

THE BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF OKLAHOMA AND HIGHER EDUCATION
THE FORMATIVE PERIOD, 1906 TO 1915

By

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PREFACE

Prior to the formation of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma in 1906, Baptist missionary and church activity in Oklahoma and Indian Territories had greatly emphasized educational activities. Therefore, Christian education was one of the most prominent concerns of the convention during the first critical decade of its existence. The convention desiring to have sole ownership and control of its institutions adopted plans in 1907 for the establishment of a new Baptist university. However, efforts to establish the new university met with competition from rival Baptist institutions which had to be eliminated before the policy could succeed. This thesis examines the nature of the resulting competition and evaluates the final success of the policy.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Before the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma was organized at Shawnee in 1906 two major obstacles had to be removed. First, the competition between Northern and Southern Baptists had to be reduced enough for both groups to work together in a common organization. Secondly, Baptists in Indian and Oklahoma Territories had to overcome their territorial loyalties and unite.

At first there was missionary and organizational competition in Indian Territory between the two largest and most influential bodies of Baptists in the United States. These were the American Baptist Missionary Union (Northern Baptist) and the Southern Baptist Convention. In 1876 Southern Baptists organized the Baptist General Association of Western Arkansas and Indian Territory. Then in 1883 Northern Baptists organized the Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention of Indian Territory. In 1894, shortly after Oklahoma Territory was opened for settlement the Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention of Indian Territory changed its name to the Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention of Oklahoma and Indian Territory. However, Southern Baptists in Oklahoma Territory who had been connected with the Baptist General Association of Western Arkansas and Indian Territory withdrew in 1895 and established their own Oklahoma Baptist State Convention. Upon the withdrawal of the Southern Baptists in Oklahoma Territory the old association changed its name to the Baptist General Association of Indian Territory. This meant that by 1895 there was one general organization of Southern Baptists in each of

the territories and one general organization of Northern Baptists serving both territories.

In 1898 the Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention of Oklahoma and Indian Territory changed its name to the Baptist Convention of Oklahoma and Indian Territory. Nevertheless, this general organization of Northern Baptists followed the lead of the Southern Baptists and split their convention in 1898. In Oklahoma Territory the Northern Baptists organized the Oklahoma Baptist Convention and in Indian Territory they organized the Baptist Convention of Indian Territory. Thus the Baptists of Oklahoma, destined to organize the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma in 1906, were divided in 1898 into four parts. Each territory had one convention affiliated with Northern Baptists and one convention affiliated with Southern Baptists. However, during 1900 the Northern and Southern Baptist organizations in Indian Territory united to form the Baptist General Convention of Indian Territory and the Northern and Southern Baptist organizations in Oklahoma Territory merged into the Oklahoma Baptist State Convention. Also, each of the newly organized conventions voted to cooperate with both the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Missionary Union.

The second conflict was between the Baptists of Oklahoma and Indian Territories over the question of statehood. This conflict was of greater magnitude than the one between Northern and Southern Baptists. Indeed, Northern and Southern Baptists had been able to unite into one convention in each territory; but these territorial conventions remained apart until 1905. In 1906 the consolidation of the two territorial conventions had been attempted, but failed because of the strong sentiment at that time

supporting statehood for each territory.¹ However, by 1906 sentiment for joint statehood led to the merging of the Oklahoma Baptist State Convention with the Baptist General Convention of Indian Territory forming the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma on November 9, 1906.² The new statewide convention affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Missionary Union.

Despite competition between Northern and Southern Baptists and antagonisms between the two territories a keen underlying agreement existed among Baptists in regard to the great importance of Christian education. Northern Baptists in Oklahoma emphasized education by describing their first general organization in Indian Territory as a missionary and educational convention. Indeed, long before the formation of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma the area of present-day Oklahoma was fertile ground for missionary activity heavily emphasizing education. Because Oklahoma was one of the last frontiers in North America and also Indian country, the earliest known Baptist missionaries in the state stressed the importance of Christian education and founded many institutions of learning from the elementary to the college level.

As early as 1833 a mission named Ebenezer was established three miles north of the Arkansas River and fifteen miles west of Fort Gibson. There a church, schoolhouse, and other buildings were erected by Reverend John Davis and Reverend David Lewis.³ Other missionaries, churches, and schools

¹Lena V. Stalcup, Life and Labors of Joseph Cole Stalcup, (Oklahoma City: Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1937), p. 51.

²Ibid.

³Joseph Bradfield Thoburn, Standard History of Oklahoma, Vol. 1 (Chicago and New York: American Historical Society, 1916), p. 151.

followed in fairly rapid succession. By 1890 there was a total of ten Baptist schools of different levels in the territories with 846 pupils.⁴ The most important of these schools was an academy supported by the Home Mission Society of New York. This academy was established at Tahlequah for the five civilized tribes in 1880 by A. C. Bacone. In 1885 it was moved to its present location near Muskogee and became Indian University. Therefore, when the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma was organized in 1906 Indian University was the only educational institution in Indian Territory engaged in academic work on the college level.

In 1906 Oklahoma Baptist College was the only educational institution in Oklahoma Territory doing academic work on the college level. It had been established by the Oklahoma Baptist Convention in 1900 at Blackwell. It was located at that city of 4,500 population with the aid of the Blackwell Board of Trade.⁵ Prior to the organization of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma the college had been beset by financial problems which had threatened to close the institution during the period of 1904-1905.⁶

The ensuing chapters will investigate the relationships between these educational institutions and the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma during the formative years from 1906 to 1915. Furthermore, local pressures, prejudices, convention politics, speculative land ventures, and unstable economic conditions will be explored in order to determine how much they may have contributed to the confusion in educational matters during that time.

⁴Charles Herman Black, "One Hundred Twenty Years of Baptist Missionary Administration in Oklahoma" (unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Central Baptist Theological Seminary: Kansas City, Kansas, 1950), p. 43.

⁵The Blackwell Daily News (Oklahoma), February 4, 1911.

⁶Ibid.

CHAPTER II

INVESTIGATION PRODUCES A POLICY 1906-1907

When the Oklahoma Baptist State Convention and the Baptist General Convention of Indian Territory joined forces in the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma in 1906 in anticipation of joint statehood for the two territories, they immediately gave their attention to educational matters. The Reverend T.R. Corr reported for the committee on Christian education, recognizing the "great value of Baptist institutions to the denomination itself, and to the cause of the Kingdom of our Lord." The committee acknowledged the great good that was being accomplished by the public and secular schools, but hastened to give its "most hearty support and co-operation to the Baptist schools located within the bounds of the new state." Nevertheless, the committee recognized the "peculiar conditions" under which the schools labored and recommended the establishment of a commission by the convention to "study carefully and impartially existing educational conditions as they affect our denominational interests." Furthermore, the committee recommended that the commission have power to make any special provision for the urgent needs of the schools during the ensuing year and make a report and recommendations to the convention at the next annual meeting.¹

The convention adopted these recommendations of the committee on Christian education and elected an Educational Commission to carry them out. The election of the Educational Commission demonstrated the keen

¹Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1906, p. 18.

interest that Oklahoma Baptists had in Christian education and their recognition of the need for some type of unified program in that area.

In addition to the report by the committee on Christian education, reports were given on ministerial education, Oklahoma Baptist College at Blackwell, Indian University at Muskogee, and the Cherokee Academy at Tahlequah. These reports, made at the convention and later published in the 1906 convention annual, were available to the Educational Commission in their investigation. However, their value was small in comparison to the first-hand information that the commission might have gained from on-the-spot observation and careful assessment of attitudes throughout the state in regard to those institutions.

The report on ministerial education pointed out that \$200 had already been given to the Kansas City Seminary, where there was not one ministerial student from Oklahoma. It also noted that about \$300 had been given to Southern Baptist Seminary, where only five men and women from Oklahoma were studying. The report stated that, on the other hand, there were thirty-two ministerial students in Oklahoma Baptist schools: twenty-one at Oklahoma Baptist College at Blackwell, nine at Indian University, and one at Cherokee Academy at Tahlequah. Two recommendations were made in the report. The first was that ministerial education be put on a regular schedule of beneficence for the churches on a par with state, home, and foreign missions. The second was that money should be apportioned among Baptist institutions in proportion to the number of ministerial students in attendance.²

Following this report an offering was taken for Oklahoma Baptist College and \$536 in cash and pledges were received. Although Oklahoma

²Ibid., p. 19.

Baptist College had by far the greater number of ministerial students, Reverend A. G. Washburn spoke to the convention on ministerial education at Indian University, taking an offering of \$730 for the ministerial students there. Therefore, Oklahoma Baptist College, despite having more than twice the number of ministerial students, received less financial support at the convention than did the latter school.³

In their report to the convention the Oklahoma Baptist College Board of Trustees stated that "sentiment in favor of the college is growing . . ." and that the "outlook of the college is bright and brightening." They attributed this improvement in part to their many student preachers who were developing support among the churches for the college; they expected to continue supplying the growing demand for preachers.⁴

Local pastors and churches constituted a main line of financial support, since the convention could only endorse its institution's needs. Most of Oklahoma Baptist College's students and support came from Oklahoma Territory and southern Kansas, because railroad facilities at Blackwell enabled many students to supply churches in the surrounding area. Lack of direct connection to the south made it difficult for student preachers to serve churches and make favorable contacts for the college in that direction from Blackwell.⁵

Oklahoma Baptist College also faced the typical problems of eliciting support from autonomous Baptist congregations for religious institutions outside of the local churches. Every institution, mission board, and agency had its field agent who solicited from the churches, and in

³Ibid., p. 20.

⁴Ibid., p. 68.

⁵Oscar L. Gibson, personal interview with the author at Stillwater, Oklahoma, May 8, 1961.

addition had to earn his own expenses for his efforts. Competition among the several types of institutions was keen. Often the ablest speakers were able to garner greater offerings for their causes simply on the basis of their skill in appealing for the funds. This situation caused the churches to be besieged with letters for causes and by agents wanting to appear before the congregations. An additional complication in Oklahoma was the state convention's cooperating with both the Northern and Southern Baptist bodies.⁶

This unsystematic method was wasteful, inefficient, and disorganizing in its effect upon all the work of Baptist general bodies. As an example, in the summer of 1910 Dr. J. H. Moore, President of Oklahoma Baptist College, sent out several students to do field work. By the end of two weeks all except one, Oscar L. Gibson, had returned without being able to make their expenses. This incident is symptomatic to conditions throughout the years immediately before and after the decade of this study.⁷

Such were the conditions which Oklahoma Baptist College and every state institution and agency faced in 1906. The conditions certainly did not in themselves contain very much promise of great financial support for Oklahoma Baptist College. Nevertheless a spirit of optimism found its way into the report, which stated that "Some of us see visions of ample buildings, equipment, income, and hundreds of earnest students under training for God in the college halls."⁸

Oklahoma Baptist College's financial history had not been the kind to produce optimism. Established in 1900 by the Oklahoma Baptist

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1906, p. 68.

Convention, it received twenty acres of land and \$15,000 in cash from the Board of Trade of Blackwell. By January of 1905 the college through mortgages had accumulated a debt of more than \$22,000, with creditors demanding payment of the long overdue notes. The Commercial Club of Blackwell, which had absorbed the Board of Trade in 1901, helped to avoid the threatened foreclosure of the college by paying \$12,000 to one creditor. The Commercial Club took from the holder of the \$12,000 note an assignment of the mortgage, in turn assigning it to Williard Foster as trustee to protect the club's interest in the property.⁹

The college corporation then deeded to the Commercial Club an undivided one-half interest in the college land and buildings. Thereafter, the Commercial Club exacted for its aid a restriction on the college corporation. For at least ten years, the club insisted, the college should operate a school in the college building; what was more, the leaders agreed to keep the college corporation, lands, and building clear of debt during the next decade.¹⁰ With the help of several individual donors, the Oklahoma Baptist State Convention cleared the debt by the fall of 1905.¹¹ Nevertheless, the Blackwell Commercial Club had established very close ties with the school, with a strong legal measure of control of the college through the restrictions placed upon it.

Such was the recent financial history of Oklahoma Baptist College when it submitted its report to the convention at Shawnee in 1906 and declared that "sentiment in favor of the college was growing." The report presented a list of six needs, most of which were monetary. First, the

⁹The Blackwell Daily News (Oklahoma), February 4, 1911.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Minutes, Oklahoma Baptist State Convention, 1905, p. 33.

college wanted to pay professors a "living salary." Second, they needed funds for increasing incidental expenses. Third, they listed laboratories. The fourth requirement was for a new dormitory to unify and centralize student life and also lower their living expenses. The fifth need was for a library, reading room, and gymnasium, while sixth and last, they wanted students.¹²

The report of Indian University's Board of Trustees to the 1906 convention was submitted by F. M. Overlees. Stressing the good work of President Scott until his resignation at the beginning of the last year, as well as that of the temporary president, the Reverend P. B. Guernsey, the report noted the election of the Reverend W. C. Farmer in April. Steps had been taken toward taking out articles of incorporation, which had been felt wise for a long time. The 1905-1906 school year, the twenty-fifth year of Indian University, found its financial condition sound. It had received a total of \$16,936.36 during the year, of which \$6,034.44 had been contributed by the Home Mission Society of New York.¹³ The report also acknowledged with appreciation the loyal support and patronage of the people of Indian Territory.¹⁴ It noted that although the university was originally for Indians, only forty of the 117 enrolled in 1905-1906 were Indians; of these only fourteen were actually doing collegiate work.¹⁵ The physical plant of Indian University consisted of several buildings, including a main structure and dormitories. The main building had just had its outside woodwork painted and drain pipes

¹²Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1906, p. 68.

¹³Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

repaired while furnishings had been added to the dormitories.¹⁶ The report stressed the philosophy of Christian education, stating that "The Christian atmosphere and the religious spirit at the school are positive and strong," and that "every member of the faculty was active in Christian work and had been chosen because of his special fitness for religious teaching."¹⁷

A report for Cherokee Academy prepared by President Walter J. Pack was inserted into the minutes. Recalling that the academy was established in 1885 at Tahlequah, the capital of the Cherokee Nation, Pack reported that the school's enrollment of 231 was the largest at any Baptist school in the state. This student body was nearly equally divided between Indians and whites. The school aimed to provide a strong spiritual environment, with all students required to take one Bible course. Although the school was plainly not a seminary, both Christian laymen and preachers were needed by the denomination. Therefore, evangelism on the campus was emphasized, with fifty students having been converted during the last session. Cherokee Academy, like Indian University, was under the control of and maintained by the Home Mission Society of New York, and was thus financially sound. Its total receipts the past year had been \$5,077.48 and expenditures had been \$5,048.23 leaving a balance of \$29.85. The academy had a preparatory department through the eighth grade and an academic course of four full years beyond.¹⁸

These three institutions, Oklahoma Baptist College, Indian University, and Cherokee Academy, were the principal responsibilities of the Educational

¹⁶Ibid., p. 115.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 117-118.

Commission at the commencement of its activity in 1906. However, before the second annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention convened at the Broadway Baptist Church in Ardmore on Thursday, October 31, 1907, a new educational institution had entered upon the scene.

