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Trinity Park School in Context: College, Community, Contemporaries

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Abstract

For twenty-four years at the turn of the twentieth century Duke University’s East Campus hosted not only Duke’s progenitor, Trinity College, but also a second educational institution, Trinity Park School. Modeled after some of the leading boarding and preparatory schools in the northeastern United States, Trinity Park School provided college preparatory instruction in the classical tradition to ensure that Trinity College was able to enroll a student body well prepared to handle its increasingly rigorous curriculum. Although its tenure was short, Trinity Park School was the right school in the right place at the right time.

Trinity College traced its history to the early part of the nineteenth century and had grown amidst a variety of challenges, but the state of secondary education in North Carolina, particularly in the realm of public education, made it difficult for the college to find prospective students with the appropriate level of preparation for its program of study. Trinity’s new home city of Durham was more progressive than most North Carolina towns, but the city and state did not fully embrace public education as a civic priority until the first decades of the twentieth century. Trinity Park School provided the solution to the college’s needs in the interim, from 1898 to 1924.

This paper examines Trinity Park School in three contexts: community, including the history of education in Durham, in North Carolina, and in the South; college, with a comprehensive review of Trinity College, the role it played in the development of education in North Carolina, and the origins of Trinity Park School; and contemporaries, focusing on Trinity Park School in both the historical context of boarding schools and in direct comparison to three northeastern schools, Phillips Academy in Massachusetts, the Lawrenceville School in New Jersey, and the Hill School in Pennsylvania.
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Preface

I grew up in a town where schools came in two varieties: public and Catholic. I went to the first, my neighborhood friends attended the second. I received my bachelor’s degree from a state college where I had prepared to be a public school teacher. Although The Hill School was located just twenty miles away from my home, prep schools were foreign to me.

Life took me to Durham, North Carolina, and for the past twenty-eight years I have been immersed in the world of private education, not only at the collegiate level but at the secondary one as well. I have visited some of the country’s most prestigious boarding schools. I have become friends with their college counselors. I have reviewed their students’ applications. Somewhere along the way prep schools became part of my life.

For everything I have learned about boarding schools and the history of Duke, I only learned of Trinity Park School, Trinity College’s own boarding school, three years ago in my Documenting Durham class. I was curious about what happened to the school. Was Trinity Park School really similar to northern boarding schools as one historian claimed? What role did it play in the history of Duke and Durham? Why did the school no longer exist?

My final project for Duke University’s Master of Arts in Liberal Studies examines these questions. It also brings together my own educational background, from public schools to private. I hope my readers enjoy the history of Trinity Park School and its place in Durham’s and North Carolina’s educational narrative as much as I have enjoyed my investigation.
Introduction

Since colonial times, education in the United States has been the responsibility of local communities. With no nationalized system of education, schools are tied to the values of the communities that create and supply them. Americans’ propensity for local control has shaped political and cultural standards that have hindered the development of a centralized educational system.\(^1\) The responsibility for education rests firmly at the local or state level. As a result, the culture of communities dictates the existence and quality of schools.

In the United States today the term “community schools” usually refers to traditional public schools, since public schools educate the vast majority of the population. But public schools are only one part of the story of American education. Today’s schools grew from a variety of public school models. In some areas of the South, wealthy benefactors established free schools for local children, but they were rare. More common were “old field schools” – also called “subscription schools” because parents paid fees for their children to attend – that developed in areas with populations large enough to sustain them. Other schools had religious ties. Missionaries established “charity schools” for poor children throughout the colonies, and some denominations established schools that included religious instruction in their faith.\(^2\) As populations grew and with them greater, if limited, government support for education, publicly-funded “common schools” developed in areas with the population to sustain them. One characteristic uniting all of these models was the limited, elementary level of instruction they provided.

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In the Northeast, families wishing to provide higher-level education for their children created “academies” that more closely mirrored the topics of instruction more common in the region’s colleges.³ Today’s public and private schools are distinct entities, but early academies straddled a public/private line by seeking and receiving public funding.⁴ Early academies also blurred the lines between preparatory and college education. Academies taught classes at the college level, while colleges often taught secondary-level courses.⁵ Higher-level instruction that led to college preparation would not become widespread in the South until the nineteenth or twentieth century. Industrialization and the growth of American cities led to the creation of a new breed of academy that provided secondary instruction to prepare students for both higher education and the new types of jobs that required higher-level skills.⁶ By the twentieth century, “graded schools” had become the public school norm, replacing the one-room schoolhouse model with one that employed a stratified system of instruction, more uniform expectations for attendance and achievement, and professional teaching.⁷

Developing alongside the various public school models, private schools and colleges have also helped shape the American education landscape. Just as public schools have differed from one another, so have private schools. One goal that private schools share is preparing the majority of their students for college. In the early years of the country, however, college preparation, particularly for the most exclusive colleges and universities, was the domain of a


⁴ Leslie, “Where Have All the Academies Gone?,” 265.

⁵ Ibid., 266.

⁶ Ibid., 264.

small number of northeastern private schools. These schools served the children of America’s power brokers and maintained associations with the country’s oldest and most well-known colleges in order to provide them with a cadre of well-prepared students.

Not surprisingly, the greatest concentration of private schools and colleges is in the Northeast. The abundance of options in New England and the Mid-Atlantic is tied directly to historical patterns of population density, wealth, power, religion, and industry. The North was urban and industrial, the South was rural and agrarian. As the country grew, many of the private schools and colleges in other regions followed the model of the northeastern schools. Such is the case for Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, and its forebears.

As this paper will show in detail, Duke University traces its origins to Union Institute, a nineteenth-century school in central North Carolina. Union Institute evolved into Trinity College, Duke’s most recent predecessor. Trinity College survived the Civil War, Reconstruction, the early days of Jim Crow, and its move to Durham. Trinity faced not only the challenges of momentous events in the history of the United States but also a host of smaller-scale issues, one of which was the problem of finding well-qualified students to make up its student body while maintaining quality educational standards.

Trinity College leaders were vocal supporters of public education in North Carolina, but the college’s administrators found that secondary schools developed too slowly to meet Trinity’s need for students who were well prepared for the rigors of the college. Like many of its nineteenth-century peers, Trinity College took it upon itself to provide the educational opportunities lacking in its community, first by offering preparatory classes and later by creating its own preparatory school, Trinity Park School, the focus of this project.
Trinity Park School served its intended purpose: Trinity College benefited from the stream of well-educated students the school fed into the college. Trinity Park School thus helped solidify the college’s reputation for educational quality and ensured not only its continued success but also its future as the recipient of the Duke family’s philanthropy. Along with Trinity College, the school was instrumental in establishing Durham as a place that valued education. Trinity College and Trinity Park School arrived in Durham not long after the city had begun to take shape as an industrial center, an example of the post-Civil War “New South.” Trinity Park School, Trinity College, and Durham had a symbiotic relationship. By offering a classical curriculum and co-curricular activities that mimicked northeastern prep schools, Trinity Park School not only fed students into Trinity College but also gave the growing Durham community a high-quality secondary school for white students. Unlike its more exclusive northern counterparts, however, Trinity Park School also served the distinctly middle-class population that had arisen in Durham and attracted similar students from other parts of the state, just as the college had for many years. Together Trinity College and Trinity Park School helped establish Durham as a destination for education. A Trinity Park student would remark later that “Certainly no town in North Carolina gives the poor but worthy young man more chances to ‘do something’ than does Durham. This is a working age, and school life should be preparation for work.”

A stronger Trinity College, and eventually Duke University, also helped reinforce the value of education in North Carolina and the South.

Trinity Park School’s success was also its downfall. By strengthening Trinity College, the school indirectly helped support a strong advocate for public education in Durham and the South. Stronger public schools, along with Trinity Park School’s failure to establish a singular

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identity, eventually led to its demise. During its lifetime, however, Trinity Park School was exactly the right school to meet the needs of Trinity College and Durham.

To understand the contribution Trinity Park School made to the success of Trinity College and to Durham’s and North Carolina’s educational history, one must consider the educational environment out of which it grew, as well as the landscape of educational opportunities that preparatory schools offered in other regions of the United States. Because Trinity Park School existed in an era of racial segregation in the South, this examination of Trinity Park School and the educational environment surrounding it focuses primarily on the education of white students, with only minimal discussion of the education black students received in Durham at the time.

The first part of this study considers the early history of education in America, with a comparison of the North and South, focusing on the development of both public and private schools in each region, along with their similarities and differences. The second chapter traces the history of Trinity College prior to the founding of Trinity Park School, focusing on the circumstances surrounding its growth and development that ultimately led to the creation of the preparatory school. Because Trinity’s history so closely parallels the development of public secondary education in North Carolina, the second chapter also considers the college’s contributions to education in the state. Chapter three serves as the heart of the project, beginning with a look at the early history of education in Durham, then delving into the history of Trinity Park School itself: its curriculum, students, and culture. In order to place the school in its historical and cultural context, this study compares Trinity Park School to three northern preparatory schools: Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts; The Lawrenceville School in New Jersey; and The Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. The three schools are examples of
successful preparatory schools; they also differ from one another and from Trinity Park School in their structure and philosophies. A brief consideration of the preparatory school associated with Franklin and Marshall College in Pennsylvania provides an example of a school/college model similar to Trinity Park School and Trinity College. The final chapter considers Trinity Park School’s development and decline alongside Trinity College. The chapter also examines the growth of Durham’s public schools as a parallel to Trinity Park School. The paper concludes with an assessment of the successes and failures of Trinity Park School, the reasons for its demise, and its legacy in Durham and with Duke University.
Chapter One

The Culture that Gave Rise to Trinity Park School: A Comparative Look at Education in the Early United States

From its earliest history, American education has been a regional concern. From the colonial period to the twentieth century, educational opportunities have been tied closely to geography: regional differences in religion, class, population density, economics, and race helped shape the values that would direct education in the early United States. In many ways the themes that accompanied education in early America continue to the present; they most certainly contributed to the educational culture of the South and North Carolina at the end of the nineteenth century when Trinity Park School was established.

In looking at the early United States, the differences between educational priorities and opportunities are regionally based. The Northeast has long been considered the incubator for educational initiatives in both public and private education. The South, for a variety of reasons, has lagged behind for a long time. This chapter examines and contrasts the early history of education in the South versus the North that laid the foundation for the schools (or lack thereof) that would arise in each region and ultimately would lead to the need for Trinity Park School.

Early Educational History in the Northeast

To understand the culture that bred the nation’s preeminent colleges and preparatory schools, one must consider the history of education in the Northeast, which for the purpose of this paper includes the New England and Middle Atlantic states. New England is often considered the birthplace of American education, with most educational innovations originating there. As far back as colonial times, residents of the Northeast showed great enthusiasm for education, reflecting both social class and religious commitment. Puritan, Quaker, and Catholic
settlers in New England and the Mid-Atlantic came to America as families seeking religious freedom, so religion necessarily played a key role in the northeast region’s early educational culture. These immigrants were highly literate; at the time of the Revolution, for example, literacy was almost universal in New England among adult males.\(^9\) Not surprisingly, the Puritans wanted their children to be able to read and interpret the Bible, so teaching them literacy skills was essential. To that end, the Puritans established laws requiring public support of schools. By 1642 Massachusetts had enacted a law that other New England colonies soon adopted to ensure that children learned “to read and understand the principles of religion and capital laws of this country.”\(^10\)

In Massachusetts, the “Old Deluder Satan Act” enacted in 1647 required towns of fifty or more families to provide reading and writing instruction funded by the families or community, while towns of one hundred or more had to establish grammar schools. These “common schools” were the precursors to modern public schools in that they provided basic education to a broad population in locations with concentrated populations. Middle-class children from smaller communities received education at home or at “dame schools” using texts with religious content. A few Latin Grammar Schools offered a curriculum of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, plus geography, history, and mathematics to college-bound boys.\(^11\)

As education grew in New England in the late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century, elite families sought alternatives to the common schools that offered rudimentary education to the children of local farmers and tradesmen. Capitalizing on the sense of independence fostered

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\(^10\) Ibid., 43-44.

\(^11\) Ibid., 45-51.
by the Revolution, educated community leaders throughout the region established academies in their villages that were “more akin to what they had experienced at college” to provide an alternative to the “rough, unruly, sometimes violent atmosphere of common schools.”¹² Over one hundred and fifty academies were founded in the fifty years after the Revolution, having developed from the feeling that “liberal knowledge—geography, history, composition, oratory—befitted the new citizenry.”¹³

By 1850, the number of academies had expanded to six thousand.¹⁴ In creating the academies as an alternative to common schools, the Northeast’s educational pioneers also began a social and educational dichotomy between the working class, which valued their children’s labor on farms or as apprentices, and the middle and upper classes, which sought to prepare their children for college.¹⁵ Early academies went a step further than town schools in that they “highlight[ed] verbal erudition” rather than emphasizing the “vernacular skills—reading, writing, ciphering—necessary to run a farm or shop.”¹⁶

Two of the earliest academies, Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire, opened in the 1780s with the broad intention to “preserve liberty and to avoid corruption” by instructing students in the “traditional social and religious order” of serving “God, their parents, the public, and their neighbors.”¹⁷ Both evolved as education evolved; they have continued to exist into the twenty-first century as boarding

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¹³ Ibid., 448.


¹⁵ Opal, “Exciting Emulation …,” 446-453.

¹⁶ Ibid., 451.

¹⁷ McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 39-42.
schools and are considered among the nation’s most elite preparatory schools.\textsuperscript{18} Though the founders did not originally intend to cater to a broad population, the “sons of the rich” and “charity scholars” at Phillips Academy and Phillips Exeter studied together in a traditional classical curriculum, unlike other boarding and preparatory schools that were to come later that served a more exclusive clientele.\textsuperscript{19}

In the mid-nineteenth century, the growing commercialization of American culture required a better-educated population overall than the old common schools could provide. Citizens of the more populated cities in the Northeast, in particular, saw the need for better schools to furnish students with the skills necessary for new types of jobs. Social reformers, concerned with the negative effects of “industrialization and urbanization,” looked to schools as the solution. The first public high school was established in Boston in 1821; by 1860 several hundred public high schools had been established in the Northeast and Midwest.\textsuperscript{20} Though some private academies remained, many were converted to public schools in the midst of social reform, and public schools began preparing students for college in the same manner as the academies had previously.\textsuperscript{21} Enrollment numbers in private academies dropped as public schools grew, everywhere but in the South.\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} McLachlan, \textit{American Boarding Schools}, 39-42
\item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 115.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 64-65. In New England today some academies continue to function as the local public school Pinkerton Academy in Derry, New Hampshire, and Hopkins Academy in Hadley, Massachusetts are two such examples.
\item \textsuperscript{22} William J. Reese, \textit{The Origins of the American High School} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), xiii.
\end{itemize}
Early Educational History in North Carolina and the South

In the early South, the education provided in the colonies was wholly dependent on who the immigrants were and how they lived. Unlike the Northeast, which was founded by religious dissidents, the people who immigrated to the South did so primarily for financial reasons. The first settlers were single men who hoped to become rich in the New World. They were followed by immigrant families seeking to make a living from the production of tobacco. Having no religious disagreement with the Church of England, and modeling the English “agrarian social order,” the earliest settlers remained tied to their home country. Southerners considered education a family responsibility rather than a community one. Both the content and quality of public education varied greatly depending on family wealth and status. Unlike the Northeast, where religious beliefs generated schools, the influence of religious sects on education in the colonial South was inconsistent. Anglican ministers had little direct involvement with educational matters outside religious instruction. Though Moravians, Quakers, and Presbyterians founded schools in Virginia and North Carolina, and missionary societies helped fill the educational void with charity schools, these schools were the exception and never an engrained part of southern culture. Other early schools in the South included “endowed free schools” adjacent to land owned by the donors and “old field schools” which were supported by fees paid by the parents of the students served.

