

“TO PROMOTE THE LIBERAL AND PRACTICAL EDUCATION OF THE INDUSTRIAL
CLASSES” IN THE SOUTH: SOUTHERN LAND-GRANT COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT,
1862-1910

by

ERIN A. LEACH

(Under the Direction of Timothy R. Cain)

ABSTRACT

The Morrill Act of 1862 provided the funding mechanism for the modern land-grant college system. In the over 160 years since its passage, the tripartite land-grant mission of teaching, research, and service has become the most recognizable legacy of the legislation. Recent scholars of land-grant education caution against viewing the history of land-grant education as a singular story. Despite this caution, many of the texts that offer horizontal histories of land-grant education focus largely on schools in Northeastern and Midwestern states. Within the study of the history of higher education, land-grant college development and the development of higher education in the postbellum South are relatively underexamined. Southern land-grant college development, where the two bodies of literature converge, is studied even less.

This study combines multicase study methodology and historical research methods to examine the history of Alcorn University (now Alcorn State University), the University of Georgia, and Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Virginia Polytechnic and State University) between 1862 and 1910 to answer the question: How did land-grant colleges develop in the postbellum South? In doing so, it looks both within the developments of these colleges, to

identify unique internal factors and external influences, and across them, to identify larger themes around land-grant college development in the region. Specifically, this study explores how state-level politics, race and racism, and the changing social order of the postbellum South shaped these land-grant colleges during the eras of Reconstruction and Populism. This study intervenes in the historiographies of land-grant college development and southern higher education, and in doing so extends our understanding of both.

INDEX WORDS: Land-grant colleges, Nineteenth century, Populism, Public higher education, Reconstruction, Southern states

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I can't have information that I know would be of interest to someone and not share it."

- Sanford Berman, Librarian

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1877, the University of Georgia faced a drop in enrollment at both Franklin College, its historic liberal arts college, and the Georgia State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts (GSCAMA), which was established with proceeds from the sale of land scrip given to Georgia as a provision of the Morrill Act of 1862. When addressing the reasons for the drop in enrollment at GSCAMA, Chancellor Henry Holcomb Tucker wrote:

This Department [*sic*] has disappointed public expectation; and the reason of this is that the public expectation has been unreasonable. It seems to have been imagined that an unlettered youth, if sent here could be so instructed that in a couple of years he would not only learn all about practical agriculture, but that he would become thoroughly versed in all the sciences that bear on that branch of industry. In point of fact such a student learns very little about either. Practical agriculture can be learned much better on a farm than in any institution of learning. The sciences which bear upon it, such as Natural Philosophy, Geology, Chemistry, Natural History, Botany and Zoology, can be taught advantageously only to those who have at least a fair knowledge of the ordinary branches of elementary education.¹

Tucker's appraisal of GSCAMA and its students was harshly worded. But it exemplified the differences between the educational opportunities early land-grant college supporters believed

¹ Tucker to Trustees, 17 July 1877, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 4, 1858–1877), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports, University Archives, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

were available to students and the opportunities that the administrators of those institutions believed could be offered.

The Morrill Act of 1862 provided the funding mechanism for the modern land-grant college system. In the over 160 years since its passage, the tripartite land-grant mission of teaching, research, and service has become the most recognizable legacy of the legislation. Because the Morrill Act of 1862 required a state to be part of the Union to receive its land scrip, southern colleges did not receive their land-grant designation until the end of the Civil War. The development of southern land-grant colleges unfolded in a postbellum South devastated by war and in the midst of Reconstruction. The South contended with a changing social order and with dire economic conditions caused by the collapse of the Confederacy and made worse by the falling price of cotton. As demand for cotton fell, farmers needed to diversify their crops, which they were ill-prepared to do. These challenging economic conditions caused farm life to lose its appeal for those who preferred an urban life, with its chance at economic advancement over a life of sharecropping and debt.

By contrast, antebellum colleges and universities were a place for wealthy planter families to send their sons in the hopes that they would mature enough to take their place in high society. The children of families of slightly lower social standing, but with the financial means to send their sons to college, sent them with the hopes that they could rise to a higher social class. In both cases, colleges and universities in the antebellum South offered students both the academic training and social connections for advancement. The daughters of the planter class, for whom “a college education became emblematic of class, a means to a type of refinement that labeled one a lady worthy of protection, admiration, and chivalrous attention” could be educated

at women's colleges.² In his study of 651 Confederate leaders, Jon L. Wakelyn identified that more than 400 of them had attended college.³

Many southern colleges and universities closed during the Civil War, due to declining enrollments. When they reopened, they faced financial hardship as an outgrowth of the financial devastation experienced throughout the region after the Civil War. Some schools saw a growth in enrollment, driven by states' interest in providing for the education of soldiers who had been wounded in the Civil War. In Georgia, for example, the legislature voted in 1866 to provide former soldiers funds for education because they "intended to provide teacher training for soldiers who because of their war injuries could not hold jobs requiring extensive physical activity."⁴ This legislation provided some of the financial support the University of Georgia needed to resume its activities after the Civil War, but it also changed the makeup of the student body in a reflection of the changing social order of the south. It was against this backdrop that southern land-grant colleges were established in the 1870s.

While southern land-grant colleges held great promise for educating students from rural farm communities, these schools struggled to find their footing in the postbellum era. In addition to ideological dissonance regarding the purpose of higher education, southern legislatures existed in extreme states of retrenchment because of the economic devastation caused by the Civil War. As Populism gave way to Progressivism in the early 20th century, land-grant colleges in the south developed new relationships with farming communities in their states. Progressives "believed that the power of the state was required to meet the problems of society as they perceived and

² Christine Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 3.

³ Jon L. Wakelyn, *Biographical Dictionary of the Confederacy* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1977), 17–18.

⁴ Thomas G. Dyer, *The University of Georgia: A Bicentennial History, 1785–1985* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1985), 112.

understood those problems.”⁵ During the progressive era, southern colleges and universities envisioned economic revitalization in the south and the establishment of a White middle class through professional education and training in the practical sciences. These institutions also began to view agricultural extension as a way to improve the lives of farming communities in their states.

The land-grant college tradition is an important part of the history of higher education, and an examination of its origins provides an opportunity to consider the role of the land-grant college system in the twenty-first century. Yet much like other topics within the study of the history of higher education, the histories of land-grant colleges and postbellum southern higher education have been understudied relative to developments in northeastern and midwestern states. Dan T. Carter suggests that the history of student protest is “narrated with a northern accent rather than a southern drawl.”⁶ So it is with the history of land-grant college development. To better understand how land-grant colleges developed in the postbellum South, I studied the developments of three southern land-grant colleges: Alcorn University (now Alcorn State University), the University of Georgia, and Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University).⁷ In doing so, I considered how each school organized itself and provided instruction in its early years, focusing on internal factors and external influences that shaped the development of each institution. I also looked across cases to construct a horizontal history of southern land-grant education.

⁵ William J. Cooper, Jr., Thomas E. Terrill, Christopher Childers. *The American South: A History*, 5th ed., vol. 2 (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 635.

⁶ Dan T. Carter, “Foreward: Deep South Campus Memories and the World the Sixties Made” in *Rebellion in Black and White: Southern Student Activism in the 1960s*, ed. Robert Cohen and David J. Snyder (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 14.

⁷ The names of each college in this study changed over time. Unless otherwise noted, I use the name that the college was given upon its establishment.

Research Purpose, Questions, and Methods

Though the development of land-grant colleges in the postbellum South is largely absent from horizontal histories of land-grant education, it is not entirely unwritten.⁸ Institutional histories, agricultural history journals, and state historical society journals provide rich details about the histories of individual institutions or regions and put aspects of southern land-grant education into cultural and political context. But these stories remain unincorporated in the larger horizontal land-grant narrative. While this type of history can be useful, especially when charting change over time at a particular college or university, it has been faulted for its uncritical presentation of history. Thomas G. Dyer suggests that,

The most common failing of the institutional history has been its ability to place the institution under study into social, political, cultural, and historiographical context. In fact, it is a rare institutional history that takes into account anything that happened outside the college. Similarly, there is perhaps understandable aversion to discussions of controversy or anything that smacks of impropriety.⁹

In a review essay, John R. Thelin offers a softer critique of institutional histories and challenges would-be authors, writing “the task is not to write ‘better’ house histories; rather, it is to integrate them into organizational analysis and regional studies.”¹⁰ This study accepts Thelin’s challenge, utilizing case study methodology and historical research methods to develop a horizontal history

⁸ John Thelin writes about horizontal history in contrast to vertical history which focuses specifically on individual institutions. He suggests that “the danger in this preoccupation is that it overlooks the more complete ecology of higher education that includes the roles of foundations, consortia, associations, accrediting bodies, state bureaus, and federal agencies, which have contributed funding, incentives, and regulations to the American campus.” John R. Thelin, “Horizontal History and Higher Education,” in *The History of U.S. Higher Education: Methods for Understanding the Past*, ed. Marybeth Gasman (New York: Routledge, 2010), 71.

⁹ Thomas G. Dyer, “Higher Education in the South Since the Civil War: Historiographical Issues and Trends,” in *The Web of Southern Social Relations: Women, Family, & Education*, ed. Walter J. Fraser, Jr., R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Jon L. Wakelyn (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 129.

¹⁰ John R. Thelin, “Southern Exposure: House Histories with Room for a View,” *Review of Higher Education* 10, no. 4 (Summer 1987): 364.

of land-grant college development in the South through the study of Alcorn University, the University of Georgia, and Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College.

Research Purpose

As discussed more fully in Chapter 3, the development of land-grant colleges as an institutional type is a more complicated story than the one Earle D. Ross offers in his foundational text, *Democracy's College*, which portrays land-grant colleges as a vehicle for the democratization of higher education. In discussing the Morrill Act and its impact on higher education, John R. Thelin suggests that “the 1862 Morrill Act is conventionally described as an influential piece of federal legislation that fostered access to useful public higher education.”¹¹ And, over 160 years after the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862, land-grant colleges continue to be in important institutional type with their research, teaching, and service missions are salient parts of their institutional identities.

In addition to the inherent value in uncovering knowledge about the past, historical research provides the opportunity to better understand modern issues. Gary McCulloch and William Richardson write that historical research,

can also illuminate the structures and the taken for granted assumptions of our contemporary world, by demonstrating that these have developed historically, that they were established for particular purposes that were often social, economic, and political in nature, and that in many cases they are comparatively recent in their origin.¹²

Those studying higher education continue to grapple with questions of access to education, of equity in higher education for minoritized students, and of policy implementation in politically

¹¹ John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 75.

¹² Gary McCulloch and William Richardson, *Historical Research in Educational Settings* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000), 5–6.

polarized times. And fundamental questions about the purpose and value of higher education persist. Studying the development of land-grant colleges in the postbellum South provides insight not only into the phenomenon itself, but also offers opportunities to reflect on modern higher education broadly and modern land-grant colleges more specifically.

Research Questions

The broad question that guides this study is “How did land-grant colleges develop in the postbellum South?” Embedded in this larger question are two additional questions:

- 1.) What factors internal to southern land-grant colleges affected their development?
- 2.) What external influences affected how southern land-grant colleges developed?

With the scope of the second question, “external influences” can be understood as the political, social, and economic contexts of the states in which the institutions are located.

Research Methods

In this study, I utilized a methodological bricolage comprised of case study methodology, my experience in librarianship, and historical research methods. Joe L. Kincheloe links bricolage and the mixing of methodologies to increasing interdisciplinarity, specifically the increasingly porous borders between the social science and the humanities. In discussing the combining of different methodological traditions, he writes “bricolage does not simply *tolerate* difference but *cultivates* it as a spark to researcher creativity.”¹³ By borrowing methodologies from multiple disciplines to answer a research question, the researcher as bricoleur can develop new insights that using a single methodological tradition alone may not provide.

To answer the questions about land-grant college development that guided this study, I employed aspects of case study methodology to design a historical multicase study. My

¹³ Joe L. Kincheloe, “Describing the Bricolage: Conceptualizing a New Rigor in Qualitative Research,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 7, no. 6 (December 2001): 687. Sage Journals.

boundaries were both temporal and geographic, focusing the study on the years between the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862 and 1910 and on the southern United States. To answer these questions, I also used aspects of librarianship and traditional historical research methods to gather, evaluate, and analyze primary sources. The analysis of this evidence happened in two parts. First, I constructed historical arguments about each institution with evidence gathered from primary and secondary sources. Second, I conducted a cross-case analysis using evidence from each site to develop themes that brought together aspects of each case to develop an argument about land-grant college development across the postbellum South.

Key Historical Events, Part 1: Federal Legislation

This section provides a brief overview of three pieces of legislation that are central to this study: The Morill Act of 1862, the Hatch Act of 1887, and the Morrill Act of 1890. Each piece of legislation impacted the states of Georgia, Mississippi, and Virginia in different ways, and those state-level impacts are described in chapters 4–6. The goal of including short overviews of this legislation’s development at the national level is to provide the necessary context to understand developments at the state level.

The Morrill Act of 1862

The Morrill Act of 1862 provided the funding mechanism for the modern land-grant college system. While the entire act outlined how land scrip would be given to the states, and to what end, a clause in Section 4 of the Act set the stage for the development of land-grant colleges.

at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such a manner as the legislature of the

States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.¹⁴

This vagueness of this directive, both in terms of the curriculum at the colleges as well as who these colleges were meant to educate, has resulted in much conjecture over time about the purpose and aims of the act.

Justin Smith Morrill, the Vermont legislator who championed the idea of using land scrip as the vehicle to fund education in agriculture and the mechanic arts, made his fortune as a merchant and began his career in politics at the age of 38 after retiring from business. Growing up in a small rural Vermont town as the son of a blacksmith afforded Morrill few opportunities for education beyond his brief time at academies in the state; according to a biographer, his “great disappointment” of missing out on higher education “nerved him to continual endeavors in study, in writing, and in speech to supply the lack, as later it inspired his long-sustained efforts to make a college training accessible to the sons of artisans and farmers.”¹⁵ Despite not having access to higher education, the wealth and connections that Morrill’s business experience afforded him provided the opportunity to serve in Congress where his attempts at enacting this kind of federal legislation began in 1856 and continued through successful passage of such legislation in 1862.

In 1857, during his second term, Morrill put forward a bill in the House of Representatives to sell public lands in order to fund agricultural and mechanic arts colleges. Morrill’s first attempt at a land-grant act for higher education passed the House and the Senate, but President Buchanan vetoed the bill in February 1859 and Congress did not have the votes to overrule the

¹⁴ An Act Donating Public Lands to the Several States and Territories which May Provide Colleges for the Benefit of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts, Pub. L. No. 37–108 (1862). ProQuest Congressional.

¹⁵ William Belmont Parker, *The Life and Public Services of Justin Smith Morrill* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924), 38.

veto.¹⁶ Despite the early defeat, Morrill remained firm in his belief in the value of agriculture and mechanic arts education. In 1861, he again tried to advance the land-grant colleges legislation. The secession of the southern states created conditions that were more favorable for the passage of such an act. When Morrill's legislation in 1857 made its way to the Senate in 1858, there was opposition because of what Nathan M. Sorber describes as the "unfairness to western settlers and the unconstitutionality of federal intervention into a state issue."¹⁷ The latter point directly related to how southern lawmakers viewed legislation "with an eye toward preserving southern slavery" and saw Morrill's legislation as "bringing abolitionists a step closer to intervention."¹⁸ With southern opposition to this kind of legislation eliminated, Morrill's legislation had a better chance of passage. In December 1861, Morrill introduced a bill into the House that was similar to the one introduced in 1857 but with two differences. First, land-grant colleges were directed to include military tactics as part of their curriculum and, second, the states which seceded could not receive land scrip until they had rejoined the Union.

Despite the change in makeup of the Congress which favored his legislation, Morrill's act struggled to make its way through the House. But in May 1862, Benjamin Wade, a Republican Senator from Ohio, introduced a bill in the Senate whose wording was almost identical to the bill that Morrill had introduced in the House. The bill passed in both the Senate and the House before being signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln on July 2, 1862.¹⁹

¹⁶ Alfred Charles True, *A History of Agricultural Education in the United States, 1785–1928* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1929), 102-3.

¹⁷ Nathan M. Sorber, *Land-Grant Colleges and Popular Revolt: The Origins of the Morrill Act and the Reform of Higher Education* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 54.

¹⁸ Sorber, 54.

¹⁹ True, *A History of Agricultural Education*, 106.

Sale of the land scrip appropriated to states as a provision of the Morrill Act of 1862 raised \$22,780,136 to be assigned to 52 universities.²⁰ The land represented over 10.5 million acres ceded by 245 tribal nations, with the Chippewa nation having ceded the most acres at over 2.2 million.²¹ As is discussed more fully below, often, the United States paid little or no money for the land. In the case of the land ceded by the Chippewa nation, the United States paid \$157,427 and 35 universities benefitted when the states in which they were located raised \$5,833, 259 from sale of the scrip that represented ceded land.²²

Hatch Act of 1887

The wording of Section 4 of the Morrill Act of 1862 gave land-grant colleges the flexibility to establish curricula and administrative operations to meet their needs, but it also left those colleges open to criticism when the agriculturalists of the states in which they were located believed they were mismanaging the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip. As Alan I. Marcus wrote, “To these men and women, the establishment of federally supported agricultural colleges served as reaffirmation of the farmers' importance to America as well as an acknowledgement of the nation's stake in making better farmers or farmers better. That the colleges appeared to pursue other agendas was to farmers a particular affront.”²³ Both the largest asset and largest liability a land-grant college had in the public relations battle with unhappy agriculturalists was its faculty. According to Marcus, “In an era of widespread dissatisfaction during which agricultural colleges were regularly viewed with suspicion, their faculties’ services to the agricultural community

²⁰ “Land Grab University,” High Country News, accessed November 30, 2023, <https://www.landgrabu.org>. The 52 universities mentioned here include colleges which benefitted from land scrip at any point. In some cases, the colleges included in this figure lost the land-grant designation and the associated land scrip.

²¹ “Land Grab University.”

²² “Land Grab University.”

²³ Alan I. Marcus. “The Ivory Silo: Farmer-Agricultural Tensions in the 1870s and 1880s,” *Agricultural History* 60, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 22–36.

seemed of paramount importance.”²⁴ Faculty teaching agricultural courses were expected by the agriculturalists of their states to engage in research of benefit to farmers and to share the results of that research in order to improve farming practices.

In December 1885, Senator James Z. George of Mississippi introduced a bill to establish experiment stations in conjunction with land-grant colleges. A month later, William H. Hatch of Missouri introduced similar legislation in the House. Both bills framed the work of agricultural experiment stations as developing new knowledge about agriculture and sharing it with the people of the states in which they were located. Senator George’s bill passed the Senate in January 1887 and was submitted to the house where Hatch accepted it in place of his own bill.²⁵ The bill passed the House in February 1887 and was signed into law in March. Though the bill that was ultimately signed into law was put forward by Senator George, Hatch’s name has been associated with the legislation because he chaired the House Committee on Agriculture and championed George’s bill in the House.

The Hatch Act provided \$15,000 annually to states for the purpose of agricultural experiment stations. The act put the experiment stations under the control of the land-grant colleges in the state, except in places where agricultural experiment stations had already been established as autonomous entities by law. The provisions of the act direct that the purpose of the agricultural experiment stations was “to aid in acquiring and diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects connected with agriculture, and to promote scientific investigation and experiment respecting the principles and applications of agricultural science” and that “it shall be the duty of said experiment stations to conduct original

²⁴ Alan I. Marcus, *Agricultural Science and the Quest for Legitimacy* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1985), 127.

²⁵ True, *A History of Agricultural Education*, 208.

research or verify experiments on the physiology of plants and animals,” thereby making the focus of the stations the teaching of scientific agriculture.²⁶

The Hatch Act’s provisions suggested that the purpose of the land-grant college was to conduct scientific research and disseminate the results of that research. This framing of the purpose of land-grant colleges supported those colleges by offering them insulation from those who believed that conducting scientific research signified a mismanagement of funds appropriated to the colleges from the state and federal governments. As Marcus argued, “Never again would agricultural colleges need to defend to farmers their legal right to pursue scientific research. They now possessed what amounted to a federal commission to serve as the site for American agricultural science.”²⁷ Though agriculturalists and land-grant colleges continued to be at odds through the end of the Populist era about the role of land-grant colleges in supporting agriculturalists, the Hatch Act gave colleges both a framework through which they might do this supportive work and the funding to do it with.

The Morrill Act of 1890

The Morrill Act of 1862 did not compel states to use proceeds from the sale of land scrip to fund colleges that served Black students. Alcorn University, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, and Claflin University were the only colleges for the education of Black students to receive funds from the sale of land scrip given to states as part of the Morrill Act of 1862. Two of these three schools, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute and Claflin University, were southern institutions founded by northern missionary organizations for the education of newly emancipated Black people.

²⁶ An Act to Establish Agricultural Experiment Stations in Connection with the Colleges Established in the Several States Under the Provisions of an Act Approved July Second, Eighteen Hundred and Sixty-Two and the Acts Supplementary Thereto, S. 372, 49th Cong. (1887).

²⁷ Marcus, *Agricultural Science and the Quest for Legitimacy*, 217.

After the successful passage of the Morrill Act of 1862, Justin Morrill continued to champion federal support for education. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, Morrill introduced unsuccessful educational bills in the Senate. In March 1890, Morrill once again introduced legislation. Rather than giving states scrip for land to sell themselves, this bill directed the federal government to invest funds and allocate to each state a portion of the interest. In the first year, states would receive \$15,000, with “an annual increase of this sum by \$1,000 for 10 years, after which the annual appropriation would be \$25,000.”²⁸ The bill also directed that,

no money shall be paid out from the college fund arising under this act to any State or Territory for the support and maintenance of a college where a distinction of race or color is made in the admission of students, but the establishment and maintenance of such colleges separately for white and colored students shall be held to be a compliance with the provisions of the act.²⁹

Though the appropriation of funds for the education of Black students was important, Morrill’s legislation did not require land-grant colleges to integrate, nor did it direct states to divide the funds equally in states where the legislature established a separate Black land-grant college.

When asked in debate how the funds should be divided between colleges if a state established a separate school for Black students, Morrill replied that the bill “does not name a proportion, but leaves the Legislature of the State [*sic*] to make a just and equitable division of the fund.”³⁰

President Benjamin Harrison signed the bill on August 30, 1890.³¹ By 1893, seventeen states had separate land-grant colleges for Black students and for White students.

²⁸ True, *A History of Agricultural Education*, 200.

²⁹ Act to Apply a Portion of the Proceeds of the Public Lands to the More Complete Endowment and Support of the Colleges for the Benefit of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts Established Under the Provisions of an Act of Congress, Approved July Second, Eighteen Hundred and Sixty-Two, S. 3714, 51st Congress (1890).

³⁰ “Industrial and Scientific Education,” *Congressional Record—Senate*, June 23, 1890: 6369.

³¹ True, *A History of Agricultural Education*, 200.

Many public HBCUs trace their founding back to the Morrill Act of 1890. But the legislation did not mean equality for Black students. In cases where states created separate agricultural and mechanic arts schools for Black students, they often allocated fewer funds to Black land-grant colleges, beginning a cycle of underfunding that persists into the modern era. In 2023, the United States Secretaries of Agriculture and Labor identified that in sixteen of eighteen states that have Black land-grant colleges, the schools had been underfunded by a total of \$12 billion in the years between 1987 and 2020 alone.³² Tracing the underfunding back to the founding of these institutions would reveal an even greater disparity in funding.

These three pieces of legislation were the foundation for land-grant college development in the nineteenth century. The Morrill Act of 1862 provided the national-level funding mechanism for the colleges and suggested what should be taught there. The Hatch Act of 1887 established agricultural experiment stations, which would disseminate the results of experiments to agriculturalists in the states in which they were located. And the Morrill Act of 1890 provided a national-level funding mechanism to ensure that Black students received a land-grant education even in states where the colleges were not integrated. Each state included in this study enacted the provisions of these pieces of legislation differently, and these differences are explored in Chapters 4–6. This high-level overview provides national-level context that will be useful when reading those chapters.

³² U.S. Department of Education, “Secretaries of Education, Agriculture Call on Governors to Equitably Fund Land-Grant HBCUs,” September 18, 2023, <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretaries-education-agriculture-call-governors-equitably-fund-land-grant-hbcus>. Kentucky underfunded its Black land-grant college by the least amount at \$172 million and North Carolina by the most at \$2 billion.

Key Historical Events, Part 2: Eras in History

This section provides a brief overview of Reconstruction and Populism, both of which are important for understanding this study. The state-level politics of Georgia, Mississippi, and Virginia were unique during each of these eras, and those state-level politics are described in chapters 4–6. Just as the above section was designed to provide a broad overview of relevant federal policies, the goal of these short overviews of national-level politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is to provide the necessary context to understand developments at the state level.

Reconstruction and Redemption in the Postbellum South

The Reconstruction era lasted from May 1865, when the Civil War ended, until 1877. During this period, southern states that had seceded prior to the Civil War were reincorporated into the Union. This included a reforming of state governments and a consideration of the status of leaders within the former Confederacy. This period was marked by Republican rule in the South; the return to the Union of the Southern states that had previously seceded; and the passage of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments. The end of Reconstruction was marked by the return of Democrats to power, ushering in an era of Redemption.

Reconstruction happened in a South devastated by the Civil War. In describing the antebellum South, Alex Matthews Arnett wrote, “Probably no other class of people ever dominated the economic, political, and social life of an American community more completely, or exerted a greater influence in national affairs, than did the farmers of the Old South.”³³ The planter class of the antebellum South brought prosperity and economic stability to the region, and this power afforded them influence at the county, state, and nation level. While some farms

³³ Alex Matthews Arnett, *The Populist Movement in Georgia: A View of the “Agrarian Crusade” in the Light of Solid-South Politics* (New York: Columbia University, 1922), 18.

in the antebellum South were family farms tended by yeoman farmers, many farms in the antebellum era were plantations worked by enslaved Black men and women. Thus, the economic prosperity enjoyed by the region during this period came at the hands of the enslaved and the influence that resulted from it was enjoyed by their enslavers. Economic devastation happened in the region through the destruction of both land and infrastructure. During the Civil War, 162 towns in counties involved in the war were destroyed and Confederate railroads were damaged almost completely.³⁴ Confederate currency “became worthless and all bonds were forcibly repudiated as part of the price of re-entering the union” and “one hundred millions [*sic*] of insurance investments and twice as much bank capital evaporated.”³⁵

The assassination of President Abraham Lincoln in April 1865 elevated Andrew Johnson, his vice president, to the presidency. In an address to Congress in December 1865, Johnson suggested that “the people throughout the entire South evince an audible desire to renew their allegiance to the Government, and to repair the devastation of war by a prompt and cheerful return to peaceful pursuits.”³⁶ But as southern states reformed their governments, many created laws that severely restricted the freedoms of newly emancipated Black people. Though slavery had been abolished with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in December 1865, many states limited the freedoms of the newly emancipated people to the point that they were basically still enslaved. In describing these Black Codes, Du Bois suggested that “no open-minded student can read them without being convinced that they meant nothing more or less than slavery in daily

³⁴ Paul F. Paskoff, “Measures of War: A Quantitative Examination of the Civil War’s Destructiveness in the Confederacy,” *Civil War History* 54, no. 1 (March 2008): 46, 52. According to Paskoff, “estimates of the extent of this damage vary, but most fall within a range of 50 to 90 percent of total destruction.”

³⁵ E. Merton Coulter, *The South During Reconstruction, 1865–1877* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1947), 4.

³⁶ “Message of President Johnson,” *Keowee Courier*, January 6, 1866. Chronicling America.

toil.”³⁷ Radical Republicans favored the complete and permanent abolishment of slavery and found Black Codes to be an unacceptable part of the reorganization of southern states in the postbellum period. A massive Republican victory in the elections of 1866 gave the party control of Congress, meaning that Radical Republicans could develop legislation that could reshape Reconstruction based on their goals and withstand veto from President Johnson.

In 1867 and 1868, the United States Congress passed Reconstruction Acts, which put the southern states under military rule until such a time as they could meet the criteria enumerated in the acts and be readmitted to the Union. Southern states would need to rewrite their constitutions to include the enfranchisement of Black men and to remove any Black Codes that limited the rights of Black people. Historian William Blair wrote that “the statutes carved the South into five military districts, with soldiers supervising voter registration and calling conventions that were to create new constitutions. They ensured that black suffrage was part of this new order.”³⁸ To satisfy the Reconstruction Acts, southern states also needed to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment, which addressed citizenship rights and the right to due process under the law. Only the state of Tennessee was exempt from this military Reconstruction because it ratified the Fourteenth Amendment in July 1866 and had been readmitted to the Union.³⁹

Between 1867 and 1869, the southern states under military rule held conventions to draft new constitutions, which would include suffrage for Black men. E. Merton Coulter writes that “the constitutions finally turned out were much better than the Southerners had ever hoped for; in fact, some of them were kept for many years after the Southern whites got control of their

³⁷ W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, “Reconstruction and its Benefits,” *American Historical Review* 15, no. 4 (July 1910): 784.

³⁸ William Alan Blair, “The Use of Military Force to Protect the Gains of Reconstruction,” *Civil War History* 51, no. 4 (December 2005): 395.

³⁹ Eugene G. Feistman, “Radical Disfranchisement and the Restoration of Tennessee, 1865–1866,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (June 1953): 146.

governments.”⁴⁰ Because most men who had served as Confederacy leadership were disqualified from voting or from office holding, the Republicans who had not been part of the secessionist government were elevated in power. Further, Ulysses S. Grant won the presidency in 1868, largely aided by Radical Republicans and newly enfranchised Black voters. Under Grant, the last four states to be readmitted to the Union—Georgia, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia—all met the conditions of the Reconstruction Acts and were admitted by 1871.

The Fifteenth Amendment, ratified in February 1870, protected citizens from being disenfranchised based on race or color. This Amendment built upon the Fourteenth Amendment’s definition of citizens and was the precursor to additional legislation that codified rights of Black men. Between 1870 and 1871, Congress passed a series of bills known as the Enforcement Acts, which David Quigley suggests were meant to “make real the promise of the recently enacted Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the constitution” and which protected the rights of Black men to vote, hold office, and service on juries.⁴¹ As Black men received not only the right to vote but the right to hold office, many took advantage of this right and Black legislators became influential in many state legislatures during Reconstruction.

In 1872, President Grant enfranchised many former Confederate leaders through the passage of the Amnesty Act. As a Louisiana newspaper explained it, “it will be remembered that the 14th Amendment to the Constitution excludes from both State and Federal offices all those who before the war held a civil office under a general law and afterwards gave aid and comfort to the rebellion” and explaining that “instead of being a general amnesty the act excepts members of the 36th and 37th Congresses, officers in the judicial, military, and naval service of

⁴⁰ Coulter, *The South During Reconstruction*, 135.

⁴¹ David Quigley, “Constitutional Revision and the City: The Enforcement Acts and Urban America, 1870-1894,” *Journal of Policy History* 20, no. 1 (January 2008): 64.

the United States, Heads of departments and foreign ministers of the United States.”⁴²

Nevertheless, those who were enfranchised could rejoin the Democratic Party again if they chose.

By 1870, many Republicans believed that the goals of Reconstruction had been achieved and the party began to focus its attention on other issues. In 1875, Democrats gained control of the United States House of Representatives and in 1877 they gained control of the Senate. In 1876, Rutherford B. Hayes won the presidency in a contested election that required the establishment of an election commission. By the mid-1870s, most southern states were back under Democratic Party leadership with the policy of Redemption well under way. According to Vann Woodward’s classic text, Redeemers “were of middle-class, industrial, capitalist outlook, with little but a nominal connection with the old planter regime.”⁴³ The Democratic Redeemers undid most of the policies of the Radical Republican predecessors, moving toward the subordination of the Black men who had recently been enfranchised. Despite federal laws that provided them with rights, the lack of military enforcement of those laws meant that Black men lost much of the political power they enjoyed under Republican rule.

The Farmer’s Alliance and Populist Party

Populism was a political movement that protested the power held by the corporate elite and the inequity that resulted from it. The Populist movement traces its history and much of its platform back to the Farmers’ Alliance, which began in the mid-1870s and was comprised of three independent but related groups: the Northern Alliance, the Southern Alliance, and the Colored Alliance. Many organizers in the Alliance movement had backgrounds in education,

⁴² “The Amnesty Act: Who Are Excepted,” *Louisiana Democrat*, June 5, 1872. Chronicling America.

