

SAMUEL EUSEBIUS McCORKLE:

NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATOR

By

WILLIAM RANDOLPH ENGER

Bachelor of Arts  
Augsburg College  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
1967

Master of Science in Education  
Winona State College  
Winona, Minnesota  
1969

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College  
of the Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
July, 1973

1973

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY

Thesis  
1973D  
E57A  
cop. 2

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY  
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY  
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY  
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

FEB 15 1974

SAMUEL EUSEBIUS McCORKLE:

NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATOR

Thesis Approved:

*Theodore L. Agnew*

Thesis Adviser

*H. James Henderson*

*William E. Leggett*

*Larry M. Bertoni*

*W. N. Durham*

Dean of the Graduate College

873263

## PREFACE

This study is concerned with the life and times of Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, 1746-1811, a Presbyterian minister at Thyatira Church near Salisbury, North Carolina. McCorkle became a leader in Presbyterianism and in education in his state. The conventional wisdom about McCorkle's efforts is largely based on the account of the Reverend William H. Foote, who wrote in 1846:

About the year 1785, Dr. M'Corkle commenced a classical school at his house, which stood on the great road from Salisbury to Statesville, in an eligible situation, with the avenue leading to it, so common in the western part of North Carolina, at a moderate distance from the meeting-house, which is about nine miles west of Salisbury. In connection with his classical school was a department for preparing school teachers. Poor and pious young men were taught free of expense for tuition, and were also assisted by him to books necessary for their instruction. If young men of good talents were wild or not studious, his rule was to talk with them in private, and if the desired reformation did not take place, to avoid any exposure, he would write to their parents or guardians to withdraw them. And if he, upon mature deliberation, judged the children committed to his charge, to be below mediocrity, in point of talents, he invariably discouraged their being trained to a classical course. On account of these principles which he carried into action, he sent out a less number of classical students, but a greater amount of piety and talents.

Foote's account erred several times and omitted other information about McCorkle's educational contributions. It is hoped that this study will correct the errors and fill in the gaps in information.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Reverend William H. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of her

I have incurred many debts, quite impossible to ever repay, in the pursuit of my doctoral studies, but at least I can acknowledge those who helped me. I would like to thank Dr. Theodore L. Agnew for his constant support during the whole of my graduate program, for his care in teaching his students, and for his patient and able assistance during this study. Thanks are also due to the committee who helped me plan my classes and who supervised my research. Dr. Agnew, Dr. H. James Henderson, Dr. William Segall, and Dr. Larry Perkins provided helpful criticism and advice in the preparation of the final manuscript. I want to recognize, too, Dr. Norbert Mahnken, Dr. Henderson, and Dr. Perkins for their excellent teaching and to thank especially Dr. Segall for my apprenticeship in college teaching.

The study was made possible through the help of the people and use of facilities at the following places:

Oklahoma State University Library

Manuscript Department, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University

State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina

Presbyterian Historical Foundation, Montreat, North Carolina

---

Early Settlers (New York: 1846), p. 357. Building on Foote, Edgar Knight wrote:

Zion Parnassus was established near Salisbury, North Carolina, in 1785, by the Reverend Samuel C. [sic] McCorkle, who was graduated from Princeton in 1772. This school was well known for its normal department, which was the first attempt at teacher-training in North Carolina and one of the first in this country, and for its assistance with tuition and books to worthy students. The school maintained a high order of scholarship and had an extensive influence. Six of the seven members of the first graduating class of the University of North Carolina received their college preparation in this academy.

Edgar W. Knight, Public Education in the South (Boston: 1922), pp. 84-85.

Rowan County Courthouse, Salisbury, North Carolina

Southern Historical Collection, Louis R. Wilson Library,  
University of North Carolina

North Carolina Collection, Louis R. Wilson Library,  
University of North Carolina.

Considerable assistance was given freely by Mr. and Mrs. C. Lock Neal and by individuals at Princeton, Dickinson College, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Appreciation is expressed to the College of Education at Oklahoma State University for the graduate assistantship that I have held for two years. The experience was broadening, and the stipend encouraged me to complete my work as quickly as possible. The 250 students whom I taught and who taught me were a continual source of energy and pleasure.

Finally, I must mention those who made bearable my moments of uncertainty, cynicism, and alienation. Thank you, Dr. Agnew, for reminding me that "This, too, shall pass," and Dr. Mahnken, for assuring me that I would come to like cornbread and okra. My gratitude is particularly due my parents, Linda, and Bill and the community for their constant support.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Early Rowan County . . . . .	3
The English Educational System . . . . .	15
Puritan Schooling and the Frontier . . . . .	18
Education in the South . . . . .	24
The Academy and North Carolina . . . . .	32
The Teacher in Nineteenth Century America . . . . .	38
Education and Adjustment . . . . .	41
II. CHILDHOOD AND EARLY EDUCATION . . . . .	43
The Trip to North Carolina . . . . .	43
The McCorkle's Homestead . . . . .	47
Sunday Worship . . . . .	51
The French and Indian War . . . . .	54
Early Education . . . . .	57
III. TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY . . . . .	66
The College of New Jersey . . . . .	66
John Witherspoon . . . . .	72
The Course of Study . . . . .	75
Growing in Grace . . . . .	86
Graduation and Clerical Apprenticeship . . . . .	88
Teaching and Probationary Preaching . . . . .	91
IV. THYATIRA AND WESTFIELD . . . . .	96
The Pastor of Thyatira Church . . . . .	98
Margaret Gillespie . . . . .	107
Settling at Westfield . . . . .	109
The Revolution . . . . .	111
The Years After . . . . .	117
V. THE ACADEMIES . . . . .	125
Liberty Hall . . . . .	126
Salisbury Academy . . . . .	131
The Normal Course . . . . .	134
Zion-Parnassus, Religion and Learning . . . . .	137
Other Academies of the Day . . . . .	152

Chapter	Page
VI. THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA . . . . .	157
The Bill of 1784 . . . . .	157
William R. Davie and the Charter of 1789 . . . . .	160
The Plan of Education . . . . .	164
The Cornerstone-Laying Ceremony . . . . .	169
The Professor of Humanity . . . . .	173
The University Opens . . . . .	177
Davie's Plan of Education . . . . .	184
Presiding Professor . . . . .	187
McCorkle's Contributions . . . . .	197
VII. THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH CAROLINA . . . . .	201
Church of the Moving Frontier . . . . .	201
Reverend McCorkle, Teacher and Preacher . . . . .	203
"wretched French deists" . . . . .	217
The Revival of 1802 . . . . .	224
Presbytery and Synod . . . . .	234
Infirmity . . . . .	237
VIII. LAST YEARS AND SIGNIFICANCE . . . . .	239
Life at Westfield . . . . .	239
Declining Health . . . . .	247
Death and Funeral . . . . .	251
McCorkle's Family . . . . .	252
The Significance of Samuel McCorkle . . . . .	254
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	260
APPENDIX A--THE "POETRY" OF JAMES MADISON . . . . .	269
APPENDIX B--THE CLASS OF 1772 . . . . .	271
APPENDIX C--THE ADVERTISEMENT FOR ZION-PARNASSUS . . . . .	273
APPENDIX D--NORTH CAROLINA PRESBYTERIAN ACADEMIES IN McCORKLE'S TIME . . . . .	275
APPENDIX E--THE McCORKLE-SHARPE BILL OF 1784 . . . . .	277
APPENDIX F--ORIGINAL CHARTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA (WHEN IT BECAME LAW ON DECEMBER 11, 1789) . . . . .	280
APPENDIX G--UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA FUNDING ACT OF 1789 . . . . .	284
APPENDIX H--THE McCORKLE COMMITTEE'S PRELIMINARY PLAN OF EDUCATION . . . . .	286
APPENDIX I--THE CORNERSTONE-LAYING CEREMONY . . . . .	288



Chapter	Page
APPENDIX J—THE REPORT OF THE McCORKLE COMMITTEE: PLAN OF EDUCATION . . . . .	290
APPENDIX K—THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA . . . . .	292
APPENDIX L—THE DAVIE PLAN OF EDUCATION . . . . .	296
APPENDIX M—THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF SAMUEL E M <sup>C</sup> CORKLE . . . .	300

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Rowan County, North Carolina in 1780 . . . . .	2
2. Map of the Salisbury Area . . . . .	5

## CHAPTER I

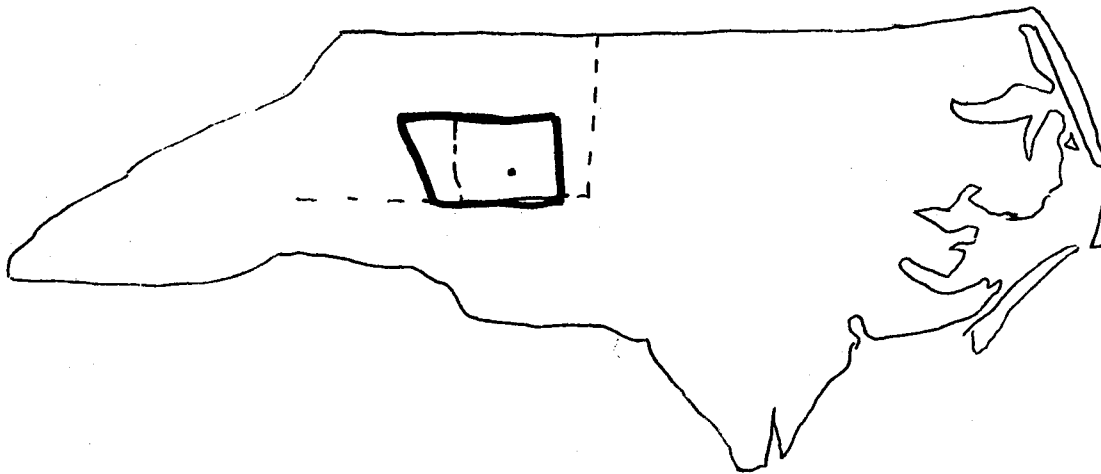
### INTRODUCTION

Samuel Eusebius McCorkle (1746-1811) was a Presbyterian minister who lived in Rowan County, North Carolina (see Figure 1), for most of his adult life. Besides serving as pastor of Thyatira Church near Salisbury, McCorkle was active in several early efforts to promote education in North Carolina. Among other activities, he helped establish at least two academies in Rowan County and was instrumental in founding the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.<sup>1</sup>

This biographical study will deal with McCorkle in two respects. First, it will consider the man and his times, attempting to recreate the life of a Presbyterian minister living in the frontier society of eighteenth century North Carolina. Second, it will sketch McCorkle's educational contributions, hoping to show clearly the early stages of educational development in North Carolina from about 1780 to 1800. The introductory chapter will provide a background of time and place against which to place McCorkle and his work in education in North Carolina.

---

<sup>1</sup>Eli W. Caruthers, "Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, D.D., 1774-1811," Annals of the American Pulpit, ed., William B. Sprague (New York: 1969), III, p. 346. Hereafter, this will be cited as Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit. He wrote the sketch of McCorkle by 1850, and Sprague originally published the work in 1859. The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography (New York: 1897), VII, p. 223. Hereafter, this will be cited as NCAB. Archibald Henderson Papers, 3650, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, folder 192. Hereafter, this will be cited as Henderson Papers.



Source: David L. Corbitt, The Formation of the North Carolina Counties, 1663-1943 (Raleigh: 1950), pp. 285-289. This map shows the approximate county lines of Rowan County in 1780. In 1760 Rowan County was larger, being that area in the northwestern part of North Carolina as contained within the broken lines. In 1788 Iredell County was set off from Rowan County and is that area west of the line within the Rowan County of 1780; Corbitt, p. 127. The dot is approximate location of Salisbury.

Figure 1. Rowan County, North Carolina in 1780

It will first sketch the North Carolina of the latter eighteenth century and then outline educational development in British America to the time of Samuel McCorkle.

### Early Rowan County

North Carolina is divided into three geographic regions—the coastal plain along the ocean, the piedmont in the center, and the mountains in the west. Rowan County lies in the piedmont area, and the county seat is Salisbury. Two rivers, the Yadkin and the Catawba, flow through the rich bottomlands and clearings of the Rowan area in a southerly direction. Beyond the two river valleys lie rolling hills dotted by pine and hardwoods. Once the Yadkin and Catawba ran clear and swift through the piedmont, and only Indians and large trees lived near them. "Yadkin," as a matter of fact, is the Indian name for large tree.<sup>2</sup>

Early visitors to the Rowan area noted its beauty and richness. In the first decade of the eighteenth century, John Lawson, the Surveyor-General of the Province of North Carolina, together with his companions and Indian guides, traveled north from Charles Town, taking the Indian trails. Near present day Salisbury, they crossed the Yadkin at the Trading Ford. This ford was the place where the Trading Path—the trail which fur traders in Virginia used to reach the local Indians—met the Yadkin. Salisbury was later built on the traders' camp site about

---

<sup>2</sup>James S. Brawley, The Rowan Story, 1753-1953: A Narrative History of Rowan County, North Carolina (Salisbury: 1953), p. 3. Cordelia Camp, The Influence of Geography Upon Early North Carolina (Raleigh: 1963), pp. 1, 3.

six miles from the ford. Lawson enthusiastically described what he saw in his journal.<sup>3</sup>

Game was abundant. Ducks, the like of which he had never seen before, lived in the creeks. They had "top-knots," red circles around their eyes, and multi-colored feathers. What Lawson's party shot at with their flintlocks had to be wood ducks—they live in trees near creeks, have the markings described, and can be stalked to within easy rifle range. Woodcocks and pigeons were also plentiful. Walking through the hills and valleys, Lawson noted the area's fertility and wrote that the great number of oaks "would render it an excellent Country for raising great Herds of Swine." These oaks were so tall that turkeys perched in their tops were safe from the gunfire of Lawson's party below, even though they "shot very often, and our Guns were very good."<sup>4</sup>

Lawson observed the potential of the Rowan area. The ground was relatively free of underbrush and could be readily cleared. There were stones handy for the construction of fence or well. Many creeks, well stocked with fish and fowl, fed into rivers which themselves flowed into the ocean. These creeks (see Figure 2) would be useful for transportation, and near them were trees which could be shaped into lumber. The soil was rich, the rainfall plentiful, and the grass tall.<sup>5</sup>

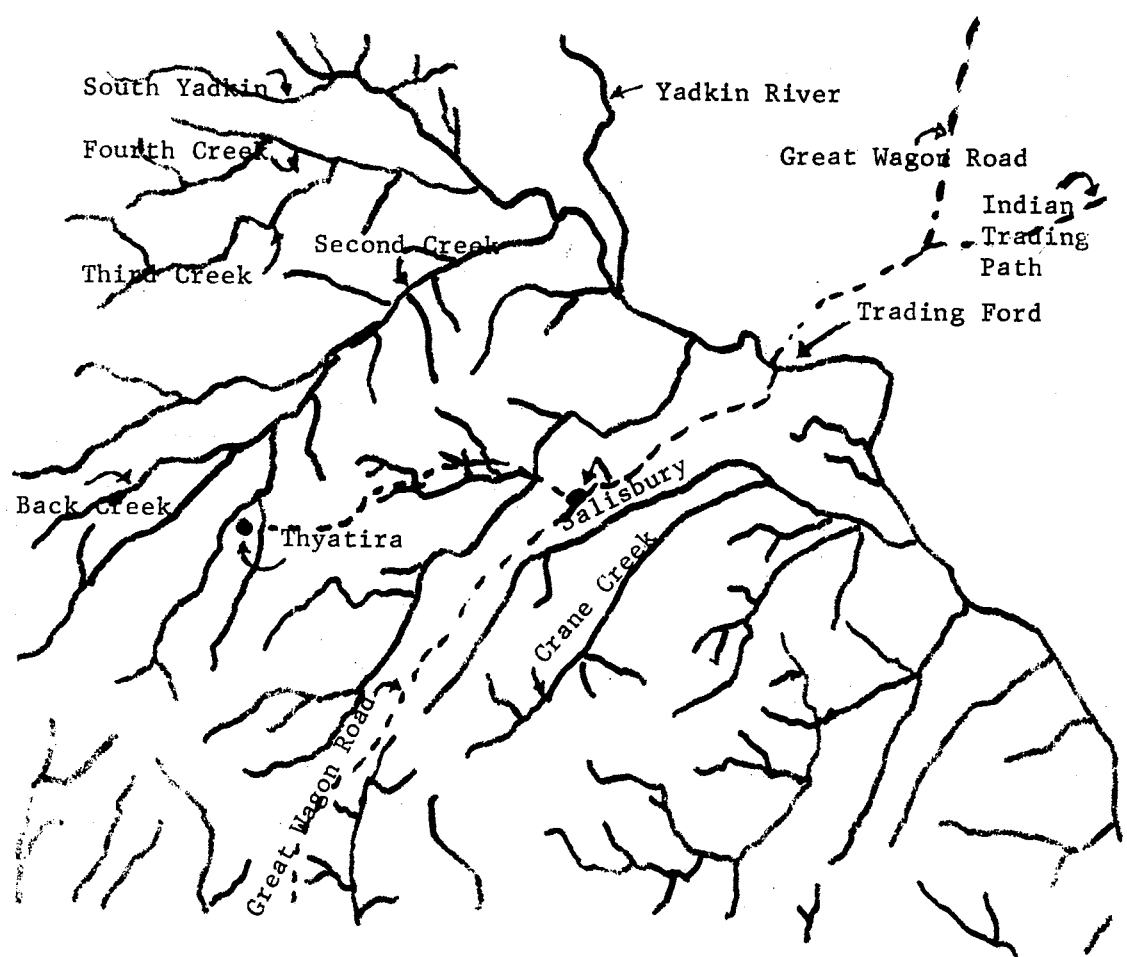
In 1728 William Byrd traveled through the Rowan area and was similarly impressed by the rich soil, large trees, and abundant, lush

---

<sup>3</sup>Samuel J. Ervin, Jr., "A Colonial History of Rowan County, North Carolina," The James Sprunt Historical Publications (Chapel Hill: 1917), XVI, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Frances L. Harriss, ed., Lawson's History of North Carolina (Richmond: 1951), pp. 41-42. Originally printed in London in 1714.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 42-43. Lawson was killed on another such trip in 1711, the victim of an Indian attack; Ibid., p. xvii.



one inch equals about six miles

Source: This map was traced from one entitled "Original Land Grants in the 'Irish' and 'Trading Camp' Settlements, 1747-62," included in Robert W. Ramsey, Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762 (Chapel Hill: 1964), pp. 108-109.

Figure 2. Map of the Salisbury Area

grass. The fish, fowl, and deer were also plentiful. Those traders who passed through usually stopped in the Rowan area for a couple of days to allow their horses and themselves to rest. In a letter he wrote in 1731, Byrd claimed that North Carolina was a bountiful country where people could live on very little labor, and that it was a happy country with both fertility and beauty. Byrd wanted to locate some of those lands for speculative purposes. He believed that the soil was good and would produce almost anything which the climate permitted, but he felt that the problem of marketing crops would keep the area from becoming immediately productive. This would end, however, with settlers, and Byrd wanted to get hold of an estate before that day.<sup>6</sup>

Settlement in the North Carolina of Byrd's day was confined to the coastal plain, and it was reasonably well ordered and prosperous. By 1742, the colony still had only about 6,800 residents, mainly in the tidewater. About a third were white—small merchants, artisans, lawyers, officials, farmers, doctors, and clergy. The Anglican religion was the most pervasive and active, and education was limited to the private tutors among wealthy families and the Anglican missionary efforts in a few settlements. Such instruction was limited to lessons in Christian piety and the manners appropriate to the charge's future station in life. However, this pattern of settlement and culture was soon to end.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>William K. Boyd, ed., Histories of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina with Introduction and Notes (Raleigh: 1929), p. 300. William L. Saunders, ed., The Colonial Records of North Carolina (Raleigh: 1886), III, p. 194. From a letter which Byrd sent to Captain George Burrington dated Virginia, July 20, 1731.

<sup>7</sup>Frederick P. Bowes, The Culture of Early Charleston (Chapel Hill: 1942), p. 35.



Others following Lawson and Byrd noticed the potential of the area —that it abounded in grass and large trees, that rainfall was sufficient and game plentiful, that oaks in the woods could sustain hogs, and that the rich bottomlands along the creeks and rivers would grow corn without taking much effort to clear the ground. A crop could be harvested the first year.

The early settlers in North Carolina who lived in the coastal plain probably never were aware of the rich potential of the piedmont and the Rowan area. There was a reason; the geography of North Carolina proved a natural barrier to westward movement. Neither passable river nor road ran from the coastal plain through the pine barrens to the piedmont. Most of the settlers who came finally to western North Carolina arrived from South Carolina or Virginia. Some of them traveled north from Charles Town; many came south on the Great Wagon Road which ran 435 miles from Philadelphia through the Valley of Virginia to the piedmont of North Carolina. The "road" was at first an Indian trail and then a wagon path used by the white traders, but it was, at any rate, the natural route to western North Carolina.<sup>8</sup>

Migration into western North Carolina where Samuel McCorkle would live is sometimes said to have begun about 1735, but it is not likely that settlers in appreciable numbers reached the Rowan area until the decade after 1750. Mathew Rowan, later the governor of the colony, traveled through the piedmont in 1746, and he estimated that not a hundred men lived in the Yadkin area. By 1753, Rowan estimated that 3,000 people had settled in the area. In 1755 Governor Arthur Dobbs

---

<sup>8</sup>Brawley, p. 12.

visited the area. He claimed that 75 Scotch-Irish families, all of them having at least five to ten children, lived on his land in the Rowan area, as well as 20 German families. These families had settled and were raising, besides their children, some grain and livestock. Both the Scotch-Irish and Germans were recent migrants to America, having left Europe for a combination of political, economic, and religious reasons. By 1756 there were probably about 5,000 people living in Rowan County.<sup>9</sup>

Since the McCorkles migrated from Ulster, their experience typifies that of the Scotch-Irish. These were the Scots who were transplanted to Ulster (northern Ireland) in the early seventeenth century in the hope that Ireland (not to mention certain English lords) would profit from the Scotch example of industry and loyalty. But the arrival of the Scots created tensions because of the religious and ethnic conflict with Ireland's native inhabitants. Often the clashes between the two groups

---

<sup>9</sup>Chalmers G. Davidson, Piedmont Partisan: The Life and Times of Brigadier-General William Lee Davidson (Davidson: 1951), pp. 4, 11. Hereafter, this will be cited as Davidson, Piedmont Partisan. Robert W. Ramsey, Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762 (Chapel Hill: 1964), p. 193, said there were 1,531 taxables living in Rowan County in 1756, and this would be something over 5,000 people. William K. Boyd, Some Eighteenth Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina with Introductions and Notes (Raleigh: 1927), p. 415, confirms the number 1,531 for 1756, but Hugh T. Lefler and Albert R. Newsome, North Carolina: The History of a Southern State (Chapel Hill: 1954), p. 118, said that the population in 1756 was 1,170 of whom 54 were black. Boyd found some original records not included in the Colonial Records, and this is one part. Governor Tryon in December, 1768, had John Burgwyn, Clerk of the Court of Chancery and Secretary of the Council, make a survey of taxables in the colony. Burgwyn's report was called "North Carolina. A Table of the Number of Taxables in this Province from the Year 1748 inclusive, with the Taxes laid for each Year, and an Account of the Sums that Should Arise by the Sinking Tax Yearly to the Year 1770." The figures showing taxables in Rowan County were taken from this report. It may be that surveys were not made in 1755, 1763, and perhaps not in 1758, judging from the similarity to figures for the years preceding these.

were precipitated by major events in England such as the Glorious Revolution in 1688. Famine visited as frequently as the upheavals and as cruelly. Despite the hardships, Ulster prospered. Fearing competition with English agriculture, Parliament limited the production of linen, livestock, and wool in Ulster. Moreover, rents and leases were drastically raised, effectively evicting small farmers and tenants.<sup>10</sup>

Unrest in Ulster because of the Scotch-Irish presence, rent-racking by English landlords, restrictions on production by Parliament, potato famines in 1725, 1740, and 1741, and drought in 1754 led to misery for the Scotch-Irish in Ulster. But the last straw came when the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians were forced to conform to the established religion, to contribute to and observe the directions of the Church of England. Many Scotch-Irish left for America; they came to do what they knew—to take up vacant land and farm it, especially on the frontier. Many of the earlier settlers in the colonies were no doubt delighted the Scotch-Irish would act as a buffer zone between the Indians and civilization. Somewhat hardened and immune to a hostile environment from their Ulster experience, the Scotch-Irish set about to wring a living from the land in America.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup>The McCorkle family papers at Lock Neal's in China Grove, North Carolina. These papers are a miscellaneous collection of marriage licenses, sermon receipts, and other scraps. Many of the papers were lost when the papers were divided among the McCorkle descendants. Archibald Henderson had selected much of the Lock Neal portion for his own study of McCorkle, and these papers burned when the Henderson residence caught fire and burned. Hereafter, these will be cited as the McCorkle family papers. Henry J. Ford, The Scotch-Irish in America (New York: 1941), pp. 1, 8, 155. James G. Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish: A Social History (Chapel Hill: 1962), pp. 157-160, 172.

<sup>11</sup>Leyburn, p. 166. Ford, pp. 163, 164, 211.

From 1717 to 1776, an estimated 200,000 Scotch-Irish migrated to America. The Scotch-Irish immigrants were part of the growth of the British colonies, the population of which more than doubled from 1727 to 1754. By the latter date the total number of people (apparently excluding Indians) in British America was about a million and a half, of whom about a fifth were black.<sup>12</sup>

Many of the Scotch-Irish landed in Philadelphia and settled first in western Pennsylvania. Despite Indian reprisals and outbreaks of disease, the frontier was subdued and the available land occupied. Newly arrived, would-be settlers then moved southward to the Valley of Virginia, and when that was peopled, they moved on to the piedmont of North Carolina. Land was distributed through grants to those who would promise to settle subjects on their grant, and these grantees then sold smaller plots to speculators or farmers.<sup>13</sup>

Those who wanted to go to America could sometimes not afford their own passage. Often immigrants signed indentures to work in America for a number of years, usually about four, in return for passage. Frequently ship captains sold these indentures to employers in America, making a tidy profit from their cargo of immigrants. Those migrants transported as indentured servants served their time before taking up their own lands. Some accounts estimate that a full half of the immigrants in colonial America came this way.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>Leyburn, p. 157. Fort, p. 211.

<sup>13</sup>Ford, pp. 211, 218.

<sup>14</sup>Leyburn, p. 176. According to Abbot E. Smith, Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607-1776 (Gloucester: 1965), whether as convicts, indentured servants, or redemptioners, half of the colonists who arrived south of New England

The first of the Scotch-Irish settlers in the Rowan area had probably arrived before 1750, and the County of Rowan was established in 1753 from Anson County to better serve their needs for roads, land, and justice. In 1753, a prison and courthouse were built in Rowan County, and a tax was levied of four shillings and a penny half-penny proclamation money per taxable (a taxable was defined as a white male over 16 or a Negro of either sex over 12).<sup>15</sup>

A settlement began in 1755 near where the Great Wagon Road forded the Yadkin. It was called Salisbury, probably for Salisbury, England, on the banks of the Avon River, although there was also Salisbury Township in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, along the Pequea Creek (from where many of the Scotch-Irish came). Salisbury, North Carolina, was the administrative center of Rowan County and barely a settlement, for there was no school, library, newspaper, or church. The court met there, and new settlers stopped in on their search for their own land. In 1755, Governor Dobbs described the village as having about seven or eight buildings. But Salisbury was growing and by 1762 had some 35 homes, inns, and shops, and 74 of its 256 town lots had been sold. Settlers such as the McCorkles usually located along the many creeks because the bottomland had the richest soil and was closest to the water, both for easy transportation and as a water supply. The early

---

came as servants. Transportation of convicts was cruel but viewed as "education," and it supplied cheap labor to landowners in the South. Those indentured servants who were transported often were apprenticed to learn a trade, and at the completion of their term of indenture, they earned their "freedom dues" (perhaps 50 acres, tools, clothing, and a few supplies), pp. 3, 17, 141, 291, 300.

<sup>15</sup>David L. Corbitt, The Formation of the North Carolina Counties, 1663-1943 (Raleigh: 1950), p. 185.

settlers quickly took up the best lands. Thus by 1760 Rowan County with Salisbury as its county seat was on its way to being settled, a situation which was also true for most of the piedmont.<sup>16</sup>

The Highland Scots also came to North Carolina and settled in the interior, but they located somewhat east of the piedmont and more in the pine barrens. When the name "Scot" or "Scotch" is mentioned in the history of North Carolina, it usually refers to those Highland Scots, also Presbyterians, who settled in the coastal plain. They were farmers and merchants and, unlike the Scotch-Irish, largely remained loyal to George III during the Revolution. These Highland Scots and the pine forests became a barrier between the piedmont and the tidewater.<sup>17</sup>

What plantations there may have been in North Carolina were located mainly in the tidewater region or coastal plain. The Scotch-Irish had little communication with this area but resented its political hegemony. The few merchants who traded with the piedmont were Scots, but most of the agricultural production of the piedmont beyond subsistence went down the Yadkin or Catawba to small towns in South Carolina. The primary cultural and religious contact of the Scotch-Irish was to the north (to their people in Pennsylvania) rather than to the east.<sup>18</sup>

The pine barrens and the southerly flow of rivers from the piedmont contributed to the lack of trade with the east, but the fact that an

---

<sup>16</sup>Leyburn, p. 218. Ervin, p. 21. Ramsey, pp. 203, 169, 202. William H. Egle, An Illustrated History of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Harrisburg: 1876), p. 853.

<sup>17</sup>Duane Meyer, The Highland Scots of North Carolina, 1732-1776 (Chapel Hill: 1957), pp. 90, 91, 151.

<sup>18</sup>Ian C. C. Graham, Colonists from Scotland: Emigration to North America, 1707-1783 (Ithaca: 1956), p. 20.

outer barrier blocked ships from the coast of North Carolina was also a major factor in forcing the flow of trade either south to ports in South Carolina or north on the Great Wagon Road to Virginia. Inland trade was limited to smaller craft on the rivers, for the roads were bad; moreover, their lackluster maintenance by local corvee and overseer did not soon improve them. The navigation acts confined legal trade to enumerated goods, but there was a fair amount of smuggling in colonial North Carolina. The chief exports were naval stores (tar, pitch, turpentine), but their reception at the marketplace was somewhat unenthusiastic because of a reputation for poor quality. Slave labor was commonly blamed for its faults. Some grains, livestock, and fish were marketed as was tobacco, but corn, wheat, hogs, and cattle were mainly local products. The dietary staples became hogs and hominy.

The major industry in colonial North Carolina was agriculture, and it was fairly simple, for little capital and primitive techniques were used in production. The lack of availability of markets was related to the quality of transportation. Most people were engaged in subsistence farming and were able to raise about 700 bushels of corn per worker with slave labor yielding somewhat less output. Slaves were used in the production of shingles and staves during the off season. Lack of markets and transport slowed economic development, but it was further hampered by a lack of capital, credit, and a perhaps justifiable fear of merchants and currency. Cheap land continually drained off the labor supply. Certain practices wore down the soil and made it necessary to hunt cattle and hogs which grew wild fending for themselves in the woods, and such techniques could hardly have led to superior yields.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup>Charles C. Crittenden, The Commerce of North Carolina, 1763-1789

The soil in the Rowan area was red and rich, and it was productive. The average rainfall was probably about 40 to 50 inches in most areas. Crops such as corn required no great labor nor any special care or hurry in harvesting. The corn became a staple for both family and livestock, and most families also raised their own vegetables. Hogs were turned into the woods to forage for acorns. Geography was kind to North Carolina and to its settlers, and it is likely that most families with sufficient care could produce most of their own food.<sup>20</sup>

The period of history which this study of Samuel McCorkle deals with is from about 1750 to about 1810. During this period there were three stages in the economic development of Rowan County (indeed, in all of North Carolina)—all of them agricultural. The first stage was that of the frontiersman venturing out into the howling wilderness. He opened up paths and brought back knowledge of the lands, streams, and forests to others who were interested in settling. The frontiersman was little different from the Indian in that he usually was concerned with hunting, trapping, fishing, and perhaps cultivating a small garden by his cabin. In the second stage settlers entered the forest primeval and began to wring a subsistence by farming along the creeks and clearings. Gradually, these settlers cleared the virgin cover from the land and carved out their farms. This was the log cabin stage where farmers mainly girdled trees, planted corn around their trunks, turned

---

(New Haven: 1936), pp. viii, 20, 22, 43, 58, 59, 64. Settlers cleared lands by slash and burn methods which deprived soils of needed cover and enrichment. Repeated planting of corn and tobacco exhausted fields, because these row crops exposed top soil to the forces of wind and rain. Crops were not rotated to renourish soil, and fertilizer was not used.

<sup>20</sup>Cornelius O. Cathey, Agriculture in North Carolina Before the Civil War (Raleigh: 1966), pp. 2, 6, 10.



their hogs loose to forage in the woods, and gradually burned down the trees and began planting tobacco and wheat. In the third stage farming had developed to the point of being commercial. Surplus corn, hogs, and wheat were marketed, and the farmers used the profits to acquire more land, livestock, slaves, and acres under the plow. Cabins were expanded to several rooms, and kitchens and smokehouses were added in the yard.

In this geographic setting, Samuel E. McCorkle came to North Carolina, grew up, was educated. He was sent off to school and to train for the ministry, but he returned as a minister to piedmont North Carolina. He became quite interested in the movement for education in North Carolina, and his efforts were much influenced by the geography of the piedmont and its population. Even his somewhat haphazard efforts to become a farmer and landowner can only be understood against the broader picture of the frontier society of piedmont North Carolina.<sup>21</sup>

#### The English Educational System

In order to understand the experience of Samuel McCorkle as an educator, we must realize the not surprising fact that the educational "system" in the English colonies was largely modeled after that of England. While there was no formal educational ladder in England, there were five distinct types of schools: the petty school, guild school, charity school, grammar school, and college.

The beginning student attended a petty school where he learned the alphabet from a primer and hornbook, and then he advanced to the catechism from which he learned biblical verses, morality, manners, and

---

<sup>21</sup>Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, pp. 346-349.

a little reading. The standard guide for this petty school education was Edmund Coote's The English Schoolmaster (1596), the ideas of which were still considered valid in McCorkle's day.<sup>22</sup>

The boys of working class families and sometimes orphans were apprenticed to tradesmen and attended schools which the guilds ran (e.g.,—in America Benjamin Franklin was first apprenticed to his father, a chandler, and then to his brother, a printer). Masters not only taught their apprentices the mystery of their trade but also caused them to learn to read, usually sending them to night class.<sup>23</sup>

Charity schools were founded by philanthropists and religious charities to spread the Christian faith to the poorer sort of people. The hope was that these godly nurseries would reform the lives of unfortunates, impressing upon them the virtues of work and the Christian faith. By 1714 over a thousand charity schools operated in England. Charity schools employed a hornbook and primer to learn the alphabet, a writing book to learn penmanship, and the Bible and The Whole Duty of Man to learn reading, piety, virtue, and morality.<sup>24</sup>

The purpose of the grammar school was to prepare students for college; that is, it trained future leaders and ministers in the scholarly languages, Latin and Greek. The impact of the grammar school on society was minimal. For instance, William Shakespeare was the soul of

<sup>22</sup>T. W. Baldwin, William Shakespere's Petty School (Urbana: 1943), pp. 25, 29, 31.

<sup>23</sup>Arthur F. Leach, English Schools at the Reformation, 1546-1548 (New York: 1968), p. 34.

<sup>24</sup>Leonard Cowie, Henry Newman, An American in London, 1708-43 (London: 1956), pp. 73, 96. W. K. Lowther Clarke, A History of the S.P.C.K. (London: 1959), p. 54.

his age, and yet he knew "small Latine and lesse Greek." Grammar school students memorized Latin passages, learning to read, speak, and write Latin, and religion and morality were not neglected, either.<sup>25</sup>

In the colleges the course of study, conducted in Latin and Greek, was the seven liberal arts—grammar, rhetoric, logic (the trivium), arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy (the quadrivium). The student was exposed to all knowledge, for "Grammar speaks, dialectic teaches the truth, rhetoric colors words, music sings, arithmetic numbers, geometry ponders, astronomy concerns the stars." The trivium was most important; "Grammar taught one to write and speak correctly, rhetoric to do it elegantly, and logic to do it reasonably." Such an education was solely devoted to the classical antiquities; one learned for the sake of learning because it was the source of virtue and truth. The students at Oxford and Cambridge developed an ability for incisive thought, clear and graceful expression, and a commitment to community service.<sup>26</sup>

The English educational system provided training based upon class privileges and left it to the individual's pride to find his place in society, acquiring an appropriate education commensurate with his social rank. First, education was mainly for leaders, and it was privately supported. Second, the social, moral, and vocational training of the

---

<sup>25</sup>T. W. Baldwin, William Shakespeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greek (Urbana: 1944), I, pp. 2, 18, 117, 202.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., I, p. 325. Mark H. Curtis, Oxford and Cambridge in Transition, 1558-1642: An Essay on Changing Relations between the English Universities and English Society (Oxford: 1959), pp. 264, 281. Samuel E. Morison, The Puritan Pronaos: Studies in the Intellectual Life of New England in the Seventeenth Century (New York: 1936), p. 162.

lower classes was largely through the apprenticeship system. Finally, the Puritan idea of the wilderness Zion in the New World required both universal literacy and trained clergy.<sup>27</sup>

#### Puritan Schooling and the Frontier

The Puritans migrated to Massachusetts Bay with the idea of founding a Bible commonwealth or city set upon a hill. After they had perfected a working model of society based on the Puritan view of Christianity, the Puritans expected to take their wilderness Zion back to England and purify the Church of its abuses and the society of its corruptions. Puritan theory held that everyman was his own priest, and the church service should be so framed as to stimulate intelligent communion between the soul and its maker. Good preaching would not in itself save people but could draw their attention to their own election. Ministers, therefore, needed to be well trained in the Bible, the scholarly languages, classics, logic, and speaking, and their congregations needed to be literate that they might know God's word for themselves.<sup>28</sup>

The Puritans settled in towns and farmed the surrounding lands. The idea of the Puritan utopia was not forgotten, as can be seen in the efforts to found schools to increase industry, piety, virtue, and to eliminate waste. The Puritans brought with them the English system of petty school (usually called "common" school in America), apprenticeship,

---

<sup>27</sup> Paul Monroe, Founding of the American Public School System: A History of Education in the United States from the Early Settlements to the Close of the Civil War Period (New York: 1940), pp. 6-7.

<sup>28</sup> Mary L. Gambrell, Ministerial Training in Eighteenth-Century New England (New York: 1937), p. 10.

Latin grammar school, and college. Since for the Puritans, the blueprint for the new society was based on the word of God, universal literacy was a prerequisite to the purification of both society and religion. Thus, schools were founded to build the city upon the hill, that all might know the will of God for themselves and society and the deluder Satan might not lead the unsuspecting into disbelief and error.<sup>29</sup>

The Puritan schools educated both the leaders and the followers. Often children learned their letters and perhaps a few Bible verses from a neighborhood woman in what were aptly called "dame" schools. Most children then attended the "common" school where a young master conducted classes for the common people in the meetinghouse or a building built for classes.

The prime function of the common school was to instill self-restraint, patience, and diligence in students, because without the proper self-discipline, evil would be unrestrained ("idle hands were the devil's playmate"). If such an education was full of fear and coercive, it was mainly due to the difficulty of restraining evil in children. The inculcation of morality and good behavior stopped the individual from being led astray by his own foolishness and ignorance, and by restraining the individual's potentiality for evil, the opportunity for misconduct (not to mention eternal misery) was considerably lessened.<sup>30</sup>

Conditions in the common school likely militated against learning much more than the Puritan creed. The master owed his position more to

---

<sup>29</sup>Louis B. Wright, The Cultural Life of the American Colonies, 1607-1763 (New York: 1957), p. 25.

<sup>30</sup>Michael Zuckerman, Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century (New York: 1970), p. 75.

religious orthodoxy than to pedagogical expertise, and he merely bided his time until a better opportunity, such as a vacant pulpit or farm, presented itself. The common school did not have a blackboard, map, pencils, globe, or desks. Students sat all day on benches waiting to be called to the master to recite a passage or read a few lines from the Bible. In a long day they completed a half page of writing, a few sums, and a reading lesson. Not surprisingly, the deluder Satan found plenty of mischief for idle hands, and punishment was prompt and did not spare the rod. While students supposedly learned the three "R's," they probably learned the other two "R's" better—religion and self-restraint, for the curriculum really consisted of five "R's" and not three. The common school graduates were the Puritans, well versed in the Bible, self-restraint, self-disciplined, but poor readers and spellers. The more notable Puritan schools, which trained the future leaders of society, were the Latin grammar school and the college.<sup>31</sup>

The Latin grammar school, like its English predecessor, simply prepared students in Latin and Greek grammar and literature, although the five "R's" were also taught. A boy of eight entered the Latin grammar school and by the age of 14 was prepared to enter college. The Puritans wanted their ministers and magistrates college educated, and students were required to be fluent in the classical languages before they entered college. The grammar school in England gave a classical education to the middle class, largely as a fitting or finishing course, but such was less the case in Massachusetts Bay.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup>Walter H. Small, Early New England Schools (Boston: 1914), pp. 395, 396, 31.

<sup>32</sup>Elmer E. Brown, The Making of Our Middle Schools (New York: 1926), p. 18. Morison, The Puritan Pronaos, p. 56.

The Puritan intellectuals nourished classicism to produce leaders; they were often well educated but displaced gentry or deprived ministers who were dissatisfied and had migrated to America. The source of Puritan intellectual life was the English university, especially Cambridge, and the English university was primarily a feeder for the Church, although it trained gentry as well. The Puritans brought the schools to New England to stave off intellectual degeneracy which would foster spiritual decay. The Puritan mind venerated learning, respected the humanities, and thus considered far more than merely material values in life.<sup>33</sup>

Harvard College was founded by the Puritans in 1636 with the aim of training a literate clergy. Modeled on Emmanuel College, Cambridge (where the founders were mainly educated), Harvard offered the typical collegiate training, four years of the seven liberal arts for the bachelor's degree. Students wore gowns, resided with their tutors in a dormitory, and were forced to speak and write in Latin. Harvard was controlled by the Church, and its discipline reflected it. Each entering class was taught by one tutor for the entire four years, and he took them through the whole curriculum. The study of divinity began with graduation when candidates for the ministry began an apprenticeship under a practicing minister. Students were first grounded in doctrine; they could pursue learning later. The master's degree, normally awarded to ministers in course (after three years of good behavior, payment of a small fee, and a public display of additional learning), required no

---

<sup>33</sup>Morison, The Puritan Pronaos, pp. 17, 19, 264, 265.

special study, but competence in the classical studies, theology, and philosophy had to be demonstrated.<sup>34</sup>

Formal Puritan education imported the English model—the petty school, Latin grammar school, and college—to the New World. But the English system proved insufficient to changing conditions in America, and modifications occurred as the moving school, advertising school, navigation school, and academy came on the scene offering a broader and more useful course of study for lower class boys who were more interested in a trade than in Latin phrases. Lessons in surveying or navigation were certainly not a part of either the trivium or quadrivium, and they were often conducted in English. This is not to say that the upper classes gave up the classical training of their sons, the mark of a gentlemen; only such mental furniture kept them from being provincials.

However, about 80 per cent of the population were farmers who settled out on their own land as settlement progressed in America. About another 18 per cent of the population were artisans, working people who learned a trade and passed it on to their sons along with a bit of the five "R's" that could be learned in night school. The working class believed in education as the sure route to success, but they replaced the study of Latin and Greek with the study of more practical subjects. Thus most boys, either formally or informally, were apprenticed to learn a trade. By the time that Samuel McCorkle began

---

<sup>34</sup>Samuel E. Morison, The Founding of Harvard College (Cambridge: 1935), pp. 8, 62, 229. Harvard was not the first college founded in the English colonies, as a "college" was begun in Virginia at Henrico to Christianize Indian children. Apparently the effort was not entirely successful, for a massacre in 1622 ended the educational endeavor, according to Robert H. Land, "Henrico and Its College," William and Mary Quarterly, second series, 18 (1938), p. 487. Gambrell, pp. 18, 20.



his schooling, the Latin grammar school and college reflected the conservative, Anglican, Tory society, and the academy represented the bustling, ambitious, energetic, and increasing working class.<sup>35</sup>

Except for a few planters and merchants, most people were still struggling to wring out a subsistence from the wilderness, and they did not have the opportunity for formal schooling. Some of them attended church services as much for learning about politics and current events as to remain orthodox in their faith. As James T. Adams said, from town meeting to sermon to lecture, no nation ever talked as much as America. This pattern of dispersed settlement was particularly true of the South, where there were few towns and where on the eve of the Revolution the population was about 700,000, slightly less than half being black.<sup>36</sup>

One large group was not educated in colonial America—women. The belief was that a woman's sole purpose was to lighten her man's burden, and since marriage was her reason for existence, a spinster who was not married was shamed. In the colonial family authority was held by the man, and descent, inheritance, and succession were traced through him. Courtship was necessarily short because of the lack of available

---

<sup>35</sup> Carl Bridenbaugh, The Colonial Craftsman (New York: 1950), pp. 1, 130, 167. Carl and Jessica Bridenbaugh, Rebels and Gentlemen: Philadelphia in the Age of Franklin (New York: 1962), p. 67. For interesting discussions of the matter of apprenticeship education, see: Robert F. Seybolt, Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship Education in Colonial New York and New England (New York: 1917); Marcus W. Jernegan, Laboring and Dependent Classes in Colonial America, 1607-1783: Studies of the Economic, Educational, and Social Significance of Slaves, Servants, Apprentices, and Poor Folk (Chicago: 1931); Robert F. Seybolt, The Evening School in Colonial America (Urbana: 1925).

<sup>36</sup> Thomas J. Wertenbaker, The First Americans, 1607-1690 (New York: 1929), p. 261. James T. Adams, Frontiers of American Culture: A Study of Adult Education in a Democracy (New York: 1944), p. 145. Carl Bridenbaugh, Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South (Baton Rouge: 1952), p. 3.

candidates, leisure for pursuit, mobility, and the overwhelming need for a helper on the farm. Moreover, responsibilities in life far outweighed consideration of lengthy engagements or worries about the degree of happiness with the intended party. Only the wealthy worried about anything different. Women belonged in the home. The "height of ambition" for girls was sewing and perhaps some reading, writing, drawing, and music. Any more than this, it was felt, would undermine a girl's health, unsex her, and menace the welfare of the human race. This prejudice in classic form appeared in advice to boys, "Wrangling and quarreling are the characteristics of a weak mind, leave that to women, be you always above it."<sup>37</sup>

#### Education in the South

In the South the settlers also brought with them the English system of petty, Latin grammar, and charity schools, apprenticeship, and college. Because settlement was predominantly rural, the founding or continued existence of schools was much more tenuous than in the more urbanized societies to the north. As such, there were very few common schools, mainly because there were few Southern utopian communities requiring universal education.

There were Latin grammar schools in the South, but their character differed from those in Puritan Massachusetts. For the Puritans culture

---

<sup>37</sup>Mary S. Benson, Women in Eighteenth-Century America (New York: 1935), p. 17. Julia C. Spruill, Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies (Chapel Hill: 1938), p. 139. John Sirjamaki, The American Family in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: 1953), pp. 12, 59. Robert F. Seybolt, Source Studies in American Colonial Education: The Private School (Urbana: 1925), p. 69. Alma Lutz, Emma Willard: Pioneer Educator of American Women (Boston: 1964), p. vii. Monica Kiefer, American Children Through Their Books, 1700-1835 (Philadelphia: 1948), p. 78.

was developed by education, discipline, rigorous training of the intellectual, aesthetic, and moral side of human nature in the pursuit of truth, beauty, and virtue. But education in the colonial South seemed more a matter of conspicuous consumption—the purchase and collection of cultural trophies. Every home had the Bible, prayer book, and Pilgrim's Progress as a part of its literary furniture, and planters' libraries varied only in size.<sup>38</sup>

Conspicuous consumption meant a casual and haphazard approach to schooling in the South. The wealthier planters hired tutors for their children and did not favor establishing schools. As will be shown below, the established church failed to move very far in education. The cultural ideal was a laissez faire attitude toward the provision of schools, and only the rich and the poor were educated. Few communities sensed the need for schools or libraries, and there were relatively few artisans pushing for schooling. According to Carl Bridenbaugh:

It was universally admitted that because of the climate and comparative ease of existence under slave labor in a fruitful country, most men lacked the questing curiosity, energy, and perseverance essential to outstanding achievement in the arts and sciences or in statecraft.<sup>39</sup>

In 1622 the massacre at Henrico ended the school founded to convert Indians. In 1693 William and Mary, more a Latin grammar school than a

---

<sup>38</sup>Bridenbaugh, Myths and Realities, pp. 99, 41.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 75, 100, 102, 105, 187, 113. A contrary view of education in the South held that it was influenced by the prevailing materialism. Individuals were mainly preoccupied with private busyness in pursuit of gain. While this seemed both meaningful and practical, it led to no rational, purposeful, socially-oriented labor and resulted in economic chaos and social fragmentation. Thus, education was a private rather than a community matter. As wealth and leisure increased, schooling became more important; David Bertleson, The Lazy South (New York: 1967), pp. 40-41, 82.

college for many years, was founded, but it did not achieve a prestigious reputation. Even in the decade after 1770, William and Mary was felt to be badly directed and confused: tutors were playing cards and getting drunk at a tavern in the evenings, tuition was prohibitive, and two trustees were engaged in a war in the newspapers.<sup>40</sup>

Efforts by charities faced their own set of problems. In 1701 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (the S.P.G.) began in order to take the gospel to the colonies. S.P.G. missionaries were ministers of the Anglican faith, but they were not always of the highest caliber, nor were they always well received. Because of the lack of churches, S.P.G. missionaries traveled about, preaching and catechizing where they could. Schools were founded in the hope that the Church might reach parents through their children. S.P.G. schoolmasters were zealous and trained, but they were not blessed always with much common sense.<sup>41</sup>

A case in point was Charles Woodmason. He had emigrated to America in 1752 and in 13 years acquired 18 slaves and 2000 acres of plantation lands. In 1765 he gave up the worldly life, returned to England, and became an S.P.G. missionary to the frontier of North Carolina. An educated member of the English gentry, Woodmason was appalled by the "crudeness and sinful practices" on the frontier. He estimated that 94 per cent of the women he married were pregnant and that 90 per cent of the adults had venereal disease. Something of a hostile witness,

---

<sup>40</sup>Hunter D. Farish, ed., Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion (Williamsburg: 1945), p. 65.

<sup>41</sup>Edgar W. Knight, ed., A Documentary History of Education in the South Before 1860 (Chapel Hill: 1953), I, p. 75.

Woodmason disliked those of dissenting religions (particularly those Presbyterians who started a dog fight outside the church while he was inside trying to preach), dirty and neglected children, the diet of corn bread and bacon, sleeping on cold floors where he stopped at night, itinerant ministers who were "eating up" the people, those who came to hear him out of curiosity and not devotion, and frontier practices such as races, games, cardplaying, throwing dice, dances, swearing, lying, "backbiting," and the practice of going to court, muster day, or church with a jug to watch the spectacle. Actually, Woodmason was not a happy missionary nor successful. Like others before him, Woodmason tried taking in 20 children, instructing them in the five "R's," and making them attend Sunday services in the hopes of impressing their relatives. Since Woodmason's district contained 45,000 square miles, and the Carolinas were the "Grave of the Clergy" (according to Woodmason's letter home, ten missionaries had died and others were sick), it is not surprising that the Anglicans did not enjoy overwhelming success in the Carolinas.<sup>42</sup>

The efforts of the S.P.G. were neutralized in three respects. First, the missionaries (often Oxford trained English gentry) tended to irritate those who were not Anglicans, sometimes into outright hostility, and the Anglican ministers never adapted their formalistic services to the needs of their audience. Second, the S.P.G. was tainted by its efforts to convert the Negro. Planters allowed assemblies

---

<sup>42</sup>Clement Eaton, A History of the Old South, 2nd ed. (New York: 1966), p. 49. Richard Hooker, The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: the Journal and other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant (Chapel Hill: 1953), pp. 13, 85, 98-99. Eaton's comments were based on Hooker, but he cited no pages.

of slaves only on Sunday; they often claimed slaves grew lazy after conversion; and they feared that education might lead to revolts. The S.P.G. effort in Barbados—plantations run by the S.P.G. on which they intended to convert slaves, train them with a skill, and free them—provoked much vocal opposition in the South. Third, S.P.G. education was typed as charity that took in Negroes, the poor, and orphans. The poor and orphans were taught the five "R's" and then bound out as apprentices to learn a trade which would save them from being among the dregs of society. S.P.G. efforts were noble, but the public saw them as relieving the parish or county from the cost of supporting dependent children. Equated as such with a workhouse, the S.P.G. school had little chance to draw students from the working class or make a long-term impact on colonial society.<sup>43</sup>

Despite the failures of Henrico, William and Mary, and the S.P.G., some successful educational endeavors were managed as adjustments in the

---

<sup>43</sup>Knight, A Documentary History, I, p. 78. Guy F. Wells, Parish Education in Colonial Virginia (New York: 1923), pp. 65, 73, 77, 89. Frank J. Klingberg, An Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South America: A Study in Americanization (Washington, D. C.: 1941), p. 7. For an interesting discussion of the matter of manumission and the status of slaves, see Frank Tannenbaum, Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas (New York: 1946). The use of Indians as slaves was not illegal in North Carolina, but it was not widespread, according to Almon W. Lauber, Indian Slavery in Colonial Times Within the Present Limits of the United States (New York: 1913), p. 262. The S.P.G. owned some 800 acres and 300 slaves on Barbados from 1710, and it operated several sugar plantations. A school, Codrington College, was founded to provide a classical education for the sons of gentry, and a free school was opened in 1745 which stressed vocational training. Profits from the plantations were used to run the schools at which slaves were trained. Actual emancipation did not occur during the colonial period, according to Frank J. Klingberg, ed., Codrington Chronicle: An Experiment in Anglican Altruism on a Barbados Plantation, 1710-1834 (Berkeley: 1949), pp. 10, 5, and J. Harry Bennett, Jr., Bondsmen and Bishops: Slavery and Apprenticeship on the Codrington Plantations of Barbados, 1710-1838 (Berkeley: 1958), pp. v, 5, 142.

English system were made to accommodate the environment in the South. Where towns existed (and the only town of consequence at this time was Charles Town), classical training existed as a badge of the upper classes. But other schooling developed—tutors, old field schools, academies.

In Virginia and South Carolina plantations were established in the coastal plain as far inland as the fall line (where rapids impeded further navigation of rivers). Planters used slave labor to produce tobacco and to build their wharves. But the tidewater also included many smaller planters and farmers. In the piedmont, once the farmer survived the subsistence period when he carved his farm from the virgin forest, he grew wheat and tobacco and carted them by wagon to the nearest point on a river from which the crops could be shipped. On the frontier life was occupied with wringing out a subsistence, surviving the starving time, clearing land, and building a cabin. If surplus corn remained beyond what was needed for food, it was fed to livestock or made into liquor, and in good years a few hogs or jugs of liquor were marketed.<sup>44</sup>

In the developing South education was largely informal. Boys learned farming or a trade from their fathers and girls homemaking from their mothers. A few planters and merchants sent their sons to William and Mary, Harvard, or England for finishing purposes, but the early training was usually conducted nearer home. A planter of substance hired a tutor for his children; the tutor was an indentured servant or a

---

<sup>44</sup>Edmund S. Morgan, Virginians at Home: Family Life in the Eighteenth Century (Williamsburg: 1952), p. 1.

young man studying for the ministry. His wages were paltry, but he lived with the family and taught on the plantation grounds.

Planters did not just sit around under magnolia trees and drink mint juleps. They worked hard, and they felt they had earned their station in life. Naturally, they did not want their sons to squander what they had acquired, and the tutor was hired to insure that diligence and honor were learned along with social graces, manners, and an appreciation for learning which their station in life called for. Morgan's delightful comment about arranged marriages could easily have been about education, "Since wisdom has never been the distinguishing mark of youth, the parents of families in the higher ranks of society frequently took an active part in planning their children's marriages."<sup>45</sup>

Philip Vickers Fithian, Samuel McCorkle's classmate at college and who also graduated in 1772, was placed with Robert Carter III at Nomini Hall in Virginia. He taught three boys and five girls, and all were at different levels. The elder son read Sallust, worked grammatical exercises, and translated Latin; the younger son read English, worked in grammar, wrote, and ciphered in subtraction; a nephew read, wrote, and ciphered in reduction; the eldest daughter read The Spectator, wrote, and began to cipher; the second daughter read from a speller and began to write; the other daughters were also in the speller or beginning their letters.<sup>46</sup>

The tutor and the college education which followed for the boys were a costly expense, and such an education was selective in that

---

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>46</sup>Farish, p. 20. Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 346.



probably only the large planter or merchant could afford them. Besides, the tutor tended to be young and impatient to be on to other things.

A letter from Fithian to the Reverend Enoch Green dated November 2, 1773, illustrates the point:

But [neither] money nor conveniency shall detain me long from my most important connections at home—You may expect me in may at the Synod.<sup>47</sup>

There were several ways, the old field school and the boarding school, that an education could be gotten less expensively, and smaller planters who could not afford tutors were the ones who used them. Several smaller planters would sometimes unite to purchase jointly the contract of an indentured servant who was then bound to them for about four to six years. They would place this man in a cabin in an unused, worn out tobacco field (thus, the name "old field school") convenient to all concerned. The man probably barely knew the five "R's" himself (although there were exceptions who had been schoolmasters in Europe), but he taught what he knew until his contract was finished and he could acquire his own land for which he had likely come to the New World. Learning may not always have occurred under ideal conditions with this type of teacher, for colonial newspapers frequently contained advertisements about runaway, alcoholic schoolmasters. In 1771 the Maryland Gazette ran a typical advertisement, "Ranaway—a servant man, who followed the occupation of schoolmaster, much given to drinking and gambling."<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>48</sup>Smith, p. 300. Willard S. Elsbree, The American Teacher: Evolution of a Profession in a Democracy (New York: 1939), p. 21.

Perhaps the expense of supporting a tutor or the problems associated with the old field school led to the founding of a new type of school, the private boarding school. Young men could be sent to this type of school for the following learning: (1) piety, virtue, and right behavior; (2) English, Latin, Greek, writing, music, speaking, and arithmetic; (3) geometry, logic, and geography; and (4) other sciences or languages. Curriculums in these boarding schools probably varied somewhat, but they still served the same purpose as for the tutor or the old field school. The course of study catered to the desire of the middle class to educate their sons for their places in life. Boarding schools began because the rural education in the form of tutors or old field schools did not work for the middle class and because there were rarely towns close by with schools in them. The boarding school was the prototype for the academy.<sup>49</sup>

#### The Academy and North Carolina

The academy originated about 1660 in England. In 1749, Benjamin Franklin planned an academy for Philadelphia, and it opened in 1751, together with a charity school; this academy became the University of Pennsylvania. Along with traditional work in the classical languages, Franklin's academy offered practical courses such as bookkeeping, navigation, and surveying. Different further from the colleges, Franklin's academy taught the sons of the working class useful courses and conducted them in English.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup>James McLachlan, American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study (New York: 1970), p. 42.

<sup>50</sup>Carl Van Doren, Benjamin Franklin (New York: 1938), p. 193.

The academy became the most popular type of school in America about the time of the Revolution. The Latin grammar schools had found increasing difficulty in finding students, and they had often changed their names to "English grammar schools;" however, perhaps with the war against England, the English grammar schools became academies. At any rate, students usually took only the courses they wanted and not the whole prescribed curriculum as had been the case in the old Latin grammar school.<sup>51</sup>

---

When Charles II was restored to the English throne in 1660, there was considerable reaction against what the country had experienced under Puritan rule. A major change came with the attempt to reassert the vitality and authority of the Church of England. By the Uniformity Legislation of 1662, Puritan ministers who dissented from the established religion were driven from their pulpits, and the same was true for many of the tutors at Oxford and Cambridge. Many of these instructors supported themselves and continued their teaching in private academies which they founded (hence the name "dissenting academy").

The dissenting academy was modeled after the courtly academy, a French school which taught courtly manners and graces to the sons of gentry. The dissenting academy was like the courtly academy in that it was also private and devoted to a special end, but the dissenting academy and its Puritan master were devoted to scholarly endeavor and soon surpassed the universities of the day in rigor and course of study. Dedicated to forming scholarly judgment in its students, the dissenting academy offered in addition to the traditional trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music) of the university, work in the new sciences, modern languages, history, geography, and English. The education was for the Puritan middle class.

The dissenting academy did not last long. It was founded as an alternative form of schooling to the university which had lost both mission and vitality, and the academy's effectiveness in professional training challenged the university and forced it to change. The Puritan tutors, although forced from the university, managed to improve the university education. Perhaps, the Puritans failed in their attempt to purify the English society, but their academies reformed education at the universities; Irene Parker, Dissenting Academies in England: Their Rise and Progress and their Place among the Educational Systems of the Country (Cambridge: 1914), pp. 16, 44, 48, 58, 124, 125, 132, 133.