This new effort involved the general public of Hastings, Oklahoma. Spearheaded by several prominent Baptists, citizens raised funds sufficient to purchase the building of the former Congregational preparatory school, Southwest Academy, which had gone defunct in 1906. When the structure was offered to the Baptists of the area, the Baptist Church of Hastings took control of the property and proposed to give it to the Mullins and Comanche County Baptist Associations. However, the Hastings Baptist Church opened the school on October 28, 1907, under its own auspices with the pastor, C. R. Hairfield, a Wake Forest College graduate, as president and Bible teacher. The new school, although only an academy, was named the Hastings Baptist College.¹⁹

However, before this institution entered upon the scene the Educational Commission had completed its investigation of the existing conditions, agreed unanimously upon a recommended policy, and had set this policy in motion. Long before the convention met on October 31, 1907, the commission had instructed their secretary, Professor W. C. Farmer, to notify the several cities of the state that the commission had concluded that a new Baptist university should be established and to invite those cities desiring the university to submit their bids.²⁰

Lawton and Chickasha were the only two cities responding with propositions prior to the 1907 meeting of the convention.²¹ However, on July

¹⁹J. M. Dyer, "History of Southwest Baptist College," address delivered at Hastings, Oklahoma, on May 5, 1957.

²⁰Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1907, p. 57.

²¹Ibid., pp. 57-58.

25, 1907, following the Baptist Young People's Union assembly at Sulphur, leaders of that city gave evidence of wanting the Baptist university. Dr. I. N. Clark of Kansas City, the field secretary of the Missionary Union of Boston, and Dr. E. Chivers of New York, field secretary of the American Home Mission Society, were both in Sulphur for the assembly. These men stated for the news media that the Baptists of the new state should unite on building a great endowed Baptist university at Sulphur overlooking the beautiful Platt National Park. Both indicated that they had already discussed with their millionaire friends in the East the advisability of building a great university at Sulphur. They also were of the opinion that Carnegie, Rockefeller, and others would give liberally to the building and endowment fund of such an institution. Nevertheless, no concrete offer resulted from this idle talk.²²

The officials of Oklahoma Baptist College and Baptists throughout the state knew because of the Educational Commission's advertisement for bids that the commission would recommend the establishment of a new Baptist university and would by-pass Oklahoma Baptist College. Therefore, in their report to the convention which preceded the report of the commission they attempted to gain the convention's support for the college. The report stated that the college was making a steady advance. It was "growing in strength, in usefulness, in patronage, and in the confidence of the people." The enrollment had risen during the past three years from 72 to 83 to 104. The report also praised the fine Christian atmosphere and the full faculty of competent teachers. In several places the report referred to "your college" and attempted to shame the convention for the poor support given the work at Blackwell. First, "your teachers" of "your

²²Lawton Constitution-Democrat (Oklahoma), October 24, 1907.

college" were giving one-third of their income to the denomination in the way of free tuition to ministerial students, missionary students, preacher's wives, and children of ministers. These donations amounted to \$1,200 per year, an expense which the convention should have provided. Second, the Home Mission Board at Atlanta, Georgia, had given \$1,750 to the teachers fund of the college during the previous two years and was expected to give \$2,000 during the following year. The report then stated that "But for this your college could not possibly have gone on as it has."²³

The report then called for enlargement of the college, stating that "The field of our patronage is widening, friends are multiplying, criticisms are growing fewer" The report called for an endowment, stating that "No unendowed college can do the work a college ought to do, and do it honestly, and well, and pay its teachers a living salary." Mississippi College was given as an example of a well endowed Baptist college. Therefore, the officials of Oklahoma Baptist College called for a \$50,000 endowment, proposing that the convention raise \$25,000 and Blackwell the other \$25,000. Following the report Dr. M. D. Early appealed for gifts to the college, and an offering was taken resulting in \$728.64 in cash and pledges. The convention, however, took no action toward providing an endowment.²⁴

The Educational Commission's long-awaited report was no surprise. It began by stating that the doctrine of the complete separation of church and state could not be used as an excuse for not meeting the responsibility for Christian education. The commission felt that Christian education was the foundation of all well-balanced civilizations and lay at

²³Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1907, pp. 46-51.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 48-50.

the base of all enduring denominational progress. Thus the Baptists of Oklahoma had a great responsibility for providing education for the more than seven hundred Baptists who were attending "state schools." However, the commission believed that the Baptist institutions then available were wholly "insufficient to meet the demands of the denomination."²⁵

The commission went on to commend heartily Indian University at Muskogee and Cherokee Baptist Academy at Tahlequah, expressing the hope that they might be brought into closer touch with the convention's work and life.²⁶ To this end the Reverend A. G. Washburn moved, with the convention concurring, that the Educational Commission open correspondence with the Home Mission Society of New York with a view of finding a way of bringing Indian University under the control of the Oklahoma convention, either exclusively or in conjunction with the Society.²⁷ The Commission acknowledged that Oklahoma Baptist College at Blackwell was the only chartered Baptist institution in the state under the management of the state convention, but noted the school's limited capacity "without the heartiest co-operation from our Baptist Brotherhood."²⁸ Therefore, the commission recommended that the convention should establish a new Baptist university as soon as practicable and correlate as far as possible all the denomination's schools in the state, including the new Hastings Baptist College.²⁹

The Educational Commission reported that Lawton and Chickasha's

²⁵Ibid., pp. 54-57.

²⁶Ibid., p. 54.

²⁷Ibid., p. 92.

²⁸Ibid., p. 56.

²⁹Ibid., p. 57.

propositions had already been considered and recommended that the new university be established at Lawton.³⁰ Indeed, by the time the 1907 convention met, the Chamber of Commerce at Lawton had been working for nearly a year to get the college. The Lawton chamber was under the impression that the Educational Commission had full authority to locate the college. Several sites and financial arrangements had already been discussed between Lawton and the Educational Commission. There was even a final meeting on the night of October 24, 1907, for the purpose of discussing the proposed site of the college. This was one week before the convening of the convention.³¹ Nevertheless, the convention rejected the Lawton location while accepting the rest of the commission's recommendations.³²

Following the Educational Commission's recommendation for establishing a new university, the convention voted that the Board of Trustees of the Oklahoma Baptist University should be members in good standing of a Baptist Church within the state of Oklahoma. Furthermore, the convention instructed the board of trustees for the university to provide in their articles of incorporation and charter that the trustees and their successors were to be elected by the convention at its regular annual meetings. Thus a new educational policy was launched, aiming at the establishment of a new Baptist university under the complete and sole control of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.³³

³⁰Ibid., p. 58.

³¹Lawton Constitution-Democrat, October 24, 1907.

³²Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1906, p. 58.

³³Ibid., p. 69.

CHAPTER III

LOCATING THE UNIVERSITY 1907-1910

In pursuance of its newly established educational policy the convention turned its attention to the next important task of determining the preferred location for the new university. Because the convention rejected the Educational Commission's recommendation as to the location of the university, every city that had a proposition was invited to present it. The following six cities responded to the above invitation: Shawnee, Hobart, El Reno, Chickasha, Lawton, and Blackwell.¹

The first five of these cities differed mainly in details while making attractive offers that generally included land, cash, scholarships, and utility and transportation facilities. Sidney J. Roy, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce of Shawnee, offered his city's bid. It included forty acres of land, \$75,000 in cash, two hundred scholarships for three years at \$40 each, water and sewage guaranteed, electric car line to the grounds, and many other superior advantages. E. A. Wesson, representing Hobart, offered forty acres of land, \$125,000 in cash, three hundred city lots worth \$75,000, and water and sewage connections with the city. W. T. Scott, speaking for El Reno, presented a plan which hinged on the possibility of the people of El Reno purchasing the Darlington School property from the United States Government and presenting it to the denomination. The property was four and one-half miles from El Reno and consisted of 640 acres of land, brick buildings appraised at \$78,000 in

¹Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1907, pp. 58-67.

value, sewage, water, gas, light plant, and telephone system. El Reno also proposed to purchase the Cheyenne School property of 640 acres of land to be used as an orphanage, with street car connections with El Reno. Chickasha's proposition consisted of twenty acres of land, \$110,000 in cash, sewage and water free for five years, and two hundred scholarships at \$40 each for two years. The cash was to be paid by installments at ninety day intervals.

Dr. M. D. Early's presentation of Lawton's proposition was seconded by State Senator J. Elmer Thomas. Lawton offered forty acres of land, \$100,000 in cash, 250 scholarships at \$40 each for one year underwritten by the Comanche County Baptist Association, 250 scholarships at \$40 each for one year promised by the Lawton Chamber of Commerce, and \$25,000 pledged by Lawton real estate firms.²

The sixth and last candidate, Blackwell, varied the procedure by offering the college already in operation there, plus \$25,000 in cash within a year provided the Baptists would match the sum. However, the convention in approving the Educational Commission's recommendations had already closed the gate on the college at Blackwell, with the result that this late offering of more money within a year on a matching fund basis with the convention was not enough to cause reopening of the situation.³

The convention next proceeded to the voting, agreeing to the selection of the second choice by separate and independent balloting following the selection of the first choice. The convention also approved a motion that after each ballot, the place receiving the fewest number of votes would be dropped.⁴

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 67.

⁴Ibid., pp. 67-68.

The following tables show the results of the balloting for each choice of the convention.

Vote on First Choice

	Ballots					
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth
Hobart	34	20	24	24	21	
Shawnee	59	53	53	46	44	37
El Reno	68	98	97	94	105	110
Lawton	52	50	44	47	49	60
Chickasha	18	13	12	12		
Blackwell	4					
Total number of votes	235	234	230	223	219	207
Number needed for majority	118	118	116	112	110	104

Vote on Second Choice

	First Ballot	Second Ballot
Lawton	96	133
Shawnee	62	72
Hobart	29	
Chickasha	17	7
Total number of votes	204	212
Number needed for majority	103	107

As these tables show, Blackwell had virtually no support in the balloting for the first choice, receiving only four votes on the first ballot. Blackwell was then dropped from the balloting and was not in the running for second choice. The front runner in the first ballot, El Reno, led in every ballot until the issue was decided. Lawton lagged slightly behind Shawnee on the first three ballots, then forged ahead on the last

three ballots. Nevertheless, the second choice had to be decided through subsequent separate balloting. Lawton receiving the endorsement on the second ballot.⁵

The convention decisively selected the Darlington site proposed by El Reno but the Lawton delegation left the convention confident that Lawton would get the university. They felt sure that El Reno would not be able to secure the Darlington site from the United States Government. Furthermore, the supporters of Oklahoma Baptist College, Indian University, and Tahlequah Academy voted for Darlington in order to overcome the influence of the Educational Commission's support for Lawton and to delay or prevent altogether the establishment of a new university. In addition, the Lawton delegation felt that the "country element" at the convention were influenced mostly by the 640 acres of good land with a few buildings and light plant. The Lawton delegation derided the latter group for having their minds on "raising alfalfa instead of a modern university."⁶

Following the voting, the convention adopted a resolution putting the matter of actually locating the university in the hands of an eleven member Board of Trustees. The trustees were also charged with the duty of taking the steps necessary to erect and prepare suitable buildings and have general supervision of the new university.⁷

W. W. Chancellor called the newly elected Board of Trustees for the university together at Oklahoma City on November 13, 1907. After electing G. M. Harrell, chairman, and the Reverend J.L.H. Hawkins, secretary, they went to El Reno in a body to view the property of the Darlington

⁵Ibid., p. 68.

⁶Lawton Constitution-Democrat, November 7, 1907.

⁷Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1907, p. 69.

site and to confer with the El Reno Commercial Club.⁸

However, before the university trustees had examined the Darlington site they were met at El Reno by State Senator J. Elmer Thomas, supporter of Lawton's bid for the university. The university trustees indicated to Senator Thomas that they were not enthusiastic about the El Reno "project" and that it was questionable whether El Reno would raise the money to buy the Darlington site. Some of the El Reno businessmen contended that the location of the university at the Darlington site would build up a "rival trading point" five miles from the city that would be a detriment instead of a benefit to El Reno.⁹

After viewing the property of the Darlington site the university trustees met with the El Reno Commercial Club. Leaders and officers of the club informed the trustees that El Reno would first have to purchase the site from the United States Government before they could deed the property to the university. Therefore, the El Reno Commercial Club requested they be given until March 4, 1908, to secure the property, and the trustees granted the request.¹⁰

In the meantime, on December 30, 1907, the Mullins and Comanche County Baptist Associations accepted an offer of the Hastings Baptist Church and took control of the Hastings Baptist College.¹¹ The newly created Board of Trustees recognized the huge task before them in developing a stable institution and likened the college to a new born babe that "must have everything provided for it."¹² Nevertheless, Mullins and

⁸Ibid., 1908, p. 25.

⁹Lawton Constitution-Democrat, November 21, 1907.

¹⁰Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1908, p. 25.

¹¹Minutes, Comanche County Baptist Association, 1908, p. 9.

¹²Ibid.

Comanche County Baptist Associations had put the Hastings Baptist College in a more competitive position relative to the other Baptist educational institutions within Oklahoma and especially to the proposed university. The Reverend M. D. Early, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Lawton and one of the principal backers of Lawton's bid for the new university, was elected to the Executive Board of the Hastings Baptist College.¹³

In the meantime the citizens of El Reno made no overt attempts to secure the Darlington property from the United States Government. Neither had any member in the United States Congress been found who would introduce a bill donating the Indian land at Darlington for that purpose. Secretary J. L. Walker of the Educational Commission in a letter to the Lawton Chamber of Commerce indicated that such a bill would have to be passed if the site were secured for the new university, because the El Reno people had already decided not to purchase the land.¹⁴

Following Walker's letter secretary G.B.H. Saltzgaber of the Lawton Chamber of Commerce received a letter on January 29, 1908, from Indian Agent Shell of the Darlington Agency. In the letter Shell admitted some talk on the part of the Department of the Interior that the school at Darlington might be abandoned or moved and the land sold. However, Shell emphatically denied that there was any probability that the land would be donated to the city of El Reno or to the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma for a university.¹⁵

That night, following the receipt of Shell's letter, the Lawton Chamber of Commerce, feeling certain that El Reno had already failed to

¹³Dyer, "History of Southwest Baptist College."

¹⁴Lawton Constitution-Democrat, January 16, 1908.

¹⁵Ibid., January 30, 1908.

get the university, met and authorized Senator Thomas to begin pressing Lawton's bid. The Lawton Chamber of Commerce wanted Senator Thomas to secure a letter from the university trustees stating that Lawton would get the university. The Chamber of Commerce felt that if a letter of intent were secured the proposed site could be immediately plotted and offered for sale in order to raise the necessary bonus.¹⁶

Senator Thomas did not secure the letter, and the matter remained at a standstill until March 17, 1908. At 8:30 a.m. on that date the university trustees met in Oklahoma City and, after hearing the report of the chairman, G. M. Harrell, on the status of the El Reno property, adjourned to meet at 3:00 p.m. with the Lawton Chamber of Commerce. Representatives of the chamber conducted the trustees over the city and to two sites of forty acres each, either of which was offered as the location for the university. First the trustees visited the western site, which was one mile beyond the corporate limits of the city and near the Frisco Railroad. Second, they visited the location one mile north of the city limits near the public highway from the city to Fort Sill, which was five miles distant. The western site appealed to the trustees because of the "topography of the site and because it was more remote from the boulevard leading out to U. S. 4." Therefore, after some discussion the board voted unanimously that the western site would be the place for the university if its location in Lawton was consummated.¹⁷

The university trustees then met with the Chamber of Commerce at 8:00 p.m., and the chairman of the trustees, G. M. Harrell, called for the submission of Lawton's proposal in writing.¹⁸ The proposal thus

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1908, pp. 25-26.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 26.

submitted differed from the one offered at the convention in 1907. It omitted the 250 scholarships previously offered by the Chamber of Commerce, the 250 scholarships offered by the Comanche County Baptist Association, and the \$25,000 offered by Lawton real estate firms.¹⁹ The trustees also thought that Lawton had offered free water connections with the city for five years when its proposition was presented to the convention.²⁰ However, Lawton had not made the latter offer.