⁴³ C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 20.

medicine, the ministry, and journalism and most were more highly educated than the farmers they sought to influence and assist. While both the Grange movement and the Farmer's Alliance wanted to improve the financial and political status of farmers, Grangers believed more strongly in the Jeffersonian ideal of the centrality of the family farmer in American life and economics, and in the obligations owed to farmers as a result of their relationship to the land. Farmers' Alliance movement leaders had a less romantic view of farming and Charles Macune, the leader of the Southern Alliance, thought that any power or prosperity experienced by farmers would come from their "professional and intellectual improvement."⁴⁴ Macune was not an agriculturalist, but he believed deeply that farmers needed to organize to protect their commercial interests. Macune's lack of experience with agriculture made him an unlikely leader in an organization made up of farmers. Yet he rose to power in the Farmers' Alliance Movement largely because of his intellect and business knowledge, which he acquired through his urban upbringing. The Farmers' Alliance movement continued well into the 1890s, overlapping with the efforts of the Populist Party which was officially established in 1892 and which took many of the planks of its political platform from Farmers' Alliance ideology.

One aspect of the Farmers' Alliance ideology that influenced the Populist Party was a so-called "country versus city psychosis" that resulted from the farmers feeling insecure about their lives, their intelligence, and their educational ability.⁴⁵ Southern farmers believed that "public policy and private enterprise favored almost everyone in America other than themselves."⁴⁶ This psychosis born of deep insecurity drove the Populists to stand in opposition to private industry

⁴⁴ Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 37.

⁴⁵ Homer Clevenger, "The Teaching Techniques of the Farmers' Alliance: An Experiment in Adult Education," *The Journal of Southern History*, 11, no. 4 (November 1945): 511.

⁴⁶ Edward L. Ayres, *The Promise of a New South: Life After Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 214.

taking on an oversized role in the development of public policy. Charles Postel writes that the Populist Party “protested banking, railroad and other ‘interests’ that unduly influenced the political process and rendered state and federal governments corrupt, oppressive, and unrepresentative of the people.”⁴⁷ The party supported reforms to the railroad system because they saw it as “as means of exchange and public necessity.”⁴⁸ Populists also promoted governmental control of telegraph and telephone companies because they were a “necessity for the transportation of news.”⁴⁹

The Populist Party held its first national convention in Omaha, Nebraska, in July 1892. The party’s platform, known as the Omaha Platform, covered finance, transportation, and land and its preamble was written by Ignatius Donnelly of the Minnesota Alliance. The preamble offered a grim view of the times.

Corruption dominates the ballot-box, the Legislatures, the Congress, and touches even the ermine of the bench. The people are demoralized; most of the States have been compelled to isolate the voters at the polling places to prevent universal intimidation and bribery. The newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled, public opinion silenced, business prostrated, homes covered with mortgages, labor impoverished, and the land concentrating in the hands of capitalists. The urban workmen are denied the right to organize for self-protection, imported pauperized labor beats down their wages, a hireling standing army, unrecognized by our laws, is established to shoot them down, and they are rapidly degenerating into European conditions.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Postel, *The Populist Vision*, 5.

⁴⁸ “People’s Party Platform,” *The Louisiana Populist*, August 24, 1894. Chronicling America.

⁴⁹ “People’s Party Platform.”

⁵⁰ “The Omaha Platform: Launching the Populist Party,” History Matters, viewed December 5, 2023. <https://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5361/>

Within this context, the party established a platform which called for reforms to transportation, banking, and land ownership.

While not officially part of their platform, Populists were interested in land-grant education reform. Their interest was born out of a genuine distaste for what they perceived as “ivory tower elitism.”⁵¹ Both Populism, and the Farmers’ Alliance movement that predated it, believed that higher education had a democratizing power, but Alliance leaders were concerned that “universities could monopolize knowledge and limit access to political power.”⁵² Agrarian Populists believed that land-grant colleges had an obligation to the sons of farmers to make access to education more equitable. Populists hoped that the sons of farmers who attended land-grant colleges would return home to the family farm with an understanding of the latest innovations in farm management. Populist leaders believed that land-grant colleges could entice those children to return to the family farm by representing agriculture, specifically farming, as a vocation which required as much expertise as business, medicine, or the law.

In 1892, the Populist Party nominated James B. Weaver and James G. Field for president and vice president, but the third-party ticket lost to the Democratic ticket of Grover Cleveland and Adlai Stevenson. After its defeat, the party was divided over whether to build alliances with one of the major parties or to remain a separate third party. At the Populist Party’s 1896 presidential convention, a ticket was put forward that included William Jennings Bryan, who had received the Democratic nomination, and Thomas Watson, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Georgia and part of the Populist Party.⁵³ Though he was nominated by both

⁵¹ Scott M. Gelber, *The University and the People: Envisioning American Higher Education in an Era of Populist Protest* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 8.

⁵² Gelber, 6.

⁵³ Bryan’s Vice-Presidential running mate on the Democratic ticket was Arthur Sewell, a member of the Democratic National Committee. Bryan refused to replace Sewell with Watson on the Democratic ticket.

the Democratic and Populist parties, Bryan lost to Republican William McKinley. Only 600,000 votes separated Bryan and McKinley, and Bryan won every state in the South except Kentucky and West Virginia.⁵⁴

The decision to align with Democrats in the 1896 election was the starting point of the Populist Party's demise. In the 1900 election, Populists put forward two tickets. Those who wanted to align with the Democrats supported Bryan and Stevenson, while those who preferred to remain a separate party supported Wharton Barker and Ignatius L. Donnelly, who had written the preamble to the Populist Party's Omaha Platform. Neither the Bryan ticket nor the Barker ticket won and, instead, the Republican ticket of William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt won. After the 1900 election, the Populist party disbanded, though it reformed in 1904 and put forward unsuccessful presidential platforms in 1904 and 1908. After the 1908 defeat, the Populist Party disbanded permanently.

Because the temporal boundaries of this study encompass Reconstruction and the Populist era, an understanding of the national-level issues of these eras is useful for understanding the state-level politics at the center of the cases in chapters 4–6. In the Reconstruction era, southern states negotiated the issues related to rejoining the union after the Civil War. This included extending rights to formerly enslaved Black men, including the right to vote and participate in politics. During the Populist period, populist leaders from agrarian backgrounds presented themselves in opposition to the elite who hoarded resources, including knowledge, for their own gain. These leaders demanded reform in nearly every aspect of American life, including higher education. The land-grant colleges in this study developed during these periods and were impacted in various ways by the politics of each era, as state-level

⁵⁴ Ayres, *The Promise of a New South*, 297.

politics differed. An understanding of both the legislation and political periods that shaped these colleges is helpful in understanding land-grant college development in the region.

Conclusion

This study explores how three southern institutions became land-grant colleges, and in doing so extends and complicates our understanding of land-grant college history. In Chapter 2, I reflect on the research methodologies and methods that I used to design and implement this study. Chapter 3 is a historiographical essay in which I briefly review our current understandings of land-grant college history and the history of southern higher education; I also highlight gaps in our understanding which this project works to fill. In Chapters 4–6, I describe the development of the three institutions under study in this project. And Chapter 7 brings together themes from the three cases to offer an understanding of land-grant college development in the region. I conclude this dissertation with a discussion of its significance and areas of future research.

The history of southern land-grant colleges exists at the intersection of the histories of land-grant colleges and postbellum southern higher education. Both bodies of literature have left this place of intersection largely unexamined. This study illuminates the role that the social and political conditions of Reconstruction and Redemption played in state-level implementation of federal policy. In doing so, it complicates and extends our understanding of both land-grant college development and the history of postbellum southern higher education.

Additionally, this study is the result of a methodological bricolage made up of case study methodology, experiences in librarianship, and historical research methods. While historians often use the word “case” to describe the study of an institution, event, or phenomenon, it is rarer that they draw upon case study methodology as understood by qualitative methodologists. In designing and carrying out this study, I made use of case study methodology in the selecting of

cases and in bounding them temporally and geographically. Despite drawing upon qualitative methodologies, this is not solely a qualitative dissertation in which I analyze documents thematically. Rather, I used my professional experiences as a librarian and historical research methods to gather, evaluate, and interpret documents, creating historical arguments and crafting narratives for each case. This methodological marriage resulted in a dissertation that furthers a methodological conversation through an exploration of bricolage.

Farmers in the postbellum South believed that the unique composition of southern soil required special training of those who farmed it. In the same way that farmers argued that southern soil is unique, in this study I argue that the social and political contexts of the postbellum South are unique circumstances from which southern land-grant education emerged. Section 4 of the Morrill Act of 1862 has reverberated in the over 160 years since the act's passage, and issues that surround the founding of land-grant colleges are reflected in the study of higher education in the modern era. In recent years, post-revisionist scholars have opened additional lines of inquiry into the history of land-grant education. In considering the southern enactment of provisions of the Morrill Act of 1862, I open yet another line of inquiry by connecting the role of state-level politics to the development of these southern land-grant colleges.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY, METHODS, AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study, I employed a methodological bricolage comprised of case study methodology, my professional experience in libraries, and historical research methods. I used this bricolage to design and carry out a study to answer the research question: How did land-grant colleges develop in the postbellum south? This bricolage allowed me to utilize my professional and academic experiences in order to develop a research design that felt both authentic to my experiences and also rigorous in its study of history. In this chapter, I share my research design approach as well as the ideas that undergird it.

Methodological Bricolage

Because I believe that our research questions should guide our methodological choices, a study of how Alcorn University, the University of Georgia (UGA), and Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (VAMC) developed as land-grant colleges necessitated the use of historical research methods. When planning the study, I reflected on the fact that I lacked formal training in those methods, but my professional experiences as a librarian gave me a level of comfort in the archives that came from understanding how collections are acquired, arranged, and described. I also reflected on my coursework in qualitative methodologies, specifically my course on case study research. When determining the best way to answer the questions that guided my study, I considered how I might combine my professional and academic experiences to leverage their individual strengths into something new and useful. The idea of methodological

bricolage has given me a language to conceptualize my work and imbue it with the rigor I demand of myself as a researcher.

Borrowing from Claude Lévi-Strauss, Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln suggest that “the many methodological practices of qualitative research may be viewed as soft science, journalism, ethnography, quilt making, or montage. The researcher, in turn, may be seen as a *bricoleur*, a maker of quilts, or as in filmmaking, a person who assembles images into montages.”⁵⁵ Denzin & Lincoln describe several types of bricoleurs—methodological, theoretical, interpretive, political, and narrative. In describing the methodological bricoleur, they write, “the methodological bricoleur is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing to intensive self-reflection and introspection.”⁵⁶ Methodological bricolage as described by Denzin & Lincoln requires not only a deep engagement with the methodologies and methods one hopes to combine, but a deep commitment to doing so with integrity.

Kincheloe links bricolage and the mixing of methodologies to increasing interdisciplinarity, specifically the increasing porous borders between the social science and the humanities. He suggests that, “here rests a central contribution to deep interdisciplinarity of the bricolage: As researchers draw together divergent approaches to research, they gain the unique insights of multiple perspectives. Thus, a complex understanding of research and knowledge production prepares bricoleurs to address the complexities of the social, cultural, psychological, and educational domains.”⁵⁷ Bricoleurs use methodologies from a variety of disciplines to

⁵⁵ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, “Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research,” in *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, ed. by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003), 5.

⁵⁶ Denzin and Lincoln, “Introduction,” 9.

⁵⁷ Kincheloe, “Describing the Bricolage,” 687.

uncover insights that the use of a single methodological tradition alone might not provide. The idea of bricolage resonated with me because I wanted to engage with archival theory to wrestle with the idea of the socially constructed archive, to use my training in case study methodology to guide my research design, and to use historical research methods to inform decisions around gathering and analyzing documents.

Kincheloe connects bricolage to another of his theorizations, critical constructivism. Kincheloe's understanding of critical constructivism is based on an understanding of constructivism, which he suggests "asserts that nothing represents a neutral perspective—nothing exists before consciousness shapes it into something perceptible."⁵⁸ Critical constructivists layer critical theory on this notion. "Critical constructivist action researchers see a socially constructed world and ask what are the forces that construct the consciousness, the ways of seeing the actors who live in it?"⁵⁹ Critical constructivism gave me an entry point to think about whose voices are amplified through the archival record and whose are silenced. Further, critical constructivism gave me an entry point into considering my role in the research process and documenting it in the work. Kincheloe suggests that "critical constructivists assert that understanding the positioning of the researcher in the social web of reality is essential to the production of rigorous and textured knowledge."⁶⁰ The inclusion of this chapter—written in the first person and outlining in detail the theories and methodologies that undergird this study and, by extension, the inclusion of my voice into the conversation—is, itself, a further contribution to the methodological bricolage I attempted in this dissertation.

⁵⁸ Joe L. Kincheloe, *Critical Constructivism Primer* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 8.

⁵⁹ Kincheloe, 34.

⁶⁰ Kincheloe, 119.

Methodological bricolage appealed to me as an approach to research design because I wanted answer my research questions about the development of land-grant colleges in the postbellum south through a study designed to leverage my professional experience in libraries and archives, my courses in qualitative inquiry, and my emerging understanding of historical research methods. I believed that I could combine the best aspects of these methodologies and methods, and in doing so design a study that was rigorous. And to the extent practicable, I also wanted to bring my lived experience as a researcher into conversation with these methods and methodologies, including the impact of the archive itself on my research.

Aspects of this methodological bricolage were employed at each stage of the research process. Case study methodology informed how I designed my study, including how I chose to bound the study and which institutions I decided to study. Case study methodology also informed the cross-case analysis presented in chapter 7. Librarianship informed how I gathered primary sources, both archival and printed, and how I organized those sources to use later. Finally, historical research methods guided how I evaluated and analyzed primary sources in order to build the historical arguments featured in chapter 4-6, and how I wrote the narratives that conveyed those arguments. The combination of these methodology and methods allowed me to use my skills and experiences to design and conduct a multicase study that extends our understanding of land-grant college development in the postbellum South.

Case Study Methodology and Research Design

In this dissertation, I conducted a multicase study to understand the development of Alcorn University, UGA, and VAMC as land-grant colleges. Helen Simons suggests that the purpose of a case study is to “generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic (as in a thesis), programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and/or inform policy

development, professional practice and civil or community action.”⁶¹ I chose to incorporate case study methodology into my methodological bricolage because it allows researchers to immerse themselves in a manifestation of a phenomenon to better understand it from the inside.⁶²

In thinking about my interest in southern land-grant college development, I wanted to understand not only the ways that the three colleges in my study developed, but I also wanted to use them as a lens through which I could understand the phenomenon of becoming a land-grant college. Historical research methods are not incompatible with this desire to understand this phenomenon in the sense that they require a researcher to identify a research topic and associated research question based on gaps in our understanding of the topic. What felt incompatible to me, though, was what I saw as history’s positivist orientation. As a critical constructivist, the idea of discovering the “truth” about how the three colleges in my study became land-grant colleges felt daunting, especially given that issues of race and class are implicated in these colleges’ development. What felt more workable to me based on my training in qualitative methodologies was an attempt to understand this development and describe it to readers of the study. For this reason, case study methodology guided my research design.

Specific aspects of my case design that were influenced by case study methodology were how I chose to bound the study and how I selected cases to study. I chose to conduct a multicase study because I wanted to understand the phenomenon of becoming a land-grant college as experienced at different schools in the South. Robert E. Stake writes that “an important reason for doing the multicase study is to examine how the program or phenomenon performs in

⁶¹ Helen Simons, *Case Study Research in Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012), 21.

⁶² In addition to the texts cited in this chapter, foundational texts on case study research include “Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research” by Bent Flyvbjerg, *The Art of Case Study Research* by Robert E. Stake, “Doing Case Study” by Gary Thomas, and “The Curious Case of Case Study” by Malcolm Tight.

different environments.”⁶³ I explore the idea of becoming a land grant college through a discussion of the development of each institution in chapters 4-6 and through the cross-case thematic analysis in chapter 7 and, in doing so, consider what can be known about each case and what can be known across them.

Study Design and Bounding

An important part of the case study research design process is identifying the boundaries of a study. The boundaries of my multicase study are both temporal and geographic. John L. Rury suggests that,

historians are particularly concerned with the temporal dimensions of a context. For many narrative historians, the ultimate objective is to contribute to an explanation of the period itself, to convey an idea of what it was like to live in a certain time, and ways in which that set of conditions contributed to the course of events. While the work of other social scientists may contribute to such an understanding, it is usually not their principal objective.⁶⁴

The temporal boundaries of the project are between the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862 and 1910, and the geographic boundary is the Southern United States, both of which were chosen based on examination of the existing literature described in chapter 2 and a consideration of the external forces that may have influenced the developments of the institutions under study.⁶⁵

Joseph M. Stetar suggests that “both Southern culture and higher education were, in the latter third of the nineteenth century, distinct from those in other sections of the nation.”⁶⁶ Yet, as

⁶³ Robert E. Stake, *Multiple Case Study Analysis* (New York: Guilford Press, 2006), 23.

⁶⁴ John L. Rury, “Historical Inquiry,” in *Qualitative Research in Education: An Introduction to the Major Traditions*, ed. David F. Lancy (New York: Longman, 1993), 250.

⁶⁵ External forces in this context should be considered political and social.

⁶⁶ Joseph M. Stetar, “In Search of a Southern Direction: Southern Higher Education After the Civil War,” *History of Education Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (Autumn 1985): 344.

discussed in chapter 3, much of what we know about land-grant college development in the time between 1862 and 1907 is largely focused on the Northeast and Midwest. In this study, I am interested in considering how politics and the changing social order of the postbellum South impacted how land-grant colleges developed there.

Case Selection

Because I am interested in the cases for what they reveal about the development of land-grant colleges across the postbellum South, the study I designed is an instrumental case study. Stake writes that in instrumental case study, “we will have a research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding, and feel that we may get insight into the question by studying a particular case,” and that in that situation, “the use of case study is to understand something else.”⁶⁷ I chose a multicase study design in order to understand how the development of land-grant colleges in several state contexts. In determining which colleges to study, I was guided by the existing literature, discussed in chapter 3, especially the discussion of how colleges enacted the provisions of the Morrill Act related to education in agriculture, mechanic arts, and military tactics.

Beginning with a set of land-grant colleges located in the southern United States, I chose three land-grant colleges based on their characteristics, using secondary source literature as a guide for understanding variation in land-grant college development at a national level. UGA was chosen because it was a flagship university that received proceeds from the sale of land scrip given to the state of Georgia. The university used the funds to establish a college of agriculture and mechanic arts as part of its university, and did not have the funding revoked by the state legislature in favor of establishing a separate agricultural and mechanical college in the state. I

⁶⁷ Robert E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995), 3.

was also interested in studying the UGA because during the time between 1872 and 1910, it oversaw several branch colleges throughout the state including the Black land-grant college and the Institute of Technology.

Alcorn University was chosen because it was a Black land-grant college established with proceeds from the sale of land scrip given to Mississippi as part of the Morrill Act of 1862. There were three such colleges, one each in Mississippi, Virginia, and Texas.⁶⁸ I settled on Alcorn University, located in Mississippi, because I had already chosen to study Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, and did not want to study a second college in the commonwealth of Virginia. Despite the fact that Texas seceded from the Union and dealt with the turmoil of Reconstruction, I did not want to extend the geographic boundaries of my study to include it. The western and border nature of Texas create a set of pressures unique to the state and make it a less obvious choice for inclusion on a study about the southern United States.

Finally, I chose VAMC because it was an agricultural and mechanical college that legislators established with the proceeds of the sale of land scrip given to the commonwealth of Virginia. VAMC was different than UGA in that it was a college created separately from the existing public universities in the commonwealth. Additionally, I was interested in studying the college because it established a robust program of military tactics education and a culture of military discipline. This included conventions that continue into the modern era, including the founding of the Corps of Cadets.

In choosing cases for this multicase study, I followed Stake's advice and chose "cases in both typical and atypical settings."⁶⁹ Because these institutions were located in different states

⁶⁸ The three colleges are Alcorn University in Mississippi, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia, and Alta Vista Agricultural and Mechanical College in Texas.

⁶⁹ Stake, *Multiple Case Study Analysis*, 23.

and had different characteristics, choosing them as cases afforded the opportunity to see how the development of these land-grant colleges was influenced by factors internal to the colleges as well as the political and social contexts of the states in which the colleges were situated. Robert K. Yin suggests that in multicase study, “each case must be carefully selected so that it either (a) predicts similar results (*a literal replication*) or (b) predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons (*a theoretical replication*).”⁷⁰ In choosing these cases, I expected that the land-grant colleges under study would develop similarly in response to the Morrill Act’s call for agriculture, mechanic arts, and military tactics education. But internal and external influences coupled with the vague wording of the act meant that the schools would likely not develop identically.

Research Methods: Historical Research Methods and a Career in Librarianship

Methods for gathering, evaluating, and analyzing data in this study were guided by the two other pieces of my methodological bricolage: my understanding of how library collections are arranged and described based on my career in librarianship as well as my understanding of historical research methods. While not an official research methodology or method, my training as a librarian and my years of experience prepared me for the data gathering stage. At the time I began working on this project, I had worked in libraries for nearly fifteen years and in a special collections library for nearly three years. In library school, I learned the theories and methods that undergird how library collections are arranged and described. In my time working in special collections, I extended that knowledge to the arrangement and description of archival collections. This insider knowledge of libraries and archives made me feel at home navigating online library catalogs, finding aid databases, and online repositories of digitized versions of primary source material. I also felt challenged by this knowledge to consider how the socially constructed nature

⁷⁰ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research, Design and Methods*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003), 47.

of the archives, and the lived experiences of archivists, worked to amplify certain voices while erasing others. I brought all of this knowledge and lived experience to the data collection process.

Even though my research design was not guided by historical research methods, my data evaluation and analysis were. Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier suggest that “the historian’s basic task is to choose *reliable* sources, to read them *reliably*, and to put them together in ways that provide *reliable* narratives about the past.”⁷¹ While aspects of this work can also be found in qualitative research methods like content analysis, they require additional consideration unique to historical inquiry. J. Laurence Hare, Jack Wells, and Bruce E. Baker suggested that “historical research may be defined as a process of identifying, analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information from and about the past in order to resolve historiographical problems.”⁷² Specific aspects of historical research methods that influenced my approach to data evaluation and analysis were my approach to source criticism, and my narrative approach to data analysis.

The Socially Constructed Archive

Collection of primary sources for this study took place in institutional and state archives, and a detailed description of the data collection process will be described in a subsequent section of this chapter. Before discussing data collection and analysis, it is useful to understand how archives are arranged and described. My professional experience as a librarian uniquely positions me to address a critique among historians of education that archives are “violent spaces, erasing and fragmenting the stories of people of color.”⁷³ And it is important to me to do so. In this

⁷¹ Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 2.

⁷² J. Laurence Hare, Jack Wells, and Bruce E. Baker, *Essential Skills for Historians: A Practical Guide to Researching the Past* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 70.

⁷³ Kabria Baumgartner, “Searching for Sarah: Black Girlhood, Education, and the Archives,” *History of Education Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (February 2020): 76.

section, I describe the socially constructed nature of the archive and consider the effects it has on the stories we can tell.

In literature about archival theory and practice, the archive is referred to as both a physical location and an idea. The Society of American Archivists defined an archive as “a physical or digital collection of historical records” and as “a conceptual construct of a storehouse of recorded knowledge with outsized social and political significance that generally controls meaning and discourse and serves as a simulacrum of truth and fact.”⁷⁴ While primary sources can be found in a variety of places, primary sources found in archives often take the form of newspapers, photographs, letters and diaries, oral histories, meeting minutes, and business records. As Jordan R. Humphrey notes, “archives hold the primary sources that are the hallmark of historical research and thus often serve as the principal source of information for historians.”⁷⁵

In archives, primary source documents are arranged into collections based on the person or organization who transferred ownership of the collection to the archive. Archivists arrange and describe collections based on local practices and national standards. *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS) became the official standard used by the U.S. archival community in 2005 and the authors suggest that,

The principal objective of archival description is the creation of access tools that assist users in discovering desired records. The nature of archival materials, their distribution across many institutions, and the physical requirements of archival repositories

⁷⁴ “Archive,” Dictionary of Archives Terminology, accessed December 13, 2023, <https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/archive.html>

⁷⁵ Jordan R. Humphrey, “‘No Food, No Drinks, Pencils Only:’ Checklists for Conducting and Interpreting Archival Research,” in *The History of US Higher Education: Methods for Understanding the Past*, ed. by Marybeth Gasman (New York: Routledge, 2010), 44.

necessitate the creation of these descriptive surrogates which can be consulted in lieu of directly browsing through quantities of original documents.⁷⁶

While the content in the collection represents the intellectual output of the people who created it, decisions related to the arrangement and description of archival content are made by archivists in consultation with disciplinary standards.

Before collections can be arranged and described, archivists select materials to add to the archive. In a guide for archivists, F. Gerald Ham suggests that “archival selection is a process by which archivists identify, appraise, and accession records of enduring value that fulfill their institution’s legal mandate or other acquisition goals.”⁷⁷ Archivists cannot, and arguably should not, keep every primary source that is offered to them. Some collections are out of the collecting scope of the archive and others do not have sufficient value to warrant keeping them indefinitely. And because archives are not always well resourced, especially at smaller institutions, there is not always the staffing to manage and make available collections and the history of the institution and its people is lost.

Despite archivists’ roles in the arrangement and description of collections, the role of the archivists in co-creating the archives as both an idea and a place has long been ignored in favor of viewing the archive as a place of unmediated discovery. As Tom Nesmith writes, “archiving has long been in the societal and intellectual shadows, in part because documents and archives have usually been considered unproblematic means of access to information. Users of archives invariably want to look straight through archival institutions, their work, and their records, at

⁷⁶ Describing Archives: A Content Standard, Version 2022.0.1.1, accessed December 13, 2023. <https://saa-ts-dacs.github.io/dacs/>

⁷⁷ F. Gerald Ham, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1993), 2. <https://perma.cc/85TY-BYRL>

something else in the past of greater importance to them.”⁷⁸ He implicates archivists in this devaluation and erasure of archival labor, suggesting that, “traditionally, archivists have opposed any intervention by archivists or others that would undermine the physical and intellectual integrity of the records and cause the archiving process to distort transmission of the original meaning and characteristics of the records across time and place.”⁷⁹ This light touch in the process of archival arrangement and description renders the work of the archivist nearly invisible.

A consequential critique of the constructed archive is that the selection decisions of white archivists have erased minoritized voices. According to the 2017 Women Archivists Section/SAA salary survey, 87.7% of respondents identified as white.⁸⁰ Archival selection steeped in whiteness privileged, and continues to privilege, voices from dominant populations.⁸¹ Francis X. Blouin suggests that “in recent decades, historical study (and I include historical anthropology, historical sociology, economic history, etc.) has turned toward issues of power, underrepresented minority groups, issues of gender, race, etc., all of which are not so easily studied through existing documentation.”⁸² While primary sources can be found in a variety of places, groups cannot be studied about whom there is no archival record.

⁷⁸ Tom Nesmith, “Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives,” *The American Archivist* 65, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2002): 27.

⁷⁹ Nesmith, “Seeing Archives,” 27.

⁸⁰ Women Archivists Section/SAA Salary Survey (2017). Accessed December 17, 2023.

<https://www2.archivists.org/aboutarchives/resources/factsandfigures/wars-saa-salary-survey>

⁸¹ While not on the topic of archival work, I have written about lived experience and library work. See “Cataloger’s Judgement and Cataloger’s Bias: On Lived Experience and Metadata Creation” and “‘We Gave Them Songs About Taking Your Own Damn Stand’: A Blueprint for De/Reconstructing Metadata Creation as a Public Service.” For more on this idea as it relates to archival work, see Michelle Caswell’s *Urgent Archives: Enacting Liberatory Memory Work* and “Teaching to Dismantle White Supremacy in Archives.”

⁸² Francis X. Blouin, Jr., “Archivists, Mediation, and Constructs of Social Memory,” *Archival Issues* 24, no. 2 (1999): 104.

The socially constructed archive, as an idea and as a physical location, is a co-creation between the authors of primary sources and the archivists who decide whether to add those sources to the archive.⁸³ In choosing which collections to add to the archive, archivists are “doing nothing less than determining what the future will know about the past: who will have a continuing voice and who will be silenced.”⁸⁴ It is within this context that I collected data for this study.

Data Collection

I collected three types of data for this study: archival documents, course catalogs, legislation, and journal or newspaper articles. Between April 2022 and September 2023, I conducted research at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia; the Mississippi Department of Archives & History in Jackson, Mississippi; and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. Across the three schools, I examined thousands of archival documents. Documents were most plentiful at the University of Georgia, likely due to the size of the institution and resources devoted to the arrangement and description work in the archives. As Howell and Prevenier write, “only certain types of potential evidence was produced in any given age, only some of that was preserved, and only a portion of that is accessible to any given historian.”⁸⁵ I built a repository of archival documents for each institution by taking photos of the documents and using Adobe Scan to create PDFs from those photos. I assigned each image a unique identifier and logged in a spreadsheet information about the document, including author, subject, collection-related information, and identifier. I supplemented these documents with

⁸³ For more on this phenomenon, see “Archives, Mediation, and the Construction of Social Memory” by Francis X. Blouin, Jr., “The Archive(s) is a Foreign Land” by Terry Cook, and “Seeing Archives” by Tom Nesmith.

⁸⁴ Terry Cook, “The Archive(s) is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape,” *The American Archivist* 74, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2011): 606.

⁸⁵ Howell and Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources*, 64-5.

digitized versions of course catalogs, newspaper and journal articles, and state and federal legislation. I found some of these digitized documents through each university's digital library platform. I also found digitized documents through online digital library platforms like HathiTrust and the Library of Congress' Chronicling America digitized newspaper database. In addition to institutional histories about each institution in the study, I also engaged with secondary sources related to the history of the states in which the schools were situated. Doing so helped me better understand the political and social contexts in which my three schools were situated.

Evaluating primary sources is perhaps the most important aspect of the historical research process. As part of the evaluation process, documents are analyzed for their content and their purpose. Lindsay Prior suggests that documents "are manipulated in organized settings for many different ends, and they also function in different ways—irrespective of human manipulations. In short, documents have effects."⁸⁶ Howell and Prevenier offer seven aspects of source criticism: genealogy, genesis, originality, and interpretation of the document as well as authority of the author and competence and trustworthiness of the observer.⁸⁷ Much of my evaluation process happened at the time that I first accessed a document, whether it was in the archive or, in the case of digitized documents, online. While all of Howell and Prevenier's criteria are helpful, I was most interested in genesis of a document and the authority of its author when evaluating sources. Much of my evaluation process happened at the time that I first accessed a document, whether it was in the archive or, in the case of digitized documents, online. As a result of that evaluation process, I viewed far more documents than I collected.

⁸⁶ Lindsay Prior, *Using Documents in Social Research* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 17.

⁸⁷ Howell and Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources*, 60-8.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process occurred in two phases. First, I used the primary source evidence to construct narratives that linked key events and actors in order to understand the development of each land-grant college in my study. This process was influenced by aspects of historical research methods. In this data analysis process, secondary sources helped contextualize primary source documents in both an institution-level and state-level context. In my initial review of the primary source data, the evidence in these sources guided my understanding of how to answer the research question. Hare, Wells, and Baker suggest that this is an inductive approach to primary source analysis.⁸⁸ But rather than identifying codes and categories based on a reading of the data as with an inductive approach to qualitative data analysis, I used the evidence to construct a narrative. The more time I spent with the data, I moved to a more deductive approach where my developing historical argument guided my interpretation of the data. Hare, Wells, and Baker suggest that “as your research progresses, your hypothesis may in turn allow you to adopt a deductive approach, in which you measure your early hypothesis against your later findings. This will lead you to corroborate your discoveries wherever possible against other sources, seeking to confirm or reject your hypothesis.”⁸⁹ Rather than applying a predetermined set of codes to the data, as in a deductive approach to qualitative data analysis, I used my emerging historical argument to guide my reading of the primary source data.