<sup>51</sup>Seybolt, Source Studies in American Colonial Education, p. 98.

The academy developed with the growth of the middle class (small planters and tradesmen), for it was the value which these placed upon education which made the academies possible. The academy was a transitory institution midway between the Latin grammar school in the stratified colonial society and the high school in the America after Jacksonian democracy. Like its predecessor, the Latin grammar school, the academy offered work in the classical languages, but it also added courses in the vernacular and made some of them relevant to specific needs. Only by vocational training could they attract sufficient students and their tuition fees to remain in operation.<sup>52</sup>

While the academy movement was one aspect of the transition of American society from deferential to democratic, according to TheodoreSizer, the academies, as such, were not the triumph of democracy over elitism in education. Instead, they were mainly boarding schools which developed in rural areas because of the lack of towns. Thus, the academy was a "product of the frontier period of national development." Moreover, with the rise of the city, the urban working class, and the high school about 1830, the academy would have to develop a special purpose to survive (such as normal training for women, manual labor for students too poor to pay tuition, the Catholic schools, military academies). But the key function of the academy was vocational training and not preparation for college.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup>Brown, pp. 228, 235, 240.

<sup>53</sup>Theodore R. Sizer, The Age of the Academies (New York: 1964), pp. vii, viii, 2. Edgar W. Knight, The Academy Movement in the South (Chapel Hill: 1920), pp. 4, 6.

The academy movement in America also reached to North Carolina during the period when Samuel McCorkle lived. The society of his day—in a relatively underdeveloped area with poor roads, little money, and an educational background predominantly informal in nature—devoted considerable interest to the organization of formal education. This interest showed in the state constitution of 1776 in which Article XLI said:

That a School or Schools shall be established by the Legislature for the convenient Instruction of Youth, with such Salaries to the Masters paid by the public, as may enable them to instruct at Low Prices; and all useful Learning shall be duly encouraged and promoted in one or more Universities.

It showed when the newly elected governor in 1782, Alexander Martin, called for more education in the state to help eliminate ignorance and savagery. The belief in education showed in the wills in which men left their hopes for the future to their descendants. Samuel McCorkle left his books to his son in the hopes that they would be used with profit. William Davidson, McCorkle's friend, instructed his wife to provide their son and two daughters with "propper Learning or as much learning as she may judge necessary." The interest in education showed in the founding of schools and of the university. In the Salisbury area alone where McCorkle lived, at least five schools were founded in the 40 years from 1760 to 1800. Three of the five—Crowfield Academy, Cokesbury School, and Zion-Parnassus—were never chartered by the state, because they were private, denominational efforts. But the other two, both called Salisbury Academy, were chartered.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Archibald Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New (Chicago: 1941), II, p. 644. Samuel A. Ashe, Biographical History of North Carolina from Colonial Times to the Present (Greensboro: 1905),

Barely started in 1760, there were 25 academies in North Carolina by 1789 (both with and without charters). By 1800, 179 academies had been chartered in the United States, and of that number, about 40 were located in North Carolina. In the fifty years after 1776, 170 academies were chartered in North Carolina. It should be noted that many of these academies did not last long, having to close for lack of students and support. But in that more attempts were made to found schools, the belief in education was not dampened by frequent failures. Many of the founders and teachers were, like Samuel McCorkle, ministers. The academy movement generated momentum for the founding of a state university in North Carolina. Since the academies could not offer professional training, and since their preparatory studies were of little good unless there was also a university where students could finish their training, the people involved with the academies began to see the establishment of a state university as the next step in encouraging and promoting useful learning.<sup>55</sup>

---

I, p. 713. The will of Samuel McCorkle, Rowan County Wills, 1761-1900, C.R. 85.802.2 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History); hereafter cited as the will of Samuel McCorkle. The will of William L. Davidson, Rowan County Wills, 1743-1868, VI (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History). Crowfield Academy began about 1760; Brawley, p. 143. Cokesbury School was founded in Rowan County by the Methodists in 1793, according to Edgar W. Knight, Public Education in the South (Boston: 1922), p. 82. Zion-Parnassus, founded by Samuel McCorkle, began in 1795, according to an advertisement in the June 22, 1795, North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), cited in R. D. W. Connor, A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1766-1799 (Chapel Hill: 1953), I, p. 402. James Iredell, Laws of the State of North Carolina (Edenton: 1799?). The Laws of North Carolina, 1784, chapter 29, "An Act for the Encouragement of Learning in the District of Salisbury," p. 544. The Laws of North Carolina, 1798, chapter 54, "An Act to establish a seminary of learning in the town of Salisbury," p. 900.

<sup>55</sup>R. D. W. Connor, "The Genesis of Higher Education in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review, 28 (January, 1951), pp. 10, 1. Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New, I, p. 461. Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 346.

During McCorkle's day, the academy in North Carolina was neither an old field school nor a grammar school. While the academy was a modest endeavor like the old field school, it was different from the old field school in three particulars. The master of the academy was probably a minister, not an indentured servant; he charged tuition, rather than working out his contract; and he offered a broad course of study, not just the five "R's." The grammar school, located in towns, drew its clientele from the upper class, taught the classical languages, and instilled the proper social graces and manners. Meanwhile, the academy, located in more rustic settings, drew students from a rising class (the farmers and merchants who had become established in the frontier society), offered more than the grammar school's classical languages, and although less pretentious than the grammar school, probably tried to instill a similar mission and morality in its students.<sup>56</sup>

According to Knight, the academy in North Carolina had the following characteristics: (1) it was privately run and associated with a denominational effort; (2) if incorporated, it was controlled by a board of trustees who had the legal right to employ teachers, buy land, and receive benefactions; (3) it was exempt from taxation (sometimes land was even set aside for its use or benefit, or a lottery was run to raise revenue for it); (4) it charged tuition; (5) its curriculum and goals were largely religious in character; (6) it often offered both a general, elementary education and a college preparatory education; and (7) it was independent, transient, and isolated.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Knight, The Academy Movement in the South, p. 6.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

The master himself ran the academy's finances, discipline, and instruction. Class was conducted in a log cabin or simple frame building, and the students sat on planks. There were no blackboards or desks, but perhaps a shelf with a few books on it sufficed for a library. Since enrollment was usually small, the combined tuition was seldom enough to cover expenses, and it was often only the generous donations of benefactors which kept the academy running. The discipline was rigid, the drill hard and boring, the instruction thorough but narrow. Beyond the basic five "R's," the master taught mathematics, the languages (English, Latin, and perhaps Greek), and perhaps some of the new fields—history, geography, belles-lettres, rhetoric, French, mental philosophy, surveying, navigation, and composition.<sup>58</sup>

#### The Teacher in Nineteenth Century America

What could be said about the quality of teaching? It varied greatly. There were men who became schoolmasters until they could find a vacant pulpit, those given to drinking and running away, the effeminate, misfits like Ichabod Crane, but there were also the Ezekiel Cheevers and John Adamses. Cheever taught grandly until he was more than 80 years old. Adams, later the second president of the United States, taught three years at Worcester (1755-1758), and he complained about "little runtlings, just capable of lisping A, B, C, and troubling the master." Adams went bad and left teaching (he had completed his studies for the bar), but it must have gotten in his blood. Later in life, Adams advised young men to teach that they might learn more about

---

<sup>58</sup> Charles W. Dabney, Universal Education in the South (Chapel Hill; 1936), p. 49.



people and patience, and he gave 160 acres of land to his native town for an academy. About the variety among schoolmasters Elsbree wrote:

The colonial schoolmaster is unclassifiable. He was a God-fearing clergyman, he was an unmitigated rogue; he was amply paid, he was accorded a bare pittance; he made teaching a life career, he used it merely as a steppingstone; he was a classical scholar, he was all but illiterate; he was licensed by bishop or colonial governor, he was certified only by his own pretensions; he was a cultured gentleman, he was a crude-mannered yokel; he ranked with the cream of society, he was regarded as a menial. In short, he was neither a type nor a personality, but a statistical distribution represented by a skewed curve.<sup>59</sup>

The teacher has always had to be an exemplary model for the community, a paragon of piety, virtue, wisdom, scholarship, humility, and morality—not to mention his responsibility for instilling those qualities in his charges. As A. P. Marble put it:

Teachers are employed for purposes "vastly great." They must teach the science of health with all the learning but without the pay of the doctor; they must inculcate the principles of morality with all the impressive sincerity but without the sectarianism of the minister; they must be altogether more patient and discreet than God Almighty himself, for He was "wroth" when He punished the wicked, whereas, if a teacher punishes in anger, he is guilty of an assault and battery; they must invent schemes to invert human nature, and make every good thing and thought enticing and every bad thing and thought abominably disgusting ... they must tenderly moderate the zeal of the too ambitious, and inspire the dullest blockhead with a manly thirst for fame and knowledge; the incorrigibly uncouth and vicious, they must endow with the tastes, the instincts, and the manners of the refined and virtuous. And in short, they must turn all from the thousand paths that lead to indolence, ignorance, and folly; and prepare them to find infallibly all the ways of pleasantness and all the paths of peace.

Probably some of the teachers of that day (or of any day) were not able to live up to expectations.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup>Elizabeth P. Gould, "John Adams as Schoolmaster," Education, 9 (1889), pp. 503, 504, 508, 512. Elsbree, p. 123.

<sup>60</sup>Elsbree, title page.

Where only a young man was hired because he could be boarded around more cheaply from family to family, was orthodox in his religious sentiments, knew his five "R's," and could be paid in country goods (corn, tobacco, not cash), the schoolmaster was not a paragon of virtue but a rather mediocre, young, poorly paid, untrained, and ill-supervised teacher. He held the position for only a short tenure until his indentured period was over, he finished studying for the ministry or law, or he married and began farming. He taught by lecture and recitation, and his main concern was class control. The students were generally rebellious because of the monotony from doing meaningless tasks for endless periods of time.<sup>61</sup>

What, then, is the perspective for this study of Samuel McCorkle? Early in this chapter the geographic and social setting was pictured. What was Samuel McCorkle's place in time with respect to American educational history? According to H. H. Benjamin, three factors act upon education causing it to respond to changes in the society: the intellectual heritage, a particular personality, and the cultural forces. As has been demonstrated by the preceding brief description of educational history in America to about 1800, changes in a society are apt to bring changes in the manner of preparing younger members of the society to take their place in it; the schooling in a society reflects its needs. This matter of change and the relationship between intellectual tradition, personality, and culture will be further explored in

---

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., pp. 44, 53, 63, 91, 98.

the study of Samuel McCorkle and his contributions to education in North Carolina.<sup>62</sup>

#### Education and Adjustment

What was the educational setting for the work of Samuel McCorkle? Before 1800 American education was characterized by diversity, autonomy, and failure. Private schools were founded within the various societies in America and differed from each other because of the differences in land settlement, social classes, and religious denominations in their respective localities. The differences between the Latin grammar school, English grammar school, and academy were not always well defined. Nor was there necessarily any particular sequence of educational steps through which students progressed. But if purposes, enrollments, teachers, and courses of study varied with the numerous attempts by committed individuals to found schools, and if there was no one pattern of education common to early America, there still were a number of limited successes and common threads. Adjustment to the frontier and the Revolution modified much of colonial American education.<sup>63</sup>

From the time of the establishment of Boston Latin grammar school in 1635, Harvard in 1636, and of the "old deluder Satan" law in 1647 (the beginning of colonial education in America) to the development of a public sentiment for state-supported schooling in North Carolina in 1789, American education transformed itself by responding (although many times

---

<sup>62</sup>H. H. Benjamin, "An Approach to the Study of Causation in Educational History," History of Education Journal, 6 (1954-1955), p. 137.

<sup>63</sup>Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators (Totowa: 1966), pp. 21-22.

by learning from its failures) to the changing culture and society. The family was preoccupied with material concerns, and this focus shattered the moral progress of the utopia in Massachusetts Bay. Because of this process in colonial America, the emphasis in education changed from strictly classical literacy to a more practical, somewhat more vocational-oriented training. This and not the deluder Satan laws (which called for the founding of schools in Massachusetts Bay towns) was the origin of the public sentiment for education. The public schools did not, however, develop until 30 years after the end of this study.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup>Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History (Cambridge: 1947), p. 18. First published about 1919, this work is the magnum opus in American educational history. Bernard Bailyn, Education in the Forming of American Society: Needs and Opportunities for Study (Chapel Hill: 1960), pp. 47-49. This work provided the first 200 books of general background in colonial education on which the study of Samuel McCorkle was founded. Lawrence A. Cremin, American Education: The Colonial Experience (New York: 1970), p. 577.

## CHAPTER II

### CHILDHOOD AND EARLY EDUCATION

#### The Trip to North Carolina

Samuel Eusebius McCorkle was born on August 23, 1746, near Harris's ferry in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Harris's ferry (the site of present day Harrisburg) was on the best fording place of the Susquehanna River, and major roads ran by it to north and south, east and west. The place lay about 100 miles northwest of Philadelphia. McCorkle's parents were a young Scotch-Irish immigrant couple who had each come to America with their families when they were younger; they probably migrated during the surge of Scotch-Irish migration which occurred from 1720 to 1730. Samuel McCorkle's parents were both born in Ulster—his father, Alexander, some 23 years earlier (about 1723); his mother, Agnes (the name she went by although her full name was originally Nancy Agnes Montgomery), some 20 years earlier (about 1726).<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Eli W. Caruthers, "Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, D.D., 1774-1811," Annals of the American Pulpit, ed., William B. Sprague (New York: 1969), III, p. 346; hereafter cited as Annals of the American Pulpit. William H. Egle, An Illustrated History of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Civil, Political, and Military, from its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time... (Harrisburg: 1876), p. 640. Egle said that the Caruthers, Caldwells, and Montgomerys came to Pennsylvania in the decade after 1720 but did not mention the McCorkles specifically. According to Egle, John Montgomery and Samuel McCorkle migrated from Ulster to Paxtang township (Pennsylvania) some time before 1735; letter of April 12, 1973, from Robert E. Scudder, Head, Social Science and History Department, The Free Library of Philadelphia, in which respondent included the above information which he found in Egle, Notes and Queries

Alexander and Agnes McCorkle likely came to Pennsylvania as a result of the severe economic conditions in Ulster. British policies had intensified the hardships to the point where it was difficult for a small farmer or tenant to support his family, nor was there much of a future for many of the small farmers. Probably the parents of Alexander and Agnes, the McCorkles and the Montgomerys, signed contracts of indenture in return for passage to Philadelphia. Immigrants who could not afford passage were commonly transported by ship captains and speculators, and upon arriving in America, their contracts of indenture were sold to the highest bidder at a tidy profit. During the eighteenth century, many Scotch-Irish and German immigrants came in this manner, serving four or six years as indentured servants. When a couple or family were transported, they were called "redemptioners," having to serve out their contract to "redeem" their freedom.<sup>2</sup>

Whether or not the McCorkles and Montgomerys were able to pay their own passage to Pennsylvania, they may well have worked as tenant farmers or employees for a few years. The practice of the Scotch-Irish immigrants was to remain in one place long enough to complete their indenture or to work long enough for someone to save the money for their own land, farming equipment, livestock, wagon, and team.<sup>3</sup>

---

Relating to Pennsylvania (third series, no place: no date), I, p. 78. It may be that John Montgomery and Samuel McCorkle were the grandfathers of Samuel Eusebius McCorkle.

<sup>2</sup>Abbot E. Smith, Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607-1776 (Gloucester: 1965), pp. 21-22.

<sup>3</sup>Harry R. Merrens, Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Historical Geography (Chapel Hill: 1964), p. 8.

After they had lived their youth in Pennsylvania, Alexander McCorkle and Agnes Montgomery married, probably settled on a farm, and began their family. Samuel, their eldest child, was born in 1746, and other children followed. After a few years in Pennsylvania, the McCorkles acquired a small stake and looked around for greener pastures. Extensive settlement in Pennsylvania had already caused property values to soar and the war had cut off settlement to the west, but cheap land had recently become available in Virginia and North Carolina. In 1756 the McCorkles loaded their belongings into a covered wagon (since the Conestoga Valley, home of the covered wagon, is located near the part of Pennsylvania where the McCorkles lived, it seems probable that they had a covered wagon) and followed the other Scotch-Irish immigrants who had already headed south on the Great Wagon Road.<sup>4</sup>

According to the 1755 edition of the Fry and Jefferson map, it was 435 miles on the wagon trail from Philadelphia through the Valley of Virginia to the Yadkin River in piedmont North Carolina. Because of that distance, no doubt Alexander McCorkle stopped the wagon a number of times in Virginia to rest the team, livestock, and family and to check the quality and price of land. The same thing had happened in Virginia as in Pennsylvania; the earliest settlers took the best lands, laid claim on the rest for speculative purposes, and raised the cost of land prohibitively high to the newly arrived.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 346.

<sup>5</sup>Merrens, p. 66. Another view holds that there were extensive economic opportunities in Virginia and ample lands at fair prices for newly arrived settlers. Since these lands existed and class lines were not rigidly drawn, the society in colonial Virginia was remarkably mobile and much more democratic than has been commonly supposed; Robert

At any rate, the McCorkles continued south on the Great Wagon Road until they reached North Carolina. Near where they forded the Yadkin

---

E. Brown and Katherine Brown, Virginia, 1705-1786: Democracy or Aristocracy? (East Lansing: 1964), pp. 32, 56, 146. In his study of the frontier of North Carolina, Ramsey claimed that Alexander McCorkle left Pennsylvania in 1750, settled in Virginia on the upper James River in the Shenandoah Valley until about 1755 or 1756, and then removed to the "Irish settlement" of Rowan County. However, he is likely mistaken in his notion that the McCorkles remained in Virginia for a few years. Neither the family tradition nor the best informed sources mentioned settling in Virginia; they say, rather, that the McCorkles came straight to North Carolina from Pennsylvania. Moreover, Ramsey's citation of the Augusta County, Virginia, records is apparently based on a case of mistaken identity, another man by the name of Alexander McCorkle; Robert Ramsey, Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762 (Chapel Hill: 1964), pp. 118-120. Lyman Chalkley reproduced the original Augusta County records in three volumes. While Ramsey probably erred in citing volume I, page 415 (there was no mention of Alexander McCorkle on that page), volume II, page 415 did carry the information upon which Ramsey based his assumption that the McCorkles settled in Virginia for a while. On that page was a list of those delinquent in their taxes for 1752. "Alex. McCorkill" and "Robt. McCorkill" were noted in the record as being gone. Although Ramsey did not realize it, Alexander McCorkle was cited eight other times as well in the records, the last occurring in 1766—ten years after our Alexander McCorkle settled in North Carolina; Lyman Chalkley, Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia, Extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County, 1745-1800 (Baltimore: 1965), II, p. 415. Order Book No. IV for November 23, 1753, listed "Alexr. McCorkall" and "Pat. McCorkall" as two of forty-five men assigned to work on a road (I, p. 61). The following March 23, 1754, "Alexr. McCorkell" and two others were assigned to mend another road (I, p. 62). In April, 1754, he was mentioned in a deed (III, p. 325). On November 16, 1757, he served as the executor of an estate (III, p. 46). In 1760, he was listed in the Augusta Parish Vestry Book (II, p. 463). On February 11, 1761, he was listed in a deed for 300 acres (III, p. 367). Another deed filed on June 10, 1763, bounded on Alexander McCorkle's place (III, p. 399). And finally, on November 15, 1766, he appeared in the following note,

15th November, 1766. Alex. McCorkle and Mary to Patrick McCorkle,  
 £ 25, 150 acres on North Branch of James, part of 300 acres  
 whereon Alex now lives; corner Abraham Brown's land.

In the original record the note appeared in Deed Book No. 13, page 104, and in Chalkley, it appeared in volume III, page 104.

Unfortunately, Samuel McCorkle was also cited seven times from 1749 to 1796. But in that his daughter Elizabeth was married on April 21, 1787 (II, p. 304), and his wife, Sarah, was the executrix of his estate among his son, John, and his daughters, Mary and Martha, as of December 16, 1788 (III, p. 182), this Samuel McCorkle was likely a planter and not our Samuel McCorkle. Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 346.



lay Salisbury, a newly founded village and the administrative center of Rowan County. Alexander McCorkle looked around and saw that few settlers had come to the area. The Yadkin area in the piedmont was mainly rolling hills covered with forest, but the soil was rich and red, about 45 inches of rain fell each year, and along the many creeks and rivers lay rich flood plain and meadow. In these areas a new settler would not need much labor to clear the native vegetation for planting crops. He could sow corn and wheat the first year, turn his livestock out to forage for itself, and focus his attention on cutting lumber and shingles. At last, the McCorkles found good land that they could afford.<sup>6</sup>

#### The McCorkle's Homestead

On May 25, 1756, Alexander McCorkle negotiated a deal with John Best for a 640 acre plantation in Rowan County. McCorkle put down five shillings sterling on the twenty-fifth, and the next day he completed the transaction by paying 32 pounds current money of Virginia (land negotiations in that period took two days; the first day the buyer paid just a fee, and the second he paid the amount agreed upon). The land was described as Messauge Tenement Plantation, and it had on it a good

---

<sup>6</sup>Merrens, pp. 162, 45. Merrens particularly emphasized that North Carolina was not settled in the conventional manner—by a steady rush of settlers moving westward and taking up the land in each zone before others coming west to settle went into the area just beyond. Settlement was rather determined by the need to settle along the transportation routes and to take the best land first (in this case, near the Great Wagon Road and along the creeks and rivers). The pine barrens—vast, unsettled tracts lying between the tidewater and piedmont in the eastern part of North Carolina—were actually the last frontier to be settled.

deal of forest but also a house, outbuildings, orchard, garden, pasture, and water, according to the deed.<sup>7</sup>

Alexander McCorkle apparently had learned in Pennsylvania and Virginia what the frontier had to teach about land speculation as a means of acquiring and enlarging a farm. He did have some business acumen, for the record shows that he quickly found a relatively easy way to pay off his investment. The deeds for Messauge Tenement Plantation (640 acres of land) were dated May 25 and 26, 1756. But two other deeds on May 26 and 27, 1756, conveyed 331 acres of the same plantation from Alexander and Agnes McCorkle to Richard King for "5 shillings Sterling" on the first day and 29 pounds current money of Virginia on the second. The buildings, orchard, and other appurtenances went with the 331 acres that were sold, and the McCorkles had to clear their ground, build a house, and plant their own fields and garden.<sup>8</sup>

Although Alexander McCorkle would deal for other tracts, it was upon this plot of land that the McCorkles carved their farm from the forest. The exact location would be difficult to pinpoint, because of the metes and bounds system of surveying. But the McCorkles probably

---

<sup>7</sup>Rowan County Record of Deeds, 1753-1800, II, pp. 285-287; the information was on microfilm reel 21.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., II, pp. 288-289 (microfilm reel 21). This same deed was rewritten and resigned on December 19, 1764. It was merely done to more clearly state the boundaries of the land, and there was no new sale; Ibid., VIII, pp. 189-190 (microfilm reel 24). In the day before rectangular surveys of land and the plotting of boundaries by latitude and longitude, the surveys were of the metes and bounds type (e.g., —the land is bounded on one side by a creek and runs to where it meets Smith's land at the old hickory tree whence it runs a hundred yards west to a rockpile). After a few years conflicts developed between neighbors when creeks shifted from their beds or trees fell over and rotted. Redrawing deeds was probably a common practice.

lived about 14 or 15 miles west of Salisbury (just west of the present day line between Rowan County and Iredell County and barely within Iredell County).<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>The will of Alexander McCorkle, Iredell County Wills, 1787-1890, Book A, p. 158. In his will of July 31, 1800, Alexander McCorkle left the home place to his son Robert. One part of it read, "... all that tract or parcel of land on which I now live held by a title from John Best bearing date May the twentysixth one thousand seven hundred and fiftysix." Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 346.

Another reason that suggests the McCorkles lived in what would become Iredell County is Alexander McCorkle's will. The will was stored in the Iredell County records. Rowan County was at one time a large area, but it was divided up into other counties as more people settled in western North Carolina. Iredell County was incorporated in 1788 (as were Guilford County in 1770, Davidson County in 1822, and Davie County in 1836) from lands that had once been part of Rowan County; David L. Corbitt, The Formation of the North Carolina Counties, 1663-1943 (Raleigh: 1950), pp. 127, 113, 87, 88). Thus, using county records is somewhat complicated. But the original will of Alexander McCorkle, filed in 1800 in Rowan County, was later taken from the Rowan County records and filed in the Iredell County records. Someone drew a line through "Rowan" from the phrase "I Alexander McCorkle of the County of Rowan..." and wrote "Iredell" above it (the will of Alexander McCorkle).

Moreover, the William D. Kizziah map of early Rowan County places the Alexander McCorkles just west of the Iredell County line on Back Creek and directly west of Salisbury. Kizziah's map is included inside the back cover of Brawley, The Rowan Story, 1753-1953: A Narrative History of Rowan County, North Carolina (Salisbury: 1953). Kizziah, the Register of Deeds in Rowan County, studied the old deeds for years before he drew that map, but even he could only approximate where families had settled.

Given the handwritten records of Alexander McCorkle's day and their subsequent shuffling to a number of locations, it is not likely that all of his land acquisitions are recorded below. But they at least indicate the nature of land speculation, a common denominator in the settlement of the frontier. Land records indicate that Alexander McCorkle acquired deeds and warrants for a number of plots of land during his lifetime, although he probably sold some of the warrants before actually owning the land (warrants were a license to hunt for land, and one could acquire and speculate in them without much capital; deeds, however, required more funds). Besides the May, 1756, transactions in which Alexander McCorkle bought a 640 acre plot and sold 331 acres of it, there were several other land speculations which he made: (1) on February 5, 1778, 400 acres adjoining his other land and 200 acres on the Catawba River (Rowan County records, Land Entries, 1778, pp. 145, 147); (2) on February 14, 1779, 300 acres on the Catawba (Ibid., 1778-1817, p. 2088); (3) on October 10, 1783, 200 acres on the Catawba for 100 shillings and 190 acres more for 95 shillings (these are probably deeds for the lands he previously held warrants on, Rowan County records,

It is impossible to determine when their children were born to Alexander and Agnes McCorkle. In that day babies were not born in hospital maternity wards, birth certificates were not kept, and most churches neither kept careful records of their baptisms nor issued certificates for the babies who were baptized. And if records were kept by a church, the chances were high that such recordkeeping would be done casually, that the records would be lost to fire or fading ink after 200 years, or that the minister would take them when he left.

Samuel McCorkle was born in Pennsylvania, and some of the other McCorkle children were probably also born there. The McCorkles, as settlers often did, recorded their children's births in the family Bible, although only names and not birth dates. The ten children born to Alexander and Agnes McCorkle were: Elizabeth, Mattee, Agnes Nancy, Samuel, John, William, Alexander (Junior), Joseph, Robert, and James. Of the ten, three were girls, and seven were boys. The McCorkles were a healthy lot, for Alexander McCorkle divided his estate among ten children in 1800.<sup>10</sup>

Information is scarce about the life of the McCorkle family on their new farm, but it is not hard to picture what it was like when Samuel was growing up. They had settled in heavy timber, and they had

---

Record of Deeds, Book 9, pp. 633, 634); (4) on November 7, 1784, he sold 200 acres for 500 pounds sterling (Ibid., Book 10, p. 384); (5) on February 4, 1788, he bought 237 acres from John McCorkle for 200 pounds lawful North Carolina money (Ibid., Book 11, p. 290); and (6) he somehow acquired warrants on 4,000 acres in Tennessee, probably after the Revolution, for Samuel McCorkle left his share of the 4,000 acres of land in Tennessee which his father had left to his heirs, Rowan County Wills, 1761-1900.

<sup>10</sup>Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 346. The McCorkle family papers. The will of Alexander McCorkle.

to work hard to clear and cultivate their land. Samuel and his brothers had to help clear fields, plow, plant, cultivate, harvest, tend livestock, build fence, weed the garden, and help build a house and out-buildings. But they certainly found the time for play, fishing, and hunting, too.<sup>11</sup>

#### Sunday Worship

Six days a week the McCorkles labored, but on the seventh they went to church. Samuel's "parents were pious people, and constant attendants at Cathey's meeting-house." More than that, Alexander McCorkle was a ruling elder in the congregation. When Samuel was born, Alexander and Agnes did not take naming him lightly, either. "Samuel" was a prophet of God, and "Eusebius" was the father of ecclesiastical history; these names were chosen carefully and indicative of the direction which Samuel McCorkle's life would take.<sup>12</sup>

Rowan County had no organized Presbyterian church with a settled minister as yet, but a meetinghouse had been constructed near where the McCorkles lived at the Cathey's (farm), and an elder conducted services. The elder was just like the other settlers, a farmer most of the week, but on Sunday he preached from a book of sermons, led the hymns and prayers, and catechized children from the Shorter Catechism.

---

<sup>11</sup> Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 346.

<sup>12</sup> James F. Hurley and Julia G. Eagen, The Prophet of Zion-Parnassus, Samuel Eusebius McCorkle (Richmond: 1934), p. 28. Reverend William Henry Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of her Early Settlers (New York: 1846), p. 351, originally published in New York in 1846; hereafter cited Foote, Sketches of North Carolina.

Occasionally, visiting missionaries preached (John Thompson in 1751, Hugh McAden in 1755, and probably others), but Alexander McCorkle perhaps took his turn at preaching along with the other elders.<sup>13</sup>

The meetinghouse and congregation dated from a time before the McCorkles came to North Carolina. A deed which was filed in Salisbury on January 17, 1753, conveyed 12 acres of land from John Linn to the congregation "belonging to the lower meeting house between the Yadkin and Catawba Rivers adhering to a minister licensed by a Presbytery belonging to the Synod of Philadelphia." Judging from the deed, a meetinghouse existed in the area before one was built on the Linn grant near Cathey's. The congregation at Cathey's meetinghouse, wherein Samuel McCorkle was reared, was mainly Old Side.<sup>14</sup>

What was the Old Side? Beginning in 1717, the Synod of Philadelphia was charged with the organization and governance of the Presbyterians in America. However, by 1741 Presbyterians were divided over two issues—the education of clergy and the authenticity of "enthusiasm." Traditionalists (the "Old Side") wanted ministers to be sent to Scotland for their training and ordination, and they emphasized the Scriptural truths as the background for the Church rather than the conversion experience of the individual believer. They distrusted the New Side insistence

---

<sup>13</sup>Walter Lingle, Thyatira Presbyterian Church, Rowan County, North Carolina, 1753 to 1948 (Statesville, n.d.), p. 9.

<sup>14</sup>Reverend S. C. Alexander, "Historical Address Delivered at the Centennial Celebration of Thyatira Church, Rowan County, North Carolina, October 17, 1855," from Thomas Lingle, History of Thyatira Church, 1753 to 1925 (Statesville: 1925), p. 8. Alexander was then the pastor at Thyatira, and his address at the centennial was apparently published some time before Thomas Lingle found it.

that the person felt "excitement" or "enthusiasm" at the moment when saving grace was at hand.<sup>15</sup>

The other view, that of the "New Side," valued learned clergy but thought that they could be better trained for the American society nearer to home (in log colleges conducted by clergymen). They also stressed the minister's own piety, wanted to be certain that his conversion and religious life were valid, and endorsed experimental religion with its attending "enthusiasm" as a means of salvation. After a conflict in 1741, the New Side broke away from the Synod of Philadelphia and formed their own synod, the Synod of New York.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, the Linn deed to a congregation which followed the way of the Synod of Philadelphia probably meant that the congregation at Cathey's meetinghouse was largely Old Side in religious outlook. They favored rigorously trained ministers but not "excitement" at the cost of the biblical traditions. Given this view and the fact that there were many more congregations desiring preachers than were ministers available, and as a result the vacancy at Cathey's meetinghouse had to be filled by an elder rather than by a minister who had been trained for the position.

On Sunday there was a sermon given in the morning and again in the afternoon, and the McCorkles attended each service. Both sermons lasted about two hours, developing point by point and closing with "Finally, my my brethren." In addition, hymns were sung, prayers were offered, and the Scriptures were read. During the break between the services, people

---

<sup>15</sup>Walter Lingle, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid. Wesley Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790 (Durham: 1930), p. 10.

socialized with their neighbors from whom they had been isolated all week. No worldly entertainment was allowed, but the church-goers still enjoyed eating lunch with friends and talking about their crops and the weather.<sup>17</sup>

Presbyterian worship merely reflected the temperament of the Scotch-Irish. There were fixed principles to believe, and one knew what was right. Giving in was both weak and sinful. The prayer, "Lord, help me to be on the path for you know that I am hard to turn," describes the mind of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. If others found them abrasive (such as the Indians who lived near them), they were also demanding of themselves.<sup>18</sup>

#### The French and Indian War

The McCorkles settled in Rowan County just before the beginning of the French and Indian War on the Southern frontier. Local hostilities caused so much fear and unrest that the flow of settlers into Rowan County was reversed, and many of the area residents moved to safer ground east of the Yadkin. Nor was this mood soon changed by the treaties in 1756 with the Catawba and Cherokee or the new forts built along the edge of settlement.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup>James G. Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish: A Social History (Chapel Hill: 1962), pp. 281, 288-191.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Brawley, p. 21. Brawley's contention that settlers moved east of the Yadkin can be supported with the tax records of Rowan County for the years of the French and Indian War. The number of taxables (a "taxable" was defined as a white male over 16 or a slave of either sex over 12) was as follows:

Year	Number of taxables
1754	1000
1755	1000



One such outpost was Fort Dobbs, about 23 miles west of Salisbury near Statesville. The fort was a three story blockhouse built in 1756. It was 53 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 24 and a half feet high, and maximum firepower could be directed from it along every lane of approach. Around the blockhouse ran a palisade, making the fort much less vulnerable to attack. Fort Dobbs was about ten miles from where the Alexander McCorkles lived. While none of the McCorkles died during the war, Robert Gillespie (the father of Margaret Gillespie, Samuel McCorkle's future wife) was killed in the attack on Fort Dobbs in 1760. When the danger came near, Gillespie, an innkeeper in Salisbury, apparently took his family to the fort.<sup>20</sup>

Captain Hugh Waddell, who commanded the defenses of the fort, later wrote that the Indians arrived in the area about the middle of February. They surrounded the fort and occasionally fired at it from the tree line but inflicted minimal damage. After a few days of this, on the night of February twenty-seventh the people inside the blockhouse were warned by their dogs that something was afoot outside. Waddell led a group of ten

---

Year	Number of taxables
1756	1531
1757	1031
1758	1034
1759	747
1760	669
1761	1373
1762	1486
1763	1486

These figures are from William K. Boyd, Some Eighteenth Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina with Introductions and Notes (Raleigh: 1927), p. 415.

<sup>20</sup>Douglas L. Rights, The American Indian in North Carolina (Durham: 1947), p. 159. Brawley, p. 27. Jethro Rumble, A History of Rowan County, North Carolina Containing Sketches of Prominent Families and Distinguished Men (Salisbury: 1881), p. 58. The distances were gauged from Kizziah's map in Brawley.

men out to investigate. When they neared a spring about 300 yards from the fort, the group was fired on by an estimated 60 or 70 Cherokees. By prearranged plan, the men retreated slowly, each man firing and loading (with a bullet and seven buckshot) in turn to prevent the Indians from rushing at them with tomahawks. The men had to fight their way through other Indians at the gate of the fort but were able to drive them off.<sup>21</sup>

Waddell wrote that they killed about ten Indians, although their bodies were carried off during the night and could not be counted. During the skirmish he lost a boy near the fort, had two of his group wounded—one of whom was scalped and not expected to live, and lost six horses to the Indians. The man who was scalped, although not specifically identified by the Waddell account, was probably Robert Gillespie, since he died at least three weeks after being scalped during the attack on Fort Dobbs, according to Brawley.<sup>22</sup>

No other attacks were made upon Fort Dobbs, but similar skirmishes were fought near Salisbury and Statesville. Hostilities subsided in the area soon after, and the number of taxables in Rowan County nearly

---

<sup>21</sup>Rights, pp. 160-161. Rights did not say where he found the Waddell account of the attack on Fort Dobbs. But the Eliason account credited the source as the Colonial Records, VI, p. 229; Minnie H. Eliason, Fort Dobbs: Historical Sketch (Statesville: 1915), p. 17.

<sup>22</sup>Rights, pp. 160-161. Brawley, p. 27. Brawley wrote that Gillespie was scalped and left for dead by the Cherokees during their attack on Fort Dobbs in 1759, and that he lived for 29 days afterward. Brawley erred on the year; it was 1760, according to Gillespie's grave-marker in Thyatira churchyard and according to Eliason, p. 16. He may have been wrong about the 29 days, too, for the marker on Gillespie's grave says that the "Deceas'd" on March 21, 1760, which is hardly 29 days after February twenty-seventh, even in leap years. At any rate, either Waddell or Brawley or Gillespie's marker is wrong (and it is probably Brawley), or Gillespie was buried somewhat prematurely; Thyatira Memorial Association, Inscriptions on Stones in Thyatira Cemetery, 1755-1966 (Salisbury: 1967), p. 19.

doubled from 1760 (669) to 1761 (1,373). People returned to their farms when it became safe, and newly arrived settlers began to take up new lands. The Indians were unable to prevent the numbers of settlers coming into the area from taking the land which had once been Indian hunting ground.<sup>23</sup>

#### Early Education

So far, this account of the youth of Samuel McCorkle has not discussed his education, but it has been important to point out that he was born of Scotch-Irish immigrant parents in Pennsylvania, that he was the oldest child in a large family, that the family made the long trip to North Carolina to find a place of their own, that life on the frontier was hard and uncertain—especially during their early years in Rowan County when the French and Indian War was underway, and that the McCorkles were a pious family and regulars at Cathey's meetinghouse. But the education of Samuel McCorkle was important, too, for it enabled him to become something quite apart from what his father was or what his younger brothers probably became.

According to Foote, Samuel McCorkle began attending an English school at age four (while the McCorkles still lived in Pennsylvania). He remained in the school for about five years, and he made "rapid progress." His early education was largely the basics, the five "R's"—reading, writing, arithmetic, self-restraint, and religion. By the time Samuel was nine years old, he could read, write, cipher, and recite Bible verses. The McCorkles then left for North Carolina.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup>Rights, p. 161. Boyd, Some Eighteenth Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina with Introductions and Notes, p. 415.

<sup>24</sup>Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 351.

When the McCorkles first reached Rowan County, they were mainly concerned for the first year or two with getting settled. But after the first shock of clearing land, planting corn and a garden, and building fences and a house, it was again time for schooling. Only by being able to read could one find out for himself what God had said in the Scriptures, and the McCorkles were pious people. Although there was an old field school in the neighborhood, there was no schoolmaster conducting classes at the time. Since Samuel McCorkle was the farthest along in his studies, he became the teacher, and for a period of about two years he taught his brothers, sisters, and some of the neighborhood children what he knew about the five "R's." It was, according to Foote, during this early teaching experience that Samuel McCorkle developed his taste and knack for teaching.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup>Ibid. Like Foote, Caruthers mentioned the early teaching experience of Samuel McCorkle when he instructed in a local school, but he never mentioned any earlier education in Pennsylvania which McCorkle received; Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 346. But if Samuel McCorkle never attended a school for a few years as a young boy, where did he learn enough himself to know enough to teach? It was not likely that his mother taught him, for she could not read or write (judging from her mark instead of her signature on the deeds for the land the McCorkles bought and sold in 1756); Rowan County Record of Deeds, 1753-1800, II, pp. 285-289. Nor does it seem likely that Alexander McCorkle, if he could read and write, would have had the time and energy to teach Samuel. Foote was probably right about the early schooling.

Circumstantial evidence makes this even more plausible. In 1792 Dickinson College bestowed a doctor of divinity degree upon Samuel McCorkle. Why would a college in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, award such a degree to a frontier preacher in North Carolina? However, the forerunner of Dickinson was Carlisle Latin School, conducted by the Reverend John Steel; personal letter from Charles Coleman Sellers of Dickinson College, dated November 19, 1972, who checked the trustee minutes upon request and sent the above information. Steel's son, Ephraim, a Carlisle merchant, corresponded with McCorkle in later life and was also related to him by marriage; H. M. Wagstaff, ed., The Papers of John Steele (Raleigh: 1924), I, pp. 4, 6, 14; John Steele Papers, 689, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, box 2 (the letter from McCorkle to Ephraim Steel was dated Salisbury, July 30,

Then a new classical school called Crowfield Academy opened about eight miles south of where the McCorkles lived (within the bounds of Centre congregation or at Bellemont, near Alexander Osborne's house). Brawley claimed that Joseph Alexander was the founder, and that Crowfield Academy began about 1760. Alexander graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1760 and came as a Presbyterian minister to western North Carolina. The McCorkles apparently decided that Samuel should go on to further schooling.<sup>26</sup>

---

1778). Since it is likely that Dickinson's trustees were acquainted with McCorkle's career in North Carolina, it seems fairly possible that they awarded a doctorate to a former student who had done well. Carlisle is about ten miles from Harris's ferry (present day Harrisburg), and Dickinson College opened as a college in 1783; letter from Sellers; Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 346.

<sup>26</sup>Ramsey, p. 190. Brawley, p. 143. Henry J. Ford, The Scotch-Irish in America (New York: 1941), p. 449. Rumble, A History of Rowan County..., p. 86. Edgar W. Knight, Public Education in the South (Boston: 1922), p. 85. Distance gauged from Kizziah's map (Brawley, n.p.). Eugene D. Owen in a very confusing discussion about whether Crowfield Academy really existed in Centre or Sugar Creek congregation managed to conclude that it never really existed; Eugene D. Owen, "Secondary Education in North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1934), pp. 141-145, 292. However, Owen, himself, told about a marker of the Crowfield Academy, 1760-1788, which was found three miles north of Davidson College (the spot within the bounds of Centre congregation and eight miles south of the Alexander McCorkles); Owen, p. 141. Knight said that Davidson College developed from Crowfield Academy; Knight, Public Education in the South, p. 85. Joseph Alexander in 1767 took the pulpit of Sugar Creek (about 20 miles south of Crowfield Academy), and he opened an academy there which became in succession Queen's College, Queen's Museum, Liberty Hall, and Salisbury Academy (this will be further discussed in chapter five); Knight, Public Education in the South, p. 85; Owen, pp. 67, 69.

Joseph Alexander was prepared for college by Samuel Finley. He entered the College of New Jersey in the spring of 1759 and was placed in the junior class by virtue of his performance on an examination. He married Martha Davies, the daughter of Samuel Davies, who was the president of the College of New Jersey. Although Alexander probably went to North Carolina after his graduation in 1760, he was not licensed as a minister until 1767 and not ordained at Sugar Creek until 1768. Later in his career Alexander removed to South Carolina, and a planned college (Alexandria College at Pinckneyville) was to be named after him (in

Samuel McCorkle probably studied under Alexander for a year or two from about 1764 to 1765. Many of the future leaders in Rowan County were also prepared for college at Crowfield Academy; Ephraim Brevard, James Hall, Adlai Osborne, and William L. Davidson were all trained by Alexander. McCorkle must have impressed Alexander, and Samuel probably found learning easy. Perhaps he decided that he would like to go on for more schooling and become something other than a farmer.<sup>27</sup>

What type of preparatory education did Samuel McCorkle receive? Direct evidence is lacking, but there is much to indicate what shape it probably took. McCorkle's schoolmaster was a Presbyterian minister and college educated, and he taught more than just the five "R's." The lessons were moral, the materials scriptural, and the method of instruction catechetical. Alexander was the model of a man whom Samuel looked up to and imitated.

The education of this period is best described in Christopher Dock's Schul-ordnung (School Management). Dock was a German immigrant, a Mennonite, who settled in Pennsylvania about 1710; about 1714 he opened a school on the Skippack River in Montgomery County and ran it for about ten years before turning his efforts to farming (perhaps

---

1797). This college apparently never opened. Joseph Alexander and his wife had ten children (and one of them, Samuel Davies Alexander, wrote an alumni history of the College of New Jersey). South Carolina College granted Joseph Alexander a doctor of divinity degree in 1807. Alexander was said to have trained both William H. Crawford (Secretary of the Treasury and candidate for the presidency in 1824) and Andrew Jackson. He died in 1809; letter of January 29, 1973, from Dr. Edith Blendon, Acting University Archivist, Princeton University, which included xeroxed copies of requested alumni biographical files.

<sup>27</sup>Ramsey, p. 190. Rumple, A History of Rowan County..., pp. 86-87. Chalmers G. Davidson, Piedmont Partisan: The Life and Times of Brigadier-General William Lee Davidson (Davidson: 1951), p. 119.

having made enough money through teaching for his "start"). But either he was a poor farmer, tired of the physical work, or teaching had gotten into his blood, for by 1738 he had returned to the classroom and remained there another 38 years. His Schul-ordnung was 57 pages long and was published in 1750. Dock discussed in it his classroom experiences, his course of instruction, and his teaching of godliness.<sup>28</sup>

Dock believed that children should be brought up to know God, that the evil within them needed restraining, and that the schoolmaster had to pray with his charges. Since youth were depraved, they had to be brought up in the way they should go. Children had it too easy, and the result was "...degenerate conditions of youth, and the many wrongs of this world by which adults spoil and distress youth." Parents needed to teach more by example than by lecture, but they should not lose hope, for given time, youth was a fault which could be outgrown.<sup>29</sup>

The average day began with children arriving at various times. As they came, Dock had each read a verse from the Bible and then set him to copying the verse on his slate. The whole class then sang a hymn, prayed, and worked over a part of the Lord's Prayer or a commandment. Dock next heard individual recitation; while he was busy at his desk, he had a monitor maintain silence among those not reciting. Dock praised the students when they answered correctly, and he called those who erred "lazy" until they learned their lesson, when their status changed to "diligent." Spelling, drilling the young scholars on the alphabet,

---

<sup>28</sup> Martin G. Brumbaugh, The Life and Works of Christopher Dock, America's Pioneer Writer on Education with a Translation of his Works into the English Language (Philadelphia: 1908), pp. 12, 13, 20, 89.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 91-92, 103.

reading the Testament, and ciphering sums took them up until dinner. One timeless institution that hung on a peg on the wall was a wood block (the lavatory pass).<sup>30</sup>

Children needed differential treatment for swearing, lying, stealing, and quarreling, and they all, good and bad, needed to be treated with love. Dock's treatise contained 200 rules for conduct which undoubtedly covered most of the sins which could possibly have been committed, and his work closed by calling upon the reader to be diligent, silent, unenvious, industrious, and so forth.<sup>31</sup>

Dock used mainly religious materials, his emphasis on right conduct and morality was largely religious in character, and his methods were those of the early Christians in the catacombs ("catechism"). Two things, however, stood out about Dock and perhaps the other good schoolmasters like Alexander. No matter how gruff he seemed, he cared about children and tolerated their childishness (even if he did help them try to overcome it). And second, he knew something about his students, about what they should learn, and about how he could stimulate learning.

Alexander probably was not much different from Dock, and Samuel McCorkle was brought up in much the same kind of classroom. He probably excelled and did additional work in Latin and in reading some of the books that his mentor possessed. McCorkle went on to study with another Presbyterian minister, David Caldwell—the pastor of Buffalo and Alamance Churches, who also ran a "log college" or preparatory school. Caldwell lived and worked about 50 miles to the northwest of

---

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 105-109.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 110-121, 125, 225.



where Alexander McCorkle lived, according to Kizziah's map, and Samuel McCorkle must have boarded at the Caldwells or in the neighborhood.<sup>32</sup>

Caruthers said that McCorkle commenced his classical studies about the age of 20 with David Caldwell in Guilford County. Caldwell began his school in about 1766, and he usually taught about 50 boys. Caldwell enjoyed teaching and was an able manager of a classroom. Of the men he prepared, five became state governors, several became judges (one of whom, Macay, will be met later), a number became lawyers and physicians, and about 50 became ministers. His school in time became an academy, a college, and a seminary. Caldwell was much respected, as is illustrated by the story about one student who when under Caldwell had to be continually heightened in his diligence, yet later in life rode 200 miles across North Carolina to visit his teacher once again.<sup>33</sup>

Part of the reason that Caldwell inspired the respect of his students was his drive, and he demonstrated through his own life his belief in education. Caldwell was born in 1725 of Scotch-Irish parents in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and was reared in a pious family (all his brothers became elders in their churches). While a young man, Caldwell was apprenticed to a carpenter until he was 21. He remained at carpentry another four years before his life changed directions, and he undertook his own education at this time.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup>Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 351. Kizziah's map is in Brawley, n.p.

<sup>33</sup>Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 346. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 235. Reverend Eli W. Caruthers, A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D.D., Near Sixty Years Pastor of the Churches of Buffalo and Alamance (Greensborough: 1842), p. 31, hereafter cited Caruthers, Sketch of Caldwell.

<sup>34</sup>Caruthers, Sketch of Caldwell, pp. 10-14. He may have attended a classical school which the Reverend Robert Smith conducted in Pequea, Pennsylvania (begun in 1751); Gewehr, p. 224.

Caldwell "professed religion" at 25, and he taught school for a year while preparing himself for college and the ministry. He entered the College of New Jersey and graduated in 1761 at the age of 36. He remained the next two years at the college as a tutor while he studied for the ministry. In 1763 Caldwell was licensed and became a probationary preacher. He went south the following year and settled among his people at Buffalo and Alamance Churches by 1765, although he was not ordained until 1767. Alamance was mainly New Side and Buffalo largely Old Side, but Caldwell lasted 60 years with no apparent difficulties.<sup>35</sup>

Caldwell married Rachel Craighead, daughter of Alexander Craighead, a Presbyterian minister, in 1766. That union produced thirteen children, of whom eight sons and a daughter lived to maturity (three became mentally ill and were apparently cared for by the family; Samuel McCorkle would supply a vacant pulpit for one of them). Three of their sons became ministers. Faced with a meager salary of \$200, Caldwell acquired a farm which he worked until he was past 90, and he opened up his log college—one of the most noted and influential in the South and well known for thorough if not extensive training.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup>Samuel A. Ashe, ed., Biographical History of North Carolina from Colonial Times to the Present (Greensboro: 1905), I, p. 207. Caruthers, Sketch of Caldwell, p. 19, and Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 234, disagree slightly, saying that Caldwell taught the year of 1762 at Cape May, but at any rate, Caldwell probably taught at both Cape May and the College of New Jersey while he was studying for the ministry.

<sup>36</sup>Caruthers, Sketch of Caldwell, pp. 26, 258. Since Caruthers succeeded Caldwell in his pulpits at his death, and since he remained there until Foote began gathering information in the decade after 1840 for his account, both sources should be reasonably accurate; Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 231. Ashe, Biographical History..., I, p. 208. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 235. Elmer E. Brown, The Making of Our Middle Schools (New York: 1926), p. 95. Knight, Public Education in the South, p. 83.

Caldwell had additional activities as well. There being a shortage

Samuel McCorkle was especially impressed by the teaching and exemplary model of David Caldwell, but there was also another side to the development of McCorkle which occurred at Caldwell's log college. According to a saying, "Dr. Caldwell made the scholars, but Mrs. Caldwell made the preachers." There were apparently some periodic revivals which occurred, and since McCorkle left for the College of New Jersey to study for the Presbyterian ministry in 1768, it is likely that he was influenced by the Caldwells and the revivals which had happened under their tutelage.<sup>37</sup>

---

of medical practitioners in the area where he lived, Caldwell studied and practiced that art until his son, a doctor, replaced him (this was not uncommon for educated men in frontier areas). He was appointed one of the examiners of the future Liberty Hall Academy in October, 1776, and he became one of the trustees when it was incorporated. Something of a patriot in the pulpit, Caldwell was forced to hide from the British during their invasions in the Revolution (there was a \$1,000 dead or alive bounty on his head). Unfortunately for history, his papers were not as lucky; his library was burned by the British; Caruthers, Sketch of Caldwell, pp. 41, 193, 216; Charles Dabney, Universal Education in the South (Chapel Hill: 1936), I, p. 52.

Caldwell was a leader of the Regulators and tried to stop any bloodshed. He was a member of the Mecklenburg Convention and the state constitutional convention. He drew up the article for the North Carolina Constitution which limited to Protestants the right to hold public office. In respect to his contributions to education in North Carolina, his name was put into nomination for the presidency of the University of North Carolina, but he declined due to advanced age. He was granted an M.A. from the College of New Jersey and a D.D. from the University of North Carolina; Edmund K. Alden, "David Caldwell," Dictionary of American Biography, ed., Allen Johnson (New York: 1946), III, p. 407; Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 240; Caruthers, Sketch of Caldwell, p. 265; The National Cyclopedia of American Biography (New York: 1909), X, p. 203.

Caldwell closed his log college in 1811 when he was 86 but did continue to preach and to instruct individual students. One of them, J. M. Morehead, the governor of North Carolina, was asked while in office (1852) to write his recollections of Caldwell, and it was his account which appeared in Sprague's Annals of the American Pulpit. Caldwell retired from the pulpit in 1820 when he was 95 and died four years later; Ashe, Biographical History..., I, p. 207; Caruthers, Sketch of Caldwell, p. 268.

<sup>37</sup>Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 235.

## CHAPTER III

### TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY

#### The College of New Jersey

Samuel McCorkle left Rowan County in 1768 for the College of New Jersey (present day Princeton) located in the small town of Princeton, New Jersey. If he became convinced that he wanted to study for the ministry during his training under the Caldwells, Samuel McCorkle, in taking his long trip north, was merely taking the next step. The story of the Presbyterians (and of the Scotch-Irish) is closely linked with that of their seminary, the College of New Jersey.<sup>1</sup>

Samuel McCorkle and the College of New Jersey were both born in the same year. During the Great Awakening, a period of religious revivalism in America beginning in about 1740, the Presbyterians split into two opinions--the Old Side and the New Side. The Old Side held a traditional view of the Church; it should be an unyielding, unchanging fortress and not be undermined by changing conditions in the society such as had occurred on the frontier. Nor should the wisdom of the ages be watered down by current fancy or notions of seeking out the man. The New Side believed that the Church should take the gospel of the good

---

<sup>1</sup>Reverend William Henry Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of her Early Settlers (New York: 1846), p. 235; hereafter Foote, Sketches of North Carolina.

news to where people were and make believers out of them. This message was best carried through evangelism and the use of revivals, and the "enthusiasm" attending these revivals was the will of God reaching man in a mysterious manner. Since few ministers served on the frontier, more were needed to serve vacant pulpits and to carry the gospel into areas without a meetinghouse. The frontier society in America was different from the society of the Old World, and if the Church were to succeed in the wilderness, it had to train American clergy for the task. With this purpose in his mind, William Tennent founded his Log College --to prepare an American and New Light clergy--and the graduates of this training were primarily responsible for the founding of the College of New Jersey in 1746. Patterned after Harvard and Yale and molded by the Log College experience, the College of New Jersey freed the New Light Presbyterians from dependence on Scotland or the Congregational-dominated Harvard or Yale for their clergy.<sup>2</sup>

The split between the New Side and Old Side gradually narrowed as was acknowledged through their formation of a reunited synod in 1758, the Synod of New York and Philadelphia. But the Presbyterian Church had moved to accept most of the enthusiasm and beliefs of the New Side, and its growth in America was largely due to this direction (away from the High Church position which the Scotch-Irish detested). The ministers who were sent out visited their people, examined their faith, and

---

<sup>2</sup>James G. Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish: A Social History (Chapel Hill: 1962), pp. 274-280. Francis L. Broderick, "Pulpit, Physics, and Politics: The Curriculum of the College of New Jersey, 1746-1794," William and Mary Quarterly, third series, 6 (1949), p. 42. Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Princeton, 1746-1896 (Princeton: 1946), p. 3. Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States (New York: 1955), p. 139.

catechized their children, and many of the ministers also began informal schooling among the young. Some of their students who completed this early religious education went on to further work in academies or colleges. It was as if Tennent's Log College had multiplied itself many times over.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to 1746 and the founding of the College of New Jersey, three colleges were founded in America: Harvard (1636), William and Mary (1693), and Yale (1701). William and Mary at this time was barely more than an Anglican grammar school in Virginia, but Harvard and Yale were well established Congregational institutions and chiefly devoted to educating the better sort of men in the New England society as well as training Congregational ministers. New England was predominantly Congregational territory, and even the Scotch-Irish settling there tended to become Congregationalists.<sup>4</sup>

Traditionally the Presbyterians relied upon the Scottish Kirk or Harvard and Yale for what few clergymen were required, but after the Great Awakening the Presbyterians began training their own ministers. As Scotch-Irish migrants settled in western Pennsylvania, the Valley of Virginia, and piedmont North Carolina, they called for Presbyterian ministers to serve in their congregations. These settlers were tied to Pennsylvania for their culture, and they looked to the College of New Jersey for their ministers.<sup>5</sup>

The College of New Jersey, founded as a seminary by the New Side (the Synod of New York) in 1746, began operating the following year at

---

<sup>3</sup>Wertenbaker, Princeton, p. 114.

<sup>4</sup>Henry J. Ford, The Scotch-Irish in America (New York: 1941), pp. 333, 345.

<sup>5</sup>Wertenbaker, Princeton, p. 113.

Elizabethtown, New Jersey, in the home of its first president, the Reverend Jonathan Dickinson. The infant college received its first shock when Dickinson, the first president and only faculty member, died in October, 1747. However, the college recovered when the eight pupils went on to study at the home of the Reverend Aaron Burr, the second president, in Newark, New Jersey. Governor Belcher granted a second charter to the school in 1748 along with considerable financial aid, but financial problems continued to plague the college. In 1753 Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Davies went across the sea to raise contributions, and a lottery was run. In 1755 a plan for a new building (54 by 176 feet with 60 rooms and space for 150 students) was developed, and a gift from Belcher enabled the construction to begin. Besides the money, the charter, and the 474 books (in 1754) which Belcher had already given, he was asked to lend his name to the building. He modestly refused, asking instead that the building be named for William and Mary of Nassau (the Protestant king and queen imported from the Netherlands to sit on the English throne in 1688). During Burr's tenure from 1748 to 1757, 114 men graduated from the College of New Jersey, and 62 of them entered the ministry.<sup>6</sup>

The question of where to build the new Nassau Hall was largely prompted by financial considerations. The Newark location had not produced many students, and the trustees voted to move the college to New Brunswick. However, that town did not seem appreciative enough, and

---

<sup>6</sup> John Maclean, History of the College of New Jersey, 1746-1854 (New York: 1969), pp. 82, 127, 149, 146, 155; originally published in Philadelphia in 1877. Wertenbaker, Princeton, pp. 114-115. Ford, pp. 427, 430. Tennent and Davies raised 1,700 pounds in England, 1,000 pounds in Scotland, and 500 pounds in Ireland for the college; *Ibid.*, p. 436.

their offer did not match that of the town of Princeton (1000 acres with ten cleared for the college and £1000). After 1756 the college moved to Princeton where it built Nassau Hall, and the enrollment the following year was 70 students.<sup>7</sup>

The time of troubles at the College of New Jersey extended from problems of financial stability to the actual running of the school. Jonathan Edwards was elected as the college's third president in 1757, and he died soon after from the effects of a smallpox inoculation. The fourth president, Samuel Davies, did not take office until 1759. He was the man who first obtained a license for four meetinghouses (for dissenters) in Virginia about 1750; he organized Hanover Presbytery (in which Samuel McCorkle would first serve) in 1755; and he "discovered" John Witherspoon while he was raising funds in Scotland.<sup>8</sup>

By the time of Davies' presidency, the schism between New Side and Old Side in the Presbyterian Church was bridged. In 1745 there were 22 New Side ministers and 24 Old Side; in 1758 there were 72 New Side preachers and 23 Old Side. The Presbyterian Church had 200 meetinghouses and 10,000 members in 1758. As these figures indicate, the New Side came to dominate the Presbyterian Church, and they made its appeal less restricted and less formal. Moreover, its impact, according to Gewehr, was to bring religious liberty, education, and social upheaval to America. "The rise of democracy was preceded and foreshadowed

---

<sup>7</sup>Ford, pp. 429-430.

<sup>8</sup>Maclean, pp. 170, 199, 156. A. Mervyn Davies, Presbyterian Heritage (Richmond: 1965), p. 100.



by the rise of religious dissent, which did much to crystallize the ideas and forces back of the American Revolution."<sup>9</sup>

When Davies died in 1761, the trustees elected as the new president the Reverend Samuel Finley, who had been a tutor at the college for ten years. Finley served until his death in 1766, and during his administration the college graduated 130 men of whom 59 became ministers. The presidency was to lie vacant for two years before the arrival of the college's sixth president.<sup>10</sup>

The usual complexities and anxieties of choosing the next college president were somewhat intensified by a renewal of the old problem, the conflict between the New Side and the Old Side. Both factions had tried to heal the wounds which their differences had inflicted upon the Church. In 1758 the New Side synod (the Synod of New York) and the Old Side synod (the Synod of Philadelphia) united as the new Synod of New York and Philadelphia, but their traditional differences reappeared in 1766 over the choice of a new president. The reconciliation of 1758 had not yet reached the town of Princeton.