The university trustees then met with a committee of six from the Chamber of Commerce until midnight in an effort to agree on the terms of the proposal. However, no agreement was reached, and the Chamber of Commerce would not give the university trustees any marketable security for the performance of their promises to the convention. Subsequently the meeting adjourned, to reconvene in Oklahoma City six days later.²¹

On March 23 the university trustees met at 8:00 p.m. Henry M. Furman of Ada called for a reading of the resolution passed at the convention in 1907 creating the Board of Trustees for Oklahoma Baptist University. After reviewing their duties the chairman, in the absence of minutes, made a full statement of what had been done at the last meeting.²² El Reno did not have a representative at the meeting, but Lawton did. Therefore, when the propositions from El Reno and Lawton were called for, only Lawton responded. Senator J. Elmer Thomas stated Lawton's proposition, which had been scaled down since the meeting of March 17.²³ Lawton's new

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., 1907, p. 66.

²¹Ibid., 1908, p. 26.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., p. 27.

proposal was the same that Lawton had presented to the Educational Commission on September 5, 1907, at Guthrie, prior to the 1907 convention. It consisted of \$75,000 and forty acres of land, or \$1,000 additional for each acre of land less than forty acres down to twenty acres.²⁴

As this proposition did not agree with the offer proposed to the 1907 convention, the trustees of the university went into executive session to consider their next move. In the executive session H. M. Furman stated orally a resolution on the problems facing the trustees which was adopted. Mr. Furman was then requested to reduce the resolution to writing and mail it to their secretary pro tem, G. P. Selvege.²⁵

The resolution stated that El Reno, having been given ample time to make good its proposition and having failed to do so, would no longer be considered by the board. Second, a misunderstanding existed between the university trustees and the people of Lawton as to the latter's proposal to the convention. The convention understood that the people of Lawton had also proposed 250 scholarships at \$40 each and a guarantee of free water connections with the water mains of the city to the university for five years. However, the resolution stated that the people of Lawton "did not so understand the proposition made to the convention and they declined to make such guarantees good." Also, according to the resolution, the people of Lawton expected the convention "to invest dollar for dollar given by Lawton in the erection of the university." The resolution stated that the university trustees had not been authorized to make any promise of investing dollar for dollar with Lawton. Therefore, the trustees resolved to refer the matter back to the convention if the people of Lawton

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

insisted upon their new offer.²⁶

Following the executive session of the university trustees, the representatives of Lawton urged the trustees not to take final action until after they had gone to Lawton or sent a committee to confer with the people there to see if a solution could be reached. Therefore, the trustees elected a subcommittee of three, composed of Henry M. Furman, G. P. Selvege, and D. P. Phillips to visit Lawton and close the contract with the people of Lawton if all the conditions of the proposition submitted to the convention were agreed to.²⁷ The next day, March 24, 1908, the subcommittee for the university trustees met with the committee of the Lawton Chamber of Commerce composed of W. T. Gilbert, J. H. Franklin, and Frank L. Ketch.²⁸ At the meeting of the committees an agreement was reached and a contract between the Chamber of Commerce and the university trustees was consummated.²⁹

By the new contract the Lawton Chamber of Commerce agreed to donate \$100,000, forty acres of land, 250 scholarships at \$40 each guaranteed by Comanche County Baptist Association, and free water for university purposes for five years. The subcommittee of the university trustees accepted the above offers on the conditions that the \$100,000 be paid in five equal installments beginning ninety days after incorporation and every ninety days thereafter until paid in full, that the university be located on the western site previously approved by the trustees, and that the 250 scholarships be furnished during the first school year but not

²⁶Ibid., pp. 27-28.

²⁷Ibid., p. 28.

²⁸Ibid., p. 29.

²⁹Ibid.

prior to June 1, 1910. The university trustees also demanded in the contract that the Lawton Chamber of Commerce give the university trustees security for the payment of the \$100,000 and the 250 scholarships within thirty days. In addition, the university trustees agreed to invest the \$100,000 in university buildings and improvements on the land. It should be noted that no mention was made of the \$25,000 offered by Lawton real estate dealers at the convention or the 250 scholarships by the Lawton Chamber of Commerce exclusively. Neither did the university trustees agree to invest dollar for dollar with the people of Lawton in the building of the university.³⁰

The Lawton Chamber of Commerce did not give the security demanded by the university trustees within thirty days. Indeed, it was more than three months before the committee of the Lawton Chamber of Commerce and the university trustees met again on June 30, 1908. Several intervening events had drained support away from the Baptist university project.

The first of these events came April 22, 1908, when State Representative J. Roy Williams introduced a bill in the Oklahoma Legislature providing for a district agricultural and mechanical college to be located in Lawton. The state legislature was contemplating the establishment of an agricultural school in each of the state Supreme Court Judicial Districts in anticipation of federal legislation appropriating the necessary funds.³¹

Williams' bill sought to locate the institution for the Fourth Supreme Court Judicial District at Lawton and have the commissioner of the land office set aside and withhold from sale a quarter section of

³⁰Ibid., pp. 29-30.

³¹Lawton Constitution-Democrat, April 23, 1908.

the public buildings land or a quarter section of equal value belonging to any other fund. The bill also called for an appropriation of \$50,000 for the erection of the building and an appropriation of \$5,000 to purchase the furnishings.³²

Despite the support of the Lawton people for the bill, it failed to receive passage. Nevertheless the state legislature did pass a bill on May 20, creating "Six district agricultural schools of a secondary grade for instruction in agriculture and mechanics and allied branches in each of the Supreme Court Judicial Districts."³³ On the same day Governor Haskell approved the bill.³⁴ The bill also stated that "for each school established no less than eighty acres of land would be provided without cost to the state."³⁵ A group of Lawton businessmen began working with the Chamber of Commerce to purchase 160 acres of land two miles west of the city for presentation to the State of Oklahoma "as an inducement of the state's locating the school at Lawton."³⁶

The next day the second disturbing event occurred. J. Walter Ross of Walters visited Lawton and called for Lawton to bid for the location of the proposed Presbyterian University. The Southern Presbytery, meeting at Oklahoma City, had proposed a new university for young men for which the Presbyterian Church had promised to spend \$200,000 in buildings and equipment.³⁷ Ross and the Reverend Mr. Strong, pastor of the Walters

³²Ibid.

³³Bulletin, Cameron State Agricultural College, 1958-1959, p. 9.

³⁴The Daily Oklahoman (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), May 21, 1908, p. 1.

³⁵Bulletin, Cameron State Agricultural College, 1958-1959, p. 9.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Lawton Constitution-Democrat, May 21, 1908.

Presbyterian Church, made up a majority of the committee of three appointed by the Southern Presbytery which had instructions to make immediate location of the university.³⁸ Durant had already made a bid for the location, while Oklahoma City and Chickasha were preparing propositions.³⁹ Thus during the more than ninety days which elapsed between meetings of the Lawton Chamber of Commerce committee and the full Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist University, the attentions and interests of Lawton were diverted from the single Baptist opportunity to a multiplicity of possible colleges.

When the Oklahoma Baptist University Trustees met with the committee of the Lawton Chamber of Commerce on June 30, 1908, Senator Thomas and the Reverend M. D. Early stated that the Lawton Chamber of Commerce was not ready to offer the security called for in the preliminary contract of March 24, 1908. Thomas and Early then asked for a delay until July 10, which was granted by the trustees. The university trustees voted to continue their subcommittee in order to pass on the sufficiency of the security to be offered. Further they voted that if by July 10, the citizens of Lawton had failed to provide the promised security the trustees' chairman would publish the fact and announce that since Lawton had not complied, its bid for the university had been rejected.⁴⁰

On July 27, the time extension having expired, the Lawton Chamber of Commerce committee and the university trustees' subcommittee met in Oklahoma City. The Lawton delegation asked if the university trustees subcommittee insisted upon a "joint and several bond in the sum of

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1908, pp. 30-31.

\$115,000" and if they insisted that "said bond shall contain a provision that if default shall be made in any payment of said installment or any part thereof that the whole sum of \$115,000 shall thereupon become due and payable." The trustees' subcommittee gave an affirmative answer to both questions, explaining to the Lawton Chamber of Commerce committee that 254 separate obligations as security for the fulfillment of Lawton's bid was insufficient because it would take separate enforcement action on each obligation that might be defaulted. The university trustees contended that in case of failure in the payments it would cause a breach of contract on the part of the university trustees with the architect and the contractor engaged in the erection of university buildings. Finally the university trustees reminded the Lawton people that Lawton had made a cash bid, and the university trustees' subcommittee had only agreed upon the payment in installments as a favor to Lawton; the subcommittee of the university trustees was bound to demand such security as would insure prompt payment of the installments. Nevertheless, despite the subcommittee's explanations, the Lawton Chamber of Commerce, refusing an extension of time, withdrew their proposition; thus ended Lawton's opportunity to receive the university and the trustees' opportunity to establish their new university before the 1908 convention met.⁴¹

Meanwhile, the failure to locate and establish the new university allowed the Oklahoma Baptist College at Blackwell to function free of strong competition in many parts of the state. The 1908 financial report of Oklahoma Baptist College revealed that most of the college's support came from northwest Oklahoma and southern Kansas. During the school year of 1907-08 Oklahoma Baptist College had been under the leadership of Professor F. E. Smith as Chairman of the Faculty. The enrollment

⁴¹Ibid., p. 32.

had risen to a new high of 122, including twenty-two ministerial students and seven missionary volunteers. The college had held its own financially. On September 4, 1908, the Board of Trustees had unanimously elected Dr. J. R. Jester of Atlanta, Georgia, as president and financial secretary, although he did not arrive on the field until after the start of the 1908-09 school year.⁴²

Meanwhile the Hastings Baptist College, which despite its name was only an academy, had begun the school year of 1907-08 with twenty-nine students and had seen the enrollment increase to near one hundred. Nevertheless, at the close of the first term the Reverend C. R. Hairfield, pastor of the Hastings Baptist Church, had resigned as head of the school and R. A. Rushing was elected to succeed him. This school, under the joint ownership and management of Mullins and Comanche County Baptist Associations, reported having an Executive Board consisting of twelve members who lived in southwest Oklahoma. The sponsoring associations also had set up a three member Executive Committee, a building committee, and a College Improvement Committee. The campus contained a three story brick building with a full basement on five acres of land.⁴³

The Board of Trustees for the still homeless new university made a full report to the convention, which met at the First Baptist Church, Muskogee, from October 29 through 31, 1908. The trustees referred the entire matter of locating the university back to the convention without making any recommendations.⁴⁴

The convention's report on Christian education reflected disappointment in these words,

⁴²Ibid., pp. 21-22.

⁴³Dyer, "History of Southwest Baptist College."

⁴⁴Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1908, p. 33.

It is with a feeling of awe at the opportunity and of dismay at the actual condition of Baptist education in our fair state, we recommend earnest thought and prayer concerning our immediate duty.⁴⁵

The Educational Commission echoed the need for "immediate duty" by urging "immediate action" in the matter of locating the university.⁴⁶ Further delay would be ruinous to the hopes of the convention. The commission's report called for the Baptists of the state to make ample provision for the Christian education of their children so that they might take their places in the very forefront of social, educational, political, and governmental life.⁴⁷

Moreover, the Educational Commission deplored "the seeming indifference of our Baptist people in distinctive Baptist educational work." The commission stated their belief that no one was as able to educate Baptist children as Baptists, and that Oklahoma Baptists needed conviction as to the importance of the truths which were "peculiar to Baptists." The commission furthermore expressed their belief that "God's saints" taught more by their lives than by their lips, and that Baptist children should

...be led into the light and knowledge with the growing conviction that God is the creator and superintendent of all and has a right to be heard in the counsels of men and all things which pertain to civilization and government.⁴⁸

The Educational Commission also reported that Oklahoma Baptist College at Blackwell was doing splendid work with its present building and equipment. Nevertheless, the commission still maintained that the

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 35.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 34.

⁴⁸Ibid.

college facilities at Blackwell were wholly inadequate for the opportunities. In addition, the commission reported that Indian University and Tahlequah Academy had been consolidated during the past year by the Home Mission Society of New York, with the Tahlequah teaching force moved to Indian University. However, the commission regarded the facilities at Bacone as wholly inadequate.⁴⁹ Therefore, the commission made the recommendation that the matter of locating the new university should be given to a "wise and conservative committee of fifteen members," which should act "without reference to the interest of any one location."⁵⁰

The Educational Commission recommended the election of a seven-member Educational Commission whose duties would be to develop Oklahoma Baptists along educational lines and to foster the interests of all the schools. The commission went further to recommend to the Baptist associations of the state that they establish Baptist academies of high grade that would be equal or superior to the state high schools. The commission suggested that the academies would be "large feeders" of the Baptist university proposed by the convention. Nevertheless, the commission's report made no mention of Hastings Baptist College, which still operated under the control and auspices of the Mullins and Comanche County Baptist Associations.⁵¹

The convention acted on the Educational Commission's recommendation, increasing the Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist University from eleven to fifteen members. These went right to work, meeting in McAlester on November 13, 1908, to organize. They elected G. M. Hairrell of Holdenville, president, Robert Hamilton of Watonga, vice president, H. Coulter

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 33.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 35.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 36.

Todd of Oklahoma City, secretary, and I. B. Oldham of Muskogee, treasurer. After designating Oklahoma City as the domicile of the board, a resolution was adopted that the board advertise for sealed bids from the various towns and cities in the state desiring to secure the location of the university. All bids were to be in the hands of the secretary on or before February 2, 1909, at 9:00 a.m. The board then adjourned subject to the call of the president.⁵²

On February 4, 1909, the university trustees met in Oklahoma City to consider bids. Guthrie and Shawnee offered a campus of forty acres and \$100,000. Sulphur offered one-fourth interest in 640 acres of land which they valued at \$200,000. There were three bids from Oklahoma City, but the board considered only two. Mr. I. M. Putnam of Oklahoma City offered an undivided interest in six hundred acres of land which would include a sixty acre campus, an additional 140 acres or \$100,000 in lieu of the 140 acres, plus \$100,000 by the Chamber of Commerce of Oklahoma City guaranteed by Putnam. The other Oklahoma City offer was made by Mr. J. L. Francis who bid \$30,000 in cash, and a 50 acre campus, and one hundred acres of land.⁵³

On March 16, 1909, the trustees met in Oklahoma City and visited the two sites there, plus sites at Guthrie, Shawnee, and Sulphur. The final session of this meeting was held in the Artesian Hotel in Sulphur, where the voting of the trustees took place. On the first ballot the vote was ten for the Putnam site and two for Shawnee. On the second ballot the vote was made unanimous for the Putnam site in Oklahoma City, which was provisionally accepted. A subcommittee consisting of H. C. Todd and

⁵²Ibid., 1909, p. 76.

⁵³Ibid.

Fred Brasted of Oklahoma City and George McKinnis of Shawnee was appointed to close details of the contract with Mr. Putnam. The Board of Trustees did not meet again until October 20, 1909.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, the Baptist college at Blackwell remained free of competition because of the continued failure to establish the new university. During these two years Oklahoma Baptist College prospered at Blackwell and reached its zenith under the presidency of Dr. John Robert Jester. In the fall of 1908 Dr. Jester had come to Oklahoma Baptist College from Georgia, where he had been secretary of the Georgia Baptist Education Board. Dr. Jester worked hard during the 1908-09 school year, and the enrollment at the college, which had been increasing for several years, reached a new high of 150. The average attendance was also higher.⁵⁵ J. C. Stalcup of Oklahoma City, Corresponding Secretary for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, was present at Oklahoma Baptist College's spring commencement, pledging his allegiance to the college.⁵⁶ Mr. Stalcup's support was important because he held the highest elective office of the state convention and was general superintendent of all its work. However, educational matters were not his direct concern nor under his direct authority.