In this approach to data analysis, influenced by historical research methods, the boundary between the analysis phase of the study and the writing up of results was porous. My historical arguments were refined during the process of crafting the case narratives found in chapters 4–6. Each case chapter, centered on a single institution, contains a historical argument about the

⁸⁸ Hare, Wells, & Baker, *Essential Skills for Historians*, 148

⁸⁹ Hare, Wells, & Baker, 148.

factors that influenced the development of that institution as a land-grant college. With each subsequent draft of a chapter, the central historical argument related to the development of each college was sharpened. In the editing process, a rereading of both the argument and the evidence often resulted in a new understanding of both. As Rury suggests,

The art of doing historical research...resides in the creative use of evidence to construct imaginative recreations of the past. Historians employ this set of skills in imagining how historical actors may have felt about various issues, or in constructing an argument about what motivated someone to behave in an observed manner, as well as in other situations. These questions often go beyond the immediate evidence and call for a peculiar type of judgement grounded in a deep knowledge of the problem's historical context, someone like an anthropologist's intimate knowledge of a particular society. Here the historian relies on his or her experience to create an explanation which is probably not directly verifiable, but which is rooted in a wide assortment of ancillary evidence.⁹⁰

Each case chapter examines the development of one of the land-grant colleges under study, focusing on internal factors and external influences.

In addition to using historical research methods to develop narratives for each college in the study, I was also influenced by case study methodology in conducting a cross-case analysis in which I used evidence from each site to develop a set of themes related to the regional development of land-grant colleges. In this form of analysis, I began by utilizing Stake's Worksheet 2 [Themes (Research Questions) of the Multicase Study] to develop themes based on the research questions that guided my study.⁹¹ I then utilized a deductive approach to qualitative data analysis in applying those themes to my findings for each case, using Stake's Worksheet 5a

⁹⁰ Rury, "Historical Inquiry," 253.

⁹¹ Stake, *Multiple Case Study Analysis*, 43.

[Matrix for Generating Theme-Based Assertions from Case Findings], mapping each finding to the appropriate theme resulting in a color coded matrix.⁹² In chapter 7, each theme is discussed along with examples drawn from primary source documents.

Analyzing the data in these two ways allowed me to achieve the goals that drove me to design a study influenced by case study methodology. In doing this work, I wanted to understand the cases themselves, and I also wanted to use these cases as a lens through which to understand the phenomenon of becoming a land-grant college. Chapters 4–6 employed an approach to data analysis informed by historical research methods, as a historical argument was developed based on the internal factors and external influences unique to each college. Chapter 7 employed an approach to data analysis influenced by qualitative research methods, as themes common across all cases were described and supported by evidence.

Ensuring Sincerity, Credibility, and Meaningful Coherence

A final way in which my training in qualitative inquiry influenced the work in this study is my choice to include this chapter in my dissertation in an attempt to ensure trustworthiness. In other forms of qualitative inquiry, researchers can triangulate through multiple forms engagement like interviews, observations, and document analysis. The data used in my study was comprised entirely of documents, and in the analysis process I -interpreted the actions of people with whom I could not consult in the act of member checking. In this section, I draw from Sarah Tracy's criteria for excellent qualitative research to describe how I worked to ensure trustworthiness throughout case design, data collection, and data analysis.

⁹² Stake, *Multiple Case Study Analysis*, 43, 51.

Tracy offers that one way to ensure qualitative quality is through sincerity, which she suggests, “can be achieved through self-reflexivity, honesty, transparency, and data auditing.”⁹³ The inclusion of this methods chapter as part of my dissertation is an attempt to ensure sincerity through transparency about the research process. In this chapter, I document choices related to research design and case selection, data collection, and data analysis including methodological theory that guided the choices. In the section that follows, I describe limitations that impact the design and implementation of the study. Tracy writes that “transparent research is marked by disclosure of the study’s challenges and unexpected twists and turns and revelation of the ways research foci transformed over time.”⁹⁴ It was important to me to illuminate my process for readers in order to establish trustworthiness through sincerity.

Tracy also offers credibility as a means through which to ensure trustworthiness can be achieved by “practices including thick description, triangulation or crystallization, and multivocality and partiality.”⁹⁵ In writing chapters 4–6, I offered thick description of events at each college under study. This required not only in-depth discussions of how each college developed, but also a discussion of state-level political and social developments. Tracy suggests that “because any single behavior or interaction, when divorced from its context, could mean any number of things, thick description requires that the researcher account for the complex specificity and circumstantiality of their data.”⁹⁶ My goal in writing this dissertation was to understand the history of each state well enough to place institutional level activities within a state-level context, and convey that information in a thoughtful way. By demonstrating mastery

⁹³ Sarah J. Tracy, “Qualitative Quality: Eight ‘Big-Tent’ Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 16, no. 10 (December 2010): 841.

⁹⁴ Tracy, 842.

⁹⁵ Tracy, 843.

⁹⁶ Tracy, 843.

of this knowledge as part of the process of analyzing data and writing case chapters, I could ensure credibility with readers.

Finally, I engaged with Tracy's idea of meaningful coherence. She suggests that "meaningfully coherent studies (a) achieve their stated purpose; (b) accomplish what they espouse to be about; (c) use methods and representation practices that partner well with espoused theories and paradigms; and (d) attentively interconnect literature reviewed with research foci, methods, and findings."⁹⁷ Throughout the research process, I was attentive to the existing literature about land-grant college history, keeping in mind that the existing literature is largely based on regions other than the South. Understanding that limitation, I used the literature as a guide when making decisions about research design and case selection. I was also mindful of my research questions during the data collection and analysis process to ensure that the historical arguments I was constructing addressed the questions at the heart of the study. The readers of this study will be the arbiters of whether I successfully achieved meaningful coherence, but I believe that I created the conditions for meaningful coherence to be achieved.

Limitations

The limitations of the study are related to elements of its research design and data collection. First, case study methodology's limitation is that findings uncovered during case study research are generally thought not to be generalizable.⁹⁸ Rury suggests that a challenge of using case study methodology in historical research is the issue of generalizability. He writes, "while examining a particularly rich case of some problem or process of development, however revealing and insightful the results may be, it is necessary to avoid the natural temptation to draw

⁹⁷ Tracy, 848.

⁹⁸ For more on issues related to generalizability, see Gary Thomas' "Doing Case Study" and Malcolm Tight's "The Curious Case of Case Study."

conclusions about the larger class of phenomena of which it is a constituent member.”⁹⁹ Case study methodologists counter the critique about generalizability by suggesting that the purpose of case study research is not to provide generalized understanding but, rather, to provide insight into the phenomenon under study. Gary Thomas offers *phronesis* as an alternative to the idea of generalizability, suggesting that “the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis* is about practical knowledge, craft knowledge, with a twist of judgement squeezed in to the mix.”¹⁰⁰ By tethering case study methodology to *phronesis* instead of generalizability, “its validation comes through the connections and insights it offers between another’s experience and one’s own.”¹⁰¹ In utilizing case study methodology in historical research projects, Rury offers a remedy for the problem of generalizability, suggesting that “researchers undertaking this form of investigation should always take pains to consider the larger context of the phenomena they are examining. If it is a case, the operative question is ‘a case of what,’ and ‘how typical’ was it?”¹⁰²

The second limitation of this case study is related to data collection, specifically access to primary source documents. A fire at the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute in 1905 destroyed the records for Presidents Minor (1872–79), Buchanan (1880–81), Conrad (1882–86), and Lomax (1886–91). Other types of primary source documents were available for this time period and included course catalogs, legislation, and newspaper articles. But when writing about the first two decades of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College’s history, the types of evidence I could draw upon to make a historical argument about the college’s development were limited. Additionally, archival documents

⁹⁹ John L. Rury, “The Power and Limitations of Historical Case Study: A Consideration of Postwar African American Educational Experience,” *Social and Educational History* 3, no. 3 (September/December 2014): 248.

¹⁰⁰ Gary Thomas, “Doing Case Study: Abduction Not Induction: *Phronesis* Not Theory,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 16, no. 7 (September 2010): 578.

¹⁰¹ Thomas, 579.

¹⁰² Rury, “The Power and Limitations of Historical Case Study,” 263.

related to the history of Alcorn University were also limited, though for different reasons than for the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College. The archival record related to the founding of Alcorn University is not especially robust, though I viewed collections related to the university's founding at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Other forms of primary sources related to Alcorn University's founding were available and included course catalogs, legislation, and newspaper articles. But, as with the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, the types of evidence I could draw upon to make a historical argument were limited.

Conclusion

In this project, I used a methodological bricolage to approach research design, data collection, and data analysis in order to answer my research questions about the development of land-grant colleges in the postbellum South. In doing so, I drew from elements of case study methodology, my work as a librarian, and historical research methods to look both within and across cases. Taken in sum, this study expands our understanding of both southern higher education and land-grant education and it contributes to our understanding of how bricolage can be used to bring together the skills and experiences of a researcher in order to create an inventive and rigorous research approach.

The archive, as both a physical location and a social construct, offers a space for researchers to make meaning from the past. Part of the meaning-making process for me was engaging with archival theory to understand how decisions related to archival arrangement and description amplifies certain voices and silences others. These decisions had a direct impact on my data collection process, and on the types of evidence I could use to create historical arguments. In developing the historical arguments found in chapters 4–7, I utilized my professional experiences as a librarian, my coursework in case study methodology, and my

understanding of historical research methods to design and carry out this study. In this chapter, I ensured trustworthiness through sincerity, offering transparency about the process of designing and implementing the study.

CHAPTER 3:

LAND-GRANT COLLEGES AND SOUTHERN HIGHER EDUCATION: A HISTORIOGRAPHY

This study extends our current understanding of the development of both land-grant colleges and higher education in the postbellum South. An examination of the development of Alcorn University, the University of Georgia, and the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College is important for what can be learned about the development of land-grant colleges within their unique state context. And looking across cases at common themes offers an understanding of land-grant college development within a regional context. An examination of each corpus reveals ways in which each body of literature is unique. It also pulls together the themes that are common to both bodies of literature. Each body of literature considers who has access to education and for what purposes. And in both bodies of literature, experiences of students are largely viewed through the experiences of White men, with the experiences of White women and both male and female Black students largely absent from the conversation.

Land Grant College Historiographical Trends and Themes

In a review essay, Eldon L. Johnson writes that “history does not change, but historians do.”¹⁰³ Johnson suggests knowledge of a particular historical period or event grows each time it is studied as a new set of historians considers, as part of their own project, the work that has come before. The historiography of land-grant college development reflects this maxim, as each

¹⁰³ Eldon L. Johnson, review of *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education: George W. Atherton and the Land-Grant College Movement* by Roger L. Williams, *Journal of Higher Education* 64, no. 5 (September–October 1993): 602.

new work on the topic complicates our previous understanding of the Morrill Act of 1862 and the land-grant colleges that developed because of this legislation.

Writings about the development of land-grant colleges begin with what Nathan M. Sorber and Roger L. Geiger call the “romantic school,” whose authors lean heavily into the idea of land-grant colleges as a democratizing force in higher education.¹⁰⁴ Those authors argued that the more liberal admissions standards and more practical curriculum made land-grant colleges accessible to a wider range of students than even the publicly funded classical colleges. In the 1970s and 1980s, the historiography of education took a revisionist turn as historians began to challenge earlier, more romantic ideas about higher education. While the revisionist historians broke down some of the earlier mythologies, their contribution was not that of generating new knowledge. Roger L. Geiger suggests of the revisionists that, “the élan that launched and sustained the movement deprecated past scholarship to such an extent that it became difficult to incorporate the more persuasive evidence supporting the traditional view.”¹⁰⁵ The scholars who followed the revisionists are considered post-revisionist historians. They have used the opening created by the revisionists’ breaking down of the “romantic school” to contribute new knowledge on this history of land-grant college development. Christine A. Ogren writes that “post-revisionists historiography of higher education grows from the work of Rudolph and Veysey as well as the demolition efforts of the revisionists,” and she suggests that post-revisionists have made contributions to “historical understandings of the sites, students, scholarship, and structures

¹⁰⁴ Nathan M. Sorber and Roger L. Geiger, “The Welding of Opposite Views: Land Grant Historiography at 150 Years,” in *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, vol. 29, ed. by Michael B. Paulsen (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013), 387.

¹⁰⁵ Roger L. Geiger, “New Themes in the History of Nineteenth-Century Colleges,” in *The American College in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Roger Geiger (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000), 7.

of higher education in the United States.”¹⁰⁶ Post-revisionist scholars studying land-grant college development have expanded our understanding by considering issues of race, gender, social class, and the role of indigenous dispossession in land-grant college development.

The “Romantic School” and Land Grant College Development in the Foundational Texts

Our understanding of land-grant college development began with a pair of key texts published in the mid-20th century. Earle D. Ross’ *Democracy’s College*, published in 1942, offers one of the first examinations of land-grant education. In it, he emphasizes the role of land-grant education in increasing access to higher education for a larger number of people and tethered the development of land-grant education to the expansion of participatory democracy. Sorber and Geiger suggest that this book owed its thesis in part to the fact that Ross wrote it during World War II and, thus, “entitled his book ‘Democracy’s College’ not ‘Industrialism’s College.’”¹⁰⁷ In a similar fashion to Ross, though not quite in as strong of terms, Edward Danforth Eddy also links the development of land-grant education to a democratic society in his 1957 book, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*. Although his discussion of land-grant education also romanticizes the land-grant system, Eddy’s book offers a broader study of the topic, incorporating brief introductions to Black land-grant education and educational opportunities for White women. Both Ross and Eddy offer uncritical examinations of the land-grant system, presenting it as a triumphant development of higher education. Because of their position as early foundational works, the notion of land-grant education as a democratizing and equalizing force in higher education became a dominant narrative that persists to some extent today.

¹⁰⁶ Christine A. Ogren, “Sites, Students, Scholarship, and Structures: The Historiography of American Higher Education in the Post-Revisionist Era,” in *Rethinking the History of American Education*, ed. William J. Reese and John L. Rury (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 190, 192.

¹⁰⁷ Sorber and Geiger, “The Welding of Opposite Views,” 389.

Books by Frederick Rudolph and Laurence R. Veysey are seen as foundational works on the history of higher education. Both books were published after Ross and Eddy published their books on land-grant college development, and each book contains references to these works. As such, the earliest books on the history of higher education perpetuated the understandings of land-grant college development, offering little to complicate those understandings. In his history of higher education, Rudolph allocates part of a chapter to a discussion of land-grant colleges. In this section, he discusses the context for the Morrill Act of 1862, and the challenges inherent in shaping colleges that would serve farmers and mechanics. He writes, “the search for a rationale for the land-grant colleges led to a controversy between the classicists, who would find room for the new subjects, and the ‘popularists’ who would provide only practical technical education. Were the new colleges to turn out trained scientists or improved mechanics and laborers? No one knew for sure.”¹⁰⁸ Rudolph takes a moderate view on the role of land-grant colleges in the democratization of higher education, noting that the “tendency of farm children to use the colleges as a means to escape from the farm instilled a deep bitterness in their fathers.”¹⁰⁹ But his assertion that “by 1890 the colleges were so certain that they had something to say to the farmer and the farmer was so ready to listen that in twenty-six states off-campus farmer institutes were literally taking the college to the farmers” offers an uncomplicated view of the development of early agricultural extension efforts.¹¹⁰

In *The Emergency of the American University*, Veysey makes sporadic mention of the Morrill Act of 1862 and of land grant-college development. Most of what he does write about these topics is in the chapter titled “Utility.” In this chapter, Veysey references the Morrill Act’s

¹⁰⁸ Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1962), 255.

¹⁰⁹ Rudolph, 258.

¹¹⁰ Rudolph, 262.

call for agriculture and mechanic arts education in the context of larger conversations about practical education suggesting that “It was sometimes urged that universities should convert their emphasis to the teaching of these skills, industrial trades, and even such occupations as blacksmithing and carpentry.”¹¹¹ Veysey offers only brief commentary on education for Black students and does not address the Morrill Act of 1890.

Revisionist and Post-Revisionist Considerations of Land-Grant College Development

The revisionist project took on the topic of land-grant college development, pushing the existing understanding of land-grant colleges not by providing new insights supported with new evidence but by debunking ideas put forth by their predecessors in the “romantic school.” In his article “Misconceptions About the Early Land-Grant Colleges,” Johnson provides a revisionist examination of land-grant education, identifying four themes in the historiography of land-grant college development that he saw as inaccurate (uniqueness of land-grants as a source of funding, student demand for land-grant education, the role of land-grant colleges in agriculture and industry at the national level, and the role of states in administration of land-grant colleges) and offering evidence to challenge those understandings. In addition to addressing misconceptions, Johnson also offers two understudied areas of land-grant educational development: the informal national network of land-grant colleges and the improvements that these colleges made over time. As with texts by other revisionist historians, the strength of Johnson’s work is not in the development of novel insights into the history of land-grant education but, rather, in the challenging of early, uncritical narratives. In doing so, Johnson’s article unsettles the dominant understanding of land-grant education.

¹¹¹ Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 71.

The revisionist project made room in the historiography for new understandings of land-grant college development. Post-revisionist scholars used new evidence to examine land-grant colleges and place the Morrill Act of 1862 within its cultural and political context. Scott Gelber takes advantage of the opening created by Johnson's critique of traditionalist views of land-grant education to provide new understandings and open new and novel lines of inquiry. In a series of works, Gelber considers the influence of the Populist movement on the development of land-grant education.¹¹² Sorber and Geiger suggest that a reader could mistake Gelber's argument for an extension of Ross' early notions about land-grant education because of its discussion of participatory democracy and its impact on higher education.¹¹³ They go on to suggest that rather than extending Ross' argument, Gelber "transcends" it, including a discussion on the Populists' view of gender and race and its impact on the development of educational opportunities for White women and Black students. In a review essay of his book, *The University and the People*, Christine A. Ogren notes that "Gelber's focus on the land grants allows him to greatly expand scholarly understanding of both Populism and the history of this type of institution."¹¹⁴

In his book, *Land-Grant Colleges and Popular Revolt*, Nathan Sorber incorporates Gelber's understanding of the role of Populism in the development of land-grant education into his work on the Morrill Act of 1862 and its role in higher education. Guided by his research of land-grant colleges in the Northeast, Sorber offers a model of land-grant college development that is comprised of four stages: antecedents, origins, reformation, and standardization. Though Sorber's work contextualizes the Morrill Act of 1862 by providing a thorough examination of

¹¹² Gelber's work on Populism's influence on higher education include his article, "'City Blood is No Better Than Country Blood:' The Populist Movement and Admissions Policies at Public Universities," his book chapter, "The Populist Vision for Land-Grant Universities, 1880–1900," and his book, *The University and the People*.

¹¹³ Sorber and Geiger, "The Welding of Opposite Views," 394.

¹¹⁴ Christine A. Ogren, review of *The University and the People: Envisioning American Higher Education in an Era of Populist Protest* by Scott M. Gelber, *History of Education Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (November 2012): 576.

Justin Morrill, it does little to deepen our understanding of Black land-grant education or women's access to land-grant education. And his focus on the northeastern United States limits the extent to which his framework for understanding land-grant education can be applied.

Timothy Reese Cain calls attention to the shortcomings of this regional focus, writing,

If land grants were as much Brown and Sheffield as Kansas State and Wisconsin, the reverse is certainly true as well. They were the all-white state college and universities in the South and the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) founded or funded through the 1890 Morrill Act.¹¹⁵

A unique contribution of Sorber's study is that it incorporates extension efforts by land-grant colleges, including tracing these efforts to the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 and placing those efforts within the context of the progressive movement.

In the years between Ross' and Sorber's studies, our understanding of the development of land-grant education has evolved. Emerging lines of inquiry in land-grant historiography such as the role of indigenous dispossession will likely complicate our understandings even further. A discussion of the key texts is useful for considering how what we know about land-grant colleges has changed over time. An expanded consideration of land-grant historiography is also needed to identify gaps in our understanding which require further study. In the sections that follow, the works referenced above are put into conversation, amongst themselves and with other works, in a thematic examination of land-grant college historiography.

¹¹⁵ Timothy Reese Cain, review of *Land-Grant Colleges and Popular Revolt: The Origins of the Morrill Act and the Reform of Higher Education* by Nathan M. Sorber, *History of Education Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (May 2020): 281.

Land-Grant Colleges and College Access

Land-grant colleges were initially seen as increasing access to higher education. In his foundational history of land-grant education, Ross suggests that agriculturalists “demanded their own colleges to help solve their problems.”¹¹⁶ In another early history of land-grant education, Eddy noted that early land-grant college enrollment was helped by these institutions lowering their admissions standards and providing preparatory education. Johnson challenges this early framing of land-grant education as an accessible and popular form of postsecondary education. He suggests that,

reaching out to sons, and later daughters, of farmers and artisans, to indigent students, and to whomever the existing system passed by was a noble egalitarian idea that remained just that—an ideal—for decades, with laborious progress toward its realization.¹¹⁷

It is unclear how many students who were otherwise unlikely to attend college were drawn to land-grant colleges because of their admissions requirements and curriculum. And, as Gelber points out, many students from rural backgrounds attended colleges to gain skills in fields other than agriculture so that they could leave the family farm. Additionally, many students who would have benefitted from the lower admissions standards and reduced tuition offered by land-grant institutions were still unable to attend those schools because the small cost was still too high and because obligations kept them on the family farm.

¹¹⁶ Earle D. Ross, *Democracy's College: The Land-Grant Movement in the Formative Stage* (Ames: Iowa State College Press, 1942), 79–80.

¹¹⁷ Eldon L. Johnson, “Misconceptions About the Early Land-Grant Colleges,” *Journal of Higher Education* 52, no. 4 (July–August 1981): 336.

Agricultural Education, Activist Farmers, and Removal Controversies

Arguably, agricultural education was the area of education referenced in the Morrill Act of 1862 that sowed the most discord between land-grant colleges and the members of the communities that their knowledge was meant to serve. Eddy suggests that in the earliest years, agricultural science could not be taught at land-grant colleges because “in spite of all of the centuries of farming, there did not yet exist an adequate body of knowledge from which the faculty could offer adequate instruction.”¹¹⁸ Instead, land-grant colleges relied on an agricultural education curriculum built largely upon the teaching of natural science and providing opportunities for students to work on the model farm. Ross discusses the failure of the model farm system to prepare agricultural education students for a career in farming, noting that it neither helped students put into practice the ideas they learned in the classroom nor helped them acquire practical farming skills. Both Ross and Eddy note that the passage of the Hatch Act in 1887 and the development of agricultural experiment stations served as a turning point in the development of agricultural education as the results of experiments offered a basis for agricultural education.

Ross makes the first reference to the tension between farmers and land-grant colleges based on the differing level of expectations for agricultural education between the two constituencies. He blames the slow growth of agricultural education on the farmers themselves, suggesting they “lacked an appreciation of the possibilities of applied science in their occupation.”¹¹⁹ Gelber expands this line of inquiry, focusing explicitly on the role the Populist movement played in land-grant educational reform. Populist leaders targeted land-grant

¹¹⁸ Edward Danforth Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time: The Land-Grant Idea in American Education* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 57.

¹¹⁹ Ross, *Democracy's College*, 121.

education reform because they opposed “ivory tower elitism” and not because they opposed higher education.¹²⁰ Gelber suggests that the desire for land-grant education reform was connected to the fact that for Populists, the land-grant college’s mission was vital to the continued success of the family farm and the stakes were high. As Gelber puts it, “academic Populists believed that land-grant colleges could enhance the status of young farmers and mechanics without destroying their identification with the producing classes.”¹²¹ In a time when many sons of farmers viewed attendance at land-grant colleges as a step toward a more urban life, creating an educational experience which retained a connection to the producing classes was of increasing importance to farmers.

The demand by Populist farmers for land-grant educational reform included the removal of both the land-grant designation from historic colleges and the proceeds from the sale of land scrip. These farm leaders were able to remove this land-grant status as Populists took control of state legislatures in the 1890s. The demand for land-grant educational reform and the associated call for land-grant removal was not limited to a particular geographic region. Gelber writes about land-grant removal controversies in the states of Kansas, Nebraska, and North Carolina. Sorber extends Gelber’s work on the political causes of land-grant educational reform, considering calls for reform in the Northeast. While he draws a direct line from politically active farmers to calls for land-grant removal in the Northeast, Sorber suggests that it was the Grange rather than the Populist movement that lead to these calls for reform.

Land-Grant Colleges, Mechanic Arts, and Engineering Education

Though much of the scholarship on early land-grant education focuses on agricultural education, the Morrill Act of 1862 also directed land-grant colleges to provide training in the

¹²⁰ Gelber, *The University and the People*, 8.

¹²¹ Gelber, *The University and the People*, 118.

mechanic arts. Eddy discusses the early mechanic arts curriculum at land-grant colleges as machine shop work rather than true engineering education. Both Eddy and Ross argue that mechanic arts education was a turning point in engineering education, at least in part because those involved with engineering were seemingly more open to formalized instruction in mechanic arts than activist farmers who questioned the efficacy of agricultural education at land-grant colleges. In fact, Ross focuses on engineering education and makes little mention of mechanic arts in his book.

The myth that engineering education began with land-grant colleges is dispelled by Terry S. Reynolds in a piece detailing how engineering was taught prior to the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862.¹²² He suggests the need for infrastructure like roads and bridges made the study of engineering more widespread in the antebellum period, moving from military schools to polytechnic schools and partial college courses. While acknowledging that engineering education predated the Morrill Act of 1862, Paul Nienkamp explores the place of midwestern land-grant colleges in the development of engineering education. He argues that through adequate funding of engineering education, including hiring engineering faculty with experience in a variety of fields, “by about 1900, new developments finalized the fundamental and lasting shift from ‘mechanic arts’ to ‘engineering.’”¹²³ In a later work, Reynolds returns to the role of land-grant colleges in the development of engineering, arguing that they contributed to the development of educational standards in the field.¹²⁴

¹²² Terry S. Reynolds, “The Education of Engineers in America Before the Morrill Act of 1862,” *History of Education Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (Winter 1992).

¹²³ Paul Nienkamp, “Land-Grant Colleges and American Engineering: Redefining Professional and Vocational Engineering Education in the Midwest, 1862-1917,” *American Educational History Journal* 37, no. 1–2 (2010): 321.

¹²⁴ Terry S. Reynolds, “Chemical Engineering, Accreditation, and the Land-Grant Colleges,” in *Engineering in a Land-Grant Context: The Past, Present, and Future of an Idea*, ed. by Alan I. Marcus (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2004).

Missing Voices: Land-Grant Colleges for Black Students and for (White) Women

Much of what is written about the history of land-grant education is framed through the experience of schools which served White male students and who received their land-grant designation after the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862. As a result, the experiences of Black students and White women are underrepresented in the historiography of land-grant college development. In their historiographical essay, Sorber and Geiger note that much of the recent scholarship around the early years of Black land-grant colleges was published around 1991, to commemorate the centennial of the passage of the Morrill Act of 1890, legislation whose provisions led to the founding of many of today's public Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). And when discussing the role of women in the land-grant narrative, they state that "historians have struggled to integrate the utilitarian foundations of the Morrill Act with women's aspirations and experiences."¹²⁵

The earliest works on land-grant college history have very little to say about Black land-grant colleges, though they are not entirely silent on the topic. While Ross discusses the Morrill Act of 1890 and how it addressed discriminatory admissions policies at land-grant colleges, he does not devote page space to Black land-grant colleges specifically. Eddy has a chapter in his book which considers both the Morrill Act of 1890 and the development of Black land-grant education. He suggests that Black land-grant colleges "have been and continue to be called upon for the rendering of service, both in quality and quantity, far beyond that usually expected of institutions of their size and stature."¹²⁶ As with the anniversary of the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862, the anniversary of the passage of the Morrill Act of 1890 provided a similar opening for a reconsideration of Black land-grant education. *Agricultural History* published a special issue in

¹²⁵ Sorber and Geiger, "The Welding of Opposite Views," 405.

¹²⁶ Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, 264.

Spring 1991 that collected articles presented at the 1890 Land-Grant Centennial Symposium held at Florida A&M University. In that issue, authors discuss the unique challenges facing Black land-grant colleges, and how the initial curriculum at these institutions tended to focus in areas other than agriculture, the mechanic arts, and military tactics. This was in part because the low educational level of Black students, just 25 years removed from enslavement, required these colleges to provide remedial instruction.¹²⁷ Additionally, Black land-grant colleges emulated their White counterparts in their interpretation of the Morrill Act of 1862, teaching agricultural and mechanical arts but not at the expense of the classical or liberal arts. Agricultural education at Black land-grant colleges was mostly vocational in nature and students in these programs learned about horticulture, veterinary science, and farm and livestock management.¹²⁸

White women's access to, and attendance at, land-grant colleges reflect the larger story of women's access to higher education. Early works on the history of land-grant education question whether the land-grant idea was meant to include the education of women. Eddy writes that "The 'industrial classes' as defined by Turner and used by Morrill did not include women. Their place was considered to be the home where higher education was not necessary."¹²⁹ Still, he notes that some land-grant colleges in the West and Midwest enrolled female students in the 1870s. Ross echoes this sentiment, writing "In the period before the industries were opened to them and applications of the sciences peculiarly in line with their interests made, the new education had little to offer to the 'gentler sex.'"¹³⁰ Andrea G. Radke-Moss recenters women in the land-grant

¹²⁷ For more on the formative years of Black land-grant colleges, see articles in the Spring 1991 issues of *Agricultural History*, especially Frederick S. Humphries' articles, "1890 Land-Grant Institutions: Their Struggle for Survival and Equality" and Robert L. Jenkins' article, "The Black Land-Grant Colleges in their Formative Years, 1890-1920."

¹²⁸ Robert L. Jenkins, "The Black Land-Grant Colleges in their Formative Year, 1890-1920," *Agricultural History* 65, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 68-69.

¹²⁹ Eddy, *Colleges for Our Land and Time*, 61.

¹³⁰ Ross, *Democracy's College*, 129.

college development narrative, focusing on women at land-grant colleges in Iowa, Nebraska, Oregon, and Utah. In the framing of her study, she writes “rather than looking at the history of women students at land-grants through the lens of oppression and exclusion for women in an all-male environment, I instead suggest that women negotiated their own inclusion and separation in new environments of coeducational experimentation.”¹³¹ Even with the contribution of Radke-Moss to our understanding of women’s place in the land-grant college system, a gap remains. In their 2014 historiographical essay, Sorber and Geiger suggest that little has been written about the experience of women at land-grant colleges, though coeducation at land-grant colleges is often addressed in institutional histories. This erasure persists. Sorber devotes a chapter in his book to co-education at land-grant institutions, but the chapter focuses as much on anti-coeducational sentiments at northeastern land-grant colleges as it does on women’s experiences in land-grant colleges. It is important to include as part of this chapter a discussion of the erasure of women’s experiences from the historiography of land-grant college development. But it is also important to note that this study also does little to advance our understandings on the topic based on the temporal boundaries of the study. As mentioned in the conclusion, examining the exclusion of women from land-grant colleges as well as their inclusion is an avenue for future research.

Land-Grant Colleges and Indigenous Dispossession

The most recent thread of scholarship around land-grant college development is one that connected the history of land-grant colleges to the settler colonialist project of American higher education. Though scholars have examined the relationship between Indigenous people and the colonial colleges, the dispossession of Indigenous people as part of the history of land-grant

¹³¹ Andrea G. Radke-Moss, *Bright Epoch: Women & Coeducation in the American West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 10.

education has, until recently, largely been ignored as part of the history of higher education.¹³²

This line of inquiry is one that neither Ross nor Eddy addresses in early works and one that Sorber and Geiger also make no mention of as part of their historiographical essay.

Scholarly conversation about the role of settler colonialism in the formation of land-grant colleges began outside of the work on the history of higher education and has continued to exist both within the field and outside of it. For example, Sharon Stein offers a direct line between Indigenous dispossession and the formation of land-grant education.¹³³ Margaret Nash's work moved this line of inquiry into the historiography of higher education, placing the land-grant educational project within a settler colonialist framework. Nash suggests that "the Morrill Act can be seen as one state-sponsored mechanism of both literally and symbolically establishing settler colonialism."¹³⁴ While published just after Nash's settler colonialist framing of land-grant education, Stein's 2020 article offers a similar framing of land-grant education as a colonialist project.¹³⁵ Nash's work, among the work of others, undergirds a project by *High Country News* called *Land Grab Universities*. This work identifies parcels of land given to states in the form of land scrip and connects those parcels of land to the tribes that were dispossessed of their land. *Land Grab Universities* is the inspiration for a series of articles in a 2021 issue of *Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS)*. In this issue, scholars in "critical Indigenous studies, American studies, geography, cartography, economics, digital humanities, history, and higher education" reflect on the Morrill Act of 1862 and its role in the settler colonialist project of

¹³² For more information on the relationship between indigenous people and the colonial colleges, see Bobby Wright's 1991 article, "The 'untamable savage spirit'" and Craig Wilder's 2013 book, *Ebony & Ivy*. For more on the settler colonialist project of American higher education, see Sharon Stein's 2022 book, *Unsettling the University*.