Education in the South also varied by colony. Each colony had its own social and economic culture, with additional differences tied to distinctions among the coastal, piedmont,

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24 Ibid., 27.
25 Ibid., 28-29.
and backcountry regions. The “dispersed agrarian pattern of settlement” made it difficult to build towns and communities like in the Northeast, which in turn made it difficult to unify citizens for educational purposes. The plantation-based economy of Virginia and South Carolina created a tiered structure by race and class. The people who settled these colonies often came from England’s higher classes and brought with them an Oxford education and a class-based society. Education for them was individualized; they hired tutors and governesses or sent their children back to England for a classical education. Religion was not a key element of education for them, nor were they concerned about educating the masses due to the sharp class divide and agrarian culture of the region.

North Carolina, by contrast, was settled by people of more modest means who farmed in communities that were more spread out. As late as the Civil War, North Carolina was primarily rural and considered by one educator as “less a state” and more “a confederation of independent communities.” Schools in North Carolina were run at a local level to reinforce religion, family ties, and race. Nonetheless, in 1825 the North Carolina legislature established the Literary Fund as an endowment to help fund schools. By 1839 the state allowed counties to collect school taxes to supplement what they received from the Literary Fund, thus creating a public education system that educated about “half the white school-aged population” in over three thousand districts.

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26 Ibid., 24.
27 Ibid.
United States census data indicate that in 1840 the average number of years of schooling completed by the South’s labor force was less than one year (.35), compared to 1.46 years in the Mid-Atlantic and 2.48 years in New England.31 The Civil War and its aftermath left the South even further behind the North in terms of education. By 1860, the average number of years of schooling in the South was still less than one year, while the average for the Mid-Atlantic had grown to almost three years and for New England to almost four years.32 The same year forty-four public high schools existed in the country, with only three located in the South.33 The depressed southern economy, fears of racially and socioeconomically integrated classrooms, and a belief in “private responsibility for education” delayed the progress of public education in the South.34 While some major cities hosted public schools, “a smaller proportion of southern children attended school, and they rarely progressed to the advanced subjects. Private schools continued to educate the majority of middle- and upper-class students in the southern states through most of the nineteenth century.”35 Public schools were synonymous with “pauper,” and only the “very poor who could not afford private education for their children sent them to public schools.”36

North Carolina’s Literary Fund disappeared with the defeat of the Confederacy. Between 1865 and 1868, the North Carolina legislature’s unwillingness or inability to allocate money for

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32 Ibid. The exact numbers were .87 for the South, 2.91 for the Mid-Atlantic, and 3.86 for New England.


education left any remnant of public schools in disarray. Finally in 1868 the legislature “appropriated $100,000 for schools that were to be established or reestablished in the townships under the direction of the superintendent of public instruction. Each county was to receive fifty cents from the state for every child within its borders.” As a result, common schools with local district control grew, lost their stigma, and helped to “shape and reflect a sense of community.”

Between the 1850s and 1900, education-minded leaders made more concentrated efforts to create public schools in North Carolina, with the larger cities establishing graded schools that operated nine months of the year. The economy was changing from agrarian to industrial, and both school leaders and industrialists saw the need for modern education for young citizens. A 1918 article about North Carolina’s early graded schools relays an interesting anecdote about the impetus for the state’s graded school in Fayetteville. A trial being held in the city required the testimony of a group of black boys and white boys. The black boys, who attended schools supported by northern philanthropists, were able to sign their names; the white boys were illiterate. The incident sparked interest in creating a school for whites, subscriptions were solicited, and the school began. Early graded schools, like their northeastern counterparts, focused more on preparing their students for work than for college. Graded schools spoke what James Leloudis terms a “language of markets and competitive individualism,” where “the

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38 Ibid., 114.


40 Charles Lee Raper, *The Church and Private Schools of North Carolina* (Greensboro: Jos. J. Stone, 1898), 4. The earliest graded schools served white students only, but by the turn of the century graded schools existed for both white and black students. Leloudis, *Schooling the New South*, 23.

41 M. C. S. Noble, “Our Early Graded Schools and Their Founders,” *The High School Journal* 1, no. 3 (1918): 6-8. URL: [www.jstor.org/stable/40358986](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40358986). Although Fayetteville instituted a graded school, the soliciting of subscriptions illustrates the blend of public and private funding that was typical at the time.
classroom was … a staging ground for the great race of life.” Regardless of their deficiencies in preparing students for college, graded schools were superior to common schools in that they used more uniform standards of performance to measure students’ success.

Despite these few mid-century advancements, North Carolina still lagged behind even its southern counterparts in widespread education. The state did not have a compulsory education law until 1913. North Carolina historian Charles Raper wrote in 1898 that “there are now almost as many illiterate whites in [North Carolina] as in all the other of the original thirteen colonies put together.” Former Duke professor Hersey Everett Spence recalled in his memoirs that when he arrived as a student at Trinity College in 1903, “there was no high school in Camden County at that time. I did not attend any school, except such as were held in one-room school houses and conducted six months or less at the time.” In a 1903 article in The School Review, author P. H. Saunders declared that “the outlook of public high schools in the South is the outlook of education in the South,” noting that public high schools in North Carolina were still in their infancy and that their success would depend on deep involvement from the state’s universities in dictating curricula and instruction.

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42 Leloudis, Schooling the New South, 22.

43 Ibid., 23.


45 Raper, The Church and Private Schools of North Carolina, 4. Though Raper focuses solely on the white population, the black population likely had even lower literacy rates.


Education in North Carolina in the nineteenth century was mostly an urban concern. A few private academies operated in North Carolina during the mid-1800s, many of which traced their origins to religious leaders in the state. Like the rest of the country, Protestant denominations had grown in size and influence throughout the country at the beginning of the century, so religion’s influence on education grew along with them.\textsuperscript{48} Raper credits the Presbyterians with advancing education in North Carolina as a result of the relocation of numerous clergymen from the Northeast in general and Princeton University (then called the College of New Jersey) in particular. It was through them that Princeton became a draw for North Carolina men seeking education outside the state.\textsuperscript{49} One of the earliest Presbyterian-affiliated schools in North Carolina was the Bingham School, founded in 1806 by the Reverend William Bingham, a Presbyterian minister, and continued by his son and grandsons for many years thereafter. The school, which was originally located in Orange County, North Carolina, moved to Asheville in 1891.\textsuperscript{50}

The Rise of Boarding Schools

Back in the Northeast, despite the decline of the academies, boarding schools prospered as the wealthiest families continued to seek ways to separate their children from the masses. Boarding schools experienced tremendous growth in the late nineteenth century. Not only did existing schools grow their populations by almost two-hundred percent, but seven of what are often considered America’s top twelve boarding schools were founded between 1883 and 1906, \textsuperscript{48} McLachlan, \textit{American Boarding Schools}, 109.

\textsuperscript{49} Raper, \textit{The Church and Private Schools} …, 32.

with all located in the Northeast. Some scholars suggest that American elites chose boarding schools for their children because of their affinity for the English system. Others suggest that boarding schools became popular because they represented “social control” in the fast-changing culture of the nineteenth century. Some argue simply that the newly rich associated boarding schools with higher social status. Certainly the limited college preparatory coursework at public schools contributed to the growth as well. The wealthy who had made their fortunes in industry wanted their children to have access to the nation’s top educational institutions, too.

New schools arose as a result of “a reaction against the rigidity of the emerging urban school bureaucracies … the admissions standards of the new universities … the needs and aspirations of the urban and suburban rich” but perhaps most importantly due to “many parents’ undefined hope that they provided the ‘best’ education available for their sons.” Unlike the academies, which either operated as day schools or housed students with local families, boarding schools offered their own housing and thus were able to draw their students from a broader population. Students came from not only the well-established families in the Northeast’s cities but also from the Midwest’s industrial cities like Chicago and Detroit. The “old aristocracy” combined with the “nouveaux riche” to form a new elite class. In doing so, boarding schools fulfilled the purpose of “keep[ing] the capitalist economy prosperous and stable.”

51 Steven B. Levine, “The Rise of American Boarding Schools and the Development of a National Upper Class,” Social Problems 28, no. 1 (1980): 64-65, URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/800381. Levine identifies the top twelve boarding schools as Phillips Academy, MA (1778), Phillips Exeter Academy, NH (1783), Hill School, PA (1851), St. Paul’s School, NH (1856), St. Mark’s School, MA (1865), Lawrenceville School, NJ (1883), Groton School, MA (1884), Hotchkiss School, CT (1892), Choate School, CT (1896), St. George’s School, RI (1896), Middlesex School, MA (1901), and Kent School, MA (1906).


53 McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 217.


55 McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 66-72.
Phillips Andover and Phillips Exeter, where scholarships allowed the “sons of millionaires” to live and study with “mill boys from near-by towns and big-fisted youths from the Pennsylvania mines,” the cost of most boarding schools was out of reach of all but the wealthiest families, adding to the schools’ exclusivity.

Like all institutions, boarding schools develop their own tone and character with time, but at their core they share many of the same attributes. They are all private, with the ability to govern themselves, design their own curricula, and select their students and teachers. Curricular offerings tend to be broad and deep, with classes based on discussion-based pedagogy. As residential communities, the schools offer a wide array of co-curricular activities, with a particular emphasis on athletics, along with definitive expectations for personal behavior.

The prototype for American boarding schools was Round Hill School, founded in 1823 by Harvard’s Joseph Green Cogswell and George Bancroft and modeled after European boarding schools. The school, located in rural Northampton, Massachusetts, promised to shape both character and mind by providing a family-type atmosphere, with the faculty serving as surrogate parents. The school educated boys not only in a classical curriculum but also “modern languages, mathematics, science, history, and geography.” Some students would go on to college, while others would finish their education at Round Hill. The school’s program included daily religious activities and physical exercise, both of which would become hallmarks of future boarding

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57 Ibid., 683.


The school was immediately successful despite tuition of $300 per year, a significant amount of money in 1823. Students came from “wealthy and firmly established families” as well as the “great merchant families of the North,” and “landed families of the South.” Like the schools that would come later, it also served the newly rich “pioneers of industrialization.” Despite its early success, the school closed in 1834 when Cogswell moved to Raleigh, North Carolina, to direct the newly-founded Episcopal School.

The Lawrenceville School, founded in 1883 in New Jersey, and The Hill School, founded in 1851 in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, and reorganized in 1879, were two schools that catered to families with newer wealth. In a 1915 article, Arthur Ruhl called Lawrenceville “a second generation” school that attracted families based on its “house system” model and its physical proximity to Princeton University. Equally prestigious at the time, but organizationally different, The Hill School followed the “family school” model, meaning that it was run by its founding family like a family unit, with the head of school and his wife acting as the school “parents.” Although neither was as old as Andover and Exeter, by 1910 both had developed a reputation for exclusivity that rivaled those earlier schools. Along with Phillips Andover, Lawrenceville and Hill are the primary northern boarding schools to which this paper will compare Trinity Park School.

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60 Ibid., 79-81.
61 Ibid., 90.
62 Ibid., 100.
63 Ruhl, “Some American Preparatory Schools,” 691.
Chapter Two

The Evolution of Trinity College

Higher Education in the South

To understand the impetus for Trinity Park School, it is helpful to consider not only the status of secondary schools in North Carolina but also the patterns of higher education in the South, the history of the school’s progenitor, Trinity College, and the college’s prominence as compared to other colleges and universities.

As with grammar and preparatory schools, the Northeast was home to many of the nation’s oldest and most prestigious colleges. As religious dissenters, Puritan colonists could not send their children back to England to attend Oxford or Cambridge due to the universities’ ties to the Church of England. Further, Puritans considered the climate at those institutions indecent. The Puritans sought to educate their sons to become “Christian gentleman,” with education and religion combined. Most of the early students at colleges like Harvard, Yale, and Princeton came from the wealthy Puritan merchant class that wanted to prepare its sons for leadership and public service. The early colleges served to “identify and ratify a colonial elite” with values that were distinctly American.64

For a population that showed only moderate enthusiasm for educating younger students, Americans demonstrated a comparatively high level of interest in founding colleges. After the Revolution, the number of colleges in the United States grew notably, from just twenty-five in 1800 to over 240 in 1860.65 The new institutions reflected the needs of a growing country in

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64 John R. Thelin, A History of American Higher Education (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004): 23-27. One exception was the College of William and Mary in Virginia, which was “royally chartered” in 1693 and maintained ties to the Church of England.

65 Ibid., 42.
their variety: comprehensive state universities, colleges for women, normal schools for teacher education, military service academies, scientifically-focused programs, and church-related liberal arts colleges developed throughout the country, beginning in the Northeast but quickly expanding to the Midwest, West, and South.

In the South, the College of William and Mary, Washington and Lee University, the College of Charleston, Salem College, and Hampden-Sydney College all predated the Revolutionary War. A post-war spirit of independence inspired the creation of some of the region’s larger universities, with Transylvania University in Kentucky, the University of North Carolina, and the University of Georgia founded in the late 1700s, and South Carolina College (later the University of South Carolina), and the University of Virginia following in the early 1800s. The creation of the University of North Carolina, founded in 1789, fostered “a sense of state pride” and fulfilled “a need for trained citizens capable of self-government.”

The early “state” universities were relatively exclusive. As late as the mid-nineteenth century the University of North Carolina was “the educator of the aristocracy of blood, wealth, and intellect of the state.” For over forty years, the University of North Carolina was the state’s only college – not surprising, perhaps, given the relative poverty of North Carolina at the time, both economically and educationally. In the early nineteenth century the state was still agriculturally driven, with lower productivity than neighboring states. The geography of the state created three distinct sections, the mountains, the piedmont, and the coastal region, leading to a sense of sectionalism rather than a cohesive entity. Public schools did not exist until 1839, and

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illiteracy was ubiquitous. The 1840 census indicated that over twenty-five percent of adult whites were illiterate.\textsuperscript{68}

Prior to the Civil War, the founding of liberal arts colleges paralleled the growth of religious denominations. The religious fervor taking place in the United States created a need for an educated clergy. By 1820, denominational colleges had formed throughout the country to educate children in their particular faith traditions. The denominational colleges tended to be “small in enrollments, lean in operations, and poor in endowments,” drawing from families of modest means, which resulted in tuitions that were relatively low.\textsuperscript{69} Unlike the exclusive state universities, the church-related colleges served “young men from modest backgrounds,”\textsuperscript{70} affording their students a level of social mobility that they may not have otherwise attained.