Dr. Jester and the college trustees were much encouraged by the work of the 1908-09 school year and felt that the college had an exceedingly bright future in store. The crisis was passed, and increased attendance, increased zeal, and increased support would be the rule for the next term.⁵⁷ In the latter part of June Dr. Jester invited a committee of

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵The Blackwell Times-Record (Oklahoma), May 27, 1909.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

Blackwell citizens to visit the college to see for themselves the improvements it needed. Following the visit the committee agreed to go before the citizens in order to raise \$1,500 by donations. By July 1 about \$1,000 had been subscribed.⁵⁸ Dr. Jester and the college trustees felt the improvements were needed in order to accommodate the fall enrollment, which they expected to reach three hundred.⁵⁹ By the beginning of the fall term of 1909 the college campus had undergone many improvements. The college building had been thoroughly renovated from roof to basement. Several rooms had been remodeled, three small rooms having been converted into one large library and reading room. The grounds had been harrowed and seeded, the trees trimmed, and sidewalks built. In addition, when the fall term of the college opened on September 14, 1909, the students were met by an enlarged faculty of fourteen members.⁶⁰

Meanwhile at Hastings the Reverend R. A. Rushing had resigned as president of Hastings Baptist College at the end of the 1908-09 term, and the Executive Board had sought J. M. Dyer of Ryan as his replacement.⁶¹ Dyer had a house in Hastings and had taught there from 1905 to 1908.⁶² Nevertheless, before Dyer could accept the post he required the Executive Board to take a census of the number of homes and people within the incorporated limits of Hastings and radius of one mile surrounding the town.⁶³ When the census revealed 1,107 people living

⁵⁸Ibid., July 1, 1909.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid., September 9, 1909.

⁶¹Dyer, "History of Southwest Baptist College."

⁶²J. M. Dyer, Waurika, Oklahoma, April 22, 1957, letter to J. M. Gaskin, Heavener, Oklahoma, in author's possession.

⁶³Dyer, "History of Southwest Baptist College."

within the area described above, Dyer accepted the position.⁶⁴ The Executive Board changed the name from Hastings Baptist College to Southwest Baptist College, and the school term opened September 7, 1909, with a faculty of six. The faculty included the pastor of the Hastings Baptist Church, the Reverend C. R. Hairfield, his wife, President Dyer, Mrs. Dyer, Miss Helen Savage, and Miss Dora Matthews.⁶⁵

Meanwhile, Dr. Jester had decided to resign the presidency of Oklahoma Baptist College to accept the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Shawnee. Dr. Jester gave three reasons for his resignation. First, he felt that his life's great work was that of a pastor, and he had a definite conviction to return. His year at Oklahoma Baptist College, while a digression, was his response to the need for a heroic effort to save the existence of the college. Second, Dr. Jester indicated that he had spent four years in "strenuous denominational service" which hurt his health. In addition, he desired to be able to spend more time with his family. Dr. Jester felt that at Shawnee he could secure a new "vantage ground" for rendering service to Oklahoma Baptist College. The success of every denominational institution, Dr. Jester went on, depended upon support from the strong centers of the state, of which Shawnee was one. Recalling that he had gone to Oklahoma Baptist College to establish the college in the confidence of the community and the people of the state, Dr. Jester apparently felt he had succeeded. He envisioned a college enrollment of three hundred students in the "very near future" and stated that the college was on far better financial ground than at any time in its history.⁶⁶

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶The Blackwell Times-Record, September 30, 1909.

On September 29, 1909, the Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist College elected as president the Reverend J. H. Moore, A. B., Th.D., of Kentucky. However, Dr. Jester agreed to remain at the college until Dr. Moore's arrival.⁶⁷ During the interval, Dr. Jester succeeded in getting Mr. J. H. Robinson of Wakita to deed a half-section of land valued at \$10,000 to the college for the purpose of building a girls' dormitory. The conditions were that Mr. Robinson be given room and board by the college as long as he lived and receive an additional \$2,000 in cash.⁶⁸

On October 20, 1909, the Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist University met again in Oklahoma City. At that meeting the committee on incorporation submitted their report, which acceded to I. M. Putnam's demands that only one-half of the Board of Trustees be elected by the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, the other half to be chosen by Putnam himself, and that only three-fourths of the trustees must be Baptists. Following this report, disagreement developed among the university trustees. The majority wanted all of the members of the Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist University to be members of Baptist churches and elected by the convention. The report was not accepted. At Chickasha on November 8, 1909, and at subsequent meetings there the trustees failed to reach a unanimous agreement. Therefore, they reported their failure to the convention of 1909, but requested that the whole question again be referred to themselves.⁶⁹

The 1909 report of Oklahoma Baptist College was presented by the college's new president, Dr. J. H. Moore. The report blamed the

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸The Blackwell Daily News (Oklahoma), February 17, 1911.

⁶⁹Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1909, p. 76.

enrollment of only 120 students on the "severe drought of the past summer." However, the college had 30 ministerial students and eight missionary volunteers enrolled. Following the report the college received \$1,868 in cash and pledges. This was by far the greatest support that Oklahoma Baptist College had received from the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma since the convention was formed in 1906.⁷⁰

The report on Christian education mentioned that Indian University had been renamed for its founder, A. C. Bacone.⁷¹ Although Bacone College was actually doing two years of college work, it received as little attention as Southwest Baptist College at Hastings, which was really only an academy. Nevertheless, Bacone College was under the control of the Home Mission Society of New York and out of reach of the control of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. Therefore, the state convention, although jointly aligned with Northern and Southern Baptist conventions, gave Bacone almost no official support. Southwest Baptist College, on the other hand, received little mention at the convention for two reasons. First, it was under the control of Mullins and Comanche County Baptist Associations. Second, it was doing only the work of an academy. Therefore, neither institution aroused the interest of the convention, which was absorbed with the problem of establishing a new university under its complete control.

After the failure of Putnam's proposition the trustees, eager to locate the university and finding no fault with Shawnee's bid, accepted sixty acres of land and a promised cash bonus of \$100,000 from that city

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 54.

⁷¹Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1909, p. 76.

sometime shortly after the 1909 convention.⁷² By February 10, 1910, the convention succeeded in setting up a corporation for the Baptist University of Oklahoma under its complete control to be located at Shawnee.⁷³ The articles of incorporation for the university set up a twenty-four member board of trustees to be elected for staggered terms. Each member must be a member of a Baptist church within the state of Oklahoma, and the board would be elected by the next regular meeting (1910) of the convention. Thereafter, at each regular annual meeting, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma would elect six trustees for a term of four years to fill expiring terms. The articles of incorporation also required the presidents of the university and each of its department heads to be members of Baptist churches.⁷⁴ On February 28, 1910, the university trustees elected W. P. Blake, W. S. Wylie, E. A. Wesson, J. A. Scott, and George E. McKennis to a committee for the purposes of employing an architect, adopting plans, and letting the contract for the erection of the administration building. They also elected W. S. Wylie Educational Secretary.⁷⁵ Thus after three years of waiting the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma found a home for its proposed new university.

⁷²Ibid., 1910, p. 51.

⁷³Minutes, Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist University, February 10, 1910.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Minutes, Baptist General Convention, 1910, p. 51.

CHAPTER IV

CORRELATION OR COMPETITION 1910-1913

In spite of the fact that the new Baptist university had been located at Shawnee by February 10, 1910, the Educational Commission of the convention gave its support at the same time to an expansionist program at Oklahoma Baptist College. In a meeting at the White Temple Baptist Church in Oklahoma City the Educational Commission endorsed a plan presented by President J. H. Moore and the trustees of Oklahoma Baptist College for the erection of \$50,000 worth of new buildings on the college campus.¹ The proposed buildings were a girls' dormitory, a science hall, and a gymnasium.²

At a meeting the latter part of March, 1910, the Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist College announced their determination to pursue an active statewide campaign for the support of the college. Shortly afterwards, Dr. Moore went to Chicago, Illinois, seeking funds for the college from a philanthropist named Dr. Pearson and returned from the trip expressing confidence that the college would receive funds from Pearson.³ He also told the people of Blackwell that he met old friends in Chicago who gave him enthusiastic support and encouragement and that he felt certain that the college would get some funds from the Rockefeller

¹Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1910, p. 53.

²The Blackwell Times-Record, March 24, 1910.

³Ibid., April 7, 1910.

Foundation.⁴

Despite Moore's golden dreams the funds from philanthropic sources did not materialize, and support in Oklahoma for the college began rapidly diminishing. In June, 1910, Dr. Moore, faculty members, and students began a canvass of the state in a campaign to raise the \$50,000 necessary for the building program.⁵ The plan of the statewide canvass was to take the "working force of the school back to its population."⁶ They expected to present the merits of Blackwell and of Oklahoma Baptist College to the Baptists and other citizens of the state in a better way than ever.⁷ The canvass failed miserably because of growing sentiment for the university which had been located at Shawnee.⁸ Therefore, when the college opened in September, 1910, the girls' dormitory, the only new building under construction, was not yet completed, and other arrangements had to be made for housing for girls. In addition, the old boys' dormitory would not accommodate all the men students needing housing.⁹

To make matters worse, after such glowing hopes had been dashed to pieces during the summer, the college also faced a lawsuit brought by the heirs of J. H. Robinson for the recovery of the half-section of land Robinson had deeded to the college for the erection of the dormitory. The heirs contended that Mr. Robinson was not mentally competent to transact business at the time he deeded the land to Oklahoma Baptist College.¹⁰

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., June 16, 1910.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Oscar L. Gibson, personal interview with the author at Stillwater, Oklahoma, May 8, 1961.

⁹The Blackwell Times-Record, September 1, 1910.

¹⁰The Blackwell Daily News, February 17, 1911.

By the time the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma held its annual meeting in mid-November, 1910, Oklahoma Baptist College had succeeded in raising only \$2,320.28 of its operating fund by contributions from churches and individuals. The college had also sold the men's dormitory for \$3,037.50 and borrowed \$17,513 during the year. Furthermore, the convention broke its custom and took no offering for the college.¹¹

With the university located at Shawnee, the educational work of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma entered into a new phase. Both the Educational Commission and the Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist University recommended the establishment of a system of correlated schools at the annual meeting in 1910. The university trustees stated that a general correlation system of Baptist schools in Oklahoma was essential to the success of the denomination. The university trustees also stated that "Such a system would be incomplete without a university at its head." The trustees then recommended to the convention in their report that the powers of the Educational Commission be broadened to allow them to cooperate with the university trustees in the general supervision of the Oklahoma Baptist University.¹²

The Educational Commission in their report to the 1910 convention warned against blunders of "ill-advised educational endeavors" such as those which had wasted time and money for Baptists in other states and called for unity of purpose in Oklahoma. However, the Educational Commission gave its hearty support to Oklahoma Baptist College at Blackwell and endorsed the college's plan to raise \$50,000 for the proposed building program by \$1 subscriptions. The commission felt that the best way to

¹¹Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1910, pp. 47-49.

¹²Ibid., p. 52.

develop support for Baptist institutions of higher learning was ultimately to plant academies in every section of the state. These academies would prepare Baptist boys and girls under Baptist influences to go to the denomination's "colleges and furnish material for the Baptist university." The commission felt that this plan could best be implemented by a uniform curriculum for all the academies and colleges arranged and adopted by the Educational Commission in harmony with accredited standards. Nevertheless, the Educational Commission recommended that no academies should be located except by the approval of the convention.¹³

The Educational Commission recommended that the convention elect an Educational Commission of nine members instructed and empowered to correlate all the educational institutions under the control of the convention and to confer with cities and communities in regard to the establishment of academies. However, like the Educational Commission elected at the convention in 1906, this commission of 1909 had already undertaken action toward correlating the educational institutions within the state and establishing new academies. It had sought unsuccessfully to bring Bacone College (formerly Indian University) under the control of the state convention. The American Baptist Home Mission Society of New York had refused to relinquish control of Bacone College. On the other hand, the Educational Commission had succeeded in getting the trustees of the Southwest Baptist College at Hastings to offer their institution to the convention to be correlated with the denominational schools. Furthermore, the Educational Commission had already received and entertained a proposition from the city of Hobart in regard to the possible establishment of a Baptist "school" at that city.¹⁴

¹³Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁴Ibid.

The Educational Secretary for the university had received cash and pledges of \$3,000 during the past year, and the Educational Commission asked for power to employ an Educational Secretary who would be the representative of the educational interests of the state. The Educational Commission wanted the power to define the Educational Secretary's duties, arrange his salary, and designate the location of his headquarters.¹⁵

Following these reports, the convention empowered the Educational Commission to correlate the schools and elect and employ an Educational Secretary. Southwest Baptist College at Hastings was accepted into the correlated system by the convention, but as an academy.¹⁶ It appears that the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma was genuinely attempting to bring about cooperation between the various institutions and lessen the competition.

However, before the Educational Commission could organize and formulate plans for the inauguration of a correlated system, the Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist College resolved to take drastic action. Having failed to win the support of the convention for their plans for expanding the campus at Blackwell, and having failed to receive from the convention any financial aid whatsoever, the college trustees met November 21, 1910, at the Lee Hickins Hotel in Oklahoma City, and voted to move Oklahoma Baptist College to Oklahoma City provided that satisfactory arrangements could be made. They also voted that the property at Blackwell be maintained by the denomination as an academy. The college trustees justified their action on the ostensible grounds that under wise management Oklahoma Baptist College had outgrown its facilities and environment at Blackwell. The college trustees then voted to lay the matter before the

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 52-53.

¹⁶Ibid., 1911, p. 60.

Educational Commission at as early a date as possible.¹⁷

The action of the trustees for Oklahoma Baptist College caused quick reaction in Blackwell. The Blackwell Commercial Club met November 28, 1910, and a committee was appointed to ascertain the rights of the Commercial Club in regard to the property and recommend action.¹⁸ This was necessary because on April 18, 1910, Dr. Moore as vice-president of the club had called a special meeting orally and without written notice and had obtained from the club the release of the restrictions which that club had placed upon the property of the college in 1905.¹⁹ The Commercial Club met again the following night, November 29, to consider Dr. Moore's letter of resignation. However, the club unanimously refused to accept his resignation.²⁰

In its December 1 issue the editor of the Blackwell Times-Record accused the preachers and educators of the convention of playing politics with the "school." The editor also expressed the sentiment that the Baptist denomination would suffer by the move as much as or more than the city of Blackwell would. Indeed, the whole matter of moving the school was more unfair to Dr. Moore and his associates than to Blackwell.²¹ This last statement reveals that obviously the Blackwell editor did not know at that time the extent of Dr. Moore's involvement in the affair.

The directors of the Blackwell Commercial Club met on Saturday morning, December 10, 1910, to hear the report by the committee appointed

¹⁷Minutes, Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist College, November 21, 1910.

¹⁸Minutes, Blackwell Commercial Club, November 28, 1910.

¹⁹The Blackwell Daily News, February 4, 1911.

²⁰Minutes, Blackwell Commercial Club, November 29, 1910.

²¹The Blackwell Times-Record, December 1, 1910.

to investigate the club's legal rights in the college property. The Commercial Club was informed by Mr. J. E. Curran, an attorney, that the committee had no report to make as such. However, Mr. J. S. Burger reviewed briefly the history of the Commercial Club and the title of Oklahoma Baptist College and stated that in his judgment the action of the club on April 18 and September 17, 1910, surrendered and released all of the club's title to the college, if the club had been dealt with fairly or a fraud had not been perpetrated. Mr. D. S. Rose, another member of the committee, stated that in his judgment the college had absolute title, but he thought the deed might be set aside on the grounds of "lack of consideration."²²

Following the comments on the title of the college Mr. Schoenwald made the motion that the directors of the Commercial Club request the Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist College to depose Dr. Moore as president of the college and to secure a president who would work in harmony with the citizens of Blackwell and for the best interests of the college. Mr. Barrett seconded the motion, but after remarks by most of the committee members the motion was withdrawn and the meeting adjourned.²³

The December 15, 1910, issue of The Blackwell Times-Record found the editor indignant over the reasons expressed by J. A. Sutton, a college trustee, for the proposed removal of the college from Blackwell.²⁴ Sutton had stated the reasons which the Board of Trustees included in their resolution passed on November 21, 1910, in Oklahoma City. Those reasons were that the college had outgrown its facilities, its location, and its

²²Minutes, Blackwell Commercial Club, December 10, 1910.

