that would affect the college tremendously was the sixth article, which stipulated "There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory." In a study of society in antebellum Mississippi and Indiana, Theodore Lloyd Benson postulated that the presence and lack of slavery in those two states

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formed the foundation of their disparate development. Sectional differences, argued Benson, were not so much the result of ideological constructions, such as planter hegemony or marked differences in racial attitudes among whites; rather, the structural consequences of slavery and the lack of slavery were the most important determinants of the course of development in Mississippi and Indiana. In Mississippi, because of the legality of slavery, large plantations dominated the landscape and stunted the growth of towns and commercial development, which depended upon a populous hinterland. Consequently, voluntary organizations were fewer, religious denominations less diverse, and political constituencies not as varied as in Indiana. In Indiana, the prohibition of slavery led to numerous small family farms and higher population densities that encouraged the growth of small towns. The result of this societal structure was a broad economic, religious, and social diversity that generated a vigorous "intellectual economy." Benson maintained that antebellum Hoosiers were far more open to new ideas and to cultural innovation than were Mississippians."

Benson pointed in the right direction in his analysis of Mississippi and Indiana, although the Virginia Military District demonstrates that the presence or absence of slavery was not the sole determinant of development. Governmental land policy and survey systems also could
influence social outcomes heavily. In the final analysis, the combined influences of the Ordinances of 1785 and 1787 laid much of the basis for the subsequent development of the Old Northwest, including the dominance of the small town.

The Town versus the Plantation

If the small-town college was one of the most representative institutions in the Old Northwest, the town was another. In the 1950s, historians Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, studying the Old Northwest, were "struck" by the "teeming numbers" of small towns in the antebellum Old Northwest, a region with at least five times as many towns per capita as the Deep South. People in the Old Northwest founded towns for many different reasons. Some towns were governmental centers, with land offices, state capitals, or county courthouses. Other towns grew at important transportation junctures, particularly on navigable waterways. Some towns existed to house workers who extracted nearby natural resources, or who worked in manufacturing. Other towns served religious, educational, or health concerns. Most towns, however, functioned as markets for area farmers.

In the Old Northwest, given the absence of slavery, the high cost of labor and the low cost of land combined to work against the accumulation of vast land purchases, except for the purposes of speculation, and speculators were usually
eager to sell the land they owned. Most farmers were at least partially reliant on the market for the disposal of their agricultural products, and the lack of efficient transportation necessitated the growth of towns that could provide banking, milling, and the host of other functions small farmers could not provide for themselves. In contrast, the dominance of the plantation in Southern states stunted the growth of the town, not only because the large acreages of plantations had a tendency to stunt the population growth on which towns depended, but also because the plantation performed many of the functions that towns provided in the Old Northwest. Frederick Douglass gave an eye-witness account of the impact of the plantation on town development in the South when he wrote that one plantation belonging to Colonel Lloyd resembled "a country village. All the mechanical operations for all the farms were performed here. The shoemaking and mending, the blacksmithing, cartwrighting, coopering, weaving, and grain-grinding, were all performed by the slaves." Plantations even included manufacturing functions; Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, for example, included a nail factory. In the Old Northwest, where compact settlement patterns and the absence of slavery worked against the development of the plantation, towns appeared almost everywhere. The one place towns did not grow in abundance was in the Virginia Military District, where the Southern systems of survey and
land distribution that worked against compact settlement and road construction also discouraged the growth of towns."

A Spirit of Improvement

The engine that built many of these towns was, according to numerous historians, a spirit of boosterism. In 1965, in *The Americans: The National Experience*, historian Daniel J. Boorstin entitled an entire section of his book "The Upstarts: Boosters," in which he discussed boosters and boosterism extensively. "Booster," however, is an anachronistic word that can be misleading when applied to antebellum Americans. The term "booster," meaning an enthusiastic supporter, did not enter the English language until 1890, and "boosterism" followed over two decades later. During the antebellum period, people did not refer to themselves or others as boosters; they used other words to describe what they saw happening around them. In the 1830s, the Massachusetts editor of the *Boston Recorder* asked for letters that would discuss the phenomenon of so many colleges in the Old Northwest. One skeptical New Englander, Elbridge G. Howe, after outlining the reasons why no need existed for more Western colleges associated with the Presbyterian church, wrote that the "Western people are apt to be schemers—projectors; a striking trait in their character, if they have any fixed character." Despite Howe's negativity, he pointed to a crucial aspect of the
Western character: an unabashedly future orientation."

Unlike eighteenth-century Americans, who commonly held a cyclical view of history, the people who settled in the Northwest Territory in the nineteenth century embraced ideas of unlimited progress. These ideas were represented, for example, in the perfectionistic impulses of evangelical religion so prevalent during the Second Great Awakening. These ideas also gave rise to the great number of utopian communities people founded during the antebellum years. Historian Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., found that almost half (45 of 99) of the communitarian societies established in the United States between 1805 and 1855 appeared in the Old Northwest. Bestor believed that the Midwesterners were inclined to found such societies because Midwesterners "possessed a powerful sense of the plasticity of American institutions." Progress seemed possible to these people."

In the 1850s, Hoosier E. T. Williams conveyed in letters the excitement he felt while living in Greensburg. In 1852, Williams reported, town members hoped to establish "a large [Presbyterian] Female College here . . . . They have been offerd some four acres of ground to build it on near my place. Our large depot for our R____ R____ is going up now Property is looking up considerably, now." The good times continued. "We are in great hopes, of seeing the Iron Horse Snorting, through our place early in the spring," Williams wrote in early 1853. "Then look out for smashing
times." The railroad soon passed through Greensburg, and Williams happily reported the numbers of trains that passed through town each day, how many cars each train contained, and the large numbers "of passengers, and hogs" these trains carried. During the next few years, Williams' excitement about the railroad transferred to new projects, such as plans for a flour mill, a new court house, and a telegraph line."

Williams lauded the evolution of Greensburg partly because the growth of the town contributed to a rise in property values. Williams was pleased when the planners of the proposed girls' school intended to locate the facility near Williams' own property. Throughout the region, the growth of towns was not simply because towns provided needed services. Land speculation took place on an impressive scale, as investors purchased vast acreages of land and attempted to sell portions to settlers. One way to attract settlers was to found a town that would provide economic, social, and religious opportunities to all who lived near. Old Northwest town promoters platted thousands of towns, many of which never became more than lines on paper. Others, like Greensburg, grew into bustling towns and even cities."

By no means were the goals of these town builders and developers solely monetary; the zeal for building and improving also had a civic component. Town residents in the
Old Northwest, again and again, demonstrated that they wanted to improve themselves and others in more than financial ways. Town residents formed a host of voluntary organizations, such as lyceums, fraternal orders, and churches, to work for the uplift and progress of society. In 1858, Williams himself experienced a religious conversion and joined the Methodist church. Such an event was entirely consistent with his keen interest in growth and improvement.  

A particularly notable way in which town residents worked for the advance of society was that they founded schools; during the antebellum years, Old Northwest residents founded hundreds, even thousands, of academies, seminaries, medical schools, and colleges. And educational leaders, like town supporters, actively built and strengthened their schools. Again and again the evidence reveals that Old Northwest college leaders exhibited the same traits in advocating their colleges that town residents displayed when advancing the interests of their towns.  

In 1847, for example, Muskingum College of Ohio had existed for a decade. While school leaders termed Muskingum a "college," in actuality, the school offered an academy-level education to almost all students. In 1847, the faculty presented a resolution to the trustees that, if adopted, would acknowledge that Muskingum educators mostly provided a preparatory education that enabled students to go
on to "higher Colleges & Universities." The trustees appointed a committee to consider the resolution."

When the trustees next met, the committee urged the trustees not to accept the proposed resolution for three reasons: first, if Muskingum College leaders announced that they really offered only a preparatory education, the public might conclude that something was wrong with the school; second, if the public thought that something was wrong at Muskingum College, the number of students would decline rather than increase, the "public confidence" would be "shaken," and contributions to the college would decrease; finally, the committee argued that they "should not yet dispair" of eventually commanding "all the wherewith that we need for the accomplishment of the objects proposed." In other words, even though Muskingum was not yet a college, the best way to make Muskingum a college was to keep calling the school a college. The trustees were persuaded by the committee's report and dismissed the resolution."

Other examples of this hopefulness about what the future might bring abound. Timothy Smith, in his study of antebellum colleges in Indiana and Illinois, found that almost every college had connections to land speculation, and that educators saw their involvement with raising the prices of land and trying to buy cheap and sell dear as perfectly compatible with their Christian beliefs. For Smith, this easy combination of practicality and idealism
Cincinnati and the Colleges

Notably, the Old Northwest colleges appeared much more commonly in towns than in cities. During the colonial period, most American colleges were located in prominent urban areas. In the antebellum Old Northwest, Cincinnati was the largest city, with 25,000 residents in 1830, and over 115,000 by 1850." Yet, while colleges appeared briefly in Cincinnati and others existed within the same county, people in numerous Old Northwest towns with populations under two thousand or even one thousand supported much finer and more stable colleges than did Cincinnatians. This decentralization of collegiate education and consequent proliferation of small-town colleges de-emphasized the city as a center of Old Northwest intellectual life. The small town was often a locus of intellectual activity, buttressed by lyceums and by traveling lecturers."

Cincinnatians attempted quite early to found a college. Ohio legislators chartered Cincinnati College in 1819; the college went into operation soon after. By 1825, however, collegiate instruction ended, and a preparatory school attached to the college closed two years later. From then on, a medical school and law school used the Cincinnati College name at times, and from 1836 until 1839 the
Cincinnati College again had a collegiate department. After 1839, though, this department also suspended instruction, a suspension that continued until the late nineteenth century. A historian of the University of Cincinnati has summed up these years as filled with "constant discord, confusion, and disorganization."  

In 1836, Cincinnatians tried again to found a college when the Episcopalian Benjamin P. Aydelott became president of the Woodward High School and expanded the facility into Woodward College. The college operated successfully for a time, but by 1845 was becoming once again simply a fine high school. When Aydelott left the presidency in 1845, the uncle of a replacement candidate informed him that he would have to teach six hours each day and "teach low branches if needed as well as high, for the greater part of the students are boys." Educators abandoned the college department completely in 1851. Otherwise, while not located directly inside Cincinnati, Lane Seminary operated a few miles outside of the city from the 1830s onward; Farmers' College did likewise in the late 1840s and early 1850s. The overall situation, however, was clearly not ideal for colleges to be located within Cincinnati."

This same pattern is visible in the other Old Northwest states. In 1850 in Michigan, the only city with more than 3,000 inhabitants, Detroit, with 21,000 residents, did not support a college. In Indiana, the three largest cities in
1850, each with 8,000 citizens, did not have a college, until Indianapolis hosted one in the 1850s. Wisconsin had no urban centers, and the largest city in Illinois, Chicago had no colleges."

The antebellum college as that institution appeared in the Old Northwest was not well-suited for the city, while the town provided an ideal environment for the college. Contemporaries claimed as much. The 1848 catalogue of Franklin College explained that the location of the village of New Athens in relation to the Steubenville turnpike, the National Road, and the Ohio River was "sufficiently near these thoroughfares and large places to enjoy their advantages, sufficiently remote to be free from their vices." Franklin "promote[d] the successful prosecution of study, and the culture and preservation of morals, being secluded from all those allurements from study, haunts of dissipation and abandoned associates so prejudicial to youth in large places." Similarly, the 1852 catalogue of Michigan Central College described Spring Arbor as "a pleasant country town, free from the temptations and distracting influences incidental to a large village, and unsurpassed in healthiness." Notice of the wholesomeness of the college and town was ubiquitous in annual college catalogues of the period.

In fact, the small-town environment was more wholesome; not because small-town residents were necessarily more
morally upright than city-dwellers, but because in the small town, college leaders could more easily observe students' lives. The lack of anonymity in the small town afforded students less room for dissipation and immorality, as opposed to the city, where a student could walk a few blocks and be among strangers, outside the purview of college leaders.

Thus, in the Old Northwest, the college did not thrive in densely populated cities, nor among the dispersed population of the Virginia Military District. Instead, the college thrived in the small towns of the region. And in almost all cases, a willing partner in the formation of the small-town colleges was the church.

The Church

Historians have debated the importance of denominations in the actual workings of the college. From 1932 to the 1970s, dominant historians of American higher education argued that religiously zealous people founded rabidly sectarian colleges during the antebellum period. Gradually, the beneficent progression of education passed from the small, intellectually unfree denominational college, to the large, intellectually free, secular university. In the 1970s, however, David B. Potts published an article, "American Colleges in the Nineteenth Century: From Localism to Denominationalism," in which he argued that the
antebellum college had been a product of local boosterism. Sectarian denominationalism did not infect colleges until after 1850. Potts retained the condemnation of denominational influence, but argued that the traditional understanding of the progression was the reverse during the nineteenth century--the colleges had gone from secular to sacred. Potts showed that most denominations supported antebellum denominational colleges only tangentially. While connected to denominations, colleges could not depend on funding from them."

More recently, Timothy Smith maintained that the antebellum colleges were aided by members of denominations, and sometimes by aid societies associated with denominations, even if denominations did not ordinarily aid the colleges directly. A Baptist college might not look to a Baptist conference for funds, but it could certainly look to individual Baptists and Baptist churches for funds, and for leadership as well--the colleges required not only dollars, but able teachers, administrators, fund-raisers, and lobbyists. Denominational connections answered these needs.

The findings of this study accord with Smith's. Almost every college relied upon denominational connections for survival. And most denominations desired to have colleges associated with the denomination. In part, denominations desired to provide seminary training to members who would
then serve the church as ministers. Also, denominations wanted to educate members who otherwise would be educated at a school controlled by another denomination. Anti-Catholicism and denominational rivalry also played a role in the growth of the Protestant denominational colleges."

Historian Peter Mode argued that in Western states, including the Old Northwest, founders increasingly justified colleges because colleges produced excellent and Christian citizens. While the motive of producing citizenship was not strong at the beginnings of college-founding, Mode found, people soon concluded that the church ought to cultivate "civic leadership," and they saw the denominational college as an ideal vehicle through which to accomplish that end. Christians knew that their developing society in the West would require leading citizens and, increasingly, they sought to make sure that those citizens received their education at a Christian college. Better to be led as a society by Christian doctors and lawyers than not, and to have these educated laypersons sit in the pews of the churches."

In all American regions, most colleges were tied to a denomination, and denominational desires to have a college or colleges associated with the denomination knew no regional boundaries. The important regional factor was the large number of denominations that existed in the Old Northwest. Unlike other regions, the Old Northwest included
immigrants from all sections of the Atlantic seaboard, as well as recent arrivals from Europe. The result was the widest and most diverse mix of American religious communities in the nation. In the Old Northwest, the array of American religious groups came together for the first time. Moreover, not one among these numerous religious groups was an established church. While the remnants of established religion still played an important role in the power dynamics of other regions, in the Old Northwest no denomination had the power to check the college-founding ambition of another group." The result of this situation was a large number of denominational colleges. Favored by the political substructure of the region, and an alliance of town and denominational forces, the other important force was the state legislatures, whose members regulated the granting of charters for colleges.

State Legislators and College Charters

Prior to the mid-1820s, Old Northwest state legislators mostly chartered a few state universities. This early tendency resembled the structure of higher education in most Southern states. During the antebellum period, Southern higher education developed in a way that emphasized the importance of public state universities at the expense of private denominational colleges. Until 1850 in South Carolina, for example, state legislators refused to charter
private colleges. In part because of this governmental hostility, antebellum Southern private colleges were less influential in Southern society than the public universities, to which the wealthy planter elites in the South tended to send their sons; the foremost function of these public universities was to teach students how to become gentlemen in a honor-based society."

This initial similarity of the Old Northwest to the South did not last; legislators in the 1820s shifted course. Ohio legislators began to charter private denominational colleges; Indiana and Illinois legislators soon did likewise. The people of the Old Northwest entered a new period, one in which they established many small, private, and denominational colleges. Control over collegiate education, as a consequence, left the state capitol and lodged in the localities, denominations, and individuals who supported these colleges.

The reasons why state legislators altered their ways at this time are not clear, although 1825 was a year of changes in the region. In 1825, Ohio legislators authorized a state-wide canal system and a public school system. Historian Donald J. Ratcliffe believed that the middle 1820s marked the onset of the market revolution in the Old Northwest. Historian Richard Lyle Power argued that after 1825 the people of the Old Northwest lost their attachments to the regions from which they had originated and began to
create "something new and different and unique in its own right." The shift in collegiate education constituted an important aspect of this change.

In most cases, the state legislators placed few restrictions on the colleges. State legislators often required that the college be non-sectarian. In practice, this stipulation did not mean that denominations could not control colleges; in fact, in almost all cases, a college in the Old Northwest was associated with a specific religious denomination. Rather, the non-sectarian requirement meant that the state leaders frowned upon denominational schools with administrators who would not admit students of different denominations. The state wanted these private colleges to be as open as possible to people with a variety of beliefs. Beyond that, state representatives exercised little oversight over the colleges, beyond requiring them to meet certain capitalization requirements and to avoid engagement in banking practices. Altogether, legislators handed out charters fairly freely and allowed people to found colleges with little state supervision or control.

The Western Education Society

However popular within the region, this structure of collegiate education did not go uncontested. Beginning in the middle 1840s, The Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West, or the
Western Education Society, attempted to impose cultural norms of New England on the Old Northwest. The Western Education Society tried to shape the system of collegiate education in the Old Northwest to approximate the development of higher education in New England, where the presence of an established church had led to a slower pace of building colleges. In colonial America, most colonies had an established religious denomination that was supported through taxation and governmental preference. Only in a few areas did denominations compete for support and establish colleges to aid their efforts. When the American Revolution began, only nine colleges were in operation in the American colonies. After the American Revolution and the adoption of the United States Constitution, disestablishment began. The process took decades and the tradition of greater influence for some churches more than others lived on, especially in regions where one church had monopolized power and support from having so long been the established church. The lack of an established church, or even a history of one, in the Old Northwest, helped to create a situation quite unlike colonial or even early national New England."

Until 1843, each Western college sent out agents or a president who made individual appeals for donations from individuals and churches in the Eastern states. Westerners began to inundate Eastern people with appeal after appeal on behalf of a multitude of colleges. Some sought-after donors
began to worry, with considerable justification, that some of these so-called colleges provided only an academy-level education or perhaps did not even exist. This doubt led to a degree of cynicism that hampered fund-raising efforts. At the same time, the effects of the Panic of 1837 made donations more difficult to obtain."

Faced with this situation, a number of Old Northwest college presidents who ran Congregational and Presbyterian schools banded together and in 1843 founded the Western Education Society. The Western Education Society represented an attempt to systematize collegiate aid solicitations in the Eastern states. These college presidents set up an organization that would funnel Eastern monies to select schools in the West that met the approval of the society. The college presidents expected that aid to their schools would increase, since Eastern donors would know that their money was going to a worthy cause. The Society's membership would be comprised of Eastern donors; Easterners would control the Society, which would dispense funds impartially to the Western colleges. Thus, while organized by Westerners, the Western Education Society was an Eastern organization."

The plan for the Western Education Society met with acclamation in the Eastern states, where residents believed that the system of collegiate education in the West was chaotic. Reverend Absalom Peters told the Society that when
their organization was founded, "A hundred beginnings had already been made . . . . But they were without concert . . . . we saw the necessity of an organization to harmonize the diverging and scattered action which was wasting itself in this impracticable way." Peters recognized that the Western colleges were founded not with any overarching plan, but as each locality and denomination desired. To the Western Education Society leaders, such a method was inefficient and undesirable. "The introduction of something like system into educational movements at the West," the first report of the Western Education Society announced, "has met with a warm response in the East." The general feeling on the part of Easterners was that Westerners were founding too many colleges. The first report of the society maintained that "it is not very wonderful that many attempts should be made where but a single institution is needed."

The second report, published in 1845, described explicitly the ideal plan for western colleges. The model would be that of colonial New England, where as early as 1644, the report related, the people of New Haven had supported Harvard College and delayed the beginning of Yale for decades. "Here was Puritan wisdom. In the exercise of similar wisdom, this Society was organized." Eastern churches would do better to support the western schools "by giving a vigorous and permanent existence to a few, than by scattering their resources among a multitude that would
inevitably conflict with each other, and entail upon all perpetual feebleness and inefficiency." This theme, the goal of having fewer but stronger colleges, predominated in the Western Education Society publications."

To reach their goal, Society members worked to slow the rate of college-founding in the West. The Society pledged to give money only to colleges well-established and locally supported: "By pursuing rigidly such a course, we hope to counteract in some measure the tendency to a reckless multiplication of ill projected and ill managed institutions." For these New Englanders, the fewer the number of colleges in the West, the better. Professor Truman Post, of Illinois College, answered the objection that "The West has too many colleges," with the reply: "True, but that does not prove that she needs none. . . . some must be sustained." The Western Education Society members supported colleges that they particularly hoped would survive. With few exceptions, the Society aided Presbyterian and Congregational colleges that had close ties to New England. Presbyterian schools with non-New England origins, such as Hanover of Indiana, or Franklin of Ohio, went without aid."

The Western Education Society proved to be influential in one respect--Society monies had the effect of strengthening the schools the Society aided. And yet the goal of introducing a New England-style structure of
colleges in the Old Northwest went unfulfilled. The Society could not slow the establishment of colleges, which people continued to found through the 1850s and beyond.

**Michigan, 1817-1855**

Though the Western Education Society was primarily an extra-regional force, leaders of the territory and state of Michigan provided the other alternative model. In 1817, the governor and judges of the Michigan Territory decided that the system of education in Michigan should be centrally controlled, with centralized power at the territorial or state level. Soon after Michigan became a state in 1837, the Michigan legislators founded the University of Michigan. These legislators intended that the University be the source of all collegiate degrees in the state. Despite the efforts of representatives of various religious denominations to obtain charters for private denominational colleges, the state leadership successfully stifled most attempts until just before the Civil War."

In the 1850s, the opponents of the state-controlled system gained the upper hand. In 1854 in Michigan, the new Republican party won the governorship as well as majority status in both halves of the legislature. Members of groups who advocated reform efforts such as anti-slavery, women's rights, and temperance supported the Republican party. The Republican party in turn supported the creation of private,
denominational colleges that could grant degrees. The Republicans complained that the University of Michigan was the only college that could administer degrees and that the University did not admit women."

The interrelatedness of these reform issues with the issue of chartering private colleges helps make clear what the denominational colleges stood for in Michigan. Essentially, the supporters of these reform efforts favored denominational colleges because they recognized that the denominational colleges could act as strong forces for these reforms. James A. B. and Lucinda Hinsdale Stone of Kalamazoo College were Michigan leaders against slavery and for women's rights, and Hillsdale College was the center of anti-slavery sentiment in the state. The counties of central southern Michigan were the location of the strongest supporters of reform, denominational colleges, and the Republican party. When the Republicans took office in 1855 and passed a law that allowed for the charter of degree-granting denominational colleges, these colleges proliferated. By 1860 the structure of higher education that emphasized decentralized control over private, local, and denominational colleges was complete throughout the Old Northwest."

Conclusion

The combined effects of the ordinances of 1785 and 1787
shaped the evolution of society in the Old Northwest in ways that stimulated the development of small-town colleges. The dominant system of survey encouraged compact settlement, while the absence of slavery assisted the growth of the small family farm. In turn, the dense population and the need for market access and other services supported the growth of towns. Town residents, eager to raise the quality of life in their area, willingly partnered with denominational groups to found colleges, which thrived in the small towns. The motives of the denominations and of town promoters meshed well. Both desired to advance society, both had a conception of citizenship in their calculations, and both saw the college as the best means of engendering their ideals among the populace at large.

The institutional structure, based upon locally-controlled, private, and denominational education, allowed, in the aggregate, for the expression of diverse ideas and minority opinions. In New England, the tradition of established religion helped to prevent the spread of colleges founded by rival denominations. In the South, the elites favored public universities that were less sectarian and also less likely to have leaders who would instill their students with the fervor of reform. Though Southern church colleges existed, sometimes in abundance, these church colleges generally followed the example provided by the state universities.
In the Old Northwest, small groups had the capacity to open colleges that would represent their views because of the private nature of the colleges and the decentralized control over them. Denominations that represented only a fragment of the population could obtain a college charter. State governmental leaders supported this arrangement. Ultimately, this arrangement demonstrated a commitment to democratic pluralism in collegiate education to an extent unparalleled in other regions.
CHAPTER 2 ENDNOTES


3. On the system of land distribution among Virginia war veterans, as well as the amounts of land specific individuals and groups controlled, see Hutchinson, *The Bounty Lands*, 35, 196-197. On the tendency of the laws to promote partition of large landholdings and the effects on landholding patterns, as well as tenant farming, in the Virginia Military District, see Bond, *The Civilization of the Old Northwest*, 330-341.

5. Thrower, *Original Survey*, 89.

6. Thomas W. King to Mrs. Edward [Sarah Worthington] King, June 3, [1833?], Box 2, Folder 1, MSS 40, King Family Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio; Francis Joseph Miller, "A History of the Athenaeum of Ohio, 1829-1960" (Ed.D., University of Cincinnati, 1964), 132. John Rankin's Ripley College, on the Ohio River within the Virginia Military District, was widely acknowledged to have been solely an academy. See, for example, Smith Nichols to Oberlin Collegiate Institution, October 15, 1845, Roll 10, Frame 148, "Letters Received by Oberlin College, 1822-1866," Archives, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio.

7. Even though slavery was outlawed in the Virginia Military District as elsewhere in the Old Northwest, some large landholders, such as Thomas Worthington, the first governor of Ohio, manumitted their slaves when they moved to Ohio. Many of these former slaves, however, came with their former owners and continued to work for them on their plantation-like estates. On the migration of former masters and slaves to Ross County, see Lyle S. Evans, ed., *Standard History of Ross County, Ohio* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1917), 227, 230; and Alfred Byron Sears, *Thomas Worthington: Father of Ohio Statehood* (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, for the Ohio Historical Society), 19. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 appears in Francis Newton Thorpe, ed., *Federal and State Constitutions* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909), 2:957 ff. On the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, see, especially, Peter S. Onuf, *Statehood and Union: A History of the Northwest Ordinance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

8. Theodore Lloyd Benson, "Planters and Hoosiers: The Development of Sectional Society in Antebellum Indiana and Mississippi," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1990). Benson identified the origins of some of the important differences between the North and the South, although the dissertation contains some unaddressed problems. For example, Benson effectively ignored enslaved people. When Benson compared population densities in the two states, he only compared free populations with free populations. Why did Benson not include the enslaved population as part of
population density, even for comparative purposes? Also, when Benson measured religious diversity, he counted the number of denominations represented per county and concluded that religious life was far more diverse in denominationally well-represented Indiana than in Mississippi. One wonders how the inclusion of enslaved peoples' religious beliefs might have altered the comparison of religious diversity.


14. E. T. Williams to Samuel Williams, December 5, 1852; January 9, 1853; December 18, 1853; January 29, 1854; April 5, 1854; and June 27, 1856; Folders 3-6, Box 2, M301, Samuel Williams Papers, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

16. E. T. Williams to Samuel Williams, March 16, 1858, Folder 6, Box 2, M301, Samuel Williams Papers, Indiana Historical Society.

17. During the first ten years, Muskingum had only eleven collegiate graduates. William L. Fisk, *A History of Muskingum College* (New Concord, Ohio: Muskingum College, 1978), 62; Typescript of Trustee Minutes, February 10, 1847, Muskingum College, Muskingum College Archives, New Concord, Ohio. The resolution the faculty offered read: "Resolved--That the objects of this Institution are 1st to prepare young men for entering at any stage in higher Colleges & Universities--2nd To supply the demands of those who only wish to pursue a partial course. 3rd To confer the first degree of the Arts on those who may prefer to finish the course of study in this Institution."

18. Transcript of Trustee Minutes, March 3, 1847, Muskingum College, Muskingum College Archives (emphasis original).


23. M. Simpson to Matthew Simpson, July 31, 1845, DC71, Folder 1, Matthew Simpson Papers, Archives, DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana. See also, on Woodward College, "'Old Woodward': A Memorial Relating to Woodward High School, 1831-1836, & Woodward College, 1836-1851, in the City of
Cincinnati," Cincinnati Historical Society. The only other Cincinnati school that may have offered a collegiate education during the antebellum years was the precursor of Xavier University, the Athenaeum. The evidence, however, suggests that the Catholic school offered a preparatory education to boys. See Miller, "A History of the Athenaeum of Ohio, 1829-1960."


27. For a more extended description of denominational motivations for founding colleges, see Vernon Franklin Schwalm, "The Historical Development of the Denominational Colleges in the Old Northwest to 1870," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1926), 23-35.


33. On the difficulty New Englanders had accepting the lack of an established religion in the Old Northwest, see Travis Keene Hedrick, Jr., "Julian Monson Sturtevant and the Moral Machinery of Society: The New England Struggle Against Pluralism in the Old Northwest, 1829-1877" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1974).


and Theological Education at the West (New York: John F. Trow, 1844), 10, 9.


CHAPTER 3

FOUNDERS

This chapter presents the ideas and actions of three Old Northwest college founders who founded, or helped to found, six institutions of higher education. These three founders, Philander Chase, John J. Shipherd, and Freeman G. Cary, differed in significant ways, yet also reveal critical common characteristics. The argument of the chapter is not that these three men were representative of all Old Northwest college founders, but rather that these three founders generally reflect the spirit and assumptions of the people who began Old Northwest colleges. Notably, the college founders opened access to collegiate education in ways that broke down boundaries of class, gender, and race that had normally excluded all but elite white males from a collegiate education.

These founders rooted their colleges in the fertile land of the region. Whether through agriculture as a support for both college and student, manual labor as an
integral part of collegiate education, or scientific agriculture, each founder utilized the soil of the Old Northwest. Such a basis for these colleges befit their rural locations and indicated the rural orientation of these educators, who built their colleges to serve non-elite students who were accustomed to and esteemed agriculture and manual labor. This idea suited the Old Northwest better than Atlantic seaboard states, where land was less fertile, land prices higher, and population denser. A Southern system centered upon slave labor, with a different conception of the value of free labor, inhibited the formation of such colleges.

The founders built colleges that would be accessible to worthy individuals who did not come from wealthy or elite families. Colleges should be egalitarian, the founders thought, rather than the province of the privileged. Colleges open to people from various backgrounds would produce useful citizens and fulfill the promises of a republican nation that relied upon an informed and educated citizenry. Jointly with these civic ideals, all three founders believed that colleges based upon farming or substantial landholding would contribute to the moral education of students. John Shipherd, who helped found Oberlin, LaGrange, and Olivet, believed that the manual labor system cultivated discipline and high morals among students. Philander Chase, the founder of Kenyon and
Jubilee colleges, saw his control over thousands of acres of land as a means of protecting students from malevolent influences beyond the college. Freeman Cary, the founder of Farmers' College, envisioned his college as a Christian school. Chase, Shipherd, and Cary looked to the land as a source of sustenance, as well as a guarantor of their civil and moral aspirations. When they combined their religious and civic loyalties with the availability of lightly populated, fertile land, these founders produced a regionally specific conception of collegiate education.

Philander Chase: The Feudal Founder

Born in 1775, Philander Chase matured in New Hampshire and at Dartmouth College, from which he graduated in 1795. Three years later, after ordination into the Episcopal Church, Chase worked in western New York, New Orleans, and Connecticut before he moved in 1817 to Ohio, where the Episcopal Church was tiny, with about eight small parishes. In 1819 Chase became the first Episcopal bishop of Ohio and soon joined educational ventures. He served as president of the Cincinnati College for a year and ran a school in his Worthington home. These endeavors, however, paled in comparison to Chase's plan to found an Episcopalian seminary that would produce ministers for Western churches.

Chase needed money to accomplish his goal, but when he asked Easterners for funds, the Easterners claimed that
Western Episcopalians would be best served at Eastern Episcopal seminaries. Undeterred, Chase went to England, where he obtained from English donors money with which to found his college. He then returned to Ohio and searched for suitable land to purchase."

Chase considered placing his college in the countryside. In March of 1825 he was "still undecided," but he was "more & more averse to putting it in or near a village." He wanted enough land that his school would "have a power to prevent immoral practice, and things that would prove injurious to the opinions and study of youth for at least 2 miles around." Chase increasingly envisioned an institution of education absolutely removed from any outside influence that might corrupt or interfere with the workings of the college."

At the same time, Chase found himself inundated with requests from townspeople who wished to host his college. Chase considered purchasing his land in Knox County, but reported to his wife that two "selfish" men he spoke to were "dead set against the Knox County plan as such because it would (in their opinion) divert the travelling from Berkshire to Sunbury and there be no gain but rather an injury to their property!!!" Chase wearily complained that "the local interests of several little towns, and villages amongst us so far warp the judgment of many that I apprehend great difficulty" in establishing the college. Chase
"feared" that "such is the overbearing influence of local interests that" all the advantages that would come from having the college in the countryside "will be overlooked and disregarded for the sole purpose of building up the importance of little towns and villages." Chase had little sympathy with the "local prejudices and sectional interests so common and so deeply rooted among us." Accordingly, in 1826 Chase purchased 8,000 acres of forested land in rural Knox County and founded Kenyon College in the center of the property.