¹³³ Sharon Stein, "Confronting the Racial-Colonial Foundations of US Higher Education," *Journal for the Study of Postsecondary and Tertiary Education*, vol. 3 (2018).

¹³⁴ Margaret A. Nash, "Entangled Pasts: Land-Grant Colleges and American Indian Dispossession," *History of Education Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (November 2019): 448.

¹³⁵ Sharon Stein, "A Colonial History of the Higher Education Present: Rethinking Land-Grant Institutions Through Processes of Accumulation and Relations of Conquest," *Critical Studies in Education* 61, no. 2 (March 2020).

higher education.¹³⁶ Articles in this issue considered not only the act's impact on higher education but also imagined a future with expanded opportunities for indigenous students whose ancestors were dispossessed from the land given to states as part of the act.

The historiography of land-grant college development includes both the foundational understanding of land-grant colleges as a democratizing force within higher education and a more complicated understanding that includes the social and political forces that shaped and limited its development. Throughout its development, the historiography of land-grant college development has largely ignored the experiences of White women, Black women and men, and Indigenous people through the production of scholarship that centers the experiences of White men as students at land-grant colleges. However, as the roles of White supremacy and settler colonialism on the history of higher education have become more closely examined, the extent to which land-grant colleges really are “democracy’s colleges” has been reconsidered.

Postbellum Southern Higher Education Historiographical Trends and Themes

Due to the geographic bounding of this study, it is informed by the existing literature on postbellum southern higher education. It is not entirely accurate to suggest that the South has been understudied as a region. However, much of the literature on higher education in the South is on issues and events in the antebellum period or in the twentieth century. Our understanding of the postbellum period is not as robust.

Scholars of both southern history and of the history of higher education seem to agree on the distinctive nature of postbellum southern higher education within the larger historical narrative. They also seem to agree that the history of higher education in this period is largely overlooked in both segments of scholarship. In their 2012 historiographical essay, Amy Wells

¹³⁶ K. Tsianina Lomawaima et al. “Editors’ Introduction: Reflections on the *Land-Grab Universities* Project,” *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 90.

Dolan and John R. Thelin identify two thematic strands in texts about the history of southern higher education: southern higher education's striving to achieve success as defined by largely northeastern standards and southern higher education's dissent from those standards in pursuit of its own path. The historiography of southern higher education also wrestles with "lost cause" ideology and its impact on higher education as well as who should be afforded access to educational opportunities.

Postbellum Southern Higher Education and the Foundational Texts

When examining the literature for characterizations of postbellum southern higher education, foundational texts of southern history and of educational history must be consulted, and it must be noted that neither address the issue comprehensively. Two foundational texts of southern history are E. Merton Coulter's examination of life in the Reconstruction South and C. Vann Woodward's examination of life in the New South. Both authors briefly considered southern higher education. Coulter suggests that southern higher education made few advances during the Reconstruction era beyond reconsiderations of the curriculum. His strongest critique was directed to the role of Radical Reconstructionists in development of southern higher education, suggesting,

The Radicals did little to promote higher education in the South; indeed, their activities carried on in the name of helping were, in fact, hindering. Their attempts at coeducation of the races had helped neither white nor black in the field of learning nor in a better understanding of race relations.¹³⁷

Much of what Woodward writes about southern higher education is about its status at the turn of the 20th century. He identifies several issues that kept southern higher education from flourishing

¹³⁷ E. Merton Coulter, *The South During Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947), 322.

in this era. First, Woodward suggests that the impoverished state of the South hindered the development of higher education in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, writing “the scholar was more dependent on the man of letters on libraries and laboratories, endowments and salaries—expensive luxuries only remotely accessible.”¹³⁸ Woodward goes on to suggest that another challenge for southern higher education was the poor quality of secondary education in the region. Because many students arrived ill-equipped to meet college entrance requirements, many institutions provided remedial education in the form of preparatory departments.

While approaching the subject from a different angle, foundational texts on the history of higher education consider southern higher education briefly as regional histories. In discussing the growth of the state university, Rudolph characterizes southern colleges in the postbellum period harshly, writing “In the South, where the universities had been the strongest before the Civil War, most now lay prostrate, victims of war, poverty, or politics.”¹³⁹ Veysey begins his discussion of the movement toward universities in the United States at the end of the Civil War but much of his text focuses on schools on the east coast with some examination of a few schools outside the region like the Universities of Chicago and Wisconsin. In their historiographical essay, Wells Dolan and Thelin attribute the exclusion of southern history from the early foundational works to the idea held by scholars that “when the South finally arrived on to the scene within a normative framework of university development, it offered too little too late.”¹⁴⁰

Joseph Stetar attempts to place Veysey’s framework (discipline and piety, utility, research, and liberal culture) atop the history of southern higher education in the postbellum

¹³⁸ C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 436.

¹³⁹ Rudolph, *The American College and University*, 280.

¹⁴⁰ Amy Wells Dolan and John R. Thelin, “Southern Higher Education History: A Synthesis and New Directions for Research,” in *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, vol. 27, ed. by John C. Smart and Michael B. Paulsen (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012), 410.

period. In introducing the utilization of this framework, Stetar focuses on the regional differences that made higher education in the south unique, writing “due to the impoverishing effects to the Civil War and South’s relative cultural isolation from the rest of the nation, changes in higher education evolved at a slower pace than was true elsewhere.”¹⁴¹ As one of the first pieces in the literature on the history of higher education to devote space and attention to the history of southern higher education, it is likely the novelty and ubiquity of Stetar’s argument rather than its quality that resulted in it being a foundational text for understanding the development of southern higher education in the postbellum era.

The Role of Higher Education in the Postbellum South

In an early examination of higher education in the postbellum South, Allan M. Cartter suggests that higher education institutions reflected the postbellum South rather than shaping it. He writes that through World War I, southern higher education suffered because of “lack of money, reflecting the lower levels of per capita income and wealth in the region, lack of understanding of the function of higher learning, lack of experience, lack of motivation.”¹⁴² A particular challenge in the development of higher education was the lost cause ideology that permeated the post-Reconstruction South. In a review essay, John Wands Sacca frames this ideology as “encompassing a cultural confluence of beliefs concerning sectionalism, progress, piety, chivalry, white supremacy, militarism, slavery, and insidious notions concerning the humanity and political nature of African Americans.”¹⁴³ Two embodiments of the lost cause ideology in southern higher education that Sacca points to are the prevalence of military

¹⁴¹ Stetar, “In Search of a Direction,” 343–44.

¹⁴² Allan M. Cartter, “The Role of Higher Education in the Changing South,” in *The South in Continuity and Change*, ed. by John C. McKinney and Edgar T. Thompson (Durham: Duke University Press, 1965), 286.

¹⁴³ John Wands Sacca, “The Lost Cause: Myth as Educational Metaphor in the New South,” review of *Long Gray Lines: The Southern Military School Tradition* by Rod Andrew Jr. and *Thinking Confederates: Academia and the Idea of Progress in the New South* by Dan R. Frost. *History of Education Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 248.

education in the postbellum South and the hiring of Confederate military leaders as professors and administrators.

Rod Andrew suggests that the connection that southerners had to the lost cause ideology created an environment where military education thrived.¹⁴⁴ Exploring this connection, he writes that military education flourished in the postbellum South because “southerners subscribed to a brand of militarism that expressed less interest in aggressive military preparedness than in military virtues, which were presented to young men as marks of honorable and virtuous citizenship.”¹⁴⁵ Dan R. Frost considers the role of Confederate military leaders in the faculty and administration at colleges and universities in the postbellum South and their impact on the development of higher education in that period as the South moved from an agrarian society to one that embraced both agriculture and industry. Frost notes that while these soldiers were able to use their status and the lost cause ideology to secure employment, they were not necessarily interested in returning to the antebellum curriculum. Instead, veterans believed that “higher education could transform the South into a dynamo of industry and science.”¹⁴⁶ In both the embracing of a military education tradition and the hiring of a veteran faculty, administrators of southern higher education institutions seemed to want to equip the region for an industrialized future without losing sight of its antebellum history.

As Populism gave way to Progressivism in the early twentieth century, administrators at colleges in the South embraced a new role for their institutions. Michael Dennis discusses how progressive leaders at southern schools saw vocational and professional education as a means for

¹⁴⁴ For a longer treatment of military schools in the South, see Rod Andrew’s 2001 book, *Long Gray Lines*.

¹⁴⁵ Rod Andrew, “Soldiers, Christians, and Patriots: The Lost Cause and Southern Military Schools, 1865–1915,” *Journal of Southern History* 64, no. 4 (November 1998): 680.

¹⁴⁶ Dan R. Frost, *Thinking Confederates: Academia and the Idea of Progress in the New South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 44.

the postbellum south to both diversify its economy and modernize its practices. Dennis notes that these leaders also partnered with Southern community leaders to solve problems in their own communities related to transportation, public works, and primary and secondary education.¹⁴⁷ Thelin and Wells suggest that the development of research universities in the South began in the Progressive Era, though academic research in the South was not fully developed until the late twentieth century. They note that while no southern universities were invited to be charter members of the prestigious, research-centric Association of American Universities (AAU) in 1900, between 1900 and 1945, five southern universities were selected to join.¹⁴⁸ As with much of the scholarship on higher education in the South, this figure illustrates the slow development of higher education in the region during the postbellum period.

Conclusion

Within the study of the history of higher education, both land-grant college development and the development of higher education in the postbellum South are relatively underexamined. Southern land-grant education, where the two bodies of literature converge, is studied even less. Sorber and Geiger write that southern land-grant colleges fell into one of several categories: segregated state universities, agricultural colleges, and quasi-military schools.¹⁴⁹ In some cases, agricultural and mechanical arts colleges were grafted onto already existing schools, teaching a more classical curriculum which required the funds from land scrip sales to keep their institutions. Andrew discusses the enactment of the Morrill Act of 1862's call for military tactics education at southern land-grant colleges, noting that these schools requiring students not only to

¹⁴⁷ Michael Dennis, *Lessons in Progress: State Universities and Progressivism in the New South, 1880–1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 3.

¹⁴⁸ John R. Thelin and Amy E. Wells, "Research Universities," in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, vol. 17, ed. by Clarence L. Mohr (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 114.

¹⁴⁹ Sorber and Geiger, "The Welding of Opposite Views," 385.

participate in drill exercises, but also requiring students to wear uniforms caused them to “be constantly under the strict military supervision of a military officer (commandant) and cadet officers, and to submit to military systems of demerits, court-martial, and promotions.”¹⁵⁰ (p. 686). And Jenkins wrote about how Black land-grant colleges in the South focused on teacher training far more than education in agriculture, the mechanic arts, or military tactics.

Recent scholars of land-grant education caution against viewing the history of land-grant education as a singular story.¹⁵¹ Despite this caution, many of the texts that offer horizontal histories of land-grant education focus largely on schools in northeastern and midwestern states. For example, Sorber builds upon Gelber’s body of work on the impact of Populism on land-grant education and Veysey’s *Emergence* to create a framework to “explain how these competing ideas were ultimately synthesized to create the modern land-grant college” (p. 12). By focusing on three southern land-grant colleges, this project offers new understandings of the early history of land-grant colleges. Understandings of land-grant college development and the history of southern higher education have each changed over time as new information has been uncovered. In the chapters that follow, the cases of Alcorn University, the University of Georgia, and the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College are woven together to build a regional story that deepens, expands, and challenges existing understandings of southern land-grant college development.

¹⁵⁰ Rod Andrew, “Soldiers, Christians, and Patriots,” 686.

¹⁵¹ For more on this, see Sorber and Geiger’s “The Welding of Opposite Views” and Sorber’s *Land-Grant Colleges and Popular Revolt*.

CHAPTER 4

“DISAPPOINTED EXPECTATIONS:” THE EVOLVING MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

In 1877, the University of Georgia (UGA) faced a drop in enrollment at both Franklin College, its liberal arts college, and Georgia State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts (GSCAMA), which was also under its leadership. When addressing the reasons for the drop in enrollment at GSCAMA, Chancellor Henry Holcomb Tucker wrote,

This Department has disappointed public expectation; and the reason of this is that the public expectation has been unreasonable. It seems to have been imagined that an unlettered youth, if sent here could be so instructed that in a couple of years he would not only learn all about practical agriculture, but that he would become thoroughly versed in all the sciences that bear on that branch of industry. In point of fact such a student learns very little about either.¹⁵²

This harsh pronouncement was typical of the critical way in which Tucker described GSCAMA and the students who attended it; he spent much of his administration making pronouncements about how ill-prepared students were to attend GSCAMA.

When GSCAMA was established in 1872 with proceeds from the sale of land scrip allocated to Georgia as part of the Morrill Act, UGA had been chartered for almost a century and Franklin College had been open since 1806. Through Franklin College, UGA had been educating

¹⁵² Tucker to Trustees, 17 July 1877, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 4, 1858–1877), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports, University Archives, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

the children of the planter class with a classical curriculum. And while the funds allocated to UGA for the management of GSCAMA were sorely needed, the addition of GSCAMA threatened to bring an entirely new type of student and new type of curriculum to the university. In the years between 1872 and 1907, UGA struggled to build a cohesive university structure which included a classical curriculum as well as instruction in agriculture and the mechanic arts. This period also found UGA working to manage Franklin College and GSCAMA in Athens, as well as other branch colleges throughout the state, all with minimal financial support from the Georgia legislature. In addition to decisions made by UGA administrators and the board of trustees about how the university would be managed, the politics of postbellum Georgia both influenced and were influenced by UGA and its trustees. Through an examination of UGA during this period, the challenges in adding a land-grant college to an existing flagship university are illuminated.

Agriculture and Industrial Education in the Antebellum University

The consideration of agriculture and mechanic arts education at UGA began in the antebellum period, well before the University accepted the proceeds from sale of the land scrip and established GSCAMA. The establishment of a professorship in agriculture endowed by Dr. William Terrell in 1854, and the Mitchell Report, in 1855, advocated for the expansion of agricultural education and the establishment of a school for the industrial arts.¹⁵³ Terrell and William Mitchell, two influential Georgians, pushed the university to expand its offerings, and reflected widely held sentiments in the state around the roles of agriculture and industry during the years immediately preceding the Civil War.

¹⁵³ Dyer, *The University of Georgia*, 83.

This interest in expansion of educational opportunities in both agriculture and the industrial arts reflected a marriage of agriculture and industry happening in the South in the years preceding the Civil War, with the cotton industry taking strong hold over Georgia. An article in an 1848 issue of *Scientific American* reported that “there are 32 cotton factories in operation or in progress of construction in that state [Georgia]. There are invested in the building and working of the 32 factories, two millions of dollars. The number of hands engaged in them now is nearly three thousand, and of persons directly receiving their support from them, six thousand.”¹⁵⁴ Though the Mitchell Report and the establishment of the Terrell Professorship raised the visibility of agriculture and industrial arts education at the University of Georgia, they did not represent a turn toward a broader access institution. Rather, they offered educational opportunities for young men that would guarantee them entry into the planter class.

At their August 1854 meeting, the UGA Board of Trustees read a letter from Dr. Terrell that included a proposal for the endowment of a professorship of agriculture. Terrell was a wealthy agriculturalist with ties to the Southern Central Agricultural Society and his proposal came with a gift of \$20,000.¹⁵⁵ As part of the endowment, Terrell asked that one of the duties of the professor be to “deliver in the College a course of free lectures during its term on ‘Agriculture as science, the practice and improvement of different people, on chemistry and geology as far as they may be useful in agriculture, on manners, analysis of soils, and on domestic economy, particularly referring to the Southern States’”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ “Manufactures of the South,” *Scientific American*, January 29, 1848, 149.

¹⁵⁵ Stephen J. Karina, *The University of Georgia College of Agriculture: An Administrative History* ([Athens, GA?]: [University of Georgia College of Agriculture?], [1985?]), 20.

¹⁵⁶ Dr. William Terrell to the Trustees, 1 August 1854, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 3, 1835–1857), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

Terrell became a cotton planter after a career that included a medical practice in Middle Georgia and service in Congress between 1817 and 1821. *Men of Georgia* called him “one of the most scientific farmers in the State” and noted that he devoted “much time to the promotion of agricultural science.”¹⁵⁷ Georgia’s farmers had focused their efforts almost exclusively on cotton farming, and Terrell’s interest in developing agricultural education was driven by his concern over the extent to which this single-crop approach to farming was damaging the soil.¹⁵⁸ In a letter written to the Executive Committee of the Southern Central Agricultural Society and published after his death, Terrell described the impact he foresaw of a properly cultivated soil. “If the Cotton, Rice, and Tobacco-growing States should so improve the present cultivated lands, as to increase their products by even ten per cent, will it not be perceived by everybody that the resources of the country will be, to that extent increased, and that the means of Commerce, Agriculture, and all the Industrial Arts, which constitute the wealth of nations, will equally share the benefit, and so in proportion as you increase your exportable products will your wealth and power increase.”¹⁵⁹

In addition to suggesting parameters of the Terrell Professors’ job description, Terrell also offered the name of the person he believed should be the inaugural occupant of the position: Dr. Daniel Lee. At the time he assumed the title of Terrell Professor in January 1855, Lee served as an editor of the *Southern Cultivator*, an agricultural newspaper published in Georgia. In the first issue after Lee assumed his new title, the *Southern Cultivator* stated that, “the task assigned is of no ordinary character; and however incompetent to its execution the person invited to labor

¹⁵⁷ “William Terrell” in *Men of Mark in Georgia*, ed. William J. Northern, vol. 2 (Atlanta: A.B. Caldwell, 1910), 377.

¹⁵⁸ “William Terrell,” 22.

¹⁵⁹ William Terrell, “Letter from Dr. Terrell, to the Executive Committee of the Southern Central Agricultural Society,” *Southern Cultivator*, February 1855. ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

may feel himself to be, yet it is his purpose to do all that in him lies to make this humble beginning in the way of Agricultural education the starting point of a higher and better system of study and practice in rural affairs.”¹⁶⁰ Terrell had hoped that his support of agricultural education at the university would inspire the generosity of the legislature, but financial support of agricultural education did not materialize in the antebellum years. Lee remained active with the *Southern Cultivator* until he resigned in 1859 and with the Terrell Professorship until he was removed from the position by the Board of Trustees in 1863, the year that the University closed because of declining enrollments due to the Civil War.

In this period, the UGA Board of Trustees also considered the expansion of industrial education in the antebellum period as part of a larger plan to grow the curriculum. At the July 1855 meeting of the board of trustees, the trustees resolved that “the faculty in connection with the Prudential Committee, prepare a plan for the further endowment of the university so as to enable it to be in fact what it was intended to be by its early friends & founders—& that the same including the estimates as to the probable amount of funds needed for that purpose” and requested that the plan be shared at the Board’s next meeting.¹⁶¹ William Mitchell, the Prudential Committee’s chair, became the architect of this curricular expansion. Mitchell began his career as a mathematics tutor at UGA, which sparked in him an interest in education and in educational reform. He returned to the university as a trustee after a career that included work in law, banking, the railroad, and manufacturing. His work in industry was lucrative and also afforded

¹⁶⁰ “Terrell Professorship of Agriculture,” *Southern Cultivator*, January 1855. ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

¹⁶¹ Trustees, 28 July 1855, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 3, 1835–1857), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

him high social standing in Athens, a necessary component required to create the curricular changes at UGA about which he felt passionately.¹⁶²

The Mitchell Report proposed five major changes to the organization of UGA: the establishments of schools of agriculture, law, and the study of industrial arts; a professorship of modern languages; and an increase in efforts around teacher training. Mitchell's committee invoked the Terrell Professorship when discussing the establishment of a College of Agriculture and suggested that its work be extended.

The best form of government for a country where a system of Agriculture prevails that is constantly tending to impoverish the soil, cannot long sustain a thrifty population or defend itself. To avoid such a calamity which there is reason to fear with be our condition at no distant day, the people of the Southern States must find the means of preserving their land from destruction, so strikingly observable in every part of the country.¹⁶³

The destruction referenced in the Mitchell Report reflected a concern among farmers in Georgia about depletion of soil as a result of mainly growing cotton that echoed those discussed by William Terrell in his comments related to the establishment of his eponymous professorship. Many Georgia agriculturalists believed that the scientific study of agriculture might result in a greater acceptance of crop diversity, and Mitchell's committee championed such a movement.¹⁶⁴

The recommendation to establish a school to scientifically study the industrial arts reflected Mitchell's work experiences and the growing industrial movement in the antebellum South. The Mitchell Report suggested that "instruction should be given to the young men, with a

¹⁶² J. Patrick McCarthy, Jr., "Commercial Development and University Reform in Antebellum Athens: William Mitchell as Entrepreneur, Engineer, and Educator," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 83, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 18.

¹⁶³ Mitchell Committee to the Trustees, 28 July 1855, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 3, 1835–1857), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

¹⁶⁴ Karina, *The University of Georgia College of Agriculture*, 18.

view to fit them for the various pursuits of life, such as engineering and the business of Artisans, Manufacturers, Agriculturalists, Chemists, and miners” and suggested instruction in drawing, machinery and engineering, and construction.¹⁶⁵ UGA already offered a degree in engineering, so this proposal complemented and expanded its offerings in practical education during a time when the South was industrializing and needed educated men to lead in many types of businesses. And it also placed the university in the company of Harvard, Yale, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, all of whom had incorporated similar scientific schools.¹⁶⁶ Upon its presentation in 1855, the Mitchell Report had little impact on the direction of UGA. The Georgia legislature had little interest in funding the proposal, and personnel issues at the university emerged in the same year and demanded the full attention of the board of trustees. Mitchell offered a slightly modified plan for reorganization of the university in 1859 that included an agricultural school, a school of engineering, and a school of commerce as well as a school of law and a collegiate institute to support the undergraduate population of the school. Of all of these recommendations, the school of law and the collegiate institute were the only changes officially enacted by the university.¹⁶⁷

Terrell and Mitchell used their money and influence on championing agricultural and industrial education at the UGA in the antebellum period. Their interests in these educational reforms reflected their personal beliefs about how Georgia’s position in the antebellum South might be advanced through more sophisticated farming techniques and greater advancement of industry. This vision of a more agriculturally and industrially vibrant state served to advance the interests of the wealthy planter class in the state using the labor of poor White men and women

¹⁶⁵ Mitchell Committee to the Trustees, 28 July 1855, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 3, 1835–1857), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

¹⁶⁶ Dyer, *The University of Georgia*, 86.

¹⁶⁷ Dyer, 97-8.

and of enslaved Black men and women. Educational reforms proposed by Terrell and Mitchell did nothing to democratize educational opportunities for either group. The proposed and realized curricular advances seen at the university in agriculture and industrial education built a foundation and a justification for future advances, but UGA would not be confronted with issues of equity and access to postsecondary education until the postbellum period.

Agricultural Education at the Newly Reopened University

When UGA reopened in January 1866, Georgia was attempting to rebuild itself after the Civil War. The period between 1866 and 1872, when GSCAMA was established as part of UGA, was a tumultuous time in Georgia as a new social order was established. With the emancipation of enslaved Black men and women, the dominant agricultural system in the state shifted from a plantation system to that of tenant farming.¹⁶⁸ Further, the election of Republican Rufus B. Bullock put him at odds with Democratic leaders, largely made up of wealthy white men who “resolved never to surrender until the state had been returned to its ‘natural’ leadership—planter leadership.”¹⁶⁹ Bullock was a businessman before he was a political leader, and he advocated for free labor and the modernization of the state. During his term as governor from 1868 to 1871, he also clashed with Democrats in supporting newly emancipated Black Georgians in their attempt to exercise rights recently given to them by the federal government through the Reconstruction Amendments. The university would need to secure funding from the Georgia legislature to return to supporting and advancing its mission after being closed for three years. But the state was busy solving problems it saw as direr than funding the university.

¹⁶⁸ C. Mildred Thompson, *Reconstruction in Georgia: Economic, Social, Political: 1865–1872* (1915; repr. New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 81.

¹⁶⁹ Russell Duncan, *Entrepreneur for Equality: Governor Rufus Bullock, Commerce and Race in Post-Civil War Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 55.

At the reopening of the university after the Civil War, the Terrell Professorship was filled by William Louis Jones and the duties were expanded to include chemistry, geology, and agriculture.¹⁷⁰ The UGA course bulletin for 1866 described a School of Agriculture as being housed in a “new and commodious Hall, furnished with requisite appliances” and suggested that “feeling well assured that the great interest now pervading the public mind on the subject of an improved Agriculture calls for special efforts in this Department of the University, the Trustees have adopted such measures as seem calculated to meet the public wants.”¹⁷¹ In 1866, students could study for bachelors of arts, science, or law as well as a degree in civil engineering and a master of arts.

Though the terms of the free lecture were set out in the original agreement outlining Terrell’s endowment, how the lectures were carried out was left to the discretion of the Terrell Professor. In his first year in the role of Terrell Professor, Jones presented ten lectures in the form of a two-week short course. In his August 1867 report to the board of trustees, Chancellor Lipscomb reported that the lectures “evinced great research and were adapted to the wants of times; while as supplementary to the chemistry course of the College, the methods employed were precisely such as advanced students need for their higher culture.”¹⁷² Because the lectures were open to the public, UGA could educate its advanced chemistry students alongside the members of the farming community who could travel to Athens to attend.

In 1871, Charles Howard, editor of *The Plantation*, offered the first attack on agricultural education at UGA. While being careful not to direct his attacks at Jones, Howard placed the blame for poor agricultural education on the Board of Trustees. He asserted that the Terrell

¹⁷⁰ Karina, *The University of Georgia College of Agriculture*, 28.

¹⁷¹ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Georgia* (Baltimore: Kelly & Piet, 1868), 38.

¹⁷² Chancellor Lipscomb to Trustees, 3 August 1867, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 4, 1858–1877), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

Professor had been given responsibility for teaching in too many departments rather than focusing solely on the study and teaching of agriculture. “The farmers and planters of Georgia have a right to insist that the whole time of a professor be devoted to the agricultural school, in conformity with the purpose of Dr. Terrell.”¹⁷³ To Howard’s point, in the years immediately after its reopening, UGA offered no degree to recognize the advanced study of agriculture. During the 1869–1870 academic year, UGA was organized into three departments: the Preparatory Department, the Academic Departments, and the Professional Schools.¹⁷⁴ Students could receive a bachelor of arts, science, or law. Students could also receive a degree in mechanical or civil engineering but there was no degree specifically recognizing the advanced study of agriculture.¹⁷⁵

Jones attempted to defend the board of trustees and the work of the Terrell Professorship in the pages of *The Plantation*, suggesting that geology, mineralogy, botany, and chemistry were “cognate” subject areas to agriculture and noting that “were it practicable, under any circumstances, to more than ground our students in the principles which underlie the applications of science to agriculture, no fair minded person could expect any more than that to be accomplished with the limited endowment under the control of the University.”¹⁷⁶ Jones remained in the role of Terrell Professor until 1872, the year that the GSCAMA was founded alongside Franklin College at Athens. And Howard remained the first in a line of critics of the university’s approach to agricultural education, many of whom took to the pages of farming publications to offer their critique.

¹⁷³ Charles H. Howard, “The University of Georgia,” *The Plantation*, June 10, 1871. ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

¹⁷⁴ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Georgia, Sixty-Ninth Annual Session, 1869–1870* (Augusta: Chronicle & Sentinel Book and Job Printing, 1870), 16.

¹⁷⁵ The catalogue for 1869–1870 lists the degrees in civil engineering and mechanical engineering as degrees but does not specify that the degree is a Bachelor of Science degree.

¹⁷⁶ William L. Jones, “The State University,” *The Plantation*, July 1, 1871. ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

Georgia and its Land Scrip Funds

In the years between the reopening of UGA in 1866 and the establishment of GSCAMA in 1872, Chancellor Lipscomb offered a variety of ideas for advancing the university. He lobbied the board of trustees for the implementation of a partial scientific curriculum and elective system, the reopening of the Law School, and commitment of support for expanding the engineering, agriculture, and commerce programs.¹⁷⁷ In his report to the board of trustees from July 1871, Lipscomb framed his improvements by asking, “how can the University of Georgia send out the wisest and largest number of men to solve the problems of the day, to meet the issues of the day, and to promote the free civilization of the day?”¹⁷⁸

For many in the state, the problems of the day in Georgia were largely related to Governor Bullock. He was widely seen as a corrupt leader, installing his supporters into prominent positions. While even Bullock’s supporters would have admitted that his dealings often favored them, most of those who criticized Bullock did so because he supported the reinstatement of twenty-nine Black legislators expelled from Georgia’s House and Senate in September 1870, with the backing of a Democratic legislative majority who declared them ineligible to serve based on the state constitution and code. Between 1870 and 1872, Democrats held the majority in the legislative houses. Between the Republican governor and the Democratic legislature, very little would be accomplished and funding for higher education would have to wait. In 1872, the Georgia legislature returned to Republican control and the cries of corruption from those who opposed Bullock’s agenda increased.

¹⁷⁷ Dyer, *The University of Georgia*, 118.

¹⁷⁸ Chancellor Lipscomb to Trustees, 25 August 1871, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 4, 1858–1877), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

Critics claimed that the state's money poured through his fingers and into the sewers or into the coffers of his friends. They howled against the number of bond issues, legislative costs—of course, had only one cent gone to what they considered an illegal legislature forced on them by bayonets, they would have yelled corruptions—excessive pardons, expenses for the capitol, rewards, and printing costs.¹⁷⁹

In October 1871 Bullock was forced to resign and was replaced by Benjamin Conley, who served as president of the Georgia Senate at the time. Conley served as governor until he was replaced in January 1872 by James Smith, a Democrat who ran unopposed. The election of Smith in 1872 was seen as the end of Reconstruction in Georgia.

Amid this political chaos, the question arose of what to do with the land scrip allocated to Georgia as part of the Morrill Act of 1862. The federal land scrip claimed by Georgia represented 2,938 parcels of Indigenous land that totaled 269,491 acres, most of which was in the western United States.¹⁸⁰ The largest parcel of land was 196 acres in modern day Mariposa, California, which was seized in 1851 from the A-pang-asse, A-wall-a-chee, Apalache, Co-co-noon, Po-to-yan-ti, and Si-yan-ti nations and for which the United States paid no money.¹⁸¹ Georgia accepted the land scrip in 1866 after it rejoined the Union, but the chaos in the state born of Reconstruction politics meant that the legislature's attention was drawn away from the land scrip and its sale. As the five-year deadline for selling the land scrip included in the act approached, the state needed a plan for how to sell the scrip and to whom the proceeds should be allocated. In January 1872, Acting Governor Benjamin Conley finally sold the scrip for \$243,000 to a single buyer, Gleason F. Lewis. Lewis was an Ohioan speculator who is believed to have

¹⁷⁹ Duncan, *Entrepreneur for Equality*, 120.

¹⁸⁰ "Land-Grab Universities."

¹⁸¹ "Land Grab Universities."

purchased nearly 3 million acres of land made available through the Morrill Act of 1862.¹⁸² But the money had not been invested by the time that Democratic Governor James M. Smith took office later that year.¹⁸³

As the July legislative deadline loomed, UGA's Board of Trustees turned its attention to gaining possession of the proceeds from the sale of land.¹⁸⁴ As a school that was already offering agricultural and engineering education, UGA's trustees felt that the university was the obvious home for the agriculture and mechanic arts education described in the Morrill Act of 1862. But before the university even approached the legislature with the idea of establishing GSCAMA as part of the University, those who opposed UGA's current approach to agricultural education took to the pages of agricultural journals to express both concern and contempt. In an October 1871 article, prominent Georgia agriculturalist, E.M. Pendleton, picked up where Charles Howard left off in excoriating UGA. He specifically attacked the idea of attaching industrial education to "literary colleges" and questioning the efficacy of the Terrell Professorship as a means of teaching practical education. Pendleton wrote,

no man who has devoted his life to the abstract sciences, as taught in books, is fit to be a teacher in the practical department of an agricultural college. Such men may do to teach students to be chemists and geologists, or even theoretical agriculturalists, but they cannot learn them that which they have never learned themselves, while then, we should

¹⁸² Thomas LeDuc, "Scrip Versus Land: The Value of the Federal Grant to the Agricultural Colleges of the Public-Land States of the South," *Journal of Southern History* 19, no. 2 (May 1953): 217. As a speculator, Lewis's goal was to make a profit by reselling the land scrip.