²³Ibid.

²⁴The Blackwell Times-Record, December 5, 1910.

environs.²⁵ However, Sutton had elaborated by stating that the college had progressed to such an extent that the city of Blackwell was too small to accommodate it.²⁶ The Blackwell editor acknowledged the right of the board to move the college from Blackwell, but charged that they had "no right to cast unwarranted aspersions upon us by so doing."²⁷

While the Blackwell editor was lamenting the possible movement of the college to Oklahoma City, the editor of The Baptist Worker, published at Mangum, Oklahoma, was praising the proposal. The Reverend A. Nunnery said that the majority of the students at Oklahoma Baptist College were overjoyed when the news of the proposed move was announced in the chapel, and had been giving yells for "Oklahoma Baptist College at Oklahoma City." The Reverend Nunnery stated that the location would be much better because it could be reached from all parts of the state by rail and would be near the center of the state.²⁸

While the controversy over the proposed removal of Oklahoma Baptist College from Blackwell moved at a quickening pace, the Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist University met in December, 1910, and accepted the resignation of their Educational Secretary, W. S. Wiley. Wiley had taken a position as a field secretary of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. In Wiley's place the university trustees named the Reverend E. D. Cameron, a former state superintendent of schools, to assume the work as soon as he could arrange to get on the field. At this December meeting the trustees also adopted plans for the erection and

²⁵Minutes, Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist College, November 21, 1910.

²⁶The Blackwell Times-Record, December 15, 1910.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸The Baptist Worker (Mangum, Oklahoma), December 21, 1910.

furnishing of the dormitory and approved a budget for the expenses of the year. They decided that the university should open in September, 1911, so that they could present the "school" more fully to the people of the state. February 22, 1911, was set as the date for the laying of the cornerstone at the university.²⁹

The year of 1911, however, quickly brought more troubles to Oklahoma Baptist College. On January 5, 1911, the directors of the Blackwell Commercial Club met and authorized their president to institute a suit in the name of the Blackwell Commercial Club against the college in order to protect the club's interest and those of the citizens of Blackwell in the college property.³⁰ Four days later the Commercial Club met and accepted Dr. Moore's resignation as a director.³¹

Three days later, on January 12, 1911, the Commercial Club met again to discuss the college difficulty. After a general informal discussion, a motion was made and seconded that the president appoint a committee to write the college trustees and other members of the Educational Commission relative to the proposed college removal. Then A. G. West announced that the college trustees would meet in Blackwell the following Tuesday, January 17, and that they would reportedly meet a committee from the Commercial Club; the club instructed the president to appoint such a committee. The president appointed the entire Board of Directors to be that committee.³² Exact details of the meeting are unknown. However, it is reasonable to assume that the results were not satisfactory to the

²⁹Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1911, p. 56.

³⁰Minutes, Blackwell Commercial Club, January 5, 1911.

³¹Ibid., January 9, 1911.

³²Ibid., January 12, 1911.

Commercial Club, since their directors met on the following Monday, January 23, and voted unanimously to instruct their attorneys to begin suit at once against the college in order to protect the club's interest in the property.³³

The suit was filed in the District Court of Kay County at Blackwell on February 3, 1911. J. S. Burger, D. S. Rose, and J. E. Curran were attorneys for the Commercial Club.³⁴ The brief of the suit, consisting of twenty-seven typewritten pages, recounted the history of Oklahoma Baptist College relative to the suit.³⁵ The brief accused Dr. Moore of boasting shortly after his arrival in Blackwell in November, 1909, that the college would be liberally supported by large gifts and endowments from eastern philanthropists.³⁶ They accused Moore of flattering the city and college "with the purpose, design, and intention of ingratiating himself into gaining the confidence of the members of the plaintiff." Whereupon, he became a member of the Blackwell Commercial Club on January 4, 1910, and a director and vice-president the next day.³⁷

The attorneys moved that the court enjoin the Oklahoma Baptist College Corporation from disposing of the property in any manner until the court had determined the issues of the case. Furthermore, the attorneys for the plaintiff charged that Moore in his official capacity as vice president of the Commercial Club had illegally called the meeting of April 18, 1910, which had released the restrictions on the deed to the college property imposed in 1905. Therefore, the attorneys for the plaintiff

³³Ibid., January 23, 1911.

³⁴The Blackwell Daily News, February 4, 1911.

³⁵The Daily Oklahoman, February 4, 1911, p. 3.

³⁶The Blackwell Daily News, February 4, 1911.

³⁷Ibid.

argued that the restrictions placed on the property in 1905 were still binding.³⁸

The day before the above suit was filed the Educational Commission met in Oklahoma City and mapped out a plan for the correlating of the Baptist educational institutions in the state. First, the university at Shawnee was to be recognized and constituted as the central and head institution. All the schools "fostered" by the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma now or in the future were to recognize the university as the head of the correlated system. Second, the university was to adopt and maintain a curriculum that would be up to the standard recognized by similar institutions in other states. Third, the several schools of the correlated system would maintain their curricula up to the university's standard. Fourth, no "school" would be allowed to launch an independent campaign for funds, but all "monies" were to be raised through the Educational Commission or by their sanction. Fifth, the several presidents of the "schools" thus correlated were ex officio educational evangelists of the Educational Commission and were authorized to collect monies for the several schools as they might be directed by the Educational Commission. Sixth, all property rights of the several schools in the correlated system were to be vested in the boards of trustees of the schools and to be held in trust for the convention by the said boards of trustees. The trustees of each institution were to have complete control and management of all internal affairs of institutions over which they were appointed, but they were not to launch building enterprises for which the denominations would be asked to contribute unless they first secured the permission of the Educational Commission. Last, the several correlated "schools" were to be asked to make their charters conform to the above

³⁸Ibid.

articles of correlation. At the same meeting the Educational Commission attempted unsuccessfully to appoint an Educational Secretary.³⁹

On February 4, 1911, the Robinson suit against Oklahoma Baptist College was decided in favor of the college. However, the problems connected with the removal proposition continued. The Educational Commission had selected a committee composed of Dr. W. D. Moorer of Oklahoma City, E. D. Cameron of Shawnee, and the Reverend R. A. Rushing of Thomas to meet with the trustees of Oklahoma Baptist College and the Blackwell Commercial Club to discuss the strained relations between the trustees and the Commercial Club.⁴⁰

During the time when the suit was pending, the Reverend L. W. Marks of Oklahoma City, a college trustee for many years, met unofficially with a number of Blackwell citizens at the Commercial Club room. Insisting that the denomination in Oklahoma was never more loyal to the college, Marks pointed out that the debt incurred by the building and furnishing of the dormitory was so large as to raise doubts that it could be cleared by the denomination. Therefore he called upon Blackwell to help alleviate the situation.⁴¹

By the middle of February the tension in Blackwell eased somewhat and confidence in Oklahoma Baptist College began to be restored.⁴² At the same time Oklahoma Baptist University marked an advance with the ceremonies attending the laying of the cornerstone of the administration building.⁴³ The Educational Secretary for the university trustees, the

³⁹Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1911, pp. 60-61

⁴⁰The Blackwell Times-Record, February 9, 1911.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., February 16, 1911.

⁴³Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1911, p. 56.

Reverend E. D. Cameron, then resigned to accept a pastoral charge. After this change the work toward developing the university campus at Shawnee proceeded slowly and unspectacularly.⁴⁴

On March 7, 1911, the editor of The Blackwell Times-Record wrote that the Commercial Club was willing to help in any way it possibly could to get the college out of its financial crisis.⁴⁵ He indicated that the agitation about moving the college from Blackwell to Oklahoma City was unfortunate and untimely, and had caused many unbecoming and hurtful things to be said on all sides.⁴⁶ He announced that President J. H. Moore had presented his resignation effective at the close of the term and that it had been accepted.⁴⁷ A committee had been chosen by the college trustees to elect Moore's successor.⁴⁸ One week later, on March 14, 1911, the trustees met and did exactly as the editor said they already had. They accepted Moore's resignation and appointed a committee of three to confer with the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention for selecting a new president.⁴⁹

The day before this meeting of the trustees, the Commercial Club met and voted to dismiss its suit against the college on these conditions: first, the trustees were to agree to maintain the college at Blackwell; second, the college was to obtain an additional loan not to exceed \$12,000 and spend the money to pay existing debts only; third, the payment of

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 58-58.

⁴⁵The Blackwell Times-Record, March 7, 1911.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Minutes, Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist College, March 14, 1911.

these debts was to be handled by a committee of three composed of one member of the Commercial Club, one member of the college trustees, and the college treasurer, V. G. Haggaman.⁵⁰ However, when the trustees met the next day they did not vote to borrow \$12,000, nor did they ever do so.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the suit against the college was dropped and everything remained quiet at Blackwell through the remainder of the school term although the financial conditions of the college worsened.⁵²

Meanwhile a rival institution had come into being with the creation of a Board of Trustees for Carey College in Oklahoma City, to have the financial backing of I. M. Putnam. The pastor of the First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City was the board's president.⁵³ On April 22, 1911, Dr. J. H. Moore, president of Carey College, announced the selection of a faculty of several staff members from Oklahoma Baptist College. These included the professor of Philosophy and Education and vice president, F. Erdmann Smith; professor of English, Luther Weeks; professor of Bible, Harrison Parker Crego; academy assistant, W. T. Short; and four members of the fine arts department.⁵⁴

The University Board of Trustees met during April and elected Dr. John Hart Scott as Dean, directing him to attend to the university's educational and financial campaign during the months of April, May, and June. The university trustees recommended Dr. Scott to the churches as an

⁵⁰Minutes, Blackwell Commercial Club, March 13, 1911.

⁵¹Minutes, Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist College, March 14, 1911.

⁵²Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1911, p. 54.

⁵³W. L. Stigler, "A History of the Institutions of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma" (unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary: Fort Worth, Texas, 1945), p. 62.

⁵⁴The Blackwell Times-Record, April 27, 1911.

educator of high standing who had proven himself strong in school management.⁵⁵

Meanwhile in April the Educational Commission still minus the services of an Educational Secretary, asked the Reverend A. J. Holt, president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and the Educational Commission to direct the campaign and disburse the funds raised to the several "schools" in the correlated system. Dr. Holt agreed for a remuneration of \$100 per month and expenses. J. B. Rounds agreed to assist Holt for his expenses only.⁵⁶

In the latter part of May, 1911, Dr. A. E. Baten accepted the presidency of Oklahoma Baptist College, and on June 8, the day after the closing of the spring term, the Educational Commission met with the college trustees at Blackwell.⁵⁷ The commission advised the trustees to borrow \$3,000 and pay it to the teachers, who were owed \$5,000.⁵⁸ The trustees were unable to borrow the money except by making personal notes, which they were reluctant to do. However, the commission assured the trustees that if they would borrow on notes to mature in December that a collection would be taken at the meeting of the convention in November which would pay off the notes.⁵⁹ The Baptists of Blackwell then borrowed \$1,500 and the Commercial Club another \$1,500, so that the teachers were paid the \$3,000.⁶⁰

⁵⁵Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1911, p. 56.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 61.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 62.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 52.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 53.

⁶⁰Ibid.

The summer financial canvass for education planned by the Educational Commission did not begin until the last Sunday in May. The delay was due to several reasons. First, it was felt that May was an unfavorable month, following as it did the "roundup" in April for home and foreign missions. Second, Dr. Holt had to attend the Southern Baptist Convention in Jacksonville, Florida, in May.⁶¹ Moreover, the conditions of Oklahoma Baptist College and Oklahoma Baptist University made their immediate futures uncertain.⁶² The Educational Commission had set a minimum goal of \$4,500 to help the "correlated schools" meet their expenses of the past year.⁶³ However, the pastors did not support the financial canvass, and the result was total failure. Only \$408.58 was collected, of which \$350 went for expenses.⁶⁴ Dr. Baten toured several western counties during August, reporting that he secured many new students for the college and met many old students who were returning, but he had received no funds.⁶⁵

At the same time the newest institution in the correlated system was having its share of financial problems. At the annual meeting of the Comanche County Baptist Association August 24-26, 1911, the messengers to the meeting were told that it was up to "the contiguous territory to support Southwest Baptist Academy in a peculiar way." The association then collected cash and pledges amounting to \$188.50 for the academy.⁶⁶

⁶¹Ibid., p. 61.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵The Blackwell Times-Record, August 24, 1911.

⁶⁶Minutes, Comanche County Baptist Association, 1911, p. 13.

The Educational Commission met at Hastings on August 25 in conjunction with the Comanche County Baptist Association and divided up the responsibility for providing representatives at the annual associational meetings between the educational institutions. Oklahoma Baptist University was given all the territory east of the Santa Fe Railroad, which ran north to south through the state. Southwest Baptist Academy was assigned six associations in their part of the state, including Comanche, Mullins, Chickasha, Caddo, Kiowa, and Tillman associations. Oklahoma Baptist College received the northwestern part of the state. These divisions tacitly recognized the sectional support for the various institutions, but the division was intended to last only until the annual meeting of the state convention in November.⁶⁷

In the fall of 1911 Carey College, formed in the spring under the presidency of Dr. J. H. Moore, entered the scene as an independent Baptist college. It opened in Oklahoma City with a faculty which included several Oklahoma Baptist College staff members from the previous year and a 5,000 volume library formerly belonging to the defunct Epworth University of Oklahoma City.⁶⁸ The college even had a football team.⁶⁹ However, the chief benefactor, Mr. I. M. Putnam, suffered financial reverses shortly after the college opened, and was forced to close its operations in less than a month.⁷⁰ Thirty-one students, two teachers including W. T. Short, and the five thousand book library were taken in by Oklahoma Baptist University, which had opened in September in Shawnee.⁷¹ The university's quarters were

⁶⁷Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1911, p. 13.

⁶⁸Stigler, p. 62.

⁶⁹The Daily Oklahoman, September 10, 1911, p. 8.

⁷⁰Stigler, p. 62.

⁷¹Ibid.

temporary, being the First Baptist Church, the Convention Hall, and the Shawnee High School. Dr. J. M. Carroll of San Marcos, Texas, was president, having been chosen by the trustees because of his remarkable success in Baptist educational work in Texas. He was expected to be an equally great success at Oklahoma Baptist University. Indeed, the university began with a student body of 150.⁷²

Meanwhile financial straits continued at Blackwell. On October 4, 1911, President Baten of Oklahoma Baptist College and several faculty members met with the Commercial Club and stated that the Amarillo National Life Insurance Company had offered to lend the college \$30,000. The mortgage of the above loan was to bear six per cent interest the first year, and four per cent the remainder of its life. However, the loan would be provided only on condition that the Baptists of the state write \$500,000 worth of life insurance policies with the Amarillo National Life Insurance Company. Dr. Baten said that another man whom he did not name would take a second mortgage for a \$5,000 loan. He then suggested that the Commercial Club agree to take care of \$100,000 worth of the life insurance policies, leaving the other \$400,000 to the rest of the state. The proposal was discussed and action deferred. Nothing was ever done about the proposition, and it was not presented to the next convention.⁷³

The gravity of the situation regarding Baptist educational activities was poignantly revealed to the messengers at the annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma in November, 1911. The trustees of Oklahoma Baptist College reported their struggle under a crushing debt of mortgages, notes, and open accounts to the amount of \$35,000. The report mentioned the promise made by the Educational Commission that the

⁷²Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1911, pp. 56-57.