Kenyon College

Chase intended for Kenyon College to play an important role in the development of the region. In 1827 Chase addressed the Ohio state legislature as he sought support for his bid to the United States Congress for a grant of government lands for the support of Kenyon college. Chase justified his request on the basis of Kenyon's centrality in the education of schoolteachers. Chase told the legislators that the Western population lacked sufficient schoolteachers and remained poorly educated. Chase argued that Ohio should have more schoolteachers and that Ohioans should "educate these Teachers ourselves. Let us draw from our own soil the moral seed, by which the Western country is to be supplied with the fruits of learning." Western colleges needed adequate support "so that the expense of education will come
within the reach of all." The colleges should train schoolteachers, Chase believed "from the middle and more industrious walks of life; the sons of farmers and mechanics in our country, who have witnessed the necessity, who have felt the want, and, to the welfare of our Republic, who know the great importance of common learning." Chase pictured his college as a place that would serve the sons not only of the wealthy, but of the "middle walks of life."

In addition, Kenyon College provided a civic function by upholding the civil structure of the United States. The teachers who went forth from Kenyon College would be "the surest preservative of our constitutional liberties." Chase argued that the Constitution prohibited "privileged orders of men," and that a college education must, thus, be accessible to all. "But experience does not justify this reasonable expectation," warned Chase. "Such is the foundation of our Colleges, especially those in the Atlantic States, that NO POOR MAN, nor even one in moderate circumstances, can give his son a collegiate education." This situation, to Chase, was "in direct hostility to the nature of a republic." Chase intended that Kenyon College be a corrective to this situation, that the college be accessible to men of whatever fortune.

In pursuit of this goal, from 1826 until 1828, at which point the first students arrived, Chase and scores of hired workers quarried stone and constructed college buildings,
built a grist and saw mill, and cleared land upon which to
grow crops. By 1830 Chase and his associates planted
hundreds of acres in corn, wheat, rye, and oats, and fenced
hundreds of acres of clover and timothy as pasture for their
oxen and cattle. "Our great object," as Chase described it,
"has been to convert our fine lands into a great stock-
farm, which, after being duly prepared, should afford us an
abundance of milk, butter, and cheese and viands."

Chase's 8,000 acres not only provided sustenance to all
who lived there, but also placed Chase in a position of
nearly absolute control over the college, as all who lived
in the vicinity did so at Chase's pleasure. The nearest
town, Mount Vernon, was five miles distant. While students
sometimes traveled there, when one student became
intoxicated in Mount Vernon once too often, Chase expelled
him and prohibited other students from visiting the town. A
student who reported that Mount Vernon was now off-limits
called Chase "tyrannical."

Professors, too, found that the college president
wielded firm control over their lives. John Kendrick, a
Kenyon professor, wrote in 1835 that he desired to leave the
college and find employment elsewhere. "The chief reason .
.. is the peculiar arrangement .. by which no one can
own real property." Kendrick had to live on college lands
to teach at Kenyon; he thus had no opportunity to purchase a
home for himself and his family within a reasonable distance
from the college. Kendrick feared that in the event of his untimely death his family would have to move elsewhere and be left without a home."

Chase did not deny that the vast acreage of Kenyon College granted him, as president, important power. In response to criticisms of his control, Chase responded that while Kenyon shared some characteristics with other colleges, in some ways Kenyon was unique. "One fundamental principle," wrote Chase, "in which [Kenyon] differs from all others is, that the whole Institution is Patriarchal. . . . This Patriarchal establishment must . . . have a Father . . . clothed with authority to seek and effect the common good." Chase would be the father, and as long as Kenyon College was surrounded for miles by college lands, no one would challenge the patriarch. Chase would keep at bay the forces of immorality and determine the common good."

Henry Caswall, a student at Kenyon College during the late 1820s and early 1830s, later described the extent of the Kenyon College workings as well as Chase's power. Chase, wrote Caswall, was not only the bishop of Ohio. At Kenyon College he headed the board of trustees and governed the professors. "He had the appointment of professors, tutors, headmen, and clerks. . . . He was the postmaster, and had the management of the mill, the farms, the printing office, the tailors, the shoemakers, and the laborers." Chase, not a man to share power, oversaw all aspects of the
Charismatic and autocratic, Philander Chase was better at building colleges than at working within a collegiate structure. In 1831 Chase lost his position as president of Kenyon College. Chase had long feuded with other powerful Episcopalians who, in combination with the faculty and trustees of Kenyon College, forced Chase to resign from the presidency of Kenyon College. Chase had fierce enemies, some of whom believed that Chase intended to rule Kenyon College as his personal possession, rather than as an instrument of the Episcopal Church. Such criticism was justified by Philander Chase's lack of distinction between his own financial affairs and those of the college. Some people questioned whether the lands of the college were actually held by the Episcopal Church or by Chase. Some powerful Ohio Episcopalians, particularly William Sparrow and Benjamin P. Aydelott, were incensed by Chase's willingness to spend all of his time and energy at Kenyon, instead of helping to build the Episcopal Church throughout Ohio. Aydelott wrote to Chase's successor, Charles P. McIlvaine, that "the impression in the minds of most" was that Chase "had become so absorbed in the secularities of the College as to neglect his episcopal duties." This criticism, too, was not without merit.\textsuperscript{12}

Another Episcopalian, William King, wrote to McIlvaine that under Chase, the union of the episcopacy of Ohio and
the presidency of Kenyon was "seriously injurious to the best interests of the church--but Bp C--from his peculiar circumstances, had become so wedded to the college that it was well understood, no entreaties could suffice to sever him from it." Yet even King was willing to grant Chase his due. Benjamin Aydelott argued that Chase's flawed character brought problems upon himself. King, while agreeing with Aydelott's argument, remarked that "those defects, however, belong to a character remarkable for untiring industry & perseverance & a sanguine & impetuous temper--without some of which qualities . . . it is not likely Kenyon ever would have existed." King's comments underscore the attributes Chase displayed as a founder of an Old Northwest college, as well as the reasons Chase was unpopular as an administrator.

When forced from his Kenyon College position, Chase no longer wanted to be the Bishop of Ohio; he moved to Michigan, where he had hopes of becoming bishop and founding another college. While the bishopric of Michigan was not forthcoming, Chase's work was not over; one notable effort remained.

**Jubilee College**

In 1835, the five Episcopalian clergy in Illinois called Chase to be the first bishop of that state. Chase accepted and immediately went to England, without even visiting Illinois, in an attempt to secure funds to found a
new college. Chase again met with success and in the summer of 1836 went to Illinois to purchase land. When he arrived in Peoria County, however, and people discovered that he was looking for thousands of acres of property to purchase and found a college upon, the price of land skyrocketed. Chase waited three years before he purchased about two thousand acres in Peoria County, fifteen miles from the county seat, and began Jubilee College.

As with Kenyon, Chase intended for his Jubilee landholdings to serve as a barrier against unwanted influences, and used the land as a source of support for the college. In the early 1840s, Chase built a saw and flour mill along the Kickapoo Creek. His workers fueled the college with thousands of bushels of coal they extracted from Jubilee coalbanks. By 1843, Chase's hired hands cultivated 150 acres and cared for a flock of 650 sheep, among other livestock. In 1847 Chase received a printing press from English donors; soon a steady stream of propaganda in support of Jubilee College issued from the press, mostly in the form of a college publication, The Motto, written almost entirely by Chase. In the winter of 1848, Chase advertised for "laborers and mechanics." "A good tailor, blacksmith and carpenter wanted immediately. Masons in the spring," announced Chase. One decade after he had purchased his land, Chase was overseeing a complex operation."
While Chase did not view his students as the primary source of labor, he made work available as a means of helping students through college. In the middle 1830s, when called to be the bishop of Illinois, Chase wrote to his nephew Samuel Chase about his plans for founding "a Self Supporting school." Students need not be wealthy: "If they were robust in their constitution used and willing to labour they would pay their way either on a farm or in such mechanical work as their genius would suggest." In 1839, when Robert S. Bailey, a medical doctor from South Carolina, visited Jubilee, Chase showed him around. Bailey was particularly interested in the coal banks and mentioned encountering "a young man with a cart load of the coal." After the young man passed, Chase explained that he "was qualifying himself for the ministry, and would soon be able to take orders, and that although we saw him so employed, he was nevertheless a gentleman that possessed talents of the first order." On another occasion, a decade later, Chase looked for an incoming student who could manage the printing press. Chase believed in providing work to students who could not afford college otherwise."

In late 1848 Silas Totten, former president of Trinity College in Connecticut, visited. In a subsequent letter, Totten wrote that most of the 2,500 acres of Jubilee lands were unimproved; 800 acres constituted the actual farm. Totten cited large numbers of livestock, "including 2000
sheep, 70 head of cattle, 20 horses, and 70 or 80 swine," and explained that the "live stock is mostly relied on for the income from the farm. . . . The farming operations are mostly confined to providing hay and grain for the stock in the winter, and provisions for the boarding houses and for families connected with the College." Much went on at Jubilee besides education, yet Jubilee College was the logical outgrowth of the ideals of the founder, who intended to support an educational mission through agricultural, commercial, and extractive activities.

In September of 1849 the college suffered a loss when the mills burned. Soon, partially to replace the income generated by the mills, Chase further expanded his existing agricultural system. By 1850, Chase employed twenty people to farm his acreage. Under the coordinating direction of Philander and Samuel Chase, the Jubilee College lands produced crops of hay, wheat, corn, turnips, oats, flax, and barley, and workers were beginning to cultivate apples and strawberries.

In 1853, E. B. Kellogg, an agent for Jubilee College, argued that the 2,227 acres of land, with its woods and its coal, including the 800 acres of improved farmland, was a "noble foundation . . . for the promotion of Religion and Learning in the West." If supporters would donate enough money to build a student dormitory and endow some "Professorships," Jubilee could offer to more students a
convenient, excellent, and inexpensive education, "well suited to the wants of people in a new country."
Additionally, Kellogg maintained, "what constitutes its peculiar claim to aid, is its seclusion from scenes of vice. The very extent of the domain itself . . . places everything of the kind at the inconvenient distance of at least two miles." Kellogg alluded to a popular idea at the time when he noted, "Those who are well acquainted with the evils which so often accompany the education of young men in cities, will need no help to understand the full benefit of such an arrangement." Kellogg believed that Jubilee College, with its agricultural basis, would help to provide access to inexpensive education for people in the West. Further, the distance of remove from immoral influences made Jubilee a safe place to send one's sons."

In the end, Jubilee College, unlike Kenyon College, did not prosper. Southern monetary support diminished as sectional tensions increased during the late 1840s and early 1850s. A title dispute over some of Chase's landholdings resulted in the loss of a portion of the acreage of the college. Philander Chase died in 1852; his nephew Samuel attempted to continue the college, but lacked Philander's charisma. While Jubilee personnel did train some Episcopal clergymen, Jubilee College mostly served as a preparatory school for boys. Nonetheless, Chase, at both Kenyon and Jubilee, carried out a vision of a college that would
operate on extensive landholdings to protect and support the students, who would go forth from the college to contribute to the religious and civic life of the nation.

John J. Shipherd: The Founder as Franchiser

Born in 1802 in West Greenville, New York, John J. Shipherd, like Philander Chase, began life outside the Old Northwest. As a young man, Shipherd ministered to a Congregational and Presbyterian church in Elyria, Ohio. Within a short time, however, as his tenure in Elyria proved unsuccessful, Shipherd considered other avenues, which he discussed with his friend, Philo P. Stewart. Eventually the two determined to found, in Ohio, a colony of settlers devoted to God. Stewart suggested that Shipherd and he begin a college in their colony. Shipherd initially objected to Stewart's proposal as unnecessary, as Western Reserve College already existed on Ohio's Western Reserve and was not overflowing with students. Over time, however, the two agreed to found a college.  

Shipherd resigned his pastorate in Elyria to devote himself full-time to founding both colony and college. He went to the East, where he worked to buy land in the Western Reserve and acquire colonists. Shipherd would call on a parish minister, ask him who his most pious members were, and then solicit those members for the venture. Shipherd met with opposition to his plans from those who considered
his ideas "visionary & impracticable, in the extreme," but he eventually gathered enough people, purchased 5,000 acres in the Western Reserve, and began the Oberlin colony and college on this tract of land three square miles in size."  

Oberlin Collegiate Institute  

Stewart and Shipherd departed from Eastern norms by founding a second college on the Western Reserve when the prevailing opinion was that another college would be wasteful and counterproductive. Stewart and Shipherd also went against the status quo when they organized Oberlin to educate males and females together. This step, the introduction of the first co-educational American college, represented a radical and unprecedented departure from the norms of collegiate education."  

Stewart and Shipherd also founded Oberlin on a manual labor system. In 1833 Shipherd advertised the Oberlin Collegiate Institute and pointed out that as the school was within eleven miles of Lake Erie, Easterners could easily send their children. One advantage of sending their children to Oberlin, stressed Shipherd, would be "an acquaintance with western character, formed by personal intercourse." Shipherd explained that the "Manual Labor Department will receive unusual attention." Students, both male and female, would perform a "variety of agricultural, horticultural, and mechanical labors ... most conducive to
their health and support." These labors would take four hours of each day, during forty weeks of the year. The annual twelve-week vacation could be spent "in school teaching, agencies, and other employments," during which the students could "study human nature to advantage, and become acquainted with common things; and earn money for their support." Shipherd would integrate work with education and implement an educational system to benefit students with little money. He also drew attention to what he felt were regional differences between the East and West when he referred to "western character" and emphasized that students could "become acquainted with common things" during their working vacations in the West."

Oberlin drew much attention and a share of criticism because the college was so unorthodox, but Stewart and Shipherd defended their decisions. "There are many in the Eastern States who are determined that every thing at the West shall be modeled after the traditions of the fathers," wrote Philo Stewart. "But let us inquire what kind of institutions are needed at the West." Stewart believed that Western institutions would differ from their Eastern counterparts because the needs of the West differed from Eastern needs.

Shipherd was originally skeptical of the need for another Western college; the longer Shipherd remained in the West, the more he became convinced of the need for more
schools. In 1836, three years after he began to establish Oberlin, Shipherd wrote to his parents, "my usefulness requires that I should leave Oberlin. . . . All that Oberlin can educate on the manual labor plan will not be a hundredth part of the youth that now wait for Oberlin privileges." Shipherd therefore planned to "establish several Oberlins." Shipherd wrote in another letter that he was going "to form a Western Education company for the establishment of Ob.n 2d--Obn 3d &c." Essentially, Shipherd advocated franchising Oberlin college."

LaGrange Collegiate Institute

Shipherd's first opportunity to found multiple Oberlins came in LaGrange County, Indiana, where people requested that Shipherd help them organize a school. On February 6, 1837, a Board of Trustees, which included Shipherd, formed to found the LaGrange Collegiate Institute. At that meeting the trustees pledged, "We will conduct the Institution . . . on the principles, & according to the plans, of the Oberlin Institute in Ohio, . . . deviating only as our experiences shall indicate will be for the glory of God & the best interests of men." The trustees issued a prospectus of the co-educational institute, which explained that the school would be a manual labor institution. Also, the trustees announced their fundamental belief that "Corporate bodies and public Institutions, no less than
individuals, are bound to do right, irrespective of worldly expediency, popular favor or any consequences." The basis for the LaGrange Collegiate Institute would be decidedly moral. The founders pledged that the LaGrange Collegiate Institute would "allow free discussion, and openly sustain the great moral enterprises of the day, such as Revivals, Temperance in all things, Sanctification of the Sabbath, Moral Reform, Christian Union, and Human Rights, under whatever colour or circumstances."

Shipherd did not long remain connected with the LaGrange Collegiate Institute. In September and October of 1837 the trustees held meetings that culminated when Shipherd declined an offer to work as "the general agent" for the trustees, a job that required heavy travel seeking donors for the Institution, "on the ground that, at present, the prospect before him would not warrant the undertaking." A subsequent history of the Institute interpreted Shipherd's refusal as a sign that Shipherd recognized the weak financial support for the Institute. In fact, Shipherd suffered from poor health.

By March, 1838, Shipherd accepted a call to pastor a church in Newark, New Jersey. "My health & life depend upon diet & regimen which I cannot have as an agent," Shipherd explained. "My health is not equal to Western service." The leaders of the LaGrange Collegiate Institute pushed on without Shipherd's help, although the school remained an
academy and never became a college. Shipherd's desire to found more Oberlins remained unabated. In the 1840s Shipherd returned to the Old Northwest to found one more college."

Olivet Collegiate Institute

In 1843 Shipherd located land in Michigan where he determined to locate his next college. He returned to Oberlin to gather a band of colonists to duplicate the Oberlin experience. In February of 1844, Shipherd and thirty-eight other colonists left for Michigan, where they settled and purchased forty acres of land for the college. Within months, however, Shipherd fell ill with malaria and in September, at the age of forty-two, died. About half of the colonists then returned to Oberlin, while a remnant stayed and carried out Shipherd's idea by establishing the co-educational Olivet Collegiate Institute. At first, Olivet educators offered an academy-level education. Over time, however, as the area grew in population and prosperity, and after Michigan legislators became congenial toward denominational colleges, the Olivet leaders, in 1858, received a charter for Olivet College."

John J. Shipherd exemplified three Old Northwest traits in his behavior that led to the founding of Oberlin, LaGrange, and Olivet. First, his desire to found multiple colleges reflected the widespread acceptance in the region
of numerous colleges to serve the inhabitants. Shipherd's idea was not something that he held when he arrived in the Old Northwest. When first approached by Philo Stewart about founding even one college, Shipherd protested that there was no need for more colleges in the area. Only as time went on did Shipherd see not only a need for another college on the Western Reserve, but colleges throughout the West. Second, Shipherd's introduction into collegiate education of the joint schooling of men and women was characteristic of an unwillingness to be bound by precedents that, in the West, did not appear to serve a useful purpose. Third, Shipherd's dedication to manual labor principles was indicative of a belief that collegiate education should be accessible even to those without great financial resources, and that the means to this end could come from the land itself.

Freeman G. Cary: The Founder as Farmer

Freeman G. Cary was born in 1810 in southwestern Ohio. In 1831 he graduated from Miami University and soon established the Pleasant Hill Academy in Hamilton County, Ohio, a few miles outside of Cincinnati. Cary's academy prospered and by the middle 1840s Cary began to think about expanding his academy into a full-fledged college.

The type of college that Cary envisioned was one that would be of use to farmers. Years earlier, in 1832, Cary had delivered an address before the Hamilton County
Agricultural Society in which he argued that the Americans needed schools that provided an agricultural education. Farmers must go to school so that they could be useful citizens, ones familiar with the governmental ways of a republic, who also knew how to farm successfully. In the 1840s, as Cary considered what sort of college to establish, he returned to these ideas of agricultural education. When Ohio state legislators chartered the college, they chartered Farmers' College."

Farmers' College

In 1847 Samuel Miller, a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, recognized that the plans for agricultural education at Farmers' College represented an educational innovation that he believed best suited for the West. Easterners, he argued, would not be attracted by such an educational venture because they "have been altogether unused to any thing of the kind, & . . . are so much the slaves of old habits." Farmers' College, he mused, perhaps would "better suit the robust, active, enterprizing minds of the west, intent on bold projects, & new & original forms of construction in everything." Easterners would remain attached to their existing educational ways, according to Miller. Farmers' College would succeed because the Westerners were open to new ideas, to "original forms of construction."
Between 1854 and 1856, Freeman Cary acquired a farm of 100 acres near the college and built an experimental laboratory on the grounds. Students and faculty conducted tests upon different strains of wheat, other grasses, vegetables, and fruit trees. Cary wrote that from the beginning, he had attempted to supply students with an education "eminently practical." The agricultural department, claimed Cary, would offer "everything calculated to render the business of farming more flourishing, prosperous, and productive." The teachers at Farmers' would educate students about mathematics in agriculture, soil management, "zoology, entomology, and natural history in general, political economy, and many other branches."

Farmers' was an early step toward the implementation of a collegiate-level scientific agriculture program in the United States. Colleges and universities centered around scientific agriculture soon appeared elsewhere, notably at the Michigan Agricultural College in 1855, and at numerous public universities spawned by the Morrill Act of 1862.

In 1856 Cary began to publish a monthly serial, *Cincinnatus*, which served as an agricultural journal and official organ for Farmers' College. In the *Cincinnatus* Cary explained his educational philosophy and the innovations of Farmers' College. "Harvard, Yale, and Dartmouth," Cary wrote, represented the standard collegiate structures in the United States. The founders of these
schools had modeled them after English schools, and these Eastern schools stood "for the education of the few, the students of the learned professions." Cary thought that Farmers' College represented a break with the past. "We propose," Cary announced, in one of his most notable sentences, an educational system "less scholastic, less monkish; not atheistic, nor yet ecclesiastic; not Prussian, not French, not royal, not aristocratic, but truly and symmetrically American, Christian, industrial and universal." During the 1856 dedication of Polytechnic Hall, Freeman Cary told those assembled, "We trust that it is the mission of American Institutions . . . to enlarge the idea of a University, until it shall embrace the education of men for every honorable calling and pursuit." Freeman Cary, through Farmers' College, broke from the past when he argued that scientific agriculture should be a standard part of collegiate education, and American universities should provide vocational education. Cary saw Farmers' College as an American college, not derivative of Old World influences, but one that met New World needs with indigenous educational ideas.

Cary pictured his college as a building block of the nation. "America is now teaching the world a lesson with regard to popular sovereignty and man's inalienable rights," wrote Cary, who argued that "there must be a lifting up of the industrial classes to a new position and placing them in
a better relation to manhood and to humanity than they have ever occupied." Farmers' College would satisfy the promise of dignity and social mobility for all that Cary believed stood at the heart of the American system. Like Chase, Cary saw his private college as a key element in the progress of civil society."

Cary's experiment, though, did not last. By 1858 Farmers' was in dire financial straits; despite consequent changes and reorganizations, Farmers' declined to a level at which the school provided only a preparatory education. Administrators sold portions of the experimental agricultural grounds to keep the school afloat. The reasons for the decline relate to the death of Cary's close associate, Robert Hamilton Bishop. Bishop, a New School Presbyterian, had presided over Miami University for many years before Old School Presbyterians on the board of trustees dismissed him in 1844. The next year he joined the faculty at his former student Cary's academy, just as the school was becoming a college. Bishop was unquestionably an important figure at Farmers' College. His stature among Presbyterians and former graduates of Miami University enabled him to bring needed funds and students to Farmers' College. After Bishop's death in 1855 the college fell on hard times."

While Bishop lived, Freeman Cary implemented an innovative system of vocational and agricultural education
at a time when classical and scientific education was still the norm. Though Farmers' did not survive, the idea of providing collegiate education in scientific agriculture would become a significant component of American higher education in the late nineteenth century. Like Chase and Shipherd, Cary saw cultivation of the land as inextricably bound to the work and mission of his college.

**Founding Old Northwest Colleges**

Chase, Shipherd, and Cary were unlike most college founders in the East and the South. In the West, where they lacked substantial financial resources, these practical founders relied on what they did have in abundance—inexpensive, fertile land. On such land, each founder intended consciously to break from established Eastern ways. Chase sought to seclude his students from outside influences, Shipherd worked to integrate manual labor with academic studies in a distinctively religious environment, and Cary implemented studies in scientific agriculture to fulfill his vision of education "truly and symmetrically American, Christian, industrial and universal." By no means were Chase, Shipherd, and Cary outside the cultural mainstream. State legislators willingly chartered their colleges and people gladly enlisted their sons and daughters in these educational enterprises.

For each founder, easy availability of a collegiate
education was a hallmark. Chase knew that students who could not afford to travel to the East to an Episcopal school could afford to travel to Kenyon, and at Jubilee he made work available to students who could not afford to study there otherwise. Shipherd automatically precluded the education of leisured elites at Oberlin and at the other colleges he helped to found by making manual labor part and parcel of the collegiate experience. Not only were elites made unwelcome, but Shipherd welcomed women, not a change to be taken lightly, into his schools. Oberlin, of course, soon allowed African Americans entry as a matter of college policy. Cary desired to make his college accessible to farmers, and neglected the classical studies that were the mainstay of elite college curriculums to provide agricultural education.

Finally, each of these founders connected his college or colleges to the strengthening of morality, Christianity and, in the cases of Chase and Cary, the nation. Chase initially created his Ohio school to produce Episcopal ministers, but as the college swelled in size and the seminary remained tiny, Chase shifted his focus to the Western need for teachers to educate the populace. Cary's emphasis on the importance of a Christian, educated, agriculturalist republic marked an easy conglomeration of the civic and the religious.

These themes were repeated many times, with numerous
variations, as other founders built colleges in the Old Northwest. Whether they were manual labor colleges of the 1830s, or schools that emphasized agriculture and scientific inquiry in the 1850s, these Old Northwest colleges, given the types of students they attracted and the educational experiences they offered those students, differed significantly from most schools in other regions.


3. Philander Chase to Intrepid Morse, March 3, 1825, Philander Chase Papers, Special Collections, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio; Philander Chase, *Bishop Chase's Reminiscences*, 442-444.

4. Philander Chase to Sophia Chase, April 18, 1826, Chase Papers, Special Collections, Kenyon College (emphasis original); Philander Chase to Bishop [?], April 26, 1825, Philander Chase Papers, Special Collections, Kenyon College; Philander Chase to Messrs. Smith & Jenkins, April 25, 1825, Philander Chase Papers, Special Collections, Kenyon College. The April 25, 1825, letter shows how much more solidly Chase's ideas had formed since his March 3, 1825, letter to Intrepid Morse.

5. "Address to the Legislature of Ohio," in Philander Chase, "The Star in the West, or Kenyon College, in the Year of our Lord, 1828," 2 (emphasis original). Chase appeared before the Ohio legislature to receive that body's support for Chase's request to the United States Congress for a grant of land to support Kenyon College. The Ohio legislature did support Chase's efforts, although the United States Congress never granted Chase any aid. See, also, Smythe, *Kenyon College*, 75-78.

7. On the numbers of workers Chase employed, see Chase, Bishop Chase's Reminiscences, 1:525, 534. On building the sawmill, see Chase, Bishop Chase's Reminiscences, 538-542; The agricultural information, and the quotation from Chase, appear in Smythe, Kenyon College, 86. Generally, on the improvement of the college lands, see Smythe, Kenyon College, 59-63, 68-73, 79-87.


9. John Kendrick to Benjamin P. Aydelott, December 22, 1835, #72, Folder 6, Box 1, Benjamin P. Aydelott Papers, Cincinnati Historical Society.

10. Philander Chase, "Circular," July 14, 1831, King Papers, Cincinnati Historical Society. Donald W. Ferguson, "The Proposed Town of Cornish, Ohio," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly 44(1935):245-249, showed that when Chase needed money desperately to keep Kenyon afloat financially, he did plot a town within the 8,000 acres of the college domain. This town he envisioned, however, which never materialized, would have been located three miles from the college.

11. Henry Caswall, America & the American Church, quoted in Smith, The Life of Philander Chase, 213, 223-225, 235 (quotation).

12. Benjamin P. Aydelott to Charles P. McIlvaine, September 16, 1831, McIlvaine Papers, Special Collections, Kenyon College. On Chase's fall from power at Kenyon College, see Smith, The Life of Philander Chase, 231-242, Smythe, Kenyon College, 95-111, as well as relevant letters in the King Papers, Cincinnati Historical Society. Benjamin P. Aydelott was an influential Episcopalian minister and educator in Cincinnati, Ohio. See the Aydelott Papers of the Cincinnati Historical Society, which make Aydelott's opposition to Chase clear. See, also, Philander Chase to Samuel Chase, June 18, 1835, Philander Chase Papers, Archives and Historical Collections, Diocese of Chicago, which names William Sparrow and Aydelott as the architects of Chase's resignation. See, also, The Motto 2(1852):202, which fingers Aydelott. The concern that Chase did not draw enough distinction between the affairs of the college and his personal financial holdings is well founded. Chase controlled Kenyon College as if he owned the college personally, and his financial status was
indistinguishable from that of the college. Moreover, after his dismissal from the college, Chase attempted, until the end of his life over twenty years later, to regain control over Kenyon. "Bishop Chase & Kenyon College," The Motto, 2(1850):33-40.

13. William King to Charles P. McIlvaine, January 9, 1833, Charles P. McIlvaine Papers, Special Collections, Kenyon College. Chase's undoing at Kenyon College was not because of an upswelling of democratic fervor among his opponents; Kenyon College changed in subsequent years in ways that made the college less autocratic, but the story of Chase's undoing is not a story of autocracy versus democracy.


17. Philander Chase to Samuel Chase, June 18, 1835, Philander Chase Papers, Archives and Historical Collections, Diocese of Chicago; Robert S. Bailey, "Narrative of a Visit," 276; In 1850, Chase boarded a man who mined four thousand bushels of coal annually for the college. See The Motto, 2(1850):18.


19. On the burning of the mills, see The Motto, 1(September 20, 1849):inside of front cover. For accounts of crops grown at Jubilee College, see The Motto 2(1850):15-18, The Motto 2(1851):129-130, 148, Philander Chase to Samuel Chase, May 18, 1843, Philander Chase Papers, Archives and Historical Collections, Diocese of Chicago, and Philander Chase to Samuel Chase, August 16, 1847, Philander Chase Papers, Archives and Historical Collections, Diocese of Chicago. For the experience of one Jubilee College farmer, see the Journal of Charles Mayo, #2034, Peoria Historical Society Collections, Bradley University, Peoria, Illinois.


24. "Oberlin Collegiate Institute" (emphasis original), John J. Shipherd Papers, Archives, Oberlin College.

25. P. P. Stewart to Levi Burnell, April 10, 1837, Roll 4, Frame 131, "Letters Received by Oberlin College, 1822-1866," Archives, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio.

26. John J. Shipherd to L. R. Shipherd, May 24, 1836, John J. Shipherd Papers, Archives, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio (emphasis original); John J. Shipherd to Fayette Shipherd, April 11, 1836, John J. Shipherd Papers, Archives, Oberlin College. Eliza Branch described Shipherd's plan in a 1836 letter. Shipherd had raised pledges of funds and was then "to select & purchase the most eligible site for a manual labour institution. The design is to get 10,000 acres & to raise money enough on the sale of it to endow the college, & aid Oberlin. some $10,000. In addition to this enough to make a second purchase for a Theological Sem, from which enough must be saved for a third purchase, & so on . . . ." Eliza Branch to Fayette Shipherd, May 13, 1836, John J. Shipherd Papers, Archives, Oberlin College (emphasis original). Such a plan, of course, was entirely within the pattern of land speculation as a standard means of financing colleges.

27. "A New England Church at Ontario," (copied from The LaGrange News, November 4, 1948), Folder "LaGrange (Indiana) Collegiate Institute (1837-74)," Box 12, Series 3, Robert S. Fletcher Papers, Archives, Oberlin College; "Pledge of Trustees" of LaGrange Collegiate Institute, February 6, 1837, Folder 5, SC-874, Nathan Jenks Papers, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana; "Prospectus" of LaGrange Collegiate Institute, Folder 5, SC-874, Nathan Jenks Papers, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana. The prospectus also appears, with slight changes, in History and General Catalogue of LaGrange Collegiate Institute, Situated at Ontario, LaGrange Co., Ind. (LaGrange, Indiana: Sweet & Bayliss, 1872).


29. John J. Shipherd to Levi Burnell, March 25, 1838, John Jay Shipherd Papers, Archives, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio; History . . . of LaGrange Collegiate Institute, 11-15. Shipherd did later consider another involvement with the LaGrange school. He wrote in September of 1838 that "If the Trustees of the LaGrange Institute pledge me such means as they
are able, I see not where I can be so useful as in bringing my experience in building Oberlin to bear in rearing a second." John J. Shipherd to L. R. Shipherd, September 20, 1836, John J. Shipherd Papers, Archives, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio.


34. [Freeman G. Cary], "Difficulties and Discouragements in the Establishment of Institutions for the Promotion of Scientific Agriculture--Plan to be Pursued," Cincinnatus 1(1856):168; [Freeman G. Cary], "Agricultural Colleges--Farmers' College," Cincinnatus 3(1858):83-84; [Cary], "Difficulties and Discouragements," 169-170 (quotations); J. R. Williams, "Address on Agricultural Education: Delivered at the State Fair, Syracuse, N.Y., October 8, 1858," Cincinnatus 3(1858):530-556, especially 544.