¹⁸³ "The Land Scrip: Governor Smith's Official Report of His Action on the Matter." *Atlanta Constitution*, April 18, 1872. ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

¹⁸⁴ A provision of Section 5 of the Morrill Act of 1862 stated that a state must allocated the proceeds from the sale of land scrip to a college within five years of accepting the scrip.

have men learned in the theory of these sciences, we should also have those who are versed in the practical details of Agriculture.¹⁸⁵

These attacks on UGA were not baseless. As a university that had taught the sons of wealthy planters, it was questionable whether UGA was prepared to provide practical instruction to the children of the industrial class, many of whom had either a poor primary school education or none at all.¹⁸⁶ From the time of its founding, UGA had been the place for the sons of elite men to receive the education and to establish the networks they would need to be powerful leaders. As men who would be unlikely to ever engage in farm work, they did not need to learn the practicalities of agriculture. Were UGA to receive the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip to establish an agriculture and mechanic arts college, admission to the university would be available to those in the state to whom it had not been before. Those who opposed UGA's bid to receive the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip believed that young men would leave their families' farms to attend the university, and their fathers would be waiting at home for them to return with knowledge that could be practically applied. Social hierarchies would either be disrupted or reinforced, as the sons of wealthy Georgians attended the same college as the sons of the industrial class.

In trying to gain support among UGA's Board of Trustees for lobbying the legislature to give the proceeds of the sale of land scrip to UGA, Lipscomb suggested that "the objects of this Fund can be best observed by giving it to the University; the machinery of education already existing here can readily be made subservient to its highest utility; every dollar of it can be made more productive, and the specific ends of the grant as to the kind and quality of the instruction be

¹⁸⁵ E.M. Pendleton, "Our Agricultural College." *Southern Farm and Home: A Magazine of Agriculture, Manufactures, and Domestic Economy* 2, no. 12 (October 1871): 447.

¹⁸⁶ In this study, I use the phrase "industrial classes" to describe the background of land-grant college students to reflect its usage in the Morrill Act of 1862.

more fully and wisely attained.”¹⁸⁷ As evidenced by his earlier proposal for expanding education at UGA, Lipscomb generally advocated for a University that was more expansive and advanced. But when it came to agricultural and mechanic arts education, he expressed doubt about the efficacy of education specifically focused on training in agriculture and the mechanic arts. “The education of agriculturalists and mechanics as such,” he wrote, “is neither possible nor expedient and hence our aim should be to educate men together so that they can act and interact on one another.”¹⁸⁸ While UGA could be a good steward of the land scrip funds, Lipscomb doubted whether the type of education described in the Morrill Act of 1862 could be realized at the university. This pull between practical education and classical education would be a theme repeated by UGA trustees and administrators through the end of the nineteenth century. It reflected a larger conflict in the state between a new social order in which agriculture and industry would modernize Georgia’s economy and a desire to return to the old social order where wealthy men of the former planter class were once again powerful and influential. Even as it wrestled with the possibility of practical education, UGA’s Board of Trustees pressed forward with its plan to take possession of the funds.

North Georgia Agricultural College

In November 1871, as the state prepared to sell the land it received as part of the Morrill Act of 1862, the UGA Board of Trustees was at work preparing a proposal for the legislature on how UGA might accept the land scrip funds.¹⁸⁹ This proposal included an impassioned plea that positioned the university as a “foster child of the state” and presented a plan for how the

¹⁸⁷ Chancellor Lipscomb to Trustees, 25 August 1871, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 4, 1858–1877), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

¹⁸⁸ Chancellor Lipscomb to Trustees, 25 August 1871.

¹⁸⁹ Robert Preston Brooks, *The University of Georgia Under Sixteen Administration, 1785–1955* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1956), 52.

university could incorporate the educational requirements outlined in the Morrill Act of 1862 without diluting the educational rigor expected of the students in Franklin College.¹⁹⁰ While it may have seemed a foregone conclusion to both the Georgia legislature and the UGA Board of Trustees that the university would receive the funds, the newly founded North Georgia Agricultural College (NGAC) demanded serious consideration as a recipient of the funds.

In 1871, 25 members of the community in Dahlonega, Georgia, incorporated NGAC with the express purpose of taking advantage of the sale of land scrip given to Georgia as part of the Morrill Act of 1862. The new trustees of NGAC petitioned the legislature for a portion of the proceeds from the sale of land scrip.¹⁹¹ In a letter to the *Calhoun Times* which was later reprinted in the *Atlanta Constitution*, an anonymous author suggested that,

As the General Government has given to Georgia 500,000 acres of the [sic] public lands to be used exclusively for the advancement of agricultural education, and as North Georgia has a building already for that purpose, I have no doubt that the next Legislature will see the wisdom of giving this institution one half of the land. It will then be ready for the youths of our country who are unable to attend literary institutions at the present high rates of tuition, board, etc.¹⁹²

NGAC trustees interpreted the Morrill Act as being exclusively about agricultural education, and they positioned the college as foil for the “literary college” at Athens. This argument brought to mind the one offered earlier by E.M. Pendleton that those at UGA could teach young men to be scientists but lacked the knowledge to teach practical agriculture.

¹⁹⁰Board of Trustees to General Assembly, 8 November 1871, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 4, 1858–1877), University of Georgia Board of Trustees correspondence and reports.

¹⁹¹ “Organization of the North Georgia Agricultural College.” *The Plantation*, June 24, 1871. HathiTrust.

¹⁹² “Interesting letter from Dahlonega,” *Atlanta Constitution*, August 15, 1871. ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

NGAC trustees undermined the argument put forward by UGA trustees that UGA was the only reasonable place to receive the proceeds of the sale of land scrip because they already had the “machinery of education.” Having a building in which to teach classes gave the impression that NGAC could support agricultural education without needing financial support from the Georgia legislature to erect buildings, an expense that the Morrill Act of 1862 forbade states from supporting with proceeds from the sale of land scrip. What made NGAC a less viable challenger than it thought was that though the college was chartered by 1871, it had not accepted any students or offered any classes. Ultimately, it was the Georgia Constitution of 1866 that posed the biggest challenge. In that document, UGA was made responsible “to establish all schools of learning or art as may be useful to the States, and organize the same in the way most likely to attend the ends desired.”¹⁹³ Because UGA was named as being responsible for coordinating higher education in the state, NGAC could offer agricultural and mechanic arts education, but could not receive any proceeds from the land scrip without becoming a branch college of the University. Though the Georgia legislature gave the land-grant designation and associated land scrip proceeds to UGA, NGAC received state support. NGAC became a branch college of UGA at the end of 1872 and was given \$2,000 per year from the Georgia legislature. With this financial support, the college began offering classes in 1873.¹⁹⁴

Georgia Legislature’s Appropriation to Atlanta University

NGAC was not the only school in Georgia to receive an appropriation related to the establishment of GSCAMA. From 1870 to 1872 and then again from 1874 to 1887, Atlanta

¹⁹³ John L. Conley, *The Constitution of the State of Georgia with Full Marginal Notes and a Copious and Analytical Index* (Atlanta: New Era Steam Printing, 1870), 216.

¹⁹⁴ Allison Galloup, “A Brief History of the University of North Georgia,” in *The University of North Georgia: 150 Years of Leadership and Vision*, ed. Katherine Rose Adams, Michael Lanford, and Jason Mayernick (Dahlongega: University of North Georgia Press, 2023), 1.

University, a college for Black students, was given an annual appropriation of \$8,000 from the Georgia legislature. The appropriation began in 1870, when the legislature decreed that “the sum of eight thousand dollars be appropriated to the Atlanta University under the same restricts and regulations as the Athens Institution,” by which they meant UGA.¹⁹⁵ Atlanta University opened in 1869, supported financially by the American Missionary Association and the Freedmen’s Bureau. In its inaugural year, the university offered studies in the Preparatory Department, the Normal Department, and the Theological Class, with preparations being made to open an Agricultural Department.¹⁹⁶ Admission to the university was contingent upon passing “a thorough examination in Reading, Writing, Spelling, Arithmetic, Geography, Grammar, and United States History” and on the student having “a good moral character.”¹⁹⁷

Atlanta University received the \$8,000 appropriation in 1870 and 1871 while Republicans were in power, and gaining the support of newly enfranchised Black voters was vital to maintaining that power. In 1872, when control of the legislature returned to the Democrats, it was less important to gain the support of Black voters and the money was not appropriated to Atlanta University in 1872.¹⁹⁸ Those who supported the continuation of the appropriation to Atlanta University saw the appropriation to UGA of the proceeds of the sale of the land scrip given to Georgia as insult heaped upon injury. In a letter to the *Savannah Morning News*, former state legislator Henry M. Turner stated that in giving the money to UGA that Governor Smith had given “every dollar of it [the proceeds] to Franklin College at Athens, to

¹⁹⁵ Augustus Flesh, *Public Laws, Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, at the Session of 1870, with an appending Containing the Government of Georgia and Court Calendar, etc.* (Atlanta: New Era Printing Establishment, 1870), 63.

¹⁹⁶ *Catalogue of the Normal and Preparatory Departments of Atlanta University, Incorporated 1867* (Atlanta: Economic Book and Job Printing House, 1870), 10-1.

¹⁹⁷ *Catalogue of Atlanta University*, 11.

¹⁹⁸ Peter Wallenstein, *From Slave South to New South: Public Policy in Nineteenth-Century Georgia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 163.

establish and endow an agricultural department in that old time-honored seat of learning, where he knew no colored student could enter, and never will, without a great hubbub and confusion.”¹⁹⁹ Turner suggested that during his time in the legislature that he and other Black legislators had made an agreement with white Democratic legislators that “we would never bother Franklin University if the State would make an equal appropriation to our University, that is to say, eight thousand dollars to each annually.”²⁰⁰ Turner saw the end of the appropriation to Atlanta University and the appropriation of the proceeds of the sale of the land scrip as a betrayal of that agreement.

In the 1874 legislative session, a Special Joint Committee was appointed by the Georgia legislature to consider the reinstating the appropriation to Atlanta University. In its report, the Committee’s members suggested that the land scrip given by the United States Congress to the States was not “given solely for the white race; but is admitted by everybody that the object of Congress was to educate every one, both white and colored, in the agricultural and mechanic arts, at little or no expense.”²⁰¹ The Committee explained that UGA received the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip because it was the best equipped to establish and agriculture and mechanic arts curriculum based on the buildings and equipment already on the Athens campus. The Committee urged the legislature to reinstate the appropriation to Atlanta University, stating “we are assured, by Professors Brown and Ware, and the leading friends of education, both white and colored, and by our own good sense, that the State’s protection of this College for the education of the colored people, would be a safeguard thrown around the University and the

¹⁹⁹ Henry M. Thomas, “The Agricultural Land Scrip and the Colored People,” *Savannah Morning News*, January 6, 1874. Georgia Historic Newspapers.

²⁰⁰ Henry M. Thomas, “The Agricultural Land Scrip and the Colored People.”

²⁰¹ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia at the Annual Session of the General Assembly, Commenced at Atlanta, January 14, 1874* (Atlanta; J.H. Estill, 1874), 397.

other Colleges of Georgia.”²⁰² The legislative committee believed that by reinstating the appropriation to Atlanta University, UGA would not face pressure to admit Black students.

The Georgia legislature reinstated the \$8,000 appropriation to Atlanta University in 1874. In the legislation, the appropriation was made,

in lieu of any claim of the colored population of this State upon the proceeds of the Agricultural Land Scrip donated by the Congress of the United States and the course of instruction shall be so far modified as may be necessary to adapt the same to the object of said grant.²⁰³

By reinstating the appropriation, the legislature ensured that UGA could retain the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip without having to share the money with Atlanta University or having to admit Black students. The state continued this \$8,000 appropriation until 1887.

In July 1887, Governor John Gordon sent a special message to the legislature in which, among other things, he shared an accusation that Atlanta University was educating Black students alongside White students, many of the White students being children of faculty members of the University.²⁰⁴ Gordon suggested that “Georgia’s policy upon this subject is plainly expressed in her laws and constitutions, and based upon the conviction that the interests of both races demand that the children of the two should be educated apart, and she cannot abandon that policy or permit any one to ignore it upon any false principles of sociology or political economy.”²⁰⁵ The legislature responded to the accusations against Atlanta University in September 1887 through a joint resolution that directed that,

²⁰² *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia, January 14, 1874*, 398.

²⁰³ *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, Passed at the Regular January Session, 1874* (Savannah: J.H. Estill, 1874), 33.

²⁰⁴ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia at the Adjourned Session of the General Assembly at Atlanta, Wednesday, July 6, 1887* (Atlanta: Jas. P. Harison, 1887), 18.

²⁰⁵ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia, July 6, 1887*, 20.

In the future the Governor be directed not to draw the sum of \$8,000.00 to the Atlanta University, under the act of March 3d, 1874, until such a plan of expenditure as will secure the exclusive use of the same for the education of colored children only, in accordance with the declared and settled policy of the State, on the subject of co-education of the races, has been submitted, and approved by the commission constituted in said Act for the supervision of the expenditure of said appropriation.²⁰⁶

Rather than being persuaded to change its practice of admitting and educating both Black students and White students, the University refused to conform to the legislature's directive and received no money from the state after 1887. Between 1870 and 1887, Atlanta University received \$136,000 from the state of Georgia.²⁰⁷ In the same 1890 act of the Georgia legislature establishing a school for Black students as a branch of UGA, the legislature officially repealed the \$8,000 annual appropriation to Atlanta University and stated that "no colored student shall be admitted into the University and no white student shall be admitted into the school for colored students, herein provided and established."²⁰⁸ This act codified segregated higher education in the state of Georgia until well into the second half of the twentieth century.

Establishment of GSCAMA

Despite the challenges that NGAC and Atlanta University made for the proceeds of the sale of the land scrip, neither had an exclusive claim to the land scrip funds or the land-grant designation. At the time that Governor Smith sold the land scrip given to Georgia as part of the Morrill Act of 1862, UGA had the most legitimate claim to both the funds and the designation.

²⁰⁶ *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, 1887* (Atlanta: Jas. P. Harrison & Co., 1887), 901.

²⁰⁷ Wallenstein, *From Slave South to New South*, 168.

²⁰⁸ *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, 1890–'91*. vol. 1 (Atlanta: Geo. W. Harrison, 1891), 117.

After Governor Smith sold the land scrip, UGA's Board of Trustees returned to Atlanta to appeal to the state for the proceeds of the land scrip. The trustees met in the Senate chamber in March 1872 and approved a resolution which offered a more fully formed vision of a school they called the Georgia State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts. Governor Smith adopted the Board's resolution, stating in the official pronouncement that,

The University of Georgia is the only institution of learning in this State having the power by law to organize and establish a college in all respects, such as described in said act of Congress and the Board of Trustees having established a college distinct in its organization and specific to its objects in conformity in every respect with the act of Congress above named.²⁰⁹

Smith's comments referenced the part of the Georgia Constitution of 1866 that made UGA responsible for coordinating higher education in the state. The UGA Board of Trustees was able to influence both Governor Smith and the Georgia legislature and, in the process, secured both the land-grant designation and the associated funds.

GSCAMA in Athens opened on May 1, 1872, under the direction of W. Leroy Broun, its first President. Broun was a Professor of Natural Philosophy at UGA and had aided in its efforts to secure the land scrip proceeds. The course catalog for 1872, GSCAMA's inaugural year, listed three departments within the college: Agriculture, Engineering, and Chemistry. The bulletin noted that "a complete organization of this College will be made, so soon as the income of the fund appropriated for its maintenance is available" and suggested that courses in mining engineering, military tactics and engineering, building and architecture, and general science will

²⁰⁹ "The Land scrip: Governor Smith's Official Report of His Action on the Matter." *Atlanta Constitution*, April 18, 1872. ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

be offered as soon as additional faculty can be hired.²¹⁰ The course in agriculture was a three-year course which included studies in algebra, geometry, English and English literature, drawing, book-keeping, French, trigonometry, mensuration (or measurements), surveying and leveling, geometrical drawing, descriptive geometry, rhetoric, elements of chemistry, elements of astronomy, mechanics and physics, agricultural chemistry, agricultural principles and methods, analytical chemistry, rural engineering, law of titles and contracts, botany, physiology of plants and animals, mineralogy and geology, architecture, and meteorology.²¹¹

The course in engineering was a two-year course that included analytical geometry, geometrical drawing, plan drawing, surveying, chain surveys, natural philosophy, French, surveying, differential and integral calculus, topographical drawing, chemistry, descriptive geometry, shades and shadows, stone cutting, theory of perspective, strength of materials, astronomy, theory of stability of various structures like retaining walls and roads, bridge construction, and architectural and machine drawing.²¹² UGA offered degrees in mechanical and civil engineering prior to the establishment of GSCAMA, and these degrees continued to be offered even as the Engineering Department moved under the supervision of GSCAMA. The course in applied chemistry included the analysis and manufacture of various compounds, as well as the study of bleaching and dying. The study of applied chemistry was separate from the study of chemistry as offered through the Academic Department, which students could study as part of a bachelor of science.²¹³

²¹⁰ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Georgia, 1872*, 44-5.

²¹¹ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Georgia, 1872*, 38.

²¹² *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Georgia, 1872*, 39.

²¹³ The study of chemistry through the Academic Department focused on theoretical and organic chemistry. The study of applied chemistry through GSCAMA focused on the role of chemistry in the manufacture of various items such as gunpowder and soap, as well as chemical processes such as bleaching.

The 1872 course catalog also listed terms of admission for both Franklin College and the GSCAMA. Franklin College's admissions requirements were nearly a page long, and included knowledge of Latin, Greek, and mathematics. The standards of admission for GSCAMA were comprised of a single sentence: "For admission into the State College, the candidate must be not less than sixteen years of age, and have a fair knowledge of Arithmetic, English, Geography, and History of the United States."²¹⁴ GSCAMA's admissions requirements reflected the fact that the college would attract a different type of student to UGA than Franklin College, specifically students of poorer families who likely had less access to quality primary and secondary education or who had not attended school at all. UGA would need to lower its admissions standards for GSCAMA students who had either low-quality school or no schooling at all. In the antebellum and early postbellum periods, students who attended UGA would have been the children of the planter class who had access to private schooling and who attended UGA to acquire the knowledge and social connections they needed to succeed. For perhaps the first time, the University of Georgia, through GSCAMA, would be forced to contend with students of the industrial class who were the product of low-quality public-school education in Reconstruction-era Georgia.

Attacks on GSCAMA in the press continued after its founding and throughout its early years. Over the course of several months in 1876, the *Southern Cultivator* published a series of articles attacking the university for mismanaging land scrip funds and proposing a new model for organization of GSCAMA. In the first article, the author wrote "in the case of Georgia, instead of the funds being employed to expand and develop the scientific department, that department, which bears directly upon Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, a very large part, perhaps half or

²¹⁴ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Georgia, 1872*, 18.

more, of the income therefrom is devoted to paying salaries of professors who now hold the *same* chairs, and perform the *same* duties which they did before the Agricultural College was established.”²¹⁵ Accusations of UGA’s mismanagement of the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip were common, especially from agriculturalists in the state who saw the Morrill Act of 1862 as legislation solely related to the establishment of agricultural colleges in the United States. This criticism of UGA only intensified over time, and the uneasy relationship between UGA and its detractors continued well into the early 20th century.

Chancellor Henry Tucker vs. GSCAMA Students

The years following the founding of the State College saw turnover at both GSCAMA and at UGA. 1872, Jones resigned as Terrell Professor and was replaced by Henry C. White, an engineer from Virginia. White’s initial appointment to the Professorship was for a single year, but his appointment was made permanent in 1873. In 1874, Chancellor Andrew Lipscomb resigned and was replaced by Henry Holcombe Tucker. And in 1875, W. Leroy Broun resigned as President of GSCAMA and was replaced by Lucien H. Charbonnier, an instructor of military tactics whose willingness to support the college made up for his lack of knowledge and experience in agricultural education.²¹⁶ Of all of the changes in personnel, Tucker’s appointment was the one that was most disruptive to the developing relationship between GSCAMA and historic Franklin College under the broader UGA organizational structure. In 1872, the year that GSCAMA opened, the university enrolled 317 students across all its schools. The year that Tucker began, the university enrolled 266 students and in 1879, it enrolled 149.²¹⁷ Enrollment in

²¹⁵ “Agricultural Colleges—Has the Fund Donated By Congress Been Properly Used? *Southern Cultivator* 34, no. 8 (August 1876): 329.

²¹⁶ Karina, *The University of Georgia College of Agriculture*, 51.

²¹⁷ Brooks, *The University of Georgia Under Sixteen Administrations*, 60.

GSCMA was especially dismal and of the few students who attended the school, even fewer studied agriculture.

Tucker believed that GSCAMA's enrollment woes were a result of how poorly prepared the students being admitted to the college were to meet the academic challenges and, as a result, how poorly the college met the expectations of the public. In his 1877 Chancellor's report, Tucker suggested,

We cannot do otherwise than teach these [State College] students what they are obliged to learn before they can learn anything else. When after a year or two they return to their parents, and it is discovered that they have learned nothing what they might have been taught as well, or better in a common academy at home, saving the expense of board and travel, there is deep disappointment. Thus the Institution loses its hold on the public confidence.²¹⁸

Tucker was correct about students being ill-prepared to succeed at GSCAMA, given the poor state of public education in Georgia. And he was also correct that even with lower admission standards, several semesters of remedial education were required to bring GSCAMA students up to a level where they could receive training at the collegiate level. But Tucker's position on the readiness of students who came to Athens to study at GSCAMA did little to account for the fact that it was an inequity in opportunity caused by lower socio-economic status that resulted in students to be underprepared relative to their peers in Franklin College. And his attitude did little to build trust with the public, many of whom were yeoman farmers. Though manufacturing was part of the state's economy, many of those employed in Georgia were farmers. In 1870, two years before the establishment of GSCAMA, 76% of all working Georgians were employed in

²¹⁸ Tucker to Trustees, 17 July 1877, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 4, 1858–1877), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

agriculture.²¹⁹ Tucker's attitude toward the students from families of modest backgrounds who came to GSCAMA to study did little toward building a positive relationship between the university and the citizens of Georgia.

So deep was the public's distrust of GSCAMA among agriculturalists that in 1877, the State Agricultural Society entertained an ultimately unsuccessful resolution at its annual meeting to charge a committee "to examine into the practicability of carrying out the original intention of organizing an agricultural institute or college under the auspices of the State Agricultural Society."²²⁰ Tucker continued his attack on the public's perception of what education could be offered to GSCAMA students, writing in his 1878 Chancellor's Report that,

Supposing at first, that an almost illiterate boy could be transformed in a few months by means of what is called practical education into a scientific agriculturalist or engineer, the people sent in their patronage to this College like a flood. Discovering their mistake that a student of very low grade of culture could learn no more here than he could at a common academy, at one-fourth the expense, a strong reaction took place in the public mind, and the people not only discontinued their patronage, but were led to underestimate the real merits of the institution. First, they expected too much; now they give credit for too little.²²¹

Tucker's ongoing criticism of GSCAMA students focused on their inability to succeed at the College, but it also extended to the socioeconomic status of the students relative to those enrolled at Franklin College. In calling them "low grade of culture," Tucker showed his disdain for the

²¹⁹ C. Mildred Thompson, *Reconstruction in Georgia*, 309.

²²⁰ *Transactions of the Georgia State Agricultural Society from August 1876, to February 1878* (Atlanta: James P. Harrison & Co., 1878), 201. The State Agricultural Society voted to table the resolution until the 1878 session, though it was not revived at the subsequent session.

²²¹ Tucker to Trustees, 24 July 1878, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 5, 1878–1886), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

class of students who were forced to attend the poor public schools in Georgia and, as a result, came to UGA unprepared for a postsecondary education. Tucker seemed to resent the fact that the public blamed UGA for the failure of GSCAMA students to thrive academically and not the public school system which sent them to Athens without the tools to succeed. Until the end of his Chancellorship in 1878, Tucker used his Chancellor's Report to defend the university and deride GSCAMA students.

Tucker also used the Chancellor's Report to address the public's perception of GSCAMA and the treatment of its students. Many believed that students enrolled in historic Franklin College were treated differently than those enrolled at GSCAMA, in relationship to their perceived status outside of the university. This perception is unsurprising given how much of his Chancellor's reports were devoted to attacking the GSCAMA students. In his report to the Board of Trustees for 1877, Tucker suggested that,

They imagine and they will imagine that the land-scrip fund is raided by Franklin College. They imagine and they will imagine that the faculty measure out different treatment to the two different sets of students. They imagine and they are determined to continue to imagine that the social status of a State College student is inferior to that of a Franklin College student. They imagine and will forever imagine that the instruction given to the classes of students is not equally valuable and that the State College students are put off, as it were, to the second table.²²²

The "they" that Tucker referred to in this excerpt from his report was the people who had taken to newspapers and agricultural journals to criticize nearly every aspect of how UGA had handled agricultural and mechanic arts education at GSCAMA. Throughout the 1870s, there were a

²²² Tucker to Trustees, 24 July 1878. University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 5, 1878–1886), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

multitude of attacks on UGA in the press, especially around its treatment of agricultural education and GSCAMA students. Detractors argued that agricultural education at GSCAMA was ineffective because those teaching at the college had no practical experience with farming. Tucker resented the GSCAMA students for being unable to succeed in college, and he resented the public for thinking that UGA treated students differently depending on whether they were enrolled at Franklin College or GSCAMA.

In his Chancellor's report for 1877, Tucker proposed a significant change to UGA's organization, which centered on the unification of GSCAMA and Franklin College under the broader umbrella of UGA, resolving many of the things about GSCAMA and its students that Tucker found irksome. Tucker suggested that through this unification "the grand old classical curriculum with its time honored degree of bachelor of arts would be accessible to the son of the farmer or of the mechanic on the same terms with the sons of statesman and millionaires."²²³ UGA would return to the single set of admissions criteria used to admit students to Franklin College. As part of this unification process, Tucker ignored agricultural and mechanic arts education but suggested that students at the college would take on training in military tactics. Tucker did not prescribe a set number of students who would attend a newly reformed UGA but suggested that the size of the student body would be dependent upon the number of students who could meet the admissions standards each year. He did, however, prescribe the number of faculty the smaller institution would require: ten professors and two tutors. The proposed tightening of admissions requirements likely gave the trustees pause, as it would make UGA less accessible to those GSCAMA was meant to serve.

²²³ Tucker to Trustees, 27 July 1877. University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 5, 1878–1886), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

Rather than stepping directly into the fray, the board of trustees charged a committee to confer with the faculty on this proposal. While the faculty agreed that change to the curriculum was necessary, they did not support Tucker's proposal. "A return to that system [the core curriculum], they believe, would seriously impair the efficiency of the University, and, indeed, prove fatal to its existence as a high grade Institution, working in harmony with modern ideas regarding liberal education."²²⁴ While the faculty did not favor a return to the "core curriculum," it did propose that the elective system created under Chancellor Lipscomb be eliminated, leaving students to choose from a fixed curriculum in six degree areas across Franklin College and GSCAMA.²²⁵ In Franklin College, students could choose from a bachelor of arts, bachelor of science, or bachelor of philosophy and in GSCAMA, students could choose from a bachelor of agriculture, bachelor of engineering, or bachelor of chemical science.²²⁶ The board of trustees instituted aspects of both Tucker's proposal and the proposal set forth by the faculty, choosing a fixed curriculum for UGA students and a single set of admissions requirements across Franklin College and GSCAMA.²²⁷

The critique with which Tucker was forced to contend during his time as Chancellor was not new, and his resignation from the position did not quiet critics. And much of it reflected the concerns held by agriculturalists in the state prior to the establishment of GSCAMA related to the appending of a college of agriculture onto a "literary college." E.M. Pendleton had sounded the alarm back in 1871 when he suggested that men with no experience in practical agriculture were not suited to teach agriculture. And it brought to mind Chancellor Lipscomb's doubts about

²²⁴ *The Faculty of the University of Georgia to the Hon. Alex H. Stephens, Benj. C. Yancey, A.R. Lawton, Jos. E. Brown* (Athens: Southern Banner Tower Press, 1878), 2.

²²⁵ Dyer, *The University of Georgia*, 118.

²²⁶ *The Faculty of the University of Georgia*, 10-11.

²²⁷ *The Faculty of the University of Georgia*, 2.

²²⁷ Dyer, *The University of Georgia*, 132.

the efficacy of agricultural education. The distrust of, and resentment toward, UGA on the part of the public persisted into the twentieth century.

Henry Grady, the New South Creed, and the Establishment of the School of Technology

The Chancellorships of Patrick Hughes Mell (1878–1888) and William Ellison Boggs (1889–1898) included very little in the way of changes to the curriculum, but neither administration should be considered uneventful. The challenges faced by each reflected larger periods of chaos in the legislative and executive branches of Georgia government. Further, the growing branch college system reflected a tension within the state between industrialists and agriculturalists who each had a different vision for the state during this period. In the years between 1879 and 1889, the Georgia legislature established the School of Technology and the Normal and Industrial College at Milledgeville. While they were not admitted into either Franklin College or GSCAMA, Black students joined the University in 1890 through the Georgia State Industrial College when the funds from the Morrill Act of 1890 were disbursed. Women joined the system in 1889 with the Normal and Industrial College and in 1891 when the State Normal and Industrial College opened in Athens.

The development of the School of Technology in Atlanta grew out of a vision of the new South championed by UGA alumnus Henry W. Grady. This new South argument gained ground in Georgia in 1874 when Grady published an editorial in the *Atlanta Daily Herald* entitled “The New South,” in which he suggested that,

for many generations the South got along well enough with its monopoly of cotton growing, its labor maintained at the simple cost of food and shelter, and its society organized on principles of pure aristocracy. But all that is changed, and it is found that the laws of growth and wealth must be observed there as in all the rest of the world.

Something has been done in Georgia and two or three other State toward building up manufactures with very favorable results.²²⁸

Grady's editorial offers the growth of industry as an alternative to the expansion of agriculture as a means for addressing the South's economic woes in the postbellum era. In doing so, he set in motion a conflict between those in the state who believed Georgia's future remained with agrarian development and those, like Bullock during Reconstruction, who saw its future in the growth of industry.

The Black Belt region of Georgia, of which Athens was a part, made up the largest part of the state and was where most of the cotton was grown and where most plantations in the state were located.²²⁹ After the emancipation of enslaved people, plantation owners in the Black Belt region struggled to adapt to a farming system where laborers were paid for their work. Many plantation owners in the Black Belt region rented their land, moving to the larger cities and taking jobs in industry.²³⁰ In contrast, the Upper Piedmont, or Upcountry, was home to mostly small farms. Located in Northern Georgia, the population of the Upper Piedmont was mostly White and in the antebellum period the farms grew mostly food, including sweet potatoes, wheat and oats, and corn with very little acreage being devoted to growing cotton.²³¹ In the postbellum years, the Upcountry farmers grew cotton almost exclusively, which coincided with the rise in power of the merchant class in the Upcountry.²³² In a departure from its antebellum economy, Grady believed that the economic future of Georgia would be diversified, including both manufacturing and agriculture.

²²⁸ "The New South," *Atlanta Daily Herald*, March 14, 1874. ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

²²⁹ Robert Preston Brooks, *The Agrarian Revolution in Georgia* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 1914), 71.

²³⁰ Brooks, 86.

²³¹ Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850–1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 32.

²³² Hahn, 184.

In May 1880, Grady became both part-owner and managing editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*.²³³ This position afforded him access to both the news and editorial sections of the paper, which he used to publish stories on aspects of the new South creed including the growth of industry and agricultural improvements in the state.²³⁴ This position also gave him access to political power as part of the Atlanta Ring, a group comprised of Alfred Colquitt, Joseph E. Brown, John B. Gordon, Evan P. Howell, and himself. This group of politicians and newspaper men controlled Georgia politics for much of the 1880s and used their position and access to power to benefit the city of Atlanta.²³⁵ Grady's most high-profile explication of the new South creed happened in the form of a speech given in December 1886 for the New England Society.²³⁶ One of the tenets of the new South creed was that the South needed financial support from the North to expand its industrial pursuits. Grady's speech in New York City characterized the South as having accepted its defeat at the hands of Union soldiers. Grady described a region that returned from war and immediately took up the work of rebuilding.