Of the colleges with religious affiliations, the majority were connected to the “Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Catholics, Lutherans, German Reformed, Dutch Reformed, and Unitarians” and promoted the education of ministers. Methodists and Baptists founded their colleges later than their peers, though by the Civil War they had become “the two most active denominations in the founding of colleges.”\textsuperscript{71} The Methodists founded their first colleges, Randolph-Macon College in Virginia and Wesleyan University in Connecticut, in 1830 and 1831.\textsuperscript{72} North Carolina Methodists naturally supported Randolph-Macon, not only because of its geographic proximity but also because the state did not have its own conference or

\textsuperscript{68} Boyd, introduction to \textit{Trinity College} …, 4.

\textsuperscript{69} Thelin, \textit{A History of American Higher Education}, 60-61.

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 68.

\textsuperscript{71} Chaffin, \textit{Trinity College}, 162.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 162.
college at the time.\textsuperscript{73} Greensboro Female College, established in 1838 when a new North Carolina conference met for the first time, was the first Methodist college in North Carolina.\textsuperscript{74}

The Roots of Trinity College: Brown’s Schoolhouse and Brantley York

As in the rest of the country, North Carolina’s religious denominations established colleges with more enthusiasm than the public showed for secondary education.\textsuperscript{75} Although colleges were taking shape, basic education in North Carolina was still limited. In the early part of the nineteenth century, education was either home- or church-based, with small communities informally assembling children for instruction in old field schools.

Brown’s Schoolhouse in Randolph County had begun as an old field school, serving the mostly Quaker and Methodist families in the area surrounding what is now the town of Trinity, North Carolina.\textsuperscript{76} The academy movement provided the spark that would transform Brown’s Schoolhouse into Union Institute Academy in 1839, under the leadership of Brantley York. By the mid-nineteenth century, following a wave of interest nationwide in improving society through education, academies had grown exponentially; by 1860 North Carolina had chartered 287 academies.\textsuperscript{77} Like academies elsewhere, Union offered classes at the college preparatory level in English, mathematics, natural science, Latin, and Greek.\textsuperscript{78} The cost for a year of study at

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 163.

\textsuperscript{74} Boyd, introduction to Trinity College …, 12.

\textsuperscript{75} Thelin, A History of American Higher Education, 68. Thelin notes that “A peculiar feature of the college-building impulse is that it took place prior to, and with more enthusiasm than, the initiative to establish primary- and secondary-school systems.” He also notes that “the greatest growth in college-building and enrollments took place in the South and West.”

\textsuperscript{76} Chaffin, Trinity College, 23.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 42.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 75.
Union Institute was ten dollars, with board costing five dollars per month.\textsuperscript{79} Presumably these costs were low enough to make the school affordable for middle-class families, since in 1840 the school advertised itself as less expensive than “any other school of the kind in the Union” and designed to “place within reach of common farmers, mechanics, and merchants an opportunity of giving their children at least a good business education.”\textsuperscript{80} The appeal to the middle class worked. Families eagerly sought the education that Union could provide, with students attending from all over North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina.\textsuperscript{81}

As previously noted, the distinction between nineteenth-century colleges and preparatory academies was not well defined. At its founding, Union Institute included “Academy” in its name and offered preparatory classes rather than college courses. Around 1848, capitalizing on the growing need for public school teachers, Union added a “normal class” in teacher education which separated the institute from other academies and started the school on the path to becoming a college.\textsuperscript{82}

**Union Institute to Normal College: Braxton Craven**

Union’s role in educating teachers would lead to its next incarnation. Under the leadership of Braxton Craven, Union Institute became Normal College in 1852. Not only did Normal College train teachers, but it intertwined teacher training with regular college courses. The North Carolina General Assembly gave Normal College the authority to “grant such degrees

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 69.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 51, quoting *Greensborough Patriot*, June 9, 16, 23, 30, July 7, 14, 1840.

\textsuperscript{81} Chaffin, *Trinity College*, 66-67.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 274.
and marks of honors as are given by Colleges and Universities generally.”

Although the school was by then officially a college, it would continue its mission of serving middle-class students from North Carolina and other southern states. President Craven was the first of many of Trinity College’s leaders to show a commitment to educating the public by reaching out to “poor boys,” offering free tuition in exchange for their later becoming teachers in the common schools. Evidence suggests that Normal College’s graduates indeed upheld the school’s mission, as most became teachers or ministers.

Despite its status as a college, the lines between preparatory and college-level work continued to be blurred during Normal College’s tenure. Over half of Normal’s students took preparatory courses, which the college catalogue eagerly promoted:

This department possesses superior advantage for those preparing for this or any other College. Such as desire a partial course, will enjoy all the privileges of Apparatus, Museum, Lectures, and College Associations that any institution can afford, without being confined to a course of instruction opposed to their purposes or opportunities. Those preparing for this institution will find this as cheap, as perhaps any school where appropriate instruction can be obtained; and therefore, it will be advantageous to prepare here. Such as design entering the University or any other distant College, can prepare here as cheap, and certainly with more advantages, than at a common school.

Union Institute and Normal College had continued their association with the Methodist church, and by 1856 the affiliation was official, with Normal College becoming the official college of the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The teacher training aspect of the college faded due to a lack of support from the state and public criticism of the teachers trained there. In 1859, the

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83 Ibid., 102, quoting C.H. Wiley Papers, 1852-1854, II, 212.

84 Chaffin, *Trinity College*, 114-117.


86 Ibid., 171.
college was renamed Trinity College and became a denominationally affiliated, liberal arts college.\textsuperscript{87}

**Trinity College: From Craven to Crowell**

The initial admission requirements for Trinity College matched those of Normal College (students had to pass examinations in English, Latin, Greek, arithmetic, and geometry), and students could choose to follow one of several paths: “Collegiate,” “Normal,” or Preparatory.\textsuperscript{88} The quality of the scholarship at Trinity College surpassed that of Normal College, however, as the faculty and trustees were committed to ensuring that students had mastered the college’s new higher-level academic expectations.\textsuperscript{89} The student body continued to come from middle-class families in North Carolina and other southern states, and they continued to become teachers and clergymen after graduation.\textsuperscript{90} They also continued to enroll at Trinity College unprepared for college-level work: “… the total number of students taking the preparatory and irregular courses was always greater [than the regular college course].”\textsuperscript{91} Public education in North Carolina and the South was clearly still lacking; the impending Civil War would set it back even further.

Immediately prior to the Civil War, Trinity College enjoyed one of its largest enrollments ever, with 215 students enrolled.\textsuperscript{92} After the war began, enrollment dropped

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 176-177.

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 191.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 199.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 203.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 201-202.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 221.
sharply; just sixty-five students entered in 1862, mostly in the preparatory department.\textsuperscript{93} The college saw other effects of the war as well. President Craven organized a military company of students called the “Trinity Guard,”\textsuperscript{94} physical education was added to the curriculum,\textsuperscript{95} and girls were admitted in 1864 to help fill vacancies.\textsuperscript{96} By April 1865 “retreating Confederate soldiers encamped upon the College grounds” and “excitement subsequent to the final overthrow of the Confederacy forced the suspension of college activities.”\textsuperscript{97}

The post-war years brought changes to the college. The “University System” model of multiple schools and advanced degrees had been adopted in 1865, but the war had delayed its implementation.\textsuperscript{98} Nonetheless, the college established a theological department in 1867 and a School of Law in 1868. The college began offering “partial courses” in “commerce, business, engineering, [and] architecture” that more closely mirrored opportunities at comprehensive universities rather than liberal arts colleges.\textsuperscript{99} Trinity reinstated its teaching course in 1876 followed by a “Summer Normal School” in

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 232.  
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 221.  
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 228.  
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 240.  
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 247.  
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., 301.  
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 298-301.
1877 and a Department of Medicine in 1880.\(^{100}\) As historian Nora Chaffin notes, “the years between 1866 and 1876 were a time of enthusiastic rebuilding of the College.”\(^{101}\)

While helping to rebuild Trinity College, Craven continued his advocacy for public education in North Carolina. During Reconstruction, the state missed its opportunity to establish a centralized system of public schools due to both “political uncertainty” and “an apparent lack of genuine educational interest.” At a gathering of educational leaders Craven encouraged “a single system of education” in North Carolina.\(^{102}\) He also reported to the Trinity College trustees that he believed in “a great future for education in the South” but that “both state and church must be ready to meet increasing demands for a more progressive system of schools.”\(^{103}\) Although Craven could not initiate better public schools, he was able to convince the Methodists to open “district academies and high schools.”\(^{104}\) He also valued Trinity’s own preparatory department, “advising parents to send their sons to Trinity if there were no good preparatory schools near their homes.”\(^{105}\)

The unfortunate news of Craven’s death in 1882 matched the state of Trinity College at that time. Enrollment numbers for the college had steadily declined, though the number of students entering the preparatory and special departments had increased. Many people thought of Trinity as “inferior to the other colleges in North Carolina,”

\(^{100}\) Ibid., 304.

\(^{101}\) Ibid., 310.

\(^{102}\) Ibid., 262.

\(^{103}\) Ibid., 255.

\(^{104}\) Ibid., 264.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., 296.
though they found the preparatory department strong. \(^{106}\) After a few particularly difficult years under the interim leadership of W. H. Pegram and Marquis Wood, a “Committee of Management” consisting of J. W. Alspaugh, Julian S. Carr, and James A. Gray took control from 1884 to 1886. Chaffin notes, “these three North Carolinians guided Trinity through one of the most critical periods in the history of the College. Their policies were wise; their financial arrangements, businesslike; and their appointments to the faculty, discriminating.” \(^{107}\) They also had the foresight to select as president another man who would leave his mark on both Trinity College and education in North Carolina, John F. Crowell.

President Crowell arrived at Trinity College in 1887 from the Schuylkill Seminary in Pennsylvania where he had served as principal. Like many of Trinity’s own students, Crowell came from a modest background but through hard work had attended Dartmouth and Yale. \(^{108}\) Crowell immediately instituted reforms to ensure the quality of a Trinity College education, including requiring entrance examinations for all students, though he continued the tradition of placing Trinity within reach of students from modest backgrounds, including “farmer’s [sic] boys,” “clerks,” and “factory operatives,” by sending faculty members throughout the state to administer entrance examinations. \(^{109}\) The demographics of the student body also changed under Crowell’s leadership. While the majority of students continued to come from North Carolina, the western part of the state offered greater representation than it once had, and Trinity saw its first students

\(^{106}\) Ibid., 373.

\(^{107}\) Ibid., 347; 354.

\(^{108}\) Ibid., 383.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., 412-413.
enroll from the Northeast, including Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and New York. Women gained official admittance as well.\textsuperscript{110}

Crowell also introduced a variety of curricular changes in his early years at Trinity. A devotee of the educational philosophies of German universities, Crowell believed that modern languages should be taught in place of classical languages and that the college’s curriculum should have relevance in the working world.\textsuperscript{111} Upon his arrival Crowell made several curricular changes. He divided history and English into two separate departments, introduced post-graduate work in English literature, established a “Biblical Department” to train prospective ministers, added a “Normal Department” for teacher training, began offering a variety of elective courses, and separated Latin and Greek into two departments.\textsuperscript{112} Just a year later he reorganized the curriculum again, dividing it into two departments, the “Academic” and the “Scientific,” each two years’ long and together creating a four-year college course.\textsuperscript{113}

With Crowell at the helm, Trinity moved forward quickly with a plan for becoming a full-scale university. The college organized and reorganized departments, improved instructional equipment, instated a museum, expanded the library, offered scholarships and fellowships, and instituted a Bachelor’s Examination.\textsuperscript{114} Outside the classroom, extracurricular offerings expanded beyond the once-heavily influential Columbian and Hesperian literary societies to include a College Congress, a student

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 452.
\textsuperscript{111} Anderson, \textit{Durham County}, 169.
\textsuperscript{112} Chaffin, \textit{Trinity College}, 411.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 414.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 421-435.
government organization, a Y.M.C.A. chapter, academic societies, musical organizations, mission-oriented activities, and student publications, including the *Trinity Archive*. The college formed an athletic association in 1887-1888 that supported teams in tennis, baseball, lacrosse, and football, which quickly became the school favorite.115

In 1888, Crowell focused his efforts on transforming Trinity College into a model university. To realize this vision, Crowell recommended that the college abolish its preparatory department. He provided four reasons for the recommendation: free tuition for preparatory students created financial loss for the college, other preparatory schools were opposed to sending their graduates to Trinity because of the competition, the faculty was not paid adequately, and eliminating the preparatory department would allow Trinity to focus on being a true college. The trustees followed his recommendation, but the lack of preparation of entering students led the department to be restored two years later.116

Crowell’s suggestion that the college abolish its preparatory department stemmed from his optimistic belief that the state’s public schools would soon be strong enough to sustain the college. Though new to the state, Crowell had become invested in promoting public education in North Carolina. Speaking in May 1888 at the commencement of the Winston Graded School, he declared “the public school system … is the one and only institution that can deal efficiently with these vast numbers in preparing them for a share in the government of the nation.”117 He also advocated a single state-school system that

115 Ibid., 436-452.
116 Ibid., 413.
would be funded by taxing urban locales to help fund poorer county districts. Like his predecessor Craven, Crowell served as an advocate for North Carolina’s public schools even though he presided over a private college.

In the midst of his advocacy for public education, Crowell also recognized that Trinity College needed its entrants to be properly prepared. Working with Methodist leaders, he helped organize elementary and preparatory schools to provide “high-school training to the ‘masses’” and “to create ‘feeders’ for Trinity College.” Seven of these schools opened by 1893. The success of these schools in providing students for Trinity College is questionable, however. In his history of Trinity’s ties with preparatory schools, William Hamilton named the “Academies of Burlington, Richlands, Hartland in Caldwell County, and Jonesboro” as part of the “Trinity Chain,” which also included Morven Academy in south Anson County and Pilot Mountain east of Mt. Airy. Hamilton wrote that “there is no evidence that these feeder schools fulfilled their function for Trinity College … Of the one hundred seventy-four students in the college in 1901-1902, there were only eight from all the Methodist Church schools in North Carolina.”

Under Crowell’s leadership, Trinity College overcame the challenges of the Civil War years and their aftermath. Crowell felt that for the college to continue to grow, however, it would need to move to a new location with more space to build and in proximity to an “urban district of greater prosperity and financial stability.”

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119 Ibid., 322.


121 Chaffin, *Trinity College*, 478.
and Durham were the finalists for Trinity’s new home, with Durham ultimately chosen thanks to the involvement and leadership of faithful Methodist Washington Duke; his son Benjamin Duke, who was a Trinity College trustee; Reverend E. A. Yates; and long-time Trinity supporter Julian Carr. The Duke family had made their first gift of one thousand dollars to the college in 1887, and in 1889 Washington Duke had attended Trinity’s commencement. Duke’s commitment of eighty-five thousand dollars to fund both buildings and an endowment, coupled with Carr’s gift of land for the college, convinced the trustees to award the college to Durham. The facilities at the original Trinity site were to be used as a preparatory school to feed into the college; the subsequent institution was named Trinity High School and opened as soon as the college moved to Durham.