CHAPTER 4

HOW THE COLLEGES OPERATED

In 1838, when the incoming president of the Granville Literary & Theological Institution announced that education was "naturally divided into three departments,--physical, intellectual, and moral," he placed himself in the mainstream of Old Northwest educational thought. Educators in the region provided physical, mental, and moral education because the implications of that curriculum best suited the regional conditions and the culture of the Old Northwest.¹

Parents of Old Northwest college students wanted their children to have sufficient exercise while at college. Collegiate educators, many of whom had the responsibility of building and maintaining the college grounds in a region in which labor costs were high, happily put students to work. Also, people founded numerous Old Northwest colleges during the same period, 1825-1840, when the manual labor system of education was most popular in the United States. Because Old Northwest residents called for healthy, productive, and
manly citizens in a society that would avoid class stratification, the manual labor school movement found its greatest support in the Old Northwest. Even though college educators discovered that manual labor was unprofitable and removed manual labor from the plan of their colleges after a few decades, the manual labor movement served the cause of founding colleges in the Old Northwest well, especially because the movement helped fledgling colleges gain public support.

Old Northwest educators viewed manual labor not only as a component of physical education, but also of moral education, which included discipline. Moral education played an important role in the Old Northwest college. Educators were almost uniformly Christians; most had ministerial training or experience. Through sermons, daily prayers with the student body, and private meetings with individual students about their spiritual lives, and through support of religious student societies, guest lecturers who discussed religious topics, and revivals at the college, these educators evidenced a strong commitment to a moral education for students.

The emphasis on physical and moral education helped to bring about changes in the mental education teachers offered at the college. In most parts of the United States, the Yale Report of 1828 squelched thoughts of deviating from a classical curriculum. In the Old Northwest, the colleges
offered a broad range of educational options, some classical, others scientific, agricultural, and vocational. This mix of educational styles reflected a heterogeneous region of people who united in support of practicality. A desire to lift the educational level of all citizens in the region, in a timely fashion, led Old Northwest college educators to deviate from the dominant classical system of education.

This chapter about how Old Northwest educators operated the collegiate institution shows how people took a newly built institution and shaped that institution in ways that reflected the variations of regional culture. The chapter charts how educators developed the institution of the college in ways that continued to reflect regional priorities and conditions, and how those educators wielded the institution in attempts to shape the lives of students. While preceding chapters have focused on the institution as a product of cultural forces, this chapter begins also to discuss how the college participated in the cultural development of the Old Northwest.

**Origins of Old Northwest College Professors**

The most recent historical scholarship demonstrates that many Old Northwest college educators were born or lived most of their adult lives within the region. For most of the twentieth century, the prevailing idea among historians
about education in the Old Northwest was that New Englanders brought educational institutions to the region. While New Englanders in the Old Northwest compromised, at times, with non-New Englanders who had different educational ideas, they kept the essential form of their educational institutions intact. In 1909, Lois Kimball Mathews provided the classic account in her influential work, *The Expansion of New England*. Other writers about education and about the Old Northwest followed suit.

In 1978, however, Timothy Smith established that people who built colleges in Indiana and Illinois came from a variety of places, that most founders and early leaders had spent at least most of their adult lives in the Old Northwest, and that the ongoing support for the Old Northwest colleges came primarily from residents living near the colleges. Smith argued that the Old Northwest colleges were indigenous institutions, and that the well-publicized efforts, for example, of the "Yale Band," a group of Yale students who left Connecticut after graduation and founded Illinois College, were not reflective of overall regional patterns. Even more recently, D. Randall Gabrielse conducted a simple quantitative study of antebellum church-associated colleges in Michigan and Ohio to discover where the faculty members of colleges in these states had been born and from which colleges they had graduated. Gabrielse found that faculty members of Ohio and Michigan colleges
were primarily graduates of Ohio and Pennsylvania colleges and were by no means overwhelmingly from New England.'

The findings of Smith and Gabrielse show that the Old Northwest faculty members generally shared the heterogeneous regional backgrounds of their neighbors; their conclusions point to one reason why faculty members at the Old Northwest colleges willingly deviated from existing educational norms, particularly in ways that reflected the priorities and cultural ways of the inhabitants of the region. In a region of residents who emphasized practicality, production, and innovation, the antebellum college leaders of the Old Northwest would distinguish their schools from those of other regions in significant ways.

Physical Education

Old Northwest educators emphasized a physical education. Parents and students alike often demanded that colleges furnish students with opportunities for physical exertion, and saw the Old Northwest colleges as the best places to receive this kind of education. In 1846 a farmer from Clark County, Ohio, wrote to Oberlin inquiring about admission for his nineteen-year-old son. "My own opinion," he confided, "is that the physical education ought to be attended to as well as the mental, and we have had some hints that this is a part of your plan." Beyond the interest in physical education, the farmer's remark
indicates that people discussed colleges and their programs, and weighed their options, which were numerous in a region with so many colleges.

Some parents specified the sort of physical exertion or labor their child should do, particularly when their child was not in the collegiate course of study, but the preparatory classes. In 1849, Sophia Noel of Fort Wayne, Indiana, inquired about her son, who had been at Hanover for two months. She wrote that her son had always been active, "and will need as all children do, outdoor exercise, that I presume he can have and does. chopping his wood, and doing other things." In 1854, Hoosier James Crawford, of Sullivan County, sent his son to Hanover with instructions to the faculty that "I should like him to board so far from the college that he would be compelled to take sufficient exercise and compelled to rise early."

This emphasis on exercise extended not only to boys, but also to girls enrolled at the female seminaries in the Old Northwest. Margaret Bunyon, who attended the Granville Female College in 1844, wrote to her brother that at the end of the schoolday at five o'clock she and the other students "with the teachers generally go out a walking. we some times go out before daylight and walk a mile or two." Other girls exercised even more vigorously than Bunyon. Eliza Crowe was fifteen years old in 1833, when she wrote to her father from the Steubenville Female Seminary in Ohio.
Crowe wrote that the students were "learning Callisthenics," which she found to be "very good exercise, for we have to throw and jerk our arms until they feel as if they were almost out of joint . . . . every body here practices teachers scholars and all so I suppose it must be important." The next month Eliza's sister Mary, attending the same school, wrote that "They are very particular here about the young ladies taking exercise, we practice callisthenics twice a week and take a walk every morning immediately after breakfast." Old Northwest educators viewed exercise as necessary for both male and female education.

The Physicality of Old Northwest Professors

The emphasis on physical education is not remarkable when one considers the lives of the Old Northwest educators, who often had to meet intense physical demands. These educators were not frail, worn-out men who could no longer stand the rigors of the circuit-rider or itinerant preacher. In fact, the existing evidence indicates that the Old Northwest college professors were hardy men, sometimes intensely physical.

Sarah King visited Kenyon College in the early 1830s. She wrote that Charles P. McIlvaine, the president of Kenyon and Bishop of Ohio, "armed with an axe, is vigorously cutting away at sundry old stumps." When John J. Shiphe...
founded Oberlin in the 1830s, he wrote in a letter that he was "chopping, loging, etc," and told his correspondent, "I have blistered my hands over & over, & the pain of them is sweet; for it relieves my scalded brain." Elijah Evan Edwards arrived at Indiana Asbury for the first time in 1846 and went to look for the president, Matthew Simpson, to give Simpson a letter of introduction. As Edwards wrote in his diary, he found Simpson at work: "He had a saw in his hands and was in his shirt sleeves and did not look at all like a College President. I did not believe he was, and so asked him if he could tell me where I would find President Simpson." In 1854, Edmund O. Hovey related an incident in which two Wabash College students would not come out of a room and had forcibly shut the door. When Professor Caleb Mills told the boys to open the door and the boys disobeyed, Mills broke down the door with an ax.'

The Old Northwest colleges required vigorous individuals to administer them, a situation one might expect in a region so full of people building things. The physical demands of erecting these colleges and running them were significant. Matthew Simpson, who, in his late twenties, began work as the first president of Indiana Asbury, quit his post after a decade and explained that he was entirely worn out. When Edmund O. Hovey wrote to Charles White, an Easterner, about coming to Wabash College to become the president, he admitted that not everyone believed that White
could do the job. "Rev. David Merrill of Urbanna . . . says you are doubtless well qualified for the 'inside work' of college; but has his doubts whether you will succeed as well outside. Thinks you have too much refinement for a western college." The demands of teaching and administering the Old Northwest college required great exertion.

The Manual Labor Movement

Between the late 1820s and early 1840s, the push for manual labor schools influenced American education greatly. Supporters of manual labor education argued that productive physical activity benefitted students and should play an important role in the educative process. In the United States, the manual labor school movement intersected with notions about masculinity, systems of labor, and the ideal of a classless society that offered social mobility. Leaders of Old Northwest colleges became influential in this movement, partly because so many Old Northwest colleges began operation during the peak years of the influence of manual labor school ideas.'

Although American educators implemented manual labor training as part of the educative process as early as 1785, the origins of the national manual labor school movement after 1825 came from European ideas of manual labor education, especially the ideas of educators Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and Emanuel von Fellenberg. Pestalozzi and
Fellenberg, however, used their manual labor educational methods to reinforce class structures and social hierarchies. American educators, more interested in the possibilities of manual labor to provide social mobility and benefit a republican society, only loosely based their schools upon these European models.¹⁰

Throughout the United States, beginning in 1825, educators began to implement manual labor systems into the educational process. Implementation, however, took place differently in the Eastern states than in the Western region. Numerous Eastern schools, such as Amherst, Dartmouth, and Williams, applied manual labor ideas to their existing institutions. At these schools, however, manual labor was not central to the educational process. When the manual labor system proved financially unjustifiable, educators at these schools shed the system with only minimal changes to their collegiate structure. By 1838, two young men applied to Oberlin College, an Ohio manual labor school, "for the reason that there is no Manual Labor College in New England." In Southern states, manual labor systems made their way into numerous schools, primarily academies, but educators always abandoned the manual labor system within a few years.¹¹

Manual Labor in the Old Northwest College

The manual labor systems would be much more central in
the Old Northwest college because the manual labor movement ideas had the greatest influence when people in the Old Northwest were founding colleges. Many founders of these Old Northwest colleges built colleges with manual labor as a crucial component of the educational plans. Founders even included "manual labor" in the name of the college in the cases of the Wabash Teacher's Seminary and Manual Labor College, the Indiana Manual Labor Institute (later Franklin College), and the Knox Manual Labor Institute. The situation seemed ideal. In a region of only moderate wealth, in which labor was valuable and inexpensive land was widely available, the manual labor college would take advantage of student labor on the land to enable students to attend college and bring about financial success for the college."

Old Northwest residents, however, did not support manual labor schools only because of the prospect of financial success; manual labor schools suited people in the Old Northwest for a variety of reasons. One reason was that manual labor, people believed, provided physical exercise conducive to good health. At this time, people thought of colleges and seminaries, especially those that trained ministers, as places of mental exertion but physical idleness, a combination that led to weak, effeminate, and sickly ministerial graduates unfit to lead churches with vigor. Educators would combat physical decay as students
labored for two to four hours daily--enough labor to make them strong, but not too much to interfere with their studies."*

Some students sought out these schools that would protect their health. In 1837, for example, Franklin Merrill wrote to the president of Oberlin about the possibility of coming to Oberlin. Merrill had been a college student in Middlebury, Vermont, and was dissatisfied. One of the reasons for his displeasure was "Want of proper exercise." Merrill explained that he had no opportunity for exercise beyond walking, and that many of his fellow students complained of "declining" health, "so that probably many after having completed their studies will not be fit for usefulness. This to me, appears to be a very important consideration. . . . The church and times demand a pious, holy, devoted, and active ministry." In 1846, Jared Baldwin inquired about admission to Oberlin. Baldwin explained that he had heard that Oberlin operated "on the laboring system which suits my situation, and Inclination, for I am of an active habit and require some active exercise each day in order that I may keep up a healthy action both mentally and physically." People recognized Oberlin College as one of the most notable examples of the manual labor system in the United States; students concerned about their health desired to attend.*

Manual labor schools were not only popular because of
the exercise one might receive there; manual labor appealed to people, especially those in the middle classes, because manual labor was a form of exercise that included production. Manual labor not only rendered one physically fit, the labor also produced something of worth. Manual labor exercise resulted in crops, barrels, brooms, and other useful items, in contrast to gymnastics, which was non-productive, and often associated with the upper class. In antebellum New England, students engaged in gymnastics at colleges such as Amherst, Dartmouth, Bowdoin, Williams, and, especially, Harvard. Old Northwest educators and students, however, rarely included gymnastic exercises in their colleges. In the Old Northwest, a cultural region dominated by middle class values, manual labor schools suited a regional predisposition toward production.

Manual labor also fit well within the cultural bounds of the Old Northwest because manual labor training prepared students for employment after college. Most college graduates did not enter manual labor occupations, but numerous parents who sent sons to college wanted to be sure that their boys learned trades that could turn a profit. In 1836, Micaiah Fairfield, a printer who lived in Troy, Ohio, sent his fifteen-year-old son, Edmund, to Granville with a letter for the president. "I expect him to work in the coopers-shop," wrote Micaiah, referring to Edmund. Beyond that assignment, though, "I have no choice in his employment
if he has good exercise & regular employment." Micaiah did, however, want to make sure that Edmund worked enough hours in the cooper's shop. "I insist on his laboring four hours a day that he may learn his trade & work to advantage afterwards." Fairfield wanted his sons to receive sufficient exercise and be trained in a trade that would bring gainful employment."

Within four years, Fairfield's priorities had shifted slightly. His sons were interested in transferring to Oberlin, and Fairfield wrote to Oberlin to inquire about the manual labor program there. "I have two sons who wish to get an education for the Ministry," Fairfield wrote. "I wish them to pay their board in their own labor if possible." Fairfield had heard that "you can all get work in the cooper's shop. . . . I would prefer coopering to anything else." Fairfield suggested a compromise, however, should work as a cooper be unavailable. He added that "Edmund is a pretty good printer. Perhaps he might work in your printing office. That I deem less healthy employment than coopering, but usually commands higher wages. I think they will both come if they can get employment in a coopers shop." No longer did Fairfield desire to train his sons for a manual labor occupation. Fairfield now believed that his sons would be ministers. Manual labor, though, remained important for two reasons. First, the sons could use their manual labor skills to defray educational costs. Still, the
The second reason was the more important of the two. Fairfield was not interested in maximizing his sons' earning potential; the father wanted his son Edmund to work at the less lucrative but healthier job of coopering, if possible. The importance of manual labor as a means of maintaining vigorous health was more important to Fairfield than the remunerative possibilities of that labor.

Manual labor remained important in the Old Northwest because the system was tied to ideas about masculinity. When Charles B. Storrs became the president of the Western Reserve College in 1831, he told the audience assembled to hear his inaugural address that an important question for the school was *whether mere diversion and gymnastic exercise ought not, in academic discipline, to give place to systematic manual labor.* Storrs stood on the side of manual labor. "A system of manual labor, well arranged," he argued, "is not only better adapted to preserve and confirm the health . . . . It will contribute to give the character a manliness, a consistency, an enterprising turn." Years later, in 1853, Old Northwest educator Jonathan B. Turner denounced University of Michigan president Henry Tappan for introducing Prussian educational ideas. Rather, Turner exclaimed, "true manhood" was the goal of the educator, which meant offering students the opportunity to learn a trade. In April of 1834, Charles Larrabee sent his son to the Granville Literary Institute in Granville, Ohio, and
wrote to President John Pratt, "I am anxious you should make a man of him from this time out. . . . Should you be able to learn him some mechanical trade, I should be much pleased."

By January of 1835, Larrabee had grown more direct about his philosophy of education. "You informed me when last here that Charles was learning the coopers trade. I wish it distinctly understood that he was sent to & he remains, with you," Larrabee emphasized,

under the surety of being learned some manual labour trade. I conceive it as great a wrong as can be done to children, to bring them up without learning them the use the Creator made their hands for, and that it is a gross imposition upon the mind, faculties & abilities of men to be brought up without any knowledge or experience of actual labor. No man ought to be considered but half taught, but half a man, however great his acquirements from books, who knows nothing of manual labor by experience, & none should be considered capable or worthy of public confidence or trust, short of this experience."

Larrabee, in both letters, assigned John Pratt, the president of Granville, with the responsibility for making Larrabee's son into a man. And "half" of being a man, for Larrabee, meant knowing "manual labor by experience."

Historian Laura Graham has argued that the manual labor school movement was tied to ideas about masculinity, and that one goal of the manual labor proponents was to bridge the gap between those who worked with their minds and those who worked with their hands. Larrabee's ideas are consistent with Graham's argument. Larrabee thought that manual labor was important even for citizens who would not labor manually all of their lives. The "public" should not
accept men as leaders who had not performed manual labor.

Larrabee's glorification of labor, and the laborer, was a fundamental tenet of a Northern free-labor society dedicated to the idea that no man should consider himself too important or greater than physical work and the manual laborer. Some men could emerge as leaders in areas that did not inherently require physical labor, such as politics or the ministry. Members of the public would accept such men so long as those men could demonstrate that they had not lost touch with the man who worked with his hands for a living. The willingness of leaders to roll up their shirt sleeves and join in physical exertion, at least occasionally, was a prime requisite of public confidence in this society that believed both in social mobility and in a classless social order."

In this anti-aristocratic society, the manual labor movement in the colleges satisfied the public's desire both for education and for public leaders who seemed not so different from their followers. Moreover, the manual labor movement not only answered the regional commitment to a classless society, but also met the requirements of a populace that feared that education could have deleterious effects on one's health, and that college leaders should make certain that students took care of their physical health while at college. Old Northwest educators furnished a collegiate education that all Americans would recognize,
yet one that showed clear signs of regional particularities.

Manual Labor at Oberlin College

Oberlin College provides a good example of how the manual labor system functioned in an Old Northwest college. Oberlin was an early manual labor college in the region, was recognized widely as a manual labor school, and had strong connections to the Oneida school in New York, the best known of the American manual labor schools.

John J. Shipherd and Philo Stewart, the founders, intended Oberlin to be a manual labor school. This plan was abundantly clear from the opening advertisement that appeared in prominent newspapers of 1833. "The Manual Labor Department will receive unusual attention," the notice read, "being not (as is too common), regarded as an unimportant appendage to the literary department; but systematized and incorporated with it." Shipherd and Stewart criticized other, less complete, manual labor programs, while they touted their own system. At Oberlin all students would work, normally four hours each day."

In the early years of these Western colleges, students never lacked opportunities for work. Forested areas needed to be cleared, stumps grubbed out of the ground. Students erected college buildings and built roads that would connect the college to the wider world. Delazon Smith went to Oberlin during its first years and graduated in 1837, only
to publish a bitter indictment of the college, entitled *A History of Oberlin, or New Lights of the West*, but more popularly known as *Oberlin Unmasked*. As for manual labor, Smith wrote that "Nearly all the labor since this Institution was first established, has been chopping, logging and burning brush; and this too, a great portion of the year, ankle deep in mud and water." Smith portrayed Oberlin in the worst light possible, but his characterization of manual labor at Oberlin during the first years sounds plausible. The work was hardly glamorous, and not particularly well suited for teaching students a trade; but the students defrayed their educational costs by working, and they built the very college they attended."

At Oberlin, the definition of manual labor expanded as the college developed. Sundry chores and tasks had to be completed to keep the college functioning. By no means was this an egalitarian system. As Micaiah Fairfield indicated in his letter, some jobs paid better than others. Also, Oberlin was a co-educational school, and while both females and males worked, the jobs of women and men rarely overlapped. As in most household economies of the time, Oberlin females washed, ironed, sewed, mended, cooked, cleaned, and scrubbed while the males normally worked at outside jobs, particularly on the college farm."

The five-hundred acre farm at Oberlin provided a large portion of the sustenance of both educators and students.
Livestock included horses, oxen, cows, bulls, sheep, and hogs. The primary crop was wheat, which students planted on 45 acres in 1838. Some land, of course, was pasture, while the Oberlinites used other acreage to grow "oats, potatoes, peas, beans, buckwheat, rye and corn," as well as apple and peach trees. The Oberlin students performed all of the myriad of tasks that farms require; they plowed and harvested, they milked the cows and built fences to keep the livestock handy. In short, the Oberlin farm was a sizeable and working farm that provided food for the college and employment for students."

The only thing the farm was not, was profitable. In fact, in financial terms, the entire manual labor experiment at Oberlin failed to make money. In this respect, the Oberlin experience was consistent with manual labor programs throughout the country--manual labor programs lost money. Eastern schools were the quickest to drop manual labor, while in the Western schools manual labor lasted longer, but eventually went by the wayside.

At Oberlin, manual labor went through a long and gradual decline. As late as 1845, the college officials still insisted that manual labor was fundamental to the college. But by the middle 1830s the administrators were unable to furnish every student with labor; in the late 1830s the daily work requirement dropped from four hours to two; and during the 1840s the leaders of Oberlin discarded
and reconfigured the manual labor system in a number of different ways. Administrators gave each student a plot of land, later rented the land to farmers who agreed to hire Oberlin students as laborers, and, finally, leased the land perpetually, as the land could not be sold under the original agreement of the Oberlin colony."

The End and Legacy of Old Northwest Manual Labor

Administrators of the Old Northwest colleges were loathe to abandon the manual labor system. "Although there are some pecuniary disadvantages," wrote one Oberlin official, "these can never counter-balance the moral, intellectual, and physical advantages . . . [of] manual labor." In the late 1850s, Horace Mann, of Antioch College, in Yellow Springs, Ohio, admonished that "We must pay far more attention to the health of the students. . . . Hence the faculty of Antioch College require exercise of its students every day." The faculty believed in manual labor, and besides exercise, the professors "encourage manual labor in every practicable way; and if a liberal public, or a liberal individual, would give us land for agricultural, or even for horticultural purposes," Mann hinted, "we promise them that the old injunction, to till the ground and dress it, shall not be forgotten." Other college leaders expressed comparable thoughts, but financial realities eventually won out. Wabash ended manual labor by 1839;
Hanover, another school founded on the manual labor system, followed in the 1840s."

For students, the decline of the manual labor system was gradual; and as employment on the campus lessened, students increasingly looked for employment beyond the college. For girls, housework was one possibility, and at Oberlin, at least, some students supported themselves in this fashion. More commonly, however, both male and female students took jobs as teachers. The implications of this development is explored below.

While the manual labor component of higher education failed to withstand persistent financial challenges, the fact remains that manual labor not only reflected the cultural values of the region, but also served well the institution of the college. The physical effects of manual labor are of little relevance. Of greater import, overall, the manual labor system encouraged people to found schools in the Old Northwest. Because people in this region agreed with the ideological underpinnings of manual labor, these colleges won public support, support that residents might not have offered had they viewed the colleges as cultural intrusions. Even after the manual labor systems declined, Old Northwest college leaders still talked about manual labor in idealistic terms--they knew that the system was popular. People viewed the college as something accessible for themselves or for their children because it offered
people with little money the opportunity to work their way through school. Despite financial failure, the manual labor system contributed to the legitimacy and, consequently, the growth of the institution of the college in the Old Northwest.

Moral Education

Educators believed that manual labor not only benefitted students in their physical education, but also in their moral education. Moral education, at the Old Northwest colleges, drew equal billing with physical and mental education. Manual labor could help to teach students discipline and to keep them occupied and out of trouble, educators said. But manual labor was only one component of the moral education faculty members imparted.

While the colleges in the Old Northwest were not highly sectarian during the antebellum period, religion and morality were forever present in the institutional environment. The president of a college, as in all parts of the country, was normally a religious figure, who sometimes served as a minister to a local church in addition to his duties as president. Philander Chase, the Episcopal Bishop of Ohio and Illinois during his tenure as the head of Kenyon and Jubilee colleges, is only one of many examples. Likewise, professors usually possessed theological training and delivered sermons during all parts of the week, both on
and off the college campus. In 1847, when Horace Wellington, Professor of Languages at Michigan Central College, wrote that he and the president of the college "preach regularly in the Institution," Wellington was not describing an unusual situation, but simply relating one of the basic functions of his position."

Students easily recognized the moral component of their education. "Religion and the fear of God is mingled with all our exercises," wrote one Oberlin student. "The grand object is to develop the moral powers in the same proportion as the mental." A Wabash College student found that "the President and four professors . . . appear to manifest the deepest interest in the welfare of their students, both as to moral & religious character, as well as to their intellectual development." For students throughout the region, each morning included prayer at the college chapel. In addition to literary societies, many colleges also had a Society of Inquiry, in which pious students could read religious periodicals and discuss matters of religion. College rules generally required students to attend one religious service on Sunday; most students could easily attend three, two during the day and another in the evening."

Regular religious revivals punctuated this continuous exposure to religion. The president of Ohio Wesleyan University wrote in 1850 that the college, founded in the
early 1840s, had "enjoyed a revival every year." College leaders considered revivals a part of the institutional mission and the educational experience. A father of an Ohio Wesleyan student wrote to his friend in February, 1847, that a revival had been ongoing in Delaware, Ohio, for two weeks, that many students had "been converted," and that "the religious feeling at the University is so great & so general, that the college studies had to be suspended, sometimes." Educators often halted the usual coursework for days or even weeks to allow the revival full sway over students’ lives, even at schools not known for revivalistic zeal.

Students pleased with their education thanked former professors for attention to their spiritual well-being. Benjamin Harrison, later President of the United States, attended Farmers' College in Ohio before he transferred to Miami University. After the transfer, Harrison extended to Robert Hamilton Bishop, a Farmers' professor, "my warmest thanks for the lively interest you have ever manifested in my welfare and advancement in religious as well as scientific Knowledge." A few years later, in another letter to Bishop, Harrison "gratefully remembered" the "kind interviews which you repeatedly gave me on the subject of my soul's future interests." Professors not only worked with students in the classroom, helping them to learn their academic studies; professors also took responsibility for
Students sometimes came to Old Northwest colleges because of this emphasis on moral education. A University of Vermont sophomore who desired to transfer to Oberlin explained in 1836 that he was leaving the University of Vermont because "while the officers of the University are diligent and unsparing in their efforts to thoroughly discipline the intellectual powers, they woefully neglect the moral training of their students." The University of Vermont was a non-denominational and a non-evangelical school. Perhaps this student sought a denominational, evangelical college. Still, a Middlebury College student who desired to transfer to Oberlin in 1837 expressed similar sentiments when he justified the move because the "subject of religion is greatly neglected here. The cultivation of piety and holiness," he had found, was "the last thing thought of." Tutors, professors, and students of Middlebury all concurred "that as a general thing, students come out of college with less religion or piety than they had when they went in." This student thought that the situation would differ at Oberlin. Reverend J. Mills of Washington, Pennsylvania, wrote to the Matthew Simpson, president of Indiana Asbury, in 1841. Mills reported that he was dissatisfied with the collegiate education his son was receiving in Washington, Pennsylvania, because of the "unwarrantable laxity in reference to the students . . . &
such a thing as the conversion of one to God, is unheard of at any time." Mills considered sending his son to study under Simpson "or some other person similarly situated, who will feel some concern, not only for his literary, but his moral & Religious training."

Old Northwest students never complained similarly. If anything, they protested that the moral and religious influences of the college were too strong. Rutherford B. Hayes, another future president, was among only ten students not "changed" when a revival swept through Kenyon College in 1839. Hayes pointed to the divide between students influenced and not influenced by the revival when he bemoaned the fact that because of the revival, "Every single one of my best friends are 'gone,' as it is called." Other students greeted revivals with cynicism. A. B. Morse studied at Agricultural College in Lansing, Michigan, where he received a letter from a former student, Caleb Manchester. Manchester asked Morse, "Did they get up a general revival . . . and try to convert all of the so called sinners to come and kneel at the throne of grace and make long prayers? How sick I did get at all of this professional religion when I was there." Far from bewailing the lack of religion at Old Northwest colleges, some students expressed dissatisfaction because the colleges had too much rather than too little moral education.

The emphasis on moral education underscored the
explicitly Christian character of these colleges, from their ties to Christian denominations, to the ministerial origins of their faculty members, to the experiences of the students. Further, the emphasis on both moral and physical education in the Old Northwest colleges helped to bring about curricular changes that made mental education in the colleges of the region distinct from other areas.

Mental Education and the Yale Report

The Yale Report of 1828 best embodied the orthodoxy concerning collegiate curriculum in antebellum America. Beginning in the late 1700s, particularly following American independence from British colonial rule, Americans began to discuss changes to the classical curriculum that was the standard in all American colleges. The two most significant deviations from the classical curriculum came in the 1820s from the University of Virginia, where students could choose from eight different courses of study, and from Harvard, where students could partially replace study of a classical language, Greek or Latin, with a modern language. In response to the call for a more practical and American system of education, and to actual curricular changes at the University of Virginia and Harvard, the faculty of Yale College defended a classical education in the Yale Report of 1828."

The Yale Report was by no means a reactionary document.
The authors agreed that "our present plan of education admits of improvement. We are aware that the system is imperfect." The real question for the Yale faculty was whether the situation called for modest reforms or wholesale changes. In part, the faculty argued, the answer depended on what a collegiate education was supposed to provide.

"The two great points to be gained in intellectual culture," they stated, "are the discipline and the furniture of the mind." For the Yale faculty, the college years were a time for "the training of the powers of the mind." At college one learned mental skills, including "demonstrative reasoning," "induction," "taste" in literature, and the arts of thinking, speaking, and writing. Students could apply these mental skills to anything they might choose, such as politics, or business, or a manual labor vocation. But one applied these skills only after passage through a collegiate course of study. The Yale faculty focused on mental education to the exclusion of physical and moral education."

The Yale faculty understood that many Americans could not afford the sort of education the Yale Report recommended. "Many, for want of time and pecuniary resources, must be content with a partial course." The Yale faculty were not against such an education. "A defective education is better than none." But all should recognize that an education other than a classical education "is an
imperfection, arising from the necessity of the case. A partial course of study, must inevitably give a partial education." For the Yale faculty, a classical education provided the standard which no other educational system could meet."

For the rest of the antebellum period, most New England and Middle Atlantic colleges adhered to the Yale directive and retained a classical curriculum. Most Southern colleges did, as well, including denominational colleges, particularly because many Southerners who supported slavery drew connections between the American South and ancient Greece and wanted Greek in the curriculum. Southern denominational college leaders also defended a classical education as a requisite characteristic of being a gentleman."

Mental Education in the Old Northwest

The Yale Report commanded attention, even adherence, from Old Northwest educators inclined to provide a classical education. The decentralized structure of Old Northwest colleges, however, in combination with other forces that propelled educators in new directions, led to an eclectic mix of curriculums in this heterogeneous region. Freeman Cary of Farmers' College, for example, de-emphasized classical education and gave students course options. This measure was uncommon and surprised at least one parent. "I
hardly know what to say," wrote J. Scott Harrison in 1849 to his sons, about what courses they should take. "In all colleges that I have ever been acquainted with before the Farmers College the *faculty* regulated the exercises of the classes." The choice of curriculums gave students a new responsibility for determining the nature of their collegiate education.

In a diary entry in June, 1855, Thomas Clark King, an Illinois College student, wrestled with his course options. King had entered Illinois College the previous fall "as a Freshman in the Scientific department, expecting to obtain but a good English education." Since that time, however, King had increasingly considered becoming a missionary. "To go through the regular college course requires five years and five years hence, if I live I will be 26 years old." King wrestled with graduating in two versus five years. If he graduated in two years with the scientific course of study, he would "be fitted for a Merchant, Clerk, Recorder, Schoolmaster, a lawyer or preacher." King, though, wanted to be a missionary, which required classical language study. "Now the question is, can I be more *useful*, in the broadest sense of that term, by studying five years . . . to master Greek and Latin . . . than I can by pursuing my scientific studies, graduate in two years, and be qualified thus & so?"

All things being equal, King valued a classical education more highly than a scientific. "But which will be the best
for me?" he wondered. For some reason, King worried that his life might end soon. In addition, his father had little money. "My brother John has volunteered to 'foot' my college bill, but then the expense of the 5 years course would be too much to take from him." Even if he could afford the expenses, wrote King, there was still "the time!"

King's dilemma helps to illustrate what people in the Old Northwest thought about when they chose a collegiate education. For King, a classical education was desirable, not because the possession of classical education would make King a gentleman, but because he would then be prepared for missionary work. Financial concerns pressed heavily upon King, who had to rely on the generosity of family members for his education. Also, King feared that he might die soon, and he did not want to spend the better part of his remaining time in college. King was concerned because he was at only the end of his first year and was already twenty-one years old.

King's age indicated a regional tendency. One reason for a heightened awareness of how long one might spend in college was that the antebellum college students in the Old Northwest sported the highest average ages of all college students in the nation. Another Illinois College student, Augustus K. Riggin, indicated this trend in 1845 when he told his father, "You may think I am quite old enough to
quit going to school." Riggin, though, who had one year left, defended himself by explaining that "I have plenty of company in this respect. There are many students as old & some older who think of remaining here three or four years yet. I know of one case," added Riggin, "where the fellow is now 26, & he will not get through till he is 30 years old." Many older students left the farm or the shop behind and delayed marriage in order to acquire the skills they desired. These students respected a classical education, but most were at college first and foremost for a vocational education. They did not have time or money for the polish that a classical education would confer upon them."

