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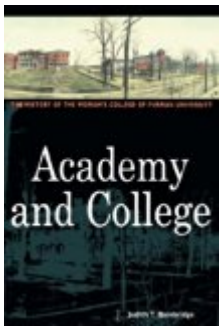
Judith T. Bainbridge. *Academy and College: The History of the Woman's College at Furman University.* Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2001. xiii + 290 pp. $39.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-86554-736-0.



Reviewed by Marcia Synnott

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A Forgotten Chapter in Southern Women's Higher Education

Judith T. Bainbridge, director of educational services and an English professor, completed *Academy and College* for the 175th anniversary of Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina. Writing "for students, alumni, friends of Furman, and the graduates of Greenville Woman's College (GWC)," she successfully narrates the detailed history of this Baptist-affiliated institution from an academy in 1819 to full coeducation with Furman University in 1961 (p. x). She also makes an effort to place GWC in the context of other southern women's colleges.

The Greenville Academy, chartered in 1819 with departments for boys and girls, was subsequently rechartered as the "Greenville Academies," and a fence was built to separate the two properties. Struggling financially, the male academy folded in the early 1850s. In 1854, the South Carolina Baptist Convention and then the South Carolina legislature approved the decision of the Greenville Female Academy's Board of Trustees to transfer its lands to a Baptist college for women, which "'would embrace all branches of liberal education that are pursued in our colleges for young men'" (p. 35). Supervised by Furman University's Board of Trustees, the Greenville Baptist Female College (GBFC) began its seventy-six years as an independent women's college ("Baptist" was not dropped from the name until 1878). Despite its new status, the college continued to offer the same studies as the academy (including preparatory courses) in the same buildings. But the college's "unique relationship with Furman," located about a mile away, allowed it to hire Furman professors to teach part-time (p. 46). According to Bainbridge, southern women's colleges like GBFC "probably rivaled the best of the northern seminaries for women" in the study of the humanities (p. 45).

Bainbridge's narrative is enlivened by biographical sketches of the presidents and faculty that administered or taught at the woman's college. Charles H. Judson (Furman's treasurer and professor of mathematics, who served as GBFC's president from 1864 to 1878) also brought to the college his sister Mary Camilla Judson, who had

been born and educated in Connecticut. A "Christian feminism" convinced her "that women's minds, like their brothers', were given by God" and that "equality" was "a divine revelation" (p. 86). Mary Judson had studied Latin, rhetoric, and sciences and had held a succession of teaching positions before settling at GBFC from 1874 until her death in 1920. An alumna remembered that she "'brought the wonderful rigor and stern morality and forceful personality of New England to the little struggling school'" (p. 69).

But it was Judson's southern "sympathies and attitudes" and Baptist faith that prepared her to help her brother and his successor, Alexander S. Townes, create a college that awarded its first B.A. in 1893. She chose an appropriate motto for the college: "Palma non sine Pulvere," which translated as "Rewards not without dirt" (p. 70). Though her knowledge was not deep, she was known as "an inspirational teacher" and beloved "Lady Principal" or dean (p. 76). Among the broad array of courses that Judson taught was calisthenics, which students performed in a Commencement Week drill "unique in South Carolina" at the Greenville Opera House (p. 80). At the suggestion of President Townes, she started and directed a literary and debating society named for her brother. Membership in the Judson Society, the oldest organization on campus and "Greenville's first organization for women," was required of all boarding students (p. 81).

Though paid only $700 a year in the 1890s, just $100 more than in 1860, Judson donated $3,000 from her savings for the college's new East Wing, which housed a dining room, an auditorium, a library named for her, and a new art studio. The college recognized Judson's contributions by awarding her an honorary master's degree and the title of Professor of English, Emerita, in 1913. Her portrait, commissioned in 1998, was the first of a woman hung in Furman's Board Room.

In 1909, Greenville Female College became independent of Furman University, after the state Supreme Court ruled in favor of separating the two institutions and the South Carolina General Assembly issued GFC its own charter. The Furman trustees then conveyed the college property to the South Carolina Baptist Convention, which gave management to twenty-five trustees. In 1915, the word "Female" in its title was replaced with "Woman" (p.145). A few years later, the college abolished the requirement that students wear uniforms.

From 1911 to 1930, Greenville Woman's College enjoyed its "longest and most effective presidency" (p. 136). Despite a fluctuating economy, President David Ramsay, a Baptist pastor and former chair of Furman's Board of Trustees, increased enrollment from 403 in 1910-1911 to 711 in 1921-1922, while requiring 14 and then 15 high school units for admission. GWC also eliminated the high school classes that had long been a source of revenue for the college. As students in a "standard" college, GWC graduates gained certification to teach in schools accredited by the Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges in the Southern States (Southern Association). However, the low salaries, which averaged $1,423 annually for the twenty-six women faculty, led the Southern Association to place GWC on "probationary status" (p. 180). By the 1920s, Ramsay increased the faculty to thirty-seven and ensured that all liberal arts teachers were graduates of a standard college. He hired Rosa Paschal as the college's first full-time dean and her sister Nell as a full-time, trained librarian for a collection that would soon number 8,000 volumes. Moreover, with the construction in 1922 of the David M. Ramsay Fine Arts Center and other buildings, GWC's facilities were "among the best in Southern women's colleges" (p. 168). After GWC satisfied all but the endowment requirement for accreditation, the Southern Association made it an "approved nonmember" (p. 188).