**Trinity College in Durham: John Kilgo**

As the new home for Trinity College, Durham was an excellent choice. A new city with a newly-minted middle class, Durham was ripe for the kind of educational offerings that Trinity College, and later Trinity Park School, would provide. According to historian James Leloudis, newspapers of the day hailed Durham, with its cotton mills and tobacco manufacturing, as a city of “delightful freedom, frankness, and independence;” a place that “stood for something brand new in North Carolina and that “look[ed] to the

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122 Ibid., 492; 497.
123 Ibid., 496.
124 Ibid., 496-498.
125 Ibid., 501; 513.
future, not backward at all.”126 Leloudis also notes that “Durham … did not even show up on the federal census in 1870 but reported seven thousand citizens by century’s end.”127 The new, manufacturing-based city represented a change from the state’s agrarian, pre-Civil War past and as such provided a prime location for a college interested in a new beginning as the twentieth century approached.

Trinity College opened in Durham on September 1, 1892, but the excitement surrounding the move to Durham was short-lived.128 The expenses associated with building the new campus, coupled with the college’s need to stay affordable in order to attract its core constituency of middle-class students, resulted in troubling debts. The stock market crash in the Panic of 1893 triggered a depression felt strongly in the South, exacerbating Trinity’s financial problems. In turn, the faculty became disgruntled as a result of not being paid.129 Rightly or wrongly, Crowell became the scapegoat for the college’s problems, with the Methodist Conference disagreeing with him on a variety of issues, including unusually vehement opposition to his support of intercollegiate football, which Crowell championed for its physical benefits and the camaraderie it engendered, but which church leaders found immoral.130 By the summer of 1893, the faculty’s and conference leaders’ negative feelings toward Crowell led him to offer his resignation.

126 Leloudis, *Schooling the New South*, 20.

127 Ibid., 19.


The board’s unwillingness to accept the resignation kept the presidency in Crowell’s hands, but many of his ideas for expanding the college, including proposals for a school of technology and greater self-governance by the students, went unrealized.  

With Trinity based in Durham, it behooved the city’s businessmen to help it succeed. Benjamin Duke and his business partner George Watts devised a plan to sell bonds that immediately relieved Trinity of some of its debt, though its financial problems continued. Though Trinity was temporarily sustained, Crowell never regained support, and he submitted his final resignation to the Methodist conference in May 1894. The conference quickly elected John Kilgo to replace him.

The differences between Crowell and Kilgo, both personal and philosophical, were marked. Kilgo was a southerner, a staunch Methodist, and a skilled fundraiser who knew how to capture a crowd. He very quickly garnered the support of both the citizens of Durham and the Duke family, who appreciated his Methodist background. As historian Earl Porter notes, “Kilgo was a preacher, not a thinker.” Regardless, he knew how best to harness his talents.

Kilgo’s first priority was funding the college through an endowment. To that end, he campaigned for funding throughout the state and with the Methodist Conferences. Ultimately, though, he knew his best hope was with the Duke family, who had gradually become more and more committed to the college. In December 1896, Washington Duke committed one hundred thousand dollars to Trinity with the condition that the college

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132 Ibid., 48-49.

133 Ibid., 78.
admit women “on an equal footing with men.”\textsuperscript{134} Former Duke professor Hersey Spence said of Kilgo “I frankly and sincerely believe that, had it not been for John C. Kilgo, there would never have been a Duke University,”\textsuperscript{135} citing Kilgo’s friendship with the Dukes as the reason for their continued support of Trinity.\textsuperscript{136}

With Trinity’s finances on firmer ground, Kilgo began to make changes to the college itself. In an effort to unify the concerns of the college with those of the conference, he discontinued intercollegiate football in 1894 and intensified the college’s focus on “Christian education.” In the case of Trinity College, Christian education generally meant character education and more specifically included a required Bible course, mandatory church and Sunday school attendance, and a faculty with strong religious ties.\textsuperscript{137} Trinity’s clear direction influenced Washington Duke again, and he followed his initial gift with two additional gifts in 1898 and 1890.\textsuperscript{138}

Once Kilgo established Trinity’s Christian foundation he then undertook a revision of the curriculum. Rather than continue with three separate baccalaureate degree paths, Kilgo combined them all into one Bachelor of Arts degree with three courses. The first, “Course A,” would require the study of Greek, while “Course B” would allow students to substitute French or German. “Course C,” the science degree, included the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 62-63. Porter notes that while women had received degrees from Trinity, the college had not provided housing for female students. The gift from Washington Duke led to construction of a women’s dormitory and a “complete commitment to coeducation.”
\item \textsuperscript{135} Spence, \textit{I Remember}, 7.
\item \textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 218.
\item \textsuperscript{137} Porter, Trinity and Duke, 64; 70.
\item \textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 71.
\end{itemize}
study of biology with fewer English and social science courses.\textsuperscript{139} As Kilgo’s tenure as president progressed, so did the curriculum. Between 1894 and 1903 the number of courses grew from fifty-four to 125 and the elective policy became more flexible. The former “Course C” scientific track became an engineering degree, and the modern languages grew with the addition of faculty.\textsuperscript{140} Porter notes, “The new men, the new resources, and the receptivity to new ideas were wholly in accord with the optimism that greeted the new century.”\textsuperscript{141} These positive changes also attracted the attention of James B. Duke, who made his first gift to the college in the form of funds for a new library.

While Kilgo made raising funds for Trinity his first priority and reshaping the curriculum another, like Crowell he recognized the need for better educational preparation in the South. As early as in his inaugural address, Kilgo spoke to the need for preparatory schools and for colleges to support them.\textsuperscript{142} Unfortunately, as popular as Kilgo was as a speaker, and as well-supported as he was in his advancement of Christian education, his “attempts to raise the standards of the public-school system of the state were received unfavorably”\textsuperscript{143} according to his successor, William Preston Few. Few attributed the lack of support for Kilgo’s aims to the agrarian nature of the state and the fact that his primary supporters, the Dukes, were Republicans, the minority party in the South. Few credited Kilgo with being “for progress and improvement and the creation of

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 72.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 89.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 90.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 56.
wealth and opportunity in the South … he wanted Trinity College … to be national in aims and interests.”

Kilgo was not alone in his commitment to advancing education, particularly college preparatory education, in the South. In 1895, Kilgo joined colleagues from Vanderbilt, Washington and Lee, the University of North Carolina, the University of Mississippi, and the University of the South to create the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Southern States. The association aimed to “establish lines of communication between the colleges and the schools, to elevate and agree upon standard admission requirements, and to mark a clear line between college and preparatory work.” Further, the association required colleges to “separate or eliminate preparatory work” and to “enforce the admission requirements by written examination.”

The work of the association resulted in Trinity College’s adopting detailed admission standards, as revealed in a pamphlet for secondary school teachers published in 1898. The pamphlet referenced “the needs of Trinity College” and the “educational conditions of North Carolina.” It addressed the effect that poorly prepared students had on the quality of education at the college, their impact on the students who were well prepared and were ultimately held back, and the results for the ill-prepared students themselves, who ultimately dropped out. The guidelines also suggested that when colleges provide preparatory instruction, they risk “encroaching on the preparatory


146 Ibid.
schools” at the risk of being “disastrous to both.” Given Kilgo’s interest in supporting secondary education in the state, the brochure also affirmed Trinity’s interest in doing “all in its power to foster secondary education and to build up high schools all over the State, so that as the years go by an increasingly larger number of boys and girls may be well fitted to enter college,” calling secondary schools “the supreme need of education in North Carolina.”

The new admission standards resulted in higher graduation rates for the college but lower enrollments. Given the state of education in North Carolina, finding well-qualified students for Trinity was a challenge. The college’s improved resources and Kilgo’s reputation attracted students, but North Carolina’s secondary schools and private academies had a hard time preparing students to meet the elevated entrance requirements, which was a problem since most of Trinity’s students still came from North Carolina. The college needed some way to enroll well-prepared students. As Porter notes, “the solution came in 1898, when the college decided to open its own academy, the Trinity Park School.”

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147 “Requirements for Admission and Suggestions to Teachers of Secondary Schools (1898),” Trinity College, Durham. University Archives, Duke University, Durham, NC: 1.

148 Ibid., 2.

149 Porter, Trinity and Duke, 85-86.

150 Ibid., 86.
Chapter Three

Trinity Park School: A Prep School for Durham

Education in Durham Prior to Trinity Park School

The city of Durham exemplified the deficiency of education in North Carolina. Like the rest of rural North Carolina, the area that became Durham County in 1881 had very few schools in the early part of the nineteenth century. Prior to North Carolina’s 1839 law establishing free public schools for all white children, the only educational options outside of the larger towns were old field schools, also called subscription schools, that generally met for only three or four months a year and for which participating families paid a nominal amount toward their children’s education.\(^{151}\) Even after the law was enacted, however, some areas still lacked schools due to what historian Jean Anderson called “prejudice against free education because it smacked of charity” or because influential leaders “preferred education to remain a preserve of those who could pay for it.”\(^ {152}\)

The Civil War had set North Carolina’s education efforts back even further. It was not until the 1860s that public schools began to emerge again in Orange County (of which Durham was a part) with funds provided by the state. At the same time, new private schools and academies had also appeared. In the burgeoning city of Durham, the Durham Male and Female Academy was chartered in 1865 and later expanded in 1868. Academies also appeared in other parts of the county: the northern part of the county hosted the South Lowell Academy, the Mangum Male Academy was established in 1871,


\(^{152}\) Anderson, *Durham County*, 64.
the Red Mountain Male and Female Academy opened in 1878, and Round Hill Academy formed in 1879. The section of Durham that was then part of Wake County hosted Cedar Creek Academy after the war and Dayton Academy in the 1870s.\footnote{Ibid., 115.}

After Durham became a separate county, a push for a graded school with a longer school term began around 1880, led by tobacco manufacturer William T. Blackwell and Caleb Green, editor of Durham’s Democratic-leaning Tobacco Plant.\footnote{Westin, “A History of the Durham School System,” 11.} Other North Carolina cities, including Wilmington (1868), Greensboro (1870), Raleigh (1876), Charlotte (1876), and Fayetteville (1878) had already established graded schools. Enthusiasm across the state for graded schools increased when Wilson and Goldsboro opened theirs in 1881, as both were major railroad stops, thus allowing travelers from other towns to see the school model themselves.\footnote{Leloudis, Schooling the New South, 22-23.} In 1881, state Democratic legislators, led by newly elected legislator Caleb Green, introduced bills that provided for county superintendents, teachers’ institutes, normal schools for each race, and teachers’ exams, as well as a public school curriculum and three grades of teachers.\footnote{Westin, “A History of the Durham School System,” 7-13, citing the Durham Tobacco Plant, Nov. 5, 1878.}

Although public support for education in North Carolina had grown, not everyone in Durham supported publicly-funded schools. Like many other issues, the discussion about funding public schools was divided along political party lines. The main resistance came from Republicans who opposed taxes to support the public schools, arguing that taxpayer money would benefit those who could already afford to send their children to the town’s private schools. These individuals also expressed concern that better schools
would lead to more affluent families moving to the city, thus driving up the cost of living and driving out the poorer families who most needed the free education. Notably, some of those opposing the publicly-funded graded schools had their own interests in Durham’s private schools.\footnote{Westin, “A History of the Durham School System,” 14-16. Westin cites a handbill that was signed by fifteen city leaders, including “W. Duke” and “W. Duke Sons & Co.” explaining their dissension, not on the principle of graded schools, but rather on the grounds that “there were a number of good private schools in Durham which would be destroyed by the establishment of the Graded School …” as well as for the aforementioned reasons.} One of the opponents was Atlas Rigsbee who had built the Baptist Female Seminary; he had friends who supported the Methodist Female Seminary, both of which opened in 1881.\footnote{Anderson, 145.} Some of the opponents were skeptical about educating blacks, while others found the method of funding the schools, which allocated taxes from white property owners to white schools and taxes from black property owners to black schools, discriminatory.\footnote{Ibid., 14.} Indeed, black residents of Dallas, North Carolina, joined by two white merchants, successfully challenged the law several years later, but subsequent methods of funding schools were left in the hands of local governments, resulting in continued inequity.\footnote{Leloudis, \textit{Schooling the New South}, 122-123.} Despite the opposition, Durham voters affirmed a local tax for education in an election held in the spring of 1882, and Durham’s first graded school opened the same year in Wright’s Factory, West Main Street, with 308 students and a one hundred dollar donation from Eugene Morehead to aid poor children in purchasing books.\footnote{D. C. Mangum, \textit{Mangum’s Directory of Durham and Suburbs} (Durham, NC: The Educator Company, 1897): 14-15. Serial. NC Digital Heritage Center. University Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. \url{www.archive.org}.}

An 1885 publication entitled “Rules and Regulations Governing the Durham Graded and High School” reveals the structure and curriculum of Durham’s graded
school. The school was free for the children, ages six to twenty-one, of all permanent, white residents of the town; nonresidents and those over twenty-one could pay tuition to attend the school at the annual rate of ten dollars for primary grades, fifteen dollars for intermediate grades, and twenty dollars for high school. Classes were organized into grades one through nine, with the ninth grade called the “senior class.” The school offered a five-hour day for thirty-eight weeks. Promotions to the next grade were based on a final examination, with interim examinations held every eight weeks.\textsuperscript{162}

In 1886, after the North Carolina State Supreme Court declared that dividing school funding on the basis of race was unconstitutional, four of Durham’s graded school trustees, Eugene Morehead, R. F. Webb, Edward James Parrish, and Samuel F. Tomlinson sought a way to continue the graded schools for whites. They devised a subscription plan to raise six thousand dollars to supplement a promised gift from W. T. Blackwell that would continue to fund the school. Participants would pay their subscriptions in four installments.\textsuperscript{163} Their efforts were successful. Enrollments grew, and by 1892 a new building for the white graded school opened and was named for Morehead to honor his contributions.\textsuperscript{164}

Amidst the question of whether or not the method of funding schools was discriminatory, Durham’s African American community created the graded school for black students in 1887, with James A. Whitted, principal.\textsuperscript{165} In 1890 the school enrolled

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{164} Anderson, Durham County, 197.
\item \textsuperscript{165} Westin, “A History of the Durham School System …,” 14.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
about 160 students in six grades with four teachers; by 1896 the school included nine
grades and served over 260 students. A new building, which opened in 1893, was named
in Whitted’s honor.\textsuperscript{166}

By the time Trinity College arrived in Durham in 1892, education had become an
important issue in North Carolina politics. Even white supremacist Charles Aycock made
universal education part of his platform in his campaign for governor. Meanwhile,
education in North Carolina continued to lag behind other states. In her history of
Durham, Jean Anderson notes that “North Carolina public schools in 1897-98 averaged
sixty-three school days a year, compared to 172 days in Massachusetts and 179 days in
Connecticut.”\textsuperscript{167} Support for education in Durham was better than elsewhere in the state,
however, in terms of the willingness of taxpayers to support education.\textsuperscript{168} By 1899
another graded school for whites had opened in Durham and served students through
sixth grade. A school in West Durham in 1900 operated a full nine months of the year.\textsuperscript{169}
The graded schools offered a primary education (generally first through fifth grades), and
Durham hosted four private secondary schools in the decade leading up to the twentieth
century: the Durham Female Institute, the Methodist Female Seminary, the Male
Academy, and Miss Florence Fleet’s school. Trinity Park School would become the city’s
fifth private school in 1898.\textsuperscript{170}

\textsuperscript{166} Anderson, \textit{Durham County}, 197.