When Old Northwest college leaders began to distance themselves from classical education in favor of scientific, or even vocational education, this change went hand in hand with the manual labor system and its emphasis on learning a trade and producing. The shift also was consonant with a desire to offer education to all in society, and with a regional emphasis on the practical implications of education. The concern with practicality was always pronounced in the Old Northwest. In 1837, Cincinnati educator and Woodward College president Benjamin P. Aydelott told his students, in an address entitled "American Education, or the Education We Need," that education "ought to be eminently practical. . . . we do not mean that it should be the less scientific, or less classical, or less
philosophical; but" educators should always impart
"knowledge which will fit the learner for his part in the
intercourse and pursuits of ordinary life." Secondly,
Aydelott instructed, education should be "best calculated to
develop the resources of our country." To help "stir up the
spirit of enterprise, and nerve the arm of industry,"
Aydelott recommended "Chemistry, Mathematics, and Mechanical
Philosophy, Botany, Mineralogy, and the other branches of
the Natural Sciences." Finally, Aydelott called for "that
education that will best prepare us for our peculiar duties
as citizens of a free country. American education must, in
some respects, be peculiar, because our civil institutions
are peculiar." For Aydelott, education should be practical,
resourceful, and civic."

In 1854 Horace Mann, the president of Antioch College,
delivered an address in Cincinnati. Mann stated that the
college "should not be an Egyptian pyramid, for the
preservation of old mummies, literary or psychological."
The demands of a new age, announced Mann, required that
college educators provide "solidity and breadth" in
education, "not only for the professions, but for all the
business vocations of after-life."" Mann called for an
education that would meet the vocational needs of students
and not be tied uselessly to past ways that no longer
sufficed.

Some New Englanders articulated their unhappiness with
Old Northwest educators who departed from the curricular norms of the period. The most pronounced incident in relation to this conflict occurred between Oberlin College and the American Education Society. New Englanders founded the American Education Society in 1815 to fund the collegiate educations of young men preparing to enter the ministry. Oberlin and the American Education Society had always had a rocky relationship because the founders of Oberlin initially did not want their students to accept aid from the American Education Society, lest the practice make students less likely to work at manual labor. Over the next few years, however, as manual labor did not produce the financial benefits the founders had hoped for, they applied to the American Education Society for aid. In December of 1838, the governing board of the American Education Society rejected the Oberlin request for aid, citing "deficiencies in the classical and theological training of students at the Oberlin Institute." In the eyes of the Society, Oberlin failed to offer enough Latin and Greek."

Other colleges, frightened by the prospect of losing or being refused aid, downplayed their curricular differences. For example, when Knox College leaders applied for aid in 1844 from the Society for Collegiate and Theological Education at the West, they described Knox College as a school with a thorough classical education and included no mention that the founders organized the school on a manual
labor basis. But overall, the Old Northwest colleges continued to offer agricultural and vocational education and a commitment to education for those who would continue in the laboring professions following their education. Timothy Smith, in his study of the Christian colleges in Indiana and Illinois, concluded that the educators in those colleges were convinced that all classes of society deserved access to a collegiate education, and preparation for a vocation was the principal goal at the Christian colleges."

Conclusion

The antebellum Old Northwest colleges operated in ways that accorded with the values of the inhabitants of the region. That the colleges worked in this fashion is not surprising, given that many of the professors in these colleges had been born and reared within the region, and other professors often had lived many years in the Old Northwest. These collegiate educators understood the best ways of obtaining public support for their educational efforts, and they knew what attributes the public expected from leaders.

As a result, educators emphasized the physical component of a complete education. In part, this form of education came naturally in a region that still made physical demands upon those who lived there. The professors often built the physical structures of the college and
traveled thousands of miles each year, preaching and raising funds for the college in a region still developing an efficient system of transportation. The manual labor movement fit this regional emphasis on physical education.

Although many educators throughout the United States began manual labor programs in their colleges, manual labor received the most emphasis in the Old Northwest because the manual labor system met many regional expectations. Residents of the Old Northwest wanted their colleges to be accessible to young people regardless of wealth; the manual labor program gave students the opportunity to pay for college as they attended. People in the Old Northwest were concerned that college students might lose their health while studying; manual labor would ensure students' health through vigorous exercise. Parents wanted their children to be useful and productive citizens; the manual labor program taught useful and productive skills that students could transfer into gainful employment. The inhabitants of the Old Northwest who performed manual labor for a living wanted their public leaders to experience manual labor and identify with those who earned a living with their hands; the manual labor system satisfied this yearning for a classless and anti-aristocratic society. Even though the manual labor system did not bring revenue to the colleges, the system aided impecunious students greatly and helped to generate regional approval of the colleges.
The manual labor system also comprised one portion of the emphasis on a moral education for students. In the Old Northwest colleges, students faced a battery of initiatives, from daily prayers and weekly church services to revivals that erupted at least annually, that educators intended to help foster moral development of students. By no means did Old Northwest educators consider their job strictly to provide a mental education. The mental, the moral, and the physical combined into a pedagogy that sought to educate "the whole man." The Yale Report of 1828 kept most colleges in the nation from leaving the standard classical curriculum, but numerous Old Northwest educators, influenced by the advanced ages and lack of wealth among their students, experimented with a variety of other curriculum ideas, and produced a diverse mixture of educational patterns within the region.
1. Typescript of Jonathan Going, "The Inaugural Address at the Anniversary of the Granville Literary & Theological Institution, August 8, 1838," Archives, Denison University, Granville, Ohio. Sometimes educators mentioned a fourth category, manners, or the polite, usually in reference to the education of children or females. For another example of the emphasis on the mental, moral, and physical, see "[Ohio] State Commissioner's Report of Common Schools," Cincinnatus 3(1858):175.


3. Timothy L. Smith, Uncommon Schools: Christian Colleges and Social Idealism in Midwestern America, 1820-1950 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1978), especially 3-40; D. Randall Gabrielse, "Diversity in Church-Associated Colleges in Michigan and Ohio, 1825-1867 (M.A. thesis, Michigan State University, 1993). 33 of 90 professors Gabrielse studied were natives of New England. 51 of 156 professors had graduated from New England colleges. Gabrielse's study is quite helpful, despite a lack of thoroughness, as the study did not include many of the lesser-known colleges in these states, nor some of the well-known colleges, such as Kenyon and Antioch.

Despite studies such as these, the myth of New England dominance over the Old Northwest college continues. In 1991, Arlan K. Gilbert, the author of a recent history of Michigan Central College (later Hillsdale), began the book by tying Hillsdale college to New England. Most of the founders, he wrote, "were part of the New England--New York--Michigan nexus. The earliest presidents of the college . . . arrived
directly from New England." In fact, the two men who served as president for twenty-eight of the first thirty years of the college, from 1844 until 1874, were both graduates of Oberlin College. Daniel Graham, of Gilead, Branch County, Michigan, graduated from Oberlin in 1844 and became the president and sole faculty member of Michigan Central College that same year. The next president, who replaced Graham in 1848, was Edmund Burke Fairfield. Fairfield was born in Virginia, reared in Ohio, graduated from Oberlin in 1842, and remained an extra three years as a tutor. He then served New England churches for a few years before accepting the presidency of Michigan Central. "Edmund Burke Fairfield," The Oberlin News (Oberlin, Ohio), November 25, 1904. Gilbert's de-emphasis of the crucial importance of Oberlin to the early history of Michigan Central and Hillsdale colleges is especially curious given how well known the connections are between those schools. See William C. Ringenberg, "The Oberlin College Influence in Early Michigan," The Old Northwest 3(1977):111, 117-118. Gilbert's attempt to emphasize tenuous New England connections to Hillsdale College, and to de-emphasize the numerous connections between Hillsdale and Oberlin College, and the Old Northwest generally, is indicative of a long-standing triumph of myth over historical evidence regarding the origins of the Old Northwest colleges.


5. Sophia C. Noel to J. F. Crowe, December 5, 1849, Box 11, John Finley Crowe Papers, Archives, Hanover College; James Crawford to J. F. Crowe, August 27, 1854, Box 11, John Finley Crowe Papers, Archives, Hanover College.

6. Margaret Bunyon to William Bunyon, December 6, 1844, Archives, Denison University; Eliza Crowe to J. F. and Esther Crowe, November 24, 1833, Box 25, John Finley Crowe Papers, Archives, Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana; Mary A. Crowe to Esther Crowe, December 16, 1833, Box 25, John Finley Crowe Papers, Archives, Hanover College.


13. Jonathan A. Glickstein, *Concepts of Free Labor in Antebellum America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 78-80; Knight, "Manual Labor Schools in the South," 213-215; Graham, "From Patriarchy to Paternalism," 92-114. Graham argued that the manual labor school movement was so powerful because manual labor appealed greatly to the newly disestablished clergy in the United States who believed that they needed to reshape their image in the public mind from that of the unproductive, increasingly effeminate, tax-supported minister to the productive and manly minister who was connected to the laboring classes and worthy of voluntary support.

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14. Franklin Merrill to Asa Mahan, June 17, 1837, Roll 4, Frames 294-295, "Letters Received by Oberlin College, 1822-1866," Archives, Oberlin College (emphasis original); Jared Baldwin to The Principal of Oberlin College, February 21, 1846, Roll 10, Frames 379-380, "Letters Received by Oberlin College, 1822-1866," Archives, Oberlin College.


16. M. Fairfield to John Pratt, September 19, 1836, 3D1, "Office Files," Denison University Archives, Granville, Ohio. Fairfield's 1836 letter does not indicate M.'s full first name, nor the age of Edmund. For this information, see "Lives of the Founders and Builders of Hillsdale College," The Advance (Hillsdale, MI), June 9, 1886, and the obituary of Edmund Fairfield in The Oberlin News, November 25, 1904.


18. Charles B. Storrs, "An Address, Delivered at the Western Reserve College, Hudson, Ohio, February 9, 1831," (Boston: Peirce and Parker, 1831), 12-13 (emphasis original); Turner quoted in Smith, Uncommon Schools, 34-35; Charles Larrabee to John Pratt, April 10, 1834, Folder 2, Container 2, John Stevens Papers, MSS 1455, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio; Charles Larrabee to John Pratt, January 5, 1835, Folder 3, Container 2, John Stevens Papers, MSS 1455, Western Reserve Historical Society.

19. Abraham Lincoln, of course, provides a readily recognizable example of a politician who cultivated the "rail-splitting" image of himself in order to advance his career.


Fletcher noted, "One of the major reasons why joint education was supported in Oberlin was that this mutual economic dependence of the sexes made it possible to cheapen the cost for both (640)." These two features of the Old Northwest colleges, a preponderance of both the co-educational and manual labor colleges, were inter-related. A further inter-relation was the age of the students. The Southern college students were the youngest, on average, in the nation. The New England students were also younger, on average, than the Old Northwest students, and they were often elite boys in an urban environment. In the Old Northwest, agricultural and manual-labor-based education required, as most households did in that society, both men and women. These older people, then, were able to accept the responsibility to raise their own food, make decisions about the farm, work without supervision, and work together as mature women and men.


24. Fletcher, History of Oberlin College, 647-663.

25. Fletcher, A History of Oberlin College, 660-661; Horace Mann, "Demands of the Age on Colleges: Speech Delivered by the Hon. Horace Mann, President of Antioch College, Before the Christian Convention, at its Quadrennial Session, Held at Cincinnati, Ohio, October 5, 1854," (New York: Fowler & Wells, 1857), 22-23 (emphasis original); Laura M. Bachelder, Indiana Alma Mater: Student Life at Indiana Colleges, 1820-1860 (Conner Prairie: Center for the Study of Indiana Life, 1995), 7, 10.


27. H. N. Thissell to Josiah Foster, July 4, 1842, Folder "Correspondence--Misc., Pre-1865," Box 3, Series 2, Robert Samuel Fletcher Papers, Archives, Oberlin College; Edwin I. Farwell to Timothy H. Ball, December 24, [1847?], M-309, Timothy Horton Ball Papers, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

28. E. Thomson to Thomas A. Morris, March 3, 1850, Box 1, Morris Papers, Archives, Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio; Samuel Williams to Stephen [Widney?], February 9, 1847, copied into "memoirs of Samuel Williams," 5:869, Box 2, Samuel Williams and Samuel Wesley Williams Papers, MSS 148, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio. On the subject of revivalism in the colleges, see Norman Rovick, "The Impact of Religious Revivalism Upon Five Selected Ohio Colleges of the
Mid-Nineteenth Century," (M.A. thesis, Ohio State University, 1965). Rovick examined Western Reserve, Marietta, Oberlin, Granville, and Ohio Wesleyan colleges. Western Reserve was a staid and conservative college, but revivals did occur there.

29. Benjamin Harrison to R. H. Bishop, August 28, 1850, Roll 1, Series 1, Benjamin Harrison Papers, Library of Congress (microfilm edition); Benjamin Harrison to R. H. Bishop, March 11, 1855, Roll 1, Series 1, Benjamin Harrison Papers, Library of Congress (microfilm edition).

30. Elam J. Comings to Asa Mahan, January 26, 1836, Roll 2: September, 1834-February, 1836, "Letters Received by Oberlin College, 1822-1866," Archives, Oberlin College (emphasis original); Franklin Merrill to Asa Mahan, June 17, 1837, Roll 4, Frames 294-295, "Letters Received by Oberlin College, 1822-1866," Archives, Oberlin College (emphasis original); Rev. J. Mills to Matthew Simpson, October 18, 1841, Box 4, Bishop Matthew Simpson Papers, Library of Congress (emphasis original).

31. Charles Richard Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Rutherford Birchard Hayes: Nineteenth President of the United States (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1922), 1:36-37; Caleb Manchester to A. B. Morse, February 27, 1859, Box 1, Marion Morse Davis Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.


40. Mann, "Demands of the Age on Colleges," 9, 14.


CHAPTER 5

STUDENTS

Just as founders and faculty members influenced how the college appeared and operated, students also played a significant role, one that historians have frequently overlooked or misunderstood. Typically, historians have focused on the propensity of antebellum college students to riot against college authorities. Scholars agree that the period between the American Revolution and the Civil War was marked by riots and strikes among students. In 1976, John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy described the antebellum years as "a period when constant warfare raged between faculty and students . . . . It was pre-eminently a period of rowdies, riots, and rebellions." In 1987, Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz characterized these years as a time when "All over the new nation colleges experienced a wave of collective student uprisings." These scholars are correct when they write that numerous noteworthy violent incidents occurred. In 1840, for example, difficulties at the University of North
Carolina between faculty and students led to a spree of violence in which drunken students tore down the professors' stables and rode the professors' horses through town, broke the windows of tutors' rooms, and stoned members of the faculty. The same year, University of Virginia students shot and killed Professor John A. G. Davis as he attempted to stop a group of rioting students. Other student disturbances took place at, among other schools, the University of Georgia, Geneva (later Hobart) in New York, Davidson of North Carolina, Randolph-Macon College, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. During these riots students discharged firearms, stoned professors and tutors, and generally damaged property, especially college classrooms and buildings.¹

A few scholars carefully point out that violent student disturbances occurred at some schools more than in others. State university students in the South were more violent than their evangelical college counterparts. Students in non-eastern and non-urban colleges were least likely to riot. No scholar, however, has ever noticed that while riots took place at colleges in New England, the Mid-Atlantic, the South, and the Southwest, none took place in the Old Northwest. Unhappy Old Northwest students displayed a unique regional trait when they resolved their dissatisfaction with college leaders in other ways. These students negotiated collectively with college leaders and
rejected violence in favor of other means, including strikes and even mass withdrawal, as ways of resolving difficulties.

These college students rejected mob violence partly because they were, on average, older than their counterparts in other regions. Also, the students generally came from non-elite and religious backgrounds that emphasized usefulness and piety. Partially, the students embraced non-violence because the student literary societies of each college reinforced the idea that students were training for future roles as public figures, and that riots and violence were unacceptable means of pursuing their objectives. In this way, the institutional environment of the Old Northwest colleges fostered respect for opposing ideas and a civil approach to disagreements that focused on negotiation and persuasion.

Hillsdale College

J. J. Hopkins, a Hillsdale College graduate who reminisced about his antebellum college years, remembered that on one occasion the president of the college found students decorating the chapel for commencement and sent the students to their rooms because they did not have permission. "Then was there a rebellion indeed!" The students abandoned their recitations and held mass meetings instead. They formed committees and petitioned "for a
redress of grievances." The students met with faculty members and made "inflammatory speeches and threats . . . that the college would be abandoned unless the decree was recalled." In the end, though, Hopkins concluded, "everything went on as before." The matter blew over.

Hopkins' tale is intriguing not only because the students failed to resort to violence, but also because of what their response did include: abandonment of classes, meetings among the students, committees to meet with the college leaders, petitions, speeches, and threats that the students might withdraw from the college if they did not get their way. In comparison with conflicts between students and college leaders at other Old Northwest colleges, the Hillsdale incident shared a great deal in method. Old Northwest students negotiated, particularly relying on their ability to withdraw from the college entirely, as a means of resolving disputes with college leaders.

**Lane Seminary and Oberlin College**

One significant example of how Old Northwest students influenced the colleges took place at Lane Seminary and Oberlin College between 1834 and 1835. In 1834 the students at Lane Seminary determined to debate the subject of slavery, colonization, and abolitionism. Most faculty members opposed discussion of these matters, as Lane Seminary stood only two miles from Cincinnati, a city tied
strongly to the South, and a city with few residents who promoted abolitionism or any other critique of slavery. Undeterred, the students ignored faculty concerns and debated their questions two and a half hours each day for eighteen days."

By the end of the debate in March, almost every student had become convinced of the evils of slavery and the need for slavery's immediate end, so students formed the Lane Anti-Slavery Society in connection with the American Anti-Slavery Society. Equally important, the students acted upon their convictions and took their anti-slavery message to Cincinnati whenever possible. Students began working among the African Americans of Cincinnati, speaking to them at lecture halls, setting up a circulating library and reading room, and teaching reading schools, Sabbath schools, and Bible classes in the African-American community. Two students took leaves of absence from Lane in order to teach full time, while other students began to disseminate anti-slavery propaganda."

Most Cincinnati citizens responded negatively to these changes. Formally, critics published letters in newspapers and magazines that chastened the students for being swept up by current events and neglecting their studies. Informally, the students and everyone else associated with Lane Seminary received threats of violence against the seminarians, the seminary, and abolitionism in general. For the trustees of
Lane, most of whom were established Cincinnati businessmen, respected Presbyterians, and anti-abolitionists, the situation was quite uncomfortable. As a result, while most students were away during the summer break between terms, the trustees met to discuss the matter. In early October, with the new school year set to begin on the fifteenth of October, the college leaders made their decision. They voted to ban all student organizations lacking faculty approval and forbade students from meeting together, making speeches, or leaving Lane Seminary grounds without faculty approval. They specifically ordered the student anti-slavery and colonization societies to disband and they reasserted their authority to dismiss students from Lane Seminary at any time.

Upon returning, students learned of the new rules. In response, the students asked the faculty for an explanation of the rules, which the faculty provided. Students then asked permission to discuss the new regulations among themselves. The faculty denied this request, and when the students asked permission to discuss among themselves whether or not to stay at Lane, permission was again denied. Faced with this situation, thirty-nine of the forty-six returning students withdrew, and eight of the seventeen students who were newly arrived refused to enroll. Turnover continued until by the end of the school year seventy-five students had left Lane, fifty-one of whom said they did so
because of the actions of the faculty and trustees. Officials scrambled to attract other students, but Lane Seminary never fully recovered.*

At Lane Seminary, students worked together and rejected institutional leaders' attempts to force them into accepting antithetical ideas. The students avoided violence and then worked to find a way to continue their education. About a dozen students remained together in the town of Cumminsville, near Cincinnati, where they attempted to continue their Cincinnati work and their studies. After a few months in Cumminsville they met with John J. Shipherd of Oberlin College. At the time, Oberlin was a new and small college that struggled in the shadow of nearby Western Reserve College. Shipherd was a founder of Oberlin who, when he learned what had happened at Lane Seminary, went to Cumminsville and invited the former Lane students to come to Oberlin. The students agreed to Shipherd's request, but not unconditionally. The students wanted Asa Mahan, a Lane trustee who was sympathetic to the students, to become the president of Oberlin. The students asked that John Morgan, a Lane professor who had supported their debates and who the trustees subsequently fired, become a professor at Oberlin. Further, they wanted Oberlin to guarantee all students freedom of speech and allow admission to Oberlin with no consideration of race.

These proposed changes were hardly cosmetic and Oberlin
trustees were leery of some of the conditions; but the prospect of enrolling the Cumminssville students and perhaps other Lane students was too much to turn down. Oberlin leaders met the students’ requests; ultimately thirty-two of the Lane Rebels studied at Oberlin, quickly transforming the college into one of the most significant schools in the United States.  

Granville College  

This emphasis on pursuing objectives through civil procedures, debate, petition, and negotiation characterized student conduct in the antebellum Old Northwest. In 1840, Granville College students loudly celebrated Independence Day after their classes ended on July 3, in the same building where a recitation continued. The professor went upstairs and asked a student, Miller Moody, who was making so much noise. Moody declined to answer, the noise suddenly stopped, and the professor returned to his classroom. A few days later students were surprised when the faculty dismissed Moody from the college.  

Students concerned about the dismissal held a meeting of students, which resulted in a delegation that visited the acting college head, Professor Stevens, to ascertain exactly why Moody had been dismissed. Stevens informed the committee that Moody had been dismissed because he would not agree to provide information about his classmates when so
directed by college authorities. In response, most of the students at Granville signed a protest in which they approved of what Moody had done, and maintained they would do likewise in similar circumstances. The students delivered their protest to Stevens. No response was immediately forthcoming, but on the final day of the term Stevens asked to meet with all of the students who had signed the protest. At the meeting, Stevens defended the faculty, criticized the students, and announced that he expected all of the students who had signed the protest to sign a request that their signatures be withdrawn from the document. The students refused to sign and immediately left for vacation following commencement ceremonies. Ultimately, however, Stevens had his way, as he required students who returned the following term to remove their name from the protest as a condition for their admittance. The students apparently complied. Other students at other times were less easily dealt with.

Muskingum College

In 1856, at Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio, a student named Francis H. Herdman wrote an impertinent letter to a professor with whom he was dissatisfied. The professor complained to the trustees, who suspended Herdman for the three weeks remaining in the term. The next morning, though, when Herdman's punishment began, twenty-six of
Herdman's fellow Union Literary Society members left the college, along with many of the other literary society's members. As one student recalled, the students "took their ease and walked the streets as independent as retired merchants." For Muskingum College, which had only within the previous decade risen above the academy level to establish a regular collegiate course of study, the incident was alarming. Trustees examined the president and two professors on the matter and heard petitions from townspeople of New Concord, who were interested in Muskingum College as an important local institution. Eventually most students returned; the professor the students had criticized left the college.  

Indiana Asbury University  

The other notable example of non-violent conflict between students and faculty occurred in 1856 in Greencastle, at Indiana Asbury University. At this school, students normally met in their literary societies for debates and orations each Friday evening. During the 1855-1856 school year the college president and faculty discussed moving the meeting time of the societies from the evening to the afternoon, because the faculty were concerned that the societies were meeting until too late in the evening, oftentimes to 10:30 and sometimes almost until midnight. Further, the faculty suspected that both during and after
the meetings some society members were risking their moral health. At the close of the 1855-1856 year, the president and faculty decided that in the coming school year the literary societies would meet during the afternoon."

When Indiana Asbury reopened, though, the professors were busy launching the new school year and did not immediately insist on the Friday afternoon meeting time. For the first number of weeks the literary societies met on Friday evening. Finally, on October 17, President Daniel Curry sent a letter to each literary society that instructed the societies to meet on Friday afternoons between two and six o'clock, a demand to which the students objected strongly. During the following week the students formed committees on behalf of evening meetings and these committees met with the faculty to plead their case. The students complained that the evening meetings did not cause trouble and that afternoon meetings would prevent students who stayed in school by working at jobs on Friday afternoons and on Saturdays from continuing in the societies. The meetings ended without resolution; the faculty would not relent, at which point the students met and decided that if they could not have evening meetings then they would suspend the literary societies altogether."

This move on the part of the students was certainly a serious one, given that the literary societies of any college were a crucial component of the collegiate
education. Moreover, scores of students met outside of town on Saturday, October 25, to discuss the situation. This action appears to have alarmed the faculty greatly, as the following Monday President Curry spoke to the students publicly about what was happening. In the faculty letter to the trustees, the faculty reported that Curry "earnestly admonished the young men to cease their agitations, assuring them that if they did so the matter should stop at this point, and no further inquiry be made." The students reported that indeed, Curry had told the students to stop agitating, and "at the same time threatened them . . . that if any more meetings were held, or other demonstrations of dissatisfaction were shown, he would 'expel' every such offender from the institution." Whatever Curry's words had been, by no means did Curry and the rest of the faculty take the situation lightly. One reason for their concern is probably their lack of experience. In 1854, the faculty had experienced wholesale turnover when the president and three other prominent faculty members resigned. Curry, who had not worked as a college leader previously, did not become president until late in 1854, thus Curry and his faculty had governed the institution for fewer than two years; their response to student opposition reflected their lack of experience."

After this Monday encounter, the faculty and students agreed to meet on Tuesday to settle the dispute amicably.
At the meeting, the professors spoke first and explained their side of the matter. After these speeches, W. F. Stone, a senior, delivered what was to have been the first of a number of student discourses. As it happened, however, Stone was the only student who spoke that evening. Stone basically told the faculty that the students considered their prerogative to set the time the literary society would meet a "right" held by the students with which the faculty could not interfere, and that the students were united in this belief and could not be convinced otherwise. Stone indicated that if the faculty did not acknowledge this right of the students, then the students were willing to leave the institution altogether. When Stone finished, Curry asked the students if anyone disagreed with Stone; not one student answered. Curry asked if they agreed with Stone and received a hearty response. At this point Curry told the students that the meeting was over and they should leave, although he would like for any students who disagreed with Stone to remain, as he would like to talk to them. About half of the students remained, but when Curry realized that most of them agreed with Stone and just wanted to hear what Curry had to say, he ended the meeting altogether."

In the words of the faculty, the course of the Tuesday evening meeting showed that "the Faculty had been openly defied, and the existence of a conspiracy to drive them from their positions declared, in behalf of the great body of the
students, and assented to by them." The faculty concluded "that to delay action longer would be a dereliction of duty . . . and a virtual surrender of the discipline of the institution to a factious body of Students." The outcome of this meeting, in which Curry determined that the college students were in rebellion, was an ultimatum presented to every student at Wednesday chapel that, if rejected, would result in suspension from the college. Acceptance would absolve the student of all responsibility for his actions to that point and he would continue in the college in good standing. Each student had twenty-four hours in which to consider his response, and the roll would be called at prayers the next day, at which each student had to answer "yes" or "no" when asked whether he would sign the document.

The ultimatum itself was a pledge:

I promise in all things, as a Student and a member of Indiana Asbury University, that, so long as I sustain that relation, I will be subject to its laws, and to the regulations and discipline of the Institution.

I entirely disclaim for myself as a Student, and for any and all association of Students any rights or privileges, not secured by said laws and discipline.

I further promise that I will abstain from all words and actions of every kind, in opposition to the government of the Institution; and that I will not do anything, directly or indirectly to render any fellow-student dissatisfied with the government of the institution, or to induce any one to leave it.

While the faculty apparently thought that this pledge would be satisfactory to most students and that the college could
easily without the few who might refuse the pledge, the pledge actually brought an entirely new issue into the conflict. Almost every student would willingly agree to the first part, but most students believed that the second and third portions were not corollaries of the first. Moreover, many students objected to the requirement that students "abstain from all words and actions of every kind, in opposition to the government of the Institution" as a denial of their rights to free speech. The following day, of the approximately eighty-eight students who answered, sixty-nine, including all twenty-two members of the senior class, refused to accept. The faculty suspended every one of the refusers."

The suspension itself was ambiguous. The students were not expelled outright, although some of the students claimed that Curry told them that the suspension would last at least ten years. Some suspended students left Greencastle, while others remained. The college continued to function, since besides the college-level students, over a hundred other students uninvolved in the dispute were enrolled in preparatory and normal work. But the suspension of the larger portion of the collegiate classes was a serious event, and the claim on the part of the students that they had been suspended for not agreeing to give up their rights of free speech brought townpeople rallying to the side of the students. The Putnam Republican Banner, which
immediately after the mass suspensions had reserved judgment, condemned the faculty, including President Curry, the following week for having gone too far and for having failed to use restraint and tact in dealing with the students. The public could hardly ignore the suspended students, "now out on furlough," the newspaper reported, "loafing about town."¹⁹

The college leaders were understandably distraught by the outcome of the fast pace of events. Curry had initiated the chain of events when he wrote to the students on Friday, October 17, to inform them of their new meeting time. After the student meeting on Saturday, October 25, and the following Tuesday evening meeting that Curry dismissed, most of the college was suspended by Thursday morning, October 30. On November 11 the faculty wrote to the trustees to defend their actions, and the faculty published this lengthy letter in the November 19 edition of the Putnam Republican Banner. The students countered with their own, even lengthier, letter, which they both sent to the trustees and published in the Putnam Republican Banner on November 26.

Normally, the trustees came to Greencastle each July. In light of these unusual events, though, the trustees called a special meeting and came together on December 16 to investigate what was happening at the Indiana Asbury University. At the meeting, President Curry presented various records to the trustees and explained what had
happened. Next, the trustees heard from the faculty members. The trustees declined to hear any students. After the trustees adjourned for a time and reconvened, they resolved that "as a general rule . . . the action of the Faculty must be deemed and taken as supreme and final." The trustees said that they were convinced that during the events of October "the Faculty acted with a view to the best interests of the Institution--though could the end of these things have been seen from the beginning, we might have advised a different time & manner for the action had." In other words, the trustees stood by the faculty, who the trustees believed had bungled.

Above all else, the trustees wanted a resumption of the status quo. The trustees resolved, "we consider the Suspension of a number of the students of the university, during the recent difficulties, as temporary and not as finally condemnatory." All students who remained should consider themselves in good standing, and "those who have left may with entire self-respect, return." The trustees promised that those students who did return would "find their position as pleasant, agreeable and profitable as it was previously to those occurrences." The trustees did not discuss the matter of when the literary societies should meet, although the societies soon returned to meeting during their accustomed Friday evenings. Some suspended students returned to Indiana Asbury, but not one of the seniors did.
Indiana Asbury had lost the entire senior class. Many of the withdrawn seniors went to other schools, especially Indiana University, from which nine of them graduated the following spring. At the same time, when the school year ended, Daniel Curry resigned his presidency.¹¹

Old Northwest Students

At Indiana Asbury University, as at Granville, Hillsdale, Lane, Oberlin, and Muskingum, students used negotiation, strikes, and outright withdrawal from the college in attempts to achieve their objectives. At no time were they violent. Students gained leverage because administrators knew that students who left one institution could easily enroll in another within days, even in the middle of a term.

People associated with Oberlin College argued that the college's coeducational structure prevented the riots that afflicted all-male colleges; women and men together acted in different ways than groups solely composed of men. The Oberlinites made a good point. Although only a minority of Old Northwest colleges were coeducational, the connections between coeducation and the lack of riots in the Old Northwest are intriguing. During the antebellum period, most coeducational colleges were Midwestern colleges; the cultural climate of the region was receptive to coeducation, unlike other regions. This same cultural climate produced
colleges notable for their non-riotous students."

A significant reason for the lack of riots among the Old Northwest college students was the students' ages, which were higher than in other regions of the country. When a Kenyon College student reported in 1830 that "in the college there are many between twenty and thirty years of age, and even older," he was identifying a regional trend. Prior to the Civil War at Oberlin College, for example, the average age at graduation was twenty-five; fewer than five percent of entering students were under the age of seventeen during the 1840s and 1850s. By way of contrast, almost half of incoming college students at Harvard in the 1830s were under the age of seventeen; at other Mid-Atlantic schools such as Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania over sixty percent of entering college students were under seventeen in both the 1830s and 1850s. Even more youthful, Southern college students had the lowest average ages among students of all regions."

Also, not only did Old Northwest college students tend to be older on average, but education in the Midwest during this period was the least age-specific of any region; college students ranged from the age of about twelve to at least thirty-six years. One important reason why Old Northwest college students did not riot was because many students were beyond adolescence; ones who were not would often have been around older students less given to
rioting."