Strenuous fund-raising efforts increased the endowment to $133,000 by 1928, but GWC could

not meet the new endowment requirement of $500,000 ($300,000 had to be in cash) imposed on denominational colleges by the Southern Association. In addition, as agricultural and textile profits declined, enrollment dropped to 376 in September 1929, the year of the school's Diamond Jubilee. Despite its "deep financial distress" (p. 192), President Ramsay rejected becoming part of Furman because of the "'dismal failure'" (p. 184) that had marked the college's relationship with the university between 1853 and 1908. He resigned in June 1930, when the trustees of GWC and Furman negotiated a proposal to affiliate the college with the university. In December 1930, the South Carolina Baptist Convention approved, without dissent, the union of GWC under Furman's charter, board of trustees, and administration. Henceforth, GWC would be called the Greenville Woman's College of Furman University; their first joint commencement was held in 1932. As GWC dean, English professor Virginia Thomas was instrumental in directing the college through the coordination process. Most non-athletic extracurricular activities, such as student publications, were soon consolidated. Both institutions jointly sponsored cab rides to transport students the mile between the Woman's College, nicknamed "the Zoo," and Furman, called the "Hill" (p. 221).

In 1933, Furman conditionally agreed to GWC's request for "full coordination," which meant that the university would temporarily take over the operation of the college to deal with its financial crisis (p. 206).

Businessman Bennette E. Geer, president of both institutions from 1933 to 1938, initially opposed coordination until he saw that it improved academic performance and raised enrollments, thereby increasing income. In November 1937, the South Carolina Baptist Convention approved the full coordination of GWC, which had decreased its indebtedness. GWC's Board of Trustees dissolved itself; and, in September 1939, the convention turned over to Furman the deeds to GWC's property.

In Bainbridge's view, full coordination gave women students "more and eventually equal educational opportunities, and Furman University was stronger than it had ever been" (p. 218). Such GWC alumnae as Lois Aileen Coggins, French professor, and Marguerite Moore Chiles, director of student personnel, dean of women, and Furman's first woman vice-president, provided role models and essential continuity for the Woman's College. Full coeducation was effected in 1961, when all female students resided at Furman University's new Poinsett Highway Campus, five miles north of Greenville. Some names from the Woman's College and such artifacts as the college seal, a small building, furniture items, bricks, and entrance columns were relocated to the new campus. The original site of the Woman's College in downtown Greenville is now "Heritage Green," new home to the Little Theatre, the Greenville County Library, and the Greenville Museum of Art. The former men's campus was replaced by the Bell Tower Shopping Mall.

Supplementing her narrative of institutional changes, Bainbridge includes commentary on college ceremonies, the impact of wartime conditions, and changing social customs. She draws on a rich mixture of sources: South Carolina Baptist Convention records and the ***Baptist Courier***; Greenville, South Carolina, newspapers; Woman's College and Furman University catalogues, minutes, and reports; and student scrapbooks, letters, poems, and essays. Thirty-two pages of excellent photographs and some maps enhance the text. The appendices list principals and trustees of the Greenville Female Academy, 1823-1854; the presidents of the college, 1855-1938; the words of the Alma Mater; and Woman's College Graduates, 1858-1932.

Although Bainbridge mentions other southern women's colleges, she might have developed a more sustained comparison between them and

GWC. It would have been helpful if she had explored how two other Baptist women's colleges in South Carolina--Limestone in Gaffney and Coker in Hartsville--in the 1920s raised the endowment necessary for Southern Association accreditation. Moreover, the non-denominational Converse, financed by a joint-stock company, developed in Spartanburg a fifty-acre campus with new buildings that had electricity, steam heat, and a modern laboratory. It gained accreditation in the 1910s. In addition to facing keen competition for women students in the upstate, GWC came in second to the publicly supported Winthrop College in Rock Hill in training female teachers.

There is one substantial factual error in the book. Bainbridge writes that in the 1920 "presidential election between Warren Harding and Woodrow Wilson," students "overwhelmingly supported Wilson" (p. 163). However, the Democratic Party, much to an ailing Wilson's disappointment, had nominated Ohio governor James M. Cox to run, with Franklin D. Roosevelt, against Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge. There are also a few typographical errors. Nevertheless, Bainbridge has written a meticulous and memorable history of the Woman's College of Furman University.