As ruin was never before so overwhelming, never was restoration swifter. The soldier stepped from the trenches into the furrow; horses that had charged Federal guns marched before the plow, and fields that ran red with human blood in April were green with the harvest in June; women reared in luxury cut up their dresses and made breeches for their husbands, and, with a patience and heroism that fit women always as a garment, gave their hands to work.²³⁷

²³³ Harold E. Davis, "Henry W. Grady: Master of the Atlanta Ring, 1880–1886," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 69, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 11.

²³⁴ Harold E. Davis, "Henry Grady, the Atlanta Constitution, and the Politics of Farming in the 1880s," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 71, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 571.

²³⁵ Davis, "Henry W. Grady," 7.

²³⁶ Henry W. Grady, *Life and Labors of Henry W. Grady, His Speeches, Writings, etc.* (New York: WM. M. Goldthwaite, 1890), 99.

²³⁷ Grady, 107.

Grady's speech to the New England Society was seen as a great success, though his vision of the New South as a place that embraced industrialization as a way out of a dire economic situation described the Black Belt region of Georgia better than it did the state as a whole.

While Grady's calls for a new South did not explicitly call for an increase in industrial education, many in Georgia who called for increased industrial education were influenced by the creed. By the 1880s, those in Georgia who favored the development of industrial education offered a familiar critique on a different topic by suggesting that UGA was falling short of meeting the needs of the state in offering technological education. The course catalog for 1880 stated that in addition to a bachelor of agriculture, GSCAMA offered a bachelor of engineering and a Bachelor of chemical science, as well as a course in civil engineering and a partial course in building and architecture.²³⁸ The catalog also noted that the school of engineering was for the benefit of "those who intend to make engineering a profession; the course of instruction enabling the student to acquire a practical knowledge of the science as to be qualified for entering, upon graduation, upon the duties of his profession."²³⁹ Even with this amount of engineering and science education, detractors of UGA suggested that the skills obtained by GSCAMA students were not sufficient to prepare them for careers in emerging areas of industry.

Grady's newspaper, the *Atlanta Constitution*, supported the expansion of technological education and suggested that "as matters stand a classical education is a hindrance rather than a help to a young man starting out in practical life."²⁴⁰ The author of the editorial suggested that while classical education may provide some educational benefits, "in these latter days that are there are more lawyers in the courts than there are cases, and more physicians at large, even in

²³⁸ *Annual Announcement of the University of Georgia with a Catalogue of the Officers and Students, Seventy-Ninth Year—1880* (Atlanta: Jas. P. Harrison & Co., 1880), 33-5.

²³⁹ *Annual Announcement, Seventy-Ninth Year, 1880*, 36.

²⁴⁰ "Practical Education," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 23, 1882. ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

the malarial districts, than there are patients, while, on the other hand, capital and enterprise stand behind the trades and industries of the country and hold out fame and fortune to the youth of the land.”²⁴¹ It followed that a focus on practical education, specifically technological education, would lead to an increase in economic development in Georgia.

In 1883, a legislative committee chaired by Representative Nathaniel E. Harris was appointed to study whether a school of technology should be established as a branch of UGA. The committee visited several schools of technology in the North and was especially taken with the Worcester Free Institute in Massachusetts, recommending that a technological school in Georgia be established using Worcester as a model.²⁴² The committee recommended that the curriculum include “mechanical engineering, mining engineering, building and architecture, chemistry and textiles.”²⁴³ Two members of the committee to establish such a technological school introduced a bill in the Georgia House in September 1883. After lengthy debate, and despite passing 64–63, the measure failed to reach a constitutional majority and was not passed.²⁴⁴ The measure was reintroduced in the 1885 legislative session and was successfully passed, having been signed into law in October 1885.

The act established the School of Technology as a branch of UGA and outlined its curriculum, stating,

a course of practical training in the use and manufacture of tools and machines for wood and iron working shall be provided for all the students in said school, and the curriculum or course of training shall include, as near as practicable, consistent with the

²⁴¹ Practical Education,” *Atlanta Constitution*.

²⁴² Robert C. McMath, Jr. et al., *Engineering the New South: Georgia Tech, 1885–1985* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 18.

²⁴³ Robert C. McMath, Jr. et al., *Engineering the New South*, 19.

²⁴⁴ “The Legislature: Business Record of Both Houses of the Assembly,” *Atlanta Constitution*, September 15, 1883. ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

appropriation made, the branches now taught and followed in the Free Institute of Industrial Science at Worcester, Massachusetts.²⁴⁵

While the act established the School of Technology as a branch of UGA, it did not explicitly state that the school should be located in Athens. Instead, it established a Commission on the School of Technology whose first order of business would be to find a location for the school.

The commission met for the first time in April 1886 and appointed Nathaniel Harris as its chair. Until October 1886, the commission received bids to host the School of Technology from the cities of Athens, Atlanta, Covington, Macon, Milledgeville, and Penfield.²⁴⁶ Valued at \$120,000, the bid from Atlanta also came with the support of local politicians and the media.²⁴⁷ An editorial in the *Atlanta Constitution* suggested that “the commissioners have the opportunity, by planting a superb and separate technological school in Atlanta, to make themselves the apostles of the new and coming education by which Georgia must stand or fall, and of opening a new era to our grand old state. This opportunity will be lost, in our opinion, if the school is annexed to the university.”²⁴⁸ While Athenians valued their bid at \$163,500, most of what was being offered was existing facilities on the Athens campus.²⁴⁹ After 24 ballots, the commission finally settled on Atlanta as the home for the new School of Technology. UGA still benefitted from the \$65,000 appropriated to the School of Technology through its relationship with the University as a branch campus, but Atlanta was victorious in being the home of the institution that many felt would help educate students that would help Georgia embody the new South creed.

²⁴⁵ *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, 1884–1885* (Atlanta: James P. Harrison & Co., 1885), 70.

²⁴⁶ Robert C. McMath, Jr. et al., *Engineering the New South*, 27.

²⁴⁷ Robert C. McMath, Jr. et al., 29.

²⁴⁸ “The Technological School,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 2, 1886. ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

²⁴⁹ Robert C. McMath, Jr. et al., *Engineering the New South*, 29-30.

University of Georgia and Tensions with the Legislature

In 1887, as UGA was still stinging from losing the School of Technology to Atlanta, the state of Georgia received a federal appropriation for the establishment of an agricultural experiment station as a provision of the Hatch Act. While the legislation was making its way through Congress, UGA's Board of Trustees was already positioning itself as the obvious choice to receive the appropriation. In his July 1886 Chancellor's Report, Mell suggested that "for many years the College farm has subserved the purposes virtually and to some extent of an Experimental Station. Results of experiments there made, reported annual or oftener to the State Agricultural Convention have been acknowledged by that distinguished body as valuable contributions to the cause of scientific and practical farming."²⁵⁰ While the Georgia legislature was out of session in early 1888, Governor John B. Gordon accepted the Hatch Act funds and gave them to GSCAMA with the understanding that the legislature would choose the permanent location of the experiment station when it came back into session in the fall.²⁵¹

Newspapers across the state heralded the opening of the agricultural experiment station and described how the station would aid the citizens of Georgia.

The Station was established for the benefit of those engaged in rural pursuits, and they have the right to apply to the Station for any assistance that comes within its legitimate province. The results of the investigations made by the Station will be published and distributed free of cost, and become the common property of all.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Mell to Trustees, 16 July 1886, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 5, 1878–1886), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

²⁵¹ Karina, *The University of Georgia College of Agriculture*, 65.

²⁵² W.L. Jones, "Georgia Agricultural Experiment Station," *Union Recorder*, October 23, 1888. Georgia Historic Newspapers.

For the first time since the establishment of the Terrell Professorship back in antebellum Georgia, UGA interacted directly with farmers in transmitting knowledge on agricultural practices. When the legislature reconvened in the fall, it passed an act which officially established the experiment station, though not in Athens as part of GSCAMA. Rather, it suggested that “in selecting a site for said station the Board shall have reference to the central portion of the State and the accessibility of the place offered, the healthfulness of the locality and the adaptability of the land to represent the variety of soils in this State.”²⁵³ The board of directors of the experiment station entertained proposals from various locations across the state to serve as the site of the experiment station before finally settling on Griffin, a town 90 miles southeast of Athens, in 1889.²⁵⁴

As UGA’s Board of Trustees turned its attention to the Morrill Act of 1890 and how UGA might claim to the funds given to Georgia, Chancellor Boggs reflected upon the failure of GSCAMA to retain the agricultural experiment station. In his chancellor’s report for 1890, Boggs cautioned,

The Board knows perfectly well the wide spread discontent in certain quarters with regard to the A&M College. It was without doubt this feeling which led to the removal of the Experiment Station from the control of the Trustees contrary to the provisions of the Hatch Bill itself. It seems to me that we should do everything that is right in order to forestall hasty actions when the matter involved in the Morrill Bill comes before the Legislature.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, 1888* (Atlanta: W.J. Campbell, 1889), 50

²⁵⁴ Karina, *The University of Georgia College of Agriculture*, 69.

²⁵⁵ Boggs to Trustees, 30 October 1890, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 6, 1887–1914), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

When the time came to appropriate the funds from the Morrill Act of 1890, the legislature voted to “establish a school for colored persons, as a branch of the State University, and appropriate money for the same, etc.”²⁵⁶ In a communication dated July 28, 1891, Henry C. White, the president of the GSCAMA, suggested to the Board of Trustees an arrangement where the Board could appropriate some of the funds to the Georgia State Industrial College, the school for Black students established under the provisions of the Morrill Act of 1890, while keeping some of the funds for the university.²⁵⁷ The board of trustees adopted White’s plan, allowing UGA to meet the requirements of the Morrill Act of 1890 while at the same time allowing it to recoup some of its financial losses associated with the relocation of the agricultural experiment station.²⁵⁸ In doing so, it began a cycle of underfunding of public higher education for Black college students similar to underfunding seen at other public colleges and universities in the South.

Though the legislature disbursed the funds from the 1890 Morrill Act to UGA, this did not serve as a sign of eased tensions between the University and the legislature. During the 1890s, there were multiple attempts to legislate the removal of GSCAMA and associated land scrip funds from UGA, as well as legislative investigations into the operations of GSCAMA. Removal bills in 1891, 1892, and 1895 were all unsuccessful, though the 1895 bill presented the greatest cause for alarm because it was sponsored by J. Pope Brown, the chairman of the Agricultural Committee in the House. In the following year, Brown introduced a joint resolution in the legislature that required UGA representatives “ascertain the amounts received by the State University from the federal government, to investigate and determine whether this money is

²⁵⁶ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia at the Session of the General Assembly* (Atlanta: Franklin Publishing House, 1890): 223.

²⁵⁷ Henry C. White to Trustees, 28 July 1890, box 2, folder 8, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

²⁵⁸ Trustees, 28 July 1891, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 6, 1887–1914), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

being properly applied and used in such manner as will best promote the interests for which it was intended, and to report the results of their investigation to the next session of this House.”²⁵⁹

A key ally of Brown and his committee came from within GSCAMA. Agriculturalist James B. Hunnicutt was appointed Professor of Agriculture at GSCAMA in 1891. Hunnicutt was critical of UGA because he believed it had not done enough to be in service to the farmers of the state, and he pointed to how much more effective the State Agricultural Society run farmers’ institutes had been in educating the people in the state than anything that happened in Athens.²⁶⁰ Hunnicutt’s openly critical comments put his job in jeopardy, and in November 1897 Chancellor Boggs notified Hunnicutt of his intention to declare the position of Professor of Agriculture vacant. Hunnicutt retaliated by taking his side of the situation to the local paper.²⁶¹ He began his article in the *Athens Daily Banner* by suggesting that “it is evident even to a casual observer that there is a determination on part of certain professors to fix all the blame, as they call it, of the present investigation into the affairs of the University of Georgia upon the present professor of Agriculture.” He went on to address how critical people affiliated with UGA had been of him for taking the position that agriculture could be taught, a position held by very few in the administration of UGA. “The United States has granted a very large sum of money, over two million dollars annual to be used in conducting agriculture college and experiment stations. Congress must have believed that agriculture could be taught.” He concluded by suggesting “teach agriculture as well as ‘the sciences related thereto’ and Georgia boys will stay upon the

²⁵⁹ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia* (Atlanta: Franklin Printing and Publishing Company: 1896), 584.

²⁶⁰ Karina, *The University of Georgia College of Agriculture*, 88.

²⁶¹ Karina, 91.

farm and build lovely homes and Georgia girls will preside over them with grace and dignity and be proud to be prosperous farmers' wives."²⁶²

In delivering the report of his committee, Brown offered a scathing critique of UGA, suggesting that much of the money appropriated to the university for the purpose of agricultural education had been, instead, used to support the development of Franklin College.²⁶³ The rest of Brown's committee viewed UGA more favorably.

As to whether this money is being 'used in such manner is will best promote the interest for which it was intended,' differences of opinion may, of course, exist to some extent in the minds of the committee, but the committee recognized that the interests involved are education interests concerning which the opinions of experts in education and in the management of educational institutions should be given first consideration, and the committee is convinced that the board of trustees and officers of the university are faithful and earnest students and guardians of these interests; are capable and conscientious in promoting them to the best attainable end; and in the views concerning the administration of the land grant college are in accord with the great bulk of those engaged in similar work elsewhere.

Though the university was seen favorably by a majority of Brown's Committee, Boggs' job as chancellor was not secured and he was forced to resign in 1898. Hunnicutt, whom he threatened to have removed from position of Professor Agriculture outlasted Boggs by a year before being forced to retire in 1899 by the board of trustees.²⁶⁴ After Hunnicutt's ousting, UGA's Board of Trustees adopted a resolution on the study of agriculture that included a provision that all

²⁶² James B. Hunnicutt, "His Reply Made to His Critics, Prof. James B. Hunnicutt Writes in Full About His College Work." *Athens Daily Banner*, November 17, 1897. Georgia Historic Newspapers.

²⁶³ Karina, *The University of Georgia College of Agriculture*, 93.

²⁶⁴ Dyer, *The University of Georgia*, 153.

students “in the Senior Class be required to attend lectures in Agriculture.”²⁶⁵ This proposal reflected the position Hunnicutt held during his time at GSCAMA that agriculture could be taught. While there were additional attempts in the legislature to remove GSCAMA, and its associated land-grant designation and funding, from Athens, in no period after the Boggs administration was the relationship as contentious between UGA and the Georgia legislature.

Walter B. Hill and the End of an Era of Removal Controversies

In 1899, a year after Chancellor Boggs’ resignation, Walter B. Hill was elected as Chancellor. Hill came to UGA after a law career in Macon, including a partnership with Nathaniel Harris, who had been instrumental in advocating for a School of Technology.²⁶⁶ Historically, members of the clergy had been presidents and chancellors of the university but the board of trustees wanted a chancellor “more suited to the demands of the modern university.”²⁶⁷ The sting of the decision to locate the School of Technology in Atlanta was still fresh in the trustees’ minds, and was one in a long line of examples of how Chancellors Mell and Boggs had done little to move the university beyond Franklin College’s classical curriculum. The choice of Hill as a chancellor gave UGA the opportunity to grow GSCAMA in order to silence critics and prepare students to succeed in the new South.

Hill laid out his vision for the university of the twentieth century in an unpublished speech. Among other things, Hill stated that “the University of the Twentieth Century will be differentiated from his predecessors with this: it will connect its activities more closely with the business and life of the people.”²⁶⁸ He went on to suggest that “in collaboration with State

²⁶⁵ Trustees, 20 June 1899, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 6, 1887–1914), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

²⁶⁶ Michael Dennis, *Lessons in Progress*, 118.

²⁶⁷ Dennis, 119.

²⁶⁸ Walter Hill, “The Twentieth Century University,” unpublished speech, no date, box 8, folder 7.5 Walter B. Hill Papers, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

boards, bureaus and commissions, the universities should look after social and economic conditions.”²⁶⁹ Much like the university described by Chancellor Lipscomb in 1871, Hill’s university of the twentieth century considered how it might solve the problems of the day. But instead of delivering learned men to society who could use what they learned at UGA to solve the problems of the day, Hill’s university of the twentieth century would actively partner with community agencies to solve problems in all areas of society. Hill’s framing of the purpose of the modern university differed from those of chancellors who came before him and guided his efforts to make UGA a bigger part of the lives of the people of the state of Georgia.

After decades of minimal support from the Georgia legislature, Hill understood that one of his most immediate responsibilities would be to repair UGA’s fractured relationship with the legislature to secure additional funding. At the time that Hill took office, over half of the financial support that UGA received each year was from the federal government.²⁷⁰ In order to gain support from a legislature that was suspicious of UGA’s commitment to agricultural education, Hill would need to generate support for the university by making it seem more relevant to the citizens of Georgia. In waging his public relations campaign within the state, Hill “appeared at as many agricultural meetings as possible, served as judge at fairs, spoke to conclaves of farmers, and encouraged the development of university-sponsored agricultural enterprises.”²⁷¹ While the Georgia legislature was not immediately receptive to Hill’s calls for increased support, choosing not to appropriate \$10,000 to the University in 1899, the following year it appropriated \$45,000 to UGA for the purpose of improving buildings on the Athens

²⁶⁹ Walter Hill, “The Twentieth Century University.”

²⁷⁰ Brooks, *The University of Georgia Under Sixteen Administrations*, 115.

²⁷¹ Dyer, *The University of Georgia*, 158.

campus.²⁷² This appropriation signaled that the Hill had made progress in winning over the legislature and also created a precedent for renewed financial support from the state of UGA.

Chancellor Hill found financial support outside of state and federal appropriations in the form of philanthropist George Foster Peabody.²⁷³ Born in Georgia in 1852, Peabody's family relocated to Brooklyn after the Civil War. After making a fortune in banking, he retired at 54 and spent his remaining years involved in philanthropic activities.²⁷⁴ Chancellor Hill made Peabody's acquaintance at UGA's centennial celebration, which Peabody attended as the guest of Oscar Strauss, a fellow southerner turned wealthy New Yorker.²⁷⁵ In the years during Hill's chancellorship, Peabody and Hill developed a strong partnership with Hill looking to Peabody not only for financial support but for advice. During Peabody's 25-year relationship with UGA, he provided roughly \$250,000 in financial support.²⁷⁶ Most notably, Peabody supplied both the idea and the money for a train trip to Wisconsin that secured the future of agricultural education at UGA.

Even with the early advances that Hill was able to make at UGA with the financial support of Peabody, there were still some who still wanted GSCAMA and the associated land scrip funds to be removed from the university at Athens. In 1902, Representative J.J. Conner introduced legislation to "separate the College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts from the State

²⁷² Dyer, *The University of Georgia*, 156; Karina, *The University of Georgia College of Agriculture*, 96.

²⁷³ In addition to his philanthropic activities at UGA, Peabody was a member of both the Southern Education Board (SEB) and the General Education Board (GEB). Each group was made up of different members but held in common the mission of support for education in the rural South. Also of note, UGA was supported financially by George Foster Peabody and George Peabody who was also a philanthropist. The Peabody mentioned in this chapter is George Foster Peabody.

²⁷⁴ Louise Ware, *George Foster Peabody: Banker, Philanthropist, Publicist* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1951): vii–viii.

²⁷⁵ Dennis, *Lessons in Progress*, 133.

²⁷⁶ Ware, *George Foster Peabody*, 109.

University” which ultimately died in committee.²⁷⁷ Additional attacks on GSCAMA came from James B. Hunnicutt, who had been removed from his job as Professor of Agriculture in 1899. As editor of the farm journal, *Southern Cultivator*, Hunnicutt used the publication as a platform to attack GSCAMA. A July 1904 article in the *Southern Cultivator* described Henry C. White, GSCAMA’s President, as “not only unsuited in personal equipment for teaching agriculture, but openly and above board avows that ‘agriculture can not be taught, has not yet reached the pedagogical stage.’”²⁷⁸ Given this position, the *Southern Cultivator* article went on to suggest “the farmer says to himself, ‘Why should I send my boy to a college presided over by a president who says that he knows nothing at all about agriculture and does not believe that it can be taught?’”²⁷⁹ While Hill wished for White to rebut Hunnicutt’s accusations, White believed that “this college will not receive fair treatment in the *Southern Cultivator* and whatever we may say would surely be distorted and fresh injustices done us in the comments which the editor would certainly make upon our communications. Nothing would please him [Hunnicutt] more than to involve us in a newspaper controversy with him.”²⁸⁰ The feud continued in the pages of the *Southern Cultivator* well past Hunnicutt’s death when it was taken up by his son.

The Train Trip that Catalyzed the Development of the College of Agriculture

Though Hunnicutt continued his attacks on GSCAMA, Conner’s attempt at removal in 1902 was the last significant attempt to remove GSCAMA and its associated land scrip funds from UGA. In 1904, Chancellor Hill suggested that “in Georgia the case has been aggravated by the fact that dissatisfied parties for thirty years have dinned into the ears of the farmers that the

²⁷⁷ *Journal of House of Representatives of the State of Georgia* (Atlanta: Franklin Printing and Publishing Co., 1902): 439.

²⁷⁸ “An Agricultural College.” *Southern Cultivator*, July 15, 1904, ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

²⁷⁹ “An Agricultural College.” *Southern Cultivator*.

²⁸⁰ Henry C. White to Walter B. Hill, 18 July 1904, box 8, folder 13, Walter B. Hill Papers.

School of Agriculture is a failure.”²⁸¹ Rather than continue to defend the University against those who continued to attack GSCAMA, Hill suggested moving forward with a plan to win financial support for GSCAMA from the legislature. Hill and George Foster Peabody devised such a plan, deciding to take the board of trustees, politicians, and newspaper publishers on both sides of the issue of removal on a train trip to the University of Wisconsin in Madison. The relationship between the two universities began early in 1904 when the UGA was invited to send a delegation to the inauguration Jubilee for Charles R. Van Hise. Peabody encouraged Hill to accept the invitation because “the visit of the Trustees to Wisconsin still seems to me to have important possibilities with reference to the future of the University and the true welfare of the State of Georgia.”²⁸² Ultimately, Hill had to decline the invitation because the Jubilee was scheduled for the same time as commencement activities at the university.

Peabody and Hill were able to secure a separate trip to Madison for November 1904, and Van Hise’s invitation suggested “it will afford us much pleasure to have a visit from the oldest State University in the country. May not the South and the North be brought still nearer together by co-operation in education?”²⁸³ By taking the traveling party to Madison, Hill and Peabody could demonstrate to those on both sides of the GSCAMA removal issue that a large state university could work alongside its state to solve pressing issues and that an agricultural college could flourish as part of a large and well-funded university. It is no coincidence then, that among those included in the traveling party was J.J. Conner, the Georgia legislator who sponsored a bill in 1902 to separate GSCAMA and the associated land scrip from UGA.

²⁸¹ Walter B. Hill to Henry McDaniel, 24 May 1904, Box 2, folder 2, Walter B. Hill Papers.

²⁸² George Foster Peabody to Walter B. Hill, 28 March 1904, box 5, folder 20, Walter B. Hill Papers.

²⁸³ Charles R. Van Hise to Walter B. Hill, 13 October 1904, box 1, folder 10, Walter B. Hill Papers.

By all accounts, the trip to Wisconsin was a great success. One article described the scene as the traveling party arrived on the University of Wisconsin's campus. "Four thousand people, students, faculty, visitors and town people, were gathered when the Georgia delegation and Wisconsin faculty, headed by Governors Terrell and LaFollette, marched into the hall amid the strains of 'Dixie.' The hall resounded with yells of the Universities of Georgia and Wisconsin."²⁸⁴ Another article suggested that "all the members of the party said that the system and methods pursued at the University of Wisconsin were a revelation to them. All the members of the party spoke particularly of the Agricultural Department there and its wonderful development. It is development in this department, they think, that the University of Georgia particularly needs."²⁸⁵ While many of the articles about the trip included quotes from members of the traveling party, perhaps the most noteworthy came from Conner. Once a fierce advocate for removal of GSCAMA from the University, after the trip Conner was quoted as saying "I believe a plan can be secured by which the disjointed members of our university may be brought together for the benefit of the farmer. It will be my delight to vote for increased appropriations so that the farmers may have equal advantages with those of Wisconsin."²⁸⁶

The trip to the University of Wisconsin resulted in swift action to develop agricultural education. Within UGA, a committee made up of Chancellor Hill, the Dean of Franklin College, and the President of GSCAMA made report to a portion of UGA's Board of Trustees on a plan to determine what resources would be required to expand GSCAMA into a proper College of Agriculture. The authors of the report suggested that "the fact that Georgia is so largely an

²⁸⁴ "The Georgia Party on Wisconsin Soil." *The Banner*, November 25, 1904. Georgia Historic Newspapers.

²⁸⁵ "Pleased With Their Trip: Visitors to Wisconsin University Found a Revelation." *Savannah Morning News*, November 27, 1904. Georgia Historic Newspapers.

²⁸⁶ "Develop Agriculture, Say Georgia Trustees." *Atlanta Constitution*, November 27, 1904. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

agricultural state, or, to put it in other words, that so many of our citizens are engaged in agriculture, the further fact that the need of scientific advances in agriculture is so greatly recognized, causes this topic to occupy a position of prime importance.”²⁸⁷ For his part in the planning and execution of the visit to Madison, the traveling party gave George Foster Peabody a loving cup “as a token of their affectionate esteem.”²⁸⁸ After the trip, Peabody remained active in helping the university build support for a college of agriculture. He contributed \$20,000 to a fund to purchase 350 acres of land that would extend the UGA campus and would be the likely home of the college of agriculture. The land was purchased, with the alumni fund paying an additional \$20,000 to secure the land. As for the purpose of the purchase of this additional land, the *Atlanta Constitution* suggested that “the legislature will be asked to provide for an agricultural college upon this land.”²⁸⁹

Meanwhile, Conner introduced legislation in the 1905 session “to appropriate \$100,000 to the State University to erect an Agricultural College” while J.J. Flynt from Griffin introduced legislation in the same session to “separate the College of Agriculture and the Mechanical Arts from the State University.”²⁹⁰ Neither bill received enough support in the 1905 session to move forward and the year ended with the sudden death of Chancellor Hill from pneumonia. In the 1906 session, Conner and Flynt again introduced rival bills, but this time Conner’s bill had enough support to move forward, and the Conner Act passed by a vote of 97–60.²⁹¹ Conner’s bill provided for a \$100,000 appropriation for the equipment and buildings for the agricultural

²⁸⁷ “Report is Made by Committee: Visit to University of Wisconsin Produces Fruit.” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 16, 1905. ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

²⁸⁸ Hamilton McWhorter to George Foster Peabody, 1 May 1905, George Foster Peabody Papers, 1894-1937, box 1: folder 1, Library of Congress.

²⁸⁹ “Will Extend Campus at State University: Seventy-Five Thousand Dollar Y.M.C.A. and Gymnasium Will Be Built,” *Atlanta Constitution*, June 21, 1905. ProQuest Historic Newspapers.

²⁹⁰ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia* (Atlanta: Franklin Printing and Publishing Co., 1905): 75, 252.

²⁹¹ Karina, *The University of Georgia College of Agriculture*, 109.

college and mandated the establishment of a Board of Trustees for the agricultural college, a position to which Conner was elected in 1907.²⁹²

Hill was succeeded as chancellor by David C. Barrow, who served as a faculty member and Dean of Franklin College during Hill's tenure. He served for a year as interim chancellor before being given the permanent appointment in 1906. Barrow's first order of business after UGA received the \$100,000 appropriation for the college of agriculture was to identify a dean for the college. Henry C. White, GSCAMA's president, was never a true contender for the title. Andrew M. Soule, Dean of Agriculture at Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (VPI), was first raised as a potential candidate by William A. Henry, Dean of University of Wisconsin's College of Agriculture. He suggested of Soule that "a couple of years since he went to Blacksburg and his reputation, while there, has been growing."²⁹³ Soule was elected as dean by the trustees in January 1907 and White resigned his position as president in June. Soule and White stood in contrast to one another as administrators. Karina suggests that "White had been very much a nineteenth century administrator, allowing his College of Agriculture to remain an adjunct of the University of Georgia, largely ignoring the needs of the state."²⁹⁴ By contrast, Soule sought at UGA to do what he had done at VPI in positioning the College of Agriculture as an educator of both students at the college and the agriculturalists within the state.

Conclusion

During the administration of Walter B. Hill, UGA became "a repository for progressive ideas, a southern example of progressive higher education, and a centerpiece of a state-supported

²⁹² Brooks, *The University of Georgia Under Sixteen Administrations*, 138.

²⁹³ W.A. Henry to David C. Barrow, 24 September 1906, David C. Barrow papers, box 3, folder 3. Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library. University of Georgia Libraries.

²⁹⁴ Karina, *The University of Georgia College of Agriculture*, 126.

bureaucratic matrix.”²⁹⁵ Hill’s interest in a modern university that could stand alongside Georgia in service to its citizens resulted in the establishment of a more progressive university that valued practical education as much as a classical curriculum. This transformation began in the antebellum years with the establishment of the Terrell professorship, but its endpoint was never a foregone conclusion. From the establishment of GSCAMA until the ascension of Walter B. Hill as Chancellor, UGA’s leaders were largely steadfast in their defense of a classical education through Franklin College and their opinion of GSCAMA ranged from indifference to outright disdain.

Despite the best efforts of its detractors, UGA never lost GSCAMA or the associated proceeds of the land scrip sale. Over time, UGA found a balance between the classical curriculum offered in Franklin College and agricultural and mechanic arts education offered in GSCAMA. Even as much as Tucker seemed to resent GSCAMA and the students it attracted, in the same Chancellor’s report where Tucker suggested that GSCAMA had disappointed the unrealistic expectations people had for its ability to educate students, he suggested that they not give up. “We must be patient and persevering, and willing to bear public reproach of necessary, looking for our reward to the approbation of our own conscience and to the verdict of the next generation.”²⁹⁶ Through perseverance, UGA succeeded in transforming its institutional identity into a university in service to the state and its people.

²⁹⁵ Dennis, *Lessons in Progress*, 151.

²⁹⁶ Tucker to Trustees, 17 July 1877, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 4, 1858–1877), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

CHAPTER 5

POSTBELLUM POLITICS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALCORN UNIVERSITY

In his 1871 message to the Mississippi legislature, Governor James L. Alcorn suggested that “colored boys may be expected to present themselves within four or five years at the level of the curriculum of the High School, if not the University. We ought not be unprepared to discharge our obligations to them, as we discharge it to white boys, by the time they shall have made the coming demand for a college education.”²⁹⁷ The University of Mississippi reopened in 1865 at the end of the Civil War, but Alcorn was not proposing in his comments to integrate the school. While Alcorn believed that Mississippi was obligated to offer education to Black students, he also believed that education at all levels should be segregated. Rather than excluding Black students from college because the University of Mississippi was unavailable to them, Alcorn found a mutually beneficial and politically expedient solution. In his message for 1871, he proposed the establishment of a college for Black men which would be funded in part from the proceeds of the sale of land scrip that was given to Mississippi as a provision of the Morrill Act of 1862.

Though Alcorn University was established in 1871 with proceeds from the sale of land scrip, it was not designated as a land-grant college. At the time that Mississippi allocated its land scrip funds, the University of Mississippi received two-fifths of the proceeds and the land-grant designation. In fact, Alcorn University did not receive its land-grant designation until it was reestablished in 1878 as Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College. In its earliest years,

²⁹⁷ James L. Alcorn, *Annual Message of Gov. J.L. Alcorn to the Mississippi Legislature, Session of 1871* (Jackson: Kimball, Raymond & Co., 1871), 24.

