

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA

HISTORICAL PAPERS

No. 3.—1892

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PREFACE.

This number contains the valuable address of Col. Bolivar Christian on "The Scotch-Irish Settlers in the Valley of Virginia," now nearly out of print; Notes on Washington Academy and Washington College, by the Hon. Sidney S. Baxter; Memorial Tributes to the Rev. George A. Baxter, D. D.; and a continuation of Sketches of Trustees.

In preparing these Sketches we have been greatly aided by the Rev. William Brown, D. D., Mrs. S. C. P. Miller, Judge William P. Houston, and William H. Ruffner, LL. D. These will be continued in succeeding numbers.

We hope to publish in the next number a continuation of Dr. Ruffner's history of the institution by his son Dr. William Henry Ruffner.

WILLIAM McLAUGHLIN,
WILLIAM A. GLASGOW,
HENRY ALEXANDER WHITE,

Committee.

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY,
February, 1892.

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF WASHINGTON ACADEMY AND COLLEGE FROM 1799 TO 1829.

Prepared in 1873, at the Request of the Alumni Association,

By the HON. SIDNEY S. BAXTER.

I.

These notes are prepared from memory, without reference to documents, and in the midst of professional engagements. They may be in some respects inaccurate, and must contain many imperfections, for which the writer begs indulgence.

In 1797, the law erecting Liberty Hall Academy into Washington College was repealed. By the second section of the repealing law the name of the institution was changed to Washington Academy. The only copy of this act known to be in existence is in the first volume of the old record of the Academy, perhaps on pages 194-5.

After the resignation of Mr. Graham the Academy sunk to a low point. The Rector, Dr. S. L. Campbell, was a physician engaged in an extensive practice. He acted as president of the board of trustees, and did not superintend the instruction of the pupils. That duty was confided to a tutor. The number of students dwindled down to five or six.

In 1798 George A. Baxter was elected professor of mathematics. At that time he was principal of New London Academy, a flourishing institution, with a large number of students. Mr. Daniel Blain was his assistant. They removed to Lexington, and were accompanied by a large number of students. Students came from other places, until the number became quite respectable.

He quoted authors but seldom, either in his sermons or his recitation room. When he quoted in his recitation room, it was either to induce the pupils to study diligently the works quoted, or by judicious criticism to guard them from errors or faults of style or principles in the author. In his sermons and in the instruction of his pupils, it was obvious his thoughts were derived from and refined by his familiarity with the greatest and best writers. It ought to be added, that his mind was richly stored from and indeed richly imbued with the Holy Scriptures, and themes from them were often the subjects of his soliloquies. Both in preaching and in the instruction of his pupils he possessed in an eminent degree the faculty of stating the most abstruse and difficult problems in simple and lucid forms, which rendered them plain and acceptable to the most common understanding.

Of the course of Dr. Baxter after he resigned the Presidency of the College it would be out of place to speak here extensively, but it may not be improper to say, that soon after his resignation he was elected Professor of Christian Theology in the Union Theological Seminary. He discharged the duties of that office to the satisfaction of the pupils, the trustees, the churches, and the public. In the academy, the college, and the seminary, he was honored and venerated as an apt instructor of youth. As a minister of the gospel he was always one of the most highly esteemed members of the Synod of Virginia. And in the latter part of his life no minister of the Presbyterian Church in Virginia, or perhaps in the Southern States, had greater influence or was more venerated and honored.

REV. DANIEL BLAIN.

The name of the Rev. Daniel Blain ought always to be honored by the alumni of this institution. I regret I cannot speak of him from personal recollection; but from information derived from many sources I will attempt a brief notice of him.

Mr. Blain was a man of more than average intellect. His mind was highly cultivated, especially in the branches of learning connected with his professorship; but it was as an instructor he was most eminent. He was familiar with the dead languages, English literature, &c., and was a good French scholar. He had a pecu-

liarily happy manner of explaining to his pupils the most difficult passages and questions they encountered, and in improving and cultivating their taste in the classics, and exciting them to extend the range of their inquiries into all the subjects connected with ancient literature. His manner to the students was kind. He always treated them as gentlemen, and sustained his authority by the firmness, gentleness and dignity of his manner, rather than by force. He was assiduously devoted to his duty, and cheerfully encountered every labor and sacrifice necessary to sustain the character of the institution and to attain the purposes common to the Rector and himself, namely, the preservation of the Washington donation undiminished and unencumbered.

He was pastor of the churches of Oxford and Timber Ridge. His sermons were carefully prepared and his ministrations always acceptable to the people. He died in 1814 in the meridian of life and before he had attained the full measure of the reputation his talents, industry and fidelity entitled him to; but he saw before his death the Washington donation on firm ground and becoming valuable to the College.

His death was greatly mourned by all the friends of the college and by the entire community. It was a sore bereavement to the President. With him Mr. Blain had been associated as assistant professor for seventeen years, and during all that time there had not been a jar between them.

REV. ANDREW HERRON.

The Rev. Andrew Herron succeeded Mr. Blain as professor of Languages. He was a minister of the Associate Reformed Church. He was educated at Cambridge, Mass., and unquestionably was a man of ability and learning much above mediocrity. As an instructor and disciplinarian his success did not equal his talents and attainments. He soon manifested dissatisfaction with his duties as professor, and resigned the second year.

REV. HENRY RUFFNER, D. D.

He was succeeded by the Rev. Henry Ruffner, afterwards Dr. Ruffner. Dr. Ruffner was an alumnus of the institution. As assistant professor during the sickness of Mr. Blain and until the