Related to the students' ages was their social and economic background. Age of entry often indicated the social status of students. The young students of the South and of the established New England colleges generally came from elite segments of society, while rural New England colleges and most Midwestern schools served students with rural and small town origins. In most cases, the youngest college students were unable to support themselves; parents paid their way. Older college students normally taught school or took other jobs to put themselves through their course of study. To these older students, college represented an opportunity to prepare for the vocations they would enter and the lives they desired to lead. These older students sought social mobility, and they generally exhibited a piety and earnestness that precluded violence."

Old Northwest students often intended to spend their lives in service to the church and to the public. Nineteen-year-old Aaron Sadner Lindsley was working at a newspaper press in Illinois in 1837 when he introduced himself to Charles Finney of Oberlin College by writing, "I am a poor young man, endeavoring to enter the gospel ministry." Lindsley explained that the year before, "at a camp meeting, I believe I gave my heart to God; and I now desire to become a useful man." For Lindsley, college was not only an opportunity to prepare for a specific career, but also a
place to become "useful.""

Lindsley was far from unique in his expressed purpose. Hugh Smart wrote to recommend a potential student to the faculty at Granville College in 1832, explaining that the young man desired to enter Granville because "it is his wish to qualify himself for usefulness among us--should he appear promising I design to aid him some in getting a useful education." In this idea of usefulness lay two principles: one, that the education be useful, or practical; and two, that the practical education be implemented to the benefit of something greater than the individual. When Smart wrote that his protege wanted to become useful "among us," he indicated that the education would be for the betterment not only of the individual, but of society generally."

Westerners wanted students to acquire a practical education; "practicality," however, was not measured by the pecuniary abilities of the graduate, but by how well the education would prepare the graduate to perform valuable societal functions. When in 1844 A. F. Ross addressed the two literary societies of Franklin College in New Athens, Ohio, he told those assembled that society had invested in them, not for each student's individual benefit, but that the community might receive a return on its investment."

Many students appear to have taken this idea quite seriously. In 1846 Homer Wheeler of Indiana University was
"in a quandary" about what to do after his college years. "Shall I study Law or Theology?" Wheeler knew, though, upon what he would base his decision. "I do not want to live without effecting something for the benefit of my fellow mortals--"My self" alone has never for a moment been an object of my concern." The next month Wheeler wrote that he had decided to embrace duty. "Duty says this and no more--'Obey and serve you God, and do all you can for the benefit of your Country and the Human race in general.'" Wheeler's altruism was indicative of a regional disposition toward usefulness and service to others."

Old Northwest students with other priorities felt odd. John D. Hovey, after studying at Middlebury College in Vermont, moved to Ohio, where he commenced his junior year at Marietta College. Hovey wrote to a Massachusetts aunt that he was quite worried about money, which was "most dreadful scarce." Hovey had recently turned twenty-one years old and reported that he was giving thought to how he should make his way in the world. "I begin to feel some of that spirit which the people here say is so peculiar to the people of New England, that is the money-making spirit."*

While Hovey was hardly the only resident of the Old Northwest who was concerned with how to make money and a living, his letter underscores the idea that many students at the Old Northwest colleges went to school out of a desire to become useful, to engage in self-improvement. Older, on
average, than students in other regions, these Old Northwest college students who came from modest backgrounds and who put themselves through school attended college as the intentional result of mature deliberation.

Literary Societies

Another feature of the Old Northwest college that worked against student violence was the literary society. The literary society is an American institution that first appeared in colonial New England colleges and then spread throughout collegiate education. After the mid-nineteenth century the literary society went into decline in all regions except for the Midwest, as fraternities competed for the social activities of the students and as colleges absorbed many of the educational functions of the literary societies into the standard curriculum. Indicative of a unique vitality, the literary societies of the Middle West prospered alongside fraternities and changing curriculums through the beginning of the twentieth century.

During the antebellum period at the Old Northwest colleges, the literary society was a pivotal institution in the lives of students. Normally, almost every college student belonged to a literary society and each college had two competing societies, each with a library. Besides books, these libraries included a variety of periodicals that kept the students informed about the world around them.
The literary society membership met weekly to debate questions or resolutions, read essays and poetry, and critique each other's work. Though the literary society functioned under the auspices of the college leadership, faculty members did not participate in the meetings. Rather, the literary society functioned because of student initiative, which encouraged student initiative and independence, as students learned how to create and shape the social structures in which they participated."

Despite the fact that proceedings of the society were secret, students were hardly locked away in their literary society meeting rooms. Society members sometimes invited guests to view their proceedings. Also, though the literary societies met separately during the school term, at the end of the term they engaged each other in public competition, sending forth their best members to orate and debate, often in front of large audiences. An Indiana University senior in 1846 attended an exhibition at Indiana Asbury. He wrote in a letter, "I went to Greencastle last week to see the "animals" of that college show off . . . And a greater string of bombast I never heard (or saw) spun--All of our class went." Parents and townspeople, as well as students from other colleges, attended these public affairs."

The first year of operation of one literary society illustrates the values and the range of activities embraced by college students. At Granville College in Granville,
Ohio, a literary society, the Calliopean, formed in 1835. The charter members quickly wrote a constitution and by-laws, elected officers, and decided to meet weekly. The Calliopean Society was clearly connected to Granville College itself. If a member were expelled from the College, he would also be expelled from the Society. All society activities, including changing the constitution or by-laws, had to be approved by the faculty.

Almost as soon as they formed, the members authorized the purchase of a bookcase and sent a detail to Columbus with instructions also to purchase the Harper's Family Library. The students did so, finding a seventy-two volume set, which they shelved in the bookcase. This collection constituted the beginning of the Society's library.

The membership increased quickly when the Calliopeans elected sixty-one honorary members in April and two months later elected forty-eight more. Through an examination of the list of honorary members one gains clues about the aspirations of the students and about their models of behavior. The honorary members of the Calliopean Society included the most notable living national political figures, including John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, and Henry Clay. The Calliopeans also elected authors such as James Fenimore Cooper, and important Ohioans, including political figures such as William Allen and William Henry Harrison, and Daniel
Drake, a doctor, writer, and early leader in Cincinnati, and Caleb Atwater, politician and author of the first history of Ohio."

The intentions of the Society in electing honorary members were two-fold: first, they hoped honorary members would contribute funds or books to the support of the Society; second, by electing honorary members and opening correspondence with them, the students hoped to establish connections to a public world of politicians, lawyers, ministers, educators, and authors. If an honorary member responded by thanking the society or by sending a volume from his library, this event was potentially the beginning of an association the students could use to their advantage. The corresponding secretary of each society had a most coveted job, which allowed one to correspond with political leaders around the country."

That same April, the Calliopeans established "a Historical and Philosophical Department" of the Society, "designed for collecting and preserving all such facts relating to the civil and natural history of the Western country, especially of the early settlements, as may be deemed worthy of preservation." Part of the reason for establishing this department was that the members wanted to fill "a Cabinet of Curiosities" with "Natural, Mineral, and Artificial Specimens--such as rocks, minerals, petrifactions, shells, Indian Antiquities, and other objects
of curiosity." Though the curriculum at most colleges still embraced a classical education, the literary society provided an outlet for other academic pursuits, such as scientific and historical interests."

The next month the society members met to determine whether to expel one of their number. The Calliopeans tried Lewis Granger on the charge that "he encouraged and was engaged in a mob against a portion of his fellow students and a lawful meeting of citizens." As J.H. Fetters, a Calliopean, testified to the assembled, he had attended a meeting held at the schoolhouse. There, "Mr. Alvord lectured on Abolitionism--toward the close of the meeting a disorderly mob made its appearance and broke up the assembly, by throwing stones & eggs into the windows--The students present & some others pursued the intruders" and Fetters had seen Granger run away. Others testified as well; apparently Granger had not only been part of the mob, but an instigator of the incident. Granger was removed from the Society by a vote of nineteen to one."

Significantly, the Calliopeans booted Granger for inciting a mob against a lawful gathering of citizens, rather than for holding unpopular views on abolition. The breach of rights of assembly and expression of ideas was Granger's egregious failing. The Calliopeans were unafraid of ideas, willing to allow those in opposition to have their say. The rule of mobs was anathema; the ability of citizens
to gather lawfully must be protected.

One way students ensured a respect for unpopular ideas was by appealing to the common bonds of patriotism. Rutherford B. Hayes recalled that on the Independence Day, 1839, an orator's speech at Kenyon aroused sectional disagreements among the students, which Hayes feared would result in a "serious disturbance." Two students, however, proposed that everyone "should take a short march to the tune of Yankee Doodle." This idea was acceptable to all, and, as Hayes gladly noted, "the spirit-stirring notes . . . recalled at once to the minds of the combatants the fact that we were all Americans, so that the dispute was amicably settled and we marched to college better friends than ever." These students focused on what united rather than what divided them in order to allow room for variant viewpoints."

Such a focus was necessary because Old Northwest colleges, on average, drew one of every five of their students from outside the region. Numerous colleges educated international students. In 1830 a Kenyon College student wrote that most of the 170 students "are natives of various parts of the United States, and the sons of episcopalian parents. There are, however, a few Irish and Welsh, one Greek, and one native of Hindostan." The preparatory school had briefly included "three or four American Indians." Almost thirty years later, in 1858, a
Kenyon College student wrote to his sister that all thirty-two members of his sophomore class were "full blooded Americans--Not a foreigner in the class--in all the others there are Dutch--Irish--Spanish--Indian--and one poor Chinaman in the Freshman." In the company of such a diverse group of young men, college students could hardly avoid encountering a wide variety of ideas."

Special occasions gave students chances to foster unity within their literary societies. On July 4, 1836, the Calliopean members met early in the morning at the Baptist Meeting House and then proceeded in a carriage to an impressive set of ancient Indian mounds near Newark, which they intended to excavate in hopes of finding items to add to their Cabinet of Curiosities. Upon their arrival, "the company were drawn up in a line, and gave three hearty cheers in honor of the day and occasion. After which the Declaration of Independence was read." Following this celebration they set to digging and were rewarded by finding skeletons, arrowheads, and other items."

The capstone of the year came the following month, August, when they celebrated the first anniversary of the Calliopean Society. William Allen of Chillicothe, one of the honorary members of the Society, gave an address, which the Society then had printed and, after purchasing one thousand copies, sent to honorary members and other literary societies. Having a notable public figure address a
literary society was standard, as was printing the address at society expense for distribution to all who might be interested. The practice represented a desire to hear the words of important individuals and to make connections between the college students and invited speakers."

In that first year, through orations and debates, through exploratory outings and internal discipline, the Calliopean Society members prepared for entry into a public world beyond the college. They proved their allegiance to a particular vision of civil discourse and interaction when they expelled Lewis Granger from their society for participating in a mob. In many respects, the literary society functioned as a collegiate training ground for participation in public affairs. Literary society proceedings from college to college are standard in their descriptions of debates and orations. Existing essay books show that essays were normally quite conventional, often on topics such as "Our Country's Prospects," or "Personal Responsibility." Students debated questions such as "Should slavery be abolished?" or "Are mental resources and moral energy most developed in worldly men?" Many members found the literary society exercises enjoyable, though rarely profound. Yet, despite the ordinary nature of much that transpired, these organizations were highly significant because of their role of instilling habits of serious inquiry, thought, writing, and open debate. Weekly,
surrounded by books and curiosities, the members practiced
the habits of democratic and public wrestling with ideas."

Conclusion

The Old Northwest, then, was a unique region within
American higher education because of the lack of riots among
college students against college authorities. Instead of
rioting, Old Northwest college students nonviolently worked
together to negotiate their disputes with college leaders
through meetings, petitions, attempts to sway public opinion
through newspapers, and strikes or even withdrawal
altogether from one college in favor of another. College
leaders were usually at some disadvantage in these disputes
because the student threat to leave was not idle.

The high average ages of Old Northwest college students
reduced the chances of riots. The young men and women of
the Old Northwest colleges were not so much the sons and
daughters of elite parents as they were children of the
denizens of small towns and farms. Ambitious and highly
motivated, spurred by a desire to aid society by means of
self-improvement, within college literary societies these
students carried out their preparation for public lives.

Students played an important role in the formation of
the colleges of the Old Northwest, a role that reflected
particular regional ways. In the actions of the students
one sees receptivity to opposing or new ideas. Accompanying
this trait was the penchant for critical analysis and open debate, as well as the willingness to act upon convictions. By no means would the students exhibit these characteristics only within the bounds of the college; as the students left the college to teach schools or make their way in the world, they took with them these patterns of thinking and behavior.


of the Traditional View (New York: New York University Press, 1982). The best work that studies student life in a particular region is David F. Allmendinger, Jr.'s Paupers and Scholars: The Transformation of Student Life in Nineteenth-Century New England (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975). Allmendinger argued that antebellum New England colleges attracted poor farmer boys forced from the farms by declining prospects, as rocky New England soil competed poorly with large and fertile farms to the west. College administrators embraced innovation and change as they dealt with a different student body than the colonial colleges had known. These administrators had to provide financial help and work opportunities to students. Also, students lived in the towns and cities rather than in campus dorms. Most students worked as school teachers for three months each winter to support their education. Antebellum students were, as a result, more independent than their colonial counterparts. Allmendinger's book is sound, though the book strangely does not mention the college literary societies. On student life at the Old Northwest colleges, see Laura M. Bachelder, Indiana Alma Mater: Student Life at Indiana Colleges, 1820-1860 (Connor Prairie, IN: Center for the Study of Indiana Life, 1995), which presents basic information accurately, though with little historical analysis. See, also, Laura M. Bachelder, "Daniel Franklin Hatfield: The Indiana College Experience in 1836" (M.A. thesis, Indiana University [Indianapolis], 1997).

4. J. J. Hopkins, "Old College Days," The Reunion (Hillsdale, Michigan), (July 8, 1885):158.

5. The authority on the Lane Seminary affair is Thomas Lesick Lawrence, The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1980). Lawrence, The Lane Rebels, 42-51, 71, 78-84.


7. Lawrence, The Lane Rebels, 91-93, 116-118, 126.

8. Lawrence, The Lane Rebels, 129-132. Lane Seminary operated into the early twentieth century.


11. Ferris, quoted in Shepardson, Denison University, 53-54.
12. Hamaline McKinney, "History of Muskingum College," 1876?, Box 5, Muskingum College Archives. Herdman's letter against Professor Willson was copied into the August 8, 1856, Trustee Minutes. See Typescript of Trustee Minutes, August 8, 1856, Trustee Minutes, Muskingum College, Muskingum College Archives. See, also, the minutes for August 11, 1856; August 28, 1856; and September 3, 1856. The September 3 minutes include the notice that the trustees "have given due attention to the petitions of the citizens of this village," concerning Herdman's suspension and the ensuing student protest. The one published account of this incident is William L. Fisk, "The Early Years of Muskingum College," The Old Northwest 5(1979):35-38.


17. Curry, et al., "To the Trustees of Indiana Asbury University."


19. "The Difficulties in the University," Putnam Republican Banner, November 5, 1856, 2:3; "Indiana Asbury University," Putnam Republican Banner, November 12, 1856.

20. Joint Board of Trustees and Visitors of the Indiana Asbury University, Minutes, December 16, 1856, Archives, DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana.
21. Joint Board of Trustees and Visitors of the Indiana Asbury University, Minutes, December 16, 1856, Archives, DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana; Sweet, Indiana Asbury, 80-82.


23. Henry Caswall, America and the American Church (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969 [1839]), 34; Fletcher, A History of Oberlin College, 507; Burke, American Collegiate Populations, 90-136, especially 102, 116, 120, 127. Wilson Smith, "Apologia pro Alma Mater," argued in a fine, though exploratory, essay that in the non-urban and non-Eastern colleges he detected a vitality and sense of common purpose, fostered by the religious environment of each college. The students at these colleges came from pious Protestant families of little wealth, in contrast to the wealthy and less pious students who attended the well-established colleges. Smith also argued that age was a significant factor in preventing riots, as the small-town non-eastern colleges drew an older and more serious student. Reed, in "Fortresses of Faith," 131-132, argues that older students were the most likely to riot, when all evidence indicates the contrary.

Southern college students were not only the youngest American college students, but they were more commonly from wealthy families than Northerners. In general the student experience at southern colleges, especially southern state universities, centered around the process of becoming a gentleman and mastering the ways of southern honor. On southern college students, see, especially, E. Merton Coulter, College Life in the Old South (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), Albea Godbold, The Church College of the Old South (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1944); Reed, "Fortresses of Faith"; and Jon L. Wakelyn, "Antebellum College Life and the Relations between Fathers and Sons," 107-126, in Walter J. Fraser, Jr., R. Frank Saunders, Jr., and Jon L. Wakelyn, eds., The Web of Southern Social Relations: Women, Family, & Education (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985). On southern honor and being a gentleman in the South, see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982). A revealing glimpse into the Southern college student's world comes from Ishkanian, "Religion and Honor at Chapel Hill."

24. Burke, American Collegiate Populations, 126.
25. Students at Southern denominational colleges came from the wealthiest segments of society. Reed, "Fortresses of Faith," 132-133, sampled the families of 143 students at eight church colleges in 1850 and found that the mean family held eight times the average real estate of free white males in 1850, ninety percent of the students came from slaveholding families, and the mean number of slaves was 24. On New England, see Allmendinger, Paupers and Scholars, and Smith, "Apologia pro Alma Mater."


27. Hugh Smart to Professor [John] Pratt, February 5, 1833, folder 2, container 2, MSS 1455, John Stevens Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio. Women also desired to become useful. Florella Brown, of Oberlin College, wrote that she intended "to prepare herself for usefulness in whatever field the Lord see fit to place her." Brown quoted in Fletcher, A History of Oberlin College 2:512.


29. Homer Wheeler to Maro Wheeler, July 22, 1846, Folder 2, Container 1, Thomas, Wheeler, and White Family Papers, MSS 3412, Western Reserve Historical Society (emphasis original); Homer Wheeler to Maro Wheeler, August 20, 1846, Folder 2, Container 1, Thomas, Wheeler, and White Family Papers, MSS 3412, WRHS (emphasis original).

30. John Hovey to Lucy M. Bricket, August 27, 1852, VFM 783, Ohio Historical Society (emphasis original).


32. An English observer of antebellum American colleges was astonished by the large number of public speaking exercises that went on in these schools compared to institutions of


38. "Journal of the Calliopean Society of Granville Institution, Vol. I, 1835." Note that the society wanted these items to be well cared for and visually impressive. They bought the bookcase before they bought the books. They formed a department to fill a cabinet. After the literary societies had been established for a few years they often acquired their own meeting hall, which they tended to decorate in an elaborate fashion.


41. Caswall, America and the American Church, 34; ? to "dear Sister," Oct. 10, 1858, VFM 130, Ohio Historical Society. One foreign-born Kenyon student of the 1850s was George W. Pepper, an Irish Methodist who emigrated to the United States in his early twenties and enrolled at Kenyon. Pepper recalled that
many of the students were Southerners, and that Pepper "introduced a resolution before one of the societies that the New York Independent should be added to the reading-room. To my surprise a score of fiery Southerners jumped up, and demanded my immediate expulsion. 'He is an Abolitionist! Out with him!' they shouted. President Andrews quieted them by telling them I was a stranger, ignorant of the customs of the United States." George W. Pepper, Under Three Flags: Or, The Story of My Life (Cincinnati: Curts & Jennings, 1899), 69. Pepper's experience at Kenyon is not only a reminder of the international students who attended these colleges, but also that many students came from outside the region, particularly at Episcopal Kenyon, which had exceptionally strong ties to the South. Still, the percentage of students who came from other regions to Old Northwest colleges should be accepted cautiously. Colin B. Burke, American Collegiate Populations, 130, reported that though Midwestern schools appeared to draw one in five students from outside the region, he also noticed that Midwestern colleges apparently had a tendency to list students' birthplaces as their home residence, which could exaggerate the diversity of student backgrounds.


43. Though the Democrat William Allen was only twenty-nine years of age when he delivered the address, the Calliopean Society had made an auspicious choice. The following January the state legislature sent Allen to the United States Senate. Francis P. Weisenburger, The Passing of the Frontier: 1825-1850 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1941), 328-330.

44. Despite similarity in form, the existing scholarly literature on literary societies in Southern institutions of higher education shows that the Southern literary societies actually functioned differently than literary societies in the Old Northwest. In the South, the literary society also prepared young men for public life, but a public life within Southern culture. Ideas about Southern honor pervaded life within the literary society, and literary societies were arenas within which Southern college men jockeyed, sometimes violently, for power and respect. See Drew Gilpin Faust, James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 13-22; and Reed, "Fortresses of Faith," 135-150.
CHAPTER 6

TOWN AND GOWN

Over time, the colleges became more independent of the townspeople that founded them, sometimes in ways that highlighted differences between the goals of townspeople and the college leaders. This chapter focuses on the influence of the college on the town. From the beginning, of course, professors and students participated in civic life. This chapter discusses this civic participation and its effect on towns with colleges.

The chapter centers on two colleges: Michigan Central, and Indiana Asbury. The removal of Michigan Central College by Free Will Baptists from the village of Spring Arbor to nearby Hillsdale illustrates dynamics of town and denominational control over colleges, and the centrality of the college to the prosperity of the small college town. A conflict between the leaders of Indiana Asbury University and a vocal group of Greencastle residents over differing visions of the boundaries of civic participation and
involvement demonstrates the dependence of the college upon the goodwill of town inhabitants. Many times, people resisted the power of the college because the institutional values of the college conflicted with their own.

Town and Gown

The strongest and most immediate influence of the colleges was on the towns in which the colleges were located. College presidents and professors, for example, almost universally trained or experienced as ministers, were an instant source of religious and civic leadership. Oftentimes college leaders served as ministers in local churches, or preached regularly in the community and took part in revivals. George Leonard, a Granville College student, observed in 1851 that the previous day, "the President enjoyed the privilege of baptizing thirteen . . . . Four had been strong Universalists. . . . [In Granville they] have meeting every evening in all the churches in town for about two months, and . . . nothing but religion talked all the time in every place." Religious enthusiasm was not located principally at the college, but the president of the college was active in the religious life of the wider community.

Colleges also affected the broader intellectual life of the community. From the beginnings of the Old Northwest colleges, literary society members annually invited a
notable person to address the society. College commencement, a community event that could attract thousands of people, normally featured a well-known speaker. In the 1820s and 1830s, transportation difficulties limited traveling lecturers. By the late 1840s, however, internal improvements contributed to the ability of college towns to host numerous traveling speakers.

Elliott M. Bowman of Greencastle, Indiana, the home of Indiana Asbury, wrote in 1848 that "There is a lecturer in our town giving a course of lectures on the subject of electricity with explanations and experiments on Morse's Telegraph. A great many attend." Bowman did not indicate that the lecturer was in town because of the college; possibly the lecturer was simply passing through the town. The presence of the college, however, often made the difference. Greencastle, a small town not directly on the National Road, was hardly a town that would attract traveling lecturers without the presence of Indiana Asbury. In 1852, the Hungarian Governor Kossuth traveled through the United States and made a number of stops at Ohio colleges, including Ohio Wesleyan. In 1855, Illinois College student Thomas Clark King wrote in his diary that "George Copway, an educated indian, preached today. He is to deliver a course of lectures . . . on the fate of the American indians! He has a plan for the education of the N. A. indians in order to make missionaries of them." In 1858 a student at Indiana
Asbury reported that "a Phrenologist" had given "a set of lectures on Phrenology and Physiology by or through which I learnt more practical good than I expect to all the rest of the present term." The following month, Ohio Wesleyan University students welcomed a lecturer who spoke on the "Philosophy of American Politics."

During the 1850s, East Coast luminaries on lyceum tours frequented college towns in the Old Northwest. A historical study of Ohio lyceums found that these speakers addressed audiences at colleges such as Western Reserve, Oberlin, Antioch, Ohio Wesleyan, and Miami. The evidence indicates that traveling lecturers sometimes addressed only students and professors of the college, while at other times lectures were open to anyone in the surrounding town.

Another way in which the college influenced the town was through the various educational endeavors that the college spawned. Most colleges evolved from existing academies, and almost all colleges in the Old Northwest included a preparatory department that educated students too young or not ready for collegiate studies. Colleges also attracted new residents who supported education for their children. Ohio druggist John Sala wrote to the president of Indiana Asbury University in 1841 to express his interest in moving to Greencastle. "I have a family of five Children," Sala related. "I want to be among Methodist people and at a place where I can give my Children good Education." New
Yorker Eben Curtis wrote to Oberlin College in 1842. He explained that he had sold his home, "& wishing to locate myself where I may do good & enjoy the means of preparing my Children to labor in the vineyard of the Lord, my mind has been directed to your place." Curtis wanted to know about the possibility of renting a house in Oberlin that would house him and his wife, their eight children, and perhaps some boarders. Curtis meant for his children to attend Oberlin. In 1855, Jonathan Jennings of Greenvale, Illinois, wrote to ask about the availability of land near Hillsdale College: "I would like a piece nigh enough to the College, so that my children might study at home, and go into the College to recite." Others, too, wanted to settle at Hillsdale. Ransom Dunn received a letter from W. H. H. Myers in 1859. Myers wondered if he would have any opportunities to work as a Free Will Baptist minister in the Hillsdale area. He hoped to purchase or rent a small farm and to begin sending his children to Hillsdale College, as his oldest son was seventeen years old. Myers also scribbled a postscript that there were "others here who would like the same opportunity." Within a week or two, Dunn received a letter from R. R. Walters of Chagrin Falls, Ohio. Walters told Dunn "I have been thinking of making Hillsdale a home for more than three years. My Son wishes to pursue a course of study, and I think a better place cannot be found." During the same period, a couple in
Kentucky wrote to inquire about purchasing land in Delaware, Ohio, so they could educate their children at Ohio Wesleyan University. Generally, these people could not afford to send their children away to a college. They were willing to move to a college town so the children could live at home and attend college. A college attracted people to the area who believed in the importance of education.

Colleges also brought economic benefits. Normally, the college was a large, if not the largest, employer in the town and consequently of substantial economic significance. Further, in many college towns students were a source of income to town residents. Anyone with an extra room could take in at least one student, who would pay from $1.25 to $2.00 each week for room and board. The simple presence of a college in a town influenced property values. Many town residents would rather support a college in their town than the college that represented their denomination in another locale. A Methodist who was raising money for the support of Ohio Wesleyan in 1853 wrote that it was "out of the question to do much" among Methodists who lived near Miami University, "as their property is directly affected by the prosperity of the college, and depressed by its adversity."

The reasons, then, why town residents desired a college were many. Any disruption, such as the possibility of the demise or the removal of the college, was of great concern. As the story of Michigan Central College demonstrates,
colleges could begin as a joint project of denominational members and town promoters, but grow in size until the goals of the town and the denomination moved from compatibility to competition, with the viability of both college and town hanging in the balance.

Spring Arbor, Michigan

In 1835, before Michigan became a state, territorial legislators granted a charter to establish a Methodist seminary in Spring Arbor, a small town of fewer than one thousand residents. Elijah H. Pilcher was the motivating force behind this attempt to found a school. Pilcher, born in Ohio in 1810, had attended Ohio University for two years before leaving to work as a teacher and Methodist minister. He wanted to found a school. While ministering in Michigan he settled on Spring Arbor as a good location and, in conjunction with other proponents, lobbied successfully for a charter. The chartered school was a joint venture between Methodists, who comprised two-thirds of the trustees, and Spring Arbor residents. Two Spring Arbor residents, William Smith and Moses Benedict, who sat on the board of trustees, donated 100,000 bricks and around 200 acres to further the project. Over the next few years, however, nobody built any buildings; Pilcher and other Methodists soured on the Spring Arbor location when they concluded that other towns were more likely to prosper and support the school. In 1838 the
Methodists formed a committee to settle the matter of whether the seminary should remain in Spring Arbor or relocate elsewhere. Residents of nearby Albion lobbied for the seminary, and in 1839 Smith and Benedict had their gifts returned when the proposed seminary relocated to Albion.⁴

Undaunted, Spring Arbor residents again lured an educational institution to their town. In 1844, Free Will Baptists accepted an offer from Smith, Benedict, and other Spring Arborites, of 210 acres and money to help establish the Michigan Central College. The Michigan Central College, upon opening in a Spring Arbor storefront, had one teacher, Oberlin graduate Daniel M. Graham, and five students.⁵

Over the next few years, residents of Spring Arbor and Free Will Baptists everywhere helped the Michigan Central College, which increasing numbers of students attended. In 1848, this growth continued when another Oberlin graduate, Edmund Burke Fairfield, replaced Graham at the head of the institution. Fairfield quickly expanded the school. Fairfield took over Michigan Central when the school had twenty students. Within one term the number of students reached sixty, and by 1851 Fairfield administered a school of close to 150 students.⁶

Long past the day when an empty storefront would hold the student body, by 1851 the Michigan Central College had two buildings and Fairfield aimed to build another. Spring Arbor residents had donated money to build these buildings,
but Fairfield suspected that the Spring Arbor residents might not provide the monies necessary for continued expansion. In July, 1852, Fairfield wrote to a new professor, Ransom Dunn, "that new building can be had if they will do at Spring Arbor what they ought. If they will not--why then--." Fairfield did not say what would happen, but was clearly thinking about his options. Within weeks Fairfield again wrote to Dunn, "I have concluded that the new building can and must go; . . . . The Spring Arbor friends must raise the $3,000, or--something else." Over time, the Spring Arbor residents failed to provide the money. As a result, on January 5, 1853, the trustees of Michigan Central College voted 9-2 to search for another location for the college. To that end, they authorized a committee to survey nearby towns that might have better transportation facilities and offer greater public support for the college.

The two towns where townspeople showed a lively interest in attracting a college were Coldwater and Hillsdale. Fairfield wrote in late January to Ransom Dunn, "I met a large audience of all classes of business men at C. on Saturday eve. Never was there more interest felt there on any matter. But at H. there is a regular furor. . . . They are whole-hearted in the movement." Both towns were located on the Michigan Southern Railway, a railway that passed by no college. If relocated to Coldwater or
Hillsdale, the Michigan Central College could draw students from the entire span of the railway line without competition. By the February 16, 1853, meeting of the trustees, both Coldwater and Hillsdale residents made offers to the trustees of Michigan Central, of $10,000 and $15,000, respectively, for the support of the college. The trustees decided to negotiate solely with Hillsdale, and the Hillsdale contingent raised another $6,000 in pledges within a few more months. By May, the residents of Hillsdale, a town with a population of 1,067 in 1850, promised sufficient support for the trustees to decide to remove the college to Hillsdale and to sell the buildings and property in Spring Arbor."

The people of Spring Arbor, who had already lost one denominational school to another town, were aroused over the possibility of losing a second school, one they had supported for almost ten years. Late in January, the same month that the trustees voted to entertain offers from other communities, a group of Spring Arbor residents met, passed a series of resolutions, and published them in Michigan newspapers, including the Jackson American Citizen, the paper published nearest Spring Arbor. The resolutions expressed "astonishment and regret" that the faculty "with a few others have privately concocted a scheme to remove or destroy the Institution, and that this secret conspiracy was concealed from the stockholders until" those who preferred
moving the college gained control. The resolutions called for the resignation of three trustees who had voted to remove the college, accused President Fairfield of having lied, labeled the action of the trustees "an act of gross injustice and ingratitude," and announced that "the stockholders and friends of Michigan Central College... regard Professors Fairfield, Dunn, Churchill and Thompson, as unworthy [of] their confidence and support."  

The following week, a letter to the editor of the American Citizen, signed "Spring Arbor," argued that faculty and trustees who intended to remove their connection to the Michigan Central College at Spring Arbor had the "right" to do so, "with as little injury as possible to the Institution." The Free Will Baptists were free to withdraw their support from the college, but they should not attempt to destroy the college, which, the author argued, was a Spring Arbor school, not a Free Will Baptist school, despite the fact that Free Will Baptists had dominated the board of trustees from the beginning. The charter, the writer correctly noted, did not establish the Michigan Central College at Spring Arbor as a Free Will Baptist school. "We pledge," the writer continued, "a sacred regard to the original intentions of the donors, to build up a literary Institution at Spring Arbor." The writer referred to the monies that Spring Arbor residents had contributed to the college and maintained that "the funds were contributed for
educational purposes, exclusively by the friends of education of all religious creeds, and of all political parties and sho'd not be used to advance the interest of one at the expense of another." This letter raised the issue of control. Did the college belong to a religious denomination? Or did the college belong to the townspeople who had supported the school?

Spring Arbor residents were not content to raise these issues only among the newspaper-reading public. They also filed suit in the circuit court of Jackson County against the Michigan Central College and the college trustees. Members of the Spring Arbor group argued that they, by virtue of their contributions to the college, were stockholders in the institution. The circuit court issued a preliminary injunction against the move to Hillsdale; the trustees could not sell or remove the property at Spring Arbor, nor could they legally collect money for or build a college at Hillsdale."