Each faction wanted one of its own as the president of the chief Presbyterian seminary. The New Side was able to dominate the direction of the Church after the reunion of 1758, but the Old Side found it much easier to tap financial resources. In 1766 the Old Side proposed to the New Side-dominated trustees of the College of New Jersey that should they choose an Old Side man as the president; and should they hire a

---

<sup>9</sup>Davies, p. 95. Wesley M. Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia, 1740-1790 (Durham: 1930), p. 262. Walter L. Lingle, Presbyterians: Their History and Beliefs (Richmond: 1944), p. 79.

<sup>10</sup>Maclean, pp. 156, 265, 274, 285.

"genuine faculty of professors," substantial contributions would be forthcoming to the college to lift it out of its financial problems. But the trustees feared the restraints of such a compromise, and they did not consent to the Old Side proposal. Instead, they chose Dr. John Witherspoon, a Scottish churchman, as the new president.<sup>11</sup>

#### John Witherspoon

The trustees selected Witherspoon as the best possible solution, and they were true to the American tradition in such matters—get a man from outside. Witherspoon was 43, was from a family of Presbyterian divines, and had taken a master of arts and a doctor of divinity from the University of Edinburgh. A man who had published, who had been a parish minister, and who had an established reputation in the Scottish Kirk, Witherspoon had adequate ethnic, religious, and academic credentials for his new position. He could speak with the Scots and the Scotch-Irish who made up the Presbyterian Church in America, his views were not sectarian on the issue of enthusiasm, and he pleased both the New Side and the Old Side. Witherspoon's eclectic views embraced both orthodoxy and enthusiasm, and he defended both of them as necessary for the vitality of true religion.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup>Hofstadter and Metzger, pp. 142-143; the authors base their findings on Varnum L. Collins, President Witherspoon: A Biography (Princeton: 1925), I, pp. 134-135, hereafter cited as Collins, Witherspoon; and Varnum L. Collins, Princeton (New York: 1914), pp. 62-93.

<sup>12</sup>Willard Thorp, ed., The Lives of Eighteen from Princeton (Princeton: 1946), pp. 68, 73, 85. Ashbel Green, "John Witherspoon, D.D.," Annals of the American Pulpit, ed., William B. Sprague (New York: 1969), III, p. 288. John E. Pomfret, "Witherspoon, John," Dictionary of American Biography, ed., Dumas Malone (New York: 1946), XX, p. 436; Pomfret cited Green, Collins, Maclean, and others. Edinburgh was a Presbyterian institution which emphasized the preparation of clergy

Witherspoon was a fortunate selection, for under his leadership the College of New Jersey freed itself from the sectarian controversy which previously had plagued it. Witherspoon's influence upon his students reached the Church in the person of his graduates, and he became the educational and religious leader of the Presbyterians in America. His forceful presence enabled him to reconcile at the College of New Jersey the differences between the New Side and the Old Side.<sup>13</sup>

However, the coming of Witherspoon healed the schism in the Presbyterian Church and brought new life to the College of New Jersey, it might be more to the point to consider him as a preacher and teacher and to assess his probable influence on Samuel McCorkle. Witherspoon based both his teaching and his preaching on common sense, a practical view of life. His beliefs were influenced by the realist philosophy which he had adopted as a student during the Scottish Enlightenment. Hardly a great philosopher, Witherspoon was an able administrator, teacher, and churchman who thoroughly incorporated the Presbyterian doctrines within his own view of the world. Man physically lived in the natural world,

---

through a course of study consisting largely of theology, dialectic, Latin grammar, and literature; Scotch education was disciplined and much like the English system; Leyburn, pp. 42-44. Other interesting accounts of Witherspoon can be found in the works of Collins; Davies; L. H. Butterfield, John Witherspoon Comes to America: A Documentary Account Based Largely on New Materials (Princeton: 1953); Clifford P. Reynolds, ed., Biographical Directory of the American Congress (Washington: 1961); and The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography (New York: 1907), V.

<sup>13</sup>Hofstadter and Metzger, pp. 142-143; Witherspoon became a leader of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and was a delegate from New Jersey to the Continental Congresses from 1776 to 1782. He signed the Declaration of Independence; Reynolds, p. 1840. Horace Walpole later said about Witherspoon that "Cousin America has run away with a Presbyterian parson;" "The Beginnings and Development of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina," Appreciations and Historical Addresses, ed., Walter W. Moore (no publisher: no date), p. 157; from an address given at the Synod of North Carolina, October 17, 1913.

but there was also a spiritual reality to the universe which transcended his physical existence. This spiritual reality was experienced through the mind or soul through understanding, the will, passions. One could understand the world as it was, and one was free to decide how to act, although the "affections" (passions) influenced both judgment and will. God's will was perfect, and the man knowing the divine commands would certainly live a virtuous and moral life. God's plan for the world would be realized through such rationality and by man coming to know the natural law.<sup>14</sup>

This common sense philosophy, called "realism," fit snugly with the tenets of the Presbyterian faith, and upon it Witherspoon built his view of the universe, of God, and of morality. Since his philosophy was fairly easy to grasp, many of Witherspoon's students came to understand common sense realism and to use it to fight against materialism, idealism, and deism. When they left the College of New Jersey, Witherspoon's graduates carried a set of his lectures with them as they scattered to all parts of America.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>Max Savelle, Seeds of Liberty: The Genesis of the American Mind (New York: 1948), pp. 175-176, 278; Savelle cited I. Woodbridge Riley, American Philosophy; The Early Schools (New York: 1907), p. 476; and John Witherspoon, Lectures on Moral Philosophy, ed., V. L. Collins (Princeton: 1912), pp. 8-12, 28. Witherspoon's personal philosophy of realism helped him harmonize an empirical Newtonian universe with the Christian religion; this was reflected in his lectures on the "natural laws" of human conduct which the Divine Mechanic had revealed in the Scriptures. Witherspoon united morality, rationality, and theism in his world view; John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, Higher Education in Transition: A History of American Colleges and Universities, 1636-1968 (New York: 1968), pp. 16.

<sup>15</sup>Savelle, pp. 175-176, 278.

Witherspoon's theology was fairly conservative, and he was really a defender of orthodoxy. As a student Witherspoon read John Locke, George Berkeley, and Thomas Reid, and his master's thesis drew upon them to demonstrate the divinity and immortality of the mind. These views were later propounded in the articles which Witherspoon wrote while a minister in Scotland and in the lectures he gave at the College of New Jersey. The common sense philosophy adapted to such issues as deism, politics, economics, and law.<sup>16</sup>

#### The Course of Study

When philosophy is put into educational practice, it usually is typed as "curriculum." At the College of New Jersey, Witherspoon tried to "unite together piety and literature," an influence which would later occur repeatedly in the work of Samuel McCorkle. The traditional course of study called for mastery of the trivium and the quadrivium, study of the classical antiquities, and learning the scholarly languages (Latin and Greek), and although it did not appear as a course, the cornerstone of this curriculum was divinity. But Witherspoon wanted a broader course of study than just the traditional classics and languages, and he added work in English literature and grammar, French, history, philosophy, and eloquence. The theology was largely New Side, but the new birth was less essential than thorough learning and personal dignity. The course of study resembled that of the Scottish university, and through it Witherspoon attempted to harmonize religion with Enlightenment rationalism.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup>Lawrence A. Cremin, American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783 (New York: 1970), pp. 298-300.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid. Douglas Sloan, The Scottish Enlightenment and the American

Witherspoon encouraged the grammar school which operated in the basement of Nassau Hall, and he gave attention to those students who were not going on to college. He wrote about concern for students, the need for varied approaches in teaching different students, and the need for setting a moral example for children. Witherspoon sought to educate students for service, whether to church or state, and he enjoyed a measure of success, for among his graduates were: a president (James Madison), a vice-president (Aaron Burr), ten cabinet officers, 60 members of Congress, and three Supreme Court justices. Besides the 75 offices held in the federal government, College of New Jersey men also sat in offices at the state level; Witherspoon's graduates held 12 governorships, 30 were judges, and 56 served as members of state legislatures. In their own category were at least 13 future college presidents. These figures need to be taken with caution since there were few colleges at the time, and others probably had prestigious graduates as well. However, that is not to deny that Witherspoon had considerable influence in philosophy, politics, the Presbyterian Church, and education.<sup>18</sup>

If the course of study under Witherspoon was not entirely the food of giants, it trained the students in the classical education and fitted them for any calling—scholar, citizen, Christian. Witherspoon sought

---

College Ideal (New York: 1971), pp. 132, 146. Louis F. Snow, The College Curriculum in the United States (New York: 1907), pp. 15-18.

<sup>18</sup> Cremin, pp. 300-301; Cremin cited William W. Woodward, ed., The Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon (Philadelphia: 1800), III, pp. 279, 271, 373-375; William W. Woodward, The Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon (2nd ed., rev., Philadelphia: 1802), IV, p. 10. Collins, Witherspoon, I, p. 229. Maclean, p. 358. Of the 186 total offices held, some were obviously held for only short periods by men who went on to hold other offices (e.g., —James Madison held at least three such offices).

to instill a sense of responsibility in those who would later take a high station in society, and he promoted in them industry, virtue, happiness, and dignity, besides teaching the social graces and conversational skills. Witherspoon had much to do with this training, and he, as the college president, also ran the institution, made contact with the community outside, and set the tone of scholarship.<sup>19</sup>

When Samuel McCorkle arrived at the College of New Jersey in 1768, he was 22, and most of his classmates were 15 or 16. He paid nine pounds a year for tuition, room, and board. He and his class were instructed by one tutor through their entire four years, except for the president's lectures and sermons. Everyone took the same prescribed curriculum, and their days probably seemed long and dry, filled with lecture and recitation. They were strictly regimented, opportunities to relax were infrequent, and if a student's self-discipline broke down, his diligence was heightened by a tutor or Witherspoon. The faculty probably felt on most days that the students carried the full measure of original sin, and accordingly, lectures on moral philosophy were given as a remedy.<sup>20</sup>

As a freshman, McCorkle read the Latin and Greek classics and learned about rhetoric. Work in the classical languages continued his second year, but McCorkle also studied geography ("with the use of the

---

<sup>19</sup>John Witherspoon, Address to the Inhabitants of Jamaica, and Other West-India Islands, in Behalf of the College of New-Jersey (Philadelphia: 1772), pp. 5-6; hereafter cited Witherspoon, Address. George P. Schmidt, The Old Time College President (New York: 1930), pp. 22, 42.

<sup>20</sup> Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 351. Beyerly McAnear, "College Founding in the American Colonies, 1745-1775," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 42 (1955), pp. 33, 38. Brubacher and Rudy, pp. 82-84. Schmidt, p. 93.

globes"), philosophy, and mathematics. Languages were not ignored the junior year, but more emphasis was placed on mathematics and natural philosophy (physics). Seniors did additional work in mathematics and natural philosophy, read the "higher classics," and took Witherspoon's capstone course in moral philosophy.<sup>21</sup>

This president's lecture course was actually heard twice by each student, once as a junior for content and once as a senior for style. Students remembered Witherspoon for these lectures rather than for saving a struggling young college, and they carried their notes with them as a mark of their learning and as a basis for further scholarship. Witherspoon's lecture reviewed all previous work, added lectures in theology and philosophy (with readings over Grotius, Pufendorf, Hobbes, Harrington, Locke, Sidney, and Montesquieu), and enabled students to synthesize and integrate all their work into a meaningful structure which they could retain and use for further learning. In his series of lectures, Witherspoon formulated a philosophical system which considered ethics, government, politics, international law, and mixed in discussions about eloquence, taste, criticism, and composition.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup>Witherspoon, Address, pp. 15-16. Natural philosophy, or the study of the natural world (what would be called "science" today), was then one-third of the area of philosophy, the study of truth and wisdom. The other two parts were rational philosophy (logic, metaphysics, ontology, dialectic, speech, grammar, rhetoric, oratory, history, poetry, and criticism) and moral philosophy (theology, ethics, politics—civil and ecclesiastical, and "pneumatology"). Physics, as a branch of natural philosophy, was concerned with music, geography, navigation, lithology, metalogy, meteorology, botany, agriculture, anatomy, medicine, and chemistry; Louis W. McKeehan, Yale Science: The First Hundred Years, 1701-1801 (New York: 1947), pp. 8-9.

<sup>22</sup>Collins, Witherspoon, I, p. 84. Cremin, pp. 298-300. James J. Walsh, Education of the Founding Fathers of the Republic, Scholasticism in the Colonial Colleges: A Neglected Chapter in the History of American Education (New York: 1935), p. 157.



Samuel McCorkle took a fairly standard course of study at the College of New Jersey (Latin, Greek, Hebrew, logic, geography, astronomy, natural philosophy, ontology, ethics, and rhetoric), but he also learned about the cultural heritage, became fluent in Latin through drill, and worked in the English grammar and composition. He and other students competed to see who could become the most fluent, the most accurate, the most alert.<sup>23</sup>

His work in English, history, and French kept McCorkle's course at the College of New Jersey from being rigidly classical, and by 1770 the study of science was introduced. Witherspoon apparently brought with him the Scottish scientific interest in such things as natural history, plants, and astronomy. He often busied himself in recording temperatures, observing comets, or tinkering with a piece of apparatus; Witherspoon was a product of the Enlightenment, very curious about his environment.<sup>24</sup>

Witherspoon's fascination with the natural world reached McCorkle through his teaching. Witherspoon believed that the divine plan would be realized through human rationality and natural law, and this could be furthered through education. Thus, science would enable man to look more fully at his world and find the hand of God working in it, both in the natural order and in new and mysterious ways. But science as it was used in McCorkle's education meant reinforcing the existing view of

---

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 156. Collins, Witherspoon, I, p. 84. It was quite necessary for McCorkle, as a future Presbyterian minister, to learn Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, for the scholarly languages enabled one to read God's word without having it corrupted by intervening translations; Walsh, p. 157.

<sup>24</sup>Broderick, p. 60. Brook Hindle, The Pursuit of Science in Revolutionary America, 1735-1789 (Chapel Hill: 1956), pp. 89, 389.

the world (and God's authority in it) rather than concerning itself with a critical attitude or learning new information about the world.<sup>25</sup>

The intellectual training, in spite of the broad curriculum, was narrowing. Meriwether brilliantly described the process as:

It was another sky over their heads, another atmosphere around them, another problem for them to solve. It was an age of discussion, not of investigation; it was a war of words, not a research into nature. Men harassed their souls to know what the masters meant, they did not gather their forces and concentrate their efforts to learn the results of science. For the epochs past they had been dealing with terms of speech, they had been fashioning their language, they had been sharpening their dialectical wits, they had been polishing the symbols of sound. They had been delving into the past and they had begun to weigh the value of tradition and custom. They were hoarding their powers to break the crust of conservatism.

Their Latin, their Greek, their Hebrew, their linguistic study generally, had given them a verbal razor for splitting the hairs of discussion. Logic, metaphysics, and theology had whetted their ardor still more keenly and had furnished them with great principles, which became bulwarks of safety to fall back upon. The little history they had supplied them with another form of argument, the most convincing to the average human mind, that of example. The shreds and patches of science that they got hardened them in their respect for authority. The formal rules and processes of mathematics that they memorized set them in crystals of unchangeable faith.

Thus they stood, with trained memory, fortified with great axioms, equipped with flexible and adaptive language, panoplied with hard dry logic.<sup>26</sup>

The "friendly" game in which students honed their dialectical tools was disputation, a pedagogical technique which followed presentation and recitation. The object of such a discussion (actually, a debate) was to win—by quotation, by citation, by example, or by marshalling words and mighty phrases. The organization of two literary and debating societies helped students put their learning into practice as it helped

---

<sup>25</sup>Savelle, p. 175.

<sup>26</sup>Colyer Meriwether, Our Colonial Curriculum, 1607-1776 (Washington, D.C.: 1907), pp. 284-286.

then channel off their exuberance and excess energies. Debates on academical or political questions sparked up dull days. They were structured so that participants had either to affirm or deny the question (thus utilizing the traditional method of scholarship—proving truth and disproving heresy).<sup>27</sup>

As has been shown, the prime goal of preparatory education in colonial America was the restraint of individual behavior, getting students to conform to the expected norm. Diligence, piety, and self-discipline were reinforced by the schoolmasters, and the continual lessons conducted by catechetical methods with their moral tone and their scriptural injunctions clearly strengthened the hand of the masters against deviant behavior. "Good" students were well behaved if narrowly trained. These lessons were further taught in colleges through the excessive concern with the classical heritage, the ancient languages, and the dialectical powers; they encouraged an intellectual dependence on the proper authorities. Thus, a successful student was conditioned to the traditional view and was resistant to any new ideas or to original thinking. The daily schedule for McCorkle and his classmates also

---

<sup>27</sup>Ibid. David Potter, Debating in the Colonial Chartered Colleges: An Historical Survey, 1642-1900 (New York: 1944), pp. 65, 3. Perhaps disputations and trips to the library broke up the daily routine. The library was small, select, and mainly donated. The works were mostly theology and classics with a few works on medicine, science, and travel; Louis Shores, Origins of the American College Library, 1638-1800 (Nashville: 1934), p. 58. Donations were necessary for apparatus and libraries; the college library had 2,000 volumes by McCorkle's time. The tutors, young men who had graduated and were studying theology for the ministry and were supported on an early form of the teaching assistantship, probably found the library more useful than their students, but most lectures probably were written at the library; McAnear, "College Founding in the American Colonies, 1745-1775," pp. 26-31. The Whig Society and the Cliosophic Society began at the College of New Jersey in 1770; Brubacher and Rudy, p. 49.

played their part in enforcing conformity and self-discipline, although it must have generated much rebellion among the students as well.

Philip Vickers Fithian, McCorkle's classmate, kept a journal in which he copied the college rules, and they are an indication of what the daily schedule and the education were like. The rules were "exceedingly well formed to check & restrain the vicious, & to assist the studious, & to countenance & incourage the virtuous." Six days a week the students rose at five o'clock and dressed, and they had a half hour before they had to be in attendance at prayers (or face punishment, verbal but not corporal). From seven to eight they returned to their rooms to study, and at eight breakfast was served with the time afterward until nine for play or exercise. Classes met from nine until one, and students after dinner were free until three to do as they pleased. From three to five they had to study, and the evening was begun with prayers at five. Each evening after prayers three students gave orations which they memorized for delivery, and seniors had to compose their own. Supper was at seven and bed check at nine. On Sundays, morning prayers were held as usual, and attendance was also required at the two worship services at eleven and three. A society of boys met voluntarily at six to sing psalms and pray, and a tutor sat in and read a prayer. After supper at seven, each class met separately in a member's room to sing psalms and pray and then retired to individual rooms.<sup>28</sup>

When Samuel McCorkle attended the College of New Jersey, the average enrollment was about 80 students, and other, younger students

---

<sup>28</sup>Witherspoon, Address, pp. 9-13. Archibald Henderson Collection, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; Henderson found Fithian's rules in John R. Williams, ed., Philip Vickers Fithian: Journal and Letters, 1767-1774 (Princeton: 1900), pp. 7-9.

were enrolled in the excellent grammar school which ran in Nassau Hall. The average class graduated about 22 men from 1769 to 1776. The faculty consisted of three tutors and President Witherspoon. Classes were held in Nassau Hall where most of the students also had their rooms and board.<sup>29</sup>

The single most important fact about Samuel McCorkle's education at the College of New Jersey was John Witherspoon, the president and leading teacher, and a leading figure in American Presbyterianism. Witherspoon arrived in 1768, rescued the college from impending dissolution, restored its direction (i.e.—finances, prestige, attendance), and revitalized its education. The college began to prepare social and civic leaders as well as clergy; during Witherspoon's tenure 478 men graduated, of whom about a fourth entered the ministry. McCorkle's classmates largely became Presbyterian ministers (at least 14 of the 22), but that may well indicate the earlier educational emphasis of the College of New Jersey than its experience under Witherspoon. The graduates became ministers, tutors, teachers, college instructors, and college presidents.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup>Collins, Witherspoon, I, p. 83. Witherspoon, Address, pp. 9-13. The class of 1767 had 11 men, the class of 1768 had 11, the class of 1770 had 22 (plus five earned master's, four honorary master's, and five doctor of divinity degrees), and the class of 1771 had 12. James Madison was excused in 1771 from the commencement exercises, and Aaron Burr was the outstanding performer in those contests that year; Maclean, pp. 299-313. Two "poems" which James Madison wrote, both mentioning Samuel McCorkle, can be found in Appendix A.

<sup>30</sup>Walsh, p. 52. Wertenbaker, pp. 76, 392. Samuel D. Alexander, Princeton College during the Eighteenth Century (New York: 1872), pp. 147-159. At the College of New Jersey there were several sources of revenue—tuition (and Nassau Hall had been built partly to provide room and board so as to increase the number of students enrolled), lotteries (which usually lost money), grants from the government (which the Quakers usually defeated), and donations from benefactors. When Gilbert

Indeed, the influence of John Witherspoon upon the lifelong education of Samuel McCorkle was direct and pervasive. Many of the ideas which Witherspoon articulated in his writings and lectures later appeared in the sermons of Samuel McCorkle. The favorite words of Witherspoon—dignity, diligence, true religion, Zion, and piety—became an integral part of McCorkle's vocabulary. Witherspoon preached that true religion was not just a theology but also a personal belief, an inner religion. Religion could not be totally understood by the mental processes; it had to be felt. Witherspoon wrote, "Experimental knowledge is superior to all other, and necessary to the perfection of every other kind." McCorkle wrote nearly the same sentence in considering the revival of 1802 in North Carolina. The man who felt this truth and was genuinely pious would be diligent in his studies and daily life, and the conviction which he felt would give force to what he said, "a piercing and a penetrating heat in that which flows from the heart, which distinguishes it both from the coldness of indifference and the false fire of enthusiasm and vain glory." True religion was thus an inward temper and an outward conduct.<sup>31</sup>

---

Tennent and Samuel Davies raised funds in Great Britain, they based their case on two points—the education of ministers to supply vacant pulpits and the conversion of Indians to Christianity. Witherspoon was also a very able fund raiser, but his efforts were offset by sectarian conflicts, jealousies, inflation, and the Revolution's impact on the college (curtailing operations greatly); Beverly McAnear, "The Raising of Funds by the Colonial Colleges," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 38 (1951-1952), pp. 591-611. Witherspoon's significance should not be underestimated. He was the only minister or educator to sign the Declaration of Independence; Butterfield, p. v. He wrote to newspapers in support of the Patriot cause; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Prelude to Independence: The Newspaper War on Britain (New York: 1958), p. 293. 41 of his graduates served in the Revolution as officers; Collins, Witherspoon, p. 229. McCorkle was in college during the conflict before the Revolution, and this influence likely was present in his training, judging from his later behavior.

<sup>31</sup>John Witherspoon, The Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon...

Many of Witherspoon's lectures, essays, and sermons were published, either separately or in a posthumous, three volume, 2,000 page work. The focus of much of that work was on Christian conduct, on how men behaved. A typical sermon was entitled Christian Magnanimity. It called elders to train up youngsters "to walk in the paths of piety and virtue," to teach them magnanimity. One who received this training would attempt great and difficult things and be governed by wisdom, prudence, and justice. He would realize that moral principles enter "into the compositions of true greatness." Later McCorkle wrote, preached, and published his own sermon on magnanimity, True Greatness. McCorkle, like his mentor, would preach against deism, for education, and for patriotism. His preaching style would also parallel that of Witherspoon, for each man would write out his sermon text, memorize it, and deliver it without notes, citing many learned sources and preaching about the mysteries of grace.<sup>32</sup>

However, education was the activity of Samuel McCorkle in which the teaching of John Witherspoon showed most clearly. Witherspoon stressed

---

(Philadelphia: 1800), I, p. 27, III, pp. 465-466. Evans, 39128. John Witherspoon, The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men (Philadelphia: 1776), p. 60. Evans, 15224.

<sup>32</sup>Witherspoon, The Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon... John Witherspoon, Christian Magnanimity (Princeton: 1787), pp. 1, 5, 8-11, 18. Evans, 20893. The third volume of The Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon... included a subscriber list which numbered, besides George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, names from each of the states. There were 44 names for North Carolina—ten of which were prefaced by "Reverend" and fourteen accompanied by either "Mr." or "Esq."—including McCorkle's associates. While Samuel McCorkle did not purchase the works of his mentor, he may well have borrowed a copy from one of the following: James Hall, Richard King, William Sharpe, Joseph Kilpatrick, Lewis Wilson, David Caldwell, and Robert Tate.

and McCorkle would stress early religious training, and their favorite verse was, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The teacher or parent needed to be circum-spect and edifying in his example, and he should not become lofty or precocious. Their favorite injunction on this point was, "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." Early training was necessary for developing piety and tapping ability. The vital lessons to be learned were the virtues of piety and diligence.<sup>33</sup>

#### Growing in Grace

The religious influence which likely began for McCorkle under Joseph Alexander and David Caldwell, his former teachers, continued under Witherspoon. McCorkle was influenced by a revival during his last year at college, as were his future colleagues in the ministry, Lewis Wilson and James Hall. Wilson experienced conversion, and Hall "grew in grace." The three of them would all serve congregations in western North Carolina for most of their pastoral careers. McCorkle's religious experience that spring is documented by a fragment from his diary, beginning on Saturday, April 11, 1772, at Nassau Hall:

1st. Resolved, This day to begin a religious diary, having been a long time convinced of its necessity and importance, and having oftentimes made faint resolutions to begin it.

Resolved, To begin with a short record of my whole life, offering up a prayer to Almighty God for his assistance and

---

<sup>33</sup>John Witherspoon, A Sermon on the Religious Education of Children (Elizabethtown: 1789), pp. 3, 15-18. Evans 22284. This 24 page sermon was also printed in New York in 1789. Evans, 22285. It was then printed in Putney in 1797. Evans, 33237. John Witherspoon, A Series of Letters on Education (New York: 1797), pp. 12, 74. Evans, 33236.



direction, intending to devote the whole day to religious purposes.

Very early in life I was impressed with a sense of divine things, and lived convinced of the necessity of religion, and convinced that I was without it, sometimes careless, sometimes awakened, till about the age of 20, when, at the approach of a sacrament, I was more than usually concerned, and resolved to defer it no longer. Here I fell into a self-righteous scheme, and mistook a certain flow of natural affection for real delight in religion, while I never saw the enmity of my own heart, the odiousness of sin in its own nature, nor the glory and excellence of God in his own nature; only hated sin because it exposed me to misery and loved God because I hoped he would make me happy. Upon this I fear thousands are apt to rest, as in all probability I should have done, had it not pleased God to send me to college, where, the last year of my residence, was a considerable revival, in which it pleased God to open my eyes to see my awful deception.

In the beginning of this work, I found my heart not properly engaged, but indifferent and unaffected. I read the following remark in Boston's Fourfold State:—'When winter has stripped the trees of their verdure, it is hard to distinguish those that have life from those that have not; but when the spring approaches, then they are easily known by their spreading leaves, while those that are dead still continue the same; thus when religion is in decay, the saint can scarcely be distinguished from the sinner; but when a time of refreshing comes, then will they blossom and bring forth fruit abundantly;' partly condemned by this remark, I cast back my thoughts upon past life, and began to examine my religion and motives of my actions. I found they were all selfish, and that since the time when I thought I had got religion, I had fallen away even to the neglect of secret prayer, which is quite inconsistent with the Christian character.

Here I was further condemned, but still appeared very unwilling to give up all my religion, till I came to read Hopkins's State of the Unregenerate which presented such a picture of wickedness and enmity of the human heart, and of the misery they are in by nature, as fully convinced me that I had never seen my own heart, never had had any proper views of God; and, in short, that I had never known anything about religion. Here I felt myself in great distress, and had very violent exercises, till my passions subsided, and seemed to end in a calm, rational conviction. Here my views were all confirmed on searching the enmity of my own heart, which seemed to increase and almost amaze me, that I had never seen it before, having read Mr. Edwards's sermons on that subject. Also in viewing the dreadful and misery of man's estate, and the horrid nature of sin, which Mr. Hopkins's sermon on the law seemed to present in an aggravated light, I could never raise my thoughts to contemplate the feelings and glory of God in Christ, though I sometimes attempted it; my sins seemed to be so aggravated, that they made me sometimes

almost despond of God's mercy; and what seemed most of all terrible to me, was, that I had in that state been admitted to the table of the Lord.

Here I ran into frequent cavils against the dispositions of Providence in the creation of man, and His justice in condemning him. I found a secret disposition to clear myself by the doctrine of man's inability, till I read Mr. Smalley's Sermons on that subject, which seemed to give me considerable light in vindicating the justice of God. Another cavil seemed to be against the mercy of God. I thought I desired salvation, and found fault that it was not given me; upon this neglect I received considerable light by Mr. Green's Sermon, which showed me that sinners only desire a partial Saviour—a Saviour from misery, but not a Saviour from sin. Here I thought I gave up all my cavils, thought I discovered the justice of God, the mercy of a Saviour, and the expediency of the Gospel; and thought I was willing to renounce all other Saviours, and accept Him in all His offices and relations. Hereupon I felt considerable comfort.<sup>34</sup>

The passage caught the flavor of Samuel McCorkle. He was honest and self-disciplined in his study and in his piety, he searched for answers, and he believed firmly in God. Foote wrote that this conversion was still not from death unto life, and when he did experience that change was unknown. In that McCorkle began reading for the ministry soon after he was graduated may indicate that such a change did occur shortly after his experiencing a personal religion during the revival that spring.<sup>35</sup>

#### Graduation and Clerical Apprenticeship

Samuel McCorkle was graduated with his class in the fall of 1772. Exercises were conducted over: Latin, Greek, and Hebrew scripture, Homer and other classical writers, logic, rhetoric, the philosophies,

---

<sup>34</sup>Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, pp. 351-353. This diary and a later memoir of his life were lost by a family friend and member of his congregation on a trip from Tennessee back to North Carolina.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

mathematics, and geography. The seniors had to defend or attack a series of propositions such as "Being can effect nothing of higher dignity than itself," or "God's foreknowledge does not at all impair the freedom of the human will."<sup>36</sup>

McCorkle began to study for the ministry under his uncle, the Reverend Joseph Montgomery. Joseph Montgomery was the brother of Samuel McCorkle's mother (Nancy Agnes Montgomery McCorkle); Agnes was born about 1726 in Ulster, and Joseph was born about 1733 in Pennsylvania (thus, the family migrated to America about 1730). Montgomery attended the College of New Jersey and graduated in 1755; he was master of the Nassau Hall grammar school from 1757 to 1758. He studied for the ministry with the Reverend John Roan of Derry, Pennsylvania, was licensed for the ministry in 1759. The year 1759 to 1760 Montgomery was a tutor at the College of Philadelphia (presently the University of Pennsylvania); he received the master of arts from the College of New Jersey in 1758, from the College of Philadelphia in 1760, and from Yale in 1760. He was ordained as a Presbyterian minister in 1761 and served from 1762 to 1769 in Lewes Presbytery, being settled at Georgetown, Maryland, in 1767.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup>Alexander, pp. 147-159, Walsh, pp. 156, ix, 18-19. The College of New Jersey published an alumni catalogue in 1773 (a broadside) which listed one "Samuel Maccorkle" as one of 22 graduates in 1772. Besides the bachelor's degrees that year, eight advanced degrees were granted to men at Harvard, Philadelphia, and Edinburgh. Thomas Reid and David Rittenhouse received master's degrees; Alumni Catalogue, 1773 (Philadelphia: 1773). Evans, 12883. The broadside listed graduates from 1748-1773. For further discussion of the subsequent careers of McCorkle's classmates, please see Appendix B.

<sup>37</sup>Alexander, p. 36. Letter of January 29, 1973, from Dr. Edith Blendon, Acting University Archivist, Princeton University, in which she included xeroxed copies of requested alumni biographical files; hereafter cited Princeton Archives. The major source of Princeton's information was likely John M. Forster, Life of Joseph Montgomery (Harrisburg: 1879). For an interesting extract from Joseph Montgomery's journal and

Montgomery married Elizabeth Reed, the sister of President Joseph Reed of Pennsylvania, in 1767; she died in 1769. After his wife's death, Montgomery left Georgetown and settled in New Castle, Delaware, where he remained as the Presbyterian minister until 1776. In 1769 he remarried; his second wife was Rachel Boyce, the sister of Benjamin Rush (College of New Jersey, class of 1760), by whom he had two children.<sup>38</sup>

The procedure for a young college graduate, such as Samuel McCorkle, who wanted to become a Presbyterian minister was to serve an apprenticeship with a practicing clergyman under whom he would study theology and begin pastoral duties. After a suitable period for such apprenticeship, the candidate was advanced to probationary status. During the year or two spent as a probationary preacher, the candidate either traveled as an itinerant preacher in frontier areas where there were few ministers, or he served at previously established congregations which no longer had a settled minister. But he could administer no sacraments until he was ordained.

---

additional information about him, see William H. Egle, "Joseph Montgomery," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography (1877), I, pp. 217-218, 356-358; Ibid., (1878), II, p. 474.

<sup>38</sup> Princeton Archives. In 1777 Montgomery began to suffer from a physical ailment, and he was relieved from his pastoral duties. He served as a brigade chaplain during the Revolution, a member of the Pennsylvania legislature from 1780 to 1783, and as a member of the Continental Congress from 1780 to 1782. In 1785 Montgomery became the Register of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, and from 1785 to 1794 he served as the Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. He died in 1794; Princeton Archives; Reynolds, p. 1346. Eli W. Caruthers, "Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, D.D., 1774-1811," Annals of the American Pulpit, ed., William B. Sprague (New York: 1969), III, p. 346.

### Teaching and Probationary Preaching

When McCorkle began his apprenticeship for the ministry or for how long or where he was thus occupied is not clear from any hard evidence. He also taught school at least part of the time between fall, 1772, and fall, 1775. A note in The New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury on December 21 and 28, 1772, reported, "There is a Grammar School lately opened at Goshen ... taught by Mr. Samuel McCorkle, graduated last fall at New Jersey College, and well recommended by the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon."<sup>39</sup>

Several letters between former classmates and some presbytery records provide at least some glimpses of McCorkle as he prepared for the ministry during those three years. Philip Fithian, after being graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1772, went to Virginia as a tutor to the children of Robert Carter III at Nomini Hall, his plantation. A letter from Andrew Hunter, Junior, at Nassau Hall to Fithian dated June 26, 1773, commented:

There are a number of our friends and class-mates getting into business as fast as possible, whether they are called or not I cannot pretend to judge, this much I would say that I think it is not any ones duty to run too fast. No less than four Debow, Reese, McCorkle, Allen, under trials by a presbytery, and Bryan trying to get license to plead law in some of the best courts on the continent, if infamy were law or lies were Gospel he might get license either to plead or preach.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup>Robert F. Seybolt, Source Studies in American Colonial Education: The Private School (Urbana: 1925), p. 89.

<sup>40</sup>Hunter D. Farish, ed., Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion (Williamsburg: 1945), p. 3.

In May, 1774, McCorkle was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of New York with the direction that he soon go to the southward to spend at least a year under the supervision of the Presbyteries of Hanover and Orange (in Virginia and North Carolina, respectively). A letter from William Bradford to James Madison (classes of 1772 and 1771, respectively) dated October 17, 1774, contained his observations on McCorkle in the pulpit:

I went yesterday to hear our classmate McCorkle predicate: & I assure you his sermon was very orthodox: The point he chiefly Laboured to prove was "that the Laws of God were superior in wisdom to the Laws of men;" & I think his arguments on this part were in a gr[e]at measure unanswerable; the rest had a great deal of chronology but very little instruction in it. However he is better than many that I have heard.

According to Bradford, McCorkle was able, orthodox, well read, but he was somewhat difficult for the congregation to understand.<sup>41</sup>

McCorkle next became a probationary preacher in Virginia, probably in early 1775. Hanover Presbytery records for October 26, 1775, show that McCorkle, who had come as a probationer from the Presbytery of New York, was taken under the care of the presbytery. Fithian had by then quit as a tutor at Nomini Hall and was also itinerating in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. His journal for December, 1775, contained the thoughts of a young minister about his duties and about the others itinerating in Virginia:

---

<sup>41</sup>Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America Embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod, 1706-1788 (Philadelphia: 1904), pp. 451, 459. William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal, eds., The Papers of James Madison (Chicago: 1962), I, pp. 127-128. In footnote 9, page 128, there was further mention of McCorkle. In a letter dated November (1?) from Bradford to William Linn, Bradford wrote, "...for three sundays past have been entertained with hearing (Samuel) McCorkle, (Oliver) Rees, and (Israel) Evans...: I have a great inclination to laugh at the first; but you would chide me if I did" (Historical Society of Pennsylvania).

Sunday 10th cold & cloudy. We rode to the North-Mountain Meeting House. Many assembled—The Congregation appear'd genteel. All here are Irish—all are Presbyterians. It grew very windy & rainy before the Sermon was half finished. Bad Times for poor itinerant Preachers. In this Valley now are many such—McKnight, Hunter, Linn, McConnel, McMillan, McOrkle, Archibald, Graham, & poor scurvy I—Nine raw inexperienced Candidates not one of whom are ordained—Almost as many Shepherds as Sheep you will say—near as many officers, & Field Officers too, as privates!—But Officers in Religion have hard Service—<sup>42</sup>

While thus engaged as an itinerant preacher in Virginia, Samuel McCorkle underwent another learning experience which was somewhat unpleasant—a case of unrequited love. Philip Fithian, a former classmate also itinerating in Virginia, claimed that the object of McCorkle's attention was Betsey Brown, the daughter of the Reverend John Brown, pastor of New Providence Church. Fithian, too, was favorably impressed by Miss Brown, and he paid several visits to the family, although he never courted the daughter. In his journal for December, 1775, Fithian described her:

... a young Woman about twenty—tall of that Age, & lusty—The Picture of Health—She told me herself that from her first Remembrance She has never had half a Days Sickness—This fine Woman partakes largely of the Abilities of her Mother. She speaks wonderfully—But She speaks rapidly—Like other Females She smiles often—Yet Miss Brown never smiles but with Dignity—She is constantly, in Spite of Dullness, entertaining—She has been courted by many—It is said She is now steadily visited by two, both of which it is said will be unsuccessful. She has read many English Authors—Several of the Latin Classicks—And you may be certain, though She has been born in this distant unimproved Country, there are few young Women of her Rank & Education, who may be compared with her in the most excellent of all Accomplishments, the Ornaments of her Mind.

---

<sup>42</sup> Reverend William Henry Foote, Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical (Richmond: 1966), p. 446; Foote originally published this work in 1850. Robert G. Albion and Leonidas Dodson, eds., Philip Vickers Fithian: Journal, 1775-1776; Written on the Virginia-Pennsylvania Frontier and in the Army Around New York (Princeton: 1934), pp. 136, 139.

Fithian wrote in his journal the following month about Miss Brown:

The extreme cold Evening detained the Parents—But Miss Brown the Daughter, being young, sprightly & robust, without any Difficulty, or one female Complaint for Pity, came in soon after us, & made us happy as mortals could be, with her enlivening Vivacity, til' half after eleven.

Fithian also found her "intelligent" and "chatful."<sup>43</sup>

The charms of Miss Brown apparently attracted Samuel McCorkle as well, but his efforts met with failure. According to Fithian's journal for December 17, 1775:

Yesterday I was told that Mr. McOrkle, at the Forks of this River, is perplexed with Melancholy & Dejection of Mind—I wrote him a Line desiring him to call & see me—This Evening he came, & he is indeed in deep Distress!

What has given me much uneasiness quite overbears & weighs down his Spirit;—I mean Consideration upon the Importance of taking a Congregation under his Care: He supposes it, as it is indeed, a Matter of very high Importance. He has a Call from the People where he now preaches, & is soon to acquaint them with his Mind—He had also Invitations in Carolina, his native Place, but he cannot be certain of his Duty—

It is said also he has made some Proposals of an Alliance with Miss Brown, & has been put off—hard Fate, enough, I think, to give him Uneasiness!—<sup>44</sup>

Among his other duties in Virginia, McCorkle had served three newly formed congregations (Oxford, Falling Spring, and High Bridge), and the three churches had called him to be their minister, according to Hanover Presbytery minutes for October 26, 1775. But McCorkle had also received a call from Thyatira Church, his home congregation, and there was the matter of his suit with Elizabeth Brown. Word of McCorkle's dilemma reached Fithian, and Fithian sent word to McCorkle to visit and talk it over. McCorkle rode to Whistle Creek, where the two conferred on

---

<sup>43</sup>Albion and Dodson, pp. 141, 169.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 143, 166.



December 15, 1775. The next month McCorkle had decided to go to North Carolina and had left. He married Margaret Gillespie the next summer, and Miss Brown later married in 1780 the Reverend Thomas Craighead, son of the Reverend Alexander Craighead.<sup>45</sup>

Seven years after leaving Rowan County to study for the ministry, Samuel McCorkle returned as the settled pastor at Thyatira Church. His experiences training under John Witherspoon, teaching, and itinerating made a considerable impact on the future direction of the Reverend Mr. McCorkle.

---

<sup>45</sup>George W. Diehl, Old Oxford and her Families (Verona: 1971), p. 32. There were two minor errors in the Diehl account. First, he called Margaret Gillespie by the wrong name (Margaret Steele), but it was an easy mistake. Her mother, Maxine Gillespie, remarried when her father was killed. She married William Steel. A son of that union, John Steele, changed the spelling of the family name when he was elected to the United States House of Representatives. Second, Diehl said that Samuel McCorkle and Margaret Steele [sic] were married on July 2, 1776, when in fact the record shows they were married on June 29, 1776; Rowan County Marriage Record, 1759-1865. Since Jethro Rumble, A History of Rowan County, North Carolina Containing Sketches of Prominent Families and Distinguished Men (Salisbury: 1881), p. 264, makes the same mistake (following in the path of Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 354), it is likely that Diehl just replicated the error of Foote and Rumble. If that is not conclusive enough, both Foote and Rumble claimed that McCorkle died six months after he actually did (Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 362, and Rumble, A History of Rowan County ..., p. 264).

## CHAPTER IV

### THYATIRA AND WESTFIELD

While Samuel McCorkle was away from Rowan County preparing for the ministry, some changes occurred in the congregation at Cathey's meeting-house. In 1764 Elihu Spencer and Alexander McWhorter, two visiting Presbyterian ministers, reorganized the congregation as Thyatira Church. Their mission also included an effort to heal the wounds of the Old Side-New Side controversy, and the two were apparently successful in that goal.<sup>1</sup>

Spencer and McWhorter carefully selected the name "Thyatira" for the church. Mentioned in the Bible in Acts 16:14 and Revelation 1:11 and 2:18-29, Thyatira was one of the seven churches of Asia. This early church had a record of faith, love, and endurance until an evil temptress, Jezebel, led many of the townspeople into disbelief and immorality, and some of the congregation followed their example. By choosing the name Thyatira, the two ministers demonstrated their knowledge of the

---

<sup>1</sup>Walter Lingle, Thyatira Presbyterian Church, Rowan County, North Carolina, 1753-1948 (Statesville: n.d.), pp. 9-10. Both Walter Lingle and his brother, Thomas Lingle, drew heavily upon Foote for their accounts of Thyatira, for church records are not extant for the period before 1828; Thomas Lingle, History of Thyatira Church, 1753 to 1925 (Statesville: 1925); Reverend William Henry Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of her Early Settlers (New York: 1846), p. 350; hereafter cited Sketches of North Carolina. Both Lingles were well acquainted with the history of Thyatira and repeated Foote's errors (and Rumble's) on the dates of McCorkle's marriage and death.

Scriptures and left a reminder to the congregation. Church members were called to keep their faith in God and to prevent the prevailing materialism of the frontier society from leading them into immorality or infidelity. The choice of the name was particularly appropriate, because Spencer and McWhorter were sent out by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia which met in the latter town. Philadelphia, another of the seven churches of Asia, was a center for evangelism.<sup>2</sup>

In 1765 the Thyatira congregation called Spencer to be their pastor; he declined. In 1770 the meetinghouse was licensed by the colonial government as a house of worship, and elders were appointed to lead services, but there was still no settled pastor. In 1772 a minister preached but for only a short time.<sup>3</sup>

The congregation at Thyatira actively sought God as well as a pastor. They believed that God was executing his plan on earth, but as at Thyatira in Asia, the selfish will of man often corrupted His effort to establish the earthly Kingdom of God. They believed that the day of the Kingdom was coming, although many in the community had lost their way, and they longed for grace, the Kingdom, and eternal life.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia (New York: 1962), IV, pp. 638-639.

<sup>3</sup>Walter Lingle, p. 10. By 1765 Thyatira had a small library containing Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Prideaux's Connections, Butler's Anthology of Natural and Revealed Religion, and other works; Robert W. Ramsey, Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762 (Chapel Hill: 1964), p. 190; Ramsey cited Alexander, Historical Address, p. 17. He was likely referring to Reverend S. C. Alexander, "Historical Address Delivered at the Centennial Celebration of Thyatira Church, Rowan County, North Carolina, October 17, 1855," from Thomas Lingle's work on Thyatira.

<sup>4</sup>H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America (Chicago: 1937), pp. 3, 20, 88, 148.

### The Pastor of Thyatira Church

When Samuel McCorkle arrived in the Rowan area in January, 1776, he became the first settled pastor at Thyatira. As was customary, McCorkle began a trial period as the minister of the congregation. He returned to Virginia in late April for a meeting of the Hanover Presbytery at Timber Ridge. On May 1, 1776, McCorkle preached the opening sermon of the session from Job 27:8, "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he has gained, when God taketh away his soul?" McCorkle remained at Thyatira on probation for over a year. Both he and the congregation were satisfied with each other, but no convenient presbytery meeting was held until the following year. In October, 1776, the Presbytery of Orange received McCorkle from the Presbytery of Hanover, and on August 2, 1777, the Presbytery of Orange ordained him. He could now administer the sacraments, and he would never leave the congregation which had called him.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>Walter Lingle, pp. 9-10. Reverend William Henry Foote, Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical (Richmond: 1966), p. 447; originally published in 1850. Eli W. Caruthers, "Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, D.D., 1774-1811," Annals of the American Pulpit, ed., William B. Sprague (New York: 1969), III, p. 346; cited hereafter as Annals of the American Pulpit.

Foote wrote that McCorkle was ordained by Hanover Presbytery; Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 354. There is a question why the Presbytery of Hanover would ordain a minister for a church which lay in the Presbytery of Orange, but the detail can not be clarified by checking presbytery records. Orange Presbytery was organized in 1770 out of Hanover Presbytery to include all of North Carolina. Its minutes for 1770 to 1795 and 1813 to 1826 burned in 1827 when the Reverend John Witherspoon's house caught fire in Hillsboro; Robert H. Stone, A History of Orange Presbytery, 1770-1970 (Greensboro: 1970), pp. xxvii, 9. When this fire destroyed the records, each minister was asked to write on his church, and this was when Caruthers wrote his accounts.

McCorkle itinerated under the Presbytery of Hanover and preached his qualifying sermon to its ministers, and it may have been their prerogative to ordain him. However, when McCorkle's ordination was reported to the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, it was the Presbytery

Samuel McCorkle was typical of the college-educated Presbyterian clergy being sent from Philadelphia to the newly settled areas. In 1776 there were slightly fewer than 200 Presbyterian ministers in America, according to one account; certainly a large number of licentiates and probationers were also serving pulpits. By 1775 and 1776, 588 Presbyterian churches were operating in America, roughly a fifth of the total number of churches (3,378). Some Presbyterian ministers likely served several churches (if the estimates above are nearly correct), but many pulpits were undoubtedly vacant, as Thyatira's had been.<sup>6</sup>

McCorkle returned to the homespun society in Rowan County, and he likely found more prestige as a minister than he had ever known before. The meeting on Sunday was the major social event of the week and the chief emotional outlet for the participants. All week they worked long, hard, boring hours on the farm, and on Sunday they sang with power and prayed with feeling. The service called each person to account with God, but it also taught him more about the world and God's revelations in it. The sermon, their only intellectual stimulus all week, in the day before newspapers or other media, had to challenge people's minds.<sup>7</sup>

---

of Orange who reported ordaining him. Foote may have erred, slipping in Hanover instead of Orange. Since McCorkle's ordination was not reported at Philadelphia until May 15, 1782, it may be assumed that delegates were not always sent to the annual meetings, for it was probably a month's travel by land to go to and from the meeting; Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America Embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod, 1706-1788 (Philadelphia: 1904), p. 494.

<sup>6</sup>Henry J. Ford, The Scotch-Irish in America (New York: 1941), p. 356. Conrad H. Moehlman, The Wall of Separation between Church and State: An Historical Study of Recent Criticism of the Religious Clause of the First Amendment (Boston: 1951), p. 100.

<sup>7</sup>Chalmers G. Davidson, Piedmont Partisan: The Life and Times of Brigadier-General William Lee Davidson (Davidson: 1951), p. 10. Printing did not begin in the Salisbury area until after 1790; Chalmers

When he was in the pulpit, McCorkle was commanding and solemn. He was six feet one inch tall with light hair and blue eyes, looking much like Thomas Jefferson, and as cheerful, mild and dignified. Speaking firmly about what he believed, McCorkle never faulted others for their opinions. He presented his sermon slowly in his loud, harsh voice, and the congregation listened intently to hear that they might reconcile their lives with God's plan.<sup>8</sup>

The ministry of Samuel McCorkle extended to other concerns than the two services on Sunday. He paid close personal attention to all the details connected with Thyatira and planned carefully for all concerns. This watchful attention showed, for example, when a delegate was to be selected to represent Thyatira at a meeting of the presbytery. When one man was to be sent, McCorkle preferred that an older man with experience in such matters be the representative. But if two men were going, McCorkle wanted the older man to take a younger man and instruct him that he might learn from the meeting. McCorkle also married couples.

---

G. Davidson, "Bases for a Mecklenburg Bibliography," North Carolina Historical Review, 26 (1949), p. 28. There were printers at only New Bern and Wilmington at this time; Isaiah Thomas, The History of Printing in America, with a Biography of Printers, and an Account of Newspapers (Albany: 1874), I, p. 339. At New Bern James Davis ran the North Carolina Gazette from 1755 on, and in Wilmington A. Steuart ran The Cape Fear Gazette and Wilmington Advertiser from 1764 to 1767, and A. Boyd ran The Cape Fear Mercury from 1769 to 1775. There probably were no booksellers for North Carolina but several for Charleston, South Carolina; Thomas, II, p. 240.

<sup>8</sup> Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 361. Foote wrote that McCorkle was once introduced to Jefferson in Philadelphia because of their marked resemblance to one another, and both retired from the interview with expressions of satisfaction at the comparison. Reverend Eli W. Caruthers, "a typewritten copy of a MS biography of Richard Hugg King" (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), personal collection 23.1, p. 22; hereafter cited as Caruthers, "Richard H. King."

However, it was in his concern for the spiritual welfare of his congregation that McCorkle devised a remarkable plan for their instruction.<sup>9</sup>

McCorkle wanted his flock to become better acquainted with God's word. Thus he divided the congregation at Thyatira into a number of groups and assigned elders to lead each group. The elders received lists from McCorkle with questions over books of the Bible, and they took the lists home and learned their assignments, teaching it in turn to their groups. On Sunday McCorkle quizzed the congregation. Thus, the congregation at Thyatira came to know the Scriptures better than before. Nor were children neglected, for they had to recite the Shorter Catechism. After the service McCorkle either commended or reproved parents for their children's degree of proficiency.<sup>10</sup>

McCorkle was as thorough in his treatment of sermon topics as he was meticulous in their presentation, and he preached a number of times on the same subject, if needed, until he was certain that it had been adequately handled. He carefully prepared his sermons at his desk (a large secretary which lasted 200 years; it even had a secret compartment), using his own library to investigate what was written about his topic.<sup>11</sup>

This library and secretary were McCorkle's luxury. In spite of a small salary and large family, McCorkle acquired a personal collection of books as fine as there was in western North Carolina. Books were

---

<sup>9</sup> Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 361. The McCorkle family papers at Lock Neal's contained a packet of marriage certificates.

<sup>10</sup> Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, pp. 360-361. Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 348.

<sup>11</sup> Caruthers, "Richard H. King," p. 22. McCorkle's descendants, the Lock Neals, still have the secretary.

very expensive and hard to get from overseas, especially by the time they were shipped to Rowan County. McCorkle had Calvin, Turretin, Stackhouse, Stillingfleet, and Owen on theology; Hooker, Shuckford, Prideaux, and Mosheim on church history; Pufendorf, Burlemaqui, Montesquieu, and Blackstone on law and civil government; and the Universal History and Encyclopedia Britannica for general knowledge. According to Caruthers, McCorkle's selections were all first rate. He did not have any novels or romances on his shelves, any works by second or third rate men, or any works on experimental religion unless they were by the like of Owen, Edwards, or Doddridge.<sup>12</sup>

Judging Samuel McCorkle by his library, he knew his duty, he had few doubts as to the correctness of what he was doing, and he needed and took little time to relax. Like other Presbyterians, McCorkle looked to John Calvin and John Knox as his leaders, and he stressed the sovereignty of God and the dependency and depravity of man. Man was predestined by God's will and not individual merit for either eternal bliss (election) or eternal torment (reprobation), and God's will—as the center of history and nature—pervaded all human and cosmic events. Calvin (1509-1564) in his Institutes of the Christian Religion set forth his interpretation of God's supremacy and man's utter dependency. He formulated a church government based on the apostolic model, because by

---

<sup>12</sup>Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 349; same story also in Archibald Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New (Chicago: 1941), I, p. 573. Thomas Dobson mailed a receipt on October 15, 1790, from Philadelphia to Samuel McCorkle. The receipt was for ten dollars in payment for the first two volumes of the encyclopedia. Albert Torrence paid for the books and took them to McCorkle (perhaps a merchant or a friend; his name appeared on some of the wills or other documents of the McCorkle family, too); from the McCorkle family papers at Lock Neal's.



following the Scriptures it would be gospel pure. This government established the pastor and elected officials (elders or presbyters), as ruling the local church, and the highest authority, the presbytery.<sup>13</sup>

Like many other eighteenth century followers of the Calvinist way, McCorkle was also strongly influenced by Enlightenment ideas. His library included the following authors from both views. John Owen (1616-1683) was an English theologian; he was a rigid Calvinist and a leader in the struggle for religious liberty. Richard Hooker (1554-1600), a student of Aristotle, wrote the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (1594) and at least four other such works; he also was a high churchman, Calvinist, and predestinarian. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), a leader in the Great Awakening, stressed both the sovereignty of God and the rebirth. He believed that the individual lacked the inclination to do God's will and that conversion was needed first before one would practice a virtuous life. Mosheim and Turretin were midway between orthodoxy and the Enlightenment; they believed that revelation did not contradict reason, and they urged tolerance of others. No one could know the whole truth; there was the Word, but man erred sometimes. Samuel Pufendorf (1632-1694) wrote on the precedence of natural law; by its nature, the world was a peaceful place, and man needed to use reason to discover the natural law. Montesquieu in The Spirit of the Laws talked about separation of power in government, the superiority of natural law to ecclesiastical and political law, and a republic based on

---

<sup>13</sup> Lefferts A. Loetscher, A Brief History of the Presbyterians (Philadelphia: 1958), p. 23. Walter A. Lingle, Presbyterians: Their History and Beliefs (Richmond: 1944), pp. 41, 15-17. Dagobert D. Runes, ed., The Dictionary of Philosophy (New York: 1942), p. 43. Encyclopedia Britannica (Chicago: 1970), XVIII, p. 467.

virtue. Blackstone, a famous English jurist, wrote that the law of nature was either revealed by or inferred from the will of God. A legal commentator, Blackstone listed rules for civil conduct in several works, and his critique of the English constitution was viewed in America as an oracle of law, a text. Of course, McCorkle also accepted the "common sense" position of his mentor, John Witherspoon, which clearly mediated between Calvin and the Enlightenment.<sup>14</sup>

Samuel McCorkle was well disciplined in his own study and in his preparation of sermons, and this diligence reached even into his own piety. From the day he "found peace in believing," McCorkle kept a diary of his own faith and what he experienced daily. His sense of order permeated his view of the world, and McCorkle found it easy to organize the complexities of life into a meaningful pattern. The world, as he saw it, was both rational and spiritual in composition. Things happened with a certain regularity, a lawfulness that could be clearly understood by man. God had brought order out of chaos, and everything to McCorkle was as clear as day.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>Shailer Mathews and Gerald B. Smith, eds., A Dictionary of Religion and Ethics (New York: 1923), p. 321. Vergilius Ferm, A Protestant Dictionary (New York: 1951), pp. 121, 85-86. John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, Protestant Christianity Interpreted Through Its Development (New York: 1954), pp. 153-154. Encyclopedia Britannica, XVIII, p. 856. Ibid., XV, pp. 785-786; XVI, p. 104. Ibid., III, pp. 748-750.

<sup>15</sup>Caruthers, "Richard H. King," p. 45. The purpose of science to McCorkle was to learn more about the world so that one could better grasp what God had done and was doing in the world. Even Alan Heimert commented on the fact that a Calvinist such as McCorkle used Newtonian terms to describe the universe. McCorkle believed that love was both a moral law and a natural law which operated to achieve harmony in creation; Alan Heimert, Religion and the American Mind from the Great Awakening to the Revolution (Cambridge: 1968), pp. 107-108. Heimert cited Samuel E. McCorkle, A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness and Duty of the United States of America (Halifax: 1795), p. 41.

The major underlying principle in McCorkle's view was that God governed the universe and acted in history and nature. God was the center of the universe; He created the Earth and all that was on it. God revealed Himself and His will through the Creation. God's revelations were also contained in the Scriptures; therefore, revealed religion was the axle around which life should turn. But this was not difficult to understand or to practice, because the two great commandments were simple, "Love thy God and love thy neighbor." Of course, keeping these commandments was part of the individual responsibility to "exercise church discipline" with others.<sup>16</sup>

McCorkle devoutly believed in the doctrines of the Presbyterian faith, and he listed twelve principles of his creed: (1) there was first the existence of God; (2) the Scriptures were clearly God's word; (3) God existed in three persons; (4) Jesus as the Savior died to save man from his sin; (5) the Holy Ghost acted to recover man from his sin; (6) every man sinned and was a sinner; (7) a man had to be reborn to see the kingdom of God, or else he was condemned to eternal torment in hell; (8) the soul was immortal; (9) the body would be raised by Christ after death; (10) there would be a judgment day; (11) there was a heaven or a place of rewards; and (12) there was a hell or a place of punishments.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, A Discourse, on the Doctrine and Duty of Keeping the Sabbath (Salisbury: 1798), p. 36. Evans, 34032. Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, Three Discourses on the Terms of Christian Communion (Salisbury: 1798), pp. 4-5. Evans, 48510.

<sup>17</sup> Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, A Sermon on the Doctrine and Duty of Sacrificing (Philadelphia: 1794), pp. 41-42. Evans 27246.

The duty of man was to be religious, to be both a good person in his daily life and to read his Bible for heavenly guidance. One had to be tolerant of others with different outlooks and diligent in his duty towards his family, his own improvement, and his daily employment. McCorkle prayed that God would "grant wisdom and virtue" to his people, that they might achieve these ends. McCorkle's emphasis on duty and his statements such as "justice, industry, and frugality are required of all," sounded much like the virtues that Franklin extolled in his epigrams in Poor Richard's Almanac (e.g.—"Diligence is the mother of good luck").<sup>18</sup>

McCorkle's views on man and his duty in life directly influenced his ideas on education. McCorkle wrote, "I believe that man was created in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. I believe that he was without positive evil." And, "God never created a sinner," but man was created with only a small portion of knowledge. But man had the capacity to grow "in wisdom and knowledge" and to learn "intelligence from the things he suffered." It was just that "misery existed before man, and at his creation was hovering all around him." Man's duty and happiness were the two motives for his actions, but tension produced by his moral depravity filled his life. Because of this dual nature of man, war had hitherto been the principal object of education.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness and Duty of the United States, Contrasted with other Nations, particularly the Israelites (Halifax: 1795), p. 41, 27. Evans, 29001. Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, "A Sermon from Deut. VIII, 19, 20;" this was a 60 page handwritten original from the Manuscript Department, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University.

<sup>19</sup> Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, A Charity Sermon (Halifax: 1795), pp. 10-11, 17, 21. Evans, 29000. McCorkle, A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness ..., p. 41. Evans, 29001.