Alcorn University was a liberal arts college that offered courses of study in the scientific and classical departments. Whether one chooses to consider Alcorn University's emergence as a land-grant college at the time of its founding or at its reestablishment, it is counted by scholars as one of three Black land-grant colleges appropriated funds from the sale of land scrip given to the states as part of the Morrill Act of 1862.²⁹⁸

From the time of its founding, Alcorn University both influenced, and was influenced by, Mississippi politics. It was founded during Reconstruction as a concession to Black voters in Mississippi who demanded greater access to education, and whose status as newly enfranchised voters made them an influential group. Its reestablishment as Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College during the Redeemer Era was the result of a changing balance of influence between Black voters who had been so vital for Republicans and White agriculturalists whose votes returned Democrats to power in Mississippi, and whose call for more educational opportunities for White students resulted in the founding of the Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College (now Mississippi State University). And the expansion of industrial courses in the Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College curriculum reflected the shift in the state's economy from a primarily agrarian economy to one that also included industry. In its earliest years, Alcorn University offered new educational opportunities to formerly enslaved Black Mississippians. The education provided at Alcorn University equipped students with the skills to pursue career opportunities but was meant for preparation and not for liberation. By understanding the connection between the politics of Mississippi and the developments of Alcorn

²⁹⁸ The three Black land-grant colleges given funds from the Morrill Act of 1862 were Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (now Hampton University) in Virginia, Alta Vista Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas for Colored Youth (now Prairie View A&M University) in Texas, and Alcorn University (now Alcorn State University) in Mississippi.

University (later Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College) in the period between 1862 and 1905, the development of southern Black land-grant colleges can be better understood.

Higher Education in Mississippi Prior to the Founding of Alcorn University

Public higher education was established in Mississippi later than other states in the region. Chartered as the first public higher education institution in the state in 1844, the University of Mississippi was established 24 years after the University of Alabama and nearly 60 years after the University of Georgia. The idea for public higher education in Mississippi dated back to 1835, when the sale of a seminary owned by the state yielded a profit of over \$277,000 which could be invested in the development of a state university.²⁹⁹ While the state legislature had funds, there was no movement on the issue until well after the inauguration of Governor Alexander McNutt in 1838. In February 1840, a bill was signed into law that directed the Mississippi legislature to decide upon the location for a state university. The law directed the process by which the decision would be made, including the election of commissioners to “report to the Legislature at its next meeting” on sites chosen for consideration, at which point “the two Houses shall convene in the Representative Hall and proceed to ballot jointly upon the sites upon which they have reported, and upon no others.”³⁰⁰ Seven sites were chosen as finalists, with Oxford receiving the largest number of votes.

In the antebellum period, Mississippi was divided politically and economically in direct relationship to the quality of the soil. In the western part of the state, which included areas known as the Bluff Hills and the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta, the soil was fertile, and the enslaved

²⁹⁹ Allen Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi: Its First Hundred Years* (Hattiesburg: University & College Press of Mississippi, 1971), 9.

³⁰⁰ *Laws of the State of Mississippi, Passed at a Regular Session of the Legislature, Held in the City of Jackson in the Months of January and February, A.D. 1840* (Jackson: C.M. Price, 1840), 93-4.

population of the state was concentrated in this area.³⁰¹ Oxford, the newly chosen site of the University of Mississippi, was located in this part of the state. In the eastern part of the state, which included areas known as the Northeast Highlands, North Central Plateau, and Long Leaf Pine Hills, the soil contained a significant amount of silt and because there was less plantation agriculture, there was also a smaller population of enslaved people.³⁰² By the 1840s, the state had fierce sectional divisions with those in the western part of the state aligned with the Whig Party and those in the east aligned with the Democratic Party. Agriculturalists in the western part of the state took advantage of the fertile soil and proximity to the Mississippi River to grow cotton, which they sold in New Orleans for great profit.³⁰³ Education in the state during the antebellum period was also divided sectionally, with White people in the wealthier western parts of the state having access to greater educational opportunities. Aubrey Lucas wrote that “the planter class in and around Natchez was aristocratic, intellectual, and had been educated in the eastern colleges and abroad. The sons and daughters of these citizens were likewise educated by tutors and then sent east or abroad for collegiate study.”³⁰⁴ As the South moved toward secession, there was less appetite among the wealthy planter class to send their sons out of the region for education. It was against this backdrop that the University of Mississippi was established.

The act to incorporate the University of Mississippi was passed in February 1844. It empowered a twelve-member board to,

have power to devise and adopt a such a system of learning as in their judgment they may deem most advisable to be pursued in the course of education in the University; to

³⁰¹ Percy Lee Rainwater, *Mississippi: Storm Center of Secession, 1856–1861* (Baton Rouge: Otto Claitor, 1938), 2–6.

³⁰² Rainwater, 2–6.

³⁰³ William K. Scarborough, “Heartlands of the Cotton Kingdom,” in *A History of Mississippi*, vol. 1, ed. Richard Aubrey McLemore (Hattiesburg: University & College Press of Mississippi, 1973), 314.

³⁰⁴ Aubrey Keith Lucas, “Education in Mississippi from Statehood to the Civil War,” in *A History of Mississippi*, vol. 1, ed. Richard Aubrey McLemore (Hattiesburg: University & College Press of Mississippi, 1973), 354.

employ a competent person to draft a plan of the same, and appoint commissioners to contract for the erection of the University building, so soon as they may think advisable.³⁰⁵

In the time between the act of incorporation in 1844, and when the University of Mississippi opened in November 1848, a board of trustees was chosen for the university and funds were secured for to erect buildings and hire faculty. In November 1848, the University of Mississippi opened, with eighty students enrolled.³⁰⁶ At an address given at the time of the opening of the university, Jacob Thompson, a member of the University of Mississippi Board of Trustees suggested that, “we [the trustees] have sought in no case to serve ourselves or show partiality or favoritism to our immediate friends and neighbors; but we have ever kept in mind that we are the agents of the whole people of the whole State.”³⁰⁷

In the years between 1848 and 1870, the University of Mississippi offered a fixed curriculum, and students could earn either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Laws. Students who wanted to take courses, but who did not want to study the fixed curriculum in pursuit of a degree, could take partial courses.³⁰⁸ While the university offered an admission examination that covered each year, its “first requisite demanded of every candidate for admission” was “a written testimonial of his good, moral character” and students were required to be over sixteen years of

³⁰⁵ *Laws of the State of Mississippi, Passed at a Regular Biennial Session of the Legislature, Held in the City of Jackson in January and February, A.D. 1844* (Jackson: C.M. Price & S. Rohrer, 1844), 228.

³⁰⁶ Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi*, 13.

³⁰⁷ Jacob Thompson, *Address delivered on Occasion of the Opening of the University of the State of Mississippi, on Behalf of the Board of Trustees, November 6, 1848* (Memphis: Franklin Book and Job Office, 1849), 3.

³⁰⁸ *Historical Catalogue of the University of Mississippi, 1849–1909* (Nashville: Marshall & Bruce Company, 1910), 12.

age.³⁰⁹ In its early years, the University alternated between opening and closing its preparatory department before finally closing the department in 1892.³¹⁰

The University of Mississippi closed for the duration of the Civil War, reopening in September 1865. In February 1861, the year that the university closed, a company of 135 students were organized into the “University Greys,” serving in the Civil War under the command of William B. Lowry. By March 1865, 24 were still accounted for.³¹¹ As Confederate soldiers returned home to Mississippi at the end of the war, they were confronted with the destruction of their state. Many landowners who left the state at the start of the war leased their property to northerners rather than returning home, which accounted for the influx of so-called carpetbaggers into the state. Upon reopening, the University of Mississippi welcomed an incoming class of 193 students, most of whom were veterans. While the student body in the antebellum period had been comprised of the sons of wealthy planters, the postbellum student body was comprised largely of student veterans who were both less wealthy and less prepared for university life than their predecessors. This lack of preparedness is what necessitated the persistence of the preparatory department.

Mississippi Politics and the Segregation of Public Education

At the end of the Civil War, nearly 400,000 enslaved people were emancipated in the state of Mississippi.³¹² With the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, Black men in Mississippi became a powerful voting block within the state, and Republicans determined that in order to

³⁰⁹ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Mississippi, Ninth Session, 1856–1857* (Memphis: Memphis Bulletin Steam Presses, 1856), 13. The entrance examination focused on English, Latin, and Greek; geography; arithmetic, and algebra.

³¹⁰ *Historical Catalogue of the University of Mississippi, 1849–1909*, 11. Preparatory departments in this era were common at southern colleges and universities, as students who enrolled in them were unprepared for the collegiate curriculum and required remedial schooling.

³¹¹ *Historical Catalogue of the University of Mississippi, 1849–1909*, 9.

³¹² William C. Harris, *Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 20.

win the 1869 election they would need to win support from the newly enfranchised Black voters. James L. Alcorn, a moderate Republican who had “been of the wealthy class, though never privy to its aristocratic designs,” changed his party affiliation from Democratic to Republican after the close of the Civil War and was elected with significant support from Black voters.³¹³ According to historian William C. Harris, Alcorn’s victory was also assured by the fact that disillusioned White voters “refused to participate because their self-styled leaders had abandoned conservative, white supremacist principles, embraced carpetbaggers running for office on a Republican ticket, and accepted blacks into political fellowship.”³¹⁴

Alcorn championed public elementary education for all young Mississippians but did not believe that schools should be integrated. In 1870, Alcorn defended his position, suggesting not only that “the education of this people [Black Mississippians] is the measure of reconstruction nearest to my heart” but also that “during the canvass of last Autumn, the colored men were as earnest in their demand for separate schools as any white man that spoke to me on the subject.”³¹⁵ Not only was the state not obligated to offer integrated education, Alcorn suggested, but Black Mississippians did not want it. On the other side of the issue, many White Mississippians did not support public education for Black Mississippians at all because they believed that “it would indoctrinate them to hate their former masters and support the Republican party in future political contests.”³¹⁶

Republicans in Mississippi focused more on public elementary education than on public higher education because they believed that higher education offered fewer benefits for

³¹³ William C. Harris, *The Day of the Carpetbaggers: Republican Reconstruction in Mississippi* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 247.

³¹⁴ Harris, *The Day of the Carpetbaggers*, 259.

³¹⁵ James L. Alcorn, “The Feelings of the People Respecting Separate and Mixed Schools—Letter from Gov. Alcorn,” *New York Times*, May 23, 1870, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

³¹⁶ Harris, *The Day of the Carpetbaggers*, 323.

Mississippians. They pointed to antebellum University of Mississippi, which served mainly the children of wealthy planters, giving them both the education and social connections required to maintain their wealth and social status, as an example of why public higher education was not worth funding. The state's 1868 constitution established "a uniform system of tax-supported public schools for all children between the ages of five and twenty-one," which went into effect in 1870.³¹⁷ While the new system of public education benefitted all students in Mississippi, the segregated nature of the schooling meant that the quality of education was variable based on location in the state and race of students being educated.

Based on its role in educating the wealthy planter class in antebellum Mississippi, legislators struggled to see the University of Mississippi's capacity for educating a wider range of students. Nevertheless, Alcorn championed the school for the potential it held to serve the state by training teachers to support the burgeoning public elementary system in the state.³¹⁸ Alcorn opposed integrated public higher education, just as he opposed integrated public elementary education. In his memoirs, John N. Waddel, Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, suggested of Alcorn that, "even if the colored men, women, and children in State should have petitioned him to sanction such a policy, he would have persistently refused."³¹⁹ With the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, newly enfranchised Black men had become a powerful voting block and wielded significant political influence as a result of having handed Alcorn the governorship. As they raised their voices in favor of publicly funded educational

³¹⁷ Christopher M. Span, *From Cotton Fields to Schoolhouse: African American Education in Mississippi, 1862–1875* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 117, 128.

³¹⁸ Harris, *The Day of the Carpetbaggers*, 341.

³¹⁹ John N. Waddel, *Memorials of Academic Life: Being an Historical Sketch of the Waddel Family, Identified Through Three Generations with the History of the Higher Education in the South and Southwest* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1891), 465.

opportunities for Black Mississippians that extended beyond primary and secondary education, Governor Alcorn felt increasing pressure to respond.

As the only public university in Mississippi, the University of Mississippi became the center of controversy regarding segregated higher education in the state. The issue of integrating the university was finally forced by Judge Robert S. Hudson in September 1870 in a letter to John N. Waddel, the University of Mississippi's Chancellor.³²⁰ He inquired about whether the University of Mississippi would "accept or reject an applicant for admission as a student on account of color or race."³²¹ Hudson hoped to get faculty and administrators on the record regarding their position on admitting Black students to the University of Mississippi. After conferring with the faculty, Waddel responded to Hudson, suggesting that the faculty would not agree to accept Black students into the University of Mississippi. In the letter, he laid out an argument against integration based on the original intent for the University of Mississippi at the time of its incorporation by the state legislature, which was "for the education of the white race."³²² Waddel went on to suggest that the faculty was not imbued with authority to change the purpose of the university and would defer to the board of trustees, who had not given any hint that they may be interested in changing that foundational principle.

The faculty and trustees of the University of Mississippi remained steadfast in their unwillingness to accept Black applicants to the school, and Black leaders in Mississippi remained steadfast in their demand for access to public higher education for Black students in the state. Responding to the demands of Black leaders was a priority for Republicans who saw Black voters as crucial to remaining in power. The University of Mississippi and the Black leaders of

³²⁰ Waddel was a UGA alumnus and the son of Moses Waddel, the fifth President of the University of Georgia.

³²¹ Waddel, *Memorials of an Academic Life*, 466.

³²² Waddel, 467.

the state had reached an impasse that Governor Alcorn felt pressure to resolve. His belief in the obligation of the state to provide educational opportunities to all Mississippians and his reliance on the Black vote to maintain power converged in his proposal to create a separate public university for Black students.

Alcorn devoted several paragraphs of his January 1871 address to the Mississippi legislature to the question of higher education for Black Mississippians, acknowledging that a time would soon come when young Black men would be ready for education beyond what was currently available to them. Alcorn suggested that Shaw University, a private university for Black students founded in 1870, could be enlisted in the project of educating Black men with its only flaw being its close proximity to the University of Mississippi.³²³ Alcorn's views on segregated education made even geographic proximity of the college for Black students an impossibility. Rather, he preferred to have the college for Black students in a different part of the state, so that the two races would not mix even by chance. Implied in the governor's suggestion that "whether the Shaw University or some institution situated in the Southern part of the State, shall be made the vehicle of University training for the negro youth," was the idea that the state of Mississippi would provide financial support for the establishment of a college for Black men in the state similar to the public university at Oxford.³²⁴

Alcorn returned to the issue of education for Black men in Mississippi in May 1871 in a special message to the legislature. In this message, he proposed to divide the proceeds of the sale of land scrip between the University of Mississippi and a second college whose focus would be

³²³ Shaw University was founded by Northern Missionaries in 1866 and retained its original name from its chartering in 1870 until 1892 when it was renamed Rust University

³²⁴ *Annual Message of Gov. J.L. Alcorn*, 24.

on educating Black students. In describing the school that would become Alcorn University, he stated,

Our common schools will, however, have given out before five years colored boys in considerable numbers will be sufficiently advanced to enter on the curriculum of the University. So soon, indeed, may this condition of things be looked for, that I propose to prepare for it at once; and, with that view, recommend the immediate establishment of a high school so directed and cherished that it may keep pace with all the demands of the hour in a healthy progress to the level of the college.³²⁵

In proposing the establishment of such an institution, he suggested that the university for Black students receive three-fifths of the proceeds from the sale of land scrip and \$50,000 annually from the state's seminary fund.

As of Alcorn's special message in 1871, Mississippi had yet to claim the land scrip allocated to the state as a provision of the Morrill Act of 1862. It had only become eligible to do so upon its readmission to the Union in 1870. In his special message, the governor urged the legislature to pass legislation authorizing him to accept and sell the land scrip, suggesting that the proceeds from the sale would be about \$160,000.³²⁶ The Mississippi legislature passed such a law in the 1871 session, and Alcorn went forward with selling the scrip.

In the same message, Governor Alcorn proposed that the remaining two-fifths of the proceeds from the sale of land scrip be given to the University of Mississippi "for the establishment of an agricultural college or colleges—conditioned, however, that the amount given to the University shall be applied, under the direction of the board of trustees, so as to give

³²⁵ *Special Message of Gov. James L. Alcorn, on the Subject of the Establishment of a University for Colored People* (Mississippi: [n.p.], 1871), 10.

³²⁶ *Special Message of Gov. James L. Alcorn*, 11.

young men of this society of *agriculturalists* the benefit of education in the art and science of *agriculture*.”³²⁷ This provision required that the University of Mississippi establish a department of agriculture, which it did in fall 1873. This agricultural program included not only courses, but also a model farm.

The land scrip sold by Mississippi represented 2,344 parcels of Indigenous land that totaled 209,092 acres of land, most of which was in the western United States.³²⁸ The largest parcel of land was 172 acres in modern day Stanislaus, California which was seized in 1851 from the Chap-pah-sim; Co-to-plan-e-nee, I-o-no-hum-ne, Sage-womnee, Su-ca-ah, and We-chil-la nations and for which the United States paid no money.³²⁹ Governor Alcorn sold all of the scrip to a single buyer, Gleason F. Lewis, for a total of \$188,928, which was higher than the amount he projected in his special message to the Mississippi legislature. Interest from the proceeds were earmarked to be split with the as-yet unchartered Alcorn University receiving \$113,357 and the University of Mississippi receiving \$75,571.

The Founding of Alcorn University

In the 1871 session, the Mississippi legislature established Alcorn University through state statute. The statute, approved in May 1871, enumerated the powers of the President, Board of Trustees, and Board of Examiners. Both the trustees and the president would be appointed by the governor, with the president serving a five-year term and the trustees serving staggered five-year terms.³³⁰ The governor had conceived of Alcorn University as a segregated school for the education of Black men in Mississippi, though neither of these facts is stated explicitly in the

³²⁷ *Special Message of Gov. James L. Alcorn*, 10.

³²⁸ “Land Grab University.”

³²⁹ “Land Grab University.”

³³⁰ *The Revised Code of the Statute Laws of the State of Mississippi as Adopted at January Session, A.D. 1871, and Published by Authority of the Legislature* (Jackson: Alcorn & Fisher, 1871), 633.

statute establishing the school. While the statute gave the president and trustees the authority to hire faculty and set the curriculum, it hinted at what the curriculum might be, stating,

The president and board of trustees shall have power to secure a collection of specimens in mineralogy, geology, botany, and other specimens pertaining to natural history and the sciences, and a full and complete collection of mineralogical and geological specimens, for the use of Alcorn University; and the said president and board of trustees shall also provide the university with a library, philosophical apparatus, and all other necessary appliances, proper to intellectual culture.³³¹

The funding for Alcorn University came from a combination of the seminary fund and the proceeds from the sale of land scrip given to Mississippi by the federal government. But nowhere in the statute was Alcorn University described as a land-grant college, nor was it directed to offer agriculture, mechanic arts, or military tactics education. At the time of its founding, Alcorn University was a college for Black students funded with proceeds from the sale of land scrip given to states as part of the Morrill Act of 1862 but it lacked the land-grant designation or the directive to focus its curriculum on agriculture, mechanic arts, or military tactics.

In contrast to Alcorn University, the University of Mississippi was explicitly given the land-grant designation when it received two-fifths of the proceeds of the sale of land scrip. At the same time that Alcorn University was being established and organized, the University of Mississippi established a School of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts during which students studied agricultural and economic chemistry, botany, general agriculture, general chemistry, geology, geometry, mineralogy, physics, practical agriculture, rural engineering, special agriculture, special geology and agriculture of the state, stock and dairy farming, trigonometry,

³³¹ *The Revised Code, January Session, A.D. 1871*, 635.

and zoology along with generalized courses like composition and rhetoric, English literature, ethics, and history.³³² The University added a farm “to the purposes of the Department of Agriculture, Horticulture and Botany” and noted that “the conditions of the Congressional grant will be fully complied with by the organization of the Mechanical and Military courses, so soon as the requisite funds shall have been provided.”³³³

Admission requirements for the School of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts at the University of Mississippi were lower than those for admission to the Department of Science, Literature, and the Arts, which awarded bachelors of arts, science, and philosophy. Students who applied to attend the School of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts would face examination in English, geography, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and bookkeeping.³³⁴ Similarly to those applying to the School of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts, those who applied to attend the Department of Science, Literature, and the Arts would face examination in English, geography, and arithmetic. But they would also be examined in algebra, Latin, and Greek.³³⁵ Lower admissions standards for the School of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts reflected the poorer preparation that students entering the program were likely to have had.

At the time of its founding, Governor Alcorn exercised the power he had been given to appoint the first president of Alcorn University, choosing Hiram Revels. A revered Black politician in the state, the Mississippi legislature considered naming the new college Revels University after the president.³³⁶ Revels was ordained as a minister in the Baltimore African

³³² *Triennial catalogue of the trustees, faculties, alumni, and other students of the University of Mississippi from the original organization; together with the annual catalogue of the officers and undergraduates of the twenty-first session, 1872-73* (Oxford: Reporter Book and Job Printing Office, 1872), 104–5.

³³³ *Triennial catalogue*, 106.

³³⁴ *Triennial catalogue*, 103.

³³⁵ *Triennial catalogue*, 81.

³³⁶ Josephine McCann Posey, *Against Great Odds: The History of Alcorn State University* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994), 10.

Methodist Episcopal Church in 1845.³³⁷ Making his way to the Midwest from Maryland, Revels preached and taught Black people in Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Ohio before coming to Mississippi in 1864 to work with the Freedman's Bureau in Vicksburg and pastoring the town's African Methodist Episcopal Church. Despite his outsider status, he became politically influential in the state and served in the Mississippi Senate. Revels was seen as a palatable Black politician by White politicians because of "his past educational and religious experiences, and because of the knowledge which he had gained of White America as a free black who had traveled widely in the United States before the Civil War."³³⁸

Revels is perhaps best known for being the first Black legislator to be seated in the United States Senate. In January 1870, Revels was chosen by the Mississippi legislature to complete the last year of the term of the seat after Mississippi was readmitted into the Union.³³⁹ In February 1870, Revels traveled to the nation's capital to take his place in the Senate but was not welcomed into the Senate chamber. Indeed, the Senate initially refused to seat Revels. According to Julius E. Thompson,

For the next three days, the Senate debated whether Hiram Revels could take office. In the grand tradition of nineteenth-century senatorial debate on constitutional issues, senators argued at length about the meaning of the Civil War, the respect due to the Supreme Court, and the raw question of whether black men could be high-level participants in American government.³⁴⁰

³³⁷ George A. Sewell, "Hiram Rhodes Revels: Another Evaluation," *Negro History Bulletin* 38, no. 1 (December 1974–January 1975): 336.

³³⁸ Julius E. Thompson, "Hiram Rhodes Revels, 1827–1901: A Reappraisal," *The Journal of Negro History* 79, no. 3 (Summer 1994): 298.

³³⁹ The vacancy that Revels filled in 1870 was a seat previously held by Jefferson Davis, who vacated the seat in 1861.

³⁴⁰ Richard A. Primus, "The Riddle of Hiram Revels," *Harvard Law Review* 119, no. 6 (April 2006): 1683.

After three days of debate, Revels was finally seated in the Senate. His time as the first Black United States Senator raised his visibility, and newspapers as far north as Vermont announced his appointment as the president of Alcorn University, which he accepted after the end of his term in the Senate. “Ex-Senator Hiram R. Revels has been elected President of Alcorn University at Jackson, Miss. Mr. Revels was nominated by Gov. Alcorn, and the election was a unanimous one.”³⁴¹

As part of the statute that established Alcorn University, the governor also appointed a board of trustees for Alcorn University. Of the ten men appointed as trustees, half were White and the remaining five trustees were Black men who had served as members of the Republican Mississippi legislature.³⁴² By including Black leaders on the board of trustees, Governor Alcorn created a publicly funded university for Black men that was led by a Black president and given oversight by a board of trustees that was not entirely White. As the president and trustees were responsible for hiring the faculty and setting the curriculum, the majority Black leadership of the university was responsible for setting its course.

The site of Alcorn University had been formerly occupied by Oakland College, founded in 1830 by the Presbyterian Church.³⁴³ Due to declining enrollments, Oakland College closed for the duration of the Civil War and could not afford to reopen upon the war’s end. Oakland College’s Board of Trustees conferred with the Synod of Mississippi about the debts the College had incurred that made reopening impossible and was directed by the Synod to put the grounds and buildings up for sale. At the same time, the state of Mississippi was searching for a site for

³⁴¹ “Personal,” *Burlington Free Press and Times*, May 24, 1871. America’s Historical Newspapers.

³⁴² “Against All Odds: The First Black Legislators in Mississippi,” Mississippi State University Libraries, accessed January 11, 2024. <https://msstate-exhibits.libraryhost.com/exhibits/show/legislators>

³⁴³ W. Milan Davis, *Pushing Forward: A History of Alcorn A.&M. College and Portraits of Some of its Successful Graduates* (Okolona: Okolona Industrial School, 1938), 13.

the new college for Black students.³⁴⁴ The state purchased the buildings and grounds of Oakland College for \$40,000, and the school was reestablished as Alcorn University.³⁴⁵

While the founding of Alcorn University diffused some of the agitation around the desegregation of the University of Mississippi, there were those in the state who saw the establishment of Alcorn University as a ploy to win the votes of Black Mississippians. Robert W. Flournoy, a prominent White Mississippian who opposed Governor Alcorn, wrote a newspaper editorial in July 1871 condemning the governor and his role in proposing and championing Alcorn University. Flournoy had been an enslaving plantation owner in antebellum Mississippi, but after the Civil War he became a Republican and advocated for equal rights for Black Mississippians. In the editorial, Flournoy condemned the governor and the decision by the legislature to establish Alcorn University.

Alcorn's degradation of the colored citizen was concocted with no other purpose in mind than to aid Mr. Alcorn with a half million of the people's money, to buy up a set of renegades and traitors to their race. Is there an intelligent man in the State that does not know that there are not half a dozen colored boys, natives of the State, who are prepared to enter the freshman class in any college? Yet in the face of such a fact, the people, in addition to their other burthens are to be taxed five hundred thousand dollars to establish a University without students, professors drawing big salaries without performing duties.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴ "Canton and Oakland College—A Good Chance to Secure the Location of Oakland College at Canton," *American Citizen*. February 3, 1872. Chronicling America.

³⁴⁵ "Canton and Oakland College."

³⁴⁶ "R.W. Flournoy Again: The Old John Brown of the Republican Party Tells What He Knows," *The Weekly Clarion*, August 10, 1871. Chronicling America.

Flourney suggested that Black students should have been admitted to the University of Mississippi, for the financial health of the state and the advancement of rights for Black Mississippians. By maintaining a segregated system of public higher education, Flournoy suggested that Black Mississippians were being treated as inferior to their White counterparts. By supporting the establishment of Alcorn University instead of pushing for admission into the University of Mississippi, Flournoy argued that Black Mississippians were complicit in their subordination. “Alcorn’s plan is to make the negro admit his inferiority, and repudiate the Constitution of his country, and through a few bought-up men of his own race, accept a subordinate position.”³⁴⁷ Alcorn University became not only a topic of political debate, but its founding was impacted by the political maneuvering happening as the Republicans tried to maintain power.

Alcorn University in Republican Era Mississippi

Alcorn University accepted students in February 1872 and in its first year enrolled 179 students who came from Mississippi and from other states in the region.³⁴⁸ In its earliest years, Alcorn University offered a preparatory course, a classical course, and a scientific course. The newly established public schooling system in the state meant that many students who enrolled at the university would have enough education to be prepared to meet the demands of the classical or scientific course and would likely need to begin in the preparatory course for remedial education.³⁴⁹ Even if students began their time at Alcorn University in the preparatory course, the establishment of academic, classics, and scientific departments made clear that Revels and the

³⁴⁷ “R.W. Flournoy Again.”

³⁴⁸ Davis, *Pushing Forward*, 16.

³⁴⁹ “The 1872–73 catalog did not list students by department, so there is little way of knowing how many students were actually enrolled in the advanced courses rather than in the preparatory department,” Soares, *Higher Ambitions for Freedom*, 100.

board of trustees took seriously their task of offering quality higher education to the Black men of Mississippi of the sort that they would have received at the University of Mississippi. W. Milan Davis suggests of the university that, “the fame of the institution was converting rural and urban boys into sensible and educated young men, fairly capable of caring not only for their own affairs but also those of others.”

The College Preparatory Department’s course of study was carried out over six terms across two years. According to the catalogue for the 1872–1873 academic year, to gain admission to the preparatory department, “the student must be fourteen years of age, and must be able to sustain a credible examination in orthography, reading, writing, the fundamental rules of arithmetic, and the general outlines of the geography of the United States.”³⁵⁰ Students enrolled in the preparatory department studied arithmetic, algebra, grammar, Greek, history, Latin, and reading.³⁵¹ The curriculum in the preparatory department covered the topics that students would need to know in order to pass the entrance examinations for the classical and scientific courses of study.

Both the classical course of study and the scientific course of study were fixed curricula made up of four years that each contained three terms. Entrance into the classical department required knowledge of arithmetic and algebra, English grammar, geography Greek, and Latin; and entrance into the scientific department required knowledge of arithmetic, algebra, English geography grammar, penmanship, reading, and spelling.³⁵² Courses in the scientific curriculum focused more on modern languages, mathematics, and applied science than those in the classical

³⁵⁰ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Alcorn University at Oakland, Mississippi, Second Year, 1872-’73* (Kimball, Raymond, & Co., 1873), 24.

³⁵¹ *Catalogue, Second Year*, 10.

³⁵² *Catalogue, Second Year*, 11, 15.

curriculum, which focused more on ancient languages and English literature and writing.³⁵³

Despite some of its funding coming from proceeds of the sale of land scrip, the statute the established Alcorn University offered no direction to the university on its obligation to offer education in agriculture or the mechanic arts.

While Revels was known for his political acumen, his tenure as Alcorn University's president was rocky. In the university's first year, he faced the challenge of a legislature who was suspicious of former Governor Alcorn and of Ridgley C. Powers, who replaced him when Alcorn took Revels' place in the United States Senate.³⁵⁴ That same legislature was also suspicious of the university and sought to reduce its funding. The elections in 1871 resulted in a large number of Black men joining the Mississippi legislature, and they "arrived in Jackson determined to make their majority at the polls felt and to effectuate a real equality of treatment."³⁵⁵ The newly elected Mississippi legislature wasted no time upon the start of the 1872 in scrutinizing the university and the governor who championed its founding.

In February 1872, the Mississippi House resolved to appoint a committee of three legislators to determine the whereabouts of the proceeds from the sale of land scrip given to Mississippi as part of the Morrill Act of 1862. The committee would "call on the State Treasurer, and get from him the amount that said scrip brought when it was sold, and at what date the money was placed in his possession, and all other matters connected therewith" and report back on the investigation.³⁵⁶ At issue was the fact that none of that money had been deposited with the State Treasurer and, indeed, he did not know where the money was. In a letter to Powers, shared

³⁵³ *Catalogue, Second Year*, 12–18.

³⁵⁴ Ridgley C. Powers was a Republican and served as Lieutenant Governor from 1870–1871. He finished James L. Alcorn's term, serving from November, 1871–January, 1874 after having lost his race for reelection to fellow Republican Adelbert Ames.

³⁵⁵ Harris, *The Day of the Carpetbagger*, 349.

³⁵⁶ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi, at a regular session thereof, held in the City of Jackson, 1872* (Jackson: Kimball, Raymond & Co., 1872), 225.

with the legislature, Alcorn reported that in September 1871, 1,312 total pieces of scrip were either given directly to George F. Lewis, who purchased them, or deposited in a bank in either New York City or Cleveland.³⁵⁷ Between September 1871 and January 1872, Lewis paid \$56,720 to Alcorn, all of which was transferred to an account in the Savings Bank of Memphis and \$30,000 of which he withdrew to give directly to Powers.³⁵⁸ In his letter, Alcorn pointed to the fact that the law that directed him to sell the land scrip did not direct him to deposit the funds with the State Treasurer until the cash had been converted into bonds. He wrote, “had the mover of the resolution consulted the law he would have found that the State Treasury had not been designated as a depository for the money; not until the cash have been converted by the Governor into bonds was the Treasurer required to receive any portion of the grant.”³⁵⁹ The committee received Alcorn’s report and the legislature considered the matter closed, save for a small number of protesters who could not accept this explanation for what had become of the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip. A headline in the *Weekly Clarion* described the legislative investigation by suggesting that the land scrip had been “mismanaged” and described Alcorn as, “the ‘eminent man’ in hot water.”³⁶⁰

The university faced additional challenges in the form of legislation considered later in the 1872 session. H.B. no. 584, *An Act in Relation to Normal Schools and Industrial Colleges*, proposed the establishment of five publicly supported normal schools in the state. Each of these schools would receive an annual appropriation of \$10,000.³⁶¹ The bill also reduced the amount of support that Alcorn University would receive from the state. At the time that the bill was

³⁵⁷ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi, 1872*, 302.