⁷³Minutes, Blackwell Commercial Club, October 4, 1911.

convention would take a collection to pay the \$3,000 for the teachers' back pay which had been provided by personal notes of supporters of the college. The trustees made an urgent appeal for honoring this pledge and giving \$2,000 besides for "current expenses." Nevertheless, the convention took no offering for the college.⁷⁴

Oklahoma Baptist University Trustees reported their institution's opening in temporary quarters, and mentioned "the drought and many other complexities," including the "general depression" existing throughout the state as hindrances. Work on the university building had ceased. The company which had agreed to furnish the city's bonus to the university had instead had to deed the university the unsold lots. These, the university was selling in the hope of realizing the full \$100,000 bonus. The trustees recommended that the convention either provide an endowment for the university or make its salary budget a regular part of the convention budget.⁷⁵

In 1911 the Southwest Baptist Academy made its first report to the convention and stressed its status as a "correlated school."⁷⁶ The report recounted the history of the institution and described the campus and its facilities, including two farms comprising 163 acres.⁷⁷ The report estimated the value of the property and assets of the Academy at \$35,000, but its total indebtedness was \$14,937.⁷⁸ Twenty-five hundred dollars of the debt was secured by personal notes which had already

⁷⁴Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1911, pp. 52-54.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 55.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 58.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 59.

⁷⁸Ibid.

matured.⁷⁹ Indeed, the Academy trustees had informed the Comanche County Baptist Association at their August meeting that the trustees could not depend upon the convention for support since much that they might have obtained was going to the university at Shawnee. They also told the association that \$2,000 would have to be raised if the school remained in operation through the following May.⁸⁰

Despite the dire needs of the educational institutions the convention was adamant and did nothing to alleviate their pressing problems. Their inaction was due not so much to inability as to lack of interest. Shortly after the convention the Reverend A. Nunnery, editor of The Baptist Worker, pointed out the disparity between the sum of less than \$500 raised in the summer canvass for education, and the \$70,000 given to missions, the orphan's home, and for state missions. He explained that Oklahoma Baptists did not look upon the Baptist "schools" of the state as absolutely necessary to the "Baptist cause."⁸¹ Dr. Baten returned to Blackwell and reported to the Commercial Club on November 20 that the convention had accepted his report without a dissenting vote, but that no collection was taken for any of the three Baptist "schools" of the state.⁸² On December 1, the trustees of Oklahoma Baptist College met with the Blackwell Commercial Club and other businessmen, to plan for a mass meeting with citizens of Blackwell. A committee was then chosen to arrange for the meeting.⁸³ The Commercial Club met again on December 11 and raised \$1,250,

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Minutes, Comanche County Baptist Association, 1911, p. 12.

⁸¹The Baptist Worker (Granite, Oklahoma), December 6, 1911. This paper was moved from Mangum, Oklahoma to Granite, Oklahoma, in 1911.

⁸²Minutes, Blackwell Commercial Club, November 20, 1911.

⁸³Ibid., December 1, 1911.

which was one-half of the amount required for the "current expenses" of the college. The club agreed to help raise the rest.⁸⁴ On the following Sunday night the citizens of Blackwell held their mass meeting at the Methodist Church. The crowd of about one thousand people raised the balance of the \$2,500.⁸⁵

Hardly had the convention adjourned in November before the competition between educational institutions broke out in a literary skirmish. In the December 14, 1911, issue of The Baptist Standard, the Texas Baptist paper, Dr. J. M. Carroll, president of Oklahoma Baptist University, stated that the college at Blackwell had never had the support of the denomination and continued to have a hard battle before it, being several thousand dollars in debt.⁸⁶

Baten answered Dr. Carroll's charge in The Baptist Worker of December 20, 1911. The college property was worth \$70,000 above the indebtedness, Baten maintained, while also chiding Dr. Carroll over Oklahoma Baptist University's loss to Oklahoma Baptist College 14-0 during the past football season. He pointed out that Oklahoma Baptist College's basketball team had won the state championship in 1910-11, even defeating the state university at Norman. Thus the year of 1911 ended with the competition waxing stronger and becoming more open.⁸⁷

However, neither Dr. Carroll nor Dr. Baten had much time for debate, public or private. Financial problems continued to be pressing for the college at Blackwell and the university at Shawnee. Dr. Baten reported to

⁸⁴Ibid., December 11, 1911.

⁸⁵Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1912, pp. 42-43.

⁸⁶The Baptist Worker, December 20, 1911.

⁸⁷Ibid.

Blackwell Commercial Club on February 12, 1912, that the Missouri Life Insurance Company was threatening foreclosure on the college. Three days later Dr. Baten took the president of that company with him to a meeting of the club. After a discussion concerning the loan held by the company, Dr. Baten and the club members attempted without success to persuade Mr. Nelson to loan the college \$35,000 through his company. Therefore, the college's financial condition remained unimproved except that the threatened foreclosure was forestalled for some time.⁸⁸

The Southwest Baptist Academy at Hastings, beset by financial problems, was forced early in 1912 to seek another location for their institution.⁸⁹ The Board of Trustees had involved the Academy in a real estate venture, including the purchase of two farms totaling 163 acres, which had cost the institution both public confidence and money.⁹⁰ Therefore, it is not surprising that the Reverend A. Munnery, editor of The Baptist Worker, upon hearing of the proposed move, warned against the danger of Baptists being taken in by townsite promoters. Munnery also felt that it was the wrong time to launch the enterprise, wishing that existing institutions had been put on their feet before others were started.⁹¹

In April, 1912, the trustees of Southwest Baptist Academy offered the school to Mangum. The Baptist Church at Mangum and the citizens of that city paid \$3,300 to the Academy Board on two conditions. First, the people of Mangum would not be responsible for any other debts, most of

⁸⁸Minutes, Blackwell Commercial Club, February 15, 1912.

⁸⁹Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1912, pp. 46-47.

⁹⁰Dyer, "History of Southwest Baptist College."

⁹¹The Baptist Worker, April 24, 1912.

which were covered by mortgages and property. Also, the new institution was to be allowed to teach at least two years of college work. The Baptists of Mangum then raised \$20,000 to complete their church edifice, which was used to house the college. The Reverend J.L.H. Hawkins, pastor of the Mangum Baptist Church, was elected president of Southwest Baptist College, while H. B. Crego was elected dean.⁹²

Meanwhile it became apparent that the Oklahoma Baptist University at Shawnee was getting overly involved in debt and might have to suspend operations. Therefore a committee of the Oklahoma Baptist University Trustees began meeting with a committee of the Oklahoma Baptist College Trustees, and a friendly relationship developed. Indeed, on June 4, 1912, the Ways and Means Committee of the Oklahoma Baptist University Board of Trustees led by Dr. Carroll recommended the consolidation of the two institutions, to be located at Blackwell. This recommendation was based on the fact that existing conditions in the state made it unwise to undertake maintenance of two colleges at that time. Yet they recommended that at the earliest practical moment the convention should establish two educational institutions of college rank, one to be co-educational and the other a female college. The Ways and Means Committee of the university trustees wanted the consolidated college to be established at once for a definite period of five years. Afterwards, if the convention so ordered, the college at Blackwell would become the Baptist Female College.⁹³

The Ways and Means Committee further recommended that the two boards of trustees be consolidated and act jointly until the annual meeting of the convention in November, 1912. A chief task of the joint board would

⁹²Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1912, p. 47.

⁹³Minutes, Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist University, June 4, 1912.

be selecting a faculty for the consolidated "Oklahoma College." The committee report was tabled subject to later discussion and therefore never received the approval of the entire University Board of Trustees. Instead the university trustees approved a motion that an educational campaign be inaugurated to secure funds with which to pay the university's indebtedness and to build dormitories. However, the university trustees rejected the Executive Committee's recommendation that the university remain open the following year. Thus Oklahoma Baptist University suspended operations for an indefinite period of time at the close of its first year of operation, 1911-12.⁹⁴

Needless to say, the university's suspension was greeted with joy in Blackwell. In fact, the people called a mass meeting for the following Sunday at three o'clock at the Methodist Church to celebrate the expected union between the college and the university. It was planned as a day of joy and thanksgiving.⁹⁵ The people of Blackwell felt that the Oklahoma Baptist College had survived the J. H. Moore defection to Carey College, the rivalry with the university, the division thus created among the Baptists of the state, and the worst crop year in the history of Oklahoma. They were jubilant over what they saw as Oklahoma Baptist College's "open field." Leaders of the college and of Blackwell seemed to consider the Southwest Baptist College at Mangum as no threat.⁹⁶ The latter had not yet begun operations, but planned to open in the fall.

Faced with Oklahoma Baptist University's suspension by debt and Oklahoma Baptist College's perennial needs the Educational Commission employed Dr. J. M. Carroll as their Educational Secretary. His duties were

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵The Blackwell Times-Record, June 6, 1912.

⁹⁶Ibid., June 13, 1912.

to help raise funds to clear the debts of the now correlated schools, Oklahoma Baptist College and Oklahoma Baptist University, and to solicit students for the Southwest Baptist College and Oklahoma Baptist College.⁹⁷ On June 26, 1912, Dr. Carroll told J. C. Stalcup, Corresponding Secretary of the state convention, that he was sure that both The Baptist Messenger and The Baptist Worker would support the educational campaign.⁹⁸ Stalcup virtually agreed to permit all the convention's field workers to be used in the educational campaign for sixty days.⁹⁹ Carroll, who was seeking to raise \$25,000 by December 1, 1912, expected the help from Stalcup and the state men to effect an impression for educational work heretofore unknown.¹⁰⁰

The Educational Commission members had become convinced that a definite educational policy needed to be adopted and adhered to by the convention. Therefore, the commission, meeting July 9, approved these resolutions for submission as recommendations to the annual convention of 1912. First, the commission recommended the establishment of only one thoroughly equipped, co-educational college and the discouragement of efforts for any other. Second, after this college was established, Oklahoma Baptist College be converted to a Baptist college for young women. Third, the establishment of high grade academies be encouraged at strategic points in the state, and Southwest Baptist College at Mangum be allowed to continue in the correlated system as a junior college. Fourth, that the Educational Commission's powers should be greatly broadened so that

⁹⁷The Baptist Messenger, June 12, 1912.

⁹⁸Ibid., June 26, 1912.

⁹⁹Ibid., June 19, 1912.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., June 10 and July 19, 1912.

the commission would have the same authority in educational matters that the Convention's Board of Directors had in all other matters in order to further lessen the competition between institutions.¹⁰¹ This policy recommendation would definitely leave no room for a merger of Oklahoma Baptist College and Oklahoma Baptist University. The talks between committees of the respective trustees had created friendly feelings but had produced few results except perhaps to crystallize opposition to any merger and to strengthen the sentiment at large for a stronger effort in educational matters. Many legal impediments, moreover, in the charters of the institutions would have made consolidation difficult.¹⁰²

During July, 1912, Mrs. Carroll was severely burned in a gas explosion, and Dr. Carroll on the advice of her doctors took his wife to Colorado.¹⁰³ This of course took Dr. Carroll off the field and out of the campaign for funds at a critical time, and little was done afterwards.¹⁰⁴

In August the new Southwest Baptist College was preparing to open with a flourish on Tuesday, September 3, 1912. The college officials announced that Mangum's citizens would provide free entertainment for all visitors who would attend the opening, thus indicating solid support by the Mangum citizenry. The officials also stated that several thousand dollars had been subscribed for an endowment fund for the college. Following the address at the opening ceremonies for the college the Board of Trustees of Southwest Baptist College met with interested pastors and

¹⁰¹Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1912, pp. 40-41.

¹⁰²The Blackwell Times-Record, June 13, 1912.

¹⁰³The Baptist Messenger, August 7, 1912.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., August 28, 1912.

laymen and discussed the future policies of the school and of the Baptists of southwestern Oklahoma toward denominational education. The exact proceedings of this meeting are unknown. However, the question for discussion was obviously framed to appeal to southwest Oklahoma's sectional interests and to gauge the strength of sectional interests.¹⁰⁵

An announcement of the opening of Bacone College for the fall term was carried in The Baptist Messenger on September 25, 1912. President Walter J. Pack made a bid for students, suggesting that Oklahoma Baptists should be happy to hear of the college's good healthy condition, since the work done there was without financial embarrassment to the convention. Pack stated that the people should not be concerned over the lack of organic connection with the state convention, as long as the college provided splendid training. Thus the competition for students and for general support began to tighten.¹⁰⁶

Meanwhile, the removal of Dr. Carroll from the educational campaign and its subsequent meager results left the college in Blackwell in deeply troubled financial waters. On November 4, 1912, only four days before the state convention was scheduled to convene, Dr. Baten asked the Blackwell Commercial Club to pledge \$2,500 per year for five years to the college if the Baptists of the state would raise \$10,000 per year for five years. The Commercial Club agreed to raise \$2,000 per year or one dollar to every four dollars raised by state Baptists on a proportional basis.¹⁰⁷

When the convention met in Shawnee on November 8, 1912, the Executive Board broke its long silence on educational matters. Their report

¹⁰⁵Ibid., August 21, 1912.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., September 25, 1912.

¹⁰⁷Minutes, Blackwell Commercial Club, November 4, 1912.

stated their belief that it was time for the convention to adopt a broad, comprehensive, but "sane and conservative educational policy" which would be lived up to and heartily supported by the churches of the state. They called for a policy that would "rise so high above local sectionalism as to be able to best serve our cause for the whole state. . ."¹⁰⁸

The Educational Commission recommended the fixed policy they had adopted on July 9, 1912. Commission members stated their willingness for the convention to adopt a policy and "adhere to it with unshaking tenacity until substantial results have been achieved."¹⁰⁹ The convention adopted the Educational Commission's report. Therefore, the policy of the convention was to build a great university at Shawnee although the university was suspended and the building was only half completed.¹¹⁰

The report to the convention from Oklahoma Baptist College was full of scathing rebuke. The college trustees condemned the convention for their lack of support at the previous annual meeting. The report then praised the citizens of Blackwell in glowing terms for their heroic efforts which had saved the college following the last annual meeting of the convention. The report then noted that Oklahoma Baptist College was again in peril, that heavy debts aggregating \$35,000 had created distressing conditions, that lawsuits to foreclose had been instituted, and that a chattel mortgage of \$800 was crowding the college to the wall. The college report next lectured the convention on the importance of paying honest debts; they owed it to the past supporters of the college, the trustees went on, to save the college property to the convention. The messengers were told that their credit would suffer greatly if Oklahoma

¹⁰⁸Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1912, p. 20.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 40-41.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 48.

Baptist College were allowed to fall. However, the report ended by denying that Baptists were in the habit of repudiating honest debts and called upon the convention to justify the college's faith in Oklahoma Baptists.¹¹¹

Following the reports a great collection was taken which amounted to about \$4,000 in cash and pledges.¹¹² Then the convention set apart the months of January and February, 1913, for a "vigorous" campaign in the interest of educational work and requested every church to take a cash offering during these months. The convention also directed the Board of Directors to enter into hearty cooperation with the Educational Commission and have the employees of the board take collections in the field for education.¹¹³

The absorbing interest of the convention in educational matters during the months that followed was dominated by the financial crisis at Oklahoma Baptist College at Blackwell, which almost completely overshadowed the problems of the university at Shawnee.¹¹⁴ Dr. Baten wrote his opinion that the Baptists of Oklahoma had enough schools and that they knew it. Furthermore, he believed that Oklahoma Baptists had finally united on a policy of correlation that meant something. He referred to the Oklahoma Baptist University, Oklahoma Baptist College, and Southwest Baptist College as sister schools who were going to act as sisters should.¹¹⁵ However, in explaining how funds to be given during the

¹¹¹Ibid., pp. 42-45.