McCorkle believed the answer to man's dilemma could be found in religion and education. He wrote that religion remained the same in all ages but that education would change with the society of which it was a part. Early education or religion—they could not be divorced in McCorkle's thinking—would tap all the potential of an individual and develop it, teach him to control his pride and temper, and help him develop a full and stable character. But if this training was delayed until the child was older and his nature was formed, his habits suffered.<sup>20</sup>

Here was the reason that the pastor of Thyatira was interested in education. According to McCorkle, teachers had the duty to teach those from all stations of life, to accommodate themselves to the ability of their students and to "lead them along to improvement." The teacher should "train them up in the way they should go," but he had to consider the student's ability as well as what would likely be his future place in life. The teacher needed to help all of his students to "be truly religious" and to "seek for knowledge." The lessons of pedagogy, piety, and learning which McCorkle had received under John Witherspoon at the College of New Jersey were now employed by the pastor at Thyatira.<sup>21</sup>

Margaret Gillespie

Yet not all McCorkle's time at this beginning point of his career went to fulfilling his pastoral responsibilities. McCorkle did not

---

<sup>20</sup>McCorkle, A Sermon on the Doctrine and Duty of Sacrificing, pp. 31-33. Evans, 272-46.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 35, 39, 59, 65.

neglect the social side to his life; he began visiting at the house of Mrs. Elizabeth Steel in Salisbury. By the following summer (on June 29, 1776) McCorkle married Margaret Gillespie. Margaret was the daughter of Mrs. Elizabeth Maxwell Gillespie Steel. Her father, Robert Gillespie, an innkeeper in Salisbury, had died in 1760 during the Cherokee attack on Fort Dobbs. Margaret's brother was Robert Gillespie, Junior, and she also had a stepbrother, John Steel. Her stepfather (William Steel, who married Mrs. Elizabeth Maxwell Gillespie in 1763) died in 1773.<sup>22</sup>

Samuel McCorkle chose his wife carefully. Margaret, "a lady of excellent character and highly respectable connections," belonged to a prominent family in Salisbury. Mrs. Steel had invested the estates left to her by her deceased husbands, and she owned 18 lots in town, 275 acres on the north side of town, and the inn. She was an able businesswoman and would make further investments, mainly speculating in land. Besides the aforementioned character and connections, Margaret also led a "pious and useful life." McCorkle may have married her for spiritual

---

<sup>22</sup>Rowan County Marriage Record, 1759-1865 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), n.p. The couple's names were recorded along with many others in a ledger arranged by alphabet and not by page. Their witness was Adlai Osborne. Caruthers apparently was the first to write that McCorkle married "Margaret Steele" on July 2, 1776; Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 347. Then Foote mentioned July 2, 1776, again as he wrote that McCorkle married a Miss Steele, sister of the Honorable John Steele; Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 354. Ramsey, pp. 168-169. Jethro Rumble, A History of Rowan County, North Carolina Containing Sketches of Prominent Families and Distinguished Men (Salisbury: 1881), p. 58. Thyatira Memorial Association, Inscriptions on Stones in Thyatira Cemetery, 1755-1966 (Salisbury: 1967), p. 50. John Steel became an officer during the Revolution; afterward he entered politics, sitting in the state legislature and the United States Congress, and he was appointed Comptroller of the Treasury of the United States. Some time during his career, he changed his last name from "Steel" to "Steele," adding an "e;" Ramsey, p. 169; Blackwell P. Robinson, ed., The North Carolina Guide (Chapel Hill: 1955), p. 249.

companionship, or love, or social position, or maybe all three. He was 30; she was 21.<sup>23</sup>

Samuel and Margaret McCorkle must have lived with Mrs. Steel or Alexander McCorkle for a year or two. Since it was about eight miles to Thyatira from either place, Samuel McCorkle began looking for a place for them closer to the church. Within six months, he found what they wanted and somewhere found the money to buy it. According to the deed, on January 13, 1777, "Saml. McCorkal [sic], minister, for 300 Continental Currency at 8 shilling per dollar" bought about 315 acres of land from Daniel and Esther Hare. Their place was located about a mile east of Thyatira.<sup>24</sup>

#### Settling at Westfield

The McCorkles began settling on their land, a place they called "Westfield." McCorkle, together with the slaves (which Margaret had inherited) and perhaps a few parishioners, built a house, cleared a few plots, and planted a garden and some corn. The typical house of the

---

<sup>23</sup>Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 347. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 354. Ramsey, pp. 168-169; he found this information in the Rowan County deeds and in James S. Brawley, The Rowan Story, 1753-1953: A Narrative History of Rowan County, North Carolina (Salisbury: 1953). On July 21, 1761, Mrs. Gillespie (Steel) paid the sum of one shilling per year proclamation money for one of those lots. She was listed as the innkeeper; Rowan County records, Record of Deeds, 1753-1800, IV, p. 763. Mrs. Steel acquired warrants on 1,110 acres of land in 1778 alone; she did so in four parts: 100 acres, 100 acres, 640 acres, and 270 acres; Rowan County records, Land Entries, 1778, pp. 1207, 232, 1729, 1730. Rowan County records (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), microfilm reel 323. Calculated from a tax list for 1787 which gave the number of people in each household by sex and age. Margaret was 32 in 1787.

<sup>24</sup>Brawley, Kizziah's map. Rowan County records, Record of Deeds, Book 8, p. 445.

day, which the McCorkles probably put up at first, was the double cabin, two cabins built apart from each other and covered by a common roof. They were built on the same foundation, with the same flooring if floored at all, and the two rooms were about ten or fifteen feet distant from each other. In the passage-way was another covered but wall-less room for use.<sup>25</sup>

In the South log cabins were rarely built with logs, bark and all, because insects and rot would quickly make their way into the walls. Instead, a rock foundation was laid, and on it was laid a double cabin made with hewn (squared and debarked) logs. These logs lay as waste when a settler cleared a field. With a frow to make shingles, a saw to make windows and doors, and a hammer to drive pegs or nails, the settler could build his house. The chimney was made with clay and rock, clay chinked the logs, planks made the flooring, and a door and window shutters were hung on hinges. Hewn logs took time to square carefully with an adze; they were about ten inches on a side and about 20 feet long. A lean-to could be built at either end of the cabin, and a second story added later. The space between the separate rooms could be walled off and a porch added in front for outdoor sitting space.<sup>26</sup>

The McCorkles were probably living at Westfield when their first child was born on August 15, 1778, at three in the morning. What the

---

<sup>25</sup>The will of Samuel McCorkle, Rowan County Wills, 1761-1900. McCorkle's will named the home place as Westfield as did his obituary in the Raleigh Register, according to Newspaper Notices of Marriages and Deaths Copied from the Raleigh Register, 1807-1811 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), n.p. Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 349. Ulrich B. Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South (Boston: 1948), pp. 328-329.

<sup>26</sup>Phillips, pp. 328-329.



little girl was named is not known, but 14 months later her proud grandmother reported that she walked, ran, danced, sang, and spoke baby-talk. The work on their homestead went slowly because Samuel McCorkle had to be away from home for his pastoral duties much of the time. His slaves set their own pace—glacial—when he was not standing over them. Indeed, it was later said that the McCorkle farm did not produce sufficient meat and vegetables for the table, and that they had to buy additional foodstuffs.<sup>27</sup>

### The Revolution

In the years when the McCorkles settled at Westfield and began their family, the tempo of life was changing in the Rowan area. The Revolution did not disrupt North Carolina or the rest of the South during its first few years. In the Rowan area most people supported the Patriots, but some were suspected of Tory leanings. The Presbyterian Scotch-Irish were usually Patriots, and their ministers were no exception. Independence was preached from the pulpit, and men joined

---

<sup>27</sup>Elizabeth Steel to Ephraim Steel, August 15, 1778, quoted by H. M. Wagstaff, ed., The Papers of John Steele (Raleigh: 1924), I, p. 4. The diet was made up largely of varieties of dishes made of corn (mush, hoecake, hominy) and pork and washed down with homemade beer or brandy (though perhaps not at the McCorkles); it was supplemented with vegetables, dairy products, meat, and game; Julia C. Spruill, Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies (Chapel Hill: 1938), p. 82. Mrs. Steel was writing to her brother-in-law who lived in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. A tax list in 1778 did not list Samuel McCorkle as the head of a household on any land in Rowan County, but given the casual nature of record-keeping in that day, too much should not be presumed; Rowan County records (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), microfilm reel 323. Elizabeth Steel to Ephraim Steel, October 19, 1779, quoted by Wagstaff, I, p. 6. Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 349. Slaves rebelled against their status by shuffling their feet and playing dumb, which was far safer than overt hostility. An overseer could have worked slaves more productively, but McCorkle would have needed a larger operation, a plantation, to afford an overseer.

the militia and drilled. A few left to fight with the Continental Army, and two of McCorkle's colleagues in the ministry were among those from North Carolina who bore arms. The two fighting Presbyterian parsons were James Hall and Thomas McCaule. Samuel McCorkle, Joseph Alexander, and David Caldwell were also strongly Patriot, being said to vent an ire which made officers of deacons and elders.<sup>28</sup>

The Rowan and Mecklenburg areas were very much involved in the Patriot cause from the beginning. Rowan County was the first county in North Carolina to appoint a committee of safety. Ephraim Brevard, a friend of McCorkle's from student days at Crowfield Academy, is credited by some sources with writing the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. The Mecklenburg resolution was said to have been issued on May 31, 1775, a full year before another such declaration, somewhat more famous. Colonel Banastre Tarleton later credited Rowan and Mecklenburg Counties with being more hostile to George III than any other counties in America.<sup>29</sup>

The coming of the Revolution tore society apart as men made their choices for loyalty or rebellion. Morality waned and licentiousness rose as the traditional values were challenged. McCorkle preached to and prayed with his congregation about the events and their effect on society and on their faith. By 1780 and 1781, the British troops ruled the Carolina tidewater by day, but partisan bands led by Pickens, Sumter,

---

<sup>28</sup> Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 81. Davidson, Piedmont Partisan, p. 29.

<sup>29</sup> Robinson, The North Carolina Guide, p. 249. Samuel A. Ashe, ed., Biographical History of North Carolina from Colonial Times to the Present (Greensboro: 1905), I, p. 447. Ramsey, p. 190.

and Marion threatened their control. In the piedmont, however, wide scale battles were not common. The greater danger was that Tory or Patriot groups would attack known enemies with little opposition and deadly execution. Tension was also increased by the fear that the Indians would be agitated to go on the warpath against the frontier.<sup>30</sup>

Samuel McCorkle wrote a letter to Ephraim Steel in Pennsylvania in 1778 which left little doubt where he stood:

I can't but abruptly break out into the congratulating of your state, on your deliverance from a barbarous foe. I hope you will pursue the advantage you gained 'till they are driven from the northern department ... We shall endeavor to expel them from the southern department.

McCorkle and the other Presbyterian ministers who had been educated at the College of New Jersey were undoubtedly influenced by John Witherspoon, a believer in the Patriot cause and a member of the Continental Congress from 1776 to 1782.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the disruption of the war, McCorkle and Ephraim Brevard went on an educational mission to Pennsylvania in 1779 (which will be

---

<sup>30</sup>Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 347. M. F. Treacy, Prelude to Yorktown: The Southern Campaign of Nathanael Greene, 1780-1781 (Chapel Hill: 1963), p. 40.

<sup>31</sup>Samuel McCorkle to Ephraim Steel, July 30, 1778, from the John Steele Papers, 689, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, box 2. Clifford P. Reynolds, ed., Biographical Directory of the American Congress (Washington: 1961), p. 1840. Baldwin called the Presbyterian ministers "sowers of sedition." She pointed to the strong dissenting tradition of the churches which was based on natural rights. Rights of Englishmen were assumed by fundamental law, guaranteed by the constitution. But no one was bound to a law which was either unconstitutional or contrary to divine law. Given the rights to choose their own minister, to own the covenant, to interpret the Bible, to have freedom of conscience, and to free speech and a speedy trial, the dissenting denominations could hardly be expected not to rebel. From the assumption of natural rights came the right of revolution, the duty to establish a new government, and the laws protecting life, liberty, and property; Alice M. Baldwin, New England Clergy and the American Revolution (Durham: 1928), pp. 82, 164, 172.

discussed later). They were detained longer than they had expected to be gone, but McCorkle was back at his duties by the middle of September. Robert Gillespie, Margaret's brother, was apparently a captain in the Continental Army. He had gone to the northward also and had returned by September. The war in 1779 was still far away to the north or at Savannah.<sup>32</sup>

By 1780 the war was heating up in the South. Gates was finally removed from his command and replaced with Nathanael Greene. Greene divided his army as did Cornwallis, who sent Tarleton after the part of Greene's army under Daniel Morgan. Morgan beat the invincible Tarleton at Cowpens in January, 1781, and began to retreat towards Virginia with his prisoners. Cornwallis wanted to crush the resistance and started pursuing Morgan. The line of march of both Morgan and Cornwallis was through the Rowan area. Greene ordered a general retreat toward the interior of North Carolina, drawing Cornwallis away from his supplies and support and into a trap.<sup>33</sup>

Commanding the militia in the Salisbury district was Brigadier-General William Lee Davidson, a friend of McCorkle's. His orders were to delay the crossing of Cornwallis over the swollen Yadkin as long as possible to cover the retreat of Morgan. It would not be easy, for there were many fording places. When he passed by Thyatira on the way

---

<sup>32</sup>Elizabeth Steel to Ephraim Steel, October 9, 1779, quoted in Wagstaff, I, p. 4. The will of Samuel McCorkle contained a phrase about some things left by Captain Robert Gillespie for the McCorkle children; Rowan County Wills, 1761-1900.

<sup>33</sup>Treacy, pp. 40, 50, 112. Hugh T. Lefler and Albert R. Newsome, North Carolina: The History of a Southern State (Chapel Hill: 1954), p. 236.

to place his men along the Yadkin, Davidson borrowed McCorkle's great-coat. The next day, Davidson and his men were surprised at Cowan Ford. Davidson, still in McCorkle's greatcoat, was killed at the start of the skirmish by Frederick Hager, a local German Tory who was guiding the British. The British lost about 40 men to the Americans' four in making the crossing, but they carried the day because the local militia, without Davidson's leadership, broke and ran.<sup>34</sup>

At the time this rear guard action was fought, General Greene stopped alone—his aides were on their way to various parts of the retreating army—at Mrs. Steel's tavern for something to drink. According to the story, an American doctor at the tavern was writing paroles for British officers too badly hurt to travel further. When the doctor asked Greene how he was, Greene replied that he was discouraged and without funds. Mrs. Steel took him aside, gave him refreshment, encouragement, and two bags of gold and silver pieces. Before he left, Greene noticed a portrait of George III which he turned to face the wall and then wrote on its back "O George, hide thy face and mourn."<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup>Davidson, Piedmont Partisan, pp. 110, 119, 121, 103, 155. General Davidson's parents were Scotch-Irish immigrants who migrated from Pennsylvania (Lancaster County) in 1748. Davidson, with McCorkle, had attended Crowfield Academy; Ibid., pp. 132, 1, 3, 17. The author cited Eli W. Caruthers, Interesting Revolutionary Incidents: and Sketches of Character, Chiefly in the "Old North State" (Second Series, Philadelphia: 1856), p. 26, and also Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 348.

<sup>35</sup> Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, pp. 354-355. Foote mentioned that the picture hung in the Charlotte post office (in 1846). Mrs. Steel has since been canonized by the Daughters of the American Revolution. In 1948, the Salisbury chapter of the DAR erected a tall marker over Mrs. Steel's grave in Thyatira churchyard. It proclaims that on February 1, 1781, Mrs. Steel gave two bags of money to General Greene with the words, "Take these, general. You need them, and I can do without them." The DAR chapter in Salisbury is, naturally, named the Elizabeth Maxwell Steel Chapter.

Robinson, The North Carolina Guide, p. 249, said the day was

Greene went on to the north and, after a period of recuperation, brought his troops to Guilford County (northeast of Rowan County) to meet Cornwallis. At the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, Cornwallis pushed Greene aside, the same way as he had Davidson's men at Cowan Ford (the North Carolians did not win their reputation as Tar Heels until later). The flight of the fleet-footed North Carolina militia turned what should have been a victory into a defeat. But the victory was costly to Cornwallis, for he lost 93 dead and 439 wounded out of his 1,900 man army. Stopping his immediate pursuit of Greene to lick his wounds and to regroup, Cornwallis was forced to leave the interior and move back to the safer, better protected coastal plain.<sup>36</sup>

The war gradually went away, concluding finally at Yorktown (October, 1781) when Cornwallis surrendered to George Washington. The society of North Carolina had been disrupted by the Revolution and its attendant chaos; poverty, destruction, immorality, and the lack of law and order had resulted. With the conclusion of hostilities, the people of North Carolina finally realized their personal and financial losses. Other problems also faced the new state--the lack of precedent in governance by the new state and national governments, the difficulties caused by the confiscation of Tory properties, and the considerable loss in investment when the slaves were carried off or ran away during the

---

February 2, 1781, one day later than the DAR grave marker version.

Two conclusions can be made from the story. First, Mrs. Steel must have run the inn successfully to have such resources. Second, she was practical--if Cornwallis came, there was a portrait of George III up.

<sup>36</sup>Lefler and Newsome, p. 237. 576 of Greene's 1,255 casualties were North Carolina militia. This militia sustained seven dead and six wounded; therefore, about 563 men ran away and were listed in the casualties as missing; Treacy, p. 187.

war. A less tangible remainder of the recent war was the reservoir of hatred toward Tories which remained to haunt the new American society. These wounds would be healed, not by the Treaty of Paris, but only by time.<sup>37</sup>

#### The Years After

Finance was the most serious problem of the state government, and the lack of resources slowed development in all areas. The increased expenditures, inadequate revenues, debts, and inflation forced the sale of lands to meet state obligations. While this situation was advantageous to settlers such as the McCorkles, it crippled the development of education in the state. For example, the founding of a state university (with which McCorkle was associated) was not sanctioned by the legislature of North Carolina in 1784 and had to wait until 1789 when more money and support were available. Few funds were available to subsidize existing schools or begin new ones, although sometimes grants of land were made for the benefit of schools. When a school sold its land, keeping a lot for its own use, the revenue was applied to operating expenses or the construction of a building.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup>Richard G. Boone, Education in the United States: Its History from the Earliest Settlements (New York: 1899), p. 79.

<sup>38</sup>Milton S. Heath, Constructive Liberalism: The Role of the State in Economic Development in Georgia to 1860 (Cambridge: 1954), pp. 118, 338. The sale of lands in addition to the grants which veterans of the Revolution received put much land on the market at relatively cheap prices. By buying warrants and holding them until the price of land rose, an individual could clear enough profit to expand his farm, clear new acres, and buy slaves; Ibid., p. 69.

The Presbyterian Church emerged from the Revolution in good condition, exceeded only by the Congregational Church in membership. Presbyterians in the South had supported the cause of independence, and their churches kept their strength. In a day when there was little precedent or public money for education, the Presbyterians with their emphasis on education contributed mightily to the movement for schools. Presbyterian ministers commonly held at least a bachelor's degree from a college, and they often opened academies within their congregations and conducted classes. McCorkle's work in this respect is discussed in the following chapter, but the point is that the Presbyterians were well established and organized at a time when many other institutions and organizations were not. Their message provided a certainty and direction for their people and for others as well.<sup>39</sup>

The first thing which people had to do was go on living, adapt to a peacetime society, bind up the old wounds, and discover and develop new resources and institutions. The process went slowly, but the new America found itself largely in rediscovering its own roots. Standing amidst all the unrest and problems of the Revolution's aftermath was Samuel McCorkle. Samuel McCorkle, with his belief that God acted in nature and in history, knew that no problem was insoluble. The question was simply how to organize meaning out of chaos.<sup>40</sup>

McCorkle preached to this point on July 24, 1786, in a sermon for the anniversary of independence. First he envisioned a peaceful and

---

<sup>39</sup>Walter B. Posey, Frontier Mission: A History of Religion West of the Southern Appalachians to 1861 (Lexington: 1966), pp. 12, 265.

<sup>40</sup>Boone, p. 79.



tranquil society wherein there was much diligence and piety. That society would learn to prevent ignorance and to promote knowledge of every kind, especially of wisdom and goodness for governing the state and the nation. Education would "extend the knowledge of natural philosophy and of commerce and trade--of agriculture and the manufactures, and above all the knowledge and practice of our most holy religions." This need for education would be realized through the founding of schools and universities with public support. It was necessary for training leaders, expanding knowledge, and improving life through religion, law, and morality. Religion promoted learning and liberty, and it pointed the way. McCorkle wrote that God had not left the world to govern itself but had "established a system of laws for the government of the natural and moral world." Moreover, He could intervene in the world to make His will known.<sup>41</sup>

The war had been unsettling, but the McCorkles still enjoyed living at Westfield. The work was hard but filled with pleasant moments. By 1786 the McCorkles had three children, a boy and two girls. The boy spent the week in town living with his grandmother and attended a grammar school. He was named Alexander Gillespie McCorkle, and "Sandy," as he was called, was the apple of his father's eye. Sandy, at age four, was the eldest. The first child, a daughter born in 1778, had died by 1786. Disease and sickness were frequent in the frontier society because of the lack of means to prevent them and the dependence on a hog and hominy diet (little was known about vitamins in fruits and

---

<sup>41</sup>Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, "A Sermon for the Anniversary of American Independence, July 24th, 1786," from the handwritten sermon collection at Duke.

vegetables). The surprising thing about any journal written during this period is the frequency of sickness (especially fever and ague), toothache, and funerals. Samuel and Margaret McCorkle had their share of sorrow; of their ten children, six survived.<sup>42</sup>

Happiness and tragedy reached other members of the McCorkle family, too. The Reverend Joseph Montgomery, Samuel's uncle with whom he studied for the ministry, requested in 1785 that his name be left from the records of the Presbytery of Newcastle. Because of bodily indisposition, he could no longer serve as a minister, and he had been elected to the United States Congress from Pennsylvania as well. John Steel had married; he and his wife had a child and lived with Mrs. Steel in Salisbury. Robert Gillespie, Junior, had married "a very worthy Lady near Georgetown in So. Carolina," in July, 1785, but he caught a "putrid" fever in September and died several days later.<sup>43</sup>

In a letter he wrote on March 18, 1786, Samuel McCorkle described what had happened to the McCorkles lately. The family was healthy; there were a son and two daughters. He was "driving forward a little Academy in Salisbury, with as much expedition as the great scarcity of cash will admit. Time only can determine what it will rise to."

---

<sup>42</sup>Elizabeth Steel to Ephraim Steel, March 17, 1786, quoted in Wagstaff, I, p. 14. Caruthers, "Richard H. King," p. 58. The tax list of 1787 mentioned a white boy of five; Rowan County records. Hunter D. Farish, ed., Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion (Williamsburg: 1945), p. 9. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 354. The will of Samuel McCorkle divided his estate among his wife and six children and directed that his body be laid beside his four children in Thyatira churchyard; Rowan County Wills, 1761-1900.

<sup>43</sup>Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 346. Elizabeth Steel to Ephraim Steel, March 17, 1786, quoted in Wagstaff, I, p. 14.

Mrs. Steel was still sad at the death of Robert, her son. McCorkle closed the letter with a request that Ephraim Steel, his correspondent, check the printers in Carlisle to find out what they would charge to print a sermon on education.<sup>44</sup>

Things were going fairly well for the McCorkles. Samuel was preaching and teaching, and his interests blended in the sermon that he preached on education and which he wanted to publish, Sandy was in school. They had seven slaves: a man 39, a woman 29, a boy 11, and girls 14, five, three, and one. Samuel's father, Alexander, owned property valued at \$2,800 with deeds for 311 acres and warrants for considerably more lands.<sup>45</sup>

How did Samuel McCorkle see himself in 1786? As he wrote in one of his sermons, "No man can be happier in his own mind, in his family, select friends, and pastoral charge." His 40 years had been good ones. McCorkle had been away from the College of New Jersey for 14 years. He taught school at Goshen, itinerated as a probationary preacher in Virginia for a year, suffered from a case of unrequited love, left for North Carolina where he settled at Thyatira Church near Salisbury among the homespun society of piedmont North Carolina, and after a trial period was ordained. Ten years ago he married a fine girl nine years his junior, the daughter of a prominent Salisbury widow. Their first child was born in 1778, but she died as would three other McCorkle children. By 1786 he and his wife had three children (a boy and two

---

<sup>44</sup>Samuel McCorkle to Ephraim Steel, March 18, 1786, from the John Steel Papers.

<sup>45</sup>Caruthers, "Richard H. King," p. 58. Rowan County records (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), microfilm reel 323.

girls), and they also owned seven slaves (a family made up of a man, woman, son, and four daughters) which they got from Margaret's inheritance. They expected to have three or four more children, and their number of slaves would grow in time, too. More slaves would gradually clear the lands at Westfield and turn it into a paying plantation.<sup>46</sup>

McCorkle dressed in the basic parson black, except when he did chores around their home at Westfield, a 300 acre "plantation" (with mostly unimproved acres) located some eight miles west of Salisbury. McCorkle's pay as a Presbyterian minister was fairly poor, and part of it came in the form of country goods such as bacon and corn, but together with the garden, milk cow, and hogs at Westfield, the McCorkles did all right. There were only two rooms in the cabin at Westfield, but they built a kitchen and smokehouse and would add more rooms soon. McCorkle was something of a gentleman farmer, much preferring his study to the field, but he did like to experiment with new seeds in the garden. The slaves managed to get almost enough corn for bread, and they repaired the fences and buildings, slowly cleared the land, and tended the garden, crops and livestock. The McCorkles had a horse and wagon to take to town or to church.

McCorkle preached twice every Sunday, met with his elders during the week, called on his people often, and catechized the children. As the pastor of Thyatira, McCorkle baptized young children and married and buried persons of all ages. He knew all of his people and was well respected, although most thought him something of a strange man, too much given to reading. He preached sermons based on the Scriptures, and

---

<sup>46</sup> McCorkle, "A Sermon from Deut. VIII, 19, 20," from the handwritten sermon collection at Duke.

there were those who wished that he had more "excitement." He also was well known in Salisbury where he ran the academy and conducted classes during the week, and he preached there occasionally at the courthouse.

During the Revolution McCorkle supported the Patriot cause, although he preached strongly against the looting on the battlefields. One of his friends, to whom he had loaned his greatcoat, was killed as he slowed Cornwallis's advance at Cowan Ford. Both armies left the Rowan area and went on to Guildford courthouse, where the British won a costly victory and had to return to the coastal plain. The Indian threat was pretty much gone, but life was hard on the frontier. Diseases, hard work, poor diet, and alcoholism took their toll.

McCorkle was proud of his library and spent much of his time in his studies at his secretary, his pride and joy. Once in a while, he told his wife to keep the children quiet, but he usually was lost to everything but his book or his thoughts. His library had only the recognized authorities in theology, history, law, and some of the classical works they used in college. He and his colleagues exchanged their new books, but such occasions were rare because they could not often buy them.

Salisbury had no newspaper yet; sometimes, a paper came from the other towns but not often enough. Travelers were welcome for their news and stories. In writing his sermons, McCorkle had got away from strict emphasis on theology and now spoke more to the needs of his flock, pointing out the hand of God in their lives and in the world (such as the plants, animals, and meteors). Reading was his relaxation; he did not smoke or drink. He also enjoyed a good conversation, although with his teaching and preaching he had little time for much of it any more. Twice a year he went to Orange Presbytery meetings and enjoyed the

several days discussing matters spiritual and worldly, not to mention seeing his fellow ministers and exchanging stories with them. The number of his colleagues had grown, too.

What did McCorkle have to show for his 40 years? He was happy in his study, teaching, and preaching. They were not rich, but they had a place to live and food on the table. Few of their neighbors were much better off. He was respected by his people and was becoming better known in the state; he was thinking about publishing some of his sermons, particularly the one on education. He still had not given up on founding a university for the state, either, even if the first attempt failed. The McCorkles would remain in Thyatira; no other congregation would call him away, and in any case he wanted to stay. With luck his son would attend a college and do even better in life than he had. McCorkle believed firmly in God and in his country, he was proud of his family and home, and his congregation had recently come along.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup>Samuel E. Morison, Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: 1936), II, pp. 562-565. The preceding sketch of McCorkle's view of himself in 1786 was based on Morison's classic sketch of the typical Harvard man of 1700, although specific information on McCorkle was substituted.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ACADEMIES

The academy came about in North Carolina when the government, provincial and state, would not or could not establish public schools. In colonial times the governor and Board of Trade concerned themselves with commerce and "exterior" affairs, and "interior" concerns were local matters. This may have been the "laissez-faire theory of government," but that may be misleading, since no policy was ever really formulated; instead it grew from neglect and necessity. At any rate the academy, a private, local institution, developed in North Carolina largely as a result of the nonconforming denominations (the Presbyterians being one major group), and this denominational emphasis consequently gave a religious accent to their training.<sup>1</sup>

As Samuel McCorkle arrived in North Carolina in 1776, the province became a new state, poor and inexperienced, with few resources or precedents for public education. While the constitution called for promoting useful learning, education in practice lagged somewhat behind the cherished ideal. Into this vacuum came the Presbyterian ministers—Pattillo, Caldwell, Hall, McCorkle—and the influence of the College

---

<sup>1</sup>Charles W. Dabney, Universal Education in the South (Chapel Hill: 1936), p. 47. Edgar W. Knight, The Academy Movement in the South (Chapel Hill: 1920), pp. 4, 6,

of New Jersey and the log college movement. The academy was thus the "product of the frontier period of national development."<sup>2</sup>

### Liberty Hall

McCorkle had been in the pulpit at Thyatira about a year when he first became involved with the educational movement in North Carolina. He was appointed one of the trustees of the Liberty Hall Academy, which, according to Foote, was one of the most useful and permanent academies in the western part of the state, surpassing even Caldwell's log college in significance. The academy had survived a series of name-changes and an effort by the Board of Trade to wish it away; this persistence indicated the strength of independence and education in the piedmont.<sup>3</sup>

Liberty Hall began thus. After his graduation from the College of New Jersey in 1760, Joseph Alexander became the minister of a Presbyterian Church at Sugar Creek near Charlotte. In 1767 with the help of a Mr. Benedict, Alexander opened an academy. In 1770 the Presbyterians of Mecklenburg County asked the General Assembly to charter and endow the Sugar Creek academy, to be known as Queen's College. The governor and the legislature complied, and the charter was granted on January 15, 1771. However, the schoolmaster had not been licensed by the Lord Bishop of London (nor was a Presbyterian likely to be), and the Board of

---

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Walter Clark, ed., The State Records of North Carolina (Greensboro: 1906), pp. 30-32; originally, The Laws of North Carolina, 1777, chapter XX. Reverend William Henry Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of her Early Settlers (Dunn: 1912), p. 234; originally published in New York in 1846 and hereafter cited Foote, Sketches of North Carolina. Edgar W. Knight, ed., A Documentary History of Education in the South Before 1860 (Chapel Hill: 1953), II, p. 476.



Trade disliked the idea of raising an endowment through a tax upon liquor entering the county. The crown and Board of Trade disallowed the charter. They did not want to encourage a dissenting religion, impair the flow of commerce (from which royal revenues were raised), or subsidize a Presbyterian seminary. Following the loss of its charter, Queen's College became Queen's Museum and operated without incorporation or public endowment until 1777.<sup>4</sup>

On May 9, 1777, the new state government in North Carolina chartered Queen's Museum but with a new name, Liberty Hall Academy. Samuel McCorkle and his colleagues David Caldwell and James Hall were appointed as three of the 14 trustees by the charter which incorporated Liberty Hall. The charter granted to the president and trustees of the academy certain privileges, responsibilities, and legal protections as granted to any corporate body. Specific procedures were implemented for the academy's organization, administration, and finance.<sup>5</sup>

The charter of Liberty Hall acknowledged that the school was useful and necessary to the state, and it commended the academy for the preparatory education that it had given students up to that time. Upon completing their work in languages, arts, and sciences at the academy, many young men had gone forth to colleges. It was hoped that Liberty Hall would continue to diffuse "the great Advantages of Education upon more liberal, easy, and generous Terms." The state incorporated Liberty Hall

---

<sup>4</sup>Edgar W. Knight, Public Education in the South (Boston: 1922), p. 85. Elmer E. Brown, The Making of Our Middle Schools (New York: 1926), p. 99. R. D. W. Connor, "The Genesis of Higher Education in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review, 28 (1951), pp. 3-7.

<sup>5</sup>Clark, XXIV, pp. 30-32.

that it might legally possess the private subscriptions which supported it and that it might become even more useful to the state. However, this encouragement was only legal and in no way financial. Further provisions concerned the reception of donations and endowments, the purchase of books and a building, the hiring of a faculty, an oath of office, bond for the treasurer, meeting times for the trustees and president (Isaac Alexander), and so on.<sup>6</sup>

The charter of Liberty Hall Academy solved the problems of organization, but it did little to guard against coming problems. Liberty Hall was soon haunted by the everpresent financial difficulties which plagued all the academies. The academies may have served the public, but they enjoyed little public support. Apparently the Presbyterians saw the need of Liberty Hall for assistance, and they began to raise support for it.

A Presbytery of Orange meeting was convened expressly to handle business for Liberty Hall, and three ministers were delegated to write a letter to Pennsylvania. According to presbytery minutes, "Fourth Creek, April 10th, 1778, Messrs. McCorkle, Hall, and McCaule, are hereby appointed to write a letter to Dr. McWhorter, concerning the academy in Charlotte." The letter offered the presidency of the academy to McWhorter and pleaded for funds. It was felt that McWhorter would bring the academy prestige and lend a considerable hand in fundraising. But McWhorter declined the position offered in 1778.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Reverend Eli W. Caruthers, A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D.D., Near Sixty Years Pastor of the Churches of Buffalo and Alamance (Greensborough: 1842), p. 195. Archibald Henderson Papers, 3650, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, folder 192; hereafter cited as the Henderson Papers.

But the trustees did not give up on either getting McWhorter for the presidency of the academy or on soliciting funds. The following year Samuel McCorkle and Ephraim Brevard were sent to Pennsylvania to take the word to benefactors and McWhorter. To aid them in their mission, McCorkle and Brevard carried a letter from the president and trustees of Liberty Hall Academy to the friends of learning and religion. Containing a brief plea for financial assistance, the letter pointed out that the academy had prepared a number of young men who had completed their work at colleges in the North and were currently serving in positions in both church and state. While the academy had been recently incorporated, it had received no endowment from the government for its operation and was dependent on the good will of its friends and of the patrons of learning and religion. The letter closed by requesting funds "to forward so laudable & useful a Purpose."<sup>8</sup>

The journey of McCorkle and Brevard was successful, although it took them all summer for their mission, for Alexander McWhorter accepted the offer of the presidency (together with a pastorate in Charlotte) in October, 1779. His arrival, however, was a mixed blessing to Liberty Hall, and he must have barely had time to grip the reins before the next crisis occurred. Cornwallis and his invading army were approaching, and McWhorter—who probably had a price on his head for his involvement with the Patriots—may have found it expedient to leave the vicinity. Meanwhile, the academy was turned into a British field hospital. It is likely that the students were sent home, and that Liberty Hall stopped

---

<sup>8</sup> The President and Trustees of Liberty Hall Academy to the Friends of Learning and Religion, April 18, 1779, Henderson Papers. This letter is a negative photograph from the Thomas Addis Emmet Collection in the New York City Public Library.

classes in 1780. The difficulties raised by McWhorter's leaving, the British occupation, and the academy's closing disrupted Liberty Hall's financial stability, a problem which was not surmounted as long as the academy remained in Mecklenburg County. The academy probably was unable to resume its activities because of the tuition it had lost, and its building was considerably damaged by the British.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the efforts of McCorkle and other Presbyterian ministers to generate public support and private donations for Liberty Hall, the academy was not able to survive the effects of the Revolution and of the period when its doors were closed. Charlotte was but a hamlet of 20 houses in 1780, and the academy probably had a small student body and ran on a shoestring, anyway. Losing several students was simply fatal.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>Henderson Papers, folder 192. The trip took McCorkle several months, according to a letter from Elizabeth Steel to Ephraim Steel dated Salisbury, October 19, 1779, which said McCorkle returned about the middle of September; quoted in H. M. Wagstaff, ed., The Papers of John Steele (Raleigh: 1924), I, p. 6. McCorkle probably left for Pennsylvania in May.

According to the Journal of the Continental Congress for December 20, 1775, McWhorter and Elihu Spencer were each paid \$120 and sent by the Continental Congress to North Carolina in 1776. Their mission was to talk about the causes of the Revolution and of the necessity of defending America. The Hessians burned Spencer's library, plundered his church, and used his house for a hospital, but they never caught him. Spencer was the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Trenton, New Jersey (and a trustee of the College of New Jersey). It seems that the same type of treatment was applied to McWhorter, not to mention David Caldwell; John Hall, History of the Presbyterian Church in Trenton, New Jersey, 2nd ed. (Trenton: 1912), pp. 160-162, 175; the author was the pastor of this church in 1890 when he wrote the work.

<sup>10</sup>Henderson Papers, folder 192. M. F. Treacy, Prelude to Yorktown: The Southern Campaign of Nathanael Greene, 1780-1781 (Chapel Hill: 1963), p. 45.

## Salisbury Academy

Samuel McCorkle changed perspective from fund-raiser and trustee towards attempting to move the academy to Salisbury. In 1784 McCorkle organized a petition to transfer the academy and to charter it, and he had William Sharpe of Salisbury present it to the state legislature. On its third reading (November 23, 1784) the petition was enacted into law, but its companion bill to found a state university failed to pass a week later (a development that will be discussed in the following chapter).<sup>11</sup>

The law incorporating the new Salisbury Academy was entitled "An Act for the encouragement of Learning in the District of Salisbury." Paragraph I said that the trustees of Liberty Hall had petitioned the General Assembly to move the academy from Charlotte where it was "in an entire state of decay" to Salisbury. It "would be more eligible to have an academy" near Salisbury, and the General Assembly did wish to promote "learning, virtue, and religion."<sup>12</sup>

Paragraph II expanded the number of trustees from 14 to 33, including Governor Martin, prominent residents of Salisbury, and the same three Presbyterian ministers—McCorkle, Hall, and Caldwell. Seven trustees were graduates of the College of New Jersey—Martin, McCorkle, Hall, Caldwell, Spruce Macay, Adlai Osborne, and Samuel Spencer. The 33 trustees were incorporated as the trustees of the Salisbury Academy with their own seal and succession. At least nine trustees were required to be present before they acted: (1) to receive

---

<sup>11</sup>Henderson Papers, folder 192.

<sup>12</sup>Clark, XXIV, pp. 690-692; originally published as The Laws of North Carolina, 1784, chapter XXIX.

donations or purchase lands to endow the academy; (2) to purchase a building, library, or "philosophical apparatus;" or (3) to hire a president and tutors.<sup>13</sup>

Paragraph III granted the trustees the legal right, were nine of them present: (1) to possess lands and "hereditaments;" (2) to buy, sell, or rent them; and (3) to be able either to sue or be sued in all courts of record. Paragraph IV called a meeting of the trustees for March 22, 1785, at which if 17 or more were present, they should decide upon: (1) the academy's location; (2) whether to buy a building or construct one; (3) hiring a president, tutors, secretary, treasurer, and steward; (4) regulations concerning discipline, course of study, and certificates of graduation; and (5) procedures for the trustees to meet and remove any of the academy's officers or faculty.<sup>14</sup>

Paragraph V discussed the duties of the treasurer, his bond of 1,000 pounds, the succession to the office with all profits remaining with the academy, and the procedure for the recovery of any funds which a treasurer held out of the academy finances. Paragraph VI set up the term of office (two years) and selection procedure of new trustees in the event of death or neglect by those in office. Paragraph VII permitted the trustees to name the future buildings after the most generous donors, although not after any trustee.<sup>15</sup>

Other than stating the need to move Liberty Hall Academy to Salisbury, reincorporating it as the Salisbury Academy, and expanding

---

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. Archibald Henderson, The Campus of the First State University (Chapel Hill: 1949), p. 7.

<sup>14</sup>Clark, XXIV, pp. 690-692.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

the number of trustees from 14 to 33, the charter of 1784 was little different from the Liberty Hall Academy charter of 1777: (1) the provisions for receiving donations were as carefully written; (2) the same three Presbyterian ministers were trustees; (3) provisions for hiring faculty, securing facilities, organizing the course of study, choosing the president and other employees, and replacing trustees were much the same; (4) the legal safeguards were written into both charters; and (5) the incorporation at Salisbury may have brought with it legal recognition and protection but brought no more financial support than had been enjoyed at Charlotte.

Henderson claimed that when the academy moved to Salisbury, Samuel McCorkle became its first and only president. A letter from McCorkle to Ephraim Steel dated Salisbury, March 18, 1786, after the usual comments about family health, commented about the academy. McCorkle wrote, "We are driving forward a little Academy in Salisbury, with as much expedition as the great scarcity of cash will admit. Time only can determine what it will rise to." Jedidiah Morse, who visited the Salisbury area in 1786, described the Salisbury Academy as "situated in a rich, healthy country" and flourishing with "almost fifty scholars under the tuition of a worthy clergyman." Henderson believed that the clergyman was Samuel McCorkle.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Archibald Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New (Chicago: 1941), I, p. 561. John Steele Papers, 689, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, box 2. Jedidiah Morse, The American Geography; Or a View of the Present Situation of the United States of America Containing... (Elizabethtown: 1789), p. 417; reprinted in Charles Evans microprints, 21978. Henderson Papers, folder 192.

### The Normal Course

One fascinating feature which may have been included in this academy was a normal course for future teachers. There had been a normal course (teacher training) at Rheims, France, by 1685, and from there it spread to Halle in the German state of Brandenburg within the same century. When the French armies defeated those of the Prussians, Prussia turned to Karl A. Zeller to train schoolmasters, that Prussia might have better disciplined men for its future armies. Zeller's system was copied in other places in the Netherlands, Sweden, and present day Germany. The normal system for teacher training reached its peak later under Napoleon, when the state system in France was developed emphasizing planning and control by the government.<sup>17</sup>

In America there had also been some normal training before the time of McCorkle's academy, but it is not known whether he was acquainted with what had been done. In 1751 Benjamin Franklin's plans for an academy in Philadelphia contained a planned course in pedagogy. It would be a useful course, according to Franklin's idea, for a student to train in and later practice as a trade. It is not known whether the course was actually offered or not.<sup>18</sup>

But with all due respect to Franklin, normal training in America likely originated in another way and from a chronic shortage of teachers.

---

<sup>17</sup>Adolph E. Meyer, An Educational History of the American People, 2nd ed. (New York: 1967), p. 375. In describing McCorkle's academy Meyer erred in its location and date of founding. It was in North and not South Carolina and began in 1794 and not 1785 (the first was a simple mistake and the second a repetition of the error in the conventional wisdom).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.



Colonial newspapers often advertised for the return of runaway schoolmasters (which partly illustrates the status of the profession—teachers were seen as Ichabod Cranes, as bumbling idiots—and the problem involved with staffing classrooms with indentured servants as schoolmasters), and in the villages there was rarely a good man available and willing to keep a school. Ministers or candidates for the ministry were often pressed into service, but the teacher supply problem seemed to be a constant factor. Given this situation, it was likely that an older schoolmaster sometimes bound some poor, deserving student to himself as an apprentice to learn the mystery and art of the trade of schoolmaster. Strictly speaking, this may not have been a normal course, but it probably led some schoolmasters to advertise that they would be willing to offer such a course in their schools to anyone willing to pay the tuition. Hence, the first pedagogy courses in America were likely offered in the "advertising schools" and not in Franklin's academy.

The materials and methods for McCorkle's normal course came from Germany. McCorkle asked the Reverend Adolph Nussman, the German minister in Salisbury, to write his superiors in Germany for educational works. According to Henderson:

...Rev. Adolph Nussman, who wrote in October, 1787, at Dr. McCorkle's request for books on education, Abbot Johann Caspar Velthusen of Helmstaedt, Germany, sent over the following books for pastors' libraries and likewise for McCorkle's use: F. G. Resewitz's Education for Citizenship, J. C. F. Rist's Suggestions for School Teachers of the Lower Grades, F. A. Wiedeburg's Fundamental Principles, Plan, Discipline, and Teaching Methods for the Ducal Institute of Pedagogy at Helmstaedt, J. H. Campe's Elementary Psychology for Children, G. F. Seiler's Book of School Methods, and J. B. Basedow's Elementary Work. Somewhat later were sent or promised Characterization of the Educational Works in Germany, and The Magazine for Philology and Pedagogy for 1791, edited by Wiedeburg. In all likelihood these books enabled McCorkle to do important pioneering work in American education by introducing teacher training in his school at Thyatira.

Besides Nussman, McCorkle was acquainted with the Reverend Carl A. G. Storch, who served in Rowan County from 1788 to 1823. Storch served Organ Lutheran Church, preached at St. John's, taught Hebrew at the Salisbury Academy in 1789, and taught a German school in his own congregatipn.<sup>19</sup>

The Salisbury Academy apparently enjoyed local support. The Presbyterians supported it, and the Germans in Rowan County must have. At least one German, John Beard, served as a trustee; Storch, a German minister, taught at the academy; and Nussman wrote to Germany for educational works. A group called the Library Society tried to buy books for Salisbury and the academy. But in spite of a healthy enrollment in its early life along with apparent public support, the academy had to close its doors in about 1792 after seven years of operation. Tuition

---

<sup>19</sup>Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New, I, p. 617. Henderson believed that McCorkle offered a normal course, and Foote agreed; Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 357. Caruthers did not mention such a normal course; Eli W. Caruthers, "Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, D.D., 1774-1811," Annals of the American Pulpit, ed., William B. Sprague (New York: 1969), III, pp. 346-349; hereafter cited Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit. Owen doubted that McCorkle offered a normal course, even though he discussed the books from Germany for the preceding pages; Eugene D. Owen, "Secondary Education in North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1934). Based on my acquaintance with Samuel McCorkle, I conclude that it would be impossible for McCorkle to learn anything and not incorporate it into his ministry or his teaching. For instance, what he knew about agriculture, as shall shortly be shown, managed to appear in both his sermons and lectures. In that he wished to promote learning, religion, and happiness, McCorkle (it would seem) probably wanted his students to go out and teach in turn. Is it not too much to expect that students were influenced by McCorkle's example and instruction and that they would model themselves after him?

"Records of Organ Lutheran Church, Rowan County, North Carolina," tran., Bernard W. Cruse (microfilm reel 90, Church Records, Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), pp. 1, 2, 176. Carl Hammer, Rhinelanders on the Yadkin: The Story of the Pennsylvania Germans in Rowan and Cabarrus (Salisbury: 1943), pp. 29, 41, 46, 47, 51, 54.

and private donations never seemed to be sufficient for the academies in the frontier society.<sup>20</sup>

#### Zion-Parnassus, Religion and Learning

It was at this time that McCorkle was engaged in planning for the new state university (to be discussed in the following chapter), and he was likely concerned that the Salisbury Academy failed. He began laying the groundwork for another academy, this one in his own congregation at Thyatira. The plan came to the testing stage in the fall of 1793 when McCorkle advertised his academy in the newspaper. The academy was "intended as a nursery for the University" and would prepare young men in basic languages and science that they might be ready for a complete course of study at the university, "which it is hoped will ere long be prepared to receive them." The advertisements appeared in the North-Carolina Journal on November 27, 1793, and the following issues until December 18, 1793.<sup>21</sup>

According to the advertisement, the academy at Thyatira would begin in January, 1794, if three more students enrolled; there were already seven signed up. Nearby board and room could be found for 15 pounds per year (paper), tuition would be five pounds ten shillings (paper) for the year, and an extra dollar would be charged for the use of the laboratory apparatus. McCorkle would himself teach most of the time, and he would

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. Henderson Papers, folder 192.

<sup>21</sup> Connor, "The Genesis of Higher Education in North Carolina," p. 10. North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), November 27, 1793, quoted by R. D. W. Connor, A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1766-1799 (Chapel Hill: 1953), I, pp. 251-253; hereafter cited as DHUNC (for further study, see Appendix C).

closely supervise the morality, manners, and religion of his students. The academy was a preparatory school for those going on to the university which would perhaps soon be opened. The education would be in the basic languages and science, and the following apparatus would be utilized to teach the latter: globes, barometer, thermometer, microscope, prismatic glass, and surveying instruments. Also, McCorkle had sermons on education and charity he wished to publish if enough people would subscribe. Previous experience with education at the Salisbury academy would benefit the academy at Thyatira, and the former friends of the first would not forget its successor.<sup>22</sup>

McCorkle's academy was founded in the interest of promoting education in North Carolina, but it could expect to founder on the financial rocks if enrollment or donations were available in only limited quantities. It would also perish for lack of interest if a university were not soon created to fill the vacuum at the top of the educational ladder.<sup>23</sup>

Zion-Parnassus, as McCorkle named his academy at Thyatira, must have solved its lack of enrollment problem, for it opened in January, 1794. Proof of this exists in two places—a published sermon and a newspaper article. In a footnote to the text of a sermon was the statement, "I have delivered to the students under my direction at Zion-Parnassus" these two paragraphs on agriculture. And the article—in the June 22, 1795, issue of the North-Carolina Journal—about the state of

---

<sup>22</sup> North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), November 27, 1793, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 251-253.

<sup>23</sup> Connor, "The Genesis of Higher Education in North Carolina," p. 10.

the university at the close of its first term contained the note that "...the academy at Thyatira, erected and conducted by Dr M'Corkle ... [is] in a very flourishing state."<sup>24</sup>

The choice of name, Zion-Parnassus, demonstrated McCorkle's proficiency in the classical heritage and his goals for his school. Zion, once the hill on which the biblical David's palace stood in Jerusalem, applied to the Hebrew and Christian religions meant the ultimate, the heights of religion. Parnassus, an 8,000 foot mountain in Greece, was, according to Greek mythology, sacred to Apollo (the god of youth, manly beauty, music, song, and prophecy) and to the Muses (the goddesses of poetry, art, and science). The name Zion-Parnassus seemed appropriate for an academy founded to promote religion and learning. Lest someone criticize Samuel McCorkle for confusing his images, remember that McCorkle belonged to an eclectic age where a learned man was more than a narrow specialist, and he saw no problem with identifying his academy with both the Hebrew and the Greek traditions.<sup>25</sup>

What was Zion-Parnassus like? It was located seven miles west of Salisbury (and a mile east of Thyatira Church) on the road to Statesville. The spot today is marked by a roadside marker saying the academy existed from 1794 to 1798, run by "Sam'l E. McCorkle, Presbyterian preacher and educator." It is hard to determine exactly where Zion-Parnassus stood, because a hundred bushel corn grown on the rich,

---

<sup>24</sup> Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness and Duty of the United States, Contrasted with other Nations, particularly the Israelites (Halifax: 1795), p. 36; Evans, 29001. North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), June 22, 1795, quoted in DHUNC, I, p. 402.

<sup>25</sup> James F. Hurley and Julia C. Eagen, The Prophet of Zion-Parnassus, Samuel Eusebius McCorkle (Richmond: 1934), p. 83.

red soil near where it once stood sentinel. Brawley claimed that the academy was run behind the house at Westfield; he also believed Samuel McCorkle built a two story Greek-type house on his plantation, complete with porches, columns, windows, and a large chimney. At any rate the academy stood atop a hill, surrounded by low hills covered by woods—both pine and hardwoods. It faced down the hill toward a meadow with a stream running through it, and the clearing in front of the academy was grassy. Behind Zion-Parnassus and all around, except for the space in front, were trees; the road ran by at a short distance away. The building was made of hewn logs, and they were carefully laid on rock foundations. Because of the cultivated fields, Zion-Parnassus is hard to find, but the story is that one should look in the spring when the flowers bloom. The grass and flowers mark the foundations of Zion-Parnassus, since they border the stones thereof.<sup>26</sup>

Foote claimed that McCorkle was a pioneer in pedagogy, Brawley held that he was a pioneer in architecture, and Henderson claimed that McCorkle was a pioneer in the teaching of the laboratory method in science and in the instruction of agriculture. No evidence remains extant that McCorkle offered a laboratory course in science, but with all the paraphernalia he had access to (as the previously mentioned "philosophical apparatus" in his advertisement in the November 27, 1793, North-Carolina Journal), it seems probable that science was taught. McCorkle's sermons abound in references to natural history and the

---

<sup>26</sup>The description is based on personal observation while in North Carolina on a field trip in 1972. James S. Brawley, "McCorkle Home Still Stands in Rowan," Salisbury Post (Salisbury), October 15, 1972.

universe, and they indicate that he had a vigorous, curious interest in the world about him.<sup>27</sup>

But Henderson may have overstated the case when he credited McCorkle with introducing science and agriculture into his curriculum. Nor was his really the first vocational agriculture course in North Carolina. McCorkle likely did employ the scientific apparatus at hand as well as his active curiosity and broad reading, but no dynamic turning point was reached in the curriculum in America because of McCorkle's work. McCorkle published sermons and not texts; he promoted education largely because he felt it would further the cause of religion. The study of science was most likely undertaken to develop a better perception among the students of God's will working in the universe, the natural laws which demonstrated order in the world. This kind of motivation was clearly reflected in the lectures which McCorkle gave on agriculture.

In 1795 McCorkle published a sermon which contained two paragraphs and a sentence on agriculture which "I have delivered to the students under my direction at Zion-Parnassus." McCorkle wrote:

No state can be happier than that of the farmer, and farmer happier than the American, who is subject to no imperious landlord, but calls the soil his own, and cultivates it with conscious freedom.

Agriculture is the first of sciences and arts. In philosophic view, it is great and extensive. In a political, it is the only firm and stable way to national greatness. In morals, it increases virtue by encouraging industry; and it discourages vice by discouraging idleness and dissipation. It is both business and amusement. It requires no fatigue. It indulges no indolence. In a religious view, it inspires

---

<sup>27</sup>Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New, I, p. 617.

with piety and devotion. It leads to an admiration of the works of God, to a dependence on the providence of God, and to justice and charity to men.

Such being the importance of agriculture, why is it not revered and more improved? Many cases combine to produce this effect. I select but a few of them. It has not been taught in our seats of science. It has been too much cramped by poverty, and too little cultivated by the rich and great. Our farms are too large, and furnished on the niggard plan. Too many countries opening to the west, and to ascend to the source of all—the habits of industry are greatly wanting. We now stand at the unhappy place, where all countries have been, or will be, a stage between two states, in one of which men may live without labour; and in the other of which they must live by it. The first is the state of a new country; the last, the condition of an old one—and the unhappiest place is the point between.<sup>28</sup>

McCorkle had apparently read and absorbed the views of the physiocrats on the point that the agrarian society was the highest form of civilization. It is tempting to speculate that McCorkle would have said with Franklin that "Diligence is the mother of good luck," with Rousseau that society corrupted man and his institutions, and with Jefferson that an agrarian society preserved the morality and virtue of a people. But McCorkle probably felt that an agrarian society best kept man away from corruption, open to his own piety, and devoted to the will of God.

This religious perspective as it influenced the schooling in McCorkle's day could perhaps best be illustrated with two examples. The German ministers in Rowan County requested that Velthusen (who had sent the educational works), Professor of Theology in the Julius Charles University at Helmstaedt, Duchy of Brunswick, send some texts. He sent eight books (apparently four different works, each in both German and English versions) after they were "outlined by a society of Helmstaedt

---

<sup>28</sup>McCorkle, A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness..., pp. 35-36. According to the title page, this sermon was given on February 18, 1795, at Salisbury and on the following day at Thyatira.



professors." The books were Catechism and Question Book (1787), Handbook of the Bible and Biblical Narratives (1788), A History of Religion and Geographical Handbook (1788), and Book of Practical Information based on Reason (1789); they were all printed by Siegfried L. Crusius in Leipzig. All of these materials appear religious in nature and catechetical in method. But the second example may be even more descriptive.<sup>29</sup>

McCorkle's colleague, the Reverend Henry Pattillo, wrote the first textbook in North Carolina. Pattillo was born in Scotland in 1726, migrated to America in 1740, studied at the College of New Jersey (he did not take a degree there, perhaps because of the college's difficulties remaining open due to the deaths of presidents; Pattillo actually did all the work, became an "eminent Presbyterian divine," and was later granted a master's degree by the College of New Jersey), was licensed to preach in 1757, and arrived in North Carolina in 1765 to take up pastoral duties. Pattillo founded Granville Hall in 1779, and this academy was chartered by the state in 1780. In 1796 Pattillo published his Geographical Catechism, a book exactly described by its title; it was a catechism of geography. The work, written in a dialogue with questions and answers, was a kind of journal which took the reader around the world of 1796. It was obviously written by a minister, and its thesis was simple. Pattillo's message was summed up in the closing sentence, "May piety, virtue, honour, truth, and justice increase in full proportion; and let all the people say, Amen."<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup>Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New, I, p. 617.

<sup>30</sup>Stephen B. Weeks, ed., "Beginnings of the Common School System in the South," from the Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1896-97,

Pattillo wrote as he taught, in a religious perspective which sought to understand the world (hence teaching a geography course), and through that method, to see God's revelations and His will for man. His work best speaks for itself on its title page:

A Geographical  
Catechism,  
To assist those who have neither Maps nor Gazetteers,  
to read  
NEWS-PAPERS, HISTORY, or TRAVELS:  
With as much of  
The Science of ASTRONOMY, and the Doctrine of the AIR,  
As is judged sufficient for the FARMER, who wishes  
to understand something of  
The Works of GOD, around him;  
And for the studious YOUTH, who have or have not a prospect of  
further prosecuting those SUBLIME SCIENCES.

By HENRY PATTILLO, A. M. Granville

The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have  
pleasure therein. Psalmist.

Lord how manifold are thy works! In wisdom has thou made them all.  
Sun, Moon and Stars, praise ye the Lord.  
For ever singing as they shine,  
"The hand that made us is divine."<sup>31</sup>

If Pattillo, McCorkle, and the other Presbyterian ministers got religion over into their teaching, they also believed enough in education to get it into their pulpits. The Presbyterian ministers were a strong-willed group. A minister supplying vacant pulpits was to try to catechize daily, and elders of a church with a vacant pulpit had similar responsibilities. McCorkle divided the congregation at Thyatira into eight groups, each headed by an elder, and assigned the groups sets of

---

United States Bureau of Education (Washington: 1898), p. 1390. N. W. Walker and M. C. S. Noble, Pattillo's Geographical Catechism (Chapel Hill: 1909), title pages, p. 62. This work is simply Pattillo's text republished with a few notes.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., title page.

questions over the New and Old Testaments for which the church members were responsible on Sunday. Nor were youngsters exempt, for they had to repeat the Shorter Catechism each sabbath. Such a practice likely forced reading and some study from crib to grave.<sup>32</sup>

However, these men were not merely prosyletizing for the true religion, for they were mainly concerned with the welfare of society. Pattillo, McCorkle, and their colleagues were much influenced by their view of their own function, and this shaped their view of the world and how they taught. What was the late eighteenth century view of the world?

Pattillo ably summarized at least the North Carolina of the day:

North-Carolina has Virginia on the north, by a dividing line in 36° 30', South-Carolina on the south, and the Atlantic ocean on the east. It extended to the Mississippi, but the Assembly gave up its western territory to the United States. The southern line is in 35° till it turns to the southeast, and extends on the sea coast about 200 miles. Its chief rivers are Pasquotank, Chowan, Roanoak, Tar-river, Neuse and Cape-Fear. Its rivers and extensive coast, render it as convenient for trade as any of its sister states, if the entrance from the ocean were not shallow and sandy; which confines the trade to small vessels; but Cape-Fear admits ships of any burden. The productions of this state are numerous and valuable. It sends by land to Virginia annually, 6 or 7,000 hogsheads of tobacco; and exports a number from its own inspections. Its other exports are wheat, flour, pease, beef, pork, butter, cheese, lumber, pitch, tar, turpentine, and I wish I could add to the exports of my country pot and pearl ashes, which it is well calculated to produce. The numerous landings in this state, are also unfriendly to large towns. It has however, some small towns on navigation, as Halifax, Edenton, Washington, Tarborough, Newbern, Fayetteville, and Wilmington, besides some inland towns that are represented in the Assembly. The seat of Government is fixed at the city of Raleigh, in Wake county, in latitude thirty-five and an half, where the Legislature hold their Assemblies, and the officers of Government chiefly reside.

---

<sup>32</sup>Ernest T. Thompson, Presbyterians in the South (Richmond: 1963), p. 224. The author probably got this from Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 360.

A University is established by act of Assembly, in Orange county, with liberal appointments by the state, and numerous benefactions. It is yet in its infancy, has about sixty students, and is under the government of good and learned men, must prove an extensive blessing, as well as an honour to the state. What can more loudly call for the prayers of all good people, than that GOD's blessing may reside on our principal seat of learning, from which fountain are to flow those streams, that must poison, or purify and nourish our country. Its short progress has been rapid; may its success be glorious! The population of this state in 1790, was 394,000, and the proportion of whites to slaves nearly as three to one. North-Carolina sends ten representatives to Congress, besides two Senators, which is common to all the states. Religion is here also happily free.<sup>33</sup>

How did the religious perspective influence how these Presbyterian ministers taught? There were three parts to its impact—materials, objectives, and methods. First, that materials were religious has already been suggested as the standard procedure, and the books which

---

<sup>33</sup>Walker and Noble, pp. 60-61. There is reason to doubt that slaves were as free in the practice of their religion or daily lives. However, the ministers and teachers, with the exception of Pattillo, did not seem to consider the fate of the Negro. The following story should reinforce the idea that the Presbyterian ministers were a strong-willed lot, devoted to furthering the cause of education and religion. Knight said that Pattillo was the one who requested that John Chavis (a free Negro born in 1763 in North Carolina, educated as a "special student" by John Witherspoon at the College of New Jersey—to see whether Negroes could learn anything—and ordained as a Presbyterian minister) be sent to open an academy in North Carolina; Knight, The Academy Movement in the South, p. 21.