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., 195.

\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., 186; 196. Anderson notes that “in 1900 Durham County spent the highest amount per capita on
schools of any county in the state: $2.80 from county funds, $0.14 from the state.”

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., 197.

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid.
The Genesis of Trinity Park School

Trinity College had long used its preparatory division to serve students who otherwise would not have been ready for the rigors of the college. Several other Methodist-affiliated academies also provided students to Trinity College during the years of President Crowell’s leadership. When the college moved to Durham from Randolph County, the former campus became a preparatory school of sorts, the “principal member of Trinity’s chain of schools.”

The Trinity College catalog for 1895-96 includes a special section describing Trinity High School in Randolph County that provides a glimpse into the foundation for Trinity Park School in Durham. The aims of the Randolph County school were “to prepare students thoroughly for college, and especially for Trinity College, which the students enter on certificate from the Headmaster.” The school promised that male students would receive adequate preparation to enter college as freshmen or sophomores; girls were offered similar preparation for female colleges. Foreshadowing its future, the school also promised “practical education.” The cost for a year of attendance was a maximum of $140, which included tuition, fees, room and board, utilities, laundry, and books. According to the catalog, the student would find “no cheaper first class school than this.”

The school was organized into two departments of two years each. The Primary Department covered English composition and grammar, arithmetic, North Carolina history, spelling, and writing, while the Preparatory

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173 Ibid., 111, 114. According to [www.in2013dollars.com](http://www.in2013dollars.com), $140 in 1895 would be roughly the equivalent of $3737.47 in 2015. As a comparison, in 2017 the cost of Durham Academy, a private school in Durham, North Carolina, was $24,040 for tuition only. [http://www.da.org/page.cfm?p=524](http://www.da.org/page.cfm?p=524).
Department supplemented English composition and grammar with the study of rhetoric, arithmetic with the study of elementary algebra, and history with American and English history. Preparatory coursework also included two years each of Latin and Greek.\textsuperscript{174} By the time Trinity Park School opened in Durham a few years later, the old campus was slowly evolving into a public school, and in 1909 old Trinity became a Randolph County public school.\textsuperscript{175}

In 1898, Trinity College and the Methodist Conference created Trinity Park High School (later Trinity Park School), Durham, in response to the rigorous entry standards adopted by the college that same year. The new regulations required students to present academic credentials that the schools in North Carolina at the time simply could not provide. In its origins, Trinity Park School was not unlike many of the boarding schools of the era that were established to meet the needs of their companion colleges.\textsuperscript{176} Porter Sargent’s 1915 guide to private schools includes many such schools, not only in the South but in other parts of the country as well, including in the Northeast.\textsuperscript{177} For example, Franklin and Marshall Academy in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, enjoyed a history dating back to 1787 as the preparatory department of Franklin and Marshall College. It became a separate institution in 1872.\textsuperscript{178} In his study of a handful of Pennsylvania private colleges, Bruce Leslie notes that many liberal arts colleges, including Franklin and

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 116-118.

\textsuperscript{175} Hamilton, “Duke University and the Schools . . . ,” 7.

\textsuperscript{176} McLachlan, \textit{American Boarding Schools}, 12.


\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., 19.
Marshall, owed their survival to their preparatory divisions.\textsuperscript{179} In the case of Franklin and Marshall, the academy connected the affiliated church’s common schools to the college, creating a pipeline of students from the German Reformed faith. Between 1895 and 1910, about half the students entering Franklin and Marshall College had attended its academy.\textsuperscript{180} Like Trinity Park School, Franklin and Marshall Academy focused on enrolling middle-class students from its home state and denomination by keeping tuition low.\textsuperscript{181} After 1910, however, the low-tuition model became unsustainable without a strong endowment. Higher tuition costs combined with Pennsylvania’s increased support for public schools caused a decline in enrollment at the academy. The college president sought to close the school in 1916; it survived until World War II.\textsuperscript{182}

Trinity Park School’s catalogs credit Reverend James R. Scroggs of the Western North Carolina Conference of the Methodist church with the idea of founding Trinity Park School. Scroggs introduced a resolution for the school’s establishment, which was approved in June 1898, after he “investigated the situation and decided that the [Methodist] Conferences should establish a high school at the College, in order to supply what he regarded [as] a great need.”\textsuperscript{183} Although the guidelines created by the Southern Association in 1895 no longer allowed preparatory divisions, Trinity College was able to circumvent those rules by opening Trinity Park High School as a separate entity, albeit


\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., 214.

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 215

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid.

with the same trustees and with President Kilgo as the chief executive. J. F. Bivins served as the school’s first headmaster. The school, complete with academic and dormitory buildings, claimed the northwest corner of the college’s park property.

In addressing the school’s purpose, the catalog noted that Trinity Park’s goal was to prepare the “hundreds of bright boys [who] knock at college doors, and are not admitted on account of lack of preparation” since “the best colleges are beginning to raise their standards …” Although public high schools in some parts of the country, particularly the Northeast, had grown in quality, high school attendance was still uncommon. Indeed, as late as 1915, when he published his first handbook of private schools, Porter Sargent asserted that because public schools “must from necessity employ a more democratic and machine-like form of instruction,” private schools were required to provide the “special training” needed for entrance into the better colleges. Even Yale and Princeton, two of the most prestigious colleges in the country, established schools, Hotchkiss and Lawrenceville, respectively, that were designed to meet their specific requirements.

If some of the North’s oldest colleges had difficulty identifying well-qualified students, given the quality of education in the South, Trinity College’s situation was dire, since most students attended college close to home. Adding to the dilemma was the fact

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185 Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1898-1899, 12.

186 Ibid., 13.


that prior to Trinity Park School’s creation, Trinity College encouraged students to attend preparatory school if they showed interest in the college but were not qualified; once they completed their preparatory studies, few actually applied to Trinity College.\(^{190}\) Trinity Park School would furnish Trinity College with qualified students. Trinity Park High School opened in September 1898 with seventy students, and its population doubled in its first five years.\(^{191}\) By 1903 the name of the school changed to Trinity Park School to distinguish it from public high schools.\(^{192}\)

The school’s three-story main building housed recitation rooms, a reading room, a cloak room, an office, and a chapel in keeping with its Methodist connection. Additional space was available to be configured into a library or laboratory. The dormitory building included twenty-four bedrooms where three residential teachers supervised male boarding students.\(^{193}\) By its second year, the school campus included seven buildings: Asbury Building (the main building), York Dining Hall, Lanier Hall (the dormitory), Branson Hall (a second dormitory that opened in 1899), and Drummond House, Harnett House, and a cottage, all of which offered alternatives to the dormitories. High school students had access to Trinity College’s gymnasium and library.\(^{194}\) A third dormitory, Bivins Hall, funded by a gift from B. N. Duke, opened in the fall of 1905.\(^{195}\)

\(^{190}\) Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1898-1899, 11.

\(^{191}\) Porter, *Trinity and Duke*, 87-88.


\(^{193}\) Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1898-1899, 14-15.


Despite the middle-class background of many of its students, promotional language in Trinity Park School’s first catalog suggests that administrators did their best to appeal to the well-to-do or those who aspired to a higher social status. In a section on location and buildings, for example, the main building is described as “handsome,” “trimmed with granite, and covered with slate,” with “lumber … the very best quality of North Carolina pine.” Even the desks “the wooden part of which is antique oak” are described in detail.196

The school had a robust recruitment campaign. Advertisements appeared annually in the Charlotte Observer during the summer months touting the school’s advantages. In the early years of the school, an advertisement laid out some of Trinity Park School’s highlights, including “complete equipment,” a “library unsurpassed in the Southern states,” “large and comfortable dormitories furnished with modern conveniences,” and “a gymnasium furnished with the best athletic apparatus, swimming pool, shower baths, and bowling alley.”197 Perhaps the school’s leadership thought that attracting the children of wealthy families from around the state and the South would give Trinity Park School some of the prestige of the northern academies and prep schools and provide a base of potential donors.

196Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1898-1899, 14.
Trinity Park School Curriculum

In his history of Trinity College, Earl Porter asserted that “Trinity Park was modeled after the better Northern academies…”198 and in terms of its curriculum, it was. Trinity Park School emulated the classical curriculum prevalent in the more exclusive schools, setting it apart from the public schools and academies. At the time, the graded schools of North Carolina employed teaching methods to prepare students for the newly industrialized culture. Arithmetic, for example, focused on the application of mathematics to the marketplace.199 Trinity Park School prepared students for entry to college.

Trinity Park School’s first catalog in 1898-1899 listed among its aims “to give students a foundation for a thorough solid education … It aims at thoroughness and accuracy in all departments. Students are taught to use self-reliance and to be painstaking and accurate in their work.” The catalog went on to say that “the most important aim of the High School is the development of character.”200 Courses in Latin, Greek, English, history, and mathematics were the staple of elite prep schools and served to “distinguish gentlemen from virtually everyone else.”201 The initial offerings of Trinity Park School resembled those offered by other college preparatory schools, though the better-established schools offered more variety.202

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199 Leloudis, *Schooling the New South*, 29-33.
200 Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1898-1899, 12-13.
202 Catalogue of Phillips Academy, Andover, MA. 1898 (Andover: The Andover Press, 1898). 23. [https://archive.org/stream/catalogueofphil00phil_4#page/n33/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/catalogueofphil00phil_4#page/n33/mode/2up). According to its 1898 catalog, Phillips Academy, Andover, offered two four-year courses of study, the Classical and the Scientific. By their senior year, Phillips Academy students in the Classical track studied Greek, Latin, plane geometry, and English, with additional coursework in their choice of physics, chemistry, history, French, German, or trigonometry/solid and analytical geometry. Students in the Scientific track were required to study trigonometry/solid geometry, mechanical drawing,
Trinity Park students entered the school in one of three classes: junior, intermediate, or senior, and received instruction in Latin, mathematics, English, history, geography, and physical training. Additional courses included Greek, physics, French, or German.\(^{203}\) The curriculum differed from its older Trinity predecessor with the addition of physical training, physics, and the modern languages, as well as in the depth of study provided in other areas. For example, Latin students at old Trinity used a beginner’s Latin book in the first year and “Caesar’s Gallic War” and “Vergil’s Aeneid” in the second.\(^{204}\) At Trinity Park School, by the time students were in the senior class they also studied Cicero, “four Orations against Cataline,” and Roman life and literature.\(^{205}\)

Trinity Park’s depth of study and classes in Greek, physics, and modern languages set it apart from the public school. Interestingly, the texts used in Durham’s graded school for its upper-level classes (sixth through ninth) as far back as 1885 suggest that the foundational courses Trinity Park offered were not that different from the graded school, though Durham was likely an outlier in North Carolina. Similar subjects offered at the graded school included algebra, geometry, history (of North Carolina, the United States, and the "English People”), geography, and English, plus two years of Latin. Ninth grade texts, the final year offered at the graded school, did not include Latin but added Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, and “Bingham’s *Caesar*.\(^{206}\)

\(^{203}\) Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1898-1899, 12-13.

\(^{204}\) Trinity College, Durham. *Annual Catalogue of Trinity College*, 118.

\(^{205}\) Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1898-1899, 19.

\(^{206}\) “Rules and Regulations …” *Digital Durham*, 12.
Not surprisingly, the courses of study at Trinity Park School matched the entrance requirements for Trinity College. Using English literature as an example, in 1899 Trinity College applicants were expected to have read the texts cited in the first column below. The second column indicates those texts that were part of the Trinity Park School curriculum. The similarity is obvious.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trinity College, 1899 Admission Requirements</th>
<th>Trinity Park High School, 1898-1899</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Macbeth</em></td>
<td>Senior Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milton's Minor Poems</td>
<td>Senior Class</td>
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<td>Burke's Speech on Conciliation with America</td>
<td>Senior Class</td>
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<td>Carlyle's Essay on Burns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dryden's &quot;Palamon and Arcite&quot;</td>
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<td>Pope's <em>Iliad</em>, Books I, VI, XII, and XXIV</td>
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<td>&quot;The Sir Roger de Coverley Papers&quot; in the <em>Spectator</em></td>
<td>Senior Class, Supplementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goldsmith's <em>Vicar of Wakefield</em></td>
<td>Senior Class, Supplementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coleridge's &quot;Ancient Mariner&quot;</td>
<td>Intermediate Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coopet's <em>Last of the Mohicans</em></td>
<td>Senior Class, Supplementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lowell's <em>Vision of Sir Launfal</em></td>
<td>Intermediate Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hawthorne's <em>House of the Seven Gables</em></td>
<td>Intermediate Class, Supplementary</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As Trinity Park School shaped its identity, the curriculum changed frequently. By its second year, 1899-1900, Trinity Park High School had already made a curricular change. Students could elect to pursue one of three courses of study: Classical, Latin-Scientific, or Business. The first two tracks presumably offered college preparation, as the catalog affirmed that the school’s primary objective was to prepare students for college. Students in the Classical and Latin-Scientific streams carried the same course load in their first year, or “junior class:” arithmetic, geography, Latin, English, and history. In the second, or intermediate year, the sequences diverged. Classical students took arithmetic/algebra, Latin, Greek, English, and history, while Latin-Scientific students replaced Greek with physical geography and French and

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207 “Requirements for Admission …,” Trinity College, 4-5.
208 Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1898-1899, 18-20.
added a course in chemistry. The curriculum for senior students converged again slightly with both tracks offering algebra, geometry, Latin, physics or German, English, and history. The only difference between the two was an additional language: Classical course students took Greek, Latin-Scientific students took French.\textsuperscript{209}

Unlike the other tracks, the Business course provided a one-year program for students not planning to attend college. Courses in the Business track included bookkeeping, stenography, typewriting, and banking/finance in addition to English, mathematics and geography. The “commercial department,” which signaled a departure from the focus of the more exclusive preparatory schools, offered a course of study in response to “an increasing demand for stenographers and bookkeepers,” perhaps catering to the school’s more middle-class clientele.\textsuperscript{210}

The commercial courses also mirrored courses offered several years prior at the old Trinity location. The Trinity College catalog from 1894-95 included a reference to instruction at the old high school in “book-keeping, commercial law, [and] type-writing.”\textsuperscript{211}

The idea of offering several tracks of study, including commercial classes, was not limited to Trinity Park. An advertisement for Oak Ridge Institute, a peer of Trinity Park School, indicated that the school offered “special departments of book-keeping, short-hand, type-writing, and telegraphy,” along with its classical and scientific curricula.\textsuperscript{212} A history of The Hill School in Pennsylvania notes that its 1885 academic program included three courses of study: “classical,” “scientific,” and “business,” along with the caveat that the primary purpose of the

\textsuperscript{209} Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1899-1900, 37.