¹¹²The Baptist Messenger, November 13, 1912.

¹¹³Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1912, p. 66.

¹¹⁴The Baptist Messenger, February 12, 1913.

¹¹⁵Ibid., January 1, 1913.

forthcoming campaign should be handled, he emphasized that donations would be sent to the college of the donor's choice if such a choice were specified. Otherwise, the money would be "pro-rated" according to the judgment of the Educational Committee. Baten expected the new-found unity at the convention to "stir Baptist hearts and loosen the tight strings on Baptist purses."¹¹⁶

In spite of Baten's high hopes, however, Baptist purse strings remained tight during the next several months in regard to educational matters, and the doom of Oklahoma Baptist College was sealed. The Baptist Messenger carried numerous articles stressing the college's need and urging support, but all were to no avail.¹¹⁷

January and February, 1913, were set aside on the convention calendar for the educational canvass, but the results were meager. Most of the month of January was spent in making preparations for collections in February. Unfortunately, February was accompanied by snowstorms and blizzards. Many churches were unable to have a single Sunday service during the month. When services were held, they were attended by small crowds; the pastors kept putting off the collections for the educational campaign until larger congregations assembled. Even when collections were taken they were not large, and many churches and individuals did not even honor their convention pledges.¹¹⁸

In March college officials were able to stave off their creditors only by using money from the teachers' salary fund. The relief gained was temporary, merely securing a little more time.¹¹⁹ In early June Dr.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid., January 1-July 30, 1913.

¹¹⁸Ibid., April 9, 1913.

¹¹⁹Ibid., March 26, 1913.

Baten wrote that, since Dr. Carroll had been taken off the field by his wife's accident, nothing had really been done to help the financial situation in educational matters.¹²⁰ Meetings had been held by the Educational Commission, but they had resulted in inaction. Each school had been left free by the commission to adopt its own plan for raising funds, and with such sanction the college had put on a vigorous campaign.¹²¹ Nevertheless, despite the "vigorous campaign," by the latter part of July no hope for the college was evident unless some wealthy person would loan the college enough money to pay all debts while taking the property for security.¹²² However, no wealthy donor was found. The college property was sold for \$18,000 by the sheriff of Kay County at Newkirk on August 11, 1913, to the Missouri Life Insurance Company of Saint Louis.¹²³ The Oklahoma Baptist College was eliminated from the "correlated system" by default.

¹²⁰Ibid., June 4, 1913.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²A. E. Baten, Blackwell, Oklahoma, July 22, 1913, letter to W. D. Moorer, Oklahoma City (in author's possession).

¹²³The Baptist Messenger, August 20, 1913.

CHAPTER V

THE WASHBURN RESOLUTION 1913-1915

At the close of 1912, while Oklahoma Baptist College was beginning its death throes, the Southwest Baptist College at Mangum was hit by a scandal involving its president, the Reverend J.L.H. Hawkins. Hawkins, pastor of the Mangum First Baptist Church as well as president of the college, was accused of improper conduct with a certain "female" member of his church.¹

A committee of men of the Mangum First Baptist Church investigated the matter and called a private meeting with Hawkins at which they confronted him with the evidence in the case. Thereupon Hawkins confessed "indiscreet conduct" toward that certain woman and promised to discontinue his visits to her home and his attentions toward her. Nevertheless, Hawkins did not keep his promise and was forced out of both the pastorage of the church and the college presidency.²

Next the college ran into legal difficulties accruing from its former operations at Hastings. The affairs of the old school had not been satisfactorily adjusted, and attempts had been made by the creditors of the college at Hastings to establish a legal connection between the old school at Hastings and the new school at Mangum. On May 21, 1913,

¹W. L. Stigler, "A History of the Institutions of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma" (unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; Fort Worth, Texas, 1945), p. 74.

²Ibid.

therefore, the trustees of the Mangum College dissolved the Southwest Baptist College and formed the Western Baptist College at Mangum in order to assure that it would be neither morally nor legally liable for actions of the old school at Hastings. However, the trustees of the new school were the same as those elected at the convention of 1912 for Southwest Baptist College, and they expected to bear the same relationship to the convention as formerly.³

On the other hand, the Educational Commission interpreted the dissolution as the final chapter in the history of Southwest Baptist College, which had thus been removed from the correlated school system.⁴ Furthermore, they regarded the formation of Western Baptist College as the establishment of a new co-educational college in violation of the convention's policy as adopted in 1912 upon the recommendation of the commission.⁵ Thus they agreed with the trustees of the Western Baptist College that it had no legal connection with the former Southwest Baptist Academy or the Southwest Baptist College. But they concluded that the Western Baptist College had no legal connection with the convention either.

Since Mangum First Baptist Church had an agreement permitting the Southwest Baptist College to use their building, and since that college had passed out of existence, it was necessary for the church to negotiate a new agreement with Western Baptist College. In a business meeting on July 23, 1913, the church agreed to give the use of its building to the college for a period of four years. As conditions, the entire ownership and control of the building remained with Mangum First Baptist Church. Second, the college was to be responsible for all regular expenses of the

³The Baptist Messenger, May 21, 1913.

⁴Ibid., p. 55.

⁵Ibid.

building, such as heat, light, water, and janitor services. Third, the college would have to agree to repair any damages to the building caused by the college's occupancy.⁶

The announced date for the opening of Western Baptist College was September 9, 1913.⁷ However, lack of funds prevented the college from opening on schedule. The trustees decided to consult the citizens of Mangum, and a mass meeting was held on Friday night, September 19. There, several hundred dollars was pledged on the condition that the \$2,000 total which was needed would be raised. On the following day both J. M. Wileman and J. W. Solomon canvassed the city of Mangum, and \$1,700 additional was subscribed. Thus the college opened the following Monday, September 22. As a means of securing students and finances the trustees decided that any individual, church, or Baptist association which gave fifty dollars or more to the expense of the college would have the right to name some young man or woman who would be given a tuition scholarship in the "literary department."⁸

Apparently a movement was underway which aimed at abolishing the Educational Commission. On September 24, 1913, The Baptist Messenger published an article in which the Reverend J. B. Rounds emphatically stated that the convention needed an Educational Commission to unify the work in educational matters. However, he suggested that the legal and denominational standing needed to be above suspicion and that none of the correlated schools should be represented on the commission. Rounds also suggested that the Educational Commission should keep the schools from going into debt and should conduct all educational campaigns. Most

⁶Ibid., August 13, 1913.

⁷Ibid., September 10, 1913.

⁸Ibid., September 24, 1913.

importantly, Rounds recommended that the Educational Commission should be consulted about the organization, location, and grade of any new educational institution which would later appeal to the convention for moral and financial support. Rounds argued that an Educational Commission was needed in order to unify the work, but that was precisely what the Educational Commission had failed to do throughout its existence. Rounds himself admitted as much when he wrote that the failure of the college at Blackwell had been due to the lack of educational coherency and statewide educational unity.⁹

The Educational Commission admitted failure to the convention in November, 1913. The commission reported that in spite of their efforts Oklahoma Baptist College and Southwest Baptist College at Mangum had passed out of existence, and the university at Shawnee was suffering from a case of "suspended animation." Nonetheless, the commission denied having been responsible for the suspensions, because the debts were contracted several years before when the commission's powers were ill defined. Furthermore, the commission argued that they had not given their approval when the debts which caused the closing of the above schools were contracted. Yet the Educational Commission recommended the adoption of the resolution already offered by A. G. Washburn which would dissolve the Educational Commission and assign its duties to the Board of Directors of the convention. This resolution had been tabled for consideration after the commission's report. In addition, the commission recommended that an Educational Missionary be appointed to work at creating sentiment among Baptists for denominational education and to raise funds for the university.¹⁰

The Reverend A. G. Washburn sought in his resolution clearly and

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1913, p. 55.

specifically to define the educational policy of the convention. The resolution would put educational matters under the strict control of the Board of Directors of the convention with an Educational Missionary employed by the Board. The Educational Fund would be placed under the auspices of the Corresponding Secretary, and all campaigns for Christian education and the work of the Educational Missionary would be under the supervision and direction of the convention's Corresponding Secretary. Furthermore, the policy adopted by the convention in regard to the number and grade of educational institutions it would foster should remain the same; the Board of Directors were to observe that policy in future recognition and correlation of all "schools." Also, no lien was to be made against property belonging to the convention without the consent of the convention's Board of Directors. When the Washburn Resolution was adopted by the convention, for all practical purposes the correlated system passed into history. The educational policy of the convention entered into a new phase of stricter control over its educational institutions.¹¹

In their report to the 1913 convention the Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist University acknowledged their many mistakes but rejoiced in the fact that the city of Shawnee had almost completed the administration building on the sixty-acre campus.¹² However, the trustees stated that it would be necessary for the convention to provide dormitory facilities and equip the administration building before the university could open.¹³ Thereupon the trustees recommended that the university be opened at the earliest possible date.¹⁴

¹¹Ibid., p. 56.

¹²Ibid., p. 57.

¹³Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁴Ibid.

The trustees of the defunct Oklahoma Baptist College made their final report to this same convention of 1913. Their report recounted the last trying months of the college in a matter-of-fact fashion without attaching blame or showing resentment. On the other hand, the college trustees suggested that the people of the convention should join hands and hearts in a constructive, fraternal, and cooperative movement to build up a system of educational work that would secure the confidence of Baptists.¹⁵

Following the report on Oklahoma Baptist College, the Reverend W. W. Chancellor offered a resolution recognizing the Western Baptist College as efficient and sound in doctrine and recommending it to the good graces of the Baptists of the state. The above resolution was adopted, but for the reasons previously discussed Western Baptist College was not recognized as a convention college in the correlated system.¹⁶

Less than two weeks after the convention adjourned the Executive Board elected the Reverend E. G. Butler, pastor of the Holdenville First Baptist Church, to the post of Educational Missionary.¹⁷ In reference to this announcement The Baptist Messenger made the following suggestion.

Now let all drop their differences on educational matters and magnify our agreements, grasp the opportunity to establish our educational work on a conservatively, liberal, and aggressive basis and build first of all, one great school, safeguarded from the insidious influences of modern skepticism and fleshly vanity. The only way to do that is to keep it under the control of regenerated and loyal men, seeing that even regenerated men stand for the verbal inspiration of the Bible, for no man is properly equipped to teach anything as he should who gets away from that anchor. Leave that out of a man's consciousness and you know not where or when he will drift on to the shoals of speculation and doubt.¹⁸

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 60-63.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁷The Baptist Messenger, November 19, 1913.

¹⁸Ibid.

The Reverend Mr. Butler accepted the post of Educational Missionary against the advice of some of his friends who suggested that if he failed it could be detrimental to his career. Butler countered their advice by saying that he was not his own, but was bought with a price and would launch out upon the "unknown sea" with God as his captain.¹⁹

Meanwhile the Reverend J. W. Solomon was elected Educational Missionary for Western Baptist College. Solomon began work on December 1, 1913, one month in advance of Butler. Solomon, who had already succeeded in helping to secure over \$2,500 for the college during the year, was to raise funds, secure students, and gain Baptist support for Western Baptist College.²⁰

Hence it became evident to the convention leaders that the officials of Western Baptist College were intent on continuing in the face of the convention's opposition. In mid-December J. C. Stalcup, the convention's Corresponding Secretary, stated in The Baptist Messenger that the 1912 convention had voted to establish one and only one great, thoroughly equipped co-educational college, and that any effort to establish another co-educational college or university be discouraged. This policy seemed to meet with the approval of most of the convention's churches and with the masses of Baptist people over the state. Stalcup then, after passing over Oklahoma Baptist College with little comment, stated that when the Southwest Baptist College at Mangum rechartered as the Western Baptist College it "passed out of the system of correlated schools and from denominational control." However, he did recall the fraternal resolution commending the college to the brotherhood and personally wished the college "every possible success." Then Stalcup called upon the people

¹⁹Ibid., December 3, 1913.

²⁰The Baptist Worker, November 26, 1913.

to give their support to the university at Shawnee.²¹

The convention's educational campaign was conducted in January and February, 1914. The Western Baptist College also canvassed for funds during those months. Consequently the competition erupted into a public debate revealed in the Baptist papers.

In the January 7 issue of The Baptist Messenger Stalcup announced that he was investigating the university's debts but would make no statements on them until later. In the same issue he urged the people to maintain one really great school.²²

At the same time the leaders of Western Baptist College attempted to win support by an article in The Baptist Worker. The article stated that the college trustees did not doubt their ability to keep the college open throughout the 1913-14 school term, since Mangum had "so nobly" aided in the previous September. They expressed their confidence in the college by announcing that plans were already being made for the following year.²³

On January 14, 1914, The Baptist Messenger carried an article by Stalcup entitled "Conservation of the Denominational Forces." Stalcup here argued that the statewide organization was the natural and logical organization through which the denomination's life should be expressed. Stalcup pointed out that in many cases he had seen local interests absorb pastoral and popular interests so as nearly to obscure their vision of the larger denominational interests. Stalcup went on to say that under such conditions the work became "divided" and "factional" within the state. He blamed these factional local interests for the convention's failure in their past educational efforts. Stalcup closed his article

²¹The Baptist Messenger, December 17, 1913.

²²Ibid., January 7, 1914.

²³The Baptist Worker, January 7, 1914.

thus:

I am wondering if all our Baptist people in this state have learned this lesson well enough to enable us to rise above local interests, and combine our forces in doing one thing, which we have unanimously agreed to do in our state convention. It is my opinion that a very large number of our people have learned that lesson well and are now ready to combine their energies in the great task before us.²⁴

In the same issue of The Baptist Messenger the Reverend J. W. Solomon argued that the "cause demanded two schools to help each other." Solomon declared that no other state had a plan suitable for Oklahoma to follow, and he emphasized the need for the western college at Mangum. Western Baptist College was gaining new students every week, Solomon declared, and could take care of three hundred or more. The college offered free tuition, with reasonable cost for room and board. Solomon then asked every pastor in the state to take an offering for the college in January and February to help raise the \$4,000 needed to close out the 1913-14 school year.²⁵

Also in the same issue, H. P. Crego argued that appeals to the emotions and to denominational loyalty had largely lost their force and that Christian education needed to be supported as a "day to day affair" by men and women who would give regularly for erecting buildings and providing equipment. Furthermore, Crego quoted Dr. E. Y. Mullins, a prominent Southern Baptist leader, as saying "whenever any number of Baptists are associated in an enterprise for the advancement of Baptist interests, that enterprise is as much denominational as any other." Crego insisted that Baptists spoke of their denominational press, and yet he declared that as far as he knew every Baptist press in the United States was

²⁴ The Baptist Messenger, January 14, 1914.