One may not be able completely to accept the Knight story. Knight said that Pattillo requested Chavis in 1805, but according to Walker and Noble in their title pages, Pattillo died in 1801. It may only be that his request finally materialized some years after his death. At any rate Knight claimed Chavis returned in 1805 and opened a classical school. He was respected as a teacher, and "His English was said to be remarkable for its purity and its freedom from 'negroisms,' and his manner was impressive." He was well trained and continued to teach until 1831 when the legislature forbade Negroes to preach. Two of his students were Willie P. Mangum, United States Senator, and Charles Manly, Governor of North Carolina; Knight, Public Education in the South, p. 87. Whether the "experiment" with Negro learning was viewed as a success or a failure is not clear. In another book Knight claimed the first academy run by a Negro opened in Raleigh in 1808; Knight, A Documentary History of Education in the South Before 1860, V, p. 467.

came from Germany were certainly so. Second, the objectives, as seen in the choice of Zion-Parnassus as a name, were to promote religion and learning and to act as a nursery for the university. Since about 45 of McCorkle's students entered the ministry, according to his wife, there may well have been a religious emphasis in McCorkle's classroom in Salisbury and at Zion-Parnassus.<sup>34</sup>

But McCorkle's religion was too broad to concern itself only with materials, doctrines, and the Scriptures. His wider view, best shown in his published sermons, related the classical heritage, current politics, and natural history to his congregation and students. For example, in The Charity Sermon McCorkle referred to the Bible, Sallust, Vattel, Beccaria, Paley, Edwards, Blau, Doddridge, Beattie, and Reid, and when he gave the sermon to the General Assembly in 1793, McCorkle called for the promotion of science. A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness... discussed cities, mountains, rivers, and the 300 species of animals in America, citing from Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia, the Encyclopedia, and Adam Smith.<sup>35</sup>

Another indication of McCorkle's breadth is the variety of students he prepared. Six of the seven men in the first graduating class (1798) at the University of North Carolina were trained by McCorkle for college. But he also discouraged the parents of students who lacked ability or motivation from sending their sons on for further education.

---

<sup>34</sup>Henderson Papers, folder 192. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 358.

<sup>35</sup>Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New, I, p. 608. Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, A Charity Sermon (Halifax: 1795), pp. 26-30, 54-57, 62-63; Evans, 29000. Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness ..., pp. 6, 14-15, 27, 31-41.

He found financial support for students who could not pay their own tuition so they might also attend his school. If he actually taught a normal course, it is likely McCorkle did it with the idea that students from poor families could get a start in life, a means of making a living, as well as helping their people. All of these were only accomplished because McCorkle understood the background and abilities of his students, and because he treated them as if they were what they ought to be and could be rather than as what they were, thus helping them to develop.<sup>36</sup>

McCorkle and the other teaching Presbyterian ministers had a strong practical side to their nature which made them better teachers and good men. They aimed in their classes to diffuse knowledge, for they believed that it was the cure for ignorance and that ignorance was the cause of most human difficulties. They were aware of the differences among their students. For instance, Pattillo in the introduction to his book when he was really talking about learning wrote:

A large volume on these sciences, that condescends not to a low beginning, distresses the teacher, and discourages the

---

<sup>36</sup> Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, pp. 357-358. One of McCorkle's students, Murdock McMillan, might be representative of the group. He received his elementary education at Zion-Parnassus and then went on to take his classical and theological training with David Caldwell. He became a minister, serving Union, Buffalo, and Bethesda Churches from 1804 to 1830; his Sunday services were conducted in both English and Gaelic. He founded two academies, teaching at one in the morning and the other in the afternoon; Blackwell P. Robinson, A History of Moore County, North Carolina, 1747-1847 (Southern Pines: 1956), p. 171.

Those six students whom McCorkle prepared for the university were: (1) Samuel Hinton, of Wake County, a planter, died in 1815; (2) William Houston, of Iredell County, became a physician in Tennessee; (3) Robert Lock, of Rowan County, lived in Salisbury, died about 1818; (4) Alexander Osborne, of Rowan County, born in 1778; (5) Edwin J. Osborne, of Rowan County, born in 1780, probably a settler in Salisbury area, received an A. M. in 1804; and (6) Adam Springs, of Mecklenburg County; Daniel C. Grant, Alumni History of the University of North Carolina (Durham: 1924), pp. 285, 300, 371, 466, 467, 585.

learner. My book is designed to pave the way for authors who enter deeper into science; therefore all youths at our seminaries, will find their advantage from them; while the planter, and those youths who are not intended for the learned professions, will perhaps satisfy themselves with what is here offered to them.

Learning has always been an individual experience where the learner is governed by his own capacity. Learning is "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." The good teacher simply keeps that equation at equilibrium, and that is what McCorkle did. McCorkle was a good teacher, for he was fair, interested in his students, and interested in continuing to learn himself.<sup>37</sup>

And third, methods were influenced by the religious perspective of teaching Presbyterian ministers. The standard lesson was a presentation by the instructor from what was perhaps the only copy of a particular work; a set of questions was asked covering the material to which suitable answers were to be memorized by the students; and then individual students went to the master's desk during the recitation period and were privately quizzed. The best example is again from Pattillo's work:

Question 1. What is the meaning of the word Geography?

Answer. It is compounded of two Greek words, Ge, the Earth, and graphe, a description; and is the science that describes the Earth, or the globe of sea and land.

Q. 2. Why do you call the sea and land a globe?

A. Because it is round as a globe or ball.

Q. 3. How is the land on the globe divided?

A. Into four quarters or large continents.

Q. 4. What are their names?

A. Asia, Africa, Europe and America.

Another sixty pages of text discussed in turn latitude, oceans, rivers, and so on. The reader may want to compare such instruction with a minister catechizing his flock, or he may be reminded of Plato in

---

<sup>37</sup>Walker and Noble, p. vi.

The Republic where a wise teacher (Socrates) taught through asking and answering "simple-minded" questions.<sup>38</sup>

What was the course of study at Zion-Parnassus? McCorkle probably had some students in the basic five "R's," but he also had advanced students to whom he taught geography, agriculture, mathematics, natural philosophy, the classics, Latin and Greek grammar and literature, English grammar and literature, surveying, science, and moral philosophy (plus anything else that was handy and interesting).<sup>39</sup>

Zion-Parnassus, located near the McCorkle residence at Westfield, is representative of the schools of the period and of the efforts of other men laboring in similar endeavors. Zion-Parnassus was a "nursery for the University," preparing students in the basic languages and science either to go on to the university or out into the world. Although it was never incorporated, Zion-Parnassus was under the guidance and patronage of the trustees of the late Salisbury Academy; however, their aid was not sufficient to prevent a similar end. McCorkle's academy was not supported by taxes nor did it pay any; tuition and donations were the only sources of revenue for it. Its character was somewhat religious, the training both preparatory and vocational, and the existence lonely and short-lived. The master, McCorkle, sought to promote useful learning, true religion, and happiness in Rowan County. He tried to distribute what he believed was the only cure for ignorance, unhappiness, and shortcomings—knowledge.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>39</sup>Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 347. Owen, p. 282.

<sup>40</sup>Connor, "The Genesis of Higher Education in North Carolina," p. 10.



Despite a good start in 1794, Zion-Parnassus ran into fatal difficulties by 1798. Everything had begun fine. The sentence in an article in the June 22, 1795, North-Carolina Journal about the university, quoted above, suggested that Zion-Parnassus was "in a very flourishing state." But it probably failed by 1798, for the Salisbury Academy was chartered for a second time that year. It is not likely that Zion-Parnassus continued to operate when the academy began about seven miles away.<sup>41</sup>

Exact information is lacking, but several factors could have led to the demise of Zion-Parnassus. McCorkle began and ran his academy because there was no other school in the area. With the return of an academy to Salisbury, its closer proximity to more potential students and tuition and to the support of more local benefactors than just the Presbyterians at Thyatira, it is likely that McCorkle closed his academy. The academy in Salisbury would draw more students, more support, and a charter which the academy within the congregation at Thyatira could not hope to.

Besides the end of the need for Zion-Parnassus, there was perhaps an even more critical factor in causing its demise—McCorkle's vitality. McCorkle led a busy life in the 1790's, pushing himself to the limit with his activities in the pulpit, congregation, study, classroom, in speaking and planning for the university, in publishing sermons, and in serving as a leader in his presbytery (with its related duties such as supplying vacant pulpits and attending to the administration of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina). By 1801, perhaps earlier, he

---

<sup>41</sup>North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), June 22, 1795, quoted in DHUNC, I, p. 402. Henderson Papers, folder 192.

was getting incapacitated by physical infirmity, and in 1802 he was removed from a presbytery position as stated clerk because of his indisposition. Apparently McCorkle's affliction was gradually becoming more severe, and it may have influenced him in 1798 to slow down his activities. With the academy opening in Salisbury, learning would still be promoted, and McCorkle could retire from his teaching responsibilities at Zion-Parnassus.<sup>42</sup>

Zion-Parnassus did, however, leave a legacy; part of the academy, of course, went with its students. Part remained with McCorkle, and if typing McCorkle as an educational pioneer seems too strong, it is still tempting to speculate upon what influence on education he may have had. Certainly other academies multiplied from Zion-Parnassus through the students who became teaching Presbyterian ministers. And in 1808 a Zion-Parnassus opened in Robeson County; in 1809 a Mount Parnassus Academy opened in Moore County.<sup>43</sup>

#### Other Academies of the Day

In narrating the story of Samuel McCorkle and the academies, this chapter neglected the opportunity to discuss the other academies in North Carolina; perhaps such a comparative endeavor could add perspective. By way of epilogue the chapter could consider Charles Coon's work on the academies in North Carolina from 1790 to 1840. Coon's work was

---

<sup>42</sup>Maxwell Chambers to John Steele, March 17, 1801, quoted in Wagstaff, I, p. 209. "Minutes of the Synod of the Carolinas, 1788-1799" (Montreat: Presbyterian Historical Foundation), I, p. 90. McCorkle's health will be more fully discussed in chapter eight.

<sup>43</sup>Edgar W. Knight, Public School Education in North Carolina (Boston: 1916), p. 50.

largely a documentary history which used acts of incorporation and newspaper advertisements. Neither anything about McCorkle nor about Salisbury Academy before 1807 was included. But in 1807 a public examination at the Salisbury Academy was conducted over "Virgil's Eclogues, Nepos, Erasmus, Morse's and Guthrie's Geographies, reading and parsing, reciting English grammar, Assembly Catechism, Church Catechism, arithmetic, writing, and composition." Since the master was a Presbyterian minister (John Brown), the curriculum is not particularly surprising.<sup>44</sup>

Coon's description began by saying that despite the sparse settlement in the state, there were many academies, mostly run by either graduates of the University of North Carolina or Presbyterian ministers in their congregations. Of the eight academies that Coon included which were incorporated by 1800, at least six were run by ministers, and of the six, at least three were Presbyterian and maybe more. The academies emphasized the "useful and ornamental branches of knowledge." Under the useful heading were geography, history, health, Latin and English grammar, classical language and literature, and mathematics. Ornamental knowledge meant things like drawing, painting, music, and needlework (suggesting that perhaps some classes were run for girls).<sup>45</sup>

The academy was none too elaborate. A Raleigh academy built in 1802 was typical—40 feet long, 24 feet wide, and two stories tall. It did not have desks or a blackboard, but there were a few globes, maps,

---

<sup>44</sup> Charles L. Coon, North Carolina Schools and Academies, 1790-1840: A Documentary History (Raleigh: 1915), p. xxx. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 359.

<sup>45</sup> Coon, pp. vi, ix, xiii, xxviii (for further study, see Appendix D).

ten windows (with 18 panes of glass in each through which bored students could gaze), and a female department after 1807.<sup>46</sup>

Most academies need benefactors to survive, but tuition likely made up the schoolmaster's salary. In 1793 the Reverend Thomas Irving charged 20 shillings a quarter for basic instruction in the five "R's" in his academy at New Bern. Those taking mathematics paid 30 shillings and those in languages 50 shillings. William Bingham charged eight dollars for the five "R's," and he charged 13 dollars for the classics, mathematics, geography, and English. Board was 52 dollars a year in town. When David Caldwell, Junior, was added to the faculty in 1802, enrollment made a healthy increase.<sup>47</sup>

The wages for teachers did not put them into the upper strata of society; however, there were individuals who apparently were well placed. For instance, David Ker earned 400 dollars at the Fayetteville Academy in 1794 and an equal amount from his duties as a Presbyterian minister.<sup>48</sup>

Probably the singular likeness in all North Carolina academies was the stress placed on manners, morals, and restraint. Sermons were frequent. Twice a year the public came to watch the oral examinations of the students. The Reverend Joseph D. Kilpatrick, a Presbyterian minister, ran an advertisement in the 1809 Raleigh Star which aptly summarized the work of the schoolmaster:

For the instruction of young men in the Latin & Greek languages, English, Grammar, Geography, etc...price of tuition will be

---

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. x.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. xlvi, xliii, xxix, 34-37, 51.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. xlv.

twelve dollars, and of boarding forty dollars per year...  
 The utmost care will be taken to preserve the morals of <sup>49</sup>  
 young men who may be sent to this place for instruction.

Zion-Parnassus best captured the efforts of Samuel McCorkle, the student of David Caldwell and John Witherspoon. McCorkle opened the academy to train boys for college, but he did not neglect those who were not going to college; his normal course was devoted to them. He attempted, as his mentors had taught him, to tie together piety and learning, and for that reason, McCorkle selected Zion-Parnassus as his

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. xxxvi. Robert H. Stone, A History of Orange Presbytery, 1770-1970 (Greensboro: 1970), p. 45. One reason that the life of Samuel McCorkle with respect to his influence upon education in North Carolina needed study was that the conventional wisdom about him has been limited or erroneous, or has led to a mistaken impression about his contributions.

Edgar Knight is certainly the best illustration; he liked the paragraph he wrote about McCorkle so well that he included it in at least three of his books. Looking much like what Foote wrote in 1846, Knight's paragraph made the following points about McCorkle: he had been trained by David Caldwell and John Witherspoon; graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1772; became a Presbyterian minister; began Zion-Parnassus, an academy near Salisbury, in 1785; and in his academy taught a normal course,—first attempt at teacher-training in North Carolina and one of the first in the United States, gave assistance to needy students for tuition and books, and trained six of the seven men in the first graduating class at the University of North Carolina in 1798. Knight, The Academy Movement in the South, p. 18. Knight, Public Education in the South, pp. 84-85. Knight, Public School Education in North Carolina, p...

Surprisingly, the earlier works on education in North Carolina were more accurate in perspective than the later ones. Charles Smith, The History of Education in North Carolina (Washington: 1888) drew mainly from Foote and The Laws of North Carolina and wrote a fairly good account. Stephen B. Weeks, "Beginnings of the Common School System in the South," from the Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1896-1897, also wrote comprehensively, much like Smith. But Charles L. Raper, The Church and Private Schools of North Carolina: A Historical Study (Greensboro, North Carolina: 1898), did not write as fully as either Weeks or Smith. M. C. S. Noble, A History of the Public Schools of North Carolina (Chapel Hill: 1930) discussed education in North Carolina, but he limited himself to public schools (thus missing McCorkle and confining his discussion before 1800 to 40 pages) and what happened from 1800 to 1900 (in another 400 pages). Dabney, Universal Education in the South, wrote a good general work, but like the others did not devote much attention to the time period of the academy.

name for the academy. He trained boys for service to church and state. His endeavors were successful for a few years until Zion-Parnassus was supplanted by the second academy in Salisbury. McCorkle, the educator, was another side to the Reverend Mr. McCorkle's ministry at Thyatira.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

#### The Bill of 1784

In December, 1776, the first mention of a university for North Carolina was suggested by Article XLI of the state constitution, "...all useful Learning shall be duly encouraged in one or more Universities." But some years passed before Article XLI could be implemented. The first recorded attempt to establish a university was led by Samuel McCorkle.<sup>1</sup>

In 1784 McCorkle sent two bills promoting education to the North Carolina House of Commons. The first, his petition to transfer Liberty Hall Academy to Salisbury and incorporate it there as the Salisbury Academy, passed on November 23, 1784 (perhaps because it required no appropriation of funds). Its companion bill, a charter for a university, was not to fare as well. McCorkle gave his draft of the bill to Spruce Macay, a Salisbury lawyer who sat in the legislature, for touching up,

---

<sup>1</sup>The McCorkle-Sharpe bill of November 8, 1784, quoted by R. D. W. Connor, A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1766-1799 (Chapel Hill: 1953), I, pp. 13-20; hereafter cited as DHUNC. The educational provision in the constitution was likely modeled after Article 44 of the state constitution of Pennsylvania; Archibald Henderson, The Campus of the First State University (Chapel Hill: 1949), p. 6; Henderson cited the North Carolina Colonial Records, X, pp. 1003-1013.

but it was the other representative from Salisbury, William Sharpe, who was chosen to present the two educational bills.<sup>2</sup>

As it went to the legislature on November 8, 1784, the McCorkle-Sharpe bill to establish a university in North Carolina was deliberately full of blank spaces. The plan was to allow the legislature the latitude to recommend changes in the clauses and to appoint its own slate of trustees. It called for incorporating the "President and Trustees of the North Carolina University" by law, granting them a seal and order of succession, and giving them the legal right to receive donations and own property. Their profits were to be used to acquire buildings to house "a philosophical apparatus," classes, and library; to pay a president and faculty; and to acquire more lands and properties. The consent of a majority of trustees was required for such actions as well as whether to sue or to be sued. The trustees would be empowered to make the laws for the regulation of the university, the "well ordering and governing the students, their moral studies, and academical exercises," and to hire a faculty.<sup>3</sup>

Other provisions were: an oath of office for the trustees; a bond and set of responsibilities for the treasurer; succession of trustees and president accounting for term of office, death, removal of negligent people, resignation; the power of the trustees to hire and fire the president and tutors; the three degrees (bachelor's, master's, doctor's)

---

<sup>2</sup>Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>The McCorkle-Sharpe bill of November 8, 1784, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 13-20.



to be granted; and finally, the poll taxes to be levied within the state.<sup>4</sup>

On November 11, 1784, the university bill was read in the House of Commons, passed, and sent on to the Senate. There the bill was read and ordered "to lie over until the next Session." Unsettled times, fear of using a university for propoganda and privilege, and a lack of funds kept the bill to found a university from passing. Moreover, the bill raised opposition through its recommendation that revenue for a university be raised through a poll tax on the salaries of merchants, peddlers, lawyers, doctors, sheriffs, and clerks of court (rather than through the traditional tax on liquor).<sup>5</sup>

McCorkle's efforts prompted one of North Carolina's major historians, Archibald Henderson, to accord him the nomination of chief agent of higher education in North Carolina. McCorkle was the spiritual father of the university, since he was the one who first worked to get the university idea into print and then into reality. Henderson mentioned McCorkle's preaching and journeys he undertook to raise funds for the university. But apparently the fulfillment of these efforts had to wait a few years. The legislature was too close with its money, neither Sharpe nor Macay ever returned to it, and McCorkle likely became occupied with the Salisbury Academy. Perhaps a gradually rising public

---

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. The McCorkle-Sharpe bill was much like the charter of the College of New Jersey in many provisions, but it is difficult to assess just what was "borrowed" and what was similar due to the legal format and language of both documents. The charter of the College of New Jersey, however, compares readily with the McCorkle-Sharpe bill (for further study, see Appendix E).

<sup>5</sup>Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, p. 7. Blackwell P. Robinson, William R. Davie (Chapel Hill: 1957), p. 224; hereafter cited Robinson, Davie.

interest developed in the establishment of a state university—there was no college in the state; the North was far away; and sons ought to be trained closer to home.<sup>6</sup>

William R. Davie and the Charter of 1789

McCorkle kept speaking out for education. He used a sermon on education at different places and wanted to publish it, but he never seemed to generate enough interest to raise a sufficient number of subscriptions. His colleagues—Hall, Caldwell, and the other Presbyterian ministers—and his friend, Ephraim Brevard, also joined the chorus for founding a university. One man, William Richardson Davie, heard McCorkle's sermon promoting education and was convinced through further letters and private talks with McCorkle that a state university was needed.<sup>7</sup>

McCorkle and Davie were the two dominant figures in the establishment of the university. McCorkle was the Presbyterian minister and scholar, while Davie was in turn a soldier, a rising politician, a deist, and a rationalist. Davie was born in England about 1756 and was brought to the Carolinas to be left with his maternal uncle, the Reverend William Richardson, the Presbyterian pastor at Waxhaw Church and missionary to the Indians. Davie was raised by Richardson, trained in an academy in North Carolina, and sent to the College of New Jersey (class of 1776). He then began to read law with Spruce Macay in Salisbury (the

---

<sup>6</sup>Archibald Henderson Papers, 3650, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, folder 191. Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, pp. 31, 7-8.

<sup>7</sup>Robinson, Davie, p. 225. Henderson Papers, folder 191.

man who trained Andrew Jackson), for he felt the Revolution would soon be over. In 1779 he raised a troop of cavalry and led them off to war. Wounded but then recovering, Davie raised more troops. He was the officer whose men turned back Tarleton's legion twice at Charlotte; he rose from a lowly lieutenant to Greene's commissary-general (which speaks for Davie's ability to organize); and he reputedly killed more of the enemy in hand-to-hand combat than any other man in the army. At the end of the war Davie settled in Halifax, North Carolina, and began to practice law. He served in the legislature of North Carolina from 1786; he was tall, elegant, eloquent, and spoke as one of the leading believers to the strongly nationalist assembly. In 1787 Davie was sent to the Constitutional Convention and was glowingly described by Miss Martha J. Lamb as:

The youngest man from North Carolina was William Richardson Davie, then but thirty-one, of commanding presence, an accomplished orator, with a voice of peculiar melody, and remarkably winning and handsome features. He was a general favorite; one of the most affable, hospitable, and delightful of companions...

Davie's star continued to rise until about 1800.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Ernest T. Thompson, Presbyterians in the South (Richmond: 1963), p. 261. Robinson, Davie, pp. 1, 25-29, 226, 276. Chalmers G. Davidson, Piedmont Partisan: The Life and Times of Brigadier-General William Lee Davidson (Davidson: 1951), pp. 61, 104. Since Richardson had trained under Samuel Davies, William R. Davie may simply have been an orphan whom Richardson adopted, naming the boy after his mentor and having him take his last name; George W. Pilcher, Samuel Davies: Apostle of Dissent in Colonial Virginia (Knoxville: 1971), p. 118. Miss Martha J. Lamb, "The Framers of the Constitution," Magazine of American History (1885), XIII, pp. 329-330. Davie served in the legislature until 1798, when he became the governor of North Carolina. In 1800 he was sent by Jefferson as the minister to France. Davie was defeated for election to Congress (perhaps because he was too strongly identified with the Federalists) and retired to his estate in South Carolina. He was granted an LL.D. by the University of North Carolina in 1811 and died in 1820; The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography (New York: 1898), I, pp. 77-78.

His political fortunes were soaring, and it was Davie who submitted the act to the North Carolina legislature to establish the University of North Carolina. On December 11, 1789, the university was chartered. Why had the act to found the university passed when it failed five years before? There were three reasons. One, according to Henderson, there was doubtless a "recognition of the urgent necessity of the education of youth for leadership in public life." Two, McCorkle, Sharpe, and Macay faced a parochial-minded Assembly in 1784 during a time when money was not available, but Davie, who led the Federalist-dominated Assembly, presented his charter at a time when the legislature was "actuated by a spirit of unusual liberality." Three, certain gifts had made such a university possible by 1789 (namely one by Benjamin Smith of some 20,000 acres of land). Changes had occurred in politics and society in North Carolina from 1784 to 1789, and by the latter date there was support for a university.<sup>9</sup>

The charter consisted of an introduction and ten paragraphs, and it began by stating that a university would serve to educate rising generations to their duties in life. Many of the same provisions occurred as had been in the McCorkle-Sharpe bill of 1784. The president and trustees of the university were incorporated, granted a seal and order of

---

<sup>9</sup>Robinson, Davie, p. 225. Hugh T. Lefler and Albert R. Newsome, North Carolina: The History of a Southern State (Chapel Hill: 1954), p. 248. Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, p. 225. From private conversation with H. James Henderson, it appears that the men who founded the university and became its trustees were conspicuous political leaders in North Carolina, delegates to the Constitutional Convention, and members of the Continental Congress. They were associated with Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, William Samuel Johnson (president of King's College), James Manning (president of the College of Rhode Island), and John Witherspoon (president of the College of New Jersey).

succession, and empowered to receive donations and own property. Moreover, they were to establish procedures for meeting, replacing negligent trustees, regulating campus life and responsibilities. They were to promote learning and virtue, to buy land and construct buildings, and to locate no nearer than five miles from any town.<sup>10</sup>

When the charter of 1789 is compared to the McCorkle-Sharpe bill of 1784, many similarities and two major differences are noticeable. Many of the provisions are similar, although the Davie version may well have been more explicit and precise. Davie, unlike McCorkle and Sharpe, listed 40 of the most prominent men in the state (McCorkle was the only preacher and teacher on the list). The other major difference, besides listing the trustees, was that Davie did not have any poll tax scheme in his bill to establish a university. The hard-headed Davie version allowed those who would contribute a smaller amount to have their sons educated free for a specific period of time, and it allowed those who were major contributors to choose which building would have their name on it.<sup>11</sup>

There was no financial appropriation from the General Assembly to aid in the establishment of the university, but an additional act passed four days later (December 15, 1789) provided for an endowment from the sale of lands for a building fund and maintenance. The provision was neatly named "An Act for Raising a Fund for Erecting the Buildings and for the Support of the University of North Carolina." Money owed (from

---

<sup>10</sup>The Laws of North Carolina, 1789, chapter XX as quoted in Walter Clark, ed., The State Records of North Carolina (Goldsboro: 1906), XXV, pp. 21-24.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid. (for further study, see Appendix F).

before 1783) to the state and lands which would escheat to the state would go to the university, and the university was exempted from all public taxation. Although this act was a nice gesture, it would prove an awful headache.<sup>12</sup>

#### The Plan of Education

When the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina met at Hillsboro on July 19, 1791, Samuel McCorkle was one of 12 trustees present. On the following day he, Benjamin Hawkins, and Hugh Williamson were appointed a committee to obtain information from other universities and colleges about their regulations, buildings, and finances (revenues, expenditures, building costs). McCorkle and Hawkins had studied at the College of New Jersey, and Williamson had taught at the University of Pennsylvania (where he was exposed to the scientific emphasis of Franklin) and had taken a doctorate in medicine at Edinburgh. They were likely selected because they were the most familiar with colleges.<sup>13</sup>

Apparently McCorkle did not attend the meeting the following December at New Bern when the trustees dealt with the problems of lands and finances, but he was at Hillsboro on August 1-4, 1792. Probably the committee to find out about buildings and finances of other colleges was expanded on Davie's motion, "resolved that Messrs. Speight [sic],

---

<sup>12</sup>The Laws of North Carolina, 1789, chapter XXI, as quoted in Clark, XXV, pp. 24-25 (for further study, see Appendix G).

<sup>13</sup>The Minutes of the Board of Trustees, July 19-20, 1791 (hereafter cited as MBT) quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 92-95. The number of trustees present at the meeting fluctuated with continual arrivals and departures. Williamson was a scholar and a prominent citizen, having served as a delegate with Davie to the Constitutional Convention in 1787; Lamb, XIII, p. 329.

Hawkins, J. Williams, Osborne and McCorkle be appointed a committee to report the plan of the buildings of the University and particularly such part of the said buildings as it may be proper to erect [sic] at present." Osborne was a graduate of the College of New Jersey, and Spaight had attended the University of Glasgow. Hawkins read the committee report on August 4; their plan called for a building 120 by 50 feet at the foundations and three stories high. Consideration of the matter was tabled until the next meeting, and the trustees then decided on a procedure for choosing a site for the university.<sup>14</sup>

From the chartering of the university to the day it actually opened its doors, McCorkle was involved in its promotion—preaching for it and seeking funds for it. He was concerned that the university be built upon a solid foundation, financial and moral, and he worked for both goals. McCorkle wanted the university to be built as a city on a hill, far removed from the sources of corruption which towns held for fun-loving college students. This idea of a city on a hillside, as was previously noted in Chapter V, carried over to his academy and was in his dedicatory sermon of October 12, 1793, which shall be presently shown. In both McCorkle's academy and his sermon, he tried to tie religion and learning together—Zion-Parnassus, the one a noted hill for religion and the other for literature.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>MBT, August 1-4, 1792, as quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 160-168. Henderson proudly stressed that this building would be the first erected on any campus of a state university in America; Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, p. 13.

<sup>15</sup>The Annual Report of the Treasurer published in the North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), April 6, 1795, showed McCorkle's congregation donating 21 pounds, the only church so reported; quoted in DHUNC, I, p. 367.

Considerable funds were needed to finance the establishment of the university, and the choice of its site had to be conditioned on such worldly concerns. A committee of trustees for the choice of a site considered 14 different locations before they recommended the location at New Hope Chapel Hill. It was a beautiful site, and the 800 pounds and 1400 acres of land that went with it in donations to the treasury made the selection even more agreeable. The personal efforts of James Hogg, a trustee, were mainly responsible for soliciting such an attractive bid from the residents in the area. It is not clear how much influence McCorkle had on this choice, but he must have been delighted with the decision (made in November, 1792) to locate at Chapel Hill—a commanding, towering hill laden with a green forest, a bubbling spring, and much wild beauty.<sup>16</sup>

The next month McCorkle attended the trustees' meetings in New Bern, and he was named to two committees. The first committee's task was "to prepare an ordinance for carrying into effect the report of the Commissioners for fixing on the spot for the public buildings," and William Davie, Willie Jones, Samuel Ashe, and John Sitgreaves were appointed along with McCorkle. On a second committee, Stone, Ashe, Alfred Moore, and John Hay were appointed together with McCorkle to "report a plan of education."<sup>17</sup>

On the next day the trustees met again. They ratified the actions of the committee that was appointed to select a site for the university

---

<sup>16</sup>North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), November 14, 1792, quoted in DHUNC, I, p. 177. Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, pp. 12, 54-55.

<sup>17</sup>MBT, December 4, 1792, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 177-181.



and had chosen "Newhope Chappel Hill." Nine donors were named to receive the privilege of having "one Student educated at the said University free from any expence [sic] of tuition." After some other small business, McCorkle, the chairman of the committee to "report a plan for the education of Youth in the University of North Carolina," presented their report.<sup>18</sup>

Because of the uncertainty about when the buildings would be ready and about what stage the finances were in, the committee had not considered faculty salaries. If the resources were actually as limited as the committee believed, they would allow only a modest course of study at the first. With this in mind the committee recommended the following courses be offered: languages (English and foreign), history (ancient and modern), belles lettres, mathematics, natural philosophy, logic, moral philosophy, and lectures on botany, agriculture, and architecture. The matter of the size of the faculty was left to the trustees to determine, but the committee thought that selection should begin soon. Further, they recommended the acquisition of "an apparatus for experimental Philosophy and Astronomy" such as globes, thermometers, microscope, telescope, quadrant, prismatic glass, air pump, and electrical machine. Books for the library would best be ordered on the suggestions of the faculty. By mentioning such needs, the committee hoped benefactors would be stimulated to action. The committee did not know what the tuition rate ought to be but suggested that it be low enough to attract a sufficient number of students.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup>MBT, December 5, 1792, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 181-184.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid. (for further study, see Appendix H).

The board concurred with the report and further ordered the committee to advertise their plan for education in the newspapers as well as to accept applications for positions on the faculty. This report was a preliminary plan of education. McCorkle's committee on educational planning did not wait long to begin advertising for prospective instructors. A week later the North-Carolina Journal in Halifax ran the following advertisement:

To the Public

THE subscribers having been appointed a committee of the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina, for the purpose of receiving proposals from such gentlemen as may intend to undertake the instruction of youth in that institution, take the opportunity of making known to the public their wish that such gentlemen should signify their inclination to the subscribers.

The objects to which it is contemplated by the Board to turn the attention of the students, on the first establishment, are: The study of Languages, particularly the English—History, antient and modern—the Belles-lettres—Logic and Moral Philosophy—the knowledge of the Mathematics, and Natural Philosophy—Agriculture and Botany, with the principles of Architecture.

Gentlemen conversant in these branches of Sciences and Literature, and who can be well recommended, will receive very handsome encouragement by the Board. The exercises of the institution will commence as early as possible after the completion of the buildings of the University, which are to be contracted for immediately.

Samuel Ashe,  
A. Moore,  
John Haye,  
David Stone,  
Sam. M'Corkle.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), December 12, 1792, quoted in DHUNC, I, p. 189. Henderson gave the same advertisement with slight differences, but he gave the date as April 10, 1793; The Campus of the First State University, p. 29. The advertisement may have run for some time.

### The Cornerstone-Laying Ceremony

Elsewhere, another committee, headed by Davie, began to lay out the campus and the town lots. Clearly a leader among the trustees, Davie believed that government needed first class leaders and that a state university would best train them. The university was coming closer to being a reality as the campus was developed and plans were laid for a course of study, selection of a faculty, and the construction of a building. On the latter point, the trustees aimed to build within the next year (1793), and on July 19, 1793, James Patterson was signed to a contract for a brick building, 40 by 97 feet and two stories high. The building was to cost 2,500 pounds, have 16 rooms, accommodate 50 students, and be completed by November 1, 1794.<sup>21</sup>

In a festive ceremony held on October 12, 1793, the cornerstone of the first building was laid. The preeminent roles in the exercise were played by William R. Davie and Samuel E. McCorkle. In 1789 Davie led the successful effort in the General Assembly to pass the legislation chartering the university, and he was in the years following the moving force behind the actual implementation of plans that established the university. The cornerstone laying ceremony was apparently planned by Davie for several reasons: to recognize the progress and contributions in the effort to found the university, to mobilize further support

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. Louis R. Wilson, The Chronicles of the Sesquicentennial (Chapel Hill: 1947), p. 44. Wilson set the figure for the building at \$5,000, but the trustees' minutes gave 2,500 pounds; MBT, December 12, 1793, quoted in DHUNC, I, p. 258.

from the public by the promotion of October twelfth, to sell lots in the village, to begin fund raising efforts, and perhaps for other reasons as well.<sup>22</sup>

McCorkle was to be on the platform to give the oration. Why he was chosen for that task, and for that matter as a trustee, has commonly been explained somewhat grandly as a deference to his contributions to North Carolina education. The following paragraphs by Battle are illustrative:

Dr. McCorkle was among the foremost of these. He was beyond his generation as a teacher. His school at Thyatira, six miles west of Salisbury, spread abroad not only classical learning but sound religious training. He attached to it a department specially for teachers—the first normal school, I feel sure, in America. The first class which graduated at our University consisted of seven members: six of them had been pupils of Dr. McCorkle. ...

The name Zion-Parnassus, which he gave to his school at Thyatira, shows how he combined the culture of the Bible and the culture of the Muses. The first Board of Trustees of the University was composed of the greatest men of the State, and among them—Senators, Governors, Judges of the Supreme Court of the United States and of the State—was Dr. McCorkle, the solitary preacher and solitary teacher. He was one of the best friends the University ever had; worked for it, begged for it, preached for it. It was most fitting that he should deliver the first address at the University, to be followed by a long line of eloquent men.

This may at least partly explain McCorkle's presence on the platform that day and on the Board of Trustees.<sup>23</sup>

A letter which Davie sent to Spruce Macay, the man with whom he had studied law, dated September 3, 1793, suggested a different reason for the invitation to McCorkle:

---

<sup>22</sup>Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup>Kemp P. Battle, History of the University of North Carolina from Its Beginning to the Death of President Swain, 1789-1868 (Raleigh: 1907), I, p. 38.

All are expecting our worthy and learned friend Dr. McCorkle, pater benignus, who got up the first University bill. It is right and proper that he should now stand atop the Mount of Fulfillment and solemnly invoke blessings upon this embryo college. Rumor hath it that you shaped to final form that ill-starred bill which was dismissed to a subsequent session by harried representatives confronted with a multitude of claims and an empty till—Our ambitious friend, Billy Sharpe, who was charged with the handling of that delicate matter, should be present; but I hear that his ailments will probably forbid. He was ever eager to serve, but being no Verulam, seems better suited to a treaty with the savages in the Western Woods than to set afoot a seminary of learning...

Davie sent three invitations to Salisbury. One went to McCorkle in recognition of the fact that he had first called for the founding of the university in 1784, had worked for it, written a bill for it, and enlisted the support of Macay and Sharpe. The other two invitations went to Spruce Macay, who had shaped the bill, and to William Sharpe, who had sponsored the bill in the General Assembly. While the charter waited until 1789 before Davie masterminded it through the General Assembly, it was likely that McCorkle's efforts were somewhat responsible for gathering public support and in setting Davie's mind to the task.<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps to make the occasion more impressive, Davie, the master of ceremonies, invited the Masons in the state to share in the activities (he was Grand Master for the state). Davie and the Masonic brethren began the ceremony at noon on October 12, 1793, when they led in full costume a procession to the site of the cornerstone-laying. Their regal presence at the ceremony was commemorated forever in a brass plate honoring Davie and the Masons. It was likely with much the same reason in mind that Davie later wrote an account of the ceremony, and it

---

<sup>24</sup>William R. Davie to Spruce Macay, September 3, 1793, from the William R. Davie Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina (a typed copy of the original owned by Archibald Henderson); also quoted in Robinson, Davie, p. 237.

appeared in the October 30, 1793, North-Carolina Journal and the November 18, 1793, North-Carolina Gazette. But while the account mentioned the role of Davie and the Masons, it also suggested that McCorkle played just as significant a part (even if he was only dressed in the basic black of the minister).<sup>25</sup>

After the Masonic parade and the cornerstone-laying rites, McCorkle spoke to those assembled. There was a necessary and natural connection between religion and learning. Religion promoted the nation's happiness and undertakings, and God's help was required for any success in life. The advancement of learning and science also increased the happiness of man through furthering his society. Since promoting happiness was "the aim of good government and religion," they also needed to promote learning. The amount of happiness to be enjoyed depended on the glory and wealth of the nation which in turn depended on liberty and good laws. The continued existence of liberty and good laws was based on the general knowledge of the public and the training of good leaders. How could any nation be happy without the necessary accommodations of life? How could glory or wealth be preserved without liberty and good laws; "they must check luxury, encourage industry, and protect wealth." But liberty and

---

<sup>25</sup>North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), October 30, 1793, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 237-240. Also quoted or paraphrased in the following: (1) Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, A Charity Sermon (Halifax: 1795), Evans 29000; (2) Reverend William Henry Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of her Early Settlers (Dunn: 1912), pp. 532-533; (3) Battle, I, pp. 38-40; (4) Archibald Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New (Chicago: 1941), I, pp. 610-611; (5) Wilson, The Chronicles of the Sesquicentennial, pp. 48, 148; (6) Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, pp. 19-21; (7) Edgar W. Knight, A Documentary History of Education in the South Before 1860 (Chapel Hill: 1953), III, pp. 18-20; and (8) Robinson, Davie, pp. 238-242.

laws were impossible without knowledge, and this required public places of education.<sup>26</sup>

Now there was to be a university at Chapel Hill to guarantee all this—happiness, learning, advancement, good laws, liberty, wealth—to the people of North Carolina. McCorkle closed with, "May this hill be for religion as the antient hill of Zion; and for literature and the muses, may it surpass the antient Parnassus." Today there was just a cornerstone, but soon there would be a campus and village.<sup>27</sup>

Following McCorkle's speech some 29 lots were sold for over 1,500 pounds, but other donations were slow coming in. The founding of the university was delayed by its difficult financial status. McCorkle, for instance, had subscribed 150 pounds by December, 1793, but had actually collected only ten pounds of it. At the next meeting of the trustees, McCorkle, Hayward, Davie, Taylor, and Osborne were appointed a committee to examine the university's fiscal state with regard to contributions; another such group did the same for the lands which had been donated.<sup>28</sup>

#### The Professor of Humanity

At the meeting of the trustees on December 21, 1793, McCorkle presented his committee's plan of education. Their report recommended that the university open on January 15, 1795. The annual commencement and

---

<sup>26</sup>North-Carolina Journal, October 30, 1793, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 237-240.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid. The core idea of happiness followed the creeds of Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham; Robinson, Davie, p. 241 (for further study, see Appendix I).

<sup>28</sup>Ibid. MBT, December 9, 1793, to January 10, 1794, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 253-264.

visitation of the trustees for examination would occur for a week in July. Yearly vacation would be from the middle of December to the middle of January. The steward should have a building containing his kitchen and a dining room. Those students who chose could live at the university, and the trustees would set the price of room and board. Tuition was recommended at three different rates: (1) \$8 a year for reading, writing, arithmetic, and bookkeeping; (2) \$12.50 a year for Latin, Greek, French, English grammar, geography, history, and belles lettres; and (3) \$15 a year for geometry, astronomy, natural and moral philosophy, chemistry, and agriculture. For the first year the man chosen as the "Professor of Humanity" should serve as the acting president and be entitled to a salary of \$300, two-thirds of the tuition, and temporary use of the president's house. One tutor (or more if necessary) should be employed, paid \$200 a year, get one-third of all tuition, and receive free room and board at the university. Tuition would be paid each six months. The trustees would choose their professor, but he could select his tutor with their approval. If necessary, the professor could hire someone to teach reading, writing, arithmetic, and bookkeeping, with three trustees consenting, at the expense of the board of trustees. No individual so employed would have any preference in the future selection of a president for the university.<sup>29</sup>

The trustees concurred with the committee report about tuition, curriculum, schedule, and faculty, and they ordered that an ordinance be prepared along the committee's guidelines. They also ordered that nominations for the Professor of Humanity be recommended, and the

---

<sup>29</sup>MBT, December 21, 1793, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 267-270 (for further study, see Appendix J).



following names were submitted: "the Rd. Samuel McCorkle Mr. Kerr, the Rd. George Micklejohn; Robert Archibald, Mr. John Brown, the Rd. James Tate, and Andrew Martin." With the possible exceptions of Micklejohn and Martin, these candidates were Presbyterian ministers who had themselves run academies. Brown, one of McCorkle's former pupils, was perhaps a young man; he served a pastorate at Waxhaw Church and was later a professor at the University of South Carolina and President of the University of Georgia. Micklejohn, then 76 years old, had been a minister of the Church of England who served the New Hope Chapel. The Reverend David Ker (born in North Ireland 36 years before, educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and a recent immigrant) was a Presbyterian pastor at Fayetteville who conducted a school there to supplement his income. Martin remains an unknown, but Tate, Archibald, and McCorkle ran academies and were discussed previously.<sup>30</sup>

The Board of Trustees met briefly for several more sessions before adjourning until January 10, 1794. At that meeting the vote for a Professor of Humanity was conducted, and with but eight trustees

---

<sup>30</sup>Ibid. Battle, I, pp. 59-61. Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, p. 38. Robinson erroneously assigned the work of the plan of education committee to a group made up of Haywood, Davie, Taylor, Hogg, Osborne, and Polk who were concerned with financial affairs. This financial committee, among its other duties, had to report "on the propriety of employing Teachers, what number, what subjects or Sciences they shall respectively teach, and their opinion as to a proper salary and the price of tuition." Robinson deliberately listed Davie first rather than Haywood, as the minutes of the trustees show for December 16, 1793; MBT, December 16, 1793, quoted in DHUNC, I, p. 266. Yet the position of names in the minutes clearly shows that Haywood was chairman of that committee. Robinson combined the Haywood committee's report on the costs of the proposed faculty with the McCorkle committee's report on the plan of study. It was not the only time that Robinson's biography of Davie erred on his actual contribution to the university because of the author's preoccupation with showing that Davie was the "Father of the University;" Robinson, Davie, p. 242.

attending, David Ker was chosen. McCorkle was the expected selection, but apparently Davie voiced his opposition. Davie held sway over many trustees, and though he was not in attendance, those present knew his feelings on the matter. Davie did respect McCorkle for his scholarship but not for his business acumen. According to the common stories about McCorkle, he had gained his slaves through marriage. Despite his 300 acre plantation and these slaves, McCorkle was unable to make a profit and frequently had to buy food for his table from other farmers. A neighbor walked by one day and observed McCorkle somewhat negligent in the supervision of his slaves. McCorkle had gone out with his slaves into the field to oversee them, but he had taken along a book in which he was completely absorbed. Meanwhile, the work had stopped in the field when the slaves saw his preoccupation with his studies; they napped under a tree while the mules browsed contentedly among the new corn shoots.<sup>31</sup>

While the story conveniently explained why the trustees did not choose McCorkle, it was not the whole picture, and certain other differences of a more basic nature contributed to the decision. These factors would surface in other connections in the following years. The stories about McCorkle and his slaves fed on fears over money. A careful steward was needed during the first struggling steps when the funds were not abundant and could not be handled poorly were the university to survive its infancy.

---

<sup>31</sup>MBT, January 10, 1794, quoted in DHUNC, I, p. 271. The plan of education was approved formally as an "ordinance" with only minor changes in wording; Robinson, Davie, p. 243. Reverend Eli W. Caruthers, "Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, D.D., 1774-1811," Annals of the American Pulpit, ed., by William B. Sprague (New York: 1969), III, p. 349.

### The University Opens

The university, if poor, was fairly well set in motion. During 1794 activities were directed largely towards implementing plans already laid. The steps to develop a course of study, to hire a faculty, to construct buildings, to outline the yearly schedule, and to establish tuition rates were being slowly taken, but the trustees were forced to devote themselves to matters financial for most of the year. They sought additional sources of revenue from private and public quarters, and because funds were continually unavailable, they often sought lands instead. After the plan of education was established and the professor of humanity elected on January tenth, McCorkle was not much involved with the affairs of the trustees the rest of the year. The reason lay partly in the fact that McCorkle's pastoral and academical duties at Thyatira occupied much of his time and partly in the fact that his competencies did not extend to the areas of concern—financial and legal—for the trustees in 1794.

However, the next year McCorkle's influence was felt again among the trustees. The trustees met on January 10, 1795, at Fayetteville with 12 in attendance, McCorkle not being one of them. A letter from David Ker was read in which he accepted the position which he had been offered. On the thirteenth, a letter from McCorkle to Davie dealing with the diet of students was read and referred to the committee responsible for that concern. This committee—although how much McCorkle's letter influenced it is not clear—reported that breakfast and supper ought to consist of warm rolls and coffee, tea, or chocolate, and that at the mid-day meal, bacon and greens or beef and turnips should be

served along with fresh meat, bread, and puddings. The steward was to serve fresh vegetables daily, cover the table "with a clean cloth every other day," and serve no other drink than what had been mentioned (no beer or wine). The trustees approved the report as it was.<sup>32</sup>

The university opened on January fifteenth as scheduled, and a gala ceremony complete with dignitaries was held, but no students had arrived yet to take course work. While the university had been organized by the end of 1793, at least on paper, there long remained doubt whether the building would be completed in time. Moreover, there was a considerable lag in communicating to the public the fact that the university had opened. Thus the students' delayed arrival, complicated further by horrible roads and a lack of transportation. When the first student (Hinton James) arrived to enroll on February 12, 1795, he had walked 150 miles across the state. Other students arrived later in the year, and 41 were enrolled by July 15, 1795. The University of North Carolina thus became the first state university to open (although the University of Georgia was chartered before the University of North Carolina).<sup>33</sup>

Dr. David Ker, who could variously be titled the Professor of Humanity, the Presiding Professor, or the only professor, was on hand to

---

<sup>32</sup>MBT, January 13, 1795, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 346-347.

<sup>33</sup>Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, pp. 38-39; James was the only graduate in the class of 1798 not trained by McCorkle. The first commencement exercises were held on July 13, 1795, at Chapel Hill, the first commencement exercises at a state university in America; Wilson, The Chronicles of the Sesquicentennial, p. 19.

begin instruction. Another man, Charles Harris, the tutor in mathematics, arrived and began his duties later in the spring.<sup>34</sup>

Education at the university was conducted with rigor. All the students received a set of regulations (originally penned by McCorkle, revised in committee, and approved by the trustees) which they were required to know and keep. A copy remains extant which belonged to John Pettigrew; it was called "The Laws and Regulations for the University of North Carolina" and was approved by the trustees on February 6, 1795.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup>Battle, I, pp. 63-66. Harris was a highly able young man; he had taken the highest honors in his class (College of New Jersey, 1792) and was asked to stay on as a tutor; Wilson, The Chronicles of the Sesqui-centennial, p. 20.

<sup>35</sup>John Pettigrew's "The Laws and Regulations for the University of North Carolina"—MBT, February 6, 1795, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 375-379. When these regulations were published in 1800, they were nearly the same as John Pettigrew's copy, only better outlined; Laws of the University of North Carolina (Raleigh: 1800), 24 pp.; Evans, 38130. The regulations were markedly similar to those which the legislature of New Jersey passed on November 20, 1786, and which were published in 1794; Laws of the College of New Jersey (Trenton: 1794), 38 pp.; Evans, 27392. The laws for the College of New Jersey were longer than those for the University of North Carolina, and there were some other differences.

And there were similarities. At the College of New Jersey, a student had to take an examination and pass it over (translating) Sallust, Caesar, Virgil. Those admitted to advanced standing had to pay the tuition for the years which they were skipping. Study hours were from morning prayers until eight, from nine to twelve, and from two to five. Commencement exercises and the examination for the degree would test the following: Virgil, Horace, Cicero, Xenophon, Homer, Longinus, geography, logic, algebra, geometry, surveying, navigation, natural philosophy, astronomy, history, chronology, moral philosophy, English grammar, rhetoric, belles lettres, and criticism. Every evening after prayers, at least two orations would be given. All would attend prayers and worship services, and monitors would be appointed; Laws of the College of New Jersey, pp. 22-29. At the University of North Carolina, there would be same examination for admission, the same study hours, the same orations each night, the same attendance at prayers, and the same monitors checking on their classmates' diligence; Laws of the University of North Carolina.

By the provisions of the Laws and Regulations the president was to oversee the work of all students, especially the seniors. He was to conduct morning and evening prayers and to examine all students each Sunday evening with respect to their personal morality and religion. Until an appropriate individual was employed, the president was to lecture weekly on the principles of botany, zoology, mineralogy, or commerce. The faculty was to have the temporary power to regulate the discipline of the students. The president was to report at least once a year to the trustees about: the state of the university, the diligence of the teachers, the conduct of the students, the work of the steward, and regulations of the university.<sup>36</sup>

There were to be four classes at the university. No student was to be admitted to the first class until he had passed an examination over Caesar's Commentaries, Sallust, Ovid, Virgil, and elementary Latin and Greek grammar. The first class would concentrate on English grammar, the Latin classics, and the "Greek Testament," and if they could not cover this material in one year, it would be completed the second year. In the event that the first class finished their subjects before the end of the term, they would begin the work of their second year. Before one was admitted to the second class, he had to pass a comprehensive examination over the work of the first year. The focus of the second year would be on the Greek classics, arithmetic, bookkeeping, and geography ("including the use of the Globe"). In the third class the following would be emphasized: mathematics, geometry, surveying,

---

<sup>36</sup> John Pettigrew's "The Laws and Regulations for the University of North Carolina" — MBT, February 6, 1795, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 375-379.

navigation, algebra, natural philosophy, and astronomy. The exercises of the fourth class would include work in: logic, government, moral philosophy, modern and ancient history, the "Bell lettre," and what ever else needed to be covered. Those who chose to study (and pay for) the sciences and the English language would be arranged as a separate class, or their extra work would be taken exclusive of those students in the literary classes. Any student admitted to advanced standing in the third or fourth class was to pay a fee (graduated from \$8 to \$15). All students, besides their annual examinations, would also take quarterly examinations.<sup>37</sup>

Students were required to be at morning and evening prayers (dawn and five o'clock in the afternoon); they were to study from morning prayers until breakfast at eight o'clock. Classes were to be held from nine until twelve and two until five; from evening prayers until eight o'clock at night was "Vacation," but students were confined to their rooms after eight. Each class was to have its monitor, appointed by their tutor, to note down those absent without leave, the disorderly, and the vicious. Saturday, one was to spend the morning working on compositions, written and oral, and the afternoon amusing oneself. On Sunday, students were to attend divine services and the evening examination of morality and religion; they were not to use profane language or speak disrespectfully of anyone or any religion. No student was to keep spirits in his room, associate with bad company, bet or gamble, treat tutors with disrespect, or act, in any way other than was befitting his rank, toward a member of any other class.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

Students would pay \$8 a year for their rooms, pay four fold the cost of any damage they caused, act decently and be clean, pay all debts to be able to graduate, and inscribe all the regulations of the university into their own personal records. Any student would hear in advance about impending disciplinary actions against him, and punishments would range from admonition to expulsion. No fines would be assessed for missing prayers or classes, but a guardian would be informed immediately by the president of such misconduct (the monitor's account would be used for this purpose). Each week the monitor's bill would be checked; these regulations would be read publicly once each year. Those students who did not live at commons would be charged a shilling a week by the university.<sup>39</sup>

In the spring of 1795 the enrollment began to swell at the university, and the library began to be stocked, the trustees allowing \$200 in the budget for the purchase of books. An order from Hugh Williamson to Thomas Dobson on June eleventh requested the following: 18 dictionaries; multiple copies of about a dozen of the classical authors (such as Horace, Virgil, and Homer), Latin and Greek grammars, and English grammars; six each of "Nicholson's Philosophy and Greek Testaments;" and 48 "Rudimans Rudiments." The 257 books that Williamson ordered cost less than \$200. These were texts to be sold to the students at cost.<sup>40</sup>

How much progress was the university making, and what of education in North Carolina? People differed. An article in the North-Carolina

---

<sup>39</sup>Ibid. (for further study, see Appendix K).

<sup>40</sup>University Letters, 1791-1867; quoted in DHUNC, I, p. 401. Robinson, Davie, p. 244.



Journal on June 22, 1795, written by an enthusiastic supporter, simply glowed about the university and the academies in the state which served as nurseries for it (of which Zion-Parnassus was one and for which the article commended McCorkle). The enrollment of the university stood at 41, and the students had applied themselves industriously. The building was finished, and within it was a spirit of "improvement, order and harmony." The first public commencement and examination would be held the following month on the thirteenth.<sup>41</sup>

Charles Harris, the mathematics instructor, believed that too often the classical literary education placed a premium on "overloading the memory with words of a dead language" rather than "exercising the reasoning faculties, and laying up a store of useful knowledge." Harris thought, too, that the lack of books at the university would force a movement away from a strict dependence on the classical languages and authorities; in addition, the study of sciences and the English language would accelerate this change. Harris wrote that "there is much wrong in the old manner of educating." His comments were written in a letter two months before Williamson ordered the aforementioned books.<sup>42</sup>

Changes were in store for the university, however. The academies may have been its nurseries, but still some students came to Chapel Hill with less than a complete grasp of the basic five "R's" and Latin. The university opened its own grammar school to meet that difficulty. But with increasing enrollment, the available housing and the number of

---

<sup>41</sup>North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), June 22, 1795, quoted in DHUNC, I, p. 402.

<sup>42</sup>Charles Harris to Dr. Charles Harris, April 10, 1795, from H. M. Wagstaff, "The Harris Letters," The James Sprunt Historical Publications (Durham: 1916), XIV, no. 1, pp. 13-17; quoted in DHUNC, I, p. 388.

faculty were not sufficient to the need, and the university began to advertise for new instructors and room and board in the neighborhood. Both were found.<sup>43</sup>

Life at the university changed a bit, too. Chapel Hill may have seemed like a wilderness to the students, and debating societies were begun as an extracurricular activity. The deficiencies in the library and course of study were solved with the grammar school and the incoming books—some from Williamson's order but others from benefactors. Eighty-eight volumes were given in 1796 (11 of them from the Centre Benevolent Society of Iredell, with which McCorkle was associated), 174 volumes in 1797, and others in other years. Davie had donated over 50 volumes by 1802.<sup>44</sup>

#### Davie's Plan of Education

Changes were afoot in regard to the curriculum as well. On December 1, 1795, with ten trustees in attendance (and McCorkle not one

---

<sup>43</sup>Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, p. 40.

<sup>44</sup>Battle, I, pp. 53, 405. Robinson, Davie, pp. 244-245. If some thing can be told about a man by his library, then perhaps Davie's benefactions are of interest. He gave, according to the Raleigh Register of November 23, 1802, the following:

Donations by Gen. W. R. Davie

- Hume's History of England, 8 vols.
- Smollett's Continuation of do, 5 v.
- Gibbon's Decline of the Roman Empire, 12 v.
- Rollin's Ancient History, 10 v.
- Travels of Anacharsis, with Maps, 8 v.
- Robertson's Charles V, 3 v.
- Sheridan's Lectures, 3 v.
- Ramsay's Revolution of South Carolina, 2 v.
- Instructions for Cavalry.
- Reverie, 2 v.
- Account of the Pelew Islands.

Robinson, Davie, p. 244.

of them), a letter from Davie containing a broadened plan of education was read and referred to a committee of Williams, Hogg, Haywood, Davie, and Osborne. The group reported back on the fourth with eight trustees present; the trustees approved the plan of education and ordered that it be drafted as an ordinance.<sup>45</sup>

Davie's biographer claimed this plan of education was liberal and progressive, that "the earlier curriculum, planned by Dr. McCorkle, and presented by Davie to the Board back on January 10, 1795, had followed classical traditions, with a grudging concession to progressivism by admitting weekly lectures on 'the Principles of Agriculture, Botany, Zoology, Mineralogy, Architecture and Commerce'." It is well to point out Davie's significance: (1) he steered the charter through the legislature in 1789; (2) he was a leading trustee; (3) he convinced the legislature to vote a loan of 5,000 pounds in 1791 which made it possible to erect the first building on campus; (4) he was referred to as the "Founder of the University" by his contemporaries; (5) as Masonic Grand Master, it was he who laid the cornerstone of Old East, the first building on campus; and (6) he was the moving spirit behind the university in the early years. But Davie's plan was not significantly different from that of McCorkle except that it called for a grammar school (which the trustees had wanted to begin), listed more authorities under various headings to be studied, and implemented the McCorkle plan in more specific detail. It is likely that Robinson, who wrote his

---

<sup>45</sup>MBT, December 1-4, 1795, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 445-455 (for further study, see Appendix L).

dissertation on Davie, simply overstated the actual differences between the McCorkle and Davie plans.<sup>46</sup>

Davie and McCorkle were two different men. Both graduated from the College of New Jersey, but one went off to war and a political career afterward while the other became a minister, scholar, and teacher. McCorkle came up with the first plan for a university in 1784 but was unable to implement it successfully. Davie built upon that plan and successfully steered it through the legislature. McCorkle was a dreamer, moralist, and critic who wanted the university founded to promote religion and learning. Davie was a visible, influential politician who wanted the university founded to train future leaders for North Carolina within the state. Their respective plans of education simply reflected the differences between the two men. McCorkle was the scholar, and Davie was the bright young man who transformed ideas into reality. The cornerstone laying of October 12, 1793, best illustrated their roles. Davie enjoyed the pomp and circumstance; McCorkle spoke of what the university could be.

Davie's biographer claimed that his plan of education was innovative and broke with the classical tradition which McCorkle had wanted and had included in his plan. Few of the books which were donated or purchased were classical literature (e.g.—none of Davie's benefactions were). The books which the trustees ordered on December 7, 1795, with Davie and nine others in attendance and for \$50, were certainly not the classics:

---

<sup>46</sup>Robinson, Davie, p. 247; he cited the Trustee Minutes, pp. 139-141. DHUNC, I, pp. 504-505.

	Sets.
Burlamaqui's Natural and political Law	6
Paley's Moral and political Philosophy	3
Montesqueu's Spirit of Laws	6.
Millot's Ancient and Modern History	6.
Humes History of England with Smollet's Continuation	1.
Adam's Defence-the first Volume	6.
De Lolme	6.
Constitution of the United States and of the several States collected	6.
Priestly's lectures on History and General policy	6.

Under the Davie plan of education, this set of books was to be the foundation for the course of study that the "Professor of Moral and political Philosophy and History" taught. Only "Vattell's Law of Nations" was absent from the sources that Davie had outlined. But such a selection of books would appear to be excellent background for what McCorkle wanted taught in his fourth class—"...Logic, Moral Philosophy, principles of civil Government, Chronology, history antient and Modern, the Bell lettre." Again, the major difference between the plans of McCorkle and Davie was that the university had grown with a year of operation, and that Davie could think in terms of more people on the faculty and more specific courses.<sup>47</sup>

#### Presiding Professor

McCorkle in 1795 had at least some influence on the diet and more on the course of study and future development of the university. He met on July 13-14, 1795, with the trustees at the university, and although there are no records of it, McCorkle likely attended the commencement exercises on July thirteenth at the university. On the other hand,

---

<sup>47</sup>MBT, February 6, 1795, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 375-379. MBT, December 4, 1795, quoted in DHUNC, I, pp. 451-455.