With this injunction, almost all work on the new building at Hillsdale ceased for the rest of 1853 and most of 1854. Enthusiasm for the college dropped considerably. The trustees named in the suit were frightened, as the charter of the college made them personally liable for judgments against the institution. Another problem that came to light during the litigation over the college was that the charter for the Michigan Central College specified
that the corporate entity of the college was the Michigan Central College at Spring Arbor. Not only did the trustees have no legal right to collect money for the purpose of building of college elsewhere, they could not take their current collegiate charter with them. Michigan state legislators were highly hostile at that time to denominational colleges that might compete with the state university at Ann Arbor, and were unlikely to charter a new Hillsdale College. Late in 1854, however, the circuit court judge found that the Michigan Central College had no stockholders; he dropped the injunction, which allowed the trustees to proceed with their plans.14

By this point, though, some Spring Arbor residents, having tried public indignation and litigation already, turned to intimidation and threatened violence as the only means of saving their college. In early January of 1854, after a rancorous meeting of the trustees, faculty member and trustee Charles Henry Churchill left the building, carrying the records of the trustees under his arm. As Churchill explained the matter, "suddenly I was violently assailed by James Videto who caught hold of the book & endeavored to wrest it from me by force." Churchill clung to the book and talked with Videto and others who gathered. Churchill was not alone. "Bro Fairfield & Bro. King stood by me & after a little manuevering I suddenly slipped it into Bro F's hand & it being rather dark he passed through
the midst of them & went his way." The urgency with which the Spring Arbor citizens wanted the trustee records became clearer later that evening, when a group of Spring Arbor residents came forward and claimed to be "duly elected Trustees of Mich. Central Coll." who were "entitled to seats" on the board of trustees. When the trustees already sitting on the board refused to allow the so-called trustees seats and voted that whatever meeting had elected these people had been illegal, the Spring Arbor faction withdrew, albeit not quietly. "They threaten law, tar & feathers, gunpowder &c.&c.," wrote Churchill. "We shall see."

Spring Arbor residents never did resort to violence, but they tried almost every means possible to keep the Michigan Central College. In late January of 1854, three of the Hillsdale faculty met in Spring Arbor with leading Spring Arbor citizens in an attempt to negotiate a settlement. Each side offered to take the charter and leave the other group with the buildings and the college debt. People in Spring Arbor, wrote Churchill, "hug the delusive hope . . . that when we leave, the Congregationalists will take the college & make a great thing of it. We offered to encourage the support of an academy here but no! a college alone will suit this magnanimous & high souled community." Churchill's comments underscore the determination of the people of Spring Arbor to have a college in their town.

The last attempt by Spring Arbor residents to gain
control of the records of Michigan Central College came in July, 1854. The secretary of the trustees recorded that "Messrs Benedict Wildie & Roberts citizens of Spring Arbor . . . demanded all the books belonging to the Sec. & Treas. of 'Mich. Central Coll. at Spring Arbor,' representing themselves as committee of the Board of Trustees of M.C.C at Spring Arbor." Here, one and a half years after the trustees voted to remove the college, was the culmination of the argument that appeared in the American Citizen in February, 1853; namely, that the Michigan Central College was inherently a Spring Arbor college, and that trustees and faculty could remove themselves from association with the college, but that they could not take the college with them. The trustees, faced with this committee, voted not to accept "any communication from these gentlemen as a committee." Finally, "Moses Benedict asked for the books as an individual which request was of course refused." This last attempt was all the more pathetic because Moses Benedict, a Methodist, had been one of the original donors who lured the Methodist seminary to Spring Arbor in 1835. Spurned by his own denomination within a few years, Benedict had helped to bring the Free Will Baptist school to Spring Arbor, had served on the board of trustees, and was one of the two trustees who had voted against removal. Now, Benedict had failed once again to sustain a college at Spring Arbor, at the end of twenty years of effort."
Although the Michigan Central College officially stopped functioning in the summer of 1853, Charles H. Churchill stayed in Spring Arbor at least until May of 1854 and ran a school of between fifty and one hundred students, before he, too, left. Even after the sheriff sold the buildings and property to pay college debts, the college library, some college records, and scientific apparatus remained in Spring Arbor. Spring Arborites tried to keep an advanced school running. In 1856 Fairfield wrote that "Tayler's College is at Spring Arbor yet—in full sail at this time." Whatever sort of school Tayler's College was, Tayler's College apparently did not last. Hillsdale College grew and prospered in Hillsdale, as the town also grew in size. The village of Spring Arbor declined after the loss of Michigan Central, although in the 1870s the residents attracted a Free Methodist school that has since become Spring Arbor College.

The story of Michigan Central College at Spring Arbor reveals some of the dynamics between towns whose residents wanted a college, and the denominations with members who could supply crucial support and leadership for a college, but who also did not always have the same motivations and goals as the town promoters. At Spring Arbor, the intense feeling on the part of the inhabitants that their small town needed a college is notable. For decades, the residents did their best to attract and keep an institution of higher
education. These town inhabitants understood the potential power of a college to improve a town in important ways. Unfortunately for those who resided in Spring Arbor, the Methodists and the Free Will Baptists, who had so much influence over their schools, were more attached to the schools than to the towns in which the schools were located.

**Indiana Asbury v. Greencastle, Indiana**

In the case of Indiana Asbury University and the town of Greencastle, disagreement over rules governing civil behavior, the power of the college within the community, and the ability of the college leaders to enforce moral standards upon college students led to a powerful clash of differing value systems in 1853 and 1854. In the fall of 1853, an event in Greencastle precipitated a widespread conflict between townspeople and college authorities. An African-American barber, Calvin Brown, accused an Indiana Asbury student, William Gregg, of committing adultery with Brown's wife. Gregg and others, in response, formed a mob and drove Brown and his family from Greencastle. The Indiana Asbury University newspaper and mouthpiece of the administration, *Asbury Notes*, condemned the mob. Soon after, the faculty of Indiana Asbury expelled Gregg for "riotous conduct and gross immorality." Here the incident might have ended, except that eighteen Greencastle residents sent to Gregg's father a letter, subsequently published in
the Greencastle newspaper, that commended Gregg's character and, at least by implication, criticized the Indiana Asbury officials for the dismissal of Gregg. These Greencastle townspeople considered the Gregg affair as something that involved them.

1853 was not the first year that townspeople expelled an African American from Greencastle. "Mr. Thornburgh and Old Mess had a terrible fight the other day," Ellen H. Simpson wrote to her husband Matthew, the president of Indiana Asbury, in 1843. "Thornburgh cut the poor fellow face awfully and tried to put him in the fire to burn his wool off. The citizens had a meeting on the occasion and decided that Mess was too saucy a nigger to have in Greencastle so they made him clear out." The historical record leaves no indication that college leaders responded to the 1843 expulsion. Ten years later, however, with a college student involved, the college leaders exercised their power to denounce the mob and expel Gregg.

The letter to Gregg's father indicated that some Greencastle residents were displeased with the leadership of Indiana Asbury, particularly with Lucien W. Berry, the president of the college since 1849. Greencastle was a predominantly Democratic town. When the presidency of the college had opened in 1848, local residents supported Greencastle resident, Indiana Asbury professor and acting president, Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction, and
Democrat William C. Larrabee. The mostly Whig board of trustees, however, selected Berry for the presidency.  

This political struggle upset Greencastle residents, as did Berry's aggressive temperance stance. Shortly after Berry assumed the presidency, Asbury Notes carried an editorial, "The Liquor Trade of Greencastle." "Greencastle has at present a liquor trade of no mean magnitude," the editorialist asserted. "Officers of the law—temperance men—every one who loves his kind—should be wide awake," and should "correct" the "faults" of Greencastle. Berry, in agreement with the editorialist, intended to use the power of the college to reform the town. When residents hostile toward the college authorities opposed the dismissal of Gregg, the issue grew into a battle between the supporters and the foes of temperance.

President Berry published a letter in a Greencastle newspaper, the Putnam Banner. This letter directly criticized the signatories of the letter that commended the character of Gregg. Berry also attacked indirectly. One signatory was a local storekeeper, Lucien Lemon, whom Berry had previously accused of selling liquor. One of Lemon's clerks lived in a boarding house with a number of Indiana Asbury students. Berry wrote to Mrs. Elder, who ran the boarding house, and directed her to remove the Lemon clerk from her boarding house, as Berry would not have Indiana Asbury students boarding under the same roof as a Lemon
clerk. Berry charged that Lemon had his clerks deliver alcohol and cards to students, leading to the corruption of the students. Elder refused Berry's request, at which point Berry ordered the students who lived at Elder's house to board elsewhere. When three or four students refused, Berry expelled them from the college."

At this point, Berry opened the door for potent criticisms, which were forthcoming. Townspeople charged that Berry was trying to run the business or even destroy the livelihood of Mrs. Elder, a widow. Townspeople also accused Berry of tyrannically and improperly governing the students of the college. T. H. Serrin, the clerk who worked for Lemon, complained he never had delivered cards or liquor to the Indiana Asbury students with whom he lived, and that Berry had sullied Serrin's good name unjustly."

Determined to be more than observers of this conflict, the Indiana Asbury students met together in the college chapel on January 2, 1854, and passed resolutions that they then published in the Putnam Banner and in Asbury Notes. The students announced they had heard people complain "that the laws of the University are too rigorous, that the members of the Faculty are tyrannical, and that we are required to sign a pledge which 'destroys the finer and nobler feelings of the student.'" The students argued that these criticisms bore directly upon their "honor and character," and that the students would respond, "without
being in the least influenced by the Faculty." The students resolved that the laws of Indiana Asbury were reasonable, and the leaders of the university "mild and parental." The students expressed confidence in their president and faculty, and resolved that they had "no sympathy with those persons who have lately made an abusive attack upon the Faculty." The student resolutions are important because they show that the students thought of themselves as an interested group in the dispute between the college leadership and the town residents. Opponents of the college leaders, however, dismissed the students as dependent puppets of the faculty."

These indirect conflicts led to a more direct confrontation in late January, when Lucien Lemon published a lengthy letter to Berry on the front page of the Putnam Banner. Lemon noted his hesitancy to enter into a public dispute, expressed his wish to provide quietly for his wife and children—and then castigated Berry thoroughly. Lemon claimed that "widows and orphans have been injured by you in character and dollars, because they saw fit to trade in my store." Lemon was "sorry . . . to see the most steady and reputable of young men driven from their boarding houses by you in malice, because they are in my employ." Lemon complained that Berry had not confronted Lemon directly and had not been honest about the true nature of their dispute. Lemon challenged Berry to "come out like a man, like an
American, and tell the world how I have injured you. Noble sir," continued Lemon, "is it because I signed young Gregg's certificate to his father?" Lemon defended Gregg's actions. "A low and dirty negro accused him of being too intimate with his wife--a negroe's wife!--and he ran him out of town! . . . Could or would you, have done less than young Gregg?"

Lemon speculated that perhaps he would have been better off had he acceded to Berry's wishes "when the delegation, last summer, headed by a minister of your church, came into my store . . . and at my desk told me if I did not pursue a different course, that is a course of yours, you would all be down on me." Lemon had replied to the delegation that they already "always had been" down on him. "Then he told me if I would attend your church, and your temperance conventions, my trade would increase one-third,--for you all then could patronize me upon principle." Lemon mused that perhaps he should have given in to the committee's wishes. He concluded, though, that he could not walk about Greencastle "a moving, living lie to all I feel and think is right, to gain a few paltry dollars." In this passage, Lemon acknowledged the long-standing animosity between himself and Berry, a representative of the temperance forces of Greencastle. Lemon also derided the tactics of the Greencastle temperance forces. Headed by a minister, a delegation had gone to Lemon's store and promised economic
prosperity if Lemon joined them, with the threat of economic ruin if Lemon opposed.

Having established from his own point of view a chronology and the issues at hand, Lemon proceeded to what he claimed was the overarching issue: freedom of speech and thought. "Remember," he instructed Berry, "I am only dealing with you as a leader in society, with power and influence for good or evil." Lemon urged Berry not to "band together in organizations to influence public opinion, and set . . . a damper on the free thoughts of men--for as Jefferson says: 'Error can be left free, if reason is left free to combat it.'" Lemon said that if he went to Austria and claimed that democratic institutions best led to happiness he would be hanged. If, however, a Russian governor came to Greencastle and lauded "serfdom and tyranny" in the Putnam County court house, the people would laugh at the Russian rather than hang him, "because we know our institutions are founded upon a great fact. The Blacksmith here can talk eloquently over his forge and iron, even upon politics. Human thoughts and expressions have a free and wide field to play upon," Lemon summarized, "don't curtail them."

In his letter, Lemon embraced ideological contests, but rejected the coercion of the temperance forces of Greencastle. In so doing, Lemon held up a vision of participation in civic life. Moreover, Lemon articulated
the relationship between the college and the town as he understood that relationship. Lemon acknowledged President Berry as a powerful "leader in society." The question was how far Berry's influence should extend. Lemon argued that Berry should not try unduly to press his own ideas onto others because in the United States everyone, including those who had not been to college, could decide their own affairs. Berry could express his ideas, but his temperance crusade intruded upon freedoms of thought and speech through economic coercion.

At the same time Lemon lectured Berry about the appropriate boundaries of civic behavior. Lemon also denied that those boundaries applied to treatment of African Americans. Peaceful church members who promised prosperity or economic boycotts depending on the temperance stance of a storekeeper were inappropriate, argued Lemon. But violent mobs that chased African Americans for leveling accusations against a white person were appropriate. Lemon's thinking was not illogical if, as appears to have been the case, Lemon did not include African Americans among those entitled to the normal protections and constraints of civil behavior.

Lemon was hardly alone in his thinking. Throughout the antebellum period in the Old Northwest, questions about race and citizenship divided the populace. In this instance, Lemon and like-minded townspeople opposed the philosophy of the Indiana Asbury leaders. To be sure, Berry and his
supporters did not explicitly argue on behalf of African American citizenship. In Berry's letters and in the Asbury Notes, the stance was that mobs of all types were inappropriate. The Asbury Notes editor, when he first mentioned the mob, concluded that "all good citizens will frown upon a mob." This declaration of what lay outside civilized behavior, with no exceptions, only indirectly defended the right of African Americans not to be mob victims. Still, the disagreement with Gregg, Lemon, and others, was sharp."

The day after Lemon's long letter appeared, Asbury Notes included an editorial that approached the conflict from another angle. The editorial explicitly addressed only the issue of the responsibility of the college to educate students, although the underlying conflict over temperance was clearly at issue. The editorialist claimed that "Some men would have a College a place where superior instruction is furnished in all the branches of a high and finished education--but where no attention is paid to the moral nature." Such a college would be "a hot bed of vice--a moral plague spot on community--a pest to society. The day never has been and we trust never will be when moral and intellectual training will be separated in the Asbury University." This editorialist reinforced the idea that educators should provide more than just a mental education, and take interest in the moral character of students."
Lemon's letter and the Asbury Notes editorial marked the end of the affair in the newspapers, but hard feelings continued between the townspeople and Berry. Meanwhile, Berry's unpopularity among so many residents of Greencastle spilled over into a political struggle within the Methodist Church over control of Indiana Asbury University. The most powerful critics of Berry on the Board of Trustees included the governor of Indiana, Joseph A. Wright, and one of the Methodist bishops in Indiana, E. R. Ames. Berry alleged that Ames had said "if Bro. B. dont get more popular with the students & with the citizens it may be necessary to have a new president," and Berry reported on other Methodists he believed were plotting against him. Berry did his best to counter his enemies by arousing the support of his friends, but his efforts were ultimately for naught."

In July, 1854, at the close of the college year, the trustees convened for their annual meeting and examined the events of the preceding year. The trustees accepted and read a petition critical of Berry signed by fifty students, then received and read petitions from "students and citizens opposed to the first petition." Privately, the trustees pushed Berry to resign his post. After Berry agreed to resign, the trustees publicly expressed their full confidence in both the president and the faculty. Three of the most notable faculty members also resigned."

Following the meeting of the trustees at which Berry
resigned, he wrote a letter in which he detailed the events of the meeting. The trustees, planning to unseat Berry, drafted a resolution "to approve my administration, to speak in terms of highest compliment of my literary and scientific attainments, of my success as a teacher, &c and they added he is deficient in social qualities and therefore reccommend that the chair be vacated." Berry then did what he wished later he would not have done, and resigned. "They then left off the report all about defects & vacating the chair and made a report entirely commendatory."

The events of 1853 and 1854 in Greencastle demonstrate many of the values of the college, and responses to those values, in the antebellum Old Northwest. First, the college leaders exercised their claimed authority over the moral conduct of students when they expelled Gregg for his adulterous and riotous behavior. The expulsion, however, triggered a battle between numerous Greencastle residents and the college leadership over their conflicting visions of the appropriate bounds of civil behavior, particularly in reference to the legitimacy of mobs. In this conflict, some Greencastle residents questioned the appropriateness of the college's authority over the moral conduct of students, and certainly challenged the influence of the college's role in determining the social ways of Greencastle, particularly in respect to the availability of alcohol. At the forefront of that issue was money. Lucien Lemon, a businessman, opposed
temperance forces dictating how he would make money. Further, President Berry provoked some residents of Greencastle when he interfered with the ability of townspeople to board anyone they chose. Tied to this dispute, of course, were differing political party loyalties and political wrangling among Methodists around the state, from the trustees to Professor Larrabee, who had wanted the presidency when Berry was selected. Also important in the dispute was that students, hardly passive, saw themselves as an interested group in this process. While the students did not act unanimously, they organized and expressed their convictions.

In contrast to the events in Spring Arbor, Greencastle town residents who agreed with Lucien Lemon prevailed in their dispute with the leadership of Indiana Asbury. Together, the two events present a picture of the contested relations between the college and the town.

Conclusion

As the scores of small colleges in the Old Northwest grew, they had an increasingly important effect, particularly on immediate towns. A college not only served as a locus of leadership and thought for the denomination connected to the school, but also as a source of civic leadership within the community, as presidents and professors worked among town residents to fulfill their
visions of what the town could become, and students lived, worked, and studied in the area. The college also attracted further educational enterprises, as well as town residents who valued education for their children. Thus a college could amplify the work of educationally-minded townspeople who attracted or founded a college.

The people of Spring Arbor worked diligently for decades to secure a college, only to have the trustees of a most promising school, the Michigan Central College, conclude that Spring Arbor was not a sufficiently thriving town to support the continued growth of the school. The decision to leave Spring Arbor and to relocate to Hillsdale set in motion a chain of events that illustrates the power of the college to influence town growth or decline, as well as the character of a town, and the responses of the people of Hillsdale and Spring Arbor to the situation underscores their understanding of the importance of a college in their midst.

At the same time, colleges could function within towns in ways that did not always sit well with townspeople, as is shown in the case of Greencastle and Indiana Asbury University. There, townspeople and college leaders clashed over the proper role of the college and its representatives in the community, over differing ideas about temperance, mobs, African Americans and the boundaries of citizenship and civil behavior. The conflict highlighted the limits of
the influence of the college, particularly when Berry lost his job because denominational leaders were so sensitive to the townspeople and the minority of students who were so vehemently opposed to Berry.

Here, then, we see the institutional presence of the college, at once a product of the Old Northwest and an institution that was pushing in new directions, toward new definitions of the bounds of civil behavior and the appropriateness of various social ways. The next chapter continues this theme by examining the influence of the college on the growth of common school education.
1. George E. Leonard to "Sister Sarah," March 18, 1851, Archives, Denison University, Granville, Ohio.

2. Elliott M. Bowman to Henry S. Cauthorn, October 25, 1848, Box 2, Cauthorn-Stout Family Papers, M41, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis; Samuel Wesley Williams to Samuel Williams, February 5, 1852, Box 8, Folder 5, Samuel Williams and Samuel Wesley Williams Papers, MSS 148, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio; Diary of Thomas Clark King, February 5, 1855, Folder 68, King Family Papers, Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois; H. M. Perkins to ?, March 20, 1858, Box 8, Folder 9, Samuel Williams and Samuel Wesley Williams Papers, MSS 148, Ohio Historical Society.


4. John Sala to Matthew Simpson, August 9, 1841, Box 4, Bishop Matthew Simpson Papers, Library of Congress; Eben Curtis to General Agent, Oberlin College, February 12, 1842, Roll 8, Frame 264, "Letters Received by Oberlin College, 1822-1866," Archives, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio; Jonathan Jennings to Ransom Dunn, February 13, 1855, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan; W. H. H. Myers to Ransom Dunn, June 22, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers; R. R. Walters to Ransom Dunn, July 1, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers; [S. J. and M. Strealy?] to Rev. A. McHarry [?], 1856?, Early Ohio Wesleyan University Letters, Ohio Wesleyan Historical Collections, Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio.

5. A. Eddy to Rev. F. Merrick, June 1, 1853, Early Ohio Wesleyan University Letters, Ohio Wesleyan Historical Collections, Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio.


8. E. B. Fairfield to Ransom Dunn, November 22, 1848, Box 1, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor Michigan; E. B. Fairfield to Ransom Dunn, November 20, [1848], Box 1, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; Moore, The First Hundred Years, 14-15; E. B. Fairfield to Ransom Dunn, September 18, 1851, Box 1, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library.

9. E. B. Fairfield to Ransom Dunn, July 28, 1852, Box 1, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; E. B. Fairfield to Ransom Dunn, August 9, 1852, Box 1, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library (letter misfiled in 1853 material); Trustee Minutes, January 5, 1853, "Records of the Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Mich. Central College at Spring Arbor," Office of the Vice President for Administration, Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan.

Historians have long disagreed about who was responsible for initiating the move from Spring Arbor. The daughter of Ransom Dunn credited her father with the idea. Dunn, at the time, was a professor at Michigan Central College, having arrived to take that position in 1852. Helen Dunn Gates, A Consecrated Life: A Sketch of the Life and Labors of Rev. Ransom Dunn, D.D., 1818-1900 (Boston, Mass: Morning Star Publishing House, 1901) 110. Lorenzo Reynolds, who had studied at the Michigan Central College in the late 1840s and early 1850s, quickly rebutted Gates, with some evidence, in a booklet that appeared the following year. Reynolds, who had something of a vendetta against Ransom Dunn, argued that the president, Edmund B. Fairfield, had been the originator of the plan to move the college. Among other pieces of evidence, Reynolds wrote to Fairfield, who was still living, and asked him, ostensibly without making reference to the dispute, about who had originated the idea to move the college from Spring Arbor. Fairfield replied that he himself had the idea, and talked Ransom Dunn out of purchasing a house in Spring Arbor.
by explaining to Dunn that the college might move. Lorenzo Reynolds, *The True Review* (1902), 2-3; on Reynolds' distaste for Dunn generally, see Lorenzo P. Reynolds, *The Story of Fifty Years, from 1846 to 1896* (n.p.: n.p., 1896; supplements, 1897, 1898, 1899). Spring Arbor residents who opposed the move of the college assigned responsibility to Fairfield, who, they claimed, "exultingly confessed himself the prime mover." *American Citizen* (Jackson, Michigan), February 2, 1853, 2:5. The most recent history of Hillsdale College assigns, without documentation, the idea to Ransom Dunn. Gilbert, *Historic Hillsdale*, 27. The July 28, 1852, letter from Fairfield to Dunn, in combination with the findings of Reynolds and the arguments of the Spring Arbor opponents, indicate to this writer that the evidence supports Fairfield as the originator of the idea of moving. Certainly both men supported the idea, at a time when Fairfield had been president of the institution for four years and Dunn had served as a professor for under a year.

10. E. B. Fairfield to Ransom Dunn, January 26, 1853, Box 1, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library (emphasis original); Trustee Minutes, February 16, 1853, "Records . . . of the Michigan Central College"; Trustee Minutes, May 25, 1853, "Records . . . of the Michigan Central College".

11. "Michigan Central College," *The American Citizen* (Jackson, Michigan), February 2, 1853, 2:4-5. The Board of Trustees responded to these and like aspersions in the official proceedings, but not until July. Trustee Minutes, July 6, 1853, "Records . . . of the Michigan Central College at Spring Arbor."


13. Trustee Minutes, September 6, 1853, "Records . . . of the Michigan Central College at Spring Arbor." Even though the trustee minutes read that the suit was filed August 27, 1853, President Fairfield wrote a letter much earlier, in February, 1853, which he opened with the line, "So they have an injunction on us!" Fairfield followed this line with an account of his talks with lawyers, their advice on the matter, and Fairfield's own ideas about how to settle the matter with the Spring Arbor residents. E. B. Fairfield to Ransom Dunn, February 10, 1853, Box 1, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library.

"there are no stockholders of Mich. Central College at Spring Arbor such a word being used but not defined in the charter."


16. C. H. Churchill to Ransom Dunn, January 28, 1854, Box 1, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library.

17. Trustee Minutes, July 5, 1854, "Records . . . of the Mich. Central College." On Benedict as a Methodist, see Terman, Spring Arbor Township, 225.

18. On the library and apparatus, see L. B. Potter to Ransom Dunn, May 30, 1854, Box 1, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; H. J. King to Ransom Dunn, May 31, 1852, Box 1, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library. On the buildings and property, see C. H. Churchill to Ransom Dunn, December 2, 1854, Box 1, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library. On Churchill's school in Spring Arbor, see H. F. Bean to Obadiah Rogers, November 24, [1853], Obadiah Rogers Correspondence, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan; C. H. Churchill to Ransom Dunn, January 9, 1854, and May 2, 1854, Box 1, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library. On Tayler's College, see E. B. Fairfield to Ransom Dunn, October 26, 1856, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library. The zeal for a college was not gone from Spring Arbor. Two decades later, in the early 1870s, Free Methodists in Michigan decided to build a school and looked at the Spring Arbor location. The Free Methodists decided to establish their school in Spring Arbor if the residents would purchase ten acres on which Michigan Central College had been located and repair the dilapidated buildings. Spring Arbor residents accomplished the task and Spring Arbor to this day has an institution of higher education. See Killion, "A History of Spring Arbor Seminary and Junior College."

19. Lucien Lemon to Lucien W. Berry, (Greencastle) Putnam Banner, January 25, 1854, 1:2-3; "A Mob," (Greencastle) Asbury Notes September 1, 1853; "Trouble at Greencastle," Putnam Banner, January 11, 1854, 2:2 (quotation); Henry Secrest to Mr. Patrick, Putnam Banner, January 4, 1854, 2:5; "Trouble at Greencastle," Putnam Banner January 11, 1854, 2:2. For two other accounts of this same incident, see George B. Manhart, DePauw Through the Years 2 vols. (Greencastle, Indiana: DePauw University, 1962), 1:52-53; and William Warren Sweet, Indiana


21. On Berry's Whig leanings, see Lucien W. Berry to Matthew Simpson, November 24, 1851, Box 5, Bishop Matthew Simpson Papers, Library of Congress. On the politics involved in the competition between Berry and Larrabee over the presidency of the college, see Lucien W. Berry to Matthew Simpson, February 5, 1849; June 14, 1849; and July 17, 1849; and William M. Daily to Matthew Simpson, July 19, 1849, all in Box 5, Bishop Matthew Simpson Papers, Library of Congress; see also, "Trouble at Greencastle," Putnam Banner January 11, 1854, 2:2. Berry was born in 1815 in Aburg, Vermont. By the age of eighteen, he moved to the Old Northwest, where he worked as a Methodist minister before he became an educator. See Berry's brief obituary in the (Cincinnati) Western Christian Advocate, July 28, 1858, 2:1.


23. T. H. Serrin to Mr. Editor, Putnam Banner January 11, 1854, 3:1. Lucien Lemon regularly advertised dry goods, jewelry, groceries, shoes, clothing, and hardware in the Putnam Banner.

24. Lucien Lemon to Lucien W. Berry, Putnam Banner, January 25, 1854, 1:2; "Resolutions Adopted by the Students of Indiana Asbury University," Putnam Banner, January 4, 1854, 2:4; T. H. Serrin to Mr. Editor, Putnam Banner, January 11, 1854, 3:1. Serrin's letter also included evidence that Berry had written to another landlady in Greencastle and instructed her to dismiss any Lemon clerks who lived at her home.


26. Lucien Lemon to Lucien W. Berry, Putnam Banner, January 25, 1854, 1:2-3 (emphasis original).

27. Lucien Lemon to Lucien W. Berry, Putnam Banner, January 25, 1854, 1:2-3.


32. Minutes, July 17-18, 1854, Joint Board of Trustees and Visitors of the Indiana Asbury University, Archives, DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana; Lucien W. Berry to Bishop Simpson, July 22, 1854, Box 5, Bishop Matthew Simpson Papers, Library of Congress. Although the Minutes indicate that the Trustees received petitions, the July 22 letter from Berry to Simpson includes the evidence concerning the contents of the petitions. Berry wrote, "There were 50 students petitioned for my removal. Over 20 of them had been under college discipline; from 16 to 20 were minors--mere boys, and the rest entered it in the spirit of rebellion. ... There were counter Petitions from the advanced classes & from 100 citizens all got up in an hour or two."

33. Lucien W. Berry to Bishop Simpson, July 22, 1854, Box 5, Bishop Matthew Simpson Papers, Library of Congress.
The college was a highly important institution in the spread of education beyond the college. Discussions of the development of public education in the Old Northwest have traditionally lamented the haphazard, decentralized, and locally-controlled systems of education that dominated most of the nineteenth century. These same historians have lauded the rise of systematic, tax-supported, state systems of public education. In fact, though, historians know little about the variety and complexity of the sectarian and non-sectarian, the private and public schools that were known by a variety of names, including academies, female seminaries, district schools, and colleges. Nor do historians know much about the experience inside the schoolhouse for student or teacher. Most historians, when they have mentioned teachers at all, have disparaged them as transient and ill-prepared amateurs who educated poorly. Generally, historians implicitly compare these early schools
to the professional system that eventually developed, rather than to the realistic alternative at the time—no school at all.

This chapter discusses the critical role played by the colleges in the advance of primary and secondary education, including the rise of a publicly-funded common school system. While some contemporaries argued that colleges retarded the growth of common and public school education, college leaders were actually the foremost proponents of common schools. Colleges not only served as magnets for other educational facilities, but the collegiate system in the antebellum Old Northwest also functioned in a way that allowed college students to teach winter schools for three months each year. This chapter relates the experiences of these students as they learned from, and sought to teach and influence, the people they encountered outside the bounds of the college. In part, the dual role of these college students demonstrates the uncloistered nature of the Old Northwest college. College students were not insulated from the towns in which they lived, and these students traveled throughout the region to teach schools. In so doing, they met new people, observed new customs, learned new things. Their experiences provide a glimpse into the Old Northwest world of social interaction, and regional priorities and values concerning education.
A Variety of Proponents

Similar to the patterns of higher education within the region, education in the antebellum Old Northwest was varied; the system of education was not centralized. State legislators let educationally-minded individuals, churches, and denominations assume the responsibility for the education of the population. And churches did establish schools, which often grew from church Sunday Schools. Because single churches were often unable to begin a school alone, in most communities various denominations worked together to provide what was normally a thoroughly Protestant yet non-sectarian education for the children of the community. Also, the impulse to found schools for children went beyond the desire to educate the children of church members. Churches and denominations looked upon education as a part of their mission activities. In 1836, Jonas Pettyjohn wrote to Oberlin about the possibility of attending college there, but needed to know if Oberlin's schedule would fit with his own, as he was "engaged in teaching an African school near Chillicothe," in Ohio. "The Chillicothe presbytery," reported Pettyjohn, "has undertaken to establish a school in every settlement of blacks within their bounds . . . . They now have four schools a going on under their care."^1

With this central involvement in education by churches, college leaders, with close ties to denominational interests
and a devotion to collegiate education, unsurprisingly supported the growth of non collegiate education. Nonetheless, contemporaries sometimes criticized Old Northwest college-founding as a barrier to the encouragement of general schooling. In 1845, before he assumed the presidency of Antioch College, Horace Mann argued that a law of nature was no more dependable than the rule that "colleges and academies never will act downwards to raise the mass of the people by education." Mann and others believed that a complete educational system should advance logically, with primary schools, then secondary, and then, finally, the tertiary colleges. Otherwise, from where would college students come if colleges did not rest upon a developed system of earlier education? In practice, however, the Old Northwest private colleges stimulated, rather than retarded, the growth of primary and secondary education.¹

This stimulation often occurred because college educators worked to advance public education. One historian has concluded that the leaders of the colleges in Indiana and Illinois deserved the credit for almost all of the educational advances in those states through 1850. Indiana's best known proponent of public school education was Caleb Mills, who became state superintendent of education while he was a professor at Wabash College. Similarly, in the 1850s, Professor Charles Larrabee, of
Indiana Asbury University, won the state superintendency of Indiana and worked for expansion of public education. In Ohio, in 1850 Lorin Andrews left the presidency of Kenyon College to head the State Teachers' Association. At least three other Old Northwest college presidents served as state superintendents of instruction prior to presiding over a college. No evidence exists to show that persons associated with the colleges discouraged the advance of public education. When townspeople held a meeting in Galesburg, Illinois, about a proposed public high school, and one resident expressed concern that the high school might compete for students with the academy attached to Knox College, Knox President Jonathan Blanchard announced to all present "if Knox Academy stands in the way of public schools for Galesburg, perish the Academy."