²⁵ Ibid.

independent of the control of any convention or association. Therefore, Crego maintained that in eastern Oklahoma the Western Baptist College should be accepted as a denominational institution and supported as such. Crego listed several reasons which warranted the existence of the college. First, the large territory in the southwestern part of the state had no other college of any kind. He pointed out that Mangum was ninety miles from any state college and 150 miles from any Baptist school of full college rank. Crego noted the well attested fact that every college in the United States received the larger portion of its students from a radius of fifty miles.²⁶

Crego declared that Baptists would have a definite advantage in southwestern Oklahoma by pre-empting the field in religious education. For one thing Baptists were more numerous in the southwest than in any other part of the state; at least one-third of the state's Baptists lived in the southwest quarter of Oklahoma, while one-half of the Baptists lived in communities which had direct railroad connections with Mangum. Crego suggested that the Baptists of southwest Oklahoma had always furnished the majority of money and students to Oklahoma's Baptist institutions. Then he called attention to the "vast number" of young people in the southwest and to the large number of young preachers who needed the advantage of training, but had to secure work in order to afford the training; likewise he noted the number of teacher candidates being educated at Mangum. Western Baptist College could give its full attention for the following three years, Crego declared, to paying teachers and purchasing equipment. Finally Crego argued that the day of the academy was passed and that there was no future in Oklahoma for a junior college. He envisioned the time when there would be fifty or more junior colleges

²⁶Ibid.

in Oklahoma under the operation of the state's cities. Hence he maintained that only a college of "high grade" doing four full years of work could meet the demand.²⁷

The following week Stalcup came out with his most strongly worded and most clear-cut statement. He referred to the sweet fellowship in Oklahoma on state, home, and foreign missions, which had not been the case in educational work. Baptist forces had been divided on educational matters, and "DEFEAT" had been the result. He was "impressed deeply" with the hope that Oklahoma Baptists had reached the time in the history of the convention that they would see the importance of "UNIFYING" their forces and "COMBINING" their educational energies. If the people would stay with the convention's duly adopted plans, the "school" at Mangum would receive such attention, patronage, and help as it merited and as conditions would warrant, while the people at the same time would be preparing to establish the university. He did not minimize the importance of caring for local interests, but those local interests should not obscure or antagonize matters of larger and general denominational interests. In closing, Stalcup stated "OUR DENOMINATIONAL LIFE will find its expression IN AND THROUGH THE STATE CONVENTION. Anything that tends to disturb and divide, dissipate or antagonize our forces is NOT FOR THE BEST INTERESTS."²⁸

In the same issue the Reverend E. G. Butler, the Educational Missionary for the state convention, recalled that when the convention had had three colleges that its forces were divided in three parts, with each having its claim and its supporters. Therefore, he contended the cause was weakened. Hence he called for support for Oklahoma Baptist

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., January 22, 1914.

University because it was "building for permanency."²⁹ Numerous articles followed of a routine nature calling for support of the college at Mangum or the university at Shawnee. The great debate was over, and the Baptists of Oklahoma were left with the decisions to make.

Meanwhile Stalcup and the Board of Directors of the convention turned their attention in January, 1914, to the debt of over \$20,000 which the university at Shawnee had accumulated during the 1911-12 school year. The board felt that most claims were "larger than they should have been," and hoped that if they offered to settle them at the earliest possible date the claimants would accept a reduced amount.³⁰ Therefore, they selected J. T. Hargrove of Muskogee and J. O. Kuykendall of Atkoa as a committee to make contact with the claimants on unsecured notes to ascertain what they would be willing to accept as full settlement.³¹ The board hoped to raise \$6,000 during January and February, and hoped further that this amount would tide the convention over on the university debts until the next scheduled financial drive for Christian education in June and July.³² Although the exact amount of money raised during the drive was not reported, it is evident from Stalcup's report to the 1914 convention that the board's hopes were realized.³³

The committee put pressure on the claimants to settle for one-third of their debts. Stalcup carried on correspondence for the committee, thus writing one of the claimants:

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., January 28, 1914.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1914, pp. 37-38.

Brother W. B. Taylor of your city, Secretary of the Trustees of the University filed with me, when the educational interests were put in my hands, a list of claims against the University. On this list, I find one in your favor for \$31.65.

The matter of making a settlement with all of the claimants against the school, to enable us to take up these accounts, so as to open school again as early as possible, was referred to a committee of which Mr. J. T. Hargrove, of Muskogee is chairman. A large number of these claimants have agreed with him, to accept one-third of the amount of their claim as shown by the list as filed by Bro. Taylor as full payment of their claims and in that way, make a contribution towards making it possible to open school again. If you wish to do this and will advise me to that effect I will see to it that our treasurer mails a check for that amount, if you accept those terms and advise me to before the money raised for that purpose has all been disbursed. Personally I have nothing whatever to do with that phase of the matter. I am attending to the payment of those who have agreed to accept one-third of their accounts.³⁴

It is not known whether the recipient of this letter, Mrs. A. E. Glenn of Shawnee, settled for one-third of her claim, but apparently most people did.³⁵ However, not everyone felt impressed to donate two-thirds of his claim to the university. One such claimant thus replied to Stalcup:

I am this day in receipt of your letter and have noted its contents carefully and in reply desire to say that I took these notes personally, after I had purchased an account from a party to keep them from suing the University, and I do not think it right for you or any one else to ask me to take less than face value plus interest for these notes. I will not settle for less than the notes call for. If you will write to Mr. W. B. Taylor of this city you will find out about the amount that is due me.

Personally I do not feel any blame for the mistake made by the people that had charge of the University here, and said at the time that they should have commenced with a less force and feel their way, and I also feel that the accounts here should be taken care of in full and place the matter of the University in the right light before the people of this community and the state.

I shall appreciate it very much indeed if you will let me know what can and will be done with these notes at once. Thanking you for your kindness in this connection.³⁶

³⁴J. C. Stalcup, Oklahoma City, March 25, 1914, letter to Mrs. A. E. Glenn, Shawnee, Oklahoma, in author's possession.

³⁵Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1914, p. 39.

³⁶W. S. Chapman, Shawnee, Oklahoma, April 8, 1914, letter to J. C. Stalcup, Oklahoma City, in author's possession.

At the May 1 meeting of the Convention Board of Directors the Reverend E. G. Butler resigned as Educational Missionary to accept the pastorage of the Central Baptist Church of Muskogee. The board decided at the meeting to open the university at Shawnee in September, 1915, because financial conditions did not make it seem possible any sooner.³⁷

During the summer that followed the great debate between the convention leadership and supporters of Western Baptist College, Stalcup began to make overtures to the college. On June 17, 1914, Stalcup publicly changed his position in regard to Western Baptist College, stating that even though it was independent it was not antagonistic to or out of harmony with the work of the convention. Furthermore, the churches over the state would do well to assist in bearing the "current expense" of the college. However, he did not consider it wise at that time to discuss the college's future course, nor would he until the time came for the university at Shawnee to open.³⁸

The next event came on July 28, 1914, when the convention's Board of Directors met in Oklahoma City and had a "full and frank interchange of ideas" with three members of the Board of Trustees of the Western Baptist College.³⁹ Exact details of the meeting are not known, but the college made application at convention time in mid-November for admittance into the convention's system as a junior college.⁴⁰ The college was opening for the 1914-15 school year and was offering free tuition to ministerial students.⁴¹ The college officials boasted of "a library of 5,000 volumes

³⁷ Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1914, p. 19.

³⁸ The Baptist Messenger, June 7, 1914.

³⁹ Ibid., August 5, 1914.

⁴⁰ Ibid., December 30, 1914.

⁴¹ Ibid., August 19, 1914.

especially adapted to school work" and a good corps of teachers.⁴² The following week J. C. Stalcup recommended the college to the young people of the state and advised parents to send their children to Mangum.⁴³ He indicated that they would receive a good education there, and he called for general support of the college.⁴⁴

The college's financial picture, however, became steadily worse. On December 1, 1914, after the convention session, the Board of Directors selected J. B. Pyatt, J. E. Billington, and J. C. Stalcup to investigate the exact status of the college to determine if it would be wise to accept it back into the convention's system. At 3:00 p.m., December 14, the committee of the Board of Directors met with the executive committee of the Board of Trustees of Western Baptist College. At that meeting the trustees of the college decided to close the school on Friday, December 18, never to open again unless opened by order of the convention. Stalcup concluded his comment on the trustees' action by stating that it "greatly simplified the work of Christian education in Oklahoma."⁴⁵

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., August 26, 1914.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., December 30, 1914.

CHAPTER VI

THE END OF THE FRATRICIDAL POLICY

The "fratricidal policy" ended with the failure of Western Baptist College at Mangum, followed by the opening of Oklahoma Baptist University at Shawnee in September, 1915. Oklahoma Baptist University has been in continuous operation since then. At a joint meeting of the Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist University and the Board of Directors of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma on December 2, 1914, the Reverend F. M. Master, pastor of the Broadway Baptist Church, Ardmore, was unanimously chosen as president of Oklahoma Baptist University. Masters accepted the position and moved at once to Shawnee, beginning work on January 1, 1915.¹

The Board of Directors next looked into the affairs of Western Baptist College. On February 22, 1915, after hearing the report of the committee sent to Mangum in December, they selected a committee consisting of President Masters, W. W. Chancellor, and H. H. Burton, to visit Mangum and investigate the financial situation there.² Following the committee's visit to Mangum on March 15 and 16, 1915, the Board of Directors voted to assume a large portion of the debt accumulated by that college including some debts made during the years at Hastings.³ They also voted to pay the amount due on the library of the college, which was owned by the Greer County

¹The Baptist Messenger, December 16, 1914.

²Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1915, p. 18.

³Ibid., pp. 19-21.

Baptist Association⁴

Because of the action of the board in regard to the debts owed by Western Baptist College, the Reverend L. W. Marks wrote on July 14, 1915, to Stalcup on behalf of A. P. Stone, former president of Oklahoma Baptist College.⁵ Marks, in pleading for Stone's reimbursement for his salary which he had sacrificed while president of Oklahoma Baptist College, referred to the college at Blackwell as the "first victim of the fratricidal policy of multiplying schools."⁶ In answer to Marks' letter Stalcup stated:

The simple truth is that success of the one school to the establishment of which we have set our hand in this state as a denomination, was almost if not altogether, an impossibility, until the Mangum school was removed as a source of friction and division of our forces and that done in a way to be satisfactory to the churches in the southwestern portion of the state.⁷

At the convention in 1915 Stalcup had the following to say publicly:

When the educational interests were placed in the hands of the board two years ago, we owed 67 persons \$23,000 and had no school and no kind of equipment in the building. Our people, confused, discouraged and greatly divided in sentiment as to what was best to do, most of them judging from the results of former campaigns to meet these debts, they decided to do nothing and were carrying out these decisions in a very effective way. Now we have a school with as fine a faculty as can be found anywhere, and with over 100 pupils doing good work. With equipment purchased with cash with great care we owe only one person instead of 67 except the few old unpaid claims referred to above. Our people are united educationally as never before in all of our history. They are becoming more hopeful and responsive and are now thoroughly committed to the policy of undertaking to establish only one school until conditions shall so change as to warrant the convention in undertaking others. Let us all thank God and take courage. We are making steady progress.

⁴Ibid., p. 20.

⁵L. W. Marks, Edmond, Oklahoma, July 14, 1915, letter to J. C. Stalcup, Oklahoma City, in author's possession.

⁶Ibid.

⁷J. C. Stalcup, Oklahoma City, July 15, 1915, letter to J. W. Marks, Edmond, Oklahoma, in author's possession.

⁸Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1915, p. 34.

The convention, it will be recalled, had voted in 1907 to establish a new university, but had not got it established and in continuous operation until 1915. First, the economic conditions in the state were poor during a number of those years, and Shawnee was not able to fulfill her contract with the university on schedule. Second, sectional interests led to the continuance of Oklahoma Baptist College, the establishment of Southwest Baptist College and its successors, and the establishment of Carey College. The sectional schools competed with the university for finances and students and caused divided interests and confusion in regard to the convention's educational policy and especially in regard to educational finances. In plain language, the Baptists of the convention seemed to desire sectional schools especially in western Oklahoma, but just could not afford them. Therefore, as the convention members began to realize they could afford only one college, sentiment gradually emerged for establishing one and only one college or university. Consequently conditions became increasingly more difficult for the sectional college at Mangum, which failed near the end of 1914.

To be sure, each institution faced other problems. Tahlequah Academy and Indian University were merged into Indian University by the Home Mission Society of New York and kept under the Society's control. Therefore, Indian University was excluded from consideration by the convention. Carey College failed when I. M. Putnam, who supplied its financial backing, went bankrupt within a month after its establishment. Southwest Baptist Academy at Hastings was involved in a ruinous land venture, while scandal struck its successor, the Southwest Baptist College at Mangum. However, lurking in the background in every case were unsound economic conditions throughout the state and confusion stemming from sectional interests and feelings. Nonetheless, these sectional interests might have been fulfilled had it not been for the general economic depression of those years.

By 1915, however, the Baptists of Oklahoma had overcome a considerable number of obstacles and at last had a single institution -- Oklahoma Baptist University.

The importance placed on Christian higher education by the convention during the first decade of its existence is evidenced by the great amount of time and attention given toward the establishment of a workable educational policy. Oklahoma, having been populated very rapidly by the land rushes, offered an excellent opportunity for the Baptists of the state to profit from the experiences of Baptists in the older states. Realizing that in many of those states small "schools" were periodically forced to close or pass outside of Baptist control because of insufficient financial support, the convention determined in 1907 to have perpetual ownership and control of their institution of higher education.⁹

Nevertheless, despite the wisdom of this policy, several hindrances stood in the way of the establishment of such a university. First, the union of 1906 was a tenuous one.¹⁰ It was composed of a divided constituency of Northern and Southern Baptists who were also divided by territorial and sectional loyalties. Therefore, advisable as it may seem, to have openly abandoned Oklahoma Baptist College because it was not entirely under convention control would have further divided Oklahoma Baptists' forces. It might even have wrecked the union at the very beginning. Consequently, the Educational Commission could not and did not recommend the closing of Oklahoma Baptist College. Second, the insufficiency of the public schools in Oklahoma created a demand for academies and colleges

⁹Stalcup, p. 67.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 72.

strategically located throughout the state. At first, Baptist academies and colleges helped fill this void. Therefore, as long as this demand for sectional educational institutions was strong, it interfered with the plan of the convention for establishing only one university under its complete control. This demand encouraged the continued support for Oklahoma Baptist College, the establishment of Hastings Baptist College and its successors Southwest Baptist College and Western Baptist College, and the establishment of Carey College. On the other hand, the rivalry of a state institution eliminated Lawton as a possible home for the college in 1908. At the same time, Indian University seems to have drained off support in the former Indian Territory for sectional schools. Also the evidence seems to suggest that except for those at Sulphur the Baptists of Indian Territory did not make any efforts to get the new university and may have felt it wise to let the western half of the state have it as a sort of consolation prize because Oklahoma Baptist College was rejected as the site for the new university. When Oklahoma Baptist University was located at Shawnee it was felt that since that city was in the old Pottawatomie Nation, neither a part of Indian Territory nor Oklahoma Territory, that it was a place where "all our forces can easily unite."¹¹ However, such was not to be the case. Every other institution had to be eliminated before unity could be achieved.

Although the convention could not openly eliminate Oklahoma Baptist College for fear of alienating the Baptists of western Oklahoma, Indian University in eastern Oklahoma was eliminated from the convention's concern precisely because it had never been organically connected with the convention or its forerunners. Oklahoma Baptist College did have such an organic connection with the convention; the convention rejected it in

¹¹Minutes, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1910, p. 51.

1907 because it was too strongly supported by the citizens of Blackwell and too closely tied with the Commercial Club there. Once established, the convention's policy of complete ownership and control of their proposed university was first put to the test in 1909. I. M. Putnam sought the power to name one-half of the trustees for the university, causing a division among the trustees on the issue; but the convention stayed with its previous plans and rejected Putnam's offer. Later, in June, 1912, the Ways and Means Committee of the Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Baptist University attempted to consolidate Oklahoma Baptist University and Oklahoma Baptist College, but this proposal was defeated by the action of the full board. Indeed, despite all the confusion, the policy of complete ownership and control of the university was the one consistent factor which dominated the convention's efforts throughout the decade. It was the one goal which the convention never lost sight of and which eventually triumphed.

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