McCorkle was apparently not present when the Trustees met on December 7, 1795, and unanimously chose him as the "Professor of Moral political philosophy and History." Other faculty chosen for 1796 were Nicholas Delveaux as tutor in the preparatory school, Charles Harris as professor of mathematics, and the Reverend David Ker as professor of languages.<sup>48</sup>

Ker was to be replaced by McCorkle as the presiding professor; it is not entirely clear but probable that Ker was endorsing the principles of the Republicans and absorbing the infidelity associated with any who supported the French Revolution. The change was likely mainly a political move. Were the university contaminated by Ker's heresy, it would lose its reputation and public support.<sup>49</sup>

The change was quickly advertised. A letter from Pastor Storch to Professor Velthusen dated Salisbury, January 20 to February 25, 1796, indicated that Salisbury already knew about McCorkle's appointment. A sentence read, "My friend, known to you through Pastor Nuessmann's letter, the worthy Presbyterian minister, M'Corkle, was the first professor appointed." The change was announced in the February 22, 1796, North-Carolina Journal. After listing the respective appointments, the announcement read:

We are happy to inform the public, that the funds of the institution being competent to the allowance of moderate salaries to the Professors and Tutors, have enabled the Board to reduce the price of tuition as low as it is any where on the continent: Board at commons is at the moderate price of 20 or 40 dollars. The present building will accommodate seventy-five students, and considerable preparation has been made by two respectable families in the village to receive boards on the same reasonable terms.

---

<sup>48</sup>MBT, July 13-14, 1795, quoted in DHUNC, I, p. 408. MBT, December 7, 1795; quoted in DHUNC, I, p. 458.

<sup>49</sup>Battle, I, p. 100. Davie was a Federalist; Robinson, Davie, p. 251.

It is expected that the plan of education established in this national institute, will be adopted by all the district and private academies, as a general uniformity would facilitate the introduction and progress of students under the Professorships of the University.

This appointment was likely to begin July, 1796.<sup>50</sup>

From this point, the situation at the University becomes difficult to follow because of the lack of information. But the events of the next months indicate that conditions were unsettled, and the trustees seemed to be responsible for most of the unrest. When 12 trustees met at Chapel Hill on July 11, 1796, McCorkle was present. David Ker resigned by letter and gave his reasons for the student unrest at the university the previous months (although these reasons were not included in the minutes). On July 13, 1796, they met again and appointed Samuel Holmes in Ker's place. A committee made up of Stone, Jones, Alves, Haywood, Hinton, Moore, and Davie read a letter from McCorkle in which he accepted the position as professor of moral and political philosophy (and history and presiding professor (acting president) provided:

...that when he shall be deprived of the use of the Presidents House, the Board shall, in addition to his Salary make an allowance, equal in value, to the use of the House—but that he will accept the appointment without the aforesaid additional allowance.

The committee recommended to the Board that McCorkle not be appointed,

---

<sup>50</sup> Joseph Stewart, tran., "Extract from a Letter by Pastor Storch in North Carolina, dated Salisbury, January 20-February 25, 1796," North Carolina Historical Review, 20 (1943), p. 339. The letter noted also the beautiful location of the university, a new building, the many gifts to it, the student enrollment at 60, and the faculty consisting of three professors and other teachers, successful public examinations, and that a "German Catholic priest, Delvaur" was instructing in Latin and French. North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), February 22, 1796, quoted in DHUNC, II, pp. 5-6.

that his terms were inadmissible. Then Charles Harris announced his resignation by a letter; he wanted to study law.<sup>51</sup>

Charles Harris was to remain until December and to act as the presiding professor. Joseph Caldwell, a twenty-three year old graduate of the College of New Jersey who graduated with highest honors in 1791, was appointed as professor of mathematics. He had been a tutor for several years since his graduation. Caldwell was very young but competent, the best solution to the appointment problem where the salary offered was too low to attract more noted scholars.<sup>52</sup>

Why had McCorkle not been chosen? Davie's biographer said it succinctly, "Davie got most credit for the ousting of McCorkle." But he felt that it had been McCorkle's hard terms which had led the trustees not to select him. This reasoning followed from Robinson's idea that Davie was probably against a clergyman serving in what was clearly a political post, especially since McCorkle emphasized classical studies to the expense of useful learning. Thus the committee construed his terms as inadmissible and his letter as a refusal of the position. But the actual reason for McCorkle's nonselection was Davie's influence and his prejudice against clerics in general and McCorkle's lack of financial ability in particular, rather than a hard bargain from McCorkle. It is hard to justify the view that McCorkle had little business acumen

---

<sup>51</sup>MBT, July 11-13, 1796, quoted in DHUNC, II, pp. 24-27.

<sup>52</sup>Battle, I, pp. 107-108. Wilson, The Chronicles of the Sesqui-centennial, p. 149. Caldwell was "an energetic and careful teacher; able executive; persuasive preacher of the Gospel; diligent supervisor of student discipline." In 1804 he became the president of the university and served in that capacity until 1835, having a long and distinguished career; Ibid.



when he foresaw what would happen the minute Davie found someone of whom he approved for president. It would be out of the president's house and surviving on a meager instructor's salary (with a wife and six children).<sup>53</sup>

The sides to the struggle can be seen in the following quotations. In a letter from Charles Harris to Joseph Caldwell, dated University, July 24, 1796, which also contained the offer of Caldwell's position, Harris described the event as follows,

Revd McCorkle, D.D. of this state was appointed to the professorship of Moral Philosophy, but as he could not immediately accept of the appointment and the trustees began to be very doubtful respecting his qualification for that business the appointment has been retracted.

McCorkle, on the other hand, in a letter dated Westfield, December 20, 1799, and mailed to John Haywood, a trustee, saw it as follows:

My former objections against engaging in the service of the Board are rather multiplied by time and reflection. The moment I was informed that the Board had determined immediately to call for a president I that moment foresaw that my salary would immediately be less than that of a subordinate teacher who had no family to provide for. I therefore demanded the additional salary of a house-rent whenever I should be turned out of doors.

This demand you yourself pronounced inadmissible. I judged and still do judge it a reasonable and admissible demand. We differed in opinion. No change has taken place in the judgment of the Board. No change has taken place in my judgment. And this alone is a sufficient objection, or an obstacle that never has and perhaps cannot be removed.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup>Robinson, Davie, p. 251. DHUNC, II, p. 5. Battle, I, pp. 59-60. Charles W. Dabney, Universal Education in the South (Chapel Hill: 1936), I, p. 52. Dabney thought that the differences between McCorkle and Davie were settled with honor, but it does not always seem to have been so. McCorkle's turn came later through the presidency of Joseph Caldwell and not through a committee; Dabney, I, p. 52.

<sup>54</sup>Charles Harris to Joseph Caldwell, July 24, 1796, quoted by Wagstaff, "The Harris Letters," pp. 29-30. Samuel McCorkle to John Haywood, December 20, 1799, from the Ernest Haywood Collection, 1290, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, folder 27.

McCorkle may have read books out in the field, but he knew a bad bargain when he saw one. The action by the trustees in retracting the offer to McCorkle appears to have been mainly a justification for ignoring him. It had been expected, and they had to offer him the position. But by tendering a fairly bad offer, Davie and the committee assured themselves that McCorkle would refuse. When he accepted in spite of their offer—providing they would promise a housing allowance were he removed as the presiding professor—the committee could not out-and-out reject his terms, which were fairly reasonable. So the committee withdrew its offer, claimed his terms were inadmissible, and showed McCorkle to be unfit for the position. Davie's biographer made the error of assuming that the trustee's minutes were a complete appraisal of what had happened.

McCorkle's brother-in-law, John Steele, the Comptroller of the United States Treasury (1796-1802), was highly critical of both Davie and Haywood, and it was some years before he would communicate again with them. He wrote Davie that he had no sons to educate but that his nephew (Alexander McCorkle) was "relieved of the humiliation of acquiring his education at an institution whose outset was characterized by acts of ingratitude and insult towards his father." It might be noted that "Sandy" was sent to the University of Pennsylvania for his education.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup>Clifford P. Reynolds, ed., Biographical Directory of the American Congress (Washington: 1961), p. 1648. Robinson, Davie, pp. 251-252; he cited Battle, I, p. 100. University of Pennsylvania, General Alumni, Biographical Catalogue of the Matriculates of the Colleges..., 1749-1893 (Philadelphia: 1894), p. 40.

Enrollment increased at Chapel Hill in 1796. A letter which Harris wrote to Caldwell on July 24, 1796, gave the following enrollment figures: six in moral philosophy, 15 in mathematics, ten in geography and arithmetic, about ten in Latin, and six in Greek. There were about 60 enrolled in the preparatory school and 40 in the university.<sup>56</sup>

McCorkle and seven other trustees were appointed a committee to hear a public examination of the students at the university on December 11, 1796. The advertisement was run in several newspapers and for a few weeks. The annual treasurer's report showed that McCorkle had collected nine pounds from the Thyatira congregation as their contribution to the university.<sup>57</sup>

But if more money, classes, and students were coming to the university, it still did not seem to be out of its time of troubles. The eastern part of the state probably looked upon the university as a Presbyterian seminary. A letter from James Hogg to Davie dated June, 1797, noted that a Mr. Watters had been to the "North East" (the Albemarle region), and the only reason that residents there sent their children to the university was that there was no other place to send

---

<sup>56</sup>Charles Harris to Joseph Caldwell, July 24, 1796, quoted in Wagstaff, "The Harris Letters," p. 30. Battle, I, p. 108.

<sup>57</sup>The North-Carolina Minerva and Fayetteville Advertiser, November 5, 12, 19, 1796 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), microfilms. North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), November 14, 1796, quoted in DHUNC, II, pp. 69, 103. McCorkle still believed in the university and supported it. He promised to show the trustees that they could "employ all the officers the plan of Education calls for" and pay them well, too. Davie felt that it would be beyond even McCorkle's learning and talents; William R. Davie to James Hogg, August 9, 1797, quoted in DHUNC, II, p. 195.

them. "It seems that they think meanly of all our teachers. This seems to confirm Dr. McCorkle's observation."<sup>58</sup>

In some respects the University of North Carolina during its early years was a seminary, a struggling log college. From the first graduation in 1798 to the eleventh in 1808, the university graduated 59 students (an average of about five a year). The influence of the College of New Jersey was a continual one at the university and helped shape its development (Governor Alexander Martin, Davie, McCorkle, Charles Harris, and Joseph Caldwell were all alumni). The piety and learning—that had been stressed at the College of New Jersey as necessary in ministers and representatives in government—was tempered at the University of North Carolina by a decade of secularization and growth of knowledge. This emphasis ultimately weakened the bond between piety and learning.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup>James Hogg to William R. Davie, June, 1797, quoted in "Letters and Notes," James Sprunt Historical Monograph, ed., Kemp P. Battle (Chapel Hill: 1907), no. 7, pp. 35-36. The total church membership in North Carolina in 1800 was about 30,000 out of a total population of nearly 400,000. Despite these figures, the Presbyterians likely carried a weight disproportionate to their real number. Their academies were spread all over, and they looked upon the university as their denominational college. Such influence reached even the shape of the buildings on campus. The original plan was for a long building with wings, but the orthodox influence from the College of New Jersey in such persons as Davie, McCorkle, Harris, and Caldwell dictated that the new buildings be erected in the form of a quadrangle. The theory held that this was the optimum shape for detaining students after dark; William E. Drake, Higher Education in North Carolina Before 1860 (New York: 1964), p. 154. Luther I. Gobbel, Church-State Relationships in Education in North Carolina since 1776 (Durham: 1938), p. 12. DHUNC, II, p. 302.

<sup>59</sup>Battle, I, p. 136. Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, p. 7. Wilson, The Chronicles of the Sesquicentennial, pp. 21-22; from a sesquicentennial address by President Harold Dobbs of Princeton on the College of New Jersey graduates who came to the University of North Carolina.

Certainly Samuel McCorkle was in attendance when the first class graduated from the university on July 4, 1798. He had trained six of

Perhaps it was not surprising that the forces that had shaped the university resisted the threat of secularization, and that such a trend disrupted but did not really change the direction of the university. The French Revolution brought with its excesses a revulsion against Reason, Nature, and deism which were alleged to be making inroads at Chapel Hill. The university had its problems. There were student outbursts, and these drew public criticism. Added to such a bad reputation was the problem of retaining a suitable faculty; some of the professors were suspected infidels, deists, and republicans. But the classical tradition and order prevailed at the university. New courses in English, history, and the sciences were added, and with Joseph Caldwell's selection as the college president in 1804, the stability of the young institution was assured.<sup>60</sup>

In the early years of the university, McCorkle was the strong proponent of the doctrine of revelation and the spokesman for the conservatives and orthodoxy. The major threat to his cause was William R. Davie, deist and spokesman of eighteenth century rationalism. Deism, the French Revolution, and Tom Paine's Age of Reason, according to

---

the seven in preparatory work for the university; the seven were: Samuel Hinton (who became a farmer in Wake County); William Houston (who became a physician in Iredell County); Hinton James; Robert Locke (who became a farmer in Rowan County); Alexander Osborne (who became a physician in Rowan County); Edwin J. Osborne (who became a lawyer in Rowan County); and Adam Springs (who became a planter in Mecklenburg County); Battle, I, p. 153.

<sup>60</sup>Gobbel, p. 21. Drake, pp. 70, 81. By 1820 President Caldwell had the following at the university: four professors, two tutors, 35 seniors, 30 juniors, 30 sophomores, 32 freshmen, and a total enrollment of 127 students enrolled in college work; from a handbill written by Joseph Caldwell in 1821 to advertise the university, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

Henderson, "exercised a blighting influence" on Davie Ker, Charles Harris, Samuel Holmes, Nicholas Delveaux (who was also "a recusant Roman Catholic monk"), and Davie. But these influences were purged from the university, Davie finally leaving the state in 1805.<sup>61</sup>

McCorkle was kept from the faculty by Davie, but he still hoped for the university, fearing the influence of Davie and others upon the institution. In a letter to John Haywood, dated Westfield, December 20, 1799, McCorkle gave vent to his feelings:

There are other obstructions. The most leading members of the Board have not the same views that I have of that Education, Morality, and Religion which should be laid at the botton of the Institution.

I reprobate the modern French Jacobine System of Education which would govern wholly by Reason without the Rod of correction, I do assert that Reason is too weak to govern without coercion, and I would never take the charge of any Institution without express liberty to correct scholars or students whenever it might appear to be salutary, be my [sic] accountable to Trustees only for the abuse of that power.

I reprobate the Jacobine Morality which judges the virtue or vice of an action by its utility alone, and its utility by our limited and often erroneous conceptions of that Morality which teaches that Motives sanctify measures, and measures sanctify the end. I would leave out a chapter in Doley and teach in its place that there is a Moral safeguard in their very nature, an essential distinction between virtue and vice. See the Encyclopedia on the new Promise.

I reprobate deserting or banishing examinations on Divinity every Sabbath evening. This important exercise I labor to produce. But it seems as if religion and formal morality have both abandoned the University. You notice the

---

<sup>61</sup>Gobbel, p. 10. Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, p. 64. Robinson, Davie, p. 249. Davie enjoyed dancing and polite society, and that tainted him with the skepticism and deism of the educated classes. David Ker became an infidel and an outspoken republican. Harris was also shaky on doctrines, and Davies was an infidel. Delvaux, another faculty member, was an ex-monk, and Richards had been a strolling actor and a deserter from the British navy. Samuel Holmes was an anarchist; Clement Eaton, Freedom of Thought in the Old South (Durham: 1940), p. 15.

Jacobine defence of the students. It is that their expelled friends were "activated by the purest motives." Purest motive, to violate the laws when redress was otherwise so easy. Who will undertake to govern such young men? Without a change of principles and measures the University might fall. What effect the prospect of such a change might produce in my mind I know not. But to approach it at present is to approach a bursting bomb.<sup>62</sup>

However, his fears must have been somewhat eased by the regulations which the trustees established on December 20, 1799. The laws dealt with faculty and student responsibilities, discipline, and morality in terms much like those he had penned in early 1795. The rules against horse-racing, keeping dogs, firearms, or liquor, swearing, or breaking the sabbath suggest that students had found ways to adjust to the rigorous discipline at Chapel Hill.<sup>63</sup>

#### McCorkle's Contributions

What was the importance of Samuel McCorkle to the University of North Carolina? He was the man who first promoted the idea of establishing a university in the state; McCorkle hoped that a university would promote religion and learning. He was chosen as a trustee because of his reputation as an "eminent teacher and divine." He constructed the first plan of study, which was revised in committee, and which became the curriculum of the university, although more fully implemented

---

<sup>62</sup> Samuel McCorkle to John Haywood, December 20, 1799, from the Ernest Haywood Collection. McCorkle wrote to John Haywood (1757-1827), State Treasurer, trustee, and member of several committees; DHUNC, II, p. 505. Haywood was "able, genial and beloved, for forty years Treasurer of North Carolina and long devoted in service to the University;" Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, p. 17.

<sup>63</sup> Faculty Journal, 1814-1823 (not in MBT), quoted in DHUNC, II, pp. 482-494.

by the plan of William R. Davie. McCorkle's plan was for an infant institution, and he emphasized English, the natural sciences, and the classics. McCorkle promoted education because he wanted to diffuse happiness in the larger society, and his views on stern discipline for students were based on his feeling that only that would prevent ills and vice in youth. While the trustees later named the north quadrangle of the campus "McCorkle Place," the fact is not known by many on the campus today. There is no sign commemorating McCorkle, and few students know that the quadrangle has a name.<sup>64</sup>

Battle believed that McCorkle's cornerstone-laying address on October 12, 1793, was a significant event in the life of the university, and he closed his two volume history by quoting a poem by the Reverend Mark John Levy which commemorated the thoughts of that day. It may be too sentimental to modern tastes (the poem was written in 1911), but it still gets at what McCorkle attempted to do at the university. Levy wrote:

#### CHAPEL HILL

"May this hill be for religion as the ancient hill of Zion;  
and for literature and the muses, may it surpass the ancient  
Parnassus!"--History of the University of North Carolina, I,  
p. 40.

With a seer's prophetic vision  
Thus McCorkle spoke of yore;  
And the heavenly arches echoed  
"Amen" to our sun-lit shore:

---

<sup>64</sup>Battle, I, p. 4. Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New, I, p. 610. Louis R. Wilson, The University of North Carolina, 1900-1930 (Chapel Hill: 1957), p. 9. Henderson, The Campus of the First State University, p. 273.



As on Zion's hill of beauty,  
 Lord of hosts, we worship Thee,  
 Joyous in our nation's freedom,  
 Free in mind, in spirit free.

So the cornerstone of freedom  
 Here we lay at wisdom's gate,  
 Dedicating thus to virtue  
 Th' Alma Mater of our State.

May our sons the cup of learning  
 Take from out our willing hand;  
 And with us remember Zion  
 In our own dear Fatherland.

As the muses at Parnassus  
 Woke to song divinely sweet,  
 May the odes of Carolina  
 East and western nations greet.

Hence on all the sons of Adam  
 May the orb of freedom glow,  
 As the Golden Age approaches  
 When the swords our fields shall plow.

See in vision villas rising  
 On the rose encircled ground;  
 Stately walls and spires ascending  
 Where the campus trees abound!

Doctors face in halls of learning,  
 Students twice two thousand strong,  
 Who from near and distant cities  
 To our lovely hilltop throng!

Matrons beauteous as the summer,  
 Children like a vernal day,  
 Cheer the home-devoted student  
 With the light of friendship's ray!

Pulpit, clinic, senate chamber,  
 And the courts of law await  
 Righteous leaders from this Zion,  
 Cultured center of our State!

Do we justify the vision  
 That our holy seer unrolled?  
 Are our hopes as pure and brilliant  
 As our fathers' were of old?

Goes the Cross of Christ before us?  
 Is the laurel on our brow?  
 Are the heavens and earth responding  
 "Amen" to our vision now?

We must worship with a passion  
 For the glory of the Lord  
 That will strike a note triumphant  
 From each sweet Davidic chord!

We must study with a courage  
 Like to men of ancient Troy,  
 And the root of sluggish languor  
 In our inmost soul destroy!

Games must prove us lion-hearted,  
 Social life serene and pure,  
 If McCorkle's saintly vision  
 Eden-tinted shall endure!

Then as Zion and Parnassus,  
 Famed for worship, lore and song,  
 Will this hill of Carolina  
 To love's laurel'd hills belong.

Mark John Levy

The fact that the University of North Carolina did not remain a Zion-Parnassus but became a state university, as shown by Levy's verses, should not negate the contribution which Samuel McCorkle made to his society nearly 180 years ago.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup>Mark John Levy, 1911, quoted in Battle, II, pp. 775-777.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH CAROLINA

#### Church of the Moving Frontier

In the last half of the eighteenth century the Presbyterians were the church of the moving frontier, although they never received credit such as did the Congregationalists in Massachusetts, the Catholics in Maryland, or the Quakers in Pennsylvania. There was no Mayflower or Jamestown for the Presbyterians, many of whom were Scotch-Irish. Probably some half million Scotch-Irish migrated to America by 1776. By 1789 there were 419 Presbyterian churches, by 1803 511. There were also many meetinghouses, led by elders, which awaited their organization as a church and a settled pastor. Presbyterianism in North Carolina participated, too, in this period of growth. For instance, while North Carolina had only seven settled Presbyterian ministers in 1770, it had some 29 such pastors by 1799, a four hundred per cent increase in about a generation.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: 1929), p. 157. A. Mervyn Davies, Presbyterian Heritage (Richmond: 1965), p. 79. Ernest T. Thompson, Presbyterians in the South (Richmond: 1963), p. 43. Lefferts A. Loetscher, A Brief History of the Presbyterians (Philadelphia: 1958), p. 68. Reverend William Henry Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of her Early Settlers (New York: 1846), p. 302; hereafter cited Foote, Sketches of North Carolina.

The Presbyterian Church enjoyed a period of growth in the 30 years after 1758; some 250 ministers were newly ordained, and seven new

Many of the Presbyterian churches in North Carolina were probably much like Thyatira, a small community of believers within a larger society which remained largely unchurched. Still, these churches and their pastors, such as Samuel McCorkle and his colleagues, carried much influence in the homespun society, for few significant organizations had yet been developed. Ministers were very much leaders in the piedmont. The Presbyterian Church in North Carolina, led by its ministers, was mainly: (1) for the Revolution; (2) for education; (3) against the rising French infidelity; (4) for the use of revivals; and (5) for outreach (sending the gospel into outlying areas). Preceding discussion demonstrated that the Presbyterians were Patriots.<sup>2</sup>

---

presbyteries were organized. The same growth and organizational changes also occurred within the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina. The changes are confusing but went something like this: (1) in 1755 the Presbytery of Hanover was organized for all of the South; (2) in 1770 the Presbytery of Orange was organized for North Carolina with seven ministers belonging; (3) in 1784 the Presbytery of South Carolina was formed with six ministers as members; (4) in 1788 the Synod of the Carolinas was organized and consisted of three presbyteries—Orange with ten ministers, South Carolina with eleven, and Abingdon (Tennessee) with seven; (5) in 1795 the Presbyterians in North Carolina were divided into two presbyteries—the old presbytery, Orange, was to govern the area of the state east of the Yadkin, while the new presbytery, Concord, was to govern the western part of the state; Orange had eleven and Concord twelve ministers respectively; and (6) the Synod of North Carolina was organized in 1813; Harold J. Dudley, History of the Synod of North Carolina, Presbyterian Church in the United States (Raleigh: 1963), p. 17. Walter Lingle, Thyatira Presbyterian Church, Rowan County, North Carolina, 1753-1948 (Statesville: n.d.), p. 13. "Minutes of the Synod of the Carolinas, 1788-1799," I, p. 5; this handwritten copy of the original manuscript is at the Presbyterian Historical Foundation at Montreat, North Carolina. "Records Concord Presbytery," I, 1795-1824, p. 1; this handwritten copy of the original session minutes of Concord Presbytery was bound in a manuscript and stored at the Presbyterian Historical Foundation, Montreat, North Carolina. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 281.

<sup>2</sup>Dudley, pp. 159-164.

## Reverend McCorkle, Teacher and Preacher

Like his fellow Presbyterians, Samuel McCorkle advocated education. Likewise, as one among several graduates of the College of New Jersey, he shared in spreading Nassau's influence on North Carolina's education and on life in general. According to Thomas J. Wertenbaker, the mention of Nassau Hall in the South evoked the picture of a man soundly trained (by John Witherspoon), truly pious, and highly virtuous. Congregations, said he, vied for such men, and fathers who entered their sons under Witherspoon considered themselves lucky. Nassau Hall was not narrowly sectarian, even if it was a bulwark against skepticism and free thinking, and many a planter's son reared in the Anglican faith was sent to rub "elbows with the earnest and pious candidates for the ministry." These young ministers supplied pulpits in the new settlements, and they carried a large share of the early educational endeavors in the frontier society. Bible in hand, they gathered young men about them, drilled them in Latin and Greek, expounded philosophy from the treasured notes from Witherspoon's lectures on moral philosophy, and built an apparatus to run a few experiments.<sup>3</sup>

The early settlement in North Carolina was widely dispersed and had developed only a few small towns. Often where there was no town or school, a minister began an academy. During the colonial period only two such academies were chartered (they had been founded by Anglican

---

<sup>3</sup>Donald R. Come, "The Influence of Princeton on Higher Education in the South Before 1825," William and Mary Quarterly, third series, 2 (1945), p. 362. Before 1896 the college in Princeton, New Jersey, was called the College of New Jersey; Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Princeton, 1746-1896 (Princeton: 1946), pp. 112-115. One of the founders of Presbyterianism in North Carolina was Hugh McAden (class of 1753).

ministers)—one at New Bern (1764) and one at Edenton (1770). However, the Anglican educational impact was small, for trained ministers were scarce (e.g.—six Anglican ministers were in North Carolina in 1764). The Scotch-Irish formed congregations and called dissenting ministers to their pulpits; consequently their academies were not granted charter privileges because they were not of the established church. Despite the difficulties, the Presbyterian ministers founded academies in which they taught the five "R's" and languages. This Presbyterian emphasis in education continued into the early years of statehood, and seven ministers are cited by Henderson as the state's preeminent educators during the period before 1800 (Henry Pattillo, Samuel McCorkle, James Hall, David Caldwell, William Bingham, Marcus George, and David Ker). Pattillo wrote a geography text, the first educational work written in North Carolina, and Hall wrote a grammar which was widely used in the region.<sup>4</sup>

Beyond its influence on training ministers and on formal education in North Carolina, the College of New Jersey, it would seem, reached North Carolina through its graduates and their continual efforts in informal education. In a day of limited media and less than universal literacy, the sermon was an important form of education, although an

---

<sup>4</sup>Samuel A. Ashe, ed., Biographical History of North Carolina from Colonial Times to the Present (Greensboro: 1905), I, p. 305; II, p. 164. Sketches of Church History in North Carolina: Addresses and Papers by Clergy and Laymen of the Dioceses of North and East Carolina (Wilmington: 1892), p. 178. Archibald Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New (Chicago: 1941), I, pp. 460-461. Douglas Sloan, The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal (New York: 1971), pp. 37-38, 60-62. Stephen B. Weeks, "Beginnings of the Common School System in the South," from the Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1896-1897, United States Bureau of Education (Washington: 1898), p. 1390.

informal one. Mostly these sermons were given during the services on Sunday, and they reached only the local congregation. But some of the ministers in North Carolina also utilized the printing press and had their sermons published. In this endeavor Samuel McCorkle led his colleagues.<sup>5</sup>

The Reverend William H. Foote very much admired McCorkle's "sound morality, pure philosophy, and true religion," and he glowingly described McCorkle's ministry at Thyatira. McCorkle always wrote out his sermons before he gave them, although whether he preached closely from them depended upon how "disputed or argumentative" the topic was. His sermons discussed thoroughly all sides to an issue, related personal observations based on common sense, and were enriched by literary and historical references.<sup>6</sup>

Six of McCorkle's handwritten (and unpublished) sermons remain extant, and they appear to be from the period from 1780 to 1790. They are based on biblical texts, employ the theological tenor in which McCorkle thought (learned, conservative, orthodox), and are very difficult to read because of the effects of nearly 200 years on the ink and paper. "The Crime and Curse of Plundering: A Sermon" was apparently

---

<sup>5</sup>James McRee published one sermon that remains extant, An Eulogium or Funeral Discourse, In Commemoration of the ? General George Washington (Salisbury: 1800), 20 pp. Two others by James Hall, A Sermon, Based on Proverbs, xiv, 34 (Charleston: 1792?), and A Sermon Preached at the Ordination of Samuel C. Caldwell (Charleston: 1792?), were mentioned in William B. Sprague's Annals of the American Pulpit (New York: 1969), III, p. 385, but copies have not been found. David Caldwell, Joseph Kilpatrick, and Lewis Wilson probably did not publish any sermons. Henry Pattillo published a volume of sermons of at least 200 pages, according to Durward T. Stokes, "Henry Pattillo in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review, 44 (1967), p. 386.

<sup>6</sup>Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 361.

preached during the Revolution and urged people not to plunder the battlefields. This 40 page sermon (on three by six inch paper) said that the war for independence was a lawful, defensive war against the plundering of George III which should not be cheapened by plundering battlefields. Those who did would suffer guilt, shame, and the danger of eternal damnation. "A Sermon for the Anniversary of American Independence" was given on July 24, 1786. It was 26 pages long, written on both sides of five by seven inch paper, and the biblical text (Esther 9:20-28) seemed to tell what happened to those people who opposed the chosen people.<sup>7</sup>

"A Sermon on the Law of God" was delivered at the courthouse in Salisbury on September 20, 1789. It was 34 pages long and a copy of the original, written in a hand other than McCorkle's. The texts were "Thy Commandment is exceeding broad" (Psalms 119:96, 142) and "Truth doth exist abstracted from the mind and natural laws are laws that never be blind" (Deuteronomy 6:1). McCorkle defended the existence of God and the necessity of religion. There were three types of law--the commandments, statutes laid down by a society, and an individual's own judgment. One was called to be an instrument of holiness unto righteousness.

"A Sermon from Deuteronomy 8:19-20" was undated and outlined but a modest discussion for McCorkle. He wrote:

I will only recur to the parts of the divine law or our duty that has a more immediate impact to nations, the observation

---

<sup>7</sup>Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, "The Crime and Curse of Plundering: A Sermon" and "A Sermon for the Anniversary of American Independence, July 24th, 1786, by Samuel McCorkle" were both found in the Manuscript Department, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University. Because of the aging paper and ink and possible missing pages, no precise page numbers were obtained.



of the providence and worship of God, the religious education of children, and the exercise of industry, and universal justice.

The text for the 60 page sermon spoke of what would befall those who served false gods. In this sermon McCorkle wrote, "No man can be happier in his own mind, in his family, select friends, and pastoral charge." And he sounded like Benjamin Franklin when he said "justice, industry, and frugality are required of all."<sup>8</sup>

"Creation," a 38 page effort based on a text from Revelation 4:11, was McCorkle's interpretation of the creation story. McCorkle included commentaries by Berkeley and Hume (complete with Latin quotations), and he focused on the natural world—matter, ideas, light, the colors of the rainbow, soils, rivers, animals, and plants. McCorkle was well versed in his discussion of the "furniture and inhabitants of the earth" and the "figure and consistence of it." The theme of the sermon was that the world was the work of God, and one who studied this system could better understand Him and His will. McCorkle closed with several observations such as "many are called but few chosen" and heaven was a place of contemplation as well as study. Now that he had been in heaven a few years, Newton would have made additional progress in his studies.<sup>9</sup>

Another sermon on creation, "A Sermon: The Creation of Man," was a 40 page effort preached from Genesis 1:26 (the verse in which God said that He would make man in his own image and give him dominion over the

---

<sup>8</sup>Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, "A Sermon on the Law of God Delivered at Superior Court in Salisbury, September 20th, 1789, by the Rev. Saml. E. McCorkle D.D." and "A Sermon from Deuteronomy 8:19-20" were also both from the Duke collection.

<sup>9</sup>Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, "Creation" was located in the Duke collection.

earth). In talking mainly about the human being and how the body worked, McCorkle, after citing the masters (this time Locke and Edwards), made somewhat confusing comments about human depravity and man's ability to achieve perfection. McCorkle wrote:

With regard to moral and intellectual perfection there is no disagreement. All the qualities of a moral agent, says Edwards, are in God in the greatest possible degree, an understanding to discern choice guided by understanding, and power of acting according to choice.<sup>10</sup>

According to Henderson, Samuel McCorkle published at his own expense over 40 sermons and addresses, although only a few have survived to this day. McCorkle, from the earliest available evidence, became interested in publishing sermons in 1786. A receipt from a printer dated May 27, 1790, was for 536 copies of one of McCorkle's pastoral letters. Another scrap of paper, this one undated, from a printer informed McCorkle that if more than 200 sermons were printed, the cost would be a quarter of a dollar, providing McCorkle picked them up and delivered them. Ordinarily McCorkle made up lists of subscribers and then sent an order for a specific number of copies to the printer. One such list, dated 1792, totalled £100 s17 d2.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, "A Sermon: The Creation of Man; Prepared for Society at Hopewell, Jan. 6, 1790" was in the Duke collection.

<sup>11</sup> Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New, I, p. 608. Eli W. Caruthers mentioned another sermon, The Angel's seal, set upon God's faithful servants, when hurtful winds are blowing in the Church militant, which Henderson may have had, but if he did, it was likely lost when the Henderson residence burned (and with it most of the McCorkle papers). A letter dated March 18, 1786, from McCorkle to Ephraim Steel asked him to check the printers in Carlisle and nearby to see what they would charge to print a sermon on education; John Steele Papers, 689, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, box 2. The McCorkle family papers at Lock Neal's.

The first sermon which McCorkle published that is still extant was A Sermon, on the Doctrine and Duty of Sacrificing. The sermon was first given February 2, 1792, at New Providence in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina and then given at the opening session of a commission of the Synod of the Carolinas in September, 1792. The synod was convened to consider business from the Presbytery of Abingdon, and the sermon was later published to try to clear the air. Apparently two ministers, Balch and Doke, had violated church doctrines concerning the terms of communion and were being chastised by the synod.<sup>12</sup>

McCorkle was the moderator at the synod meeting, and he wrote the sermon so gingerly for publication that the issues were never clearly delineated; he was likely trying to heal wounds and not add to the troubles of the synod. Apparently Doke and Balch had admitted more people to the altar for communion than the synod felt ought to have been permitted, and this practice smacked of "Arminianism" or free grace, contrary to the Presbyterian doctrines of predestination and election. McCorkle honestly said, "I am a Calvinist..." He also knew what had been written about the issue and what he himself believed.<sup>13</sup>

In the preface McCorkle suggested that the next sermon to be printed would be one on education first given in 1785 (this is not extant). The text for the sermon on sacrifices was Leviticus 9:7:

And Moses said unto Aaron, go unto the altar and offer thy sin-offering, and thy burnt-offering, and make an atonement for thyself and for the people, and offer the offering of the people, as the Lord commanded.

---

<sup>12</sup>Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, A Sermon, on the Doctrine and Duty of Sacrificing (Philadelphia: 1794), pp. iv, 72. Evans, 27246.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. vi, 67.

While the major theme of the sermon seemed to be a defense of the Presbyterian doctrine of communion, there were also frequent digressions to other topics. The outline of the sermon dealt with the origin and development of sacrifices, with those who had conducted sacrifices in the times of the Old Testament, and with the requirements for approaching the altar (knowledge, morality, true religion). A Sermon, on the Doctrine and Duty of Sacrificing was long (74 pages), orthodox, instructional, and argumentative.<sup>14</sup>

Of particular interest were McCorkle's ideas on education. Early education and early religion were necessary to enlarge the capacity of the child; religion required both study and practice. "Wise teachers will accommodate" themselves to the capabilities of their students. McCorkle believed his congregation needed education, too, and listed the twelve doctrines he believed in and taught as well as his plan for catechizing them over the Bible. He divided the congregation into a number of groups with about 15 or 16 families per group. He then assigned each group a set of questions over about two books of the Bible. When they had learned the material, McCorkle quizzed them over their questions—the Old Testament in the morning and the New Testament in the afternoon. The congregation listened to all the questions, for each group knew that their time was coming for the next lists. Thus, the congregation at Thyatira came to know the Bible. McCorkle managed to

---

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. vii. The sermon was delivered at an ordination. At its printing it became the first known "separate," as distinguished from periodical articles, with Mecklenburg County as its subject; Chalmers G. Davidson, "Bases for a Mecklenburg Bibliography," North Carolina Historical Review, 26 (1949), p. 37.

slip in an advertisement for the University of North Carolina, too (not uncommon in his sermons).<sup>15</sup>

McCorkle closed his sermon by suggesting that the reader make himself a living sacrifice—to do good, to be truly religious, to seek knowledge, to present himself to God on the next holy day, to meet his teacher at the gates of wisdom and "hear from him the word of God," and also to present his children for early religion and early education.<sup>16</sup>

The following year (1795) McCorkle published two sermons. A Charity Sermon was honestly titled; it was a 64 page effort to solicit funds for the University of North Carolina. McCorkle gave it at Thyatira, at other churches, at the General Assembly in 1793, and also at the meeting of the synod. The text was from First Corinthians 23:13, naturally, "And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity; these three, but the greatest of these is charity."<sup>17</sup>

A Charity Sermon began by acknowledging that man owed worship to God and sobriety, self-denial, and self-government to himself. Then McCorkle discussed the "nature and excellence" of charity. Man was created in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness without positive evil, but because he lacked information, man had a potential for evil. Thus, Adam fell. Misery existed before man was created, and it was all around him—danger, devils, death. Life was filled with both duty and

---

<sup>15</sup>McCorkle, A Sermon, on the Doctrine and Duty of Sacrificing, pp. 29, 33, 39-42, 51, 63.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>17</sup>Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, A Charity Sermon (Halifax: 1795), pp. 4-5. Evans, 29000.

happiness (here McCorkle advised the serious reader to see Reid and Edwards on the subject).<sup>18</sup>

What was charity? Charity in the daily life was candor, gentleness, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness, generosity, hospitality, mercy. Charity began at home. The new university would do much good for the people of the state, much as those in England had done:

The two English Universities have been called the eyes of the nation, the lights of the church and state, and prodigious have been their influence both in politics and religion. They have arrived at mature age. Ours is the infant of a day. It is just raising its feeble hands, and stretching them out. The one it holds out to the church, and the other to the nation. Let the ministers both of justice and mercy take it by the hand. It will one day, with the patronage of Heaven, reward us all.

Charity was assisting the infant, struggling University of North Carolina which would promote much for liberty and good laws in the state to protect happiness. These laws and liberties would check luxury, encourage industry, protect lives and property, save one from a Bastille. Ignorance was dispelled by knowledge, and public knowledge was public glory (here McCorkle referred to Vattel, Beccaria, George Washington, The Federalist, and Paley). "Learning is the useful knowledge of the age we live in."<sup>19</sup>

The charity sermon had three parts: (1) the exhaustive biblical background of charity; (2) the need for charity in contemporary life; and (3) the way one could promote charity (by donating to the University of North Carolina). Henderson marveled about the extensive analysis of charity and its instinct that McCorkle did in addition to documenting

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-17.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-30, 54-57, 62-63.

his ideas with citations and quotations from the Bible, Sallust, Vattel, Beccaria, Paley, Edwards, Blau, Doddridge, Beattie, and Reid. Henderson quoted McCorkle addressing the General Assembly in November, 1793, at Fayetteville:

The truth is, human science has promoted religion, liberty, national wealth and national glory. Promote her, then, O my country, and she will promote thee. Exalt her, and she will bring thee to honour.

A Charity Sermon was advertised in the North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), March 23, 1795, and for several months thereafter as "Just published, and for sale by the printer..." for one quarter of a dollar.<sup>20</sup>

The second sermon which McCorkle published in 1795 was the 43 page A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness and Duty of the United States, Contrasted with other Nations, particularly the Israelites. McCorkle gave the sermon in Salisbury in February, 1795, and again at Thyatira, and he wrote it for the general day of thanksgiving and prayer which the president of the United States had appointed. The text was from Deuteronomy 4:32:

For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day God created man upon the earth, and ask from one side of Heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such things as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?<sup>21</sup>

In the preface McCorkle described a good bit about himself when he wrote:

---

<sup>20</sup>Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New, I, p. 608. Douglas C. McMurtrie, Eighteenth Century North Carolina Imprints, 1749-1800 (Chapel Hill: 1938), p. 137.

<sup>21</sup>Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness and Duty of the United States, Contrasted with other Nations, particularly the Israelites (Halifax: 1795), title page, p. 3. Evans 29001.

The author expresses to his friends a grateful sense of the pains they have taken, to forward the publication of the following sermon.

Because a man should think for himself, he has therefore laid his own plan, and pursued his own thoughts. Because we should read, he has availed himself of the thoughts of others, especially his copatriots and countrymen, whose sentiments on liberty and republican government are most congenial to his own.

In transcribing he has added a few thoughts, and through the whole has studied to render it useful to his loved native country; to whose candour, under Heaven, he commits his little production.<sup>22</sup>

McCorkle tried to liken the American experience to that of the Jews. The sermon said that a certain conceit among nations made them think of themselves as the most favored. For example, Israel and United States boasted of it. But rather than bragging, Americans should be proud of the 15 states, the cities, mountains, rivers, the 300 species of animals (the footnote cited Jefferson's Notes and the Encyclopedia for these facts). Not all nations were that lucky; Poland was recently subjugated, for example. With the Revolution the people of the United States effected an instantaneous change to increased industry, honor, and order. The public credit indicated a renewal of trust which carried over into other aspects of life. One should not forget that America had been supported through the wilderness by paper money (as the Jews had been supported by manna), even if it had now disappeared. In miscellaneous comments McCorkle cited the bravery of General Wayne's army against the Indians, the work of Adam Smith (Wealth of Nations), and the need for supporting the University of North Carolina. He spoke of the virtues of agriculture (previously cited) and gave the reader a personal creed stressing the following values: industry, honesty, orderliness,

---

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., preface.



wisdom, virtue, diligence, cheerfulness, vigor, contentment, vigilance, charity, and love. One ought to "deal justice to all men," do away with prejudice and bigotry, do away with discord, and be religious—read Scriptures, be catholic, be good.<sup>23</sup>

A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness... was no doubt the best advertised of the McCorkle sermons. There were advertisements in both the Halifax (North-Carolina Journal, August 3, 1795) and New Bern (North-Carolina Gazette, June 20, 1795) newspapers. The advertisement in the Halifax paper read "Just published and for sale by A. Hodge, Price a quarter of a dollar..." The advertisement printed by Francois X. Martin in the New Bern paper read "Proposals for Printing by Suscription at One Quarter of a Dollar a Copy—Those who suscribe for six copies shall be entitled to a seventh gratis."<sup>24</sup>

McCorkle published several sermons in 1798 which remain extant. The first was the 36 page A Discourse, on the Doctrine and Duty of Keeping the Sabbath; the text was, of course, from Exodus 20:8, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." The sermon on keeping the sabbath was probably directed at the local congregations, and its theme

---

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 6, 14-15, 27, 31-41.

<sup>24</sup>William S. Powell, "Patrons of the Press: Subscription Book Purchases in North Carolina, 1733-1850," North Carolina Historical Review, 39 (1962), p. 427. McMurtrie, p. 138. There were ten of McCorkle's printed sermons listed in the Charles Evans and McMurtrie accounts, and both lists were the same. Of the ten, only A Charity Sermon and A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness... were listed as having been advertised. North-Carolina Gazette, vol. X, Saturday, June 20, 1795, microfilm reel 491. McCorkle, A Sermon on Sacrifices (Halifax: 1792), Evans, 24488, was apparently a ghost of 29001, according to the Evans microcard, even though the "ghost" antedated A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness... by some three years. At any rate, no copy of A Sermon on Sacrifices was available.

seemed to be that families needed to keep the sabbath diligently, for that was the day to rise early, prepare for instruction and worship, practice private devotions, and improve oneself through conversation or reflection. McCorkle wrote that the sabbath was a divine institution, and he railed at the deists in comments like, "Ye wretched French deists; and ye, my poor deluded country-men, let these considerations come to your hearts." To McCorkle, Thomas Paine was the devil, and he found many biblical citations to prove his points.<sup>25</sup>

McCorkle warned against slacking off of responsibilities on the sabbath such as sleeping late. The reason was that "without religious knowledge the mind can not be good;" one needed to know nature and study the works of God and man. The thrust of the sermon was to his people, and he wanted them to remember the sabbath. He deplored the decline in church attendance and the renunciation of baptismal vows. McCorkle pointed some especial remarks to women readers, hoping through them to save their menfolks. He wrote, "I do not know that there is a female deist in the United States, and I believe that your deistic husbands or fathers would not in their hearts, wish you to be like them." Their men's fault was that they could not see that revealed religion was true.<sup>26</sup>

A second sermon was discourse I of Three Discourses on the Terms of Christian Communion. Forty-nine pages long, the sermon was based on a text from Acts 8:36, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" It appears

---

<sup>25</sup>Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, A Discourse, on the Doctrine and Duty of Keeping the Sabbath (Salisbury: 1798), pp. 10, 15, 18. Evans 34032.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 36. Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New, I, p. 610.

that McCorkle wrote a fairly traditional view of the doctrine of communion, perhaps in answer to a small controversy over it in Presbyterianism in North Carolina. The rambling discussion covered fairly well the ground on communion and on baptism. It emphasized the two great commandments for every believer, namely to love thy God and to love thy neighbor.<sup>27</sup>

How widespread was the circulation of the sermons which McCorkle published? Only a part of the evidence remains. A receipt of June 22, 1798, from Jonathan Carrigan to McCorkle acknowledged that his sermons were sold to the amount of 92 shillings. A receipt from Francis Coupee on August 9, 1799, read, "Received of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Saml McCorkle the sum of Fifteen Dollars and a half, it being in full for the printing of his fast day discourse of May 9th, 1798" (A Discourse, on the Doctrine and Duty of Keeping the Sabbath). At the usual rate of four copies to the dollar, that edition sold 62 copies.<sup>28</sup>

"wretched French deists"

That part of McCorkle's published sermons not yet discussed were devoted mainly to defending religion from the infidel, Thomas Paine (author of The Age of Reason), and from the blight of deism. Rising with the French Revolution, deism attacked orthodox religion, and McCorkle tried in turn to attack and destroy the deism he saw as

---

<sup>27</sup>Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, Three Discourses on the Terms of Christian Communion (Salisbury: 1798), pp. 3-4; Evans, 48510. The print on the sermon was bad, and the sermon was indistinct in places.

<sup>28</sup>The McCorkle family papers. Neither of the two recorded copies can be located of Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, True Greatness (Lincolnton: 1800); Evans, 37867.

mysterious, contradictory, stupid, and parochial. Thus he shared in the debate about the eighteenth century movement (called the Enlightenment) in which men attempted to negate and destroy what was wrong in society and to reconstruct what was good, thus restoring humanity and reason to the world. Enlightenment thinkers, the philosophes, generated a skeptical "climate of opinion" in which enlightened people turned to Reason and nature for truth rather than to the Scriptures and ancient authorities. Their key words became nature, natural law, first cause, reason, sentiment, humanity, and perfectibility; in nature lay the universal laws, truth, revelations, and a "new world view" which was that of Newtonian philosophy. This new attitude, lacking formal religious doctrines at its core, was sometimes called deism.<sup>29</sup>

In the deistic model, God created the world to run on certain principles, and the world no longer required His intervention. The world was a giant watch which the Watchmaker once made and wound up. It fell to man to discover by observation of history, nature, and behavior the laws by which the world was run. God created, along with the universe, the moral law, and if man followed the law, he could live happily. Deists believed that Christianity was helpful in that it provided a rational moral code to help guide life on earth, but believed also that it did not guarantee any special advantage to its followers. To the deists all religions affirmed the same truth—the existence of God and the goodness and equality of man.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup>Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment, tran. by Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Princeton: 1951), pp. ix, 234. Carl L. Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers (New Haven: 1932), pp. 17, 31, 47, 51, 62.

<sup>30</sup>Clement Eaton, Freedom of Thought in the Old South (Durham:

To deists, therefore, the significance of organized religion was its moral impact on people and its stabilizing impact on society. The direct influence of religion upon society had waned with deism and its growing secularism. Political leaders of the Republic, many being deists while holding to nominal Anglicanism, set the tone for North Carolina as well as for the other Southern states. There the tidewater aristocracy, largely Episcopalian in 1790, thus exalted Reason as the basis for society; but Reason also emancipated people from religious orthodoxy and allowed them an alibi for indifference. To combat deism, and thus to save the piedmont society from the corruption of skepticism, McCorkle published a sermon examining the differences between deism and revelation.<sup>31</sup>

This sermon against deism, 56 pages long, was one of the strongest and best which McCorkle ever published (1797). The text was from Hebrews 1:1-2, "God who at sundry times, and in divers manner spake in times past to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his son." McCorkle identified deism with a small "d," apparently not wanting to lend it unwarranted dignity. His goal in the

---

1940), p. 12. John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, Protestant Christianity, Interpreted Through Its Development (New York: 1954), p. 147. Robert H. Stone, A History of Orange Presbytery, 1770-1970 (Greensboro: 1970), p. 36.

<sup>31</sup>Dillenberger and Welch, p. 143. William S. Hanna, Benjamin Franklin and Pennsylvania Politics (Stanford: 1964), p. 31. Lester J. Cappon, ed., The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence Between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams (Chapel Hill: 1959), p. 420. Eaton, pp. 3, 10-15; Eaton cited Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, Four Discourses on the general first Principles of Deism and Revelation Contrasted, Discourse I (Salisbury: 1797), pp. 30-33; Evans, 48169.

sermon was to speak to the friends of revealed religion about what deists openly avowed and advocated.<sup>32</sup>

How did God reveal Himself? Paine answered "through creation;" thus, the only way man got his information was through observation of the natural world and reasoning. McCorkle differed, saying that revelation is knowledge of something previously unknown, gained from God, and not gotten from men, human experience, or reason. God revealed Himself in the Scriptures, but only a part of the Bible is thus revealed, for much of it was based on the experience of men.<sup>33</sup>

McCorkle continued that deists denied the omniscience of God; for instance, Bullinger ridiculed the idea of creation. Voltaire wrote, according to McCorkle: (1) that God left the world to govern itself; (2) all men are equal, differing only by accident of birth and education; (3) the book of creation (the world) was so plain that none could mistake God's will; reason was the basis for law and government; and (4) the age of reason was coming when absurdities and miseries would no longer exist; all the world would be governed by reason; and every child would be "freed from every prejudice of early religious education." McCorkle ranged to other writers too—Tindal, Pope, Gibbon, Bolingbroke, Hume, and especially Paine.<sup>34</sup>

Then McCorkle went to the attack. Reason was not sufficient. The deists held that man had reason prior to any supposed revelation. If

---

<sup>32</sup>Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New, I, p. 610. Paine's Age of Reason arrived on the scene about 1794. McCorkle, ... Discourse I, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup>McCorkle, ... Discourse I, pp. 4-9.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-23.

that was true, and if man was also good and equal, as deists believed, then why did the kingdom depart? Why did weak men mislead their brothers? The deists said all the ills of man were brought on by religion, and soon an age of reason was coming. Then other ages were not ages of reason, and men in them were ignorant and defective in reason or morals. Man, then, was depraved but did not need revelation. "... if all these things have been so, in the name of God, where have the deists been, and what have they been doing?" If reason was sufficient and revelation was not needed, then how did man go bad? Then came the clincher. If error is universal, then reason must be insufficient.<sup>35</sup>

But, McCorkle wrote, reason is defective, and man is depraved. The deist was reduced to saying, "Reason knows to do good, and can, but will not do it." Next followed a fairly interesting, if somewhat out of place, digression to a discussion of Chinese civilization, the age of the world, and an explanation of how lava preserves ancient civilizations. Returning to Paine and his Common Sense, McCorkle said that Paine denied human depravity. McCorkle repeated his questions. How did the world begin, and if reason was all powerful and the first religion, then why was it overcome? Could not man through his reason distinguish virtue from vice?<sup>36</sup>

McCorkle perhaps let down at the end of his sermon. He wrote that deism was too feeble to govern the world, the nation, or even the mind and heart of man. But in a footnote McCorkle commented that few deists

---

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 24-33.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 34-50.

had much common sense; instead they had not thought about religion, they were vain and conceited, or were drunkards, gamblers, or whore-mongers. Moreover, the creed of deism contradicted itself, but, then, error was human.<sup>37</sup>

The second discourse on deism, a 42 page effort, was the only other sermon of the four on deism which remains extant. McCorkle used the same text as in the first discourse, and he talked largely about the doctrines of revelation. The sermon contained more assurances for believers in revealed religion and was not nearly as strongly argued as the first discourse. It seemed that McCorkle aimed to explain the doctrines and beliefs of the Presbyterians rather than convert or controvert the deists. According to McCorkle, the believer in revelation believed that: (1) God was all powerful; (2) God created the world; (3) God created the angels, but some fell and became evil; and (4) God's will was revealed to man through the Scriptures and the Spirit. He also discussed several other religions, especially Islam, and their beliefs, and he quoted from a number of sources, one of them being Horace in Latin.<sup>38</sup>

McCorkle seemed to be making two points in his second discourse. First, deists were enemies to early religious education, for they said it was not needed. Second, deism was necessarily untrue because it

---

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 51-56.

<sup>38</sup>Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, Four Discourses on the general first Principles of Deism and Revelation Contrasted, Discourse II (Salisbury: 1798), pp. 4-6, 14; Evans, 48509. This sermon was indistinct in places. Discourse III, according to a footnote, was delivered to the General Assembly of North Carolina when it met in Raleigh on December 10, 1797. The footnote said that it would be printed when enough people subscribed.



opposed the truth of revealed religion. The attack was bitter, the citations were many, and deism was the target.<sup>39</sup>

McCorkle's attacks on deism reached their peak in The Work of God for the French Republick, and Then Her Reformation or Ruin; Or, The Novel and Useful Experiment of National Deism, To Us and All Future Ages, in which he blasted deists, Paine, and "Jacobinism." His fear of the rising French influence in America, of its infidelity to orthodox religion, was reflected throughout the 45 page discourse (published in 1798). McCorkle believed that millions died because of deism in France, the same deism which led to atheism and the moral corruption of society. To McCorkle, deism was more than just a skeptical attitude; it was a clear and present danger to the welfare of the nation and its people. He proceeded to find fault with the morality and laws of France which led to infidelity, mobs, murder, adultery, and other evils. He was certain that "Jacobinism" and deism threatened ruin for the French nation, and he hoped that by a series of sermons he could inform the people so that the same forces would not disrupt and destroy the United States. He concluded by hoping that the United States would guard against foreign influences and connections, perhaps using President Washington's advice to the nation to substantiate his view.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>40</sup>Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, The Work of God for the French Republick, and Then Her Reformation or Ruin; Or, The Novel and Useful Experiment of National Deism, To Us and All Future Ages (Salisbury: 1798), pp. 3, 7, 22, 33, 44-46; Evans, 34033.

## The Revival of 1802

Deism was only one of several foes combatted about 1800 by McCorkle and other North Carolina ministers, Presbyterian and otherwise. Despite their presence, however, the general attitude toward religion in that frontier society was hardly enthusiastic or pious. Settlers were mainly preoccupied with the acquisition of land, the time-consuming task of claiming a farm from the forest primeval, and the hard, exhausting effort to derive a subsistence from their land. Farming with an ax, hoe, scythe, and flail was awfully boring and monotonous work, and life was barren of many social contacts and opportunities for emotional outlet.<sup>41</sup>

Relief from the continual boredom was sought in attending church on the sabbath, court when it was in session, and neighborhood bees (that were organized to socialize while doing hard tasks such as husking the corn harvest, sewing bedding, and raising cabins). Drinking, gambling, and rough games contributed to the enjoyment of such gatherings. The store, tavern, meetinghouse, and courthouse also attracted crowds mainly bent on enjoying themselves.<sup>42</sup>

The rough and ready frontier life with its prevailing materialism and irreligion challenged the traditional values, authority, and morality in society. The influence the church had once had was no longer, and clergymen believed that "the need was great for moral elevation through religion." These factors, together with the decline

---

<sup>41</sup> John Boles, The Great Revival, 1787-1805: The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind (Lexington: 1972), pp. 60, 119.

<sup>42</sup> Catharine Cleveland, The Great Revival in the West, 1797-1805 (Chicago: 1916), pp. 5, 9.

in the impact of organized religion on society, the large number of people unchurched, and the need to revitalize religion, are commonly offered as the factors which primed the frontier regions to blaze when the spark of the revival was lit.<sup>43</sup>

Such a revival was not likely to be favorably influenced by deism. But if one believed, with orthodox religious leaders, that God could act directly and demonstrate His power through producing conversions of men to His way, then he became a candidate for a revival experience. The revival was an attempt to "convict" men of their evil lives, turning them to a new birth in the faith. Ministers of the more evangelical denominations (Baptist, Methodist, and some Presbyterians who were more interested in conversions than in dogma) capitalized on such a technique to bring sinners to God (or God to sinners). Basing their messages on the Bible, these ministers spoke eloquently about eternal torment for those who strayed from the path and about the joys of salvation to those who found God. If the preacher had to exhort forcefully to convict and convert sinners, such enthusiasm was thought permissible because of the magnitude of the task.<sup>44</sup>

The conditions for the revival on the frontier were primed, and the spark was lit about 1796 by James McGready, Presbyterian minister at Haw River and Stoney Creek Churches in Orange County, North Carolina. His vigorous efforts, awakening dormant emotions within some of his congregation, produced conversion experiences, but angered others among his flock, who removed the pulpit from the church at Stoney Creek and burned

---

<sup>43</sup>Durward Stokes, "North Carolina and the Great Revival of 1800," North Carolina Historical Review, 43 (1966), p. 406. Boles, p. 35.

<sup>44</sup>Boles, pp. x, 1. Cleveland, p. 36.

it. There were also clergymen who disliked McGready's inflammatory methods, but few could fault the results of his eloquence.<sup>45</sup>

As the revival movement gained momentum, the numbers of people attracted to meetings proved too many for the relatively small meeting-houses of the day. The result was the creation of the camp meeting. Families from the local congregations, loading blankets, food, and children into wagons, camped and worshipped together, with sermons, hymns, exhortations, professions of religion, and various bodily exercises. The latter occurred in several forms—faints, uncontrollable laughter, barking, falling to the ground overcome by convulsions called the "jerks." Ministers began to count the numbers of conversions at camp meetings, estimating their success by the number "struck down." Critics pointed out that the youngsters needed supervision, people often drank too much, and spectators came out to laugh at the proceedings and to dispute theology.<sup>46</sup>

Were these religious experiences the work of God, or were they delusions? People differed on what they thought happened. The excitement of the revivals spread, reaching west of the Yadkin into Rowan County by 1802. Samuel McCorkle was "strongly prejudiced against considering the exercises as a part of the work of the Spirit," yet he also desired a revival among his people. When David Caldwell called a meeting in January, 1802, McCorkle, Lewis F. Wilson (pastor of Concord and Fourth Creek in Iredell), Joseph D. Kilpatrick (pastor of Third Creek), James Hall (pastor of Bethany), and about 100 of their people

---

<sup>45</sup>Stokes, p. 407.

<sup>46</sup>Walter Posey, Frontier Mission: A History of Religion West of the Southern Appalachians to 1861 (Lexington: 1966), pp. 25-27.

attended. They came by wagon, bringing food and blankets, and soon the Reverend Mr. Hall's people began to be exercised.<sup>47</sup>

When the "jerks" made their appearance at the revival in January, 1802, at which McCorkle was in attendance, they were largely accepted as a natural outgrowth of God's will. Only McCorkle was hesitant about the authenticity and value of the powerful conversions; he wanted the Spirit to come to his people, but feared what the excesses of the revival could do to religion. The outbreak of enthusiasm dismayed McCorkle, because he could not see why God would allow such confusion and chaos to interfere with the working of His spirit. First one man and then others had become exercised, and McCorkle carefully noted their excited state. He was beset by a dilemma. Doctrinal knowledge of salvation was important to McCorkle, yet experimental knowledge was "infinitely preferable to all the doctrinal or systematic knowledge in the world without it."