People involved with non-collegiate education assumed that college leaders were interested in common school education. A Miss DeBartholt, of Madison, Indiana, wrote in 1844 to John Finley Crowe, the president of nearby Hanover College. Though she had not met Crowe, DeBartholt explained that she was writing "to solicit the favour of your advice and assistance in procuring a location for a female seminary." DeBartholt and her sisters had located in Madison the previous fall and had been teaching music classes since that time. Because of a large number of teachers in Madison, however, competition for students was
stiff. DeBartholt wondered if she and her sisters might profitably begin a "Female boarding and day school" in Hanover. "We teach," DeBartholt informed Crowe, "the english literary branches, with Music, Drawing and Painting, and the usefull and ornamental Needle works. . . . We have been engag'd in the business of teaching for the greater part of our lives." DeBartholt was far from uncommon in the Old Northwest. Many women, as well as men, taught schools.

**College Students as Teachers**

What historians have mentioned only rarely is that many teachers in the antebellum Old Northwest were college students. The majority of these teachers taught common schools, but Sunday schools were also standard. A Kenyon College student mentioned in 1830 that students who desired to spread their religious beliefs "have about a dozen Sunday-schools, from two to seven miles distant . . . each of which is under the care of two or three students." College presidents and professors not only encouraged a common school system by lobbying state legislators and popularizing the advantages of schools, they also provided their college students as teachers for these schools. College students willingly taught. John Larwill wrote to his father in December, 1855, and mentioned that he had begun a new term at Granville College. Larwill mentioned
how many students were in the college, and noted that "a good many of the old ones are Teaching this winter." In 1860 the State Commissioner of Common Schools for Ohio cited the high percentage of teachers in the state who were college students. Oberlin alone, he had learned, supplied over five hundred teachers within the state; throughout the region, other colleges also supplied thousands of teachers for common schools."

Danforth B. Nichols

In the late 1830s, in early December, John Colwell rode into Granville, Ohio, and inquired of a Granville College trustee, who worked in the saddlery, where he might hire a schoolteacher. The trustee introduced Colwell to Granville College student Danforth Nichols, who Colwell hired to teach a winter school about eight miles distant. The school was to begin after Christmas. Nichols would receive ten dollars each month and board in the households of his students.

On the appointed day, Danforth walked along roads and pathways until he came to the right place, only to be discouraged when he found that the schoolhouse was an incomplete log structure that "had a roof of split clapboards; but no door, no chimney, and windows were visible." Nichols had to wait a week before he could begin his school while the people who lived in the area built a chimney, installed a floor and window frames, hanged a door,
and built writing desks and benches. Then Nichols began teaching about twenty young scholars. While the neighborhood was quite friendly and Nichols faced no hostility from his students, he concluded that the educational state of the area was "decidedly of a low order." The students brought antiquated textbooks to school and opposed Nichols' efforts to persuade them to purchase newer books.

Nichols joined in social activities with his students and the families who lived in the area. He went to dances, helped make sugar, did chores, and went to log rollings and a wedding. But when the school ended three months later, Nichols had saved hardly any money, despite strict economy, so he took another district school three miles further for the following three months. At the end of that period he had saved seven dollars. He then returned to Granville to continue his studies.

Nichols, like many students, financed much of his own education. Born in 1816 to poor parents in Rehoboth, Massachusetts, Nichols worked during his boyhood in a dairy, a tailor's shop, and a bakery. He went to school in Providence, Rhode Island, in the preparatory department of Brown University. Nichols was almost ready to enter the regular collegiate course of study at Brown when he was reunited with a former teacher who had since removed to Ohio to teach at Granville College. This man told Nichols to
come study at Granville College, that the manual labor system of that school was perfectly suited to Nichols' needs to be able to work while in school. Attracted by his personal association with a former teacher and by the possibility of manual labor, Nichols decided to go to college in the Old Northwest. There, he performed manual labor and taught school, as did many of his peers. While Nichols was not entirely forthcoming about the effects he had upon his students, and the effects the students and area had upon him, other teachers were more revealing.

**Elijah Evan Edwards**

In 1848, a school superintendent examined Elijah Evan Edwards, an Indiana Asbury student, to determine Edwards' fitness to teach school. The examination, according to Edwards, "was not severe." After the superintendent asked Edwards if he could read, spell, and write his name legibly, "He asked me to read a passage, to spell and to write my name. I passed the ordeal triumphantly," wrote Edwards in his diary. "He at once made out a certificate empowering me to teach in any of the public schools of Warren Co."

Although many examiners were more demanding than Edwards', few college students had difficulty obtaining license to teach.' Edwards apparently did not use his license that year, but in late December of 1849 Edwards was out of money. "I
was almost in despair," he explained in his diary. Edwards "had heard nothing from father and was contemplating sadly the empty cracker box in the corner." At this point he received an offer to teach a school in Romney, Tippecanoe County, to the north. "I decided instantly to go." There, Edwards had an enjoyable time teaching school, and he found that the residents of Romney were no strangers to the style of debate that went on in the college literary societies. One evening the Romneyites invited the Canadians, who lived across the river Wea, to debate at the schoolhouse. Edwards recorded that the "momentous question was thus stated-- "Resolved:--That a dog is more serviceable than a gun." The Canadians . . . contended hotly for the dogs, while the romeyites stubbornly stood up for the guns." The debate was both long and heated, and Edwards concluded that "Fortunately there were neither dogs nor guns present, or the contest might ended disastrously with roar of gun and yalp of cur."10

Edwards' experiences illustrate that the practices going on outside the college were quite similar to those within. Edwards left the college environment only to find that the Romneyites entertained themselves and participated civically in the same fashion as college students, arguing their positions publicly and critically examining ideas. Instead of letting the river Wea divide them, the Romneyites and the Canadians came together, even if it meant they
opposed each other in debate.

John F. Rogers

In 1854, while a student at Michigan Central College in Spring Arbor, John F. Rogers decided to teach school. He first traveled to Lexington, Kentucky, but while he found Kentucky beautiful, "the schools I did not like. . . . There is not a decent schoolhouse in the country in all KY." Rogers retraced his steps into Ohio, where he found work as a teacher in Preble County, among "settlers from Penn or Virginia Dutchmen & Southerners. The most of them wealthy."11

The Preble County residents immediately welcomed Rogers as the schoolteacher and took him about the village of Upshur and into the surrounding countryside to meet people. As Rogers explained in a letter, introductions began with

'This is our Master for this winter,' Then I fall to shaking hands &c, without even hearing the name of those I am speaking to. When I come in the midst of a crowd I just speak & shake hands with all and enquire after their health &c not waiting for an introduction for I might wait in vain.

Rogers was initially startled by these habits of exuberant friendliness, and he thought of himself as different from the Preble County residents. "When I call on the young Buckeyes," he wrote, "they get down a fiddle and saw away for hours." Rogers decided he "had rather listen to a mangy pig Scratching against a sliver on a fence rail." Still, he was willing to be influenced by the people for whom he
worked. Rogers, for example, went to church with his new neighbors. "We have good society here," he concluded. "Besides the regular meeting on Sundays, there are prayer meetings on Sunday Weds & Thurs evenings. The United Brethren are numerous in this region." By January he reported "I have been learning the German language some, and have got to be quite a Dutch Yankee." Rogers was by no means the only "Dutch Yankee" in the Old Northwest. A pattern of cultural hybridization was ongoing throughout the region, as people acquired ways and habits that obscured their origins in a different region."

Rogers' job as a schoolteacher epitomizes the Midwestern experience during this period, as groups from a wide variety of backgrounds met together in the Old Northwest states. Like Rogers and the Preble County residents, they encountered each other and found that over time they took on each others' cultural traits.

Newell and Francis Dunn

The encounters, however, were not always congenial between teachers and students. During the winter of 1859-1860, two brothers from Hillsdale College, Newell and Francis Dunn, planned to use their winter break to teach school and earn money. "I have got a school for you," announced H. G. Woodworth, a Free Will Baptist from Wheatland, Kenosha County, Wisconsin, in an October letter
to Newell Dunn. "20 Dollars per month and you board with
the scholars." Woodworth told Newell to "come calculating
to act the man," and inquired if Newell were a Christian:
"you should be to teach school." Woodworth also hoped
Newell would "help me in my work of redeeming Wheatland."
Eighteen-year-old Newell packed and left Hillsdale and
traveled to Wisconsin.**13**

Newell arrived in late October and within a few days
passed his certification examination. As he wrote to his
father afterward, the examiner, the town superintendent of
schools in Wheatland, had turned away numerous persons who
were qualified to teach. "He turned away one fellow because
he could not tell the principle grain in Europe." During an
afternoon of questions, Newell satisfied the examiner. The
next day Newell received a certificate that entitled him to
teach a common school in Wheatland for as long as one year,
and signed a contract to teach school there for the coming
four months. In Hillsdale, Newell's younger brother Francis
also found employment as a teacher. Francis wrote to
Newell, "I have engaged a school out in the county about 2
1/2 miles at $20 a month and boarded there are only twenty
students I expect to have a nice time with sleigh rides
spelling schools &c."**14**

The Dunn brothers soon found that teaching was hardly a
lark. Newell wrote to his father in mid-November that he
was "teaching a school as best I can." Newell had found
that "mere moral suasion" was insufficient, and he had to "take the whip into the school house." Francis, who also passed a certification examination to teach, had his own problems. Only a few days after the school began, Francis wrote to his father that this time was "the last time that I shall ever teach a school. I have gone into the school fat and hearty but if it keeps on in this way by spring it will take six or seven of me to make a shadow." Francis had expected twenty students, but now he already had twenty-eight, and expected eight or ten more. The number of students was overwhelming. Another Hillsdale student and friend of Francis wrote to Francis that he had no time to be homesick, "for my school has increased in number to forty so you see that I have to just 'hump myself'" to manage everything. Within a week Francis wanted to quit. Just shy of his sixteenth birthday, Francis wrote to Newell that his was "the hardest school in the country." Francis had almost forty students, including "from ten to fifteen large scholars." "I already have two that are at least twenty, one coming next week twenty two and another nineteen," worried Francis. "Most of these are ugly . . . it would be better to quit now than to keep on and get turned out."

Soon, Francis did quit. He felt that the superintendent had misled him, having promised fifteen or twenty students and an easy school. By the time Francis left he already had over thirty students. He learned that
the school was quite difficult and the previous winter an old man who could not enforce discipline taught there. While he had experienced no physical violence at the school, Francis worried that the biggest students would eventually take over. After Francis left, the school continued under a replacement and Francis felt ashamed to have quit, despite a consoling letter from his father."

Francis was perhaps justified in his fears. His replacement managed to teach successfully, "by considerable whipping," including whipping a boy "who was going to throw a pair of skates at him." Such situations were not uncommon. While Oberlin student Welcome Benham taught school in 1839 without whipping even one student, another Oberlin student suffered a serious injury in 1859 when one of his charges hit him in the head with the poker for the fire."

Francis' brother Newell continued to teach in Wisconsin. He was determined that the students would either love him or fear him, and he did not care which sentiment prevailed. In early December he wrote in his diary that he "jerked one boy for lying yesterday into the middle of the floor & set him down pretty solid." Because the laws of Wisconsin did not allow Newell to use corporal punishment, "I have to do it by jerking &c. I do not know whether I make the scholars learn or not," Newell wrote, "but I try to." Newell was not afraid to punish his students.

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regularly, as "I have only two boys who will weigh more than I do. I could flail the whole school in a pitched battle." Later in the month Newell fell into trouble because "some of the dutch" accused him of favoring certain students and removed their children from the school. Newell's troubles continued. By January, his popularity was quite low, at least one student wanted to fight him, and Newell expected to be beaten. Francis told Newell that despite the fact that some people wanted him to leave, "your school is so near out that I would teach it through. . . . push it through if you have to maul the whole school and kill half the district," Francis suggested. "Dont be in a hurry with your knife or stick of wood," though, Francis warned: "use moral suasion first." Clearly, Newell and Francis Dunn were hardly exemplars of successful teaching. Still, their experiences reveal important aspects of teaching, such as the licensing process, expectations of teachers, and an example of the actual classroom experience.

Conclusion

This chapter only begins to explore the relationship of the colleges to wider educational efforts, to say nothing of an even broader public culture that included lyceums, libraries, newspapers, debate societies, and bookstores. Still, the chapter does establish that college leaders promoted the growth of primary and secondary education and
were often tied to the support of public education. College students were an important part of this process as they worked in schools throughout the region, usually to support their own collegiate education.

The varied experiences of Danforth Nichols, Elijah Edwards, John Rogers, and Newell and Francis Dunn tell a great deal about the educational opportunities in the region, as well as how college students were received by their students and students' families. Much work remains in this area, to understand the great variety of educators and educational systems that operated during this period, and any full examination will necessarily include a full appreciation of the involvement of the private denominational colleges.
1. Jonas Pettyjohn to Asa Mahan, "February 9, 1836, Roll 2: September, 1834-February, 1836," Letters Received by Oberlin College, 1822-1866," Archives, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. See, also, R. C. Galbraith, Jr., The History of the Chillicothe Presbytery: From Its Organization in 1799 to 1889 (Chillicothe, Ohio: Scioto Gazette Book and Job Office, 1889), especially 123-149; and J. Mark Stewart, "The Chillicothe Presbytery in Ohio's Anti-Slavery Movement in the 1820's and 1830's" (M.A. thesis, Ohio State University, 1971). Clarissa Wright, daughter of Elizur Wright, Jr., was another of these teachers. See the Elizur Wright, Jr., papers at the Western Reserve Historical Society.


2. Horace Mann to H. B. Gooch, November 15, 1845, in Edgar W. Knight, ed., A Documentary History of Education in the South Before 1860 (5 volumes. Chapel Hill: University of
Timothy L. Smith, "Uncommon Schools," 28-32, makes this same point. Young Matthew Simpson, as he prepared his inaugural address when he became the first president of Indiana Asbury University, wanted to go even further. He sent a draft of his remarks to his uncle, who commented "you say common schools never did and [never] can exist without Colleges." His uncle questioned the truth of that statement, then added, "But it may be safely affirmed that common schools and Colleges are mutually promotive of each other." Matthew Simpson to Matthew Simpson, August 8, 1840, Box 3, Bishop Matthew Simpson Papers, Library of Congress.


4. Miss DeBartholt to J. F. Crowe, February 24, 1844, Folder 1, Box 4, John Finley Crowe Papers, Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana. For another example of a female schoolteacher, see Louis Filler, ed., An Ohio Schoolmistress: The Memoirs of Irene Hardy (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1980).


10. Diary of Elijah Evan Edwards, December 20, 1849, and February 8, 1850, Folder 2, L49, Indiana State Library (emphasis original).

11. J. F. Rogers to "Dear Friends," October 2, 1854, Obadiah Rogers Correspondence, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library; J. F. Rogers to "Brother," October 9, 1854, Obadiah Rogers Correspondence, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library. Later, in another letter, Rogers described in more detail his observations from his week in Kentucky, where he "had time to notice much of their customs & manners, which I assure you differ from those of the Wolverines." Rogers was most struck by the corn bread and pork diet, the kindness and hospitality of the people, and the large amounts of liquor and tobacco he saw consumed and used. John F. Rogers, to "Friends," November 2, 1854 and January 11, 1855, Obadiah Rogers Correspondence, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

12. J. F. Rogers to "Brother," October 9, 1854, Obadiah Rogers Correspondence, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, (emphasis original); John F. Rogers to "Friends," November 2, 1854, Obadiah Rogers Correspondence, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library (emphasis original); J. F. Rogers to "Friends," January 11, 1855, Obadiah Rogers Correspondence, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library (emphasis original).

13. H. G. Woodworth to N. R. Dunn, October 10, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

14. Newell Ransom Dunn to Ransom Dunn, October 26, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; N. R. Dunn's certification of examination, October 28, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; Newell Ransom Dunn to Ransom Dunn, October 29, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; N. R. Dunn's teacher
contract, October 29, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; F. W. Dunn to N. R. Dunn, November 5, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library.

15. N. R. Dunn to Ransom Dunn, November 18, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; F. W. Dunn to Ransom Dunn, November 21, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; F. W. Dunn to Ransom Dunn, November 31, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; J. S. Davis to Francis Wayland Dunn, December 17, 1859, Box 2, Francis Wayland Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; Francis Wayland Dunn to Newell Ransom Dunn, November 31 and December 1, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library.

16. F. W. Dunn to Ransom Dunn, December 5, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; Ransom Dunn to F. W. Dunn, December 13, 1859, Box 2, Folder "Correspondence from Rev. Dunn, 1854-1860," Francis Wayland Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library.

17. F. W. Dunn to Ransom Dunn, January 10, 1860, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; Robert Samuel Fletcher, A History of Oberlin College: From Its Foundation Through the Civil War (Oberlin, Ohio: Oberlin College, 1943), 2:631. Fletcher provides numerous other examples of the college student experience of teaching, 2:629-633.

18. December 1, 1859, Diary of Newell Ransom Dunn, Bentley Historical Library; N. R. Dunn to Ransom Dunn, December 9, 1859, Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library; Francis Wayland Dunn to Newell Ransom Dunn, January 18, 1860 [have to check this citation's year], Box 2, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library. The phrase "moral suasion," which appears at least twice in the letters between the Dunns, was a common phrase at the time. In 1855, John P. Foote, a Cincinnati writer and historian of education, wrote that "In the West generally, . . . the doctrine had been adopted that children ought not to be punished for disobedience, or any other fault or folly, but that 'moral suasion' must be the only method of subduing evil tempers and untractable dispositions." John P. Foote, The Schools of Cincinnati, and Its Vicinity (Cincinnati: C. F. Bradley & Co., 1855), 115.
CHAPTER 8

THE COLLEGE AND REGIONAL CHARACTER

Far from being removed from the everyday workings of the region, the people associated with the Old Northwest colleges interacted with other inhabitants. Relations between townspeople and college leaders, or between college students and their pupils in one-room schoolhouses, were not always congenial, but these relations existed. And the patterns of interaction between these people bound them together. Generally, the people of the Old Northwest were open to new ideas. While immigrants to the region brought with them established cultural ways, one noticeable Old Northwest trait was a willingness not only to alter existing habits, but also to embrace new ones. Acceptance, however, did not come indiscriminately. People critically examined ideas through debate. Within the colleges, the literary societies provided the forum for these forensic exercises, while outside the colleges, people debated in churches, schools, and homes. Debate was ubiquitous and diverse.
Finally, the result of this openness and debate was action. Influenced heavily by Protestant perfectionistic and evangelical ideas that they must bring about God's kingdom on Earth, these people believed in moral action, and responded to new ideas that they accepted.

Through the embrace of reform efforts and the introduction of coeducation, the students and leaders of Old Northwest colleges not only expressed regionally distinctive ideas within their educational institution, but also contributed to the further expansion and accentuation of those regional attributes. The college, then, at once exemplified and disseminated Old Northwest cultural ways.

Old Northwest Openness to New Ideas

People in the Old Northwest noticed that the inhabitants were receptive to new ideas. In 1833, Unitarian clergyman James Freeman Clarke found "the West to be a place where freedom of thought prevails. I say things constantly with effect that if lisped in New England would be overborne at once by the dominant opinions." Years later, Presbyterian minister Albert Barnes agreed and connected this characteristic to the institutional structure of Western life. Barnes claimed that "the western mind . . . is unsettled. . . . It is, to a great extent, broken off from old fixtures and associations, and new affinities and attachments are not yet formed." Barnes argued that while
Easterners were connected to established institutions, Westerners had been "detached from all that was fixed and settled in their own native lands . . . and prepared for any new influences that may meet them."  

Another figure who connected the institutional structure of the Old Northwest to receptivity to new ideas was Daniel Drake, a notable scientist, physician, and educational leader in the West. In 1834, Drake addressed the members of the Union Literary Society of Miami University on the "History, Character, and Prospects of the West." Drake spoke about how educational environments shaped persons. Children "born in old and compactly organized communities," observed Drake, were "surrounded" by books, good schools with fine teachers, "ingenious toys," and "public lectures in lyceums." As a result, Drake argued, these children became "the objects of a sleepless superintendence" that "lays down the rules by which their growth in intellect shall proceed." These children would "acquire a copious and varied learning," and as adults display "a conformity more or less striking."  

Drake's characterization of the educational process in long-settled areas was at once complimentary and critical. Drake did not deny the advantages, but he also portrayed the resulting adults of this educational process as conformists, overly bound by laws.

In contrast, Drake posited that the children of a "new

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country" had different opportunities. In the new country, the "want of arts and inventions" to solve problems led people to "invent and substitute others," which engendered "a spirit of self-dependence." Drake cited the "many opportunities for bold enterprize" and argued that the problems people faced "call forth ingenuity." A lack of specialization was a marked characteristic of the West; while the Westerner would not attain the degree of perfection of the specialist, the varied demands of the West expanded the intellect. This same theme of the Westerner as unspecialized received a more extended exposition in 1838 from A. Wylie, who told his audience at Wabash College that the "division of labor . . . affords some striking illustrations of the effect which confinement to a narrow circle of thought has in producing mental imbecility."

Wylie offered the example of a mechanic whose life consisted of pointing pins. Place the specialized mechanic alongside "the most unlettered, uncouth stripling you can find in the woods of Indiana," put the two of them in a predicament, and one would see who was more "liberally educated."

The man of pins is confounded and paralyzed. But the Hoosier, who has rambled over mountain and forest, and met, every day of his life, with some new object to awaken his attention, or some new adventure to sharpen his wit, and who . . . has tried his hand at almost everything, . . . gathers up his thoughts in a moment, and . . . extricates both himself and his astounded companion.'

Wylie and Drake agreed that the West provided the most liberal of educations.
Significantly, Drake connected the liberal learning of the Westerner to the institutional structure of the region. Institutionally, according to Drake, the West lacked "the restraints employed by an old social organization." Drake told his listeners that "a thousand corporations,--literary, charitable, political, religious, and commercial, have not combined into an oligarchy" to erect "one set of artificial and traditional standards." As a result, in the West one found more "exhibitions of original character."

At times Drake spoke romantically of the expanding influence of nature upon the intellect, but he also presented the Westerner as an empiricist, with a mind "favorable to the reception of new truths." The Miami University students listened as Drake told them that "the West is pre-eminently the place where discoveries and new principles of every kind, are received with avidity, and promptly submitted to the test of experiment." The inhabitants of the West fostered exposure to new ideas by the very fact that the Westerners themselves were a varied lot, "the enterprising and ambitious from other realms; and each has been a schoolmaster to our native population--presenting them with strange manners and customs; arts, opinions, and prejudices, not seen before." One need not travel the world to study human nature--the West contained a remarkable variety of specimens of people from many different places. Debate, according to Drake, was one
regionally distinct way that the people tested novel ideas.'

The Culture of Debate

People in all American regions debated at this time, as Drake well knew. He argued, however, that because Westerners lacked newspapers during the early years of settlement, citizens substituted debate for the printed word. The practice continued, on its own merits, long after the West became filled with newspapers. Overall, the interpretation in this dissertation concurs with Drake's analysis. The tendency to debate was strong in the Old Northwest; so strong, in fact, that there existed a regional culture of debate. Two attributes comprise the basis for this claim: first, the debates were more widespread and more frequent in the Old Northwest than in other regions; second, in no other place did so many different groups debate each other. The frequency and variety was unparalleled.

Debates happened weekly, of course, in the numerous small denominational colleges that dotted the Midwestern landscape. As discussed above, students debated myriad topics in the literary societies of each college. College students, though, were hardly the only individuals who debated. Other debates, especially between disputants who argued about religion, occurred frequently. In 1820, at Mount Pleasant, Ohio, Presbyterian minister John Walker
debated Alexander Campbell for fifteen hours over two days on the subject of baptism. Campbell, the leader of the Campbellite movement, left the debate believing he had discovered an effective means of explaining his ideas. He debated often. These debates were quite popular and, in some cases, famous.

In 1829 Campbell debated Robert Owen. Owen, born in 1771 in Wales, became an industrialist known for his efforts at social reform and his belief in the power of the environment to shape human development. In the 1820s, Owen founded a utopian community in Indiana called New Harmony. Owen was an original thinker and, while not hostile to religious belief generally, a critic of most forms of Christianity. For eight April days in Cincinnati, in front of an audience of about one thousand each day, Campbell defended Christianity as the basis of social organization. Owen advocated his own idea that people should organize society around twelve fundamental laws of human nature, upon which he expounded during the debates. One listener observed, "the publick mind seems to be altogether taken up about the controversy between Mr. Owen & Mr. Campbell."

In 1837 Campbell engaged in another public Cincinnati debate with John Baptist Purcell, a Roman Catholic bishop who opposed the use of the Bible in public schools. Their disagreement over public schooling and the Bible led to a more general discussion about the Catholic faith, which
culminated in nine days of debate, five hours each day. The church where Campbell and Purcell debated held 500 listeners, who packed in so tightly that one newspaper editor, though able to hear, had not enough room to take notes. The editor counted himself lucky to be inside; hundreds returned home, unable to squeeze into the building.

Other disputants also generated lengthy debates. In 1845 two Ohio clergymen, representing the Methodist and Universalist faiths, delivered thirty-seven hours of speeches in nine days on the question, "Do the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament teach the doctrine that any portion of the human race will suffer endless punishment in a state of immortality?" One observer painstakingly recorded all that was said on the topic and published the proceedings the following year.

Besides lengthy or famous debates over religion, other, less noticed, debates took place constantly. Some of these debates were regularly scheduled affairs. In 1833, Edwin Stanton, the future Secretary of War, wrote from Steubenville, Ohio, that each "Monday evening the 'Atheneum' meets. The principal object of this society is debate." Ohioan James O. Rayner wrote in 1842 about "a debating society which meets once a week in the Baptist church." In 1836, Eunice Strong wrote from Springfield, Ohio, to Phinehas Strong of Southampton, Massachusetts, about a
family "accustomed to debate on all subjects. One of them told me midnight frequently found them engaged in debate."

Another Buckeye who debated often was John M. Roberts. During the 1850s, Roberts was a young central Ohioan whose diaries show a love of debate. Roberts normally engaged in planned, weekly debates during the winter months at area schoolhouses. 13

Numerous other debates were single encounters, normally over a specific issue. In 1838 Clarissa W. Humphrey, of Mansfield, Ohio, told her father that "Elder Poe, (a methodist) and some other Fanaticks some Oberlinites of course are determined to bring the good people Mansfield over to tetotalism." Some of these good people of Mansfield would debate Elder Poe and his allies in the Methodist Church the following Tuesday. A few years later in 1843 Silas A. Davis wrote to a Free-Will Baptist friend to report that "Elder Alford . . . has held a debate with the Editor of the Universallist paper in Ravenna Portage Co. . . . the statement is about this, 'Do the Scriptures teach the doctrine of the Endless punishment of the wicked'." Some debates clearly were planned well in advance so that people could know to attend them. Others occurred spontaneously. Marie Esther Brandt, of Indiana, recorded in her diary in 1851 that at that evening's prayer meeting "the preacher was not there as expected, he is having a controversy with a Cambelite preacher." 11
Most people were apparently quite willing to engage in debate. One rare example of resistance to an outright invitation to debate comes from a New Englander, a representative of the American Home Missionary Society, who, in 1832, wrote from Indiana that the "Campbellites... used every exertion to draw us into a controversy with them, but I declined." The consternation of the America Home Missionary Society representative, who worked for an organization with close ties to the newly disestablished religion in New England, demonstrates how the situation in New England worked against the habits of debate. In a region in which one religious group had dominated since their first arrival almost two hundred years earlier, the opportunity for debate over religious doctrine was limited. On the Boston Commons in the 1600s, after all, the Puritans did not debate the Quakers; the Puritans hanged them.

In the Old Northwest, public debates between people of differing beliefs took place frequently and were civil acts, in which disagreement was not stifled, but rather expected and, indeed, invited. In some instances, preachers finished speaking and then offered their pulpit to anyone who wanted to disagree. What is more, listeners were likely to accept the offer. These debates demonstrated that in the Old Northwest no single denomination held such an advantage over rival groups that religious partisans need not defend their beliefs publicly."
John Calvin Hanna recalled in his autobiography that, while a youth in southern Illinois during the 1820s, "Two or three winters we had a debating society in the neighborhood which I attended pretty regularly and there laid the foundation of my success in debates afterwards." Recalling that debate society brought to Hanna's mind "the existence of a similar society when I was but nine years old [1823]. . . . I was never present at a meeting of that society except once when it was held at my father's house." At the age of seventeen, Hanna told his father he wanted to go to college. Hanna went to Hanover College in Indiana for only a brief time. In 1841, however, at the age of twenty-five, married with a child, and schoolteaching for a living, Hanna "decided to again try to go to college. I got a teaching position near Hanover and attended the meetings of the Philadelphian Society and participated in the debates and was greatly benefitted by the exercises." Hanna discussed many other subjects in his autobiography, but he clearly remembered the debates of his life as significant and formative events."

College town residents, though, did not by any means leave all debate to college students. W. B. Riggin, at McKendree College in Lebanon, Illinois, wrote in 1844 that besides college debates, "The debate in town is still continued; They meet every once in a while." In 1837, a recently-arrived professor of classics at Miami University

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wrote that "The subject" of abolition "has not been publickly discussed since I came, at the Institution; yet there have been several debates, in the neighborhood adjacent to Town." College students who taught schools also encouraged debate. Illinois College student Augustus Kerr Riggin, teaching in 1847, wrote in his journal, "Made some preliminary arrangements for establishing a Debating Society--which I trust will succeed." Academies also routinely included literary societies. The records of the Fairmont Lyceum of Indiana show that debate was quite common there. Seminaries were no different. Abraham Bartholomew, teaching at a new Lutheran seminary in Columbus, Ohio, wrote in 1841 that "The number of students has now increased to 17 . . . . Seeing, therefore that this institution bids fair to become one of the most eminent in our state, I have endeavoured to form a debating society."

The epitome of this regional habit of interaction occurred, of course, in Illinois, during the 1858 run for the United States Senate between Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln. In their debates, in various country towns, these two candidates engaged in what was at once a significant intellectual endeavor, and a model of democratic practice. People across the nation followed these debates and read the accounts that appeared in their newspapers. In retrospect, one wonders how such debate could have occurred outside the Old Northwest; surely not in the South could such an
exchange have occurred; and in New England one would not have found the mix of political views prevalent in the Old Northwest. The United States Congress might have been the only other place in which people of such a variety of opinions all gathered to orate and debate the future course of the nation. Lincoln and Douglas concurred on the importance of debate as a means of interaction, and they, like others, competed fiercely within a civic structure that mediated their conflict. That civic structure particularly included debate as a peaceful means of organizing the clash of ideas; during the antebellum years that civic structure appeared in its most mature form in the Old Northwest.

The Emphasis on Independence

Such a culture of debate presupposed independent thinking among the inhabitants of the region. In 1835, Eliza Dana wrote from Athens, Ohio, that a mutual acquaintance of theirs had "gone on to the East." Dana suspected that the woman would be "yankeyfied" there, and admitted "I have got so sick of yankies that I don't want to see one, although my ancestors sprung from that noble race. I boast myself in being a true blooded Buckeye. . . . I admire an independant spirit and not one that will be governed by laws made by those over-bearing yankies." To Dana, the Yankee placed too much emphasis on laws. The Yankee attempted to restrain people. The Buckeye, on the
other hand, had an "independent spirit." Others agreed with Dana.

Mary Hovey had recently moved to Fountain County, Indiana, when she wrote in 1833 to her mother in the East that the "general opinion in New England that any thing will do for the West" was "very erroneous." Hovey said that her Indiana neighbors watched Easterners closely in the belief that Easterners often tried overly to constrain Western behavior. At one point, Hovey wrote, rumors spread "that I had been riding around to get subscribers to a constitution for an anti-tea & coffee society." Another rumor had Hovey traveling "round the country preaching that husbands & wives ought not to sleep together sunday nights." Hovey said neither rumor could be further from the truth. Hovey's neighbors, though, evidently suspected that Hovey, as an Easterner newly arrived in the West, would interfere with their dietary and sexual habits."

J. A. Beswick, a devout Methodist preacher, experienced similar events. Writing in Indiana to Asbury Wilkinson in 1846, Beswick told how he had "called on a gentleman, for my dinner, on Sabb.," when a man came to the door. Beswick assumed that the man needed medicine and could not wait until the next day. His host, the storekeeper, accommodated the man. Next, another man appeared who "wanted to look at his callico." Beswick, now wiser, told his host that doing business on the Sabbath violated the laws of the land and of
the church. His host said that the laws of the land were not enforced against him, and that the Bible said nothing against doing business on the Sabbath. Beswick thought that such people should be thrown out of the Methodist Church, but he admitted that "when I looked around me, and enquired into the matter, I found the Sabbath day was quite a business day--the mills were grinding--people going to, and from, mill--moving--fishing, and the like." Beswick concluded to Wilkinson, "Now you know how we spend the Sabbath."