\textsuperscript{210} Ibid., 22-23; 37-38; 47-48.

\textsuperscript{211} Trinity College, Durham. Annual Catalogue … 1894-95, 76.

\textsuperscript{212} Mangum, Mangum’s Directory of Durham and Suburbs.
school remained college preparation. Additionally, a letter to the editor of Lawrenceville School’s newspaper in 1909 argued in favor of adding a commercial course “to prepare those fellows who are not going to college with [a] knowledge of bookkeeping and commercial law.”

The business program disappeared from Trinity Park after only one year. The school offered a new “sub-junior” year of study for three years between 1901 and 1904 to accommodate students not prepared to enter the junior class until it, too, was retired; the intermediate year became a two-year program. According to the catalog for 1903-1904, advanced students were permitted to complete coursework in three years, but a four-year course of study was the norm. Trinity Park’s desire to mimic other preparatory schools is apparent in its statement that “All the good preparatory schools of which we have any knowledge have at least four years.” Further, the Southern Association of Schools, of which Trinity Park was a member, required four years of study. The additional year not only allowed the original courses within the Classical and Latin-Scientific curricula to be spread over four years but also allowed the introduction of declamation, gymnastics and Bible courses. As in previous years, the Classical and Latin-Scientific tracks differed slightly. By the second and third years, Latin-Scientific students took courses in physical geography, physiology, and either French or German in place of the Greek required in the Classical sequence. Seniors replaced the Classical course’s declamation class


215 Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1903-1904, 47.

with science. The changes to the curriculum aligned Trinity Park’s offerings with those of Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, perhaps the oldest and most prestigious of preparatory schools. Like Trinity Park, Phillips Academy organized its courses into two streams, a Classical Course and a Scientific Course, each of which included four years of instruction.

Although Trinity Park’s northern peers were more established, their curricula evolved as well. An October 1891 article in The Lawrence, the student newspaper of New Jersey’s Lawrenceville School, described an “enlarged curriculum” for the year, with courses continuing in “Bible, oratory, and essay-writing,” the addition of optional courses in French and German “open to the entire school,” and higher-level work offered in physics and chemistry.

Private boarding schools exist to prepare students for entrance to selective colleges, so it is not surprising that they change their curricula to meet changing college entrance requirements. A. Monroe Stowe, an education professor at Randolph-Macon Women’s College wrote in 1932 that through their admission requirements colleges had “determined the character of high school curricula and consequently the nature of the educational activities of our high schools.” Trinity Park School was no different. By 1910 the Latin-Scientific course had merged with the Classical course, and all students could choose among Greek, French, or German in their third and fourth years. In addition to the traditional Classical course, by 1915 the school had added a new

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217 Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1903-1904, 37-38.


Modern Language course, emphasizing study of French and German to “meet the requirements of the best Southern colleges and universities.” Fittingly, Trinity College’s admission requirements for 1915 offered three tracks for admission. The first, called “Group A,” required coursework in history, English, mathematics (algebra, plane geometry, solid geometry), Latin, and Greek. “Group B” substituted French or German for Greek but required Latin. “Group C” did not require Greek or Latin but instead allowed students to present elective work in history, physics, chemistry, physical geography, or Latin.

By the end of its tenure, Trinity Park School again offered just one liberal arts course of study, with classes in Latin, English, history, mathematics, Greek or French, spelling, and Bible. In its traditional courses, Trinity Park continued to emulate the traditional prep schools. Phillips Academy in 1924 offered in its one course sequence the same classes as Trinity Park, plus German, advanced mathematics (geometry and plane trigonometry), physics, chemistry, physiology and hygiene, and music. Trinity Park differed in its attempt to appeal to an expanded audience. Traditional four-year students still enrolled, but the school allowed students to present credits in “German, Spanish, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Mechanical Drawing, Woodwork, Forging and Machine work, Household Economics, and Commercial subjects” for entry. At the end

222 Trinity Park School Catalog, 1915-1916, 42. Trinity Park School Collection, 1898-1922. Annual Catalogs. Box 4. University Archives, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. Interestingly, though the catalog text changes little from year to year, in the school’s final years the word “Southern” was removed from this statement.


of its tenure in 1922, instead of the classical curriculum offered at leading prep schools, Trinity Park School more closely mirrored the curriculum of the local graded schools.

The Student Body: Geographic, Gender, and Socioeconomic Profile

At the turn of the twentieth century, the most prestigious colleges in the country, particularly in the Northeast, depended on private boarding schools to provide the majority of their students. Phillips Academy’s 1898 catalog identified the schools in which its most recent alumni had enrolled. Forty-eight students had enrolled in Yale, with another twenty-five enrolled at Harvard. No other college came close to those numbers, with the next being Dartmouth with four. In 1915, eighty percent of Princeton’s students, seventy percent of Yale’s, and fifty percent of Harvard’s were educated at private schools. Sixty of the eighty-eight students in Lawrenceville School’s class of 1923 planned to enroll at Princeton; Yale was second with nine. As late as 1934 “two schools – Lawrenceville and Hill – produced as many Princeton freshmen as all public high schools combined.” Like other preparatory schools, Trinity Park would serve as a “feeder” into its affiliated college. The school catalog for 1901-1902 listed Trinity Park alumni and the colleges they attended. Of the thirty-five graduates in the classes of 1899 and 1900, twenty-nine had enrolled in Trinity College, two attended the University of


227 Catalogue of Phillips Academy, Andover, MA. 1898, 40-41; 50.

228 Sargent, A Handbook ..., xx.


230 Powell, Lessons from Privilege, 127.
North Carolina, one was enrolled in a business college in Dallas, Texas, and three had no college affiliation noted.\(^{231}\)

Despite the similarities in its founding to northeastern preparatory schools, Trinity Park School differed from its counterparts in the makeup of its student body. Throughout its history, the vast majority of Trinity Park’s students came from North Carolina. Based on the data available, out-of-state attendance ranged from a low of one percent in 1906, 1908, and 1909 to a high of eight percent in 1899.\(^{232}\) Understandably, Virginia, South Carolina and Tennessee supplied the greatest number of out-of-state students; it was not until 1910 that a student from the North (New York) enrolled. In terms of the geographic diversity of its matriculants, Trinity Park School was more like a day school or a denominationally affiliated academy that served a local population than the prestigious boarding schools that attracted students from all over the country.\(^{233}\)

By contrast, the fifty-one students enrolled at The Hill School in Pennsylvania in 1877-1878 represented eleven states, including Louisiana and California; forty-three of the students were boarders.\(^{234}\) The student body of Lawrenceville School in 1894-1895 included a total of 305 students, of whom eighty-five were from New York and sixty-five were from Pennsylvania. Just fifty-five were from the school’s home state of New Jersey.\(^{235}\) Phillips Academy had an even wider geographic distribution. A review of the school’s senior class in the 1898 catalog


\(^{232}\) Trinity Park School Collection, 1898-1922. Annual Catalogs.


\(^{234}\) Chancellor, The History of The Hill School, 23.

shows twenty-two different states plus Washington, D. C. and Costa Rica; Massachusetts, the school’s home state, was represented by just thirty-three students out of 120 total. All the New England states plus New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania sent students to Phillips Academy. Students from Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, California, and Washington represented the Midwest and West. Just four students came from the South: two from Kentucky, and one each from West Virginia and South Carolina.\textsuperscript{236}

Trinity Park School’s commitment from the very beginning to serving both male and female students also separated it from northeastern boarding schools. While numerous smaller academies educated both boys and girls, the late nineteenth century’s most prominent boarding schools educated males only.\textsuperscript{237} Though never a significant portion of the student body (an average of just seven percent), girls did have a notable presence at Trinity Park School.\textsuperscript{238} Mary Lillian Duke, Washington Duke’s granddaughter and daughter of Trinity Park School and Trinity College benefactor Benjamin Duke, enrolled as an intermediate student at the school in 1901-1902. Trinity College President John C. Kilgo, who supported the coeducation that was taking hold in the Midwest, enrolled his own daughter in the school’s inaugural class.\textsuperscript{239} Several other young women had notable ties to Durham. Trinity Park’s first roster of students included Irene Pegram, daughter of Trinity College faculty member W. H. Pegram, Mayme Lunsford, daughter of Durham city treasurer Paschal Lunsford, and Carrie Burch, daughter of George Burch, an

\begin{footnotes}
\item[236] Catalogue of Phillips Academy, Andover, MA. 1898, 38-41; 49-50.
\item[237] Sargent, \textit{A Handbook} .... Sargent’s 1915 listing of private secondary schools includes 27 coeducational schools within his section on boys’ schools. Trinity Park School is among them.
\item[238] Trinity Park School Collection, 1898-1922. Annual Catalogs. Box 4. The seven-percent calculation is a conservative estimate based on a review of feminine names among the students listed in the Trinity Park School catalogs. Names that were not obviously female to the twenty-first century reader were not counted.
\item[239] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
employee of the B. N. Duke tobacco company.\textsuperscript{240} Evidence also suggests that female students performed quite well at the school. A letter written in 1921 by a Yale student who had attended Trinity Park School for his preparatory studies encouraged headmaster F.S. Aldridge to transfer to Miss Pearle Turrentine a scholarship to Trinity College that had been intended for him.\textsuperscript{241} Given Trinity Park School’s association with Trinity College, it is easy to surmise that the school was coeducational because Trinity College was as well; when Washington Duke funded the college’s move to Durham, it was with the condition that the college admit women “on equal footing with men.”\textsuperscript{242} Female students at Trinity Park boarded with the college women.\textsuperscript{243}

Unlike the most prestigious boarding schools that catered to a wealthy clientele, Trinity Park School, like its parent Trinity College, served a decidedly middle-class population. The era of Trinity Park School paralleled a time when higher education was seen as a vehicle for upward social mobility, with college expenses holding steady enough to be affordable for middle-class families.\textsuperscript{244} By contrast, the top boarding schools of the late nineteenth century were founded by the upper class “as a means of preserving their social position” and for the purpose of “excluding outsiders from certain social and economic opportunities that their group controlled.”\textsuperscript{245}

Although Trinity Park School served the children of some of Durham’s business leaders and Trinity College professors, the range of parent occupations of the school’s first students was eclectic. According to a Durham city directory for 1897, the roster of male students in Trinity

\textsuperscript{240} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{242} Porter, \textit{Trinity and Duke}, 63.

\textsuperscript{243} Anderson, \textit{Durham County}, 198.

\textsuperscript{244} Thelin, \textit{A History of American Higher Education}, 155, 169.

\textsuperscript{245} Levine, “The Rise of American Boarding Schools …,” 73.
Park School’s early years included the sons of a letter carrier, a minister, a paper hanger, a saloon owner, a tobacconist, a merchant, and Trinity College Professor W. H. Pegram.246

The more modest socioeconomic backgrounds of Trinity Park’s students very likely mirrored the economy in Durham and North Carolina at the time. Given the school’s narrow geographic market, it is unlikely that North Carolina alone would have provided enough wealthy families for the school to thrive. For better or worse, the school kept its costs relatively modest to attract a broader range of students. Indeed, an early advertisement for the school stated that “the terms are so low as to place these advantages within the reach of students of limited means.”247 From its founding in 1898 through 1919, tuition was held to $20 per term, and at its closing in 1922, it was just $25 per term. Room charges were more variable, but the maximum cost listed in the 1898-1899 catalog was $12.50 per term; by 1922, the room cost was still just $20 per term.248 The total cost of a year of attendance in 1898-1899 would have been no more than $167 for a full year.249 That price compares favorably to the cost of Oak Ridge Institute, another North Carolina boarding school of the era located near Greensboro. An advertisement for Oak Ridge in Mangum’s Directory cites the cost of a year at the school at $160, including “board, tuition, and

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246 Mangum, Mangum’s Directory of Durham and Suburbs. The individuals associated with these occupations were J. W. Markham, R. Hibbard, Thomas Walker, Jesse Johnson, J. T. Pinnix, and W. A. Slater, respectively.


248 Trinity Park School Collection, 1898-1922. Annual Catalogs. Box 4. To put the cost of a year of Trinity Park School in perspective, one must consider the cost of other items at the time. An 1898 advertisement for the State Normal and Industrial College for women in Greensboro listed annual tuition at $90 to $130, while another advertisement listed the price of a young men’s suit at $13.50. (Charlotte Observer. Sept. 6, 1898 and Sept. 11, 1898. Advertisement.) In 1922, when Trinity Park School closed, an advertisement listed a Studebaker automobile at $1825. (Charlotte Observer, Sept. 10, 1922. Advertisement.)

Similarly, North Carolina’s Bingham School, while moderately priced, was notably more expensive than Trinity Park School. The cost in 1874 for twenty weeks of study at the Bingham School totaled $160.251

The most prestigious boarding schools were notably more expensive. A document from the Lawrenceville School lists annual tuition rates (presumably including room and board) from $400 to $700 in 1899-1900 depending on residential housing assignment. By 1922, tuition for boarding students ranged from $1100 to $1250, while tuition (only) for day students was $300. Day students who wished to have lunches paid an extra $100 per year.252 At Phillips Academy in 1898, tuition alone was $100 for the year. Room and board costs were separate and depended on the board plan the student chose and where he lived. The costs ranged from $6.00 per week to $13.00 per week, resulting in room and board charges of anywhere from $240 to $520 for a forty-week term.253 Phillips Academy’s 1922 catalog listed the standard tuition rate of $200 per year, with additional costs ranging from $100 to $350 for room, $230 to $420 for board, and $12.00 to $20.00 for an athletic fee. The total cost of a year at Phillips Academy would have been anywhere from $542 to $990.254 Although Phillips Academy offered generous scholarships (the 1922 catalog lists forty-eight different scholarship funds), the minimal amount a student without a scholarship would pay was more than three times higher than the cost of Trinity Park School.

250 Mangum, Mangum’s Directory of Durham and Suburbs.

251 Raper, The Church and Private Schools …., 76-81. Tuition was $62.50, board was $82.50, and books and washing were $15.00.


253 Catalogue of Phillips Academy, Andover, MA, 1898.

Trinity Park School’s Campus Culture

Preparatory schools exist to do just what their name suggests: prepare students academically for college. At the same time, they also take seriously their role in preparing their graduates to become leaders in society by incorporating character development and discipline into their school cultures. At the turn of the twentieth century, some of the wealthy worried that their children ran the risk of living lives of excess that would prevent them from ascending to their proper position in society, so they sought the discipline that boarding schools could provide. In addition, while most boarding schools were ecumenical, their associations with Protestant denominations placed character education among their goals. Historian Edward Saveth noted that “the concept of character had historic roots in the ideal of republican virtue … the core of republican virtue was personal virtue …” To that end, much of the focus of prep school life was on the activities and organizations that created a well-rounded person of character. As Woodrow Wilson stated in a speech at Lawrenceville School in 1910, “A great school like this does not stop with what it does in the class room; it organizes athletics and sports of every kind; it organizes life from morning to night …” The most prominent activities at Trinity Park School were markers of its time: athletics, religious activities, and literary societies and debating clubs.