---

<sup>47</sup> Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, pp. 380-381. Wilson graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1773, settled at Fourth Creek and Concord in 1790 (taking them over from Hall), and had been a medical doctor before becoming a minister; he died in 1804. Kilpatrick was born in 1763, married Margaret Decky in 1784 (who, the story goes, rejected the hand of Andrew Jackson for the more pious Kilpatrick), settled at Third Creek (half way between Thyatira and Fourth Creek), became an excellent preacher; he and his heart grew warm in 1801, influenced many people, and as a result Back Creek was set off from Thyatira in 1805. Reportedly, once the Back Creek congregation got exercised, they could be heard three miles away. Hall was born in 1744, graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1774, became a fighting parson (declined an offer to be a brigadier-general), was granted two D.D.'s, died in 1826 at 82. He began as the pastor at Concord and Fourth Creek in 1778, moving to Bethany in 1790; he also founded Clio's Nursery; Eli W. Caruthers, "a typewritten copy of a MS biography of Richard Hugg' King" (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), personal collection 23:1, pp. 45-51; hereafter cited Caruthers, "Richard H. King." Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, pp. 322-359.

James Hall later estimated that three-fourths of those present became exercised.<sup>48</sup>

Later the next day McCorkle walked about the camp, observed most of the people becoming exercised, and wondered why he was bothered by the events. He seemed to feel that those who were feeling "excitement" were not wrong, for they were overcome by "an awful sense of the majesty of God—a painful sense of sin—an earnest desire to be delivered from it." This was not disorder, for it was involuntary. But there was disorder in those spectators who were not serious about what was taking place—those whose thoughts and eyes wandered, who roved from group to group, who acted and spoke profanely (e.g.—"the conversation of an intoxicated youth"). This conduct marked those who were criminal; their disorder was voluntary and not caused by a submission to the will of God. Disorder was only proper when it came with conversion, with God's impression and man's expression.<sup>49</sup>

The act of conversion and its accompanying exercises varied with different people and the degree of their guilt. McCorkle saw the experience as the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" and the answer, "Repent and believe." He noted a variation in the religious moment for several types of individuals. Those who had received a religious education and behaved morally "continued longer under convictive impressions" than those who were "ignorant and immoral." McCorkle

---

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 381-383, 392-393. Reverend James Hall, A Narrative of a Most Extraordinary Work of Religion in North Carolina (Philadelphia: 1802), pp. 6, 21-22. This work is a rare book (which has been photocopied) in the Treasure Room at the Duke University Library; it is also completely reprinted in Foote, Sketches of North Carolina.

<sup>49</sup>Hall, pp. 23-24; Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, pp. 393-394.

did not believe that a powerful conversion meant that a person's future life would be changed for the better or that such an experience would ever be repeated with the same fervor.<sup>50</sup>

Samuel McCorkle had reservations about the potential of "enthusiasm" for developing either divine knowledge or saving grace, and he likely felt the revivals should be used with caution in bringing religion to people or people to religion. But despite his initial disapproval of the revivals because of their bodily exercises, McCorkle, after actually attending several meetings, apparently came to accept the conversions as honest professions of faith. Reverend William H. Foote, writing 40 years later, claimed that McCorkle never condoned the extravagances and merely tolerated the revivals. Bud Dudley and Caruthers claimed that McCorkle's opposition lessened considerably when his own son experienced excitement during a meeting.<sup>51</sup>

Sandy, Samuel McCorkle's only son, was at a Monday night meeting when he became affected and was struck down. Samuel McCorkle then grew worried and vented his feelings with a good deal of emotion to everyone's surprise, for he was usually reserved about his own thoughts. His worry led McCorkle to shout and to jump up, his head nearly touching the ceiling in the process (the meeting was apparently in a building). McCorkle prayed for his son, mistaking his unconsciousness for death. Praying aloud, Samuel McCorkle asked that the windows of heaven open until Sandy was brought in. He also included a petition for aid to all the churches

---

<sup>50</sup>Hall, p. 25; Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 395.

<sup>51</sup>Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 362. Stone, p. 40. Caruthers, "Richard H. King," pp. 57-58. Dudley, p. 17.

in the presbytery. The paroxysm gradually passed, and Sandy finally revived. Ashamed, Samuel McCorkle apologized for his behavior, but no one in the audience blamed him. Samuel McCorkle said that for 20 years his cheeks had been dry, but that he had feared for Sandy because his son "never made any profession of religion." Samuel McCorkle was relieved, for he never before obtained any hope for his son.<sup>52</sup>

A number of other camp meetings were held in 1802 when the enthusiasm ran high in western North Carolina, perhaps one a month. During the second week of March, a union meeting at Cross Roads by Sunday had drawn maybe 10,000 people, along with their ministers—14 Presbyterian, three Methodist, two Baptist, one Episcopal, one Dutch Calvinist, and two German Lutheran. About the bodily exercises, Hall noted more people were visited by the Spirit in "God's usual way" than by the jerks.<sup>53</sup>

The ministers at Cross Roads apparently felt the need to develop some guidelines for better handling the jerks and the meddlers attending the revival. McCorkle's letter dated March 17, 1802, contained the two rules which were formed:

1. That persons exercised and crying for mercy, should neither be disturbed with prayer nor exhortation, unless when they requested it, or were verging to despair, or becoming careless without gaining consolation.
2. That when consolation came, thanks should be given; yet not in such terms as if conversion and salvation were entirely certain; but only in a judgment of charity hopefully begun, and to be manifested by a future humble active course of obedience to all the divine commandments.

No one was to encourage persons to bodily exercises. The continual problem of local people who came out to watch the festivities was not

---

<sup>52</sup>Caruthers, "Richard H. King," pp. 57-58.

<sup>53</sup>Hall, p. 10; Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, pp. 385-386, 389.



resolved, and the "infidels" who laughed at the exercises as well as "drunkards" and others who wanted to dispute the participants on theological matters were apparently a constant hazard at the camp meetings.<sup>54</sup>

In June, 1802, a somewhat smaller camp meeting was held in what is now Davidson County. Of 3,000 attending, 300 gave professions of faith. McCorkle's narrative of this meeting, which dated it from the fourth of June until the eighth and placed it at Jersey Settlement in Rowan County (which could well be in what is now Davidson County), centered on one powerful conversion which because of its enthusiasm made a greater impression on him than any of the other 300 (by his estimate) who became exercised. McCorkle wrote about the conversion of one large Negro woman:

Nothing very unusual at such meetings appeared, until Sunday evening, when a stout negro-woman, who had been all day mocking the mourners, fell; and fell in a state of horror and despair that baffles description. In this state, she continued with intervals, for three hours. I viewed her all the time, and it was impossible for my imagination to conceive of her being more tormented had she actually been in hell. She often roared out, "O hell! hell! hell! Thy pangs have seized me! O torment! torment! What torments me! Hell can't be worse. Let me go there at once. It is my dreadful doom." She said she saw hell-flames below, herself hung over by a thread, and a sharp, bright sword drawn to cut it through. Her exertions, at this moment, no angel nor devil could describe. Two stout negro-men were no match for her struggles. I thought of the man among the tombs with his legion. Such an exercise I never beheld, and I have seen not less than a thousand. No one that saw it, ever beheld anything that would stand in comparison. At intervals she cried, "O mercy! but what have I to do with mercy? No mercy for poor miserable me." Hope, however, began to prevail, and at last she shouted, "Glory, glory," as loud, and as long as she had roared out "Hell-torment" before. "Astonishing," said she, "I have mocked the mourners, boasted that I could stand, been in hell, and O praise God, praise Him, praise Him, He has brought me out. Never, never, let me forget to love, and praise, and serve my God, my Redeemer."

---

<sup>54</sup>Hall, p. 26; Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 396.

The narrative went on, describing a number of other conversions.<sup>55</sup>

The spirit that produced the revival movement in North Carolina waned by the end of summer, although the lands to the west were ripe for "burning over." Whether some of the conditions operating to produce the revival—the lax morality of the frontier society, the clerical defense of the church from deistic attacks, the relative lack of significance and vitality of the frontier church, and the large number of unchurched people representing a religious decline—were no longer existing in the same formula, is not clear. Perhaps the ingredients were at equilibrium, and the catalyst was no longer operable, or perhaps physical exercises had caused the evangelical spirit to fall into disfavor among the ministers. Perhaps the time for the revival had simply passed.<sup>56</sup>

The consequences of the revival were even more puzzling. The major impact of the Great Revival was to harden orthodoxy within the state. The tidewater populace continued its nominal membership in the Episcopal Church and its nominal scepticism and deism (e.g.—William R. Davie). This state of affairs provoked the orthodox ministers such as Samuel McCorkle to "virulent replies," as can be seen in his sermons directed at deism. According to Boles, the rugged individuals of the frontier society focused on saving their own souls from impending doom because of the everpresent evil in the society. Thus the legacies of the Great Revival were conservatism as well as orthodoxy, a concern for personal salvation and not changing the social order, and a hardening of the yeoman farmers and working class in their beliefs.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 402. W. L. Grissom, History of Methodism in North Carolina from 1772 to the Present Time (Nashville: 1905), p. 312.

<sup>56</sup> Grissom, p. 312.

<sup>57</sup> Clement Eaton, "The Ebb of the Great Revival," North Carolina

But if the revival brought with it conservatism and orthodoxy, bodily exercises as testimony of divine intervention into an individual life, the exploitation by evangelists of crowds through the power of suggestion, and a split among Presbyterians over "Arminianism," it also brought more constructive results. Individual faith deepened, denominational membership increased (particularly among the more evangelical groups, the Baptists and the Methodists), and the moral tone of the community was raised. Vice, drunkenness, and infidelity were challenged in their own backyard. The revival in piedmont North Carolina was carried in from the east and continued on to the west. Later the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, espousing free grace, split off from the mother church. In the same manner Thyatira was split in 1805 when the more "enthusiastic" believers followed the Reverend Joseph D. Kilpatrick to a new church, Back Creek, some five miles west of Thyatira. Hardly a pleasant event to McCorkle, the split still represented an increased "reach" of the Presbyterians in Rowan County.<sup>58</sup>

How in the last analysis did Samuel McCorkle react to the revival? He likely was dismayed by the physical excesses but happy to see the spirit of his people revived. McCorkle, the conservative, orthodox, defender of the revealed faith against deism, may well have doubted the authenticity of some of the powerful conversions. But he had got enthused over Sandy's experience, and his outburst suggested that he,

---

Historical Review, 23 (1946), p. 11. Boles, p. 196.

<sup>58</sup>Cleveland, pp. 118, 130-133. Orthodox Presbyterian clergy were critical of revival excesses, especially the doctrine of free grace which was flaunted at meetings. This "Arminianism" ran contrary to the Presbyterian doctrines of election, predestination, and reprobation; Posey, p. 29. "Records of Concord Presbytery," I, 1795-1824, pp. 188, 197.

too, was influenced by the revival meeting. It was the matter of involuntary versus voluntary disorder. The hand of God was one thing, but the actions of depraved man were another. Too much voluntary disorder crushed the redeeming influence of the revival. What was true of Thyatira, one of the seven churches of Asia, was also true of Thyatira in Rowan County and the rest of the frontier society in North Carolina. There were false prophets and values in any society, and it was impossible to keep men from believing in them. The essential matter was the continued ministry to the church amidst a pagan society.

#### Presbytery and Synod

Finally, there is the matter of Samuel McCorkle and the growth of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina. When the Presbytery of Orange was organized in March, 1770, it consisted of the following seven men, with their graduation dates from Nassau Hall and their churches:

David Caldwell	1761	Buffalo, Alamance
Hugh McAden	1753	Red House, Caswell
Joseph Alexander	1760	Sugar Creek
Henry Pattillo		Hawfields, Eno, Little River
Hezekiah Balch	1762	
James Creswell		Lower Hico, Barnett's
Hezekiah James Balch	1768	Rocky River, Poplar Tent <sup>59</sup>

By 1780 there were either 20 or 44 Presbyterian churches in North Carolina, depending upon whose figures are used, but nine ministers were preaching, and the smaller number of churches is probably the number of congregations which had regular services. The nine pastors were:

McAden, Caldwell, Balch, Alexander, Pattillo, McCorkle, Craighead, and

---

<sup>59</sup>Stone, pp. 9, 22-24. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, pp. 217, 236.

McCaule. However, the Presbyterians exerted "influence out of proportion to their numbers."<sup>60</sup>

By 1784 there were twenty licensed ministers in the Presbytery of Orange as well as a couple of probationers. Either some of the congregations had changed the names of their churches, or some ministers had moved to new locations. Caldwell and Pattillo were in the same places, McCorkle was at Thyatira, Alexander was at Bullock's Creek, and James Hall was at Fourth Creek. Four years later, McCaule and Alexander were in the new South Carolina presbytery; the two Balches were in Tennessee; and Pattillo, Caldwell, McCorkle, and Hall remained in the Presbytery of Orange. In 1794 there were 31 Presbyterian churches in North Carolina. In 1795 when Concord separated from the Presbytery of Orange, the following 12 men were initial members of the new presbytery: McCorkle, Hall, James McRee, Barr, S. C. Caldwell, Wallis, Kilpatrick, L. F. Wilson, A. Caldwell, J. Wilson, Hunter, and Carrigan.<sup>61</sup>

In 1792 McCorkle was chosen moderator of the Synod of the Carolinas. He and McRee were to deal with a printer for the synod, getting 800 copies of Philip Doddridge's The Rise and Progress of Religion in the

---

<sup>60</sup> Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 81. Hugh T. Lefler and Albert R. Newsome, North Carolina: The History of a Southern State (Chapel Hill: 1954), p. 127; the authors cited J. P. Maclean, Scotch Highlanders in America but gave no specific pages.

<sup>61</sup> Reverend Eli W. Caruthers, A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D.D., Near Sixty Years Pastor of the Churches of Buffalo and Alamance (Greensborough: 1842), p. 250. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 281. Jethro Rumble, The History of Presbyterianism in North Carolina (Richmond: 1966), p. 14; reprinted from the North Carolina Presbyterian, 1878-1887. This work was very much similar to Rumble's, A History of Rowan County, North Carolina Containing Sketches of Prominent Families and Distinguished Men (Salisbury: 1881), with respect to any information about McCorkle, his colleagues, and Rowan County. Stone, pp. 25-26.

Soul. He was listed as "Dr." McCorkle. In 1794 McCorkle and James Hall were deputized to get materials for histories of the churches in the Presbytery of Orange. In October, 1795, McCorkle, Hall, McRee, Kilpatrick, and eight other ministers were organized into the Presbytery of Concord, while Pattillo, Caldwell, McGready, Ker, and seven others remained in the Presbytery of Orange. By October, 1799, when the synod met again, Orange had 14, South Carolina 18 (among them Joseph Alexander), Concord 15, and Union four. McCorkle was at that time the only one in the synod with an honorary doctorate.<sup>62</sup>

Judging by McCorkle's prominence in the presbytery records, he was the first among equals in the Presbytery of Concord. When it first met in December, 1795, McCorkle was elected moderator and again the next spring. McCorkle and James Hall were appointed to oversee the course of study for candidates for the ministry. McCorkle was assigned to supply at Third Creek (this was a common ~~method~~ for covering vacant pulpits, and nearly everyone was sent somewhere). During the following fall session meeting at Concord Church, McCorkle preached the opening sermon and became the moderator when the one who had been elected failed to appear.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, pp. 286, 291, 292, 301.

<sup>63</sup> "Records Concord Presbytery," I, pp. 4, 6, 18. Of interest in the synod minutes was the sentence to the affect that ministers should have those members of their congregations owning slaves orally instruct their charges in the gospel. They were also to teach the slave children to read the Scriptures; "Minutes of the Synod of the Carolinas, 1788-1799," I, p. 197. David Caldwell was sent to the General Assembly meeting in Philadelphia in 1797, and McCorkle wrote a letter of introduction for him to Ephraim Steel as well as had Caldwell carry several copies of a recent sermon of his on charity on behalf of the university; John Steele Papers, 689, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, box 3.

In March, 1797, the Presbytery of Concord met at Sugar Creek, and McCorkle, as usual, was again listed the first of those in attendance. In September, 1797, the minutes again listed him first, and Alexander McCorkle was one of the elders present. On March 27, 1798, McCorkle was first; on March 27, 1799, he was first and was also ordered to supply a sabbath at Jersey Settlement and a sabbath at Coddle Creek. He supplied at Poplar Tent for a year sometime between 1797 and 1801 (probably one day a month).<sup>64</sup>

#### Infirmity

After 1801 McCorkle was absent from presbytery meetings most of the time. It was probably his infirmities which prohibited him from easy travel. The session minutes for March 14, 1805, for the meeting at Hopewell Church expressed the hope that the split between Back Creek and Thyatira would only be a temporary one. But on September 6, 1805, the presbytery approved a church to be built by Back Creek if it were built at least five miles from Thyatira. The presbytery also approved a school which Samuel C. Caldwell opened in Sugar Creek in 1805.<sup>65</sup>

In 1806 the minutes noted that McCorkle was necessarily absent due to "indisposition," and McRee and Hall were each ordered to supply a sabbath at Thyatira. McCorkle continued to miss meetings from his illness, and the presbytery meeting in 1807 sent the following message to Thyatira:

---

<sup>64</sup>"Records Concord Presbytery," I, pp. 23, 32, 40, 67, 70. Ruple, The History of Presbyterianism in North Carolina, p. 45.

<sup>65</sup>"Records Concord Presbytery," I, pp. 188, 197-199, 207, 210, 219, 230, 242.

Whereas the Rev<sup>d</sup> Father & friend Sam'l E. M<sup>C</sup>Corkle is in a weak & frail state & we think it is a duty incumbent on the congregation to which he has ministered for many years, to consider his temporal circumstances & conscientiously contribute to his convenience as his necessity & their ability may allow.<sup>66</sup>

As McCorkle became less able to continue his ministry, other men took his place. From 1807 to 1809 the Reverend John Brown preached regularly in Salisbury and ran the academy. As of September, 1809, the Presbytery of Concord consisted of 14 members with McCorkle listed at Thyatira. In September, 1810, John M. Wilson and John Robinson were each ordered to supply a sabbath a month at Thyatira.<sup>67</sup>

The Reverend Samuel McCorkle came to the pulpit of Thyatira Church near Salisbury in 1776 at the outbreak of the Revolution. He supported the cause of the Patriots but preached against the immorality that followed the war. He also preached and wrote sermons against the evil that he saw from France—Jacobinism, infidelity, deism. He lent a considerable hand in the founding of the university and trained some 45 young men who entered the ministry. McCorkle became a leader in the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina, and he published more sermons than any other Presbyterian minister in the state. Although distressed by its accompanying exercises, McCorkle came to endorse the revival that occurred in the piedmont in 1802. Soon after, he was stricken while preaching and spent the remainder of his life an invalid.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pp. 207, 252, 219, 230, 242. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 359.

<sup>67</sup>"Records Concord Presbytery," I, p. 296. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 359.

<sup>68</sup>The National Cyclopedia of American Biography (New York: 1897), VII, p. 223. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 362.



## CHAPTER VIII

### LAST YEARS AND SIGNIFICANCE

#### Life at Westfield

In preceding discussion the separate careers of Samuel McCorkle in secondary and higher education and in the ministry have been delineated, but mention of McCorkle's personal and family life after 1786 has been limited at best. The Samuel McCorkles continued to live at Westfield. Margaret reared the children and superintended the plantation when Samuel was not home or was preoccupied by his studies, which was likely most of the time. No doubt Margaret found moments when she grew exasperated at her husband for ignoring her, the children, and the plantation, but she—like many other people—still found her mate magnetic, mysterious, profound, strange. She worked hard and looked forward to the day of rest when she could see her friends.

Agnes McCorkle, Samuel's mother, died in 1789 at the age of 63. Little record remains extant of her, for she left no will or any letters. In the frontier society a husband held the property of the family in his name while he lived, and he left a will for the heirs. Only when women became widows did they make out wills and file them in the county records. Samuel McCorkle probably officiated at the funeral of his mother, and burial was at Thyatira.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Thyatira Memorial Association, Inscriptions on Stones in Thyatira

Sometime between 1786 and 1790, Samuel and Margaret had another child who survived, and in 1790 the children were Sandy, Nancy, Elizabeth, and Sophia. The census taken in 1790 enumerated the household at Westfield as consisting of Samuel, Margaret, the four children, and six slaves. There was no overseer at Westfield, or a free white person would have been listed as living in the household. In the four years since 1786, McCorkle had not acquired any new slaves, and one of the old ones died or was sold. Like Samuel and Margaret, most of their brothers and sisters probably remained in Rowan County after they left home.<sup>2</sup>

---

Cemetery, 1755-1966 (Salisbury; 1967), p. 38. Morbidity and mortality were everpresent dangers in early America, for epidemics of smallpox, measles, malaria, and dysentery could quickly plague a community through contact with infected individuals or contaminated water. The reality of sickness and death was caused by a number of factors: (1) a diet heavy on meat and bread and light on vegetables; (2) habits of excessive drinking of hard cider and corn liquor; (3) the use of leather or wool clothing (cotton underclothes were not yet readily available to be changed and washed frequently); and (4) the lack of regular bathing. The "itch" was common, as were gout, croup, hives, enteritis, consumption, fits, dropsies, and decay (cancer, heart disease, and tuberculosis were not yet understood). In 1789 the life expectancy was 34.5 years for men and 36.5 years for women, although after surviving infancy, people averaged 54 and 56 years respectively. The prevailing cures (purges and bleeding) may well have been more dangerous than the sickness to anyone in a weakened condition. The mentally ill and retarded were kept at home; Richard H. Shryock, Medicine and Society in America, 1660-1860 (New York: 1960), pp. 90-94, 105, 108.

<sup>2</sup>Rowan County Wills, 1743-1868, XXI, p. 57. Elizabeth Steel's will, filed in 1789, listed the four children, and Samuel McCorkle's will, twenty years later, mentioned the same legacy; Rowan County Wills, 1761-1900. Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790: North Carolina (Washington: 1908), p. 178; hereafter cited as Census of 1790. Rowan County Records, microfilm reel 323; the tax list was headed 1786 Old Taxables.

Samuel and Alexander, Junior, served as executors for their brother John's estate, and Alexander (Junior) was listed by the census of 1790 as the head of a family of six who lived in Rowan County. Another brother lived with Alexander McCorkle, Senior (distinguished by the census as a "free white male over 16" and not another "free person"), and ran that farm, supervising six slaves. This was likely Robert, for the will that Alexander (Senior) left chose Robert to tend the plantation and care for his stepmother, inheriting it at her death. John Steele, Margaret's stepbrother, headed a household made up of himself, a wife, daughter, and two slaves; they must have been away from Salisbury a part of the time, for Steele was elected to the United States Congress in 1789.<sup>3</sup>

Elizabeth Steel was afflicted with a painful, lingering disease, and she died in 1790 at the age of 57. Samuel McCorkle conducted funeral services, and interment was in Thyatira churchyard. An obituary in a newspaper praised her devoted, patriotic, and affectionate nature, and the account claimed these qualities helped her withstand the losses of her husbands and son. The personal papers that she left to her children instructed them to be guided by God, to keep company with sober and good people, and to be industrious and frugal. Her favorite

---

<sup>3</sup>Rowan County Wills, March, 1797. Census of 1790, p. 178. Iredell County Wills, 1787-1890. Blackwell P. Robinson, ed., The North Carolina Guide (Chapel Hill: 1955), p. 249. John Steele was born November 1, 1764; he attended James Hall's Clio's Nursery near Statesville and a school at Salisbury. He became a planter, served as an assessor in 1784, served as a town commissioner in 1787, was elected a member of the state legislature (in the years 1787, 1788, 1794, 1795, 1806, 1811-1813), served in the United States House of Representatives from 1789 to 1793, became Comptroller of the United States Treasury from 1796 to 1802, served on various commissions for treaties and fixing boundary lines, and died in 1815; Clifford P. Reynolds, ed., Biographical Directory of the American Congress (Washington: 1961), p. 1648.

hymn was folded up in her papers and began:

The hour of my departure's come,  
I hear the voice that calls me home,  
At last O lord; let trouble cease,  
And let thy servant die in peace.<sup>4</sup>

In her will Mrs. Steel left a piece of land (82 acres) to Samuel McCorkle, together with a runaway slave should he ever be returned. Margaret inherited Mrs. Steel's clothes, and 640 acres of land were left to the four children of Samuel and Margaret. The part of the estate which remained was ordered to be split in thirds, and one part each was for John Steele, Margaret McCorkle, and the late Robert Gillespie (this part to be used for funeral expenses with any remainder to go to the McCorkle children). Samuel McCorkle and John Steele were appointed as the executors of the estate, and they had to sell the town lots. Mrs. Steel directed that her body be laid beside the grave of William Steel; however, the grave markers indicate that her wishes were overlooked, for her body was buried in the Gillespie family plot.<sup>5</sup>

Alexander McCorkle, Samuel's father, grew lonely, although Robert lived with him and ran the farm. Alexander was losing his hearing, and during the Sunday service he usually sat on the pulpit steps in order to hear his son preach the sermon. When Alexander McCorkle had mourned for

---

<sup>4</sup>The dates on Elizabeth Steel's grave marker in Thyatira churchyard are 1733 to 1791, but the latter date is wrong and should be 1790. North-Carolina Chronicle, January 3, 1791, quoted in H. M. Wagstaff, ed., The Papers of John Steele (Raleigh: 1924), II, pp. 759-762.

<sup>5</sup>Rowan County Wills, 1743-1868, XXI, p. 57. The actual value of the whole estate is impossible to determine, but a receipt dated September 19, 1802, showed that Samuel McCorkle sold his 82 acres to John Steele for \$145; John Steele Papers, 689, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, box 4.

more than a year, he remarried in May, 1791. His second wife was Rebecca Brandon; the Brandons were long-time members of the Thyatira congregation. Rebecca had also been previously married and had probably lost her husband recently.<sup>6</sup>

Later in May, the event of the year occurred in Salisbury. President Washington visited the Rowan area while on a tour of the South. Washington noted in his journal that the area had fine lands, meadows, and wheat country, and he estimated that 300 people lived in Salisbury. After several public receptions Washington continued northward to the Moravian settlements some 35 miles distant.<sup>7</sup>

In 1792 Samuel McCorkle became the Reverend Doctor McCorkle when Dickinson College of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, granted him the degree of doctor of divinity. Since Carlisle lay approximately 18 miles southwest of Harris's ferry (where McCorkle was born), it seems likely that he may have attended the Carlisle Latin School (the forerunner of Dickinson College, which began in 1783) when it was perhaps conducted by the

---

<sup>6</sup>Census of 1790. Reverend William Henry Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of her Early Settlers (New York: 1846), p. 351; hereafter cited Foote, Sketches of North Carolina. Rowan County Marriage Record, 1759-1865. Chalmers G. Davidson, Piedmont Partisan: The Life and Times of Brigadier-General William Lee Davidson (Davidson: 1951), p. 103. Iredell County Wills, 1787-1890, Book A, p. 177. Rebecca McCorkle's will left part of her estate to her stepsons (the McCorkles) and part to her own sons.

<sup>7</sup>Robinson, The North Carolina Guide, p. 249. John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., The Diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799 (New York: 1971), VI, pp. 185-186. John Steele acted as a host for the president while he was in the area near Salisbury. Rowan County also claims Andrew Jackson, who studied law with Spruce Macay in Salisbury, James K. Polk, whose mother lived in Rowan County, and Daniel Boone, whose family lived in Rowan County for a period; Samuel Ashe, History of North Carolina (Spartanburg: 1971), II, pp. 130-131.

Reverend John Steel (Ephraim Steel's father). Thus, the D.D. would have been bestowed on a former student who had distinguished himself.<sup>8</sup>

In 1795 Alexander McCorkle served on a jury which passed on a petition to cut a road from the Catawba River to Fort Dobbs. In the many, many petitions and court sessions in Rowan County, Samuel McCorkle's name never appeared on a jury list, on a petition, or on a work crew; perhaps ministers were exempted from such duty. In those days taxpayers themselves worked on the roads, and the roads were generally fairly wretched due to neglect. In the piedmont trees had to be cut down in a path, leaving stumps no more than 16 or 18 inches high so that wagons might pick their way between or over the stumps. In low, wet spots where wagons bogged down, a driver tried to turn around the spot, but he could not, trees were cut and laid across the hole at a right angle to the direction of traffic. Streams could be forded, but deeper, faster rivers had to be crossed by ferry. Roads were built for a military purpose, if at all. A crew of county residents were selected to work, and a captain was appointed to supervise them. During the settling phase neglected roads were not a crucial matter, but the lack of easy means to market for farm products contributed to the slow start of commercial agriculture in North Carolina.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica (Chicago: 1970), IV, p. 919. Letter from Charles C. Sellers dated November 19, 1972, and based on trustee minutes of Dickinson College for 1792. However, McCorkle in a handwritten sermon that he wrote in 1789 referred to himself as a doctor of divinity. Where or when he may have gotten that degree was not ascertained by research; Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, "A Sermon on the Law of God . . . Delivered at Superior Court in Salisbury" from the Manuscript Department, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University.

<sup>9</sup>Rowan County records, Rowan County Roads, 1757-1894.

Some time before 1797, Samuel McCorkle probably took a trip west into what would become Tennessee. He may have preached at a number of vacant pulpits, but there was no mention of any such mission in the presbytery or synod minutes. His reason was likely to acquire land, and he gathered warrants for some 2,500 acres of land which he transferred to his father and brother, John, on his return. In 1797 Samuel McCorkle entered Sandy at the University of Pennsylvania, and he stopped for a visit with Ephraim Steel on his way back from Philadelphia. Sandy had never been the student. Once when he was in grammar school, Sandy sent his father a respectful, well written letter begging to be put on the farm, but Sandy remained in school. His father's drive for learning was projected onto Sandy but not as readily accepted. Samuel McCorkle was never able to stop pushing Sandy. Sandy graduated from college in 1800, but for the rest of his life he never got over a bad collegiate experience.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup>Wagstaff, II, p. 864. Samuel McCorkle could not have been entitled to such a grant from serving in the Revolution, because he was not on any muster list for North Carolina, according to The North Carolina Daughters of the American Revolution, Roster of Soldiers from North Carolina in the American Revolution (Durham: 1932); Caruthers hinted that McCorkle had been sent out to preach in vacant pulpits in the West but preferred his own pulpit; Eli W. Caruthers, "Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, 1774-1811," Annals of the American Pulpit, ed., William B. Sprague (New York: 1969), III, p. 239; hereafter cited Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit. Reverend Eli W. Caruthers, "a typewritten copy of a MS biography of Richard Hugg King" (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), personal collection 23.1, p. 58; hereafter cited Caruthers, "Richard H. King." Samuel McCorkle to Ephraim Steel, April 2, 1797; letter in John Steele Papers, 689, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, box 3. The McCorkle papers at Lock Neal's contained a diploma from the University of Pennsylvania, but the ink had faded. Only Benjamin Rush's name was legible. A letter from Nancy Huntington at the Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library at the University of Pennsylvania dated December 13, 1972, confirmed that Sandy graduated in 1800, according to alumni records. Pennsylvania. University. General Alumni Society, Biographical

The Samuel McCorkle household in 1800 consisted of a man, woman, boy, five girls, and nine slaves. In the decade since 1790, two girls (Harriet and Margaret, probably also called Peggy) were born who survived infancy, and the McCorkles also acquired at least three new slaves. McCorkle was well established as a minister and teacher, his nine slaves should have been ample for the support of his family on the plantation, and he and Margaret were rearing a typical-sized family. Samuel's father, Alexander, was also the head of a household at the time of the census, and his wife, Rebecca, his son, Robert, and a slave lived with him. John Steele's family and estate were growing, for he and his wife had a son, three daughters, and 26 slaves. Rowan County had increased in population to 20,060 residents with 645 of them living in Salisbury.<sup>11</sup>

Alexander McCorkle, Samuel's father, died about Christmas of 1800 at the age of 78. His will, written the preceding July, left to Rebecca his books, the household furniture, a horse, two cows, two calves, four sheep, and 80 pounds. She was entitled to the two rooms in the east part of the house in which they had been living, two slaves, and maintenance by Robert. Robert inherited the 300 acre farm, another tract north of it, the farming tools, and a slave girl. Alexander was to inherit 40 pounds. The clothes and remaining money were to be divided into 11 parts—two shares to go to Elizabeth and one share each to the other nine children. Robert and William were to receive a tract

---

Catalogue of the Matriculates of the Colleges..., 1749-1893  
(Philadelphia: 1894), p. 40.

<sup>11</sup>Second Census, 1800, North Carolina, Rowan County (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), microfilm reel F. 2.7 P.; hereafter cited as Census of 1800. Census of 1790.



of land on the Duck River, and John and Robert were appointed executors of the estate. Sandy inherited a 237 acre farm from his grandfather, although it was not mentioned in the will of his grandfather. The gift probably was given before Alexander McCorkle died. The plot was previously owned by John McCorkle (Sandy's uncle), from whom Alexander McCorkle (the grandfather) bought it for 200 pounds lawful money of the state. After returning from college in Philadelphia, Sandy settled on his farm and began to do what he had always wanted to do.<sup>12</sup>

#### Declining Health

Listed as the head of a household by the census of 1800, Samuel McCorkle was healthy at that time. Later in the year, however, he became afflicted with an infirmity which apparently confined him at home. A letter from Maxwell Chambers to John Steele (his friend), dated Spring Hill, March 17, 1801, noted "Our common Friend Doc<sup>r</sup> M.Corkle poor man has been very ill this last fall and winter, and is still poorly with the Rumatism. I am told by Dr. John Newnan that he is mending, and he expects that he will be able to preach again in a short time." Newnan was a physician in Salisbury.<sup>13</sup>

McCorkle may have never recovered his old vitality. The Synod of the Carolinas met at Bethany Church on October 9, 1802, and was forced

---

<sup>12</sup>Thyatira Memorial Association, p. 38. Iredell County Wills, 1787-1890; the three slaves left to heirs were a man and two girls. Apparently the census did not count the girls (under age). Rowan County records, Book of Deeds, Book 11, p. 290. Rowan County records, Tax lists of 1802 and 1803. Sandy was listed as one poll and 237 acres.

<sup>13</sup>Census of 1800. Maxwell Chambers to John Steele, March 17, 1801, quoted in Wagstaff, I, p. 209.

to remove McCorkle from his position as stated clerk, because he could no longer transcribe the minutes. McCorkle was not listed on the Rowan County tax lists for 1802 or 1803, and it may have been that he and his slaves were exempted from taxation because of his condition.<sup>14</sup>

As was the custom for widows, Rebecca McCorkle filed her will in 1802. She wrote it herself and with beautiful penmanship. Since she could write and Alexander McCorkle left his books to her, Rebecca McCorkle was surely literate. That part of the estate which Alexander McCorkle had not specifically left to family members, Rebecca McCorkle did. She left a mare to Samuel, a colt to Sandy, and the remainder of the estate to the rest of the family—books, livestock, money, and furniture. She must have had a sense of humor, for the black colt which she left to Sandy was named Kilpatrick. Her will listed the six brothers of Samuel McCorkle: Robert, James, William, Alexander, the late John, and Joseph.<sup>15</sup>

Despite his infirmity, Samuel McCorkle and his family continued to live at Westfield. In 1804 the lands were resurveyed by the common consent of McCorkle and his neighbors with the adjoining property; this was merely a legal formality to clarify the old deed which may have been unclear, and nothing other than language was changed. Samuel McCorkle

---

<sup>14</sup>"Minutes of the Synod of the Carolinas, 1788-1799," (Montreat: Presbyterian Historical Foundation), I, p. 90. McCorkle was "from a growing indisposition of body...incapable of transcribing our records with conveniency" and had to be removed from the office and replaced. Rowan County records, Tax lists of 1802 and 1803. The tax list of 1802 gave figures of 658,953 acres in Rowan County, 2,356 white polls, and 1,720 black polls.

<sup>15</sup>Iredell County Wills, 1787-1890, Book A, p. 177.

may have been getting his estate in order. Sandy married Jean Gillihan in 1804, too. On January 16, 1806, McCorkle had his will written.<sup>16</sup>

Beginning in 1806, McCorkle missed most of the Presbytery of Concord meetings. The minutes for September 2, 1806, and usually twice each year thereafter, noted that McCorkle was "necessarily absent from indisposition," and other ministers were ordered to supply at Thyatira. In 1807 the Presbytery of Concord called upon the congregation at Thyatira to provide assistance to their pastor.<sup>17</sup>

Sandy undoubtedly managed Westfield by 1807. One of the early health insurance policies was a large family so that later in life when the need arose, a parent could live with his children. Sandy probably hired a young man to work as overseer at Westfield while he worked his own land. The hand got room, board, and a share of the crops. But this overseer was either too harsh on the slaves or too lax, and the McCorkles still had to buy a part of their supplies. In 1809 Samuel McCorkle was assessed for taxes on 320 acres and six polls, one of whom was white and five of whom were black. In 1810 he paid taxes on 320 acres, himself, and six slaves. Meanwhile, Sandy in 1809 was assessed at 150 acres and six polls—one white and five black—and in 1810 at 150 acres and seven polls, six of whom were black.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup>The McCorkle family papers at Lock Neal's. Rowan County Marriage Record, 1759-1865. Rowan County Wills, 1761-1900.

<sup>17</sup>"Concord Presbytery Records, 1795-1824" (Montreat: Presbyterian Historical Foundation), I, pp. 207, 210, 219, 230, 242, 254, 303. This source is a manuscript of the session minutes of Concord Presbytery. The minutes read that since "...McCorkle is in a weak & frail state," his congregation should try to contribute to his maintenance.

<sup>18</sup>Ulrich B. Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South (Boston: 1948), pp. 306-307. Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 349. Rowan County records, Rowan County Tax List, 1809-1814. Neither Samuel

The census of 1810 did not list Samuel McCorkle as the head of a household. However, Sandy was the head of a household consisting of six males, three females, one other free person (not a family member), and no slaves. Samuel, Margaret, and their daughters lived with Sandy and his wife (the census simply must have reversed the figures for male and female). Sandy and his wife now had a little boy, and an overseer was running Westfield. John Steele was listed along with his wife, two daughters, and 7<sup>4</sup> slaves (some of whom may possibly have been rented from the McCorkles). The will that John Steele filed in 1810 left the mansion, the slaves, and 876 acres of plantation to his family, or at their deaths, to his sister, Margaret McCorkle.<sup>19</sup>

McCorkle's health was declining. Caruthers wrote that his condition deteriorated in his last years, that he was unable to recover from attacks of fever and their attending miseries, and that he knew the end was coming. Foote claimed that McCorkle was stricken while in the pulpit and was afterward afflicted with a palsy which sapped his physical and mental vigor. While his mind cleared, his body never recovered. Perhaps McCorkle suffered a stroke while preaching and was later paralyzed on one side, together with the associated tremors and the

---

nor Sandy was listed in the column for paying additional taxes; therefore, they did not have any stud horses, taverns, town lots, or billiard tables.

<sup>19</sup>Population Schedules of the Third Census of the United States, 1810 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), roll 431, North Carolina, VI, microfilm reel F. 2.13 P.; hereafter cited Census of 1810. Rowan County Wills, 1761-1900, Book G, p. 376. According to the census of 1810, the population of Salisbury was 706 and of Rowan County was 20,75<sup>4</sup> (with 3,365 of that latter number being slaves).

susceptibility to fevers, pneumonia, and other complications that such a condition brings.<sup>20</sup>

#### Death and Funeral

McCorkle was sustained by his faith and methodically, as he had done everything else all his life, planned his own funeral. It was to include a sermon from Job 19:25-26, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God," and the sixty-first hymn of Watts' second book, "My soul, come mediate the day." Early in 1811, Samuel McCorkle died.<sup>21</sup>

The funeral apparently went according to the McCorkle plan. The elders and the body of Samuel McCorkle were dressed in black. The elders sat near the body during the service and afterward bore it to the grave. The congregation followed singing, "Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound." The grave marker was inscribed with an epitaph which

---

<sup>20</sup>Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 347. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 362.

<sup>21</sup>Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 362. The March 14, 1811, Raleigh Register, and North Carolina State Gazette contained the sentence, "At Westfield, his seat near Salisbury, on the morning of the 21st January, the Rev. Dr. Samuel M'Corkle, in the 65th year of his age;" Newspaper Notices of Marriages and Deaths Copied from the Raleigh Register, 1807-1811 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), n.p. The day was given as "the 20th day of January" in the Concord Presbytery records; "Concord Presbytery Records," I, 1795-1824. The day was given as the twenty-first in the synod minutes; "Minutes of the Synod of the Carolinas," I, p. 408. Foote, despite having the synod records in his work some 20 pages later (with the correct date of McCorkle's death), erroneously dated McCorkle's death on June 21, 1811; Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, p. 362. But the error had its redeeming graces in that it was a ready indicator, in other sources which contained the error, of their dependence on the Foote account (e.g.—the Lingles).

McCorkle had written, but that original marker has been since replaced by the McCorkle family, and no record of the original seems to be extant. The new marker is imposing white marble, and the epitaph is puzzling:

In Memory of

The Rev'd Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, D.D.  
 Who was born 23rd August 1746  
 Licenced 15th October 1773 [sic]  
 Ordained 2nd Augt 1777  
 Departed this Life 21st Jany. 1811  
 The tall, the wise, the reverend head  
 must lie as low as ours.  
 Dedicated to his memory by his family.<sup>22</sup>

McCorkle's Family

The will of Samuel McCorkle named Margaret as "executrix" of his estate. She was to have Westfield, two slaves, and two other slaves with which to guard against the destruction of any child's property or to reward their duty and affection toward her. Sandy was to have "all my books on language and Science in hopes that he will make good use of them," Westfield and its improvements after the death of his mother, and the Tennessee lands inherited from Captain Robert Gillespie or two slaves (whichever he chose). Sandy, Nancy, Elizabeth, and Sophia were to share the legacy left from the will of Mrs. Steel. Each daughter (Nancy, Elizabeth, Sophia, Peggy, and Harriet) was to inherit a slave girl and a share of his part of the 4,000 acres in Tennessee entered by his father at the land office but not yet surveyed or divided among the

---

<sup>22</sup> Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, pp. 362-363. Caruthers, Annals of the American Pulpit, p. 348. The Samuel McCorkle grave marker in Thyatira churchyard.

heirs. Sandy was to maintain his mother at Westfield for the rest of her life.<sup>23</sup>

Sandy must have been more like his grandfather than his father. He wanted to farm rather than be a minister or teacher, although he was not quite the speculator in land that his grandfather had been. In 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814, Sandy was listed on the tax rolls for 320 acres of land; he had no polls in 1811, one poll (white) in 1812, and two polls in both 1813 and 1814 (one white and one black). For the same years, Margaret McCorkle was listed as a widow with no land and six polls (all black).<sup>24</sup>

By 1820 Sandy and Jean McCorkle had four daughters and a son. Since Margaret McCorkle was listed by the census that year as the head of a household, she was probably running Westfield by herself and providing for five daughters. Apparently the McCorkle daughters were not eagerly courted, for they still lived at home.<sup>25</sup>

On April 30, 1821, the will of Mrs. Samuel McCorkle was filed. The daughters each received a slave (different than those received by their father's will) as well as a share of the livestock and personal property to be sold. A tract of land in Tennessee went to her son Alexander and

---

<sup>23</sup>Rowan County Wills, 1761-1900. The will appears in Appendix M.

<sup>24</sup>Rowan County records, Land Entries, 1778-1817, listed Sandy (besides his 237 acre farm and Westfield) entering only nine acres; he entered the plot in 1807 (p. 1072), clarified the deed in 1811 (p. 1334), and bought it in 1812 (Book of Deeds, Book 23, p. 161). In 1824, he sold 150 acres for \$1150 (Ibid., Book 27, p. 795) and 165 acres to his sisters for \$600 (Ibid., Book 27, p. 808). Sandy also bought lands in 1810 and 1819, but the record was too indistinct to provide any specific detail. Rowan County Tax List, 1809-1814.

<sup>25</sup>Dorothy Williams Potter, ed., 1820, Federal Census of North Carolina (Tullahoma: 1971), Rowan County, XLVII.

at his death to her grandson Samuel Eusebius. A slave was to be sold and the money put at interest until her granddaughters Elizabeth and Margaret were 21.<sup>26</sup>

Some time after 1820, at least three daughters of Samuel and Margaret McCorkle married. Elizabeth married John Bowman, the preacher at Thyatira after her father; Margaret married John Patton; and Harriet married Amzi McGinn. Sandy and Jean McCorkle apparently died fairly young, for guardians were appointed in 1828 for "Eliza, Margaret, Samuel, and Harriett McCorkle, orphans of Alexander G. McCorkle, deceased." One of their daughters had also died.<sup>27</sup>

#### The Significance of Samuel McCorkle

Today, the catechism which Samuel McCorkle probably used to teach his people the Scriptures is in the library at Thyatira Church. A chart of the sanctuary, dated 1824, hangs on the wall. The pulpit once stood in front and to the side of the altar, facing out toward the congregation. The people sat in pews which faced toward the middle, so that the minister would preach to his left and to his right and be fairly close to his audience. The pew of the McCorkle family was the first one on the preacher's right.

A roadside marker proclaims the site of Zion-Parnassus. The Lock Neals still have some of the McCorkle papers, the secretary which was

---

<sup>26</sup>Rowan County Wills, 1743-1863, XV, p. 245. The will was proved in 1823.

<sup>27</sup>Archibald Henderson Papers, 3650, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, folder 192. Rowan County Estates, McAdams-McGill (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History), no. 91.



once Samuel McCorkle's pride and joy, a spoon and a dish that he supposedly ate on. A few of his sermons, his will, some scraps of his papers and letters, and some county records are about all that remain extant of Samuel McCorkle's writings. His record in Presbyterianism in North Carolina, in the founding of the university, and in secondary education is chronicled in a number of places.

Since any good sermon had either three or seven points, it is appropriate, in assessing the significance of the Reverend Samuel McCorkle, to stress three parts of his career. First, McCorkle was a typical graduate of the College of New Jersey. He and 22 other graduates of John Witherspoon's training came to North Carolina as ministers and educators. A graduate of 1772, McCorkle founded two academies in Rowan County in which he stressed the religious education of youth—the five "R's," the Latin and Greek classics, mathematics, and perhaps one of the first normal courses in America. The training of Nassau Hall was repeated in Rowan County, for among his students were state officials, judges, planters, and 45 ministers—all trained in the theology and philosophy of the College of New Jersey. These efforts were in secondary education.<sup>28</sup>

In higher education five graduates of the College of New Jersey were trustees when the University of North Carolina was chartered in 1789, and two others were the first two presidents of the university.

---

<sup>28</sup>Donald R. Come, "The Influence of Princeton on Higher Education in the South Before 1825," William and Mary Quarterly, third series, 2 (1945), pp. 381-383. Varnum L. Collins, President Witherspoon: A Biography (Princeton: 1925), I, p. 229; based on Charles L. Smith, The History of Education in North Carolina (Washington: 1888).

William R. Davie (class of 1776) and Samuel McCorkle were the principal founders of the university at Chapel Hill. Davie maneuvered the charter through the state legislature and led the trustees during the formative years. McCorkle first sparked the idea of the university as well as contributed the following: chaired the committee which planned instruction for the university; wrote the regulations concerning curriculum, daily schedule, discipline, and attendance at religious services; and advocated weekly examinations into the students' personal morality, although this effort was thwarted by opponents.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, the training at Nassau Hall affected McCorkle's personality and preaching. His orthodoxy caused him to condemn immorality, deism, dancing, horseracing, the rising French infidelity, and physical exercises which accompanied the revival. His personal view of the world, based on common sense and on the Presbyterian doctrines, caused him to live a serious, religious life and to expect the same from his students.<sup>30</sup>

Second, Samuel McCorkle, the backwoods pastor who returned to his home congregation after college and apprenticeship for the ministry, developed a state-wide reputation through his efforts in the Presbytery of Orange, the academies at Salisbury and Thyatira, and for the university at Chapel Hill. Together with his colleagues David Caldwell, Henry Pattillo, and James Hall, McCorkle became one of the most important Presbyterian ministers in North Carolina. A student of the history of that state wrote, "The ablest of all the North Carolina

---

<sup>29</sup>Come, p. 383. Collins, President Witherspoon: A Biography, I, p. 229.

<sup>30</sup>Come, p. 381.

theologians, preachers, and lecturers of his day was the noted Presbyterian divine, educator, and promoter of higher education, the Rev. Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, of Salisbury and Thyatira."<sup>31</sup>

When the Presbyterian Church in the Carolinas had grown enough to be set apart from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia (as the Synod of the Carolinas, formed September, 1789), Samuel McCorkle was selected as the stated clerk. McCorkle made his mark in the development of the Presbyterian Church. He was known in presbytery and synod circles as a "long headed old fellow," and a story that was told about him explained why. McCorkle sat as the moderator of a presbytery meeting at which Joseph D. Kilpatrick applied for the ministry. At such a session a young candidate was examined for his fitness, and McCorkle apparently feared that Kilpatrick would be found wanting in his theological orthodoxy. He questioned the probationer in a long, boring fashion which put everyone in the audience to sleep. When an appropriate length of time passed, McCorkle loudly woke the sleepers up and demanded to know whether any of them had found reason to deny Kilpatrick.<sup>32</sup>

Third, McCorkle, although a practicing Presbyterian minister, was also much interested in the Enlightenment and in education in North Carolina. Just what did he value?

Voltaire wrote about two magi who each sought to offer a child a better education than the other. When asked what he would teach the

---

<sup>31</sup>Hugh T. Lefler and Albert R. Newsome, North Carolina: The History of a Southern State (Chapel Hill: 1954), p. 127. Archibald Henderson, North Carolina: The Old North State and the New (Chicago: 1941), I, p. 608.

<sup>32</sup>"Minutes of the Synod of Carolinas, 1788-1799," I, n.p. Caruthers, "Richard H. King," p. 22.

child, the first answered listing the eight parts of speech, logic, astrology, pneumatics (demonomania), and about substance and accident, abstract and concrete, monads, and the pre-established harmony. The second merely wanted to have his student learn a sense of justice and to become worthy of the friendship of good men.<sup>33</sup>

Like Voltaire's first wise man, Samuel McCorkle certainly taught many things to his students and to his congregation. He believed in the liberalizing influence of a broad education in the sense that "the truth shall make you free." However, McCorkle's principal emphasis, more like that of Voltaire's second wise man, was as the exemplary model and moral critic rather than being a one-man-university. He sought to mold character by early religious training, and he endeavored to improve the society by educating capable leaders for it. McCorkle believed in work, discipline, obedience, and order, and he attempted to bring his experience to his people, training them up in the way they should go. This concern was illustrated by his effort to have weekly moral examinations of students at the university and to teach the Bible to his congregation at Thyatira. McCorkle clearly believed in progress through education. In all his efforts, McCorkle remained the student, curious and self-disciplined. As Mayer wrote, "The teacher is not an absolute guide but a fellow pilgrim." McCorkle was a particular personality who valued piety and learning—Zion and Parnassus—and tried to relate the intellectual heritage to the needs of the frontier society of which

---

<sup>33</sup>Francois M. A. de Voltaire, Candide, Zadig, and Selected Stories, tran., Donald M. Frame (New York: 1961), pp. 119-120; the passage was from "Zadig" which was written in 1747.

he was a part. Such has always been the case of enlightened, educated men.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup>Frederick Mayer, Foundations of Education (Columbus: 1960), p. 169. McCorkle was a remarkable, although not spectacular man, a product of his day who overflowed with discipline and direction.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary

#### McCorkle Manuscripts

McCorkle, Samuel Eusebius. "The Crime and Curse of Plundering: A Sermon."

The original manuscripts of sermons that McCorkle wrote and from which he preached were found in the Manuscript Department, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Sermon for the Anniversary of American Independence, July 24th, 1786."

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Sermon on the Law of God Delivered at Superior Court in Salisbury, September 20th, 1789."

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Sermon from Deuteronomy 8:19-20."

\_\_\_\_\_. "Creation."

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Sermon: The Creation of Man; Prepared for Society at Hopewell, Jan. 6, 1790."

#### Published Sermons

McCorkle, Samuel Eusebius. A Sermon, on the Doctrine and Duty of Sacrificing. Philadelphia: William Young, 1794. Evans, 27246.

The published sermons of McCorkle were found in Charles Evans. American Bibliography. New York: Peter Smith, 1942. Some eight sermons were available on microcards.

\_\_\_\_\_. A Charity Sermon. Halifax: Abraham Hodge, 1795. Evans, 29000.

\_\_\_\_\_. A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness and Duty of the United States, Contrasted with Other Nations, Particularly the Israelites. Halifax: Abraham Hodge, 1795. Evans, 29001.

\_\_\_\_\_. Four Discourses on the general first Principles of Deism and Revelation Contrasted, Discourse I. Salisbury: Francis Coupee, 1797. Evans, 48169.

\_\_\_\_\_. A Discourse, on the Doctrine and Duty of Keeping the Sabbath.  
Salisbury: John M. Slump, 1798. Evans, 34032.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Work of God for the French Republick, and Then Her  
Reformation or Ruin; Or, The Novel and Useful Experiment of  
National Deism, To Us and All Future Ages. Salisbury: Francis  
Coupee, 1798. Evans, 34033.

\_\_\_\_\_. Four Discourses on the general first Principles of Deism and  
Revelation Contrasted, Discourse II. Salisbury: Francis Coupee  
and John M. Slump, 1798. Evans, 48509.

\_\_\_\_\_. Three Discourses on the Terms of Christian Communion.  
Salisbury: Francis Coupee and John M. Slump, 1798. Evans, 48510.

#### Other McCorkle Papers

Caruthers, Reverend Eli W. "a typewritten copy of a MS biography of  
Richard Hugg King." Raleigh: State Department of Archives and  
History, personal collection 23.1.

Richard H. King (1767-1825) was a graduate of the College of  
New Jersey. His grandfather bought land from and settled near  
Alexander McCorkle (Samuel's father). King attended Clio's Nursery  
under James Hall. This biography that Caruthers wrote was only in  
manuscript and very loosely tied together, but it contained vital  
information about Samuel McCorkle, his family, and life in Rowan  
County.

Haywood, Ernest. Papers. 1290, Southern Historical Collection,  
University of North Carolina, folder 27.

Henderson, Archibald. Papers. 3650, Southern Historical Collection,  
University of North Carolina, folders 191-192.

Henderson became interested in Samuel McCorkle, borrowed some  
of the family papers to examine, and lost them forever when his  
house burned. Fragments of McCorkle's career were recorded in  
Henderson's notes.

McCorkle, Samuel Eusebius. Papers. Mr. and Mrs. C. Lock Neal, China  
Grove, North Carolina.

The family descendants of Samuel McCorkle still retain a few  
miscellaneous papers such as marriage licenses, receipts, and so  
forth.

Steele, John. Papers. 689, Southern Historical Collection, University  
of North Carolina, box 2.

These papers and letters have been discovered since H. M.  
Wagstaff published The Papers of John Steele in 1924.

### Church Records

First Presbyterian Church, Salisbury, North Carolina, 1828-1905.

Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History.

Session records were kept beginning in 1828 and were available on microfilm in the state archives.

"Minutes of the Synod of the Carolinas, 1788-1799," I. Montreat: Presbyterian Historical Foundation.

The activities of Samuel McCorkle, a leader in the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina, were recorded in the minutes of the synod. A bound manuscript contained a handwritten copy of those minutes.

"Records Concord Presbytery," I, 1795-1824. Montreat: Presbyterian Historical Foundation.

McCorkle's activities in Concord Presbytery were recorded in a handwritten copy of the original session minutes.

"Records of Organ Lutheran Church, Rowan County, North Carolina."

Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History.

Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America Embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod, 1706-1788. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1904.

Thyatira Presbyterian Church, Rowan County, North Carolina. Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History.

Microfilm of the original church records of Thyatira was available, but such records were apparently not kept during the period before 1828.

### Government Records

Rowan County records. Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History.

Original records of deeds, marriages, wills, land entries, taxes, and roads were of much significance to the study. They were viewed in the state archives on microfilm and in Salisbury in the original.

Iredell County records. Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History.

The wills of Alexander and Rebecca McCorkle contributed a surprising amount of information about the McCorkle family, the location of their farm, and their residence and habits.



Clark, Walter, ed. The State Records of North Carolina. Greensboro: Nash Brothers, Book and Job Printers, 1906.

The charter of the University of North Carolina as well as other pieces of information were contained in the laws of North Carolina.

Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census. Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790: North Carolina. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908.

Information gathered from the censuses provided information about residence, children, and slaves.

"Second Census, 1800, North Carolina, Rowan County." Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History.

"Population Schedules of the Third Census of the United States, 1810." Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History.

Potter, Dorothy Williams, ed. 1820, Federal Census of North Carolina. Tullahoma: Dorothy Williams Potter, 1971, Rowan County, XLVII.

#### Printed Primary Sources

Albion, Robert G., and Leonidas Dodson, eds. Philip Vickers Fithian: Journal, 1775-1776; Written on the Virginia-Pennsylvania Frontier and in the Army Around New York. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1934.

Caruthers, Reverend Eli W. "Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, D.D., 1774-1811." Annals of the American Pulpit. Ed. William B. Sprague. New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969, III, 346-349.

The sketch was originally written about 1850, and the work was then published about 1859. Caruthers was born in 1793 within the limits of Thyatira congregation. He succeeded the Reverend David Caldwell in his pulpits and preached there until at least after 1850. As a young boy, Caruthers knew Samuel McCorkle as a pastor, and he learned more about McCorkle from older members of Thyatira Church.

Connor, R. D. W. A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1766-1799. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953.

This source was an invaluable collection of primary information such as newspaper advertisements, state laws, trustee minutes, and letters.

Coon, Charles L. North Carolina Schools and Academies, 1790-1840: A Documentary History. Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1915.

Farish, Hunter D., ed. Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion. Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, Incorporated, 1945.

Philip Vickers Fithian was Samuel McCorkle's classmate at the College of New Jersey and was his colleague when both were itinerant preachers in Virginia.

Hutchinson, William T., and William M. E. Rachal, eds. The Papers of James Madison. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962.

James Madison graduated from the College of New Jersey a year before Samuel McCorkle. It was probably well that Madison entered politics and left his poetry behind. These papers contain two fairly bad poems that Madison wrote which mentioned McCorkle and a letter from a classmate who commented on McCorkle's preaching.

Seybolt, Robert F. Source Studies in American Colonial Education: The Private School. Urbana: The University of Illinois, 1925.

Thyatira Memorial Association. Inscriptions on Stones in Thyatira Cemetery, 1755-1966. Salisbury: Thyatira Memorial Association, 1967.

Wagstaff, H. M. "The Harris Letters." The James Sprunt Historical Publications. Durham: The Seeman Printery, 1916.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Papers of John Steele. Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1924.

Witherspoon, John. Address to the Inhabitants of Jamaica, and Other West-India Islands in Behalf of the College of New Jersey. Philadelphia: William and Thomas Bradford, 1772. Evans, 12627.

Witherspoon's account described life at Nassau Hall during the year that Samuel McCorkle graduated.

\_\_\_\_\_. A Sermon on the Religious Education of Children. Elizabethtown: Shepard Kollock, 1789. Evans, 22284.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon. Philadelphia: William W. Woodward, 1800. Evans, 39128.

The three volume, 2,000 page work contained essays, lectures, and sermons which Witherspoon had printed.

## Secondary

### Books

Alexander, Samuel Davies. Princeton College During the Eighteenth Century. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph and Company, 1872.

This work, an alumni biography, described the careers of 646 of the graduates of the College of New Jersey during the first 54 years of existence. Some 894 men graduated during that period.

Bailyn, Bernard. Education in the Forming of American Society: Needs and Opportunities for Study. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960.

Containing an exhaustive bibliography, this source may be the most important contribution to educational history since the work 40 years ago of Ellwood P. Cubberley.

Battle, Kemp P. History of the University of North Carolina from Its Beginning to the Death of President Swain, 1789-1868. Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1907.

Boles, John. The Great Revival, 1787-1805: The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1972.

Brawley, James S. The Rowan Story, 1753-1953: A Narrative History of Rowan County, North Carolina. Salisbury: Rowan Printing Company, 1953.

Bridenbaugh, Carl. Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1952.

Brown, Elmer E. The Making of Our Middle Schools. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1926.

Brown described the transition from Latin grammar school to academy in eighteenth century America. The academy arose with the growth of a middle class.

Brumbaugh, Martin. The Life and Works of Christopher Dock, America's Pioneer Writer on Education with a Translation of His Works into the English Language. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1908.

Christopher Dock, a fine teacher in colonial America, wrote down his own experiences and methods.

Caruthers, Reverend Eli W. A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D.D., Near Sixty Years Pastor of the Churches of Buffalo and Alamance. Greensborough: Swaim and Sherwood, 1842.

Cleveland, Catharine. The Great Revival in the West, 1797-1805. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1916.

Collins, Varnum L. President Witherspoon: A Biography. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1925.

Cremin, Lawrence. American Education: The Colonial Experience. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1970.

The author saw the development of education in America as something more than the deluder Satan law, the Latin grammar school, and the public school. Cremin described the informal education that occurred as colonists adjusted to life in the New World. The changing types of schools was a result of substantial changes in the needs of society.

Davidson, Chalmers G. Piedmont Partisan: The Life and Times of Brigadier-General William Lee Davidson. Davidson: Davidson Printing Company, 1951.

The biography of William Lee Davidson, who was a compatriot of Samuel McCorkle and who lived in the same place at the same time, was most helpful in picturing life in piedmont North Carolina.