The observations of Dana, Hovey, and Beswick illustrate the disinclination of Westerners to be told what to do by others. The observations also point indirectly to the variety of people one encountered in the West. Mary Hovey agreed, telling her sister that "our society here is made of people from so many different states & countries it is almost impossible to speak of any general character." Hovey was correct to point out the differences among Westerners; what this analysis shows, however, is that the Westerners were creating a regional identity that allowed these various groups to interact through common cultural habits.

The Emphasis on Action

Another trait that people claimed distinguished the West from the East was action. In 1840, Lewis Clarke, a seminary student at Andover Theological Seminary in
Massachusetts, wrote to his brother in Ohio that Lyman Beecher, of Lane Seminary in Cincinnati, had come to Andover for a few days. Beecher encouraged the Andover students to serve as ministers in the West, and Clarke confessed "I have sometimes been half sorry I did not go to Lane Sem. instead of coming here--This is the better place for study:--that for making active, efficient men." Calvin Fletcher, in Indianapolis in 1823, wrote to his brother in New York that "people here are vastly different from N.Y. or N.E. . . . They are bold and independant in their sentiments. . . . A lawyer here must become a good advocate or speaker in public. In your country any man can be a good lawyer without saying a word."

New Englander Charles Peabody visited Ohio in 1850 and wrote in his diary that he liked "the frank, wide-awake, stirring spirit" he found there. "But this jumping and twitching at trifles, and going off half cocked without anything in but powder, I disapprove of entirely." Peabody framed the differences between the inhabitants of the two regions as analogous to the differences between an ox and a horse. "A Yankee takes every thing coolly and sits down and calculates the exact issue of his plans and projects . . . But the Buckeye dives into things with all his might, and begins to pull and haul, very much like a fractious horse hitched to a heavy stone." When all was said and done, according to Peabody, the Yankee was more productive, but
the Buckeye made "a greater fuss and more splendid flourish of trumpets." In his analysis, Peabody pointed not only to the action orientation of the Midwesterner, but also to a related willingness on the part of people in the Old Northwest to draw attention to themselves.

Cyrus Nutt noticed this trait when he graduated from a Pennsylvania college and settled in Indiana in 1837. Nutt commented that "modesty, which was a high recommendation in Pennsylvania, was at considerable discount in Indiana," where he was startled to hear candidates for public office make stump speeches on their own behalf. An Oberlin student also distinguished between Pennsylvania and the Old Northwest. "I tell you what," he wrote to a friend, "the Ohioans learn faster, live faster, arrive faster, & die faster than Pennsylvanians." Diarist Charles Peabody agreed: "Every thing is high pressure out here." Not everyone minded the change. In May, 1831, Yale graduate William Kirby, having accepted a teaching position at Illinois College, wrote to his father in Connecticut that he was happy to have traveled from New England, "the pleasant land of steady habits," to Illinois. Regardless of perspective, these examples all relate similar themes: in the East, people emphasized steady habits, laws, restraint, modesty, thought; the West was characterized by impatient vigor, independence, self-promotion, action."

Even those who entered the Old Northwest with the
professed intention of bringing the cultural ways of the region they had left behind did not intend to replicate what they had known before. In 1840 L. P. Hickok, of Western Reserve College, wrote to a prospective faculty member, "The state of society, the churches, and general Institutions are all less settled and stable than in New England," but he believed that Western Reserve College was playing a "necessary" role in building the area into "what I confidently expect will be another, but a larger, better New England in the west." Hickok desired to bring New England cultural ways into the region, but he also hoped to improve upon those ways. Illinois College Professor Truman Post warned Easterners that they "should not be startled or offended to find that the West, in opinions, institutions, and social forms, is not an exact transcription of itself." Despite ties to New England, these Old Northwest college professors responded to the social environment in which they operated.

If the traits discussed above were truly characteristic of the people of the Old Northwest, then one would expect to see these traits manifested in institutions, including the college. And in fact, the colleges of the Old Northwest did differ from their counterparts in other regions. The remainder of this chapter comments on the distinctiveness of the Old Northwest college in two areas: reform and coeducation.
Reform

During the antebellum years, the differences between collegiate education in the Old Northwest and both New England and the Southern states became particularly acute in one area: the ability to embrace reform. Numerous, although by no means all, Old Northwest colleges became agents of a variety of reform movements. Presbyterian John Walker, for example, who founded Ohio's Franklin College, used the college as a means of fighting against alcohol, secret societies, and slavery. Oberlin College, of course, emerged as a notable example of a college with students perennially mobilized on behalf of an array of reform agendas, from Grahamism and temperance, to women's rights and anti-slavery. Involvement in reform activity was far from universal among Old Northwest colleges, yet pronounced at a number of schools, including Knox, Wheaton, Illinois, Kalamazoo, Hillsdale, Indiana Asbury, and Ohio Wesleyan. Overall, anti-slavery reform was the most prominent aspect of reform at the Old Northwest colleges and helps to illustrate the differences between the Old Northwest colleges and the structure of higher education both to the east and south. This degree of involvement in reform efforts, particularly in anti-slavery reform, did not occur in any other region. Historians Willis Rudy and Arthur Cole both located most antebellum student anti-slavery agitation
in the Midwest. Cole also argued that in the northeastern United States, faculty members were reluctant to involve themselves in this controversial issue, with only a few notable exceptions, including Yale president Theodore Dwight Woolsey."

New England college students and leaders not only failed to join in anti-slavery agitation, but New Englanders, generally, criticized the Old Northwest colleges for their association with reform. At Illinois College, Professor Truman Post, in a "Plea for Western Colleges" directed at New Englanders, had to respond to the accusation that "Western colleges are the hot beds and rendezvous of all the ultraisms of the day." Post acknowledged some validity to the indictment when he responded, "This charge . . . is not true of all." New Englanders viewed Oberlin College, especially, despite connections to Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, as entirely too reform-minded to warrant New England support. The president of another school, Knox College of Illinois, applied to the Western Education Society for support, which the Society refused. When the president of Knox College reapplied for support the following year, the Society sent two inspectors, Joseph Towne and Ansel Eddy, to investigate Knox College and report their findings to the Society. One Society member, Theron Baldwin, wrote that other members had "strong fears with regard to the abolition & Oberlin tendencies of the
Institution." New Englanders disapprovingly recognized that many Western colleges were involved in reform efforts."

Augusta College and Anti-Slavery

Numerous scholars have noticed the inability of antebellum Southerners and Southern institutions to embrace almost any reform lest it lead eventually to a critique of slavery." Anti-slavery helped to distinguish the Old Northwest colleges from colleges in Southern states. The story of Augusta College, a Methodist school located on the banks of the Ohio River in Augusta, Kentucky, demonstrates how the political divisions created by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 affected colleges as tensions over slavery grew during the antebellum years.

In the 1820s, Ohio and Kentucky Methodists converted an existing academy in Augusta, Kentucky, into Augusta College, which operated successfully, with support from both the Ohio and Kentucky Conferences of Methodism, through the 1830s and into the 1840s. The president of Augusta College was Joseph Tomlinson, a man with anti-slavery sentiments. The leadership of the college, however, was not united; the most influential Augusta faculty member, Henry Bascom, was pro-slavery. As the issue of slavery became more troublesome, Augusta College was caught in the middle of the dispute. In 1842 the faculty split. Some faculty members left with Henry Bascom, who became the head of the undergraduate and
This exodus weakened Augusta College and at the same time made the college firmly anti-slavery in character. Unfortunately for the college, that same year the Ohio Conference of Methodists transferred all support for Augusta College to newly-established Ohio Wesleyan University. Augusta went from being a school with a mixture of opinions, supported by two conferences with differing views on the issue of slavery, to being an anti-slavery school supported by a largely pro-slavery conference.

The situation worsened in 1844 when the Methodist Episcopal Church began to split into northern and southern bodies. By 1846, Augusta College was no longer supported by all of Kentucky Methodism, but only by the Kentucky conference that remained with the northern branch of Methodism. Such support was inadequate, as Augusta students testified. In 1846 Isaac B. Fish wrote to the president of Indiana Asbury University to inquire about admission. Fish wrote that he had "entered College at Augusta Ky" and "Laid the foundation for a regular collegiate course . . . . But as that institution is now in a very dilapidated situation," Fish hoped to leave the school and transfer to Indiana Asbury. Augusta College continued to decline and finally closed in 1849. That same year, the Kentucky legislature revoked the Augusta College charter."
The Ohio River as Cultural Boundary

The history of Augusta College illustrates with unusual clarity how the Ohio River, which had long been a political boundary that demarcated the Old Northwest, was becoming a cultural divide as well. By the late 1840s, people maintained that the education on one side of the river was different than on the other. When the president of Ohio Wesleyan University, Edward Thomson, reported in 1849 that the Kentucky legislature had revoked the charter of Augusta College, he wrote that Augusta, "could it recover its charter and regain its original vitality, would never be a suitable Institution to educate the sons of Ohio, who are not, & never should be exposed to the competing influences of a slave state."

On the other side of the river, in 1848, William Van Meter, a Kentucky principal of a Baptist female school, wrote to a Granville College professor that he had encouraged a young man who wanted to go to college to go to Granville in Ohio. "I desire to have our young brethren educated in a free state. . . . I long to raise my 3 children in Ohio and if I knew of a suitable location in that state where I could settle with a ch[urch] I would go."

In 1851, W. W. Hill of Louisville wrote to John Finley Crowe, the founder of Hanover College, an Indiana school that overlooked the Ohio River. Hill wrote because he had heard that people at Hanover College were discussing the
issue of slavery. "Hundreds in slave states would rather send their sons to a free state," Hill warned Crowe, "if they are not annoyed by agitations of that question." Van Meter and Hill were not forthcoming about the benefits of a free state education, but they clearly believed there was a difference."

Similarly, S. J. and M. Strealy of Maysville, Kentucky, wrote in the 1850s to the Reverend A. McHarry of Delaware, Ohio, that they had six children to educate, and "this we cannot do in Kentucky for the very simple reason that our income will not warrant the great outlay that is required here to educate. But in Ohio where the withering blight of slavery is not felt, even the poor man's child may be fitted for a life of usefulness and honor." The Strealy family hoped to relocate to Delaware if they could find land and if S. J. Strealy could find employment as a blacksmith." Thomson, Hill, and the Strealys all made distinctions between education north and south of the Ohio River. All recognized the river as a cultural boundary and pointed to the college as a central expression of distinctiveness.

Coeducation

Another expression of the overall culture of the region was coeducation. As is well known, in the 1830s the Oberlin Collegiate Institute in Ohio became the first college to school both men and women together. Oberlin has received a
great deal of attention, and rightly so, for what was a radical innovation in higher education. Less well known is that coeducation continued to appear at colleges in the Old Northwest, and the greater Midwest, far more frequently than in other regions of the country.

By the onset of the American Civil War, almost three decades after the beginnings of Oberlin, young people who desired a coeducational college had their choice of two dozen schools in the Midwest, including Oberlin, Baldwin, Mt. Union, Antioch, Otterbein, Franklin, Urbana, Muskingum, and Heidelberg in Ohio, Earlham in Indiana, Olivet, Hillsdale, and Adrian in Michigan, Wheaton, Eureka, Monmouth, and Lombard in Illinois, and Lawrence in Wisconsin. A few, perhaps four, other schools in New York and Pennsylvania were the only coeducational colleges outside the Midwest. No coeducational colleges existed in New England; none existed in the South."

When the Civil War accelerated the trend toward coeducation, the Midwest remained the region in which coeducation was most likely to appear, both in private and public higher education. For example, of the first eight state universities to admit women, seven were Midwestern universities. Additionally, the first fully coeducational modern research university was the University of Chicago, which opened in 1892. Founder and president William Rainey Harper hailed from small-town Ohio and graduated from
Muskingum College. Harper wanted women in every part of his university, and brought in women as undergraduates and graduate students, as faculty members and administrators."

Of course, not all Midwesterners favored coeducation, and only a minority of antebellum Midwestern colleges were coeducational. Yet in comparison to other regions, in every respect, from the denominational colleges, to the state universities, to the modern research universities, Midwesterners consistently first embraced coeducation.

**Impediments to Coeducation Elsewhere**

Beyond the Midwest, various obstacles impeded coeducation. In New England, a long tradition of exclusively male collegiate education worked against the introduction of coeducation. Also, the established colleges had a more urban, leisured, and upper-class orientation, far different from the small-town, production-centered, and middle-class Old Northwest college. Further, many antebellum New England colleges were associated with recently-disestablished churches. Overall, New England college leaders were trying to conserve their traditions rather than experiment and innovate. One sees this pattern not only in New England resistance to coeducation, but also in opposition to curricular reforms as embodied in the Yale Report of 1828, and in the hesitancy with which New England college leaders embraced reform movements of the period. In
New England, sister schools complemented Ivy League institutions, and a number of notable women's colleges appeared. Significantly, however, almost all of these schools did not exist until a generation, at least, and often a half century, after Oberlin's doors opened to women."

Southerners were as hostile to coeducation as were New Englanders, but for different reasons. The Southern educational system was designed for males, from the military academies that dotted the region, to the public universities that dominated Southern higher education, and which socialized young men into the Southern culture of honor. Honor in the South was for adult white males solely, and existing scholarship shows that the college students fully understood the importance of this function of the Southern state universities. At the beginning of the twentieth century, when the College of Charleston considered coeducation, the students petitioned against its introduction. The students explained that letting women into the school "would inevitably tend to alter the spirit and tone of robust manliness of the student body which we believe to be of even greater importance than scholarship."

During the antebellum decades, amidst the most powerful years of the culture of honor, coeducation was not an option. Furthermore, middle- and upper-class Southern white men believed that agitation for rights for women was
inextricably linked to abolitionism, and consequently frowned on roles for women that lay beyond those to which women were accustomed."

The historical literature concerning coeducation is limited. For a long time, historians were largely silent about coeducation, and about education for women generally. Since 1972, dominant voices in historical investigations of coeducation have maligned the early attempts at the combined education of men and women. In 1972, Ronald W. Hogeland criticized early Oberlin because men and women did not receive educations that were truly equal. In 1974, Jill Conway skewered Oberlin leaders for having "strictly economic" considerations when they introduced coeducation, and for considering the improvement of women's minds only as they related to "services they might provide for men." In 1978, Patricia Albjerg Graham repeated this refrain, as have others since that time. These ventures, the critics have charged, were not truly egalitarian: women were there to darn the socks of men or to civilize the male students. College leaders who introduced coeducation had only monetary interests in mind."

Certainly, the introducers of coeducation were not interested in treating men and women as interchangeable equals, nor were they so idealistic as to be oblivious to financial concerns. Overall, though, the critics have misunderstood the origins of coeducation, missed much of the
significance of coeducation, and neglected to explain why coeducation was primarily a Midwestern phenomenon. For coeducation reflected the regional culture of the Old Northwest. Coeducation made sense within the framework of Old Northwest society.

At the base of that framework was the rural and small-town orientation of the region, and the rural and small-town locale of almost all Old Northwest colleges. The process of industrialization, a process separated men's and women's spheres and economic functions in antebellum cities, had little effect in the non-urban Midwest. Yet this condition, the small-town orientation and locale of the Midwestern college, while necessary, insufficiently explains coeducation. Many other small-town colleges in the South, the Mid-Atlantic, and New England were not coeducational. The basis for coeducation was much larger than the physical location of the colleges."

**Coeducation and the Culture of Usefulness**

Generally, the Old Northwest was characterized by a culture of usefulness. Broadly speaking, this culture consisted of two major components. The first was a middle-class emphasis on productive labor. The second was a largely Protestant evangelicalism that called for people to engage in the work of reforming society. The dictates of the culture of usefulness did not release women any more
than men from responsibility, and people in the Old Northwest widely recognized the college as a place where one could become useful. There, students could, at the very least, learn a manual labor trade or, more likely, the skills necessary to succeed in business, teaching, the ministry, or other aspects of public life. People thought that teaching and missionary work were particularly appropriate avenues for which the college could prepare women.

Women who attended these coeducational colleges generally exhibited their allegiance to the culture of usefulness. Historian Lori D. Ginzberg discovered that in 1836 forty-three young Oberlin women recorded their intentions for the future. Nine said they wanted to teach, and one added that she also wanted to "translate Scriptures." Fifteen women wrote that they planned to become a "missionary," a "home missionary," or "foreign missionaries." Three others intended either to teach or become a missionary. One intended "to become qualified for instructing the ignorant," and nine expected to "prepare for whatever station the Lord directs" or enter "some sphere of Christian usefulness." These women believed that they would use their education for the enhancement of their calling, their vocation. Generally, the people of the Old Northwest were receptive to the improvement of women's minds when women wanted to work for the benefit of society."
The Old Northwest Embrace of Reform and Coeducation

In part, the embrace of Old Northwest colleges of reform and coeducation was an outgrowth of the decentralized system of private colleges. Reformist or innovative efforts by their very nature seek to alter the status quo. In regions with few colleges, dominated by the state government or few religious denominations, the likelihood that the college would become a center for change was low. In contrast, several Old Northwest groups held minority opinions that could never find expression in a state-controlled or majoritarian institution. To advance their interests, members of these groups founded private colleges.

In addition, denominational control fostered reform because denominations were intimately tied to the reform movements of the period. Evangelicalism thrived among the denominational colleges of the Old Northwest, and this religious enthusiasm went hand in hand with reform activity. At state universities, the constraints of politics and the need to have the institution serve the state as a whole precluded the ability of most state university leaders to become obvious engineers and supporters of reform. The students and faculty of a small private college, by contrast, could advocate causes that only a small denomination supported.

Over time, the critics of the Old Northwest colleges
acknowledged the benefits of the new forms of higher education. Even members of the Western Education Society, who generally opposed deviations from New England cultural norms, recognized the innovativeness of the Old Northwest colleges. In 1844, Theron Baldwin, Corresponding Secretary of the Society, confessed "The truth is, that the visionary educational schemes and abortive attempts at college building in by-gone years at the West, have not been without their uses. These very experiments have put us upon vantage-ground for the future." Baldwin expected to incorporate some of the results of educational experimentation in the Old Northwest into schools supported by the Western Education Society.

Conclusion
The college, then, was a product of the regional values of private, local, and religious education. In turn, the institutional structure of the Old Northwest college acted as a historical agent in building, intensifying, and highlighting particular characteristics of the Old Northwest, such as a penchant for reform and coeducation. The institutional structure that was based upon private, locally-controlled, and denominational education allowed, in the aggregate, for the expression of diverse ideas and minority opinions. In New England, the tradition of established religion helped to prevent the spread of
colleges founded by rival denominations. In the South, the elites favored public universities that were less sectarian and also less likely to have leaders who would instill their students with the fervor of reform. Though Southern church colleges existed, sometimes in abundance, these church colleges generally followed the example provided by state universities.

In the Old Northwest, small groups had the capacity to open colleges that would represent their views because of the private nature of the colleges and the decentralized control over them. Denominations that represented only a fragment of the population could obtain a college charter. State governmental leaders supported this arrangement. In a region where people were building institutions anew, without the debilitating effects of slavery, the college founders applied innovative ideas to their educational efforts.

The decentralized nature of collegiate education in the region allowed small groups to acquire an institutional presence. The collegiate structure represented a commitment to a democratic pluralism that gave voice to groups other than the dominant ones. The large number of colleges, founded by such a wide variety of individuals and denominations, almost guaranteed that the inhabitants of the region would be exposed to a multitude of different ideas.


7. Wesley Browning to Samuel Williams, April 14, 1829, Samuel Williams mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington (quotation); Earl Irvin West, "Early Cincinnati's 'Unprecedented Spectacle,'" *Ohio History* 79(1970):5-17.


10. Wyman W. Parker, ed., "Edwin M. Stanton at Kenyon," *Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* 60(1951):252 (emphasis original); James O. Rayner to William Rayner, August 2, 1842, VFM 2903-A, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio; Eunice L. Strong to Phinehas Strong, October 21, 1836, Bloomington, Indiana; J. Merton England, ed., *Buckeye Schoolmaster: A Chronicle of Midwestern Rural Life, 1853-1865* (n.p.: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1996), especially 11-27, 71-74, 99, 147-185. Although most of Roberts' debates were scheduled, he was open to impromptu discussions, as when he tangled with some Catholics one evening over whether or not priests were infallible (23).

11. Clarissa W. Humphrey to Milton Whitney, March 19, 1838, Folder "Correspondence, Misc.--pre-1865," Box 3, Series 2, Robert S. Fletcher Papers, Oberlin College Archives, Oberlin, Ohio (emphasis original); Silas A. Davis to Ransom Dunn, September 22, 1843, Box 1, Ransom Dunn Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (emphasis original); Diary of Marie Esther Brandt, February 13, 1851, M24, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis. See also, for an example of a debate over election between a "dipper" preacher and a "Seder" preacher, George Bartholomew to Jacob Bartholomew, March 3, 1841, Bartholomew mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.


13. On offering the pulpit to people with different ideas, see Paul H. Boase, "Interdenominational Polemics," 106-107.


16. Eliza Dana to Mary B. "Polly" Dana, October 19, 1835, Box 1, Folder 9, MSS 181, Dana Family Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.

17. Mary Hovey to "Mother" [Martha Carter], December 25, 1833, Folder 3, L75, Edmund O. Hovey Papers, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

18. J. A. Beswick to Asbury Wilkinson, June 25, 1846, Folder 2, Box 1, Asbury Wilkinson Papers, M 295, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis (emphasis original).

19. Mary Hovey to Martha White, March 15, 1832, Folder 3, L75, Edmund O. Hovey Papers, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.

20. Lewis Clarke to Oliver Clarke, August 1, 1840, Folder 1840-1841, Correspondence, Stevens mss II, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana; Gayle Thornbrough, ed. The Diary of Calvin Fletcher 9 vols. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1972-1983), 1:89.


23. L. P. Hickok to Henry N. Day, May 10, 1840, Box 1, 3GD1, Henry Noble Day Collection, Archives, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio (emphasis original); Post, "Plea for Western Colleges," 29.


29. E. Thomson to Samuel Williams, June 2, 1849, Folder 2, Box 8, MSS 148, Samuel and Samuel Wesley Williams Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio. On the changing significance of the Ohio River, see Kim M. Gruenwald, "Across
the Mountains, the Western Country, the Buckeye State: The Evolution of the Ohio River's Role as a Boundary Between North and South" (Paper presented to the Organization of American Historians, Indianapolis, Indiana, April 5, 1998).

30. William C. Van Meter to Paschal Carter, May 29, 1848, Folder 2, Box 1, Collection 12PC1, Denison University Archives, Granville, Ohio; W. W. Hill to J. Finley Crowe, January 2, 1851, Folder 1, Box 6, John Finley Crowe Papers, Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana.

31. S. J. and M. Strealy to Rev. A. McHarry, [1856?], Early Ohio Wesleyan University Letters, Ohio Wesleyan University Historical Collections, Delaware, Ohio.


33. Newcomer, A Century of Higher Education, 14, lists the first seven coeducational state universities as Iowa, Wisconsin, Kansas, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, and Michigan; Solomon, In the Company, 53-57. Newcomer, A Century of Higher Education, 12, also mentions that the University of Deseret, the forerunner of the University of Utah, and which operated only from 1850 to 1851 before closing until after 1865, enrolled women in 1851. Devine, "A Study of the Historical Development," 201, 205, agrees with Newcomer's list with the


37. Strong, "The Most Natural Way," especially 398-438, explicates the connections between rural social ways and coeducation. Malkmus, "Small Towns, Small Sects, and Coeducation," 10, points out that exclusively female Midwestern schools could be found mostly in cities, such as Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Milwaukee.


39. Rudy, The Campus, 58, indicates that the Old Northwest schools least given to reform movements were state universities.


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In 1836, Elihu W. Baldwin assumed the presidency of Wabash College in Indiana. In his inaugural address, Baldwin asked "whether the unprecedented growth and other marked peculiarities of the West, do not call for a new style of education, and consequently for Colleges founded on some new and improved plan." Baldwin believed the new region indeed called for collegiate institutions that would reflect the distinctiveness of the West. Baldwin then explained precisely what characteristics he believed inhered in the West. Educators, continued Baldwin, must consider "the unimproved state of a new country, . . . the heterogeneous character of the population, and the hardy, active and impatient spirit, by which young communities, made up of enterprising adventurers, are always distinguished. Greater rapidity and energy in decision," asserted Baldwin, "and a more extempore method of doing things, a freer and bolder eloquence, now obtain here, than
amidst the restraints and leadings of established forms and usages of the East." In a few words, Baldwin distilled the observations he and his contemporaries had made about the West.¹

For Baldwin, the culture of the West emerged from a populace derived from different backgrounds, yet united by a vigorous spirit created, in part, by their self-selected status--the Westerners had shed inertia and left what was older and more familiar for an unknown future. These people, argued Baldwin, were less constrained by precedent than the people they had left behind, and their educational institutions should reflect this willingness to move in new directions. Other observers agreed with Baldwin's assessment, and this study shows that much of what Baldwin expected came to fruition. The people of the Old Northwest did incorporate into their colleges a new style and plan for education that reflected their cultural priorities.

By no means was the Old Northwest a tabula rasa upon which the European-American inhabitants could erect a society just as they pleased. In many ways the institutions they built reflected strong continuities with the past and with what they had known in other places. Moreover, even as they arrived in the region, political actions such as the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 structured their landscape in ways that would influence the built environment. Still, the society of the Old Northwest
varied in significant ways from the societies left behind.

The people of the Old Northwest founded, against the will of some people and groups, numerous colleges. These Old Northwest colleges tended not to appear in the most populous and commercial cities, but in or near small towns of a few thousand residents. State legislators willingly chartered these colleges, and denominational interests and local residents normally worked together to found the schools. The result was a decentralized system of higher education, over which most Old Northwest state governments exercised a minimum of control.

The college founders built colleges with financial support that differed from Eastern and Southern schools. Founders showed entrepreneurial ingenuity by employing a combination of land speculation, agricultural pursuits, and manual labor education programs, in addition to the usual recruitment of students and canvassing of denominational supporters and local civic-minded individuals for financial donations.

Not content to build colleges only for the wealthy, founders offered access to students of all financial backgrounds. Many students arrived at college with meager financial resources and managed to survive and graduate by working manual labor jobs, teaching winter schools, and preaching. In part, founders built their colleges so that students would not have to travel prohibitively expensive
distances for an education, and instituted manual labor so that students could work their way through school.

Manual labor was more than expedient, however; manual labor played an integral role in the educational process for Old Northwest educators, who believed that education should be mental, moral, and physical. The physical demands of the newly-established colleges were a stimulus to this educational philosophy, which could easily justify having students clear timber, grub stumps, farm land, and build buildings. Plus, this sort of education was the education that parents required of their children. Western parents insisted on physical labor so that their children's health would not languish in the sedentary environment of college.

Manual labor was popular also in the Old Northwest because it involved production. The Old Northwest, dominated by the middle classes, was more inclined to favor a productive form of physical labor than Eastern college leaders, who favored gymnastics as the preferred form of student exercise. Old Northwest ideals of masculinity also favored anti-aristocratic manual labor, which would connect upwardly mobile college students to the laboring classes.

Old Northwest colleges were more revivalistic than Eastern schools, although Southern Christian colleges also experienced frequent revivals. What separated the Old Northwest colleges from the Southern schools was that religious revivalism in the Old Northwest often translated
into reform movement support. Few Southern college leaders and students embraced reforms on behalf of temperance, abolition of slavery, or the rights of women.

The mental education of Old Northwest college students veered from the classical norms at Eastern and Southern colleges to a scientific or practical course. A classical education was available in the Old Northwest, but the general sense among Westerners was that a college education should be practical. An emphasis on Greek and Latin did not suit many Midwesterners, who believed that a classical education ignored the needs of students to pass through college in a timely manner with the skills needed to accept most of the professional jobs that Midwestern society had to offer. Classical education, with a lesser regard for physical and moral education, was more likely to appeal to the Southern gentleman and learned New Englander than the practical Midwesterner.

In their conduct, Old Northwest students were not rioters, during a period of many riots and insurrections against college authorities in all other regions. Attacks on professors and tutors, vandalism and arson, use of firearms, even the killing of a professor, took place outside the Old Northwest. Within the region, however, students employed negotiations and peaceful walk-outs when their quarrels with college officials became severe. These differing practices help to reveal some of the distinctive
qualities of the Old Northwest college students: older, on average, than students in other regions, the Old Northwest college students were also from less privileged financial backgrounds. The revivals of the Old Northwest colleges may also indicate a high degree of piety. Further, Old Northwest literary societies inculcated the idea that students were to prepare for public service in part by eschewing riots and violence for a civil and public discourse.

Significantly, the student body included women as well as men. Oberlin College of Ohio was only the first among many Old Northwest and Midwestern schools to embrace coeducation. By 1861, zero colleges in New England and the American South admitted women, and only around four colleges in New York and Pennsylvania did, while in the five states of the Old Northwest women had their choice of two dozen coeducational colleges. In Eastern states, the tradition of single-sex male education supported by powerful denominational interests was a powerful obstacle to coeducation, while in the South women had no place in a collegiate system that socialized men into the Southern culture of honor. In the Old Northwest, the loosely-regulated, small-town colleges, often supported by marginal denominations little bound by precedent and tradition, had freedom to experiment and innovate. And just as many male students exhibited a desire to be "useful" to God and to
society, so too did women desire to be useful, and others agreed: if college could prepare women for usefulness, then women should go to college. The education women and men would receive would not be identical, as the vocations that they could enter differed. Nonetheless, the idea of women and men receiving their educations in the same college found acceptance among the people of the Old Northwest because such an idea accorded with their vision of useful citizens.

By no means were the colleges isolated from other influences, such as national political movements or local events. Similarly, college towns were tied to the fortunes of the college. College leaders were civic and religious leaders, and colleges attracted itinerant lecturers as well as notable persons to speak at graduation. College towns attracted residents who valued education and hoped to educate their children, but did not have the means to send them away to college. Moreover, the college was a financial boon. Not only a source of employment for a highly educated group of professors, the college also drew scores or even hundreds of students, many of whom would board with town residents. Unsurprisingly, many towns vied for the privilege of hosting a college. These relationships were often positive, but by no means without conflict.

At Michigan Central College of Spring Arbor in the early 1850s, as the college grew in size but Spring Arbor did not keep pace, college leaders decided to relocate the
college to a more prosperous setting. The decision to leave Spring Arbor brought vehemence from Spring Arborites, who had supported the college to the best of their abilities and now saw their investment being taken elsewhere by ungrateful college leaders. After personal conflict, lawsuits, injunctions, editorials, and threats, the trustees moved the college. The relationship between the Free Will Baptists who had founded the school and the townspeople who had supported Michigan Central was ruptured, and the prospects for Spring Arbor faded considerably.

In Greencastle, Indiana, another 1850s conflict between town and collegiate forces also illustrates the intertwining of these relationships. After an Indiana Asbury student formed a mob and drove an African-American family from Greencastle, Indiana Asbury leaders expelled the student. The expulsion then ignited conflict between townspeople and the leaders of Indiana Asbury over temperance, treatment of African-Americans, the influence of the college upon the town, college control of student behavior off the campus, the legitimacy of mobs, and the boundaries of civilized behavior. The conflict aroused the students and even leading Methodists in the state, who eventually forced the president of Indiana Asbury to resign because of his unpopularity. This chain of events showed that townspeople could have important influences upon the college, just as the events surrounding the Michigan Central College
demonstrated the power of the college to influence the town.

The college was, of course, influential beyond the immediate town, perhaps most notably in the practice of sending college students to work as school teachers for a few months each winter. For students, this pattern was a means of obtaining money with which to continue their education. As thousands of antebellum college students taught small schools throughout the Old Northwest, their experiences reveal the college's connections to the rest of the great variety of educational endeavors taking place in the region at that time.

Even though only a small percentage of Old Northwest inhabitants attended these colleges, the college both reflected the cultural attributes of the region and helped to shape what the region was becoming. The people of the Old Northwest, open to new ideas, were also critical thinkers about their received cultural ideas. Through debates in college literary societies, homes, churches, schoolhouses, and public squares, the people of the Old Northwest tangled with questions about what sort of people they should become. In time, many people of the Old Northwest acted upon their conclusions. Again and again, contemporaries described the people of the region as active, as impatiently vigorous. Herein lies another clue for understanding why Old Northwest college leaders and students were most likely to be involved in reform.
The dissertation, then, provides a new interpretation of the growth of higher education in the Old Northwest and contributes a regional perspective to the growing literature on antebellum higher education. As well, the dissertation engages an ongoing search into the origins, growth, and changing nature of the Old Northwest and Midwest in American history. The Old Northwest college was a significant expression of and vehicle for regional attributes, in ways that made the college distinct from higher education in other regions.
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