Athletics

Athletics have long played a prominent role in boarding schools. Early engagement in athletics at boarding schools came from the students themselves, but by the end of the nineteenth

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century educators supported athletics as a critical part of students’ education. McLachlan notes that “by the turn of the century organized athletics – particularly football – almost buried all other aspects of school life.”

The support for athletics stemmed from the belief that sports encouraged teamwork, helped more timid students build “self-confidence, integrity, courage,” and contributed to “robust good health.” At a more elitist level, Powell argues that participating in athletics also provided prep school students with “a democratic counterweight” to “the selfish aloofness of privilege.”

The Phillips Academy catalog for 1898 notes that its “Athletics Union” included baseball, football, and the “athletic [track and field] and tennis associations.” Articles in the Lawrenceville School’s student newspaper during that era shed some light onto the importance of athletics in that school’s culture. An article from 1900 notes that athletic expenses for the previous school year were $1787.87 and that $2481.86 had been collected as assessments and contributions specifically for sports. In 1901, a new athletic director at Lawrenceville introduced basketball, lawn hockey, cross country, skating, and walking as options, and in 1903 a new indoor swimming pool generated interest in team swimming. Because Lawrenceville School boys lived in named “houses,” intramural competitions between the houses became a mainstay of campus culture and allowed students to earn letters in football,

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259 Catalogue of Phillips Academy, Andover, MA. 1898, 19.
Baseball, and track. A history of The Hill School features the first photograph of its baseball and football teams, circa 1886, and notes that track was introduced to the school in 1896.

Having been established when the fervor for sports was strong, Trinity Park School embraced athletics-culture from the start. The school’s first catalog notes that “the development of the body is not neglected” and that “all manly sports are encouraged.” Trinity College’s athletic facilities were accessible to high school students and included “a large athletic ground,” – noting in particular its potential use for baseball and football – as well as “a large race-track … for bicyclists.” The gymnasium, called “one of the largest and best equipped gymnasiums in the South,” counted among its attributes “all the regular equipments [sic] for muscular development,” as well as “a bowling alley, hot and cold water baths, shower baths and swimming pool.” Baseball appears to be the most popular sport at Trinity Park at the time. Trinity Park School’s second catalog (1899-1900) and a 1903 booklet of souvenir photos of the school both included photographs of the baseball team. The school’s primary student publication, The High School Gazette, chronicled in detail the 1901 baseball season, which featured games against Whitsett Institute, Bingham School, and the Horner Military Institute of Oxford. By 1902 the list of competitors also included “A. and M.” (later North Carolina State), Oak Ridge, “Trinity High School” (Randolph County), Lenoir College, and Asheville

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265 Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1898, 30.

266 Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1898, 31.


According to a 1905 issue of *The Trinity Archive*, the college’s literary review, the Trinity Park School team had played – and lost to – the college team 11 to 2. A 1912 advertisement in the *Charlotte Observer* noted the school’s “large athletic fields” along with information about dormitory supervision, perhaps in an effort to reinforce the notion that young men were developed through discipline and sports. In recalling his years at Trinity College, former student and professor Hersey Everett Spence opined that “many first class ball players went to Trinity Park School,” lightheartedly referring to the school as the college’s “farming system.”

One sport conspicuously absent from Trinity Park School was football. Trinity College President Crowell had been a strong supporter of the game, which enjoyed wild popularity throughout the country in the decades before Trinity Park was founded. A game between Trinity College and the University of North Carolina in 1888 launched a rivalry and gave birth to the North Carolina Inter-Collegiate Football Association which also included Wake Forest. The objections of Methodist leaders to the sport as a result of post-game behavior, coupled with lack of support for the sport from subsequent Trinity College Presidents Kilgo and Few, likely kept it off the roster at Trinity Park.

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273 Saveth, “Education of an Elite,” 375. Saveth says that among boarding schools “Football was special; not exactly in the realm of the sacred but beyond the secular.” Perhaps President Crowell’s northern roots contributed to his support for football, while President Kilgo’s southern Methodist heritage led him to be opposed to the sport.

Religious Life

Christian religion and morality also played a role in life at Trinity Park School as they did at most prep schools. A significant percentage of schools that existed in the early twentieth century were associated with a Protestant denomination, and even nonsectarian schools embraced religious education and chapel attendance. First and foremost, Trinity Park was connected to the Methodist Church. Its board of trustees included a notable share of Methodist ministers, its main building housed a chapel, and the curriculum required Bible classes on and off throughout the school’s tenure. Despite its denominational ties, the school clearly attracted students from other religious traditions. The catalog noted that Durham offered a “large number of churches of all denominations” and that students were required to attend services and join the Sunday Schools. Students would be expelled after just one incident of “gambling, [using] intoxicating liquors, [possessing] deadly weapons, [and] untruthfulness." Students also had the option of joining the school’s Y.M.C.A. organization, which was affiliated with the state association and whose purpose was “to conserve and deepen the spiritual life of the students.” The catalog noted that “nearly all the High School students were converted” at a revival the previous year.

W. W. Peele, headmaster of Trinity Park School from 1911 to 1916, offered further evidence of the school’s tacit religious ties in an article from the school’s archives. Peele cited Trinity Park’s Bible study, the number of boys pursuing teacher training in Sunday School, the daily chapel worship/assembly requirement, the high level of participation in the Y.M.C.A. (at

275 Powell, Lessons from Privilege, 22.

276 Trinity Park High School Catalog, 1898-1899, 24.

277 Ibid., 29.
ninety percent the school’s most popular organization), and the existence of a “ministerial band” as evidence of the school’s religious connections. He stated “the one thing that separates the church preparatory school from the state school is the fact that the church school stands positively for Christian education. Upon this principle the Trinity Park School was founded and upon it she rests securely.”

Trinity Park was not alone in its religious elements. Phillips Academy was founded “within the Puritan educational tradition” that sought education for salvation. By the late nineteenth century, however, its religious identity was more closely aligned with the idea of the “social gospel,” in which the gentlemen educated at the elite schools would become leaders dedicated to the public good. Nonetheless, in 1898 Phillips Academy counted among its trustees at least six ministers, and its catalog described required daily “devotional exercises” in the chapel as well as mandatory Sunday services, from which students could be excused to attend local Christian churches. Students also had the option of attending additional devotions on Wednesday and Sunday nights with the school’s religious organization, the Society of Inquiry.

The Hill School was similar to Phillips Academy in that it was not formally tied to a church but valued religious education. The headmaster and his wife modeled the social gospel concept by encouraging charity to the poor, including establishing a free library and supporting mission work at a local center and a summer camp for disadvantaged children. The school built a chapel and dedicated it in 1904, apparently fueling deeper commitment to activities with a

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279 McLachlan, American Boarding Schools, 40-41.

280 Ibid., 287-289.

281 Catalogue of Phillips Academy, 1898. 5; 13.
religious bent, including prayer meetings, the Y.M.C.A., and continued mission work. Lawrenceville School’s chapel was also apparently a staple of school life. Calendar items in each edition of the school newspaper included a series of chapel events: the chapel hosted Sunday morning services, evening vespers, Y.M.C.A. meetings, and weekly prayer meetings, in addition to non-religious activities.

**Literary Societies**

Literary societies and publications completed Trinity Park School’s most prominent extracurricular offerings. College and university communities at the time prized students with strong oratory skills. At the University of North Carolina, for example, “The Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies … dominated student life outside the classroom … each society maintained lavish quarters.” Trinity College hosted its own societies, the Columbian and the Hesperian, which met on Saturday evenings for “declamations, debates, and orations” with almost the entire student body belonging to one or the other. The college students debated against societies from other colleges, but the intramural debate between the two was the main event of the year. To prepare its students for college, Trinity Park expected them to recite a selection from memory every three weeks as part of its “declamation” requirement. The school hosted two literary societies: Grady and Calhoun. The Grady Literary Society organized with the school’s founding and offered prizes for being the best debater, showing the most improvement, and reading the best essays. Trinity Park’s societies existed to give students the requisite

284 Leloudis, *Schooling the New South*, 46.
“training in declamation and debate” that was important in the day; they also had their own halls for meeting space. The school’s publication, the Park School Gazette, also placed considerable importance on verbal mastery. Essays, fiction, and poems figured prominently in the digest; other sections included editorials, alumni notes, Y.M.C.A. news, and a local gossip-type news feature.

Phillips Academy’s catalog offered little information about its school organizations, but it did mention the Philomathean Society for debating. The organization was founded in 1825 as an alternative to the school’s social fraternity with the goal of improving members’ intellects and manners. The society jointly owned a library of eight hundred volumes with the Society of Inquiry. The academy also sponsored three publications: one semi-weekly, one monthly, and one annual.

Lawrenceville School had its own Philomathean Society, founded in 1856, as well as the Calliopean Society, founded in 1834. The societies debated one another annually on Washington’s birthday. A May 1902 article in the school paper noted that plans were in place to build a hall for the societies, with alumni from each paying half of the ten thousand dollar building cost.

The Hill School witnessed a rise in the popularity of debating at the end of the nineteenth century. While “rhetorical declamation” had been an important part of commencement exercises,

286 Trinity Park School Collection, 1898-1922. Annual Catalogs. Box 4.


289 Catalogue of Phillips Academy, Andover, MA. 1902. 18-19.


formal debating began in 1897 with the establishment of “QED” and “Wranglers” and continued to be an important aspect of campus life for thirty years. Participation was mandatory, with students divided into varsity and lower levels in each group. Student writers published under *The Record*, a student opinion publication; another option, *Dial*, appeared in 1898.292

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Chapter Four

Trinity College, Trinity Park School, and Durham in the Twentieth Century

Trinity College Grows

With the new century came a new Trinity College. The administration had raised admission requirements, the curriculum grew with the introduction of new courses and electives, particularly in the sciences and foreign language, and faculty with stronger pedigrees were hired. The school’s growth drew the attention of James B. Duke, the wealthiest member of the family, who made his first gift to the college in 1900 to build a larger library; the building was completed in 1903. With the increasing philanthropy of the Dukes, President Kilgo deftly worked with the Methodist Conferences to establish a new charter that helped create a “self-perpetuating board” that was less susceptible to the whims of the church and strengthened the college.²⁹³

Kilgo’s tenure was marked with a mix of achievements and challenges. On the positive side, Trinity College started a Law School that graduated its first class in 1906. The college adopted the Carnegie Unit standard in 1908, requiring enrolling students to have completed 120 hours of instruction time per year in each course taken at the secondary level. Although Trinity College’s admissions standards were among the most stringent in the South, the college benefited from the presence of its own preparatory school and the Durham city schools, which an official in the North Carolina Department

²⁹³ Porter, Trinity and Duke, 90-95.
of Public Instruction called “the best in North Carolina.” Enrollment increased and the college’s finances stabilized, allowing faculty to be paid more competitively.\footnote{Porter, \textit{Trinity and Duke}, 148-149.}

Perhaps nothing represents both the positives and negatives of Kilgo’s tenure more than the controversy known as the “Bassett Affair.” A graduate of Trinity College and Johns Hopkins University, John Spencer Bassett was a history professor at the college known for espousing the ideals of research universities while remaining committed to teaching.\footnote{Robert Durden, \textit{The Launching of Duke University, 1924-1949} (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 3. Illustrating that the lines between public and private education in the South were blurred in the 1800s, Bassett had also taught in the Durham schools from 1888 to 1890. Westin, “A History of the Durham School System,” 39.} Early in his tenure he was responsible for managing Trinity College’s library, one of the better collections in the South at the time, and in 1902 he founded the \textit{South Atlantic Quarterly}, a journal that offered scholarly opposition to some of the South’s traditional stances on race and injustice. Bassett’s contention in one of his articles that “some day in the future Negroes would win equality” created such a strong uproar among the public that the college was concerned about its effect on enrollment. Though Bassett offered to resign, the college trustees voted to retain him and in doing so affirmed the principle of academic freedom, a concept which was rare not only in the South but also in colleges throughout the country. The board of trustees vote elevated Trinity College’s stature in the academic world.\footnote{Ibid., 6-8.}

While Kilgo led Trinity College – and by extension Trinity Park School – to success, he followed the example of his predecessors in supporting the development of the public schools. Hamilton notes that as early as the 1890s, when public education was still nascent in North Carolina, through pamphlets and speeches Kilgo “joined the
Baptists in strong advocacy of longer terms and more appropriations” for the public schools. North Carolina passed a Public School Law in 1907 that would lead to rapid expansion of its public schools. The law required high schools to meet for no fewer than five months a year, set teacher training standards, and appropriated funds for new buildings and rural high schools. The law also regulated child labor and instituted new compulsory attendance expectations, though they were not strictly enforced. As a result of more students completing secondary schooling, enrollments in Trinity College grew notably after 1907. To take advantage of the growth, Kilgo advocated creating a department of education at Trinity College that would prepare public school teachers who in turn would generate greater interest in the college.

Kilgo had begun two final projects as president of Trinity College before resigning upon his election as a Methodist bishop: the first was to plant the seeds of a university, the second was to raise an endowment with a goal of one million dollars, of which five hundred thousand dollars would come from the Dukes. His successor, William Preston Few, inherited those tasks.

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299 Porter, Trinity and Duke, 150

300 Ibid., 159-160.

301 Ibid., 171-172.
Trinity College: The Few Years

William Preston Few was not new to Trinity College when he became president in 1910. He had joined the faculty in 1896 after receiving his Ph.D. from Harvard and had served as a dean since 1902. Prior to that, he had taught in Wofford College’s preparatory school, so he had experience in both college and preparatory education; he also played an important role in creating Trinity College’s more rigorous admission standards. Few most certainly helped connect the Dukes – and their money – to Trinity College. He corresponded regularly with the family; during his tenure both Angier B. Duke, Benjamin Duke’s son, and J. B. Duke were elected trustees. Trinity College also became “national in its scope and outlook,” with the presidents of the University of Chicago, Harvard, Vanderbilt, and Tulane attending Few’s inauguration. When Few became president, Trinity’s endowment was around $450,000, the largest of any private college in the South.

Like his predecessors, Few had long supported public education in North Carolina. In an essay citing the educational problems of the South, Few argued that many sought to blame the Civil War for the region’s weakness in education, but in reality the deficiency owed to a lack of commitment to public education. In comparing the South to the Northeast, he said “It was not the policy of the people of the Southern states to place a school house and a public library by the side of the church in every community as the

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302 Porter, Trinity and Duke, 174-175.
303 Ibid., 184.
305 Ibid., 90.
people in New England have done.” He advocated educating all people regardless of race and economic circumstances, to be accomplished by providing more funding for public schools to pay teachers, limiting industrial education only to those for whom it was more appropriate than college, and strengthening the quality of southern colleges.