Eaton, Clement. Freedom of Thought in the Old South. Durham: Duke University Press, 1940.

Elsbree, Willard. The American Teacher: Evolution of a Profession in a Democracy. New York: American Book Company, 1939.

This enjoyable work discussed teaching in America at the time of Samuel McCorkle.

Foote, Reverend William Henry. Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of her Early Settlers. New York: Robert Carter, 1846.

This work was reprinted in Dunn, North Carolina, by the Reprint Company in 1912. The author, a Presbyterian minister, was for seven years the Secretary of Foreign Missions. His duties carried him to many congregations in Virginia and North Carolina, and while he visited these churches, Foote heard many of the older ministers and members of congregations talk about the past. Foote recorded what he learned, and his collection of information grew with the years.

\_\_\_\_\_. Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966.

This work was first published in Philadelphia in 1855.

Ford, Henry J. The Scotch-Irish in America. New York: Peter Smith, 1941.

Ford described the migration from Scotland to Ulster, from Ulster to Pennsylvania, and from Pennsylvania to the South of the many Scotch-Irish who came to America.

Henderson, Archibald. North Carolina: The Old North State and the New. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1941.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Campus of the First State University. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949.

Hurley, James F., and Julia G. Eagen. The Prophet of Zion-Parnassus, Samuel Eusebius McCorkle. Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1934.

The biography of Samuel McCorkle was based on the conventional wisdom and included very little research into primary sources.

Knight, Edgar W. The Academy Movement in the South. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1920.

Lefler, Hugh T., and Albert R. Newsome. North Carolina: The History of a Southern State. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954.

- Leyburn, James. The Scotch-Irish: A Social History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962.
- Lingle, Thomas. History of Thyatira Church, 1753 to 1925. Statesville: Brady Publishing Company, 1925.
- Lingle, Walter. Thyatira Presbyterian Church, Rowan County, North Carolina, 1753 to 1948. Statesville: Brady Printing Company, n.d.
- Maclean, John. History of the College of New Jersey, 1746-1854. Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott and Company, 1877.  
This work was reprinted in 1969 by the Arno Press and The New York Times.
- Merrens, Harry R. Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Historical Geography. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964.
- Morison, Samuel E. Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936.
- Phillips, Ulrich B. Life and Labor in the Old South. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1948.
- Ramsey, Robert W. Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964.
- Rights, Douglas L. The American Indian in North Carolina. Durham: Duke University Press, 1947.  
The author described the influence of the French and Indian War upon the area around Salisbury where the McCorkles had just settled.
- Robinson, Blackwell P. William R. Davie. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957.  
William R. Davie and Samuel McCorkle were the two most important men in the effort to found the University of North Carolina.
- Rumple, Reverend Jethro. A History of Rowan County, North Carolina Containing Sketches of Prominent Families and Distinguished Men. Salisbury: J. J. Bruner, 1881.  
Rumple was the minister at the First Presbyterian Church in Salisbury, and he was quite interested in both Rowan County and Presbyterian history. He learned what he could from Foote and other sources, and he wrote about what he had learned.
- Smith, Charles L. The History of Education in North Carolina. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888.
- Stone, Robert H. A History of Orange Presbytery, 1770-1970. Greensboro: Heritage Printers, Incorporated, 1970.

- Thompson, Ernest T. Presbyterians in the South. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963.
- Treacy, M. F. Prelude to Yorktown: The Southern Campaign of Nathanael Greene, 1780-1781. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963.
- Walker, N. W., and M. C. S. Noble. Pattillo's Geographical Catechism. Chapel Hill: The University Press, 1909.
- Wertenbaker, Thomas J. Princeton, 1746-1896. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946.
- Wilson, Louis R. The Chronicles of the Sesquicentennial. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947.

#### Articles

- Baldwin, Alice. "Sowers of Sedition: The Political Theories of Some of the New Light Presbyterian Clergy of Virginia and North Carolina." William and Mary Quarterly, third series, 5 (1948), 52-76.  
 Samuel McCorkle and his colleagues in the Presbyterian ministry in North Carolina were largely Patriots. Their politics came from the doctrine of a fundamental constitution in the Scriptures. When these natural and inalienable rights were oppressed, people had to restore good government.
- Come, Donald R. "The Influence of Princeton on Higher Education in the South Before 1825." William and Mary Quarterly, third series, 2 (1945), 359-396.
- Connor, R. D. W. "The Genesis of Higher Education in North Carolina." North Carolina Historical Review, 28 (1951), 1-14.
- Stokes, Durward. "North Carolina and the Great Revival of 1800." North Carolina Historical Review, 43 (1966), 401-412.
- Weeks, Stephen B. "Beginnings of the Common School System in the South." From the Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1896-97, United States Bureau of Education. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898.

APPENDIX A

THE "POETRY" OF JAMES MADISON<sup>1</sup>

A poem against the Tories.

Of late our muse keen satire drew  
And humourous thoughts in vollies flew  
Because we took our foes for men  
Who might deserve a decent pen  
A gross mistake with brutes we fight  
And (goblins?) from the realms of night  
With lice collected from the beds  
Where Spring & Craig lay down their heads  
Sometimes a goat steps on the pump  
Which animates old Warford's trunk  
Sometimes a poisonous toad appears  
Which Eckley's yellow carcuss bears  
And then to grace us with a bull  
Forsooth they show McOrkles skull  
And that the Ass may not escape  
He takes the poet Laureat's shape  
That screech owl too comes in the train  
Which leap'd from Alexander's brain  
Just as he scratch's his grisley head  
Which people say is made of lead.  
Come noble whigs, disdain these sons  
Of screech owls, monkeys, & baboons  
Keep up you(r) minds to humourous themes  
And verdant meads & flowing streams  
Untill this tribe of dunces find  
The baseness of their grovelling mind  
And skulk within their dens together  
Where each ones stench will kill his brother;

J.M.

---

<sup>1</sup>William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal, eds., The Papers of James Madison (Chicago: 1962), pp. 64-65.

## Clio's Proclamation

Whereas a certain mongrel race  
 of tawney hide & grizly face  
 Have dar'd to prostitute my name  
 To raise the scribbling fools to fame  
 I hereby send this proclamat(io)n  
 To every land & every nation  
 Declaring it my full intention  
 To free the world from this convention  
 And as a sanction to my word  
 I'll drive the dogs with fire & sword  
 Hedlong down to Pluto's coast  
 There in boiling flames to roast  
 And then their bodies I'll resign  
 To gnawing worms & hungry swine  
 Or to manure the farmers field  
 For much of dung their trunks will yield  
 Very like it in their nature  
 As sprung from every filthy creature  
 But first selecting from McOrkle  
 And every other stinking mortal  
 Whateer may be of use to those  
 From whom the wicked wretches rose  
 The poet Laureat head who scoops  
 May make a drum for yankey troops  
 B'ing quite as empty & as sounding  
 His skull full thick to bear the pounding  
 While eckley's skin & jakes together  
 When tan'd will make a side of leather  
 Just fit to cloath McOrkle bum  
 Which now becomes a battering ram  
 And plac'd before a city wall  
 Will ward of(f) many a whizzing ball  
 And by its monstrous stench may save  
 Ten thousand yankes from the grave.  
 Great Allen founder of the crew  
 If right I guess must keep a stew  
 The lecherous rascal there will find  
 A place just suited to his mind  
 May whore & pimp & drink & swear  
 Nor more the garb of christians wear  
 And free Nassau from such a pest  
 A dunce a fool an ass at best.

J. Maddison



APPENDIX B

THE CLASS OF 1772<sup>1</sup>

Isaac Alexander	medical doctor, president of Liberty Hall Academy, elder at Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church
Moses Allen	born in Massachusetts, became Presbyterian minister in Georgia, army chaplain during Revolution, died 1779 escaping a prison ship
Robert Archibald	Presbyterian minister at Rocky River, after 1792 was in trouble for erroneous doctrines and heavy drinking
William Bradford, Jr.	lawyer, attorney-general under Washington
Andrew Bryan	no information
Aaron Burr, Jr.	son of second president of the college, became senator, vice-president, killed Hamilton and ended in obscurity
John DeBow	Presbyterian minister of Hawfields, died 1782
Joseph Eckley	Presbyterian minister in Boston, D.D., 1787 (College of New Jersey), died 1811
Israel Evans	Presbyterian minister in New Hampshire
Ebenezer Finley	son of President Finley, became medical doctor in South Carolina
Philip Vickers Fithian	born in New Jersey, became Presbyterian minister, died in Revolution
James Grier	born in Pennsylvania, graduated with the highest honors, became Presbyterian minister

---

<sup>1</sup>Samuel Davies Alexander, Princeton College During the Eighteenth Century (New York: 1872), pp. 147-159. Alumni Biographical files from Princeton Archives; letter of January 29, 1973, from Dr. Edith Blendon, Acting University Archivist, Princeton.

Andrew Hodge	born in Philadelphia, was in Revolution, became merchant
Andrew Hunter, II	born in Virginia, became Presbyterian minister, in Revolution, trustee of College of New Jersey and professor
Robert Keith	born in Pennsylvania, Presbyterian minister, chaplain in Revolution, died 1784
William Linn	born in Pennsylvania, Presbyterian minister, chaplain in Revolution, ran academy
William Smith Livingston	lawyer in New York, officer in Revolution
George Luckey	born in Pennsylvania, Presbyterian minister in Maryland
Samuel Eusebius McCorkle	
John McMillan	born in Pennsylvania, Presbyterian minister, ran academy
Oliver Reese	Presbyterian minister in South Carolina, died 1776 or 1777
James Templeton	Presbyterian minister in South and North Carolina

APPENDIX C

THE ADVERTISEMENT FOR ZION-PARNASSUS<sup>1</sup>

A GRAMMAR SCHOOL

WILL be opened by the subscriber at the Frame-Meeting-House, now Thyatira, in Rowan county, near Salisbury, on the first day of January, 1794, provided ten scholars offer, other-wise as soon after as that number shall attend--seven have already offered.

The people in the neighbourhood have engaged by a written article, to furnish boarding for thirty-four students, and it is believed that forty may be accommodated, at the rate of fifteen pounds paper money per annum. The boarding to include all accommodations, candles only excepted, and the price not to be raised for five years, the case of extraordinary scarcity excepted. The terms will be judged not unreasonable by those who have ever boarded students, and they only can be the proper judges. It is hoped, that considering the contiguity of the place to a district-town, none will deem the price to be unreasonable.

The price of tuition will be five pounds ten shillings paper money, and a dollar for the use of an apparatus;--a very good electrical machine is already provided, and measures have been taken by the Trustees of the late Salisbury academy, under whose patronage the school will be opened, to furnish it with a set of globes, a barometer, thermometer, microscope, prismatic glass, and set of surveying instruments complete.

The school will be taken into the immediate care of the subscriber, who proposes to spend four days every week in teaching himself, and to provide a capable Usher on the other days, which he designs to devote to his parochial charge.

The students will have opportunity of attending divine service almost every Sabbath; and the greatest care will be taken to promote religion, literature, good manners and good morals among them by

SAMUEL E. M'CORKLE.

Note--The school is intended as a nursery for the University, in the interest of which the above-written feels himself warmly interested, and therefore wishes to do every thing in his power to promote it. No

---

<sup>1</sup>North Carolina Journal (Halifax), November 27, 1793, quoted in R. D. W. Connor, A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1766-1799 (Chapel Hill: 1953), I, pp. 251-253.

grammar-school being very near him, he has, with the advice of his friends, proposed to open the above school, in order to teach young men the first rudiments of language and science, and so to prepare them for a more complete education at the University, which it is hoped will ere long be prepared to receive them. Should there be some who cannot wait on the University, their education will be finished as well as the state of the said school will admit.

To promote the interest of the University, and to comply with a request made long since by some of his friends, the above named proposes to publish a sermon on Education, preached about ten years ago, together with the substance of several addresses to the students of the late Salisbury academy, on religion, morals and literature.

Also a sermon on the principles, nature and excellence of Charity, lately delivered in Salisbury and other places, and last at the opening of the Synod of the Carolinas in Mecklenburg county, with a view to the obtaining of donations for the University. The necessary measures will be concerted with his friends, at the meeting of the Assembly and Trustees of the University by the above named.

S.E.M.

APPENDIX D

NORTH CAROLINA PRESBYTERIAN ACADEMIES IN

McCORKLE'S TIME<sup>1</sup>

Name	Academy	Place	Approximate Date of Founding
Joseph Alexander	Crowfield Academy	Iredell County	1760
James Tate	academy	Wilmington	1760
David Caldwell	log college	Guilford County	1765
Joseph Alexander	academy	Sugar Creek	1767
James Hall	Clio's Nursery	Statesville	1776
Robert Archibald	Poplar Tent	Cabarrus County	1778
Henry Pattillo	Granville Hall	Granville County	1779
Samuel McCorkle	Salisbury Academy	Salisbury	1784
James Wallis	Providence Academy	near Charlotte	1792
Samuel McCorkle	Zion-Parnassus	Thyatira	1794

---

<sup>1</sup>The listing, which is admittedly partial, is my compilation from: Ernest T. Thompson, Presbyterians in the South (Richmond: 1963), I, pp. 82, 245-246. Reverend William Henry Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of her Early Settlers (New York: 1846), p. 359. Stephen B. Weeks, "Beginnings of the Common School System in the South," from the Report of the Commissioner of Education for 1896-1897, United States Bureau of Education (Washington: 1898), pp. 1387-1390. Edgar W. Knight, The Academy Movement in the South (Chapel Hill: 1920), p. 85. Louis R. Wilson, The Chronicles of the Sesquicentennial (Chapel Hill: 1947), p. 158. Charles L. Coon, North Carolina Schools and Academies, 1790-1840: A Documentary History (Raleigh: 1915), p. xxxvi. Samuel A. Ashe, ed., Biographical History of North Carolina from Colonial Times to the Present (Greensboro: 1905), II, p. 164.

Name	Academy	Place	Approximate Date of Founding
John M. Wilson		Rocky River	
David Ker	Fayetteville Academy	Fayetteville	1794
John Robinson		Fayetteville	
William Bingham	Pittsborough Academy	Chatham County	
David Caldwell, Jr.	Pittsborough Academy	Chatham County	
Joseph D. Kilpatrick			

APPENDIX E

THE McCORKLE-SHARPE BILL OF 1784<sup>1</sup>

A bill for establishing a University in this State to be distinguished by the title of the President and Trustees of the North Carolina University.

Whereas it is provided in the forty first article of the constitution of this State "That a school or schools shall be established by the Legislature for the convenient instruction of youth with such salaries to the masters, paid by the Public, as may enable them to instruct at low prices; and that all useful learning shall be encouraged and promoted in one or more universities."

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina and it is hereby enacted by the Authority of the same, That \_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_ and they are hereby declared to be a body corporate and politic, to be known and distinguished by the title of \_\_\_\_\_ and by that name and title shall have perpetual succession and a common seal and that they the said \_\_\_\_\_ and trustees and their successors by name aforesaid or a Majority of them shall be able and Capable in law to take demand recover and possess all monies goods and Chattels that shall be given them for the use of the said University. \_\_\_\_\_ and the same apply according to the will of the doners and by gift purchase or devise to take have receive possess enjoy and retain to them and their successors forever any lands, rents, tenements, and Hereditaments of what kind nature or quality soever, the same may be in special trust and confidence that the same or the profits thereof shall be applied to and for the uses and purposes of establishing and endowing the said University \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ building or purchasing suitable and convenient houses for the same providing a philosophical apparatus and Public Library and supporting and paying Salaries to the president professors and other officers as shall be necessary to instruct the students and they shall be able to pay out of the public funds that shall be in their hands

And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid that the said President and Trustees \_\_\_\_\_ and their successors or a Majority of them by the name aforesaid shall be able and capable in Law to bargain sell grant devise alien or dispose of and convey and assure to the purchasers any such lands, rents, tenements or Hereditaments

---

<sup>1</sup>The McCorkle-Sharpe Bill of 1784, quoted in R. D. W. Connor, A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1766-1799 (Chapel Hill: 1953), I, pp. 14-20.

aforesaid when the condition of the grant to them or the will of the deviser does not forbid the same and further that the said President \_\_\_\_\_, and Trustees, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and their successors for ever or a Majority, \_\_\_\_\_, of them shall be able and capable in law by the name aforesaid to sue and implead be sued and impleaded answer and be answered in any court of record whatsoever

And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid That the said Trustees or any \_\_\_\_\_ be and they are hereby impowered authorized and required to convene at \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ and then and there and at all other times forever hereafter when the said \_\_\_\_\_ and their successors or a \_\_\_\_\_ of them shall be convened and met to gether in the said \_\_\_\_\_ they shall have full power and lawful authority to elect and constitute one or more professors or tutors and also to make and ordain such Laws rules and ordinances not repugnant to the laws of this State for the well ordering and governing the students their morals studies and Academical exercises as to them shall seem expedient and necessary

Be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid that the said President \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and Trustees \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ before they enter upon the execution of the trust reposed in them by this act shall take the oath appointed for public officers and also the following oath. I. A. B. do swear that will duly and faithfully to the best of \_\_\_\_\_ skill and abilit execute and discharge the several \_\_\_\_\_ trusts powers and authorities wherewith I am invested by an act of the General Assembly intituled an act for \_\_\_\_\_ and that I will endeavour that all monies, goods and chattels and the profits of lands belonging to this corporation shall be duly applied to the use of the North Carolina University for the advancement of learning and as near as may be agreeable to the will of the doner \_\_\_\_\_, So help me God,

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that the President \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and Trustees or an \_\_\_\_\_ of them shall annaually \_\_\_\_\_, in the month of \_\_\_\_\_ elect and Commissionate some person to be treasurer for the said University \_\_\_\_\_ during the term of one year which treasurer shall enter into bond with sufficient security to the President and Trustees \_\_\_\_\_ in the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ conditioned for the faithful discharge of his office and the trust reposed in him and that all Monies and Chattels belonging to the said corporation that shall be in hands at the expiration of his office shall then be immediately paid and delivered into the hands of the succeeding Treasurer and every Treasurer shall receive all monies Donations, Gifts, bequests and Charities whatsoever that may belong or accrue to the said University \_\_\_\_\_ during his office and at the expiration thereof shall Account with the President and Trustees \_\_\_\_\_ for the same and the same pay and deliver over to the succeeding Treasurer

And whereas it is necessary to make provisions for the appointment of succeeding President \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and Trustees \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, in order to keep up a Perpetual Succession. Be it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid that on the death refusal to act or Qualify resignation or removal out of



the State of the said President \_\_\_\_\_, or any of the Trustees \_\_\_\_\_, for the time being it shall be lawful for the remaining Trustees-any \_\_\_\_\_ them and they are hereby authorized and required to convene and meet together in the said University \_\_\_\_\_ and there elect and appoint another President \_\_\_\_\_ or one or more Trustees \_\_\_\_\_, as the case may be in the room and stead of such President, Trustee or Trustees \_\_\_\_\_ dead, refusing to Qualify, resigned, or removed out of the State which President Trustee or Trustees \_\_\_\_\_, so elected and appointed shall be vested with the same Trusts powers and authorities as any other President \_\_\_\_\_ and or Trustees are invested by virtue of this Act.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that the said President and Trustees \_\_\_\_\_ and their successors or \_\_\_\_\_ of them at their meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ and at any other meeting called for that \_\_\_\_\_ purpose after due notice given at least \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ signifying the occasion of such meeting shall have full power and authority to hear any complaint against the President or any professor or Tutor or other officer and for misbehaviour or neglect, to suspend or wholly remove him or them from office and appoint others to fill the same office or offices respectively and any Person \_\_\_\_\_ so removed from office shall from thenceforth cease to be a member of the corporation and the Person so appointed in his room and stead shall be vested with all the authorities and privileges with which His Predecessor by this Act appointed is invested.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that the said President \_\_\_\_\_ and Professors \_\_\_\_\_ shall have full powers and authorities to grant and confer the degrees Doctor Master and Batchelor of Arts \_\_\_\_\_, and they are hereby impowered and required to grant Diploma's certifying the same to such Students or others as shall possess a sufficient degree of literary merit.

And be it further Enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the said Trustees may be enabled to carry this act into effect the following Tax shall be levied annually for the support and endowment thereof, that is to say a poll Tax on each Importing Merchant of \_\_\_\_\_ on each inland Trader of \_\_\_\_\_ on each Pedler or itenerant Trader of \_\_\_\_\_ on each Lawyer \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ on each Physician \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ on each Clerk of a Court \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ on each and every Sheriff \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ with two and an half per cent on all annual Salaries \_\_\_\_\_ the above Tax shall be collected \_\_\_\_\_ accounted for as directed by an act intituled an act for \_\_\_\_\_ and the above monies when so collected shall be subject to the draughts of the Treasurer of the said University only, which order or draught shall also be countersigned by the president of the University.

APPENDIX F

ORIGINAL CHARTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF

NORTH CAROLINA (WHEN IT BECAME LAW

ON DECEMBER 11, 1789)<sup>1</sup>

Chapter XX

An Act to Establish a University in this State.

Whereas in all well regulated governments it is the indispensable duty of every Legislature to consult the happiness of a rising generation, and endeavour to fit them for an honourable discharge of the social duties of life, by paying the strictest attention to their education: And whereas an university supported by permanent funds and well endowed, would have the most direct tendency to answer the above purpose:

I. Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North-Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, That Samuel Johnston, James Iredell, Charles Johnson, Hugh Williamson, Stephen Cabarrus, Richard Dobbs Spaight, William Blount, Benjamin Williams, John Sitgreaves, Frederick Harget, Robert W. Snead, Archibald Maclaine, Honourable Samuel Ashe, Robert Dixon, Benjamin Smith, Honourable Samuel Spencer, John Hay, James Hogg, Henry William Harrington, William Barry Grove, Reverend Samuel M'Corkle, Adlai Osborne, John Stokes, John Hamilton, Joseph Graham, Honourable John Williams, Thomas Person, Alfred Moore, Alexander Mebane, Joel Lane, Willie Jones, Benjamin Hawkins, John Haywood, senior, John Macon, William Richardson Davie, Joseph Dixon, William Lenoir, Joseph M'Dowall, James Holland, and William Porter, Esquires shall be and they are hereby declared to be a body politic and corporate, to be known and distinguished by the name of The Trustees of the University of North-Carolina; and by that name shall have perpetual succession and a common seal; and that they the Trustees and their successors by the name aforesaid, or a majority of them, shall be able and capable in law to take, demand, receive and possess all

---

<sup>1</sup>The Laws of North Carolina, 1789, chapter XX, quoted in Walter Clark, ed., The State Records of North Carolina (Goldsboro: 1906), XXV, pp. 21-24; also quoted in R. D. W. Connor, A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1766-1799 (Chapel Hill: 1953), I, pp. 34-39.

monies, goods and chattels that shall be given them for the use of the said university, and the same apply according to the will of the donors, and by gift, purchase, or devise to take, have, receive, possess, enjoy and retain to them and their successors forever, any lands, rents, tenements and hereditaments, of what kind, nature or quality soever the same may be, in special trust and confidence that the same or the profits thereof shall be applied to and for the use and purposes of establishing and endowing the said university.

II. And be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the Trustees and their successors, or a majority of them, by the name aforesaid, shall be able and capable in law to bargain, sell, grant, demise, alien or dispose of, and convey and assure to the purchasers, any such lands, rents, tenements and hereditaments aforesaid, when the condition of the grant to them, or the will of the devisor, does not forbid it. And further that they the said Trustees and their successors forever, or a majority of them, shall be able and capable in law by the name aforesaid, to sue and implead, be sued and impleaded, answer and be answered, in all courts of record whatsoever; and they shall have power to open and receive subscriptions; and in general they shall and may do all such things as are usually done by bodies corporate and politic, or such as may be necessary for the promotion of learning and virtue.

III. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the said Trustees, in order to carry the present act into effect, shall meet at Fayetteville on the third Monday in the session of the next General Assembly, at which time they shall choose a President and Secretary; and shall then fix the time of their next annual meeting; and at every annual meeting of the Trustees, the members present, with the President and Treasurer, shall be a quorum to do any business, or a majority of the members, without either of those officers, shall be a quorum; but at their first meeting as above directed there shall be at least fifteen of the above Trustees present in order to proceed to business; and the Trustees at their annual meeting may appoint special meetings within the year; or in case unforeseen accidents shall render a meeting necessary, the Secretary, by order of the President and any two of the Trustees signified to him in writing, shall by particular notice to each Trustee, as well as by an advertisement in the State Gazette, convene the Trustees at the time proposed by the President; and the members thus convened shall be a quorum to do any business except the appointment of a President or professors in the university, or the disposal or appropriation of monies; but in case of the death or resignation of the President or any professor, the Trustees thus convened may supply the place until the next annual meeting of the Board of Trustees and no longer; and the meeting at which the seat of the said university shall be fixed, shall be advertised in the Gazette of this state at least six months, and notice in manner aforesaid to each of the Trustees of the object of the said meeting.

IV. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the Trustees shall elect and commissionate some person to be Treasurer for the said university during the term of two years; which Treasurer shall enter into bond with sufficient securities to the Governor for the time being, in the sum of five thousand pounds, conditioned for the faithful discharge of his office and the trust reposed in him; and that all monies and chattels belonging to the said corporation that shall be in

his hands at the expiration of his office, shall then be immediately paid and delivered into the hands of the succeeding Treasurer: And every Treasurer shall receive all monies, donations, gifts, bequests and charities whatsoever that may belong or accrue to the said university during his office, and at the expiration thereof shall account with the Trustees for the same, and the same pay and deliver over to the succeeding Treasurer; and on his neglect or refusal to pay and deliver as aforesaid, the same method of recovery may be had against him, as is or may be provided for the recovery of monies from Sheriffs or other persons chargeable with public monies: And the Treasurer of the university shall cause annually to be published in the State Gazette, for the satisfaction of the subscribers and benefactors, a list of all monies and other things by him received for the said university, either by subscription, legacy, donation or otherwise, under the penalty of one hundred pounds, to be recovered at the suit of the Attorney General, in the name of the Governor for the time being, in any court of record having cognizance thereof; and the monies arising from such penalties shall be appropriated to the use of the said university.

V. Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all monies received by the Treasurer of the said university, shall be annually paid by him to the Treasurer of the state, who is hereby authorised and ordered to give a receipt to the said Treasurer of the university in behalf of the said Trustees, for all such sums by him received; and the said Treasurer shall pay annually unto the Treasurer of the said university, six per cent. interest on all such sums received by him in the manner aforesaid; which amount of interest paid by the state Treasurer as aforesaid, shall be allowed to him in the settlement of his accounts; And the said Trustees shall on no event or pretence whatsoever, appropriate or make use of the principal of the monies by them received on subscription, but such principal shall be and remain as a permanent fund for the use and support of the said university forever.

VI. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That on the death, refusal to act, resignation or removal out of the state, of any of the Trustees for the time being, it shall be lawful for the remaining Trustees, or any fifteen of them, and they are hereby authorised and required to elect and appoint one or more Trustees in the place of such Trustee or Trustees dead, refusing to act, resigned or removed; which Trustee or Trustees so appointed, shall be vested with the same powers, trust and authorities as the Trustees are by virtue of this act. Provided nevertheless, That the Trustee or Trustees so appointed, shall reside in the superior court district where the person or persons reside in whose room he or they shall be so elected.

VII. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That when the Trustees shall deem the funds of the said university adequate to the purchase of a necessary quantity of land and erecting the proper buildings, they shall direct a meeting of the said Trustees for the purpose of fixing on and purchasing a healthy and convenient situation, which shall not be situate within five miles of the permanent seat of government, or any of the places holding the courts of law or equity; which meeting shall be advertised at least six months in some gazette in this state, and at such superior courts as may happen within that time.

VIII. Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the Trustees shall have the power of appointing a President of the university, and such professors and tutors as to them shall appear necessary and proper, whom they may remove for misbehaviour, inability or neglect of duty; and they shall have the power to make all such laws and regulations for the government of the university and preservation of order and good morals therein, as are usually made in such seminaries, and as to them may appear necessary; provided the same are not contrary to the unalienable liberty of a citizen, or to the laws of the state. And the faculty of the university, that is to say, the President and professors, by and with the consent of the Trustees, shall have the power of conferring all such degrees or marks of literary distinction, as are usually conferred in colleges or universities.

IX. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every person who within the term of five years shall subscribe ten pounds towards this university, to be paid within five years, at five equal annual payments, shall be entitled to have one student educated at the university free from any expence of tuition.

X. And be it further enacted, That the public hall of the library and four of the colleges shall be called severally by the names of one or another of the six persons who shall within four years contribute the largest sums towards the funds of this university, the highest subscriber or donor having choice in the order of their respective donations. And a book shall be kept in the library of the university, in which shall be fairly entered the names and places of residence of every benefactor to this seminary, in order that posterity may be informed to whom they are indebted for the measure of learning and good morals that may prevail in this state.

APPENDIX G

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA FUNDING ACT OF 1789<sup>1</sup>

Chapter XXI

An Act for Raising a Fund for Erecting the Buildings  
and for the Support of the  
University of North Carolina

Whereas, the General Assembly by their Act, entitled "An Act to establish a University in this state," passed on the eleventh day of December instant, have declared that a University shall be established and erected in this state, which shall be called and known by the name of The University of North Carolina: And whereas, adequate funds will be found to be the means which will most effectually ensure to the state the advantages to be hoped and expected from such an institution:

I. Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the Authority of the same, That a gift of all monies due and owing to the public of North Carolina, either for arrearages under the former or present government, up to the first day of January, one thousand seven hundred and eight-three, inclusive, (monies or certificates due for confiscated property purchased excepted) shall be and is hereby declared to be fully and absolutely made, for the purpose of erecting the necessary buildings, employing professors and tutors, and carrying into complete effect the act before recited: And the Treasurer is hereby directed and required to commence suits, and to prosecute all persons owing as above mentioned, and the monies recovered in consequence thereof to pay into the hands of the Trustees named in said act, or their successors, to be applied to the purposes aforesaid. Provided, That nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent the Treasurer or Comptroller from settling with

---

<sup>1</sup>There was no financial appropriation of funds from the General Assembly to aid in the establishment of the university, but an additional act passed four days later on December 15, 1789, provided for an endowment from the sale of lands for a building fund and maintenance as well as an exemption from taxes. The Laws of North Carolina, 1789, chapter XXI, quoted in Walter Clark, ed., The State Records of North Carolina (Goldsboro: 1906), XXV, pp. 24-25; also quoted in R. D. W. Connor, A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1766-1799 (Chapel Hill: 1953), I, p. 39.

and collecting from the executors of Robert Lanier, deceased, late Treasurer of Salisbury district, such sums in cash or certificates as may on a final settlement of his accounts be found to be due to the public; nor shall it extend to prevent their collecting from the Sheriffs of that district, their arrearages of taxes which became due under the present government, and which ought to have been paid into the office of the said Lanier as Treasurer aforesaid; provided they make such collection within the space of two years, after which time the arrearages of that district also shall be considered as being included in this gift.

II. And be it enacted, That all the property that has heretofore or shall hereafter escheat to the state, shall be and hereby is vested in the said Trustees, for the use and benefit of the said University.

III. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the lands and other property belonging to the University aforesaid, shall be, and the same is hereby exempt from all kind of public taxation.

## APPENDIX H

### THE McCORKLE COMMITTEE'S PRELIMINARY

#### PLAN OF EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

That taking into consideration the uncertainty of the time when the buildings of the University will be compleated, as also that the State of our Funds at such time, is at present intirely unknown--deem it premature to offer any engagements as to stipend or salary: but in general beg leave to remark that (unless the active funds of the institution shall amount beyond the present estimate conceived by Your Committee) the pursuits of literature and Science should on the first institution be confined to the following objects: The study of languages particularly the English. The acquirement of Historical knowledge ancient and modern. The Study of the Belles letters. Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, the improvement of the intellectual powers including a rational system of logic and moral philosophy, Information in Botany to which should be added a competent knowledge in the theory and practice of Agriculture best suited to the climate and Soils of this State. The principles of Architecture these are enquiries to which your committee beg leave to submit their opinion that the attention of the students should be early directed, in which should the board concur, Your Committee would further suggest the propriety of the board making public their designs--that such literary characters as may think proper to be ingaged in the instruction of Youth in the University and conversant with these branches of literature and science may make their desires known to this board--that the pretensions of the several applicants may be inquired into and appointments accordingly made at such time as the University may be ready for the reception of Teachers and Students, With respect to what number of Teachers or professors it would be proper to engage, Your Committee decline giving an opinion as competent salaries must be provided for them, and the ability of the board of Trustees in this particular must depend upon the future state of their funds and As early as practicable Your Committee beg leave further to recommend that steps be taken to procure an apparatus for experimental Philosophy and Astronomy. In this they would include a set of Globes Barometers Thermometers Microscope Telescope Quadrant prismatic Glass Air pump and an Electrical Machine A Library Your Committee are

---

<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the Board of Trustees, December 5, 1792, quoted in R. D. W. Connor, A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1766-1799 (Chapel Hill: 1953), I, pp. 181-184.



also of opinion should be procured but the choice of books will perhaps come more immediately within the province of the faculty of the University Your Committee have however taken the liberty to mention the apparatus and Library that such Gentlemen as intend to become benefactors of the institution by presenting particular parts of either may be induced to come forward, Your Committee further add that they are of opinion that no accurate Idea can be formed of the terms upon which Students will be admitted but hope they will be such as together with the system of education will merit the patronage of the public.

Saml McCorkle Chn.

## APPENDIX I

### THE CORNERSTONE-LAYING CEREMONY<sup>1</sup>

On the 12th inst. the Commissioners appointed by the Board of Trustees of the University of this state, met at Chappel-Hill for the purpose of laying the corner-stone of the present building, and disposing of the lots in the village. A large number of the brethren of the Masonic order from Hillsborough, Chatham, Granville and Warren attended to assist at the ceremony of placing the corner-stone; and the procession for this purpose moved from Mr. Patterson's at 12 o'clock, in the following order: The Masonic Brethren in their usual order of procession, the Commissioners, the Trustees not Commissioners, the Hon. Judge Macay and other public officers, then followed the gentlemen of the vicinity. On approaching the south end of the building, the Masons opened to the right and left, and the Commissioners, etc. passed through and took their place. The Masonic procession then moved on round the foundation of the building, and halted with their usual ceremonies opposite to the south-east corner, where WILLIAM RICHARDSON DAVIE, Grand-Master of the fraternity, etc. in this state, assisted by two Masters of lodges and four other officers, laid the corner-stone, enclosing a plate to commemorate the transaction.

The Rev. Dr. M'Corkle then addressed the Trustees and spectators in an excellent discourse suited to the occasion; of which the following is an extract: Observing on the natural and necessary connexion between learning and religion, and the importance of religion to the promotion of national happiness and national undertakings, he said, "It is our duty to acknowledge that sacred scriptural truth, 'Except the Lord do build the house, they labour in vain who build it; except the Lord watcheth the city, the watchmen walketh but in vain.' For my own part, I feel myself penetrated with a sense of these truths, and this I feel not only as a minister of religion, but also as a citizen of the state, as a member of civil as well as religious society. These unaffected feelings of my heart give me leave to express with that plainness and honesty which becomes a preacher of the gospel, and a minister of Jesus Christ."

Stating the advancement of learning and science as one great mean of ensuring the happiness of mankind, the Doctor observed, "Happiness is the center to which all the duties of man and people tend. It is the

---

<sup>1</sup>North-Carolina Journal (Halifax), October 30, 1793, quoted in R. D. W. Connor, A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1766-1799 (Chapel Hill: 1953), I, pp. 237-240.

center to which states as well as individuals are universally and powerfully attracted. To diffuse the greatest possible degree of happiness in a given territory, is the aim of good government and religion. Now the happiness of a nation depends upon national wealth and national glory, and cannot be gained without them. They in like manner demand liberty and good laws. Liberty and laws call for general knowledge in the people, and extensive knowledge in the ministers of the state, and these in fine demand public places of education. That happiness is the object of all, I believe will be denied by none. Nations and men are seeking for it. How can any nation be happy without national wealth? How can that nation or man be happy that is not procuring and securing the necessary conveniences and accommodations of life? ease without indolence, and plenty without luxury or want. How can glory or wealth be procured or preserved without liberty and laws? They must check luxury, encourage industry, and protect wealth. They must secure me the glory of my actions, and save from a bow-string or a bastille--and how are these objects to be gained without general knowledge. Knowledge is wealth, it is glory, whether among philosophers, ministers of state or religion, or among the great mass of the people. Britons glory in the name of a Newton, and have honoured him with a place among the sepulchres of their kings. Americans glory in the name of a Franklin, and every nation boasts her great men who has them. Savages cannot have, rather cannot educate them, though many a Newton has been born and buried amongst them. 'Knowledge is liberty and law. When the clouds of ignorance are dispelled by the radiance of knowledge, power trembles, but the authority of the laws remains inviolable.' And how this knowledge, productive of so many advantages to mankind, can be acquired without public places of education, I know not."

In viewing the rise and progress of this important institution, he concluded with these observations: "The seat of the University was next sought for, and the public eye selected Chappel-Hill--a lovely situation--in the center of the state--at a convenient distance from the capital--in a healthy and fertile neighbourhood. May this hill be for religion as the antient hill of Zion; and for literature and the muses, may it surpass the antient Parnassus! We this day enjoy the pleasure of seeing the corner-stone of the University, its foundations, its materials, and the architects of the building; and we hope ere long to see its stately walls and spire ascending to their summit--ere long we hope to see it adorned with an elegant village, accommodated with all the necessaries and conveniences of civilized society."

This discourse was followed by a short but animated prayer, closed with the united AMEN of an immense concourse of people.

The Commissioners then proceeded to sell the lots in the village, and we have the pleasure to assure the public, that although there were but twnty-nine lots, they sold for upwards of one thousand five hundred pounds, which shews the high idea the public entertain of this agreeable and healthful situation.

## APPENDIX J

### THE REPORT OF THE McCORKLE COMMITTEE:

#### PLAN OF EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

The Committee to whom was recommitted their report fixing the price of tuition, the number of those whom it is at present necessary to employ as teachers in the University of North Carolina, the sums which shall be allowed them in salary etc., having met on the business assigned them beg leave to submit the following

The exercises of the University, aforesaid shall begin on the 15th Day of January which shall be in the Year 1795. The visitation of the Trustees for public examinations or exhibitions, and the annual commencement or time of conferring degrees, shall first take place on the monday which shall next happen after the 10th Day of July in the Year 1795, and shall occasion as a time of recreation or Holliday of one Week only. The Yearly Vacation shall first take place on the 15th. day of December 1795, and shall continue from thence until the 15th. day of January 1796, and it shall so happen yearly and every year.

A Stewards House containing a large dining room, Kitchen and such other rooms, as may be deemed necessary shall be built and finished by the said 15th. day of January 1795--the size and manner of building this house shall be left to the Commissioners heretofore appointed to carry on the buildings of the University.

Such of the Students who chuse shall be provided with rooms, and shall live at Commons for a sum to be hereafter fixed by the Trustees, both with respect to the price of Board and the price of the rooms.

With respect to the price of tuition in the opinion of Your Committee it should be as follows viz: reading, writing, arithmetic and book keeping for all or any of them eight Dollars pr. Annum.

The Latin, Greek, and French languages, the English Grammar, Geography, History and the Belles Letters, for all or any of them twelve and a half Dollars - - - - 12½ Dlls.

Geometry with its practical branches Astronomy, natural and moral Philosophy, Chemistry, and the principles of Agriculture for all or any of them fifteen Dollars provided that no Student shall pay more than 15 Dollars pr annum for his tuition let him be taught what he may.

---

<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the Board of Trustees, December 21, 1793, quoted in R. D. W. Connor, A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1766-1799 (Chapel Hill: 1953), I, pp. 267-270.

For the first Year Committee are of the opinion that one person be employed in whose charge, and under whose direction and government the University shall particularly be, who shall have the temporary use of the Presidents House; be styled the Professor of Humanity; receive a salary of three hundred Dollars from the Treasurer of the Board; and in addition to that sum shall be entitled to have and receive to his own use two thirds of all tuition monies.

In their opinion one other person should be employed in character of Assistant or Tutor, whenever it shall in the opinion of the Professor become necessary, whose salary shall be two hundred Dollars payable as aforesaid. He shall have a room in the University, shall live at Commons free of expence, and be entitled to the remaining one third of the tuition money.

The tuition money shall be received by the professor and by him shall be accounted for to the trustees shall divide the same as aforesaid, and all tuition money shall be paid as follows to wit, the one half of a Years tuition at entrance, and one half at the end of every six months.

The Professor in the opinion of your Committee shall be ballotted in by the Trustees during their present meetings, and as to the Tutor they recommend that he be nominated and appointed by the Professor by and with the approbation of the President of the board.

In case it shall become absolutely necessary Your Committee are of opinion that the Professor aforesaid be left at liberty with the consent and advice of three of the Trustees to engage some proper person who shall be employed in teaching, reading writing, arithmetic, and Book keeping and whose salary shall be paid out of the Treasury of the Board; but this engagement is not to be made unless the necessity of the case shall require it.

The Committee hope it will be at all times clearly understood that neither of the Gentlemen who may be employed as above stated shall in consequence of their being so employed have any manner of claim right, or preference whatever to the presidency of the University or to such employments as it may hereafter be thought advisable to fill, but that in those respects they shall be placed Just in the same situation as tho' they had acted under no appointment of the board.

APPENDIX K

THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF

NORTH CAROLINA<sup>1</sup>

Duty of President Professors etc.

1st That the President or in his absence the next in office superintend all the studies and particularly those of the senior class, and that every other teacher attend diligently on his respective Class.

2nd That the President or other officers perform morning and evening prayer and examine the Students each Sunday evening on the questions previously given them on the general principles of Morality and religion.

3rd That untill a professor shall be appointed for the purpose, the president or next officer shall deliver a lecture once in the week on the principles of Agriculture; Botany, Zoology, Mineralogy or Commerce.

4th That the officers of the University collectively be called the faculty and that they have power to make temporary regulations in the recess of the board, and to inflict any punishment herein after mentioned.

5th That the President or next officer report annually or oftener if called upon to the trustees, the state of the University, diligence of the teachers, conduct of the Students and steward, and the necessity of makeing and repealing laws.

6th That no President or other officer be removed from his place without a fair hearing before the Authority from which he derived his appointment.

Duty of the Students  
Of the Classes, Examinations etc.

1st That there be four literary Classes to be entered on annually and distinguished by the appellation of first, second, third and fourth.

2nd That none be admitted into the first literary class as students, untill they shall have passed a competent examination by the faculty on

---

<sup>1</sup>John Pettigrew's "The Laws and Regulations for the University of North Carolina"--Minutes of the Board of Trustees, February 6, 1795, quoted in R. D. W. Connor, A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1766-1799 (Chapel Hill: 1953), I, pp. 375-379.

Caesars Commentaries, Salust, Ovid, and Virgil or Other latin Boks equivalent and the Greek Grammar:

3rd. That the exercise of this Class be the Study of English Grammar, Roman antiquities and such parts of the roman historians, orators, and poets as may seem necessary to the Officers of the University; together with the study of the Greek Testament. It is to be understood that in case the studies allotted to the classes for this or the two following years shall be more than they can perform, then part of the same shall be taken up on the following year; But in case the class shall have performed the assigned duties before the end of the year then they shall anticipate part of the duties of the following year.

4th That none be admitted into the second or any other class untill they shall have passed a Competent examination on the exercise of the preceding Class.

5th That the exercise of the second class be Arithmetic, Book-keeping, Geography including the use of the Globe, Grecian, Antiquities Greek Classicks.

6th That the exercises of the third class be the Mathematicks, Geomaty, Surveying, Navigation, Algebra, Natural Philosophy and astronomy.

7th That the exercise of the fourth class be Logic, Moral Philosophy principles of civil Government, Chronology, history antient and Modern, the Bell lettre, and the revisal of what ever may appear necessary to the officers of the University.

8th That they who only choose to study the sciences and the english Language be either formed into a class called the Scientific class, or else aranged with some of the literary classes when they shall be studying the sciences.

9th That they who shall enter the third or fourth classes not haveing been students in former classes shall pay a certain sum for the use of the University. That is to say for admission into the third class at or after the middle stage of its progress the sum of eight dollars, for entrance into the fourth class at any stage from the begining to the middle period the sum of twelve and a half dollars and from the Middle period to the end the sum of fifteen dollars.

10th That in addition to the annual examinations, there shall be three quarterly examinations.

#### Time of Study, Vacations, etc.

11th That the students shall decently attend prayers every morning and evening. That morning prayer shall be at sunrise.

12th That from prayers to breakefast be study hours breakfast to be at Eight Oclock.

13th That One hour be allowed for Breakfast and amusement after which shall follow three hours of study and recitation, i.e. untill 12 Oclock.

14th That study hours commence again at two o'clock, and continue untill prayers at five Oclock, after which shall be a vacation untill 8 Oclock when the students shall retire to their respective lodgings and not leave them, without consent of their teacher untill prayers next morning.

15th That each class have a monitor, to be appointed by the teacher who shall note down those absent without leave, and the disorderly and the Vicious.

16th. That all students speak read or exhibit composition on saturday, A.M. and the same day P.M. be allowed them for amusement.

#### Duties moral and religious.

17th That all the students attend divine service on the sabbath, and Evening examination on the general principles of religion and morality, that they reverence the sabbath use no profane language nor speak disrespectfully of religion, or any religious denomination of people. That they be not allowed to keep any ardent spirits in their Rooms nor associate with evil company, that they shall not play at any game of hazard or any other kind of game, nor make bets they shall treat their teachers with respect and also each other, according to the honour due to each class.

#### Pecuniary Duties

18th That the Students in each room pay eight dollars per year, to be paid half yearly in advance to the professor or president having the care of the University, for roomrent, repair accidental damages and for wilful damage pay fourfold. If the author of the damage cannot be ascertained, the damage shall be asses'd on the whole number of students in the University.

19th The students in general shall observe the rules of decency and cleanliness.

20th No Student shall be admitted to the honour of a degree untill he shall have settled all his pecuniary accounts at the University.

21st Each student shall prepare a book into which he shall enter these laws.

#### Of Trials and Punishments

22nd The Student charged shall have timely notice and testamony taken on the most solemn assurance, shall be the faculty or trustees be deemed Valid, without calling on a magistrate to administer an oath in legal form.

23rd The punishments and grades of punishments shall be 1st admonition by any officer of the University 2nd admonition by the faculty 3rd admonition before the whole University, 4th Admonition before the trustees, 5th suspension. 6th Total and final expulsion.

24th No pecuniary mulcts shall be inflicted for non attendance on prayers or recitation, but besides admonition the officer of the University may transmit an abstract of the monitors bill as often as he choses, with a statement of the students negligence to his Guardian.

25th That the montors bill be called for pulickly every monday evening and every transgressor of thes laws be brought to an account.

26th That these laws be publicly read once every year before the whole Universty or oftener if judged necessary and that one officer of the University deliver to the students an address on the necessity and



advantage of observing the laws; or that a student from the classes in rotation be appointed for that purpose.

27th That the sum of one Shilling per week be imposed on those Students who do not live at Commons, which shall be paid to the steward.

A True Copsy. (Finis) Laws made by the Trustees.

Transcribed by JOHN PETTIGREW.

## APPENDIX L

### THE DAVIE PLAN OF EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

#### Plan of the Preparatory School.

The English Language to be taught Grammatically on the plan of Webster's and South's Grammars.

Writing in a neat and correct manner.

Arithmetic, the four first rules with the Rule of Three.

English Additional exercises.

Reading and pronouncing select passages from the present English Authors.

Copying in a fair and correct manner select English Essays.

When they can read English with fluency and write fairly and legibly, Students shall begin to learn the Latin language on the following plan, to Wit. Ruddiman's Rudiments, Cordery, Erasmus, Eutropius, Cornelius Nepos, with translations; Ca sar's Commentaries and Salust without translations; but when the Parent or Guardian of the Student shall choose it the whole of these Authors shall be read with translations, Kennett's Roman Antiquities to be studied at the same time. When they can render Eutropius into correct English and explain the Government and connection of the words; then the Students shall commence the Study of the French Language on the following plan, to Wit, Grammar, Telamachus, Cyrus, Gil-blas. If the Student is to be taught the Greek Language he will read The Greek Grammar, The Gospels in Greek.

The Rudiments of Geography on the plan of Guthrie.

After the Student commences the Study of the French Language, the Study of the French and Latin Language shall be associated, and the time so appropriated to each, that the course in both may be finished nearly at the same time.

When the Greek Language is Studied without the French the Student will commence it at the time prescribed for the French.

When the Latin, Greek, and French are all directed to be studied, the Study of Greek shall then commence so that the Student may be able to Read the Gospels in Greek and Translate them correctly when he finishes his course in the Preparatory School.

---

<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the Board of Trustees, December 1-4, 1795, quoted in R. D. W. Connor, A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina, 1766-1799 (Chapel Hill: 1953), I, pp. 445-455.

The English exercises shall be regularly continued, this Language being always considered as a primary object, and the other Languages but Auxiliaries.

Any of the Languages (the English excepted) may be omitted if the Parent or Guardian of the Student shall so direct.

The Plan of Education under the Professorships of the University.

#### First-The President

Rhetoric and Belles lettres.  
 Rhetoric on the plan of Sheridan.  
 Belles Lettres, on the plan of Blair and Rollin

#### Professorships.

#### First-Professor of Moral and political Philosophy and History.

Moral and political Philosophy by the Study of the following  
 Authors.

Paley's Moral and political Philosophy.  
 Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws.  
 Civil Government and political Constitutions.  
 Adams' Defence and De Lolme  
 The Constitutions of the United States.  
 The Modern Constitution of Europe.  
 The Law of Nations.  
 Vattel's Law of Nations.  
 Burlamaquis principals of Natural and political law.  
 History.  
 Priestley's Lectures on History and General policy.  
 Millots Ancient and Modern History.  
 Hume's History of England with Smollets continuation.  
 Chronology on the most approved plan.

#### Second-Professor of Natural philosophy, Astronomy and Geography.

Natural philosophy under the following heads:

#### General properties of Matter

Laws of Motion	Geography
Mechanical powers	The Use of the Globes
Hydrostatics	The Geometrical, political and Commercial relations of the different Nations of the Earth
Hydraulics	
Pneumatics	
Optics	
Electricity	Astronomy on the plan of Furgerson
Magnestism	

Third-Professor of Mathematics.

Arithmetic in a Scientific manner  
 Algebra, and the application of Algebra to Geometry.  
 Euclid's Elements  
 Trigonometry and the application of Trigonometry to the  
 Mensuration of heights and distances of Surfaces and Solids,  
 and Surveying and Navigation

[Marginal note:] Thus far shall be the regular course of Study.  
 The remainder may be taught if requested.

Conic Section  
 The Doctrine of the Sphere and Cylinder  
 The projection of the Sphere  
 Spherical Trigonometry  
 The doctrine of fluxions  
 The doctrine of chances and annuities

Fourth-Professor of Chymistry and the Philosophy of Medicine,  
 Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts.  
 Chymistry upon the most approved plan.

Fifth-Professor of Languages.

The English Language  
 Elegant Extracts in prose and verse  
 Scott's Collection

Latin Language  
 Virgil-Cicero's Orations-Horaces Epistles including his Art of  
 Poetry.  
 Greek Language  
 Lucian. Xenophon.

The Professor of Languages to attend when required, the Reading of  
 Cicero de officiis, and Horace and Livy in the Latin language Longinus  
 on the Sublime and the Orations of Demosthenes and Homer's Iliad in  
 Greek.

The Rudiments of Language are still to be attended to; the dif-  
 ferent forms and the figure of Speech will be noticed by the Professor,  
 and Comments made on the Sentiments and beauties of the Authors; parallel  
 Sentences quoted; particular idioms observed; and all allusions to  
 distant Customs and manners explained.

The Students under the 5th Professorship shall deliver twice a Week,  
 to the Professor of Languages an English translation from some of the  
 Latin or Greek Classics, in which, after expressing the sense of the  
 Author, the Spirit and elegance of the translation are principally to  
 be regarded.

The Students of the other Classes shall every Saturday deliver to  
 the President an English composition on a subject of their own chusing,  
 and he shall correct the Errors in Orthography, Grammar, Style or  
 Sentiment, and make the necessary Observations thereon when he returns  
 the Composition to the Writer.

A Student who shall pass an approved examination upon the Exercises of the Preparatory School shall be admitted upon the general establishment of the University.

Any Candidate shall be admitted into the University to attend the Classes of Rhetoric and Belles-lettres or as a Student under any of the three first Professorships who shall pass an approved examination upon the English language, the four first rules of Arithmetic, and the Rule of Three.

Any person may also be admitted as a Student under the fifth Professorship who can pass an approved examination on the English language and render Caesars Commentaries and Salust into English and explain the Government and connection of the words.

No specific Qualifications are required for a Student under the fourth Professorship alone.

The Preparatory School shall be considered as a branch of the Institution, and in all respects under the direction and regulation of the Trustees.

That the present Students who are not qualified to be entered on the General Establishment of the University, shall be Arranged to the Preparatory School and placed under the direction of the Tutors appointed to that of the Institution.

That the Studies and exercises of these Students be so arranged after the next vacation as to remedy the defects of their past education, and come as nearly and as early as possible to the plan prescribed by the Board.

APPENDIX M

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF

SAMUEL E M.<sup>C</sup>CORKLE<sup>1</sup>

In the name of God—Amen.

I Samuel E M.<sup>C</sup>Corkle of the county of Rowan, and State of North Carolina, Minister of the gospel, being in a sick and low condition, but of perfect mind and memory and reflecting on the uncertainty of human life do make and ordain this to be my last will and testament—That is to say.—

In the first place and as my greatest concern, I commend my soul to Almighty God in sure but humble hopes that it will, and can only be saved by the merits of my redeemer the Lord Jesus Christ, and as "I know that my Redeemer liveth and that he will stand on the earth at the latter days, and though after my skin worms destroy this body yet in my flesh shall I see God" I therefore commit my body to the grave to be buried with my four children in the burying ground at Thyatira, should I die near that place, in a manner mentioned in a paper left with this will.—And as to the worldly estate wherewith it hath pleased the Almighty to endow me in this life I dispose of the same in the following manner.—

2.<sup>dly</sup> To my beloved wife Margaret in whom I place the utmost confidence and with a view to support her authority in the family as well as to support her declining years as comfortably as my estate will admit I give and devise for and during her natural life, the whole of the plantation whereon I now live with the dwelling house, outhouses, and all those appurtenances there unto belonging, and also the use of my house furniture, farming utensils, outstanding debts, live stock, and any thing else not herein specially bequeathed which may belong to me at my decease, for and during the same period, that is to say, her natural life.—Also I give my beloved wife for the term of her natural life the continued use of my two negroes Dick and Jude, with power to dispose of them by sale or otherwise and also of any of the foregoing personal property should it appear to her to be for the interest and advantage of my children.—Should she however at any time cease to be my widow, it is my will, that all the moveable property of my estate, be then divided into equal shares or as nearly as may be by three good

---

<sup>1</sup>Rowan County Wills, 1761-1900.

men, such shares to be one more in number than herself and my children who shall then be at home and not married, two of which shares, that is to say, her own share, and one share superadded I do hereby give to her and her heirs and assigns forever—

3.<sup>d</sup> My Son Sandy, and daughters Nancy, Elizabeth, and Sophia I leave in full possession of every thing bequeathed to them by their dear grand mother M.<sup>rs</sup> Steele, the legacies to be paid to them out of my estate in money or otherwise as they may agree among themselves—

4.<sup>th</sup> To my beloved son Sandy I give my book case and desk, Encyclopedia, and all my books on language and Science in hopes that he will make good use of them.—All my other books to be disposed of by my wife as she pleases, only not out of the family.—To my son Sandy, I do also give, devise and bequeath the whole of the plantation or tract of land whereon I now live, after my wifes death, with the buildings and appurtenances thereon belonging, and to his heirs and assigns forever. And whereas it is my desire that my said son should live near his mother and render her every assistance in his power, I recommend to my wife to call on him to carry on the clearing and improvement begun on the North Side of the creek, and in case of his actually living there to give him what assistance she can with convenience, but not to allow him to rent or dispose of it in any other way than living upon it during her life.—It is further my will, and I do hereby accordingly direct, that if a certain tract or body of land on or near Stones river in the State of Tennessee formerly the property of my wifes brother Cap. Robert Gillespie has been granted by the State of North Carolina, as I am informed, to my son Sandy he may continue to hold it without any molestation from me or my heirs, or he may at his option convey the whole of the said land to my wife in trust for her other children in which case, and in consideration thereof I do authorize and empower her to give him a full title to my two negro boys Ben and Isaac.—If the title of the said land be in my name it is my will that my son Sandy shall have the said two negro boys Ben and Isaac and in that case I devise the said land as above described on or near Stones river to my wife in trust for the use of my other children, meaning my female children, to be divided among them in equal shares, and to their heirs, and assigns for ever.—Should the title of the said land be in the name of my son Sandy as I expect and should he make choice to keep it, for while I allow him one year from my death to make up his mind and give his determination to his mother in writing, in that case I give the two negro boys Ben and Isaac before mentioned to my wife during her natural life and at her death to be divided, together with the other personal estate and effects bequeathed to her for the same periods among the whole of my children or the survivors of them, and if any of them be dead at that time leaving issue, it is my will that such issue shall stand in the place and receive the share which the deceased would have been entitled to if living.—

5.<sup>th</sup> It is also my will and I do hereby devise my part of a tract of Four Thousand acres of land on the waters of Duck river in the State of Tennessee formerly entered by my father in John Armstrongs office but not yet surveyed or divided to my five daughters, namely Nancy M—

Elizabeth—Sophia—Peggy—and Harriet—to be distributed among them in share as nearly equal as possible regard being had to quantity and value, and to their heirs and assigns forever.—And should any of them die before arriving at the age of twenty one years, and without issue it is my will that the share of such deceased shall be added to the share of the surviving sisters.—

- 6.<sup>th</sup> I give and bequeath to my oldest daughter Nancy my negro woman Sylva and such children as she has at present or may hereafter have—To my daughter Elizabeth I give my negro woman Fan and her child together with her future increase—To my daughter Sophia I give my negro girl Hager and her issue—To my daughter Peggy I give my negro girl Milly and her issue—and to my daughter Harriet I give my negro girl Lydia and her issue, the whole of the said negroes and their issue to belong to my several daughters as above particularly given and to their heirs and assigns forever.—
- 7.<sup>th</sup> In order to provide against the inequalities which may be occasioned by the death of any of my negroes, or the loss or destruction which all personal property is liable to, as well as to afford my good and beloved wife the means of rewarding such of my children as may be most dutiful and affectionate to her, I have concluded upon further reflection to give, and I do hereby accordingly give and bequeath to my said good and beloved wife, my negro woman Jude and her child August and also all her future issue to be and remain the entire property of my wife and at her free and absolute disposal by will, gift or in any other manner which she may think proper, only not to go out of the family—And this last acknowledgement I make to the goodness and prudence of my wife not as interfering with, but in addition to the several gifts and bequests which I have made to her in other parts of this my will and testament.—
- 8.<sup>th</sup> And lastly I appoint my good and beloved wife Margaret my only and sole Executrix of this my last will and testament; hereby revoking and declaring void any and all former will or wills or Executors by me at time made or by \_\_\_\_\_, and declaring this which I know is my last will and testament.

In attestation whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal, having first had the same read to me as contained in this and the foregoing sheets in all six pages, at my own house in the County of Rowan and State of North Carolina the Sixteenth day of January in the year 1806.—

Signed, sealed, published  
declared and executed  
as the last will and  
testament of Samuel E M.<sup>C</sup>  
Corkle in presence of  
John Steele  
Alexd<sup>r</sup> Lawrance  
William S. Cowan



VITA

William Randolph Enger

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: SAMUEL EUSEBIUS McCORKLE: NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATOR

Major Field: Higher Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Blue Earth, Minnesota, February 22, 1946,  
the son of Mr. and Mrs. W. N. Enger.

Education: Graduated from Fairmont High School, Fairmont,  
Minnesota, in June, 1964; attended South Dakota State  
University, 1964-1965; attended summer sessions in 1967  
at Mankato State College and the University of Minnesota;  
attended Augsburg College from 1965 with major in social  
science and received Bachelor of Arts in December, 1967;  
attended Winona State College, 1968-1970, with concentration  
in history and received Master of Science in Education in  
July, 1969; completed 28 additional hours in educational  
psychology and literature beyond master's degree; attended  
Oklahoma State University, 1971-1973, with major in higher  
education with emphasis in history and completed requirements  
for the Doctor of Education degree in July, 1973.

Professional Experience: High school social studies teacher,  
grades 7-12, 1968-1970, teaching classes in American history,  
economics, geography, psychology, and world affairs at  
Wykoff High School, Wykoff, Minnesota; graduate student  
teaching assistant, 1971-1973, teaching undergraduate classes  
in the history of education and the school and American  
society in the College of Education, Oklahoma State  
University, Stillwater, Oklahoma; had two articles accepted  
for publication in spring, 1973.