Gradually, the efforts of Few and his Trinity predecessors proved fruitful, with the number of public schools increasing notably in the early twentieth century. Leloudis notes that from the 1880s to the 1920s – a time period that overlaps with Trinity Park School – “North Carolina led the way in building thousands of new schoolhouses, professionalizing teacher training, and developing an elaborate bureaucracy to administer the instruction of youth.” But the growing public schools presented a new challenge for Trinity College in that students were beginning to submit course work in vocational areas for admission to college. To guarantee that applicants were prepared appropriately, the college adjusted its admission standards in 1916. Though the college increased the required number of courses for admission, students no longer had to show course work in solid geometry, and they had the option of substituting French or German for Latin, following national trends. As illustrated previously, Trinity Park School’s curriculum also changed to meet these requirements. Although the college’s admission standards


307 Ibid., 177-184.

308 Leloudis, Schooling the New South, xii.

remained rigorous, Few was pleased that they more closely matched the offerings in public schools.  

World War I brought other changes to Trinity College. On the positive side, students who enlisted received a full term’s credit, female students worked for the Red Cross, faculty supported war bonds, and military training took the place of physical education. Unfortunately, the war took its toll both on and off the battlefield. Twenty-two Trinity College men died in the war, and enrollments dropped until the college was approved as a Student Army Training Corps unit, with eighty percent of undergraduate men signing up. The unit was never particularly active, however, as the influenza epidemic of 1918 had affected a large percentage of the student population and the eventual armistice made it unnecessary. Given its enrollment of younger students, Trinity Park School does not seem to have suffered negatively the effects of the war – at least not immediately. The total student population in the 1916-1917 catalog numbered 136 students; by 1918-1919 enrollment was up to 215.  

The end of the war ushered in cultural changes for both the country and the college. Science and technology became increasingly popular, and the woman’s suffrage movement opened up new opportunities for women. More students grew interested in attending college, with returning soldiers and graduates of the South’s new high schools clamoring for admission. According to Porter, “annual increases of more than 100 became the rule.” Inflation had driven up costs, so tuition had to be increased to offer

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Ibid., 206-208.

Trinity Park High School Catalog, Trinity Park School Collection, 1898-1922. Annual Catalogs. Box 4. University Archives, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. No catalog for 1917-1918 exists in the University Archives. Whether or not it ever existed is difficult to determine.
faculty competitive salaries and to build necessary facilities, including a separate building to house the larger number of female students. 313

On the academic front, the faculty again adjusted admission requirements, but by then the requirements fell more in line with what the state’s public high schools offered. Students were able to submit credits in “agriculture, woodwork, or household economics” and few language courses were required. Conversely, increasing enrollments allowed the college to consider becoming more selective in its admission decisions, a policy it would adopt with the founding of Duke University.

**Education in Durham during Trinity Park School’s Tenure**

While Trinity College was establishing itself and its preparatory school in Durham, the public schools were also growing. Immediately prior to Trinity Park’s establishment, the Durham public schools had built two permanent graded schools, one for white children and one for black children. By 1901 that number had expanded to three more buildings for white students and one more for black students as a result of Durham’s city limits being extended and more students needing to be served. 314 The schools benefited from both the proximity of Trinity College, which provided much-needed teachers to the expanding district, and visionary leadership that included introducing “modern methods of organization, discipline, and instruction.” 315 The city’s first high school for whites opened in 1906. 316 Rather than teaching all subjects as they

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315 Ibid., 50-51.

316 Ibid., 51.
had in graded schools, high school teachers specialized in a particular academic
discipline: Greek and Latin, mathematics, history, science, English, or drawing and
manual training.\textsuperscript{317}

Perhaps the initiative that enhanced the Durham public schools the most, and also
differentiated it from Trinity Park School and other private college preparatory schools,
was the introduction of vocational education. With a broader and more diverse population
of students attending high school, not all high school graduates would go on to college.
Domestic science courses in cooking and sewing were added to both the white and black
schools around 1900. The school district purchased machinery and other tools that
enabled both the white and black schools to offer work shop courses in 1902.\textsuperscript{318} By the
time a new high school building had opened for white students in 1906, students there
could elect to take courses in classics, modern language, history, science, or business,
while coursework at the black schools focused on vocational training, including classes in
laundraing, shoe repair, and agriculture.\textsuperscript{319} The disparities between the white and black
schools went far beyond course offerings. The county spent six times as much on white
schools as it did on black schools, and the value of the school buildings, property, and
grounds was almost six times higher for white schools than black schools.\textsuperscript{320}

\textsuperscript{317} Ibid., 54.

\textsuperscript{318} Ibid., 70-71.

\textsuperscript{319} Ibid., 78-83. W. G. Pearson, principal of the black school and himself an African American, subscribed
to Booker T. Washington’s philosophy of finding value in both the “liberal arts and industrial arts,” suggesting that
learning a trade created “self-respect and self-reliance.” Nonetheless, the differences between the white and black
schools went far beyond curriculum.

\textsuperscript{320} Heather Wiese, “The History of Durham Schools, 1882-1929: Learning from the Past,” (class paper,
As the public high school grew, the curriculum expanded with it. White students could choose from two courses of study in 1914: the college preparatory track or the general track. In 1915, declining interest in German and Greek led the district to replace them with Spanish. Students that year could choose from classes in “mathematics, Latin, English, French, Spanish, history and civics, science, household arts, domestic science, bookkeeping, stenography, typing, manual training, and drawing.”321 By the following fall those subjects had been assembled into four courses of study: academic, manual training, domestic science, and commercial.322

On the co-curricular front, Durham High School students could elect to join organizations that were quite similar to those at Trinity Park School. Activities included an orchestra, a monthly publication, and several debating clubs, featuring the Blackwell Literary Society, the McIver Literary Society, and a girls’ literary society. Athletics joined the mix of activities in 1914 with the school’s first interscholastic basketball team.323

North Carolina adopted its first Compulsory School Law in 1913. With more students attending school, trained teachers were in high demand throughout the state. Fortunately for Durham, the district had the advantage of having Trinity College in its environs and the University of North Carolina not far away, which had developed a variety of teacher training programs that helped staff the schools and promoted

321 Ibid., 84.
322 Ibid.
323 Ibid., 85-86.
educational innovations like cooperative education programs with local industry and real-world clerical experiences.\(^{324}\)

World War I and the influenza epidemic of 1918 took their toll on Durham’s public schools as they had at Trinity Park School and elsewhere, but the end of the war brought a new focus on education. The district was successful in establishing a new salary structure for teachers based on education and experience and in raising bond money for building new schools.\(^ {325}\) In 1921 the board approved construction of a new high school building that would include a “swimming pool, gym, auditorium, cafeteria, chemistry laboratory, cooking rooms, manual training rooms, art rooms, offices, and twenty-two class rooms.”\(^ {326}\) Durham’s public schools had reached a point of prominence that rivaled Trinity Park School, their boarding-school neighbor.

**Trinity Park School: Its Growth and Decline**

If there was a downside to the growth of public schools in North Carolina it was the effect of that growth on Trinity Park School. The school had enjoyed increased enrollment from seventy-one students at its founding to almost two hundred by 1907. After 1908, enrollment dropped to an average of fewer than 140 students for the next decade. Despite a healthy rally immediately after the war, enrollments at the school dropped again after 1920, “from 235 to 145 in one year.”\(^ {327}\) Headmaster Aldridge’s correspondence in 1922 highlighted the school’s enrollment problems. His letters include

\(^{324}\) Ibid., 96-99.

\(^{325}\) Ibid., 105-108.

\(^{326}\) Ibid., 112.

\(^{327}\) Porter, *Trinity and Duke*, 216.
a number of appeals to students to help recruit other students to the school, as well as personalized letters to prospective students that accompanied school catalogs.\footnote{328}

As a result of North Carolina’s 1907 public school legislation, public schools in North Carolina had improved and were drawing larger numbers of students. Durham public schools, in particular, “attracted four times as many students as Trinity Park.”\footnote{329} Still, if Trinity Park School was truly like its northeastern counterparts, it should have been able to attract families who sought an alternative to the public schools. The fact that it did not indicates that it was not in the mold of the prestigious northeastern prep schools after all, but rather had more in common with the local schools. Part of the problem may have been the ties between Trinity Park School, Trinity College, and the public schools. The number of public schools had increased dramatically resulting in an acute need for teachers. Trinity College offered a variety of options for teacher education, including placing practice teachers in Trinity Park who later went on to become public school teachers.\footnote{330} Trinity Park’s archives suggest that the public schools held appeal not only for college-educated teachers but for faculty as well. In 1911 future headmaster Fred Soule Aldridge, who was then a mathematics and Greek master at Trinity Park School, applied to be superintendent of Rocky Mount Schools, with letters of support from President Few, W. D. Carmichael, the superintendent of Durham City Schools, and S. B.
Underwood, headmaster of Trinity Park School. With similarities in the faculty of Trinity Park and the public schools, little was left to set the private school apart.

Histories of Trinity Park School seldom address how the financial status of the school contributed to its eventual closing. Records indicate that finances indeed played a part. Financial reports from the school to the Trinity College Board of Trustees reported deficits of $1518.59 in 1919, $644.99 in 1920, and $2130.37 in 1921. Clearly the school’s affordability did not serve it well. In March 1922, Headmaster Aldridge met with the executive committee of the Trinity College Board of Trustees to state the “need for more funds for operating expenses of Trinity Park School.” In his report to the trustees in 1923, President Few states for “the permanent record” that “the College cannot continue to operate the school without [incurring] annual deficits.”

The Trinity College Board of Trustees voted unanimously – and rather unexpectedly – to close Trinity Park School on August 4, 1922. In an article in the *Charlotte Observer* on August 7, 1922, the trustees gave three reasons for the school’s closing: there was no longer a need for the school due to the expansion of public high schools throughout the state; Trinity College needed the space; and annual deficits had resulted from education becoming more expensive, with the school becoming “a constant

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331 Trinity Park School Collection, 1898-1922. Box 5, Folder 10. University Archives, Duke University, Durham, NC. Apparently Aldridge’s application was unsuccessful, as he became headmaster of Trinity Park School in 1916.


333 Ibid.


335 Summerall, “Trinity Park School,” 35. The move to close the school must have been sudden, given that advertisements were still being run in the *Charlotte Observer* as late as July 26, 1922.
financial burden.” Hersey Spence provided a similar, if more colorful, explanation in his memoirs, suggesting that the quality of the school may no longer have matched the quality of the college. He recalled that by 1921 Trinity College had grown so much that the campus needed additional classroom and dormitory space, saying: “The idea occurred to me that it would be a fine thing to disband the high school and turn the entire plant over to the college. Bursting with enthusiasm over my new idea, I got President Few and Dr. Flowers together and revealed my wonderful plan. Literally the lid blew off. I have never seen such indignation.” Whatever President Few might have thought of Spence’s plan at the time, the following year’s decision to close the school certainly validated Spence. Spence conceded that he could have presented his idea more diplomatically, pointing out that while he noted the presence of “first-class high schools … in every community” and that “the need for [private preparatory schools] had practically vanished,” he also suggested that the school had “degenerated into a cross between a reformatory and a training ground for Trinity College ball players.”

As intended, Trinity College acquired Trinity Park School’s buildings. When Duke University’s West Campus buildings opened in 1930, Trinity College became the coordinate woman’s college that had been discussed for some time. Only Duke’s male engineering students remained on East Campus, with the former Trinity Park School

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338 Ibid., 87-88.
buildings used for engineering classrooms and laboratories.\footnote{Durden, The Launching of Duke University, 104; 471. East Campus housed Duke’s engineering facilities until 1946, when the university began building what is now Hudson Hall on Science Drive.} Bivins Hall (now Bivins Building) is the only Trinity Park School structure still standing today.
Conclusion

Trinity Park School existed for twenty-four years during one of the most dynamic periods of American education. The school furnished well-qualified students to its parent institution, Trinity College, but both its origins and its legacy extend beyond that single purpose.

Had North Carolina and the South embraced education from the beginning, Trinity Park School may not have been necessary. Unfortunately, as far back as colonial times, North Carolina’s rural, agriculturally focused population overlooked and undervalued education. The Civil War and its aftermath prevented the small strides made toward public education in the early part of the nineteenth century from taking hold. As the nineteenth century came to a close, however, the gradual industrialization of some of the state’s cities, population growth, and shifting values provided the momentum public education needed to develop and grow.

Trinity College’s own history reflected the gradual changes that occurred in the state. The college developed through a series of changes: it began as an old field school, evolved into an academy, shifted its focus to teacher education, and ultimately became a denominationally affiliated liberal arts college. Throughout its history it met the needs of the state’s middle class by providing educational opportunities to those interested in teaching, the ministry, and eventually professional careers. Trinity College’s leaders also recognized the need for strong public primary and secondary schools. While Trinity’s presidents certainly would have supported public schools to feed better prepared students into the college, they also supported public education to serve the greater good. In the words of Duke professor William Hamilton “The progenitors of Duke University had,
indeed, a natural affinity with the public schools. Time and again the institution proclaimed as its especial mission the education of that element in society less endowed with lineage and fortune.” Until the state was ready to meet the college’s enrollment needs, however, Trinity College offered preparatory classes to ensure a steady flow of students to its collegiate program. The success of those preparatory classes no doubt inspired the creation of the separate preparatory model that became Trinity Park School.

Unlike North Carolina and the South, the Northeast supported education from the outset as a result of the values of its colonists and the requirements of its industrial economy. Fittingly, the Northeast led the way in educational innovation as home to a variety of educational choices, from the country’s early public schools to semi-public academies to private boarding schools. When Trinity Park School opened in 1898, it emulated the latter.

Trinity Park School opened just six years after Trinity College moved to Durham. Unlike other southern cities, Durham’s industrial economy and culture more closely mirrored the Northeast, so having a private school similar in its approach to the North’s most prestigious schools made sense. Evidence suggests that Trinity Park School was similar academically to its northern peers. Like them, Trinity Park School offered a classical curriculum designed to meet the admission requirements of its affiliated college and other respected colleges and universities. Trinity Park also mimicked prestigious boarding schools with a character-focused residential philosophy and diverse co-curricular activities designed to educate the whole student. Conversely, as a result of Trinity Park School’s comparatively moderate cost its students represented a broader economic spectrum than the prestigious northeastern schools that served America’s elite.

It also differed in its geographic representation. Trinity Park School students came almost exclusively from North Carolina and neighboring states, while the northern schools attracted children of the wealthy from all over the country.

Trinity Park School represented an interesting paradox. It was a private school with the kind of high-quality academic offerings, resources, and services one would expect of a boarding school. Nonetheless, its relatively low cost attracted a decidedly middle class student body that in a different educational climate would be served by public schools. At the same time Trinity Park School was growing and feeding students into Trinity College, North Carolina had finally passed legislation to develop and fund public schools. Durham embraced education, and its schools became models for the rest of the state. While it is difficult to correlate the strengths and successes of Durham’s public schools with Trinity Park School, the similarities in their curricula and the positive comments about Durham’s educational culture by Trinity College administrators suggest that Trinity Park School impacted Durham’s public schools at least peripherally. While the success of Durham’s and the state’s public schools ultimately led to Trinity Park School’s demise, the school played an important role in the city’s educational history.
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