³⁵⁸ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi, 1872*, 303.

³⁵⁹ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi, 1872*, 303.

³⁶⁰ “The Land Scrip Mismanagement,” *Weekly Clarion*, March 1, 1872. *Chronicling America*. By the time that Powers delivered his 1873 report to the legislature, the issue of the missing land scrip proceeds was resolved. He reported that he had purchased \$190,000 worth of state bonds which he had deposited with the State Treasurer.

³⁶¹ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi, 1872*, 607.

considered, the state appropriated to the university two-thirds of the proceeds from the sale of land scrip, which amounted to a total of \$113,357. Under H.B. no. 584, the amount that Alcorn University would receive would be reduced to \$10,000 per year, the same amount as the five normal schools proposed in the legislation.³⁶² Driven by the newly elected Black legislators and their belief that Alcorn University was not creating genuine educational equality in the state, this legislation passed the Mississippi House before ultimately failing in the Senate.³⁶³ A letter published in the *New National Era*, edited by Frederick Douglass, suggested that,

Many of the prominent colored men of the state objected to it [the establishment of Alcorn University] as an extravagant appropriation, and established a precedent which we were working hard to break down—that of separate institutions for the races. We have an [sic] University at Oxford supported by a similar appropriation, to which they felt colored youths should be admitted when they desire it.³⁶⁴

Though this legislation was not successful, it represented an attempt by Black legislators to use their political influence to create a system of public education that they believed would support the development of Black people in Mississippi and provide more equitable educational opportunities than a segregated university established by White legislators.

Despite these challenges, Alcorn University persisted and at the end of its second year, the university held commencement exercises. An account in *The Christian Recorder*, a newspaper published by the African Methodist Episcopal Church, described the scene: “The roads leading to the University were crowded with wagons, carts, buggies, and every other conceivably conveyance laden with men, women, and children wending their way to the chapel;

³⁶² *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi*, 1872, 607.

³⁶³ Harris, *Day of the Carpetbagger*, 349.

³⁶⁴ “Items from Mississippi,” *New National Era*, April 4, 1872. Chronicling America.

fully one thousand persons were on the ground.”³⁶⁵ James Alcorn, who had left the governorship for the role of United States senator, was in attendance to see the first class graduate from the university he had championed and which bore his name. The article described how a student read an essay, in which,

the young speaker handled the late slave lords without gloves as he depicted the terrible horrors of slavery, and turning to Senator Alcorn, who occupied the platform, looked him square in the face as he launched out a flood of vituperation on the devoted heads of those who had once trafficked in human flesh.³⁶⁶

Alcorn was angered by this excoriation by a student at the school whose founding he had supported. Despite having no administrative authority over the university or its students, he demanded that no additional students be allowed to speak at the ceremonies. The author of the account of the commencement ceremonies suggested that “the incident proves to my mind that the time will come along when every slave holder in the country will be ashamed that he ever owned a man or a woman.”³⁶⁷ Both Alcorn and the university were already under scrutiny, and this incident drew even more attention to it from those who were already suspicious of its management.

Revels took a leave of absence as president of Alcorn University to become the Secretary of State of Mississippi from December 1872 to September 1873. Upon his return in the 1873–1874 academic year, a financial scandal unfolded at the university. Samuel Ireland, the former treasurer of the board of trustees was accused of mismanaging funds and stealing \$35,000. Ireland was a White trustee appointed to the board by Governor Alcorn at the time of the

³⁶⁵ James C. Waters, “Commencement at Alcorn University,” *The Christian Recorder*, August 7, 1873. Accessible Archives, African American Newspapers.

³⁶⁶ Walters, “Commencement at Alcorn University.”

³⁶⁷ Walters, “Commencement at Alcorn University.”

university's establishment. It was suggested that Ireland had mismanaged funds, including inflating quotes for services to the University and pocketing the difference between the actual amount charged for those services and the inflated quote.³⁶⁸ The *Weekly Clarion* wrote that Ireland acted as the de facto president of the university, suggesting that when Revels learned of Ireland's corrupt behavior that "the Trustees, at Ireland's request, deprived him [Revels] of all executive powers, and then set him to the dignified task of overlooking the wood choppers' and janitor's duties."³⁶⁹ While the mismanagement of funds was a serious breach of trust, the problems at Alcorn University were another symptom of the fissure in the Republican party. Those who favored Radical Republicanism saw Ireland's behavior as an extension of Governor Alcorn's corruption. Among the *Weekly Clarion's* accusations was the fact that Governor Alcorn gave the board "'commissions' to plunder the State of nearly \$70,000 per annum. He chose such Trustees as were willing to execute his dishonest schemes for the sake of bribes, and one or two half-decent men were put in to give the Board a coloring of respectability."³⁷⁰ Revels was seen as having been sidelined by the board of trustees but was simultaneously held responsible for its misdeeds.

In addition to being associated with the financial mismanagement of Alcorn University by its trustees, Revels was also caught up in the gubernatorial race of 1873 between former governor Alcorn and Adelbert Ames. Alcorn and Ames were both Republicans, and the race was one symptom of a fissure in the party.³⁷¹ Revels gave his support to Alcorn, who installed him as

³⁶⁸ "Ireland's Tammany Tricks at Alcorn University," *The Weekly Clarion*, August 13, 1874. *Chronicling America*.

³⁶⁹ "Alcorn University: Why That Institution is a Failure and What Went with the Money," *The Greenville Times*, July 3, 1875. *Chronicling America*.

³⁷⁰ "Alcorn University," *The Greenville Times*.

³⁷¹ Alcorn represented Conservative Republicans and Ames was a Radical Republican candidate. While conservatives and Radicals differed on many issues, they were the farthest apart on the treatment of those who had been active in the Confederacy. Radicals believed that those who had supported the Confederacy should be treated harshly in accordance with their activities, and this harsh treatment included disenfranchisement and exclusion from holding office.

the president of Alcorn University. When Ames won the governorship in 1873, many conservatives in the state believed that his governorship would be “a reign of radicalism for the benefit of blacks and carpetbag adventurers.”³⁷² The *Weekly Clarion* wrote that “Gen. Ames goes into office against the wishes of ninety-nine hundredths of the former governing class of Mississippi; but he goes in, nevertheless, upon a distinct pledge of administering the laws impartially, and a disavowal of design to proscribe every class of citizens.”³⁷³ At the end of the academic year in which Ames won the governorship, Revels offered his resignation on July 31, 1874.³⁷⁴

The reason for Revels’ removal as president of Alcorn University is unclear. Some historians suggest that he was forced to resign as a form of retaliation by Ames for Revels’ association with former governor Alcorn. Others suggest that he was removed because someone needed to pay for the financial mismanagement of the university at the hands of the trustees. The evidence does not conclusively point to one explanation or the other, but they are two sides of the same coin. Conservative Republicans were seen as corrupt by those who had supported Ames in the election. In order to restore order to the state, those put into positions of power by Alcorn and Powers would need to be removed from those positions. As someone who had been made president by Alcorn, and who had kept the position under Powers, Revels had benefitted from Conservative Republicans. And his removal, for whatever reason, would be a signal to Mississippians of change brought on by Radical Republican rule.

In the years between Revels’ removal in 1874 and his reinstatement as president in 1876, Governor Ames attempted to recruit Frederick Douglass to the presidency. He wrote to

³⁷² Harris, *The Day of the Carpetbagger*, 602.

³⁷³ “The New Administration,” *Weekly Clarion*, January 22, 1874. Chronicling America.

³⁷⁴ A.G. Packer to H.R. Revels, 31 July, 1874, Book A, Letterbooks, 1874–1876, 998:E, Mississippi Department of Archives & History.

Douglass, suggesting that “I believe you can accomplish great good for the University and no less to the colored people of the state and the South.”³⁷⁵ Reflecting the fissure in the Republican party and the animosity between Ames and Alcorn, Ames seemed to immediately question Douglass’ fitness for the presidency based not on his qualifications but on his relationship with Governor Alcorn. In a letter to Frank C. Harris in the U.S. Treasury Department, Ames wrote,

Last session of Congress he [Douglass] wrote to Alcorn a letter of thanks for his speech on the Civil Rights bill indicating that he had faith and confidence in Alcorn’s political integrity. As I do not consider him (Alcorn) an honest man in any particular, but a scheming, tricky demagogue who has betrayed the party and been repudiated by it, I would regret to bring into the State a supporter of his of the ability and influence of Mr. Douglass.³⁷⁶

By the end of his letter, Ames has conceded that “I regard Mr. Douglass as more capable of doing good for his race at this time should he see fit to come here than any other man in the country.”³⁷⁷ Douglass ultimately declined the invitation to run the University, and the university remained under interim leadership for the duration of Revels’ absence.

Redeemer Politics and the Establishment of Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College

The ascension of Democrats to power in 1876 signaled the end of Reconstruction in Mississippi. During their time in power, Republicans relied on the support of newly enfranchised Black Mississippians to remain in power, offering concessions to reward their support and to ensure that they kept it. White agriculturalists grew frustrated with these concessions, seeing little value in the improvement of the conditions of newly emancipated Black Mississippians.

³⁷⁵ Adelbert Ames to Frederick Douglass, 6 October, 1875, Letterbooks, 1874–1876.

³⁷⁶ Adelbert Ames to Frank C. Harris, 4 August 1874, Records of the Office of the Governor, Correspondence and Papers, 1874–1866; n.d., 993:2, Mississippi Department of Archives & History, Jackson, Mississippi.

³⁷⁷ Ames to Harris, 4 August, 1874.

What bothered them most is that these concessions were funded through increased taxation. White agriculturalists resented being asked to give the state more money while they struggled financially after the economic devastation of the Civil War and placed blame on Republicans, especially on Black leaders who had wielded the influence of Black voters to win improvements for the newly enfranchised voters. According to historian Stephen Cresswell, “many white Mississippians had never met an articulate, educated person of color, and many doubted any existed or even could exist.”³⁷⁸ Democrats in Mississippi were able to use the growing resentment of White Mississippians to their advantage, mobilizing them to vote for John M. Stone for governor. With the assistance of these White voters, Stone was elected to the governor’s office in 1875.

In the years preceding Governor Stone’s administration and immediately after his inauguration, the agricultural community, especially as organized by the Grange and, later, by the Farmers’ Alliance, assumed a place of greater political prominence within the region. The Grange arrived in Mississippi in the early 1870s and reached peak membership around 1873. By 1875 the Mississippi Grange had 31,000 members and by 1877, membership had declined to around 10,000 members.³⁷⁹ The Farmers’ Alliance took over where the Grange left off, boasting 60,000 members in Mississippi by 1888.³⁸⁰ Through the Grange and the Farmers’ Alliance, White agrarians in Mississippi became politically influential, delivered the legislature and the governorship to the Democratic Party. One area of interest for White agrarians was the establishment of a college for agriculture and the mechanic arts separate from the school at the University of Mississippi. While the University of Mississippi offered agricultural education at a

³⁷⁸ Stephen Cresswell, *Rednecks, Redeemers, and Race: Mississippi after Reconstruction, 1877–1917* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), 5.

³⁷⁹ Cresswell, 20.

³⁸⁰ Cresswell, 24.

School of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts, White agrarians saw the school at Oxford as a place that was created for the academic and social development of wealthy Mississippians in order for them to perpetuate their social status. White agriculturalists wanted agricultural education for their sons that was offered by those educated in practical agriculture which would help them improve their family farms. According to Michael B. Ballard, “only by educating young, potential agriculturalists could agrarians hope to operate their agricultural pursuits on a level playing field with those who had taken and would continue to take advantage of uneducated farmers.”³⁸¹

An early target of the newly elected Democratic governor was higher education in Mississippi. Up to this time, Alcorn University and the University of Mississippi had been sharing the proceeds of the sale of land scrip given to the state as a provision of the Morrill Act of 1862. During the Reconstruction era, Alcorn University benefitted as one of the concessions made to Black voters in exchange for their votes, and from the rise to power of Black politicians. James D. Anderson wrote that,

Alcorn’s good beginning in 1871 reflected the participation of African Americans in the state’s body politic during the Reconstruction period. The coalition of black voters and office holders, northern Republicans, and southern whites known as scalawags, made African-American interests a force to be reckoned with. Specifically, Alcorn fared well during the short-lived period of black participation in Mississippi’s *post-bellum* government.³⁸²

³⁸¹ Michael B. Ballard, *Maroon and White*, 4.

³⁸² James D. Anderson, “Philanthropy, the State, and the Development of Historically Black Public Colleges,” *Minerva* 35, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 296–7.

As the Democratic government of Mississippi turned toward policies of retrenchment and austerity, public support for higher education waned. The University of Mississippi was targeted because it was seen as a school for the wealthy and elite. Alcorn University was targeted due to racist ideologies of White agriculturalists in Mississippi. As Creswell wrote, “public schools seemed an expensive novelty and many farmers groused that the state had gotten along quite well in the 1850s without school systems. Moreover, white small farmers were uninterested in providing colleges and hospitals for black citizens.”³⁸³ White agriculturalists replaced Black Mississippians as the influential group being courted for votes, and Alcorn University was caught in the middle of these changing political power dynamics in the state.

Hiram Revels was reinstated as president of Alcorn University in 1876 by Governor John M. Stone. It is unclear why Revels was reinstated, but it is noteworthy that he had changed his political party affiliation to Democratic after the 1873 election. Upon his reinstatement, Revels worked to convince the newly elected Democratic legislature that the university had moved past the financial scandal that had tarnished its reputation. In a letter to Governor Stone, Revels stated that, “I do assure your excellency that I shall do everything in my power to restore, as rapidly as possible, Alcorn University to its former moral and intellectual status.”³⁸⁴ In his January 1877 address to the Mississippi legislature, Stone reported that “mismanagement and other causes had left it [Alcorn University] almost a wreck, a University only in name,” but that under President Revels “the strictest regard is now paid to the cultivation of good morals, and habits in the students, and the Faculty, earnestly striving to profit by past sad experience, are leaving nothing undone to surround the young men with such influences as will tend to their moral elevation.”³⁸⁵

³⁸³ Creswell, *Rednecks, Redeemers, and Race*, 5.

³⁸⁴ Hiram Revels to John M. Stone, 21, July 1876, 1006:9. Records of the Office of the Governor, Correspondence and Papers, 1876–1882; n.d., Mississippi Department of Archives & History.

³⁸⁵ “Governor’s Annual Message,” *Daily Clarion*, January 4, 1877. Chronicling America.

In a time where Democrats would need the vote of White agriculturalists to remain in power, Revels must have known that the era of concessions to Black voters was over. In order to maintain continued financial support from the Mississippi legislature, Revels would need to rely on his relationship with the political elite of the state. Cultivating a perception of Alcorn University as a place where Black Mississippians were educated for employment and the cultivation of “good habits,” and not for liberation, would be important for Revels as he petitioned for the financial support required to maintain Alcorn University as a place of public education for Black Mississippians.

In 1878, Governor Stone addressed the legislature and suggested that “the public schools and universities of the State are in a flourishing condition, and that every class of our people is manifesting great interest in the cause of education.”³⁸⁶ He also reported a drop in enrollment at Alcorn University from 83 students in the 1876–1877 academic year to 48 students in the 1877–1878 academic year. Stone suggested that “the absence of a greater number of students at the university, is not the resolute of indifference on the part of colored people, but simply in consequence of their poverty.”³⁸⁷ By the time that Stone gave his 1880 address to the Mississippi legislature, the system of public higher in the state had been reorganized and Alcorn University was altered to the point of being unrecognizable.

In 1878 legislative session, H.B. no. 182 was introduced into the Mississippi House of Representatives. The bill, titled *An Act to Organize the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi and Regulate the Government of the Same*, passed the House in February 1878 and

³⁸⁶ *Annual Message and Inaugural Address of Governor J.M. Stone, to the Legislature of Mississippi, Session of 1878* (Jackson: Power & Barksdale, 1877), 6.

³⁸⁷ *Annual Message and Inaugural Address of Governor J.M. Stone, Session of 1878*, 8.

passed the Senate later in the month.³⁸⁸ The act, which established the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi (now Mississippi State University), also reorganized Alcorn University into Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College.³⁸⁹ In addition to giving the university a new name, the act stated that the college should be, “an agricultural college for the education of the colored youth of the State.”³⁹⁰ In contrast, the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi was described in a footnote of the legislation as the “agricultural college for white youth.”³⁹¹ The act did not direct either institution on the specifics of their curricula, but did suggest that the colleges should each be a

first-class institution at which the youth of the State of Mississippi may acquire a common school education and a scientific and practical knowledge of agriculture, horticulture, and the mechanic arts, also of the proper growth and care of stock, without, however, excluding other scientific and classical studies, including military tactics.³⁹²

For the first time since its founding, the newly reorganized Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College was directed to offer a curriculum that aligned with the directives in the Morrill Act of 1862 regarding agricultural, mechanic arts, and military education.

More damaging to the health of Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College than any of the aspects of the reorganization outlined in this legislation was Section 14 of the act. Legislators wanted to ensure that the newly established Agricultural and Mechanical College of the State of Mississippi was given every possible financial advantage for the educating of White

³⁸⁸ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi at a Regular Session, Convened in the City of Jackson, January 8, 1878* (Jackson: Power & Barksdale, 1878), 260.

³⁸⁹ The Agricultural and Mechanical College of the State of Mississippi retained this name until 1932 when it was renamed Mississippi State College. In 1958, the school was renamed Mississippi State University which has been its name since that time.

³⁹⁰ *Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1878*, 119.

³⁹¹ *Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1878*, 119.

³⁹² *Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1878*, 121.

Mississippians. As a result, the provided that “a sum equal to the amount heretofore appropriated to the Alcorn University out of the principal arising from the sale of said land scrip [sic], is hereby appropriated to the college provided for in section 2d of this Act.”³⁹³ As with the act that established Alcorn University, the act establishing the new agricultural and mechanical colleges in the state gave the governor the responsibility of appointing a board of trustees for each college. Stone used this power to appoint an all white board of trustees at the newly established Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College.³⁹⁴

In addition to changing the terms of organization and curriculum for Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, Mississippi legislators also changed the terms of financial support for the college. The act directed that the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip should “be used in equal proportions for the benefit of the youth of both races.”³⁹⁵ This legislation had two immediate financial consequences for the public universities in Mississippi. First, the University of Mississippi would no longer receive any appropriation of proceeds from the sale of land scrip. Second, Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College would no longer receive three-fifths of the land scrip funds as it did when the proceeds of the sale of land scrip given to Mississippi were allocated between Alcorn University and the University of Mississippi.

Between the reorganization of Alcorn University as an agricultural and mechanic arts college and the reallocation of funds from the University of Mississippi to the Agricultural and Mechanical College of the State of Mississippi, White agriculturalists won an agricultural education for the advancement of their children, and also saw the divestment from education for Black Mississippians. Under its new scheme of organization, Alcorn University would offer an

³⁹³ *Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1878*, 122-3.

³⁹⁴ Anderson, “Philanthropy, the State and the Development of Historically Black Public Colleges,” 297.

³⁹⁵ *Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1878*, 122.

academic course, a scientific course, and a preparatory course. As with its previous organization, Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College offered a two-year preparatory course that included studies in agriculture; algebra; arithmetic; English composition, grammar, spelling, and vocabulary; free hand drawing; geography; U.S. history; physiology and hygiene; rhetoric; and vocal music.³⁹⁶ The four-year scientific course included classes in algebra, botany, bookkeeping, cattle feeding, chemistry, composition, constitutional law, crop science, English and American literature, geology, geometry, history, insects injurious to farm and garden, logic, mensuration and surveying, mental science, physics, political economy, rhetoric, soils and manures, trigonometry, vocal music, and zoology.³⁹⁷ By changing the object of the college to education in agriculture and the mechanic arts, the curriculum took a more vocational focus. Instead of focusing on theoretical subjects that offered intellectual and cultural growth, students were given career training to prepare them for a life in the industrial class.

The newly established Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi also offered a curriculum focused on agriculture, the mechanic arts, and military tactics in order to prepare the sons of White agriculturalists for a career in the industrial class. The college offered a two-year preparatory course where students studied algebra, arithmetic, elementary grammar and composition, spelling and reading, U.S. history, and writing and declamation.³⁹⁸ In the four-year regular course, students studied agriculture, algebra, anatomy and veterinary science, bookkeeping, botany, chemistry, English, entomology, free-hand drawing, geography, geology, geometry, history, meteorology, moral and natural philosophy, political economy, surveying,

³⁹⁶ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Alcorn A&M College, Rodney, Miss.* (Jackson: Clarion Steam, 1886), 12.

³⁹⁷ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Alcorn A&M College*, 13–4.

³⁹⁸ *Third Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi* (Jackson: Clarion Steam Publishing House, 1882), 16.

trigonometry, writing, and zoology.³⁹⁹ The College also established a military commandant of students. Led by Lieutenant William L. Buck and a group of staff, the commandant included five companies of students each of which had a Captain, 1st and 2nd Lieutenants, and a 1st Sergeant.⁴⁰⁰

Hiram Revels remained in office until 1882, at which time he was succeeded by John Burrus, who came to the university from Fisk University where he had been a mathematics professor. A practicing lawyer and graduate of Fisk University, he was part of the Fisk's first graduating class along with his brother and two female students.⁴⁰¹ Founded by the American Missionary Association, Fisk University's "curriculum is such that the graduates are admitted as post-graduates at Yale and Harvard without examination, and in more instances than one those who have entered the professional schools of Harvard and Yale have been among the leaders of their classes."⁴⁰² Historians have written that the Burrus brothers decided to attend Fisk University after learning that John C. Calhoun had once said "Show me a negro who can parse a Greek verb or go beyond the first equations in algebra and I'll show you a man."⁴⁰³ James Burrus arrived at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College before his brother, having joined the faculty as a mathematics professor in 1881. Yet despite the liberal arts education he received at Fisk and his further legal studies, Burrus spent his time as president of Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College turning the school's new, more vocationally focused curriculum from an idea into a reality. According to Leigh Soares, Burrus "argued that a more advanced agricultural and mechanical curriculum would best serve the needs of Mississippi's largely rural black population."⁴⁰⁴

³⁹⁹ *Third Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 15.

⁴⁰⁰ *Third Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 6.

⁴⁰¹ Posey, *Against Great Odds*, 14.

⁴⁰² *Fisk University, Nashville Tennessee, Founded 1866* ([Nashville?]: [n.p.], [1911?]), 3.

⁴⁰³ Joe M. Richardson, "A Negro Success Story: James Dallas Burrus," *The Journal of Negro History* 50, no. 4 (October 1965): 274.

⁴⁰⁴ Leigh Alexandra Soares, "Higher Ambitions for Freedom," (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2019), 101.

In implementing Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College's new curriculum, Burrus took seriously the work of developing both agricultural and mechanic arts education including in the hiring of his faculty. As Davis noted, "of the ten members of his faculty, all held Bachelors Degrees from reputable institutions, and five of them held the Masters of Arts Degree, and one of the Doctor of Philosophy Degree from Northwestern University."⁴⁰⁵ Burrus worked to bring both the theory and practice of agriculture into the curriculum. In addition to courses focused on crop science and animal husbandry, the college had a farm for the teaching of practical agriculture. He also focused on developing mechanic arts education at the college. In 1882, Burrus established a trade department at the college and secured savings for the school by having students repair campus buildings. According to Josephine Posey, "from 1885 to 1887 all maintenance was done by students. The tasks involved work in carpentry, masonry, plastering, painting, plumbing, tinnery, and glazing."⁴⁰⁶ Engaging in this maintenance work helped students apply what they had learned, and also saved the college money on expenses related to upkeep of the facilities.

The Morrill Act of 1890 and the Underfunding of Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College

As the leaders of Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College worked to establish a vocationally focused curriculum, the Mississippi legislature considered how to allocate the funds disbursed to the state as part of the Morrill Act of 1890. The legislation required states to provide land-grant college for both Black students and White students. In cases where states established segregated land-grant colleges, the legislation did not direct states on how they should divide funds between the school for White students and the school for Black students. Governor Stone allocated the funds given to Mississippi equally between Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical

⁴⁰⁵ Davis, *Pushing Forward*, 20.

⁴⁰⁶ Posey, *Against Great Odds*, 16.

College and the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi. Stone justified his decision by suggesting that,

Although the educable children of the colored race exceed in number those of the white, the enrollment and attendance at the Agricultural and Mechanical College being uniformly larger than at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, I considered an equal division equitable—at least not unjust to the latter, at which the enrollment and attendance had since its organization, been considerably below that of the former.⁴⁰⁷

This arrangement continued until the Secretary of the Interior decreed it to be unsuitable. States with segregated land-grant colleges, largely in southern states, were directed to disburse the funds from the Morrill Act of 1890 in proportion to the enrollment at the colleges for White students and Black students.

In his January 1892 message to the Mississippi legislature, Governor Stone discussed the Morrill Act of 1890 and how the funds should be disbursed going forward based on the directive from the federal government. Stone understood that he needed to follow federal guidance and directed that Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College should receive \$9,378.63 of the \$17,000 allocated to the state in 1892.⁴⁰⁸ This change gave Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College 55% of the funds given to Mississippi. But Stone's decision was more about pragmatism than equity. He stated, "I regard it as of minor importance, as both colleges must be maintained, and the necessities of each can be provided for equitably in a division of the fund from the state treasury for their support."⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi at a Regular Session Thereof Convened in the City of Jackson, January 5th, 1892* (Jackson: R.H. Henry, 1892), 26–7.

⁴⁰⁸ *Journal of the House of Representatives, 1892*, 27.

⁴⁰⁹ *Journal of the House of Representatives, 1892*, 27.

In March 1892, the legislature followed Stone's directive, passing *An Act Accepting Provisions of Act of Congress for the More Complete Endowment and support of Colleges for the Benefit of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts*. The act directed that the money that the state received from the federal government would be "divided between aforesaid Agricultural Colleges for white and colored in the proportion that the whole number of educable children in the State, of each race, bears to the whole number of educable children of both races."⁴¹⁰ In the same year that this legislation was enacted, the two colleges received additional appropriations from the state legislature. Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College received an appropriation of \$26,000 for 1892 and 1893, which included \$8,000 for the erection of new buildings and \$2,000 for repairs.⁴¹¹ The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi received a \$61,500 appropriation for the same two year period, "not less than ten thousand dollars of the above amounts shall be expended in establishing and enlarging the mechanical department."⁴¹² It is unclear what the legislature's motive was for this significant difference in funding between the colleges. While there was still a large difference between what had been appropriated to Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College and to the Agricultural College of Mississippi, the legislature may have been attempting to bring the later up to parity with the former. It is equally as likely, though, that the legislature was underfunding Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College in response to the federal mandate that the funds from the Morrill Act of 1890 be divided more equitably.

⁴¹⁰ *Laws of the State of Mississippi, Passed at a Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature Held in the City of Jackson Commencing January 5, 1892, and Ending April 2, 1892* (Jackson: R.H. Henry, 1892), 38.

⁴¹¹ *Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1892*, 13.

⁴¹² *Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1892*, 11.

Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College in the Age of Industrialization

Even with the directive to disburse the funds from the Morrill Act of 1890 proportionally between the two colleges in Mississippi, Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College remained underfunded relative to the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi in ensuing years. In the 1894 legislative session, \$15,500 was appropriated to Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College with its share of the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip funds included in the appropriation.⁴¹³ In contrast, the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi received \$45,000 in addition to its share of the proceeds from the sale of land scrip.⁴¹⁴ The differences in funding between the two Colleges reflected the state's priority in providing agricultural and mechanic arts education to White Mississippians at a level that exceeded what was available to Black Mississippians. In his 1894 address to the Mississippi legislature, Stone described curricular advancements at the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi. "The Agricultural and Mechanical College is now complete in all its departments. For years it was a mechanical college only in name, but the organization of the Mechanic Arts department is now complete, and it is an Agricultural and College in fact."⁴¹⁵ In exchange for their votes, Stone met demands made by White agriculturalists for better agricultural education by establishing an agricultural and mechanic arts college for White students in Mississippi and funding it with proceeds taken from both the University of Mississippi and the former Alcorn University, both of which the White agriculturalists had opposed.

⁴¹³ *Laws of the State of Mississippi Passed at a Special Session of the Mississippi Legislature Held in the City of Jackson, Commencing January 2, 1894, and Ending February 10, 1894* (Jackson: Clarion-Ledger Publishing Company, 1894), 13.

⁴¹⁴ *Laws of the State of Mississippi, 1894*, 12.

⁴¹⁵ *Journal of the House of Representatives, 1894*, 22.

Despite curricular advances made by Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College in the area of mechanic arts education, Stone focused his comments about the college in his address to the legislature on controversy within the school. “Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College has not been free from friction and disturbing elements for the last two years.”⁴¹⁶ Stone described how a faction of faculty, with support from members of the board of trustees, had defied President Burrus’ leadership with “the controversy finally culminating, in June, 1898, with the non-election of President Burrus, and all of the members of the faculty who sympathize with him, six or seven in number.”⁴¹⁷ Stone reported that the challenges at the college had more to do with the division in the board of trustees than in Burrus’ mismanagement of the college. Stone concluded his remarks on Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College by suggesting an investigation into the college. The Mississippi legislature followed Stone’s suggestion and drafted a concurrent resolution during the 1894 session to establish a special joint committee of the legislature to visit Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College and investigate its current situation.⁴¹⁸ While the investigation showed no wrongdoing on the part of President Burrus, he was not reinstated at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College.⁴¹⁹ Burrus was replaced by Wilson H. Reynolds, who died four months into the 1893–1894 academic year and whose term was completed by a professor of mathematics at the college.⁴²⁰ Thomas Calloway, another Fisk University graduate, began a term as president of Alcorn Agricultural College at the start of the following academic year and remained in the role until 1896.

⁴¹⁶ *Journal of the House of Representatives, 1894*, 23.

⁴¹⁷ *Journal of the House of Representatives, 1894*, 23.

⁴¹⁸ *Journal of the House of Representatives, 1894*, 105.

⁴¹⁹ While Stone suggested that Burrus was removed from the college after friction with the faculty, other secondary sources suggest that Burrus resigned due to health-related problems.

⁴²⁰ Davis, *Pushing Forward*, 23.

During this time, students at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College could choose from a five-year industrial course, a four-year scientific course, a one-year business course, and a three-year elective course in Latin. To gain admission to the industrial course, students would be examined in arithmetic, spelling, geography, and reading.⁴²¹ The industrial course was “so arranged that each student in this course can take a trade in some of the Industries. All students in this course must enter upon the learning of some trade under the same requirements as classroom work.”⁴²² In addition to developing proficiency in a trade, students in the industrial course studied agriculture, book-keeping and business papers, drawing, English grammar and literature, geography, mathematics, Mississippi history and government, penmanship, physiology, rhetoric, United States history, and vocal music.⁴²³ Students who completed the industrial course could gain entry into the college’s scientific course.

The College also offered a one-year certificate course in business for students who had completed the industrial course. Students enrolled in the business course studied business correspondence, commercial arithmetic, commercial law and business forms, double-entry book-keeping, penmanship, short-hand, single entry book-keeping, and type-writing. In this course, “practical work as much as possible will be given,”⁴²⁴ which allowed students the opportunity to complete the industrial and business courses with skills that could be put to use in a business or trade.

Students who completed the industrial course could enroll in the four-year scientific course. The industrial course acted both as a stand-alone course of study and a preparatory

⁴²¹ *Catalogue of the Officers of Alcorn A.&M. College, Westside, Mississippi, 1894–1895 and Announcements for 1895–1896* (Westside: Printed by Students of Alcorn College in Printing Classes, 1893), 18.

⁴²² *Catalogue of the Officers of Alcorn A.&M. College, 1894–1895*, 18. Industrial departments included blacksmithing, carpentry, printing, and shoemaking.

⁴²³ *Catalogue of the Officers of Alcorn A.&M. College, 1894–1895*, 18–9.

⁴²⁴ *Catalogue of the Officers of Alcorn A.&M. College, 1894–1895*, 20.

course for the scientific course. Students in the scientific course studied algebra, astronomy, breeds of livestock, cattle feeding, chemistry, civics, English grammar and literature, geometry, history, horticulture, how crops grow, insects injurious to farm and garden, international law, logic, mental and moral science, physics, political economy, rhetoric, surveying, trigonometry, and zoology. Students in the scientific course were also required “to write at least one article a year and secure its publication in some newspaper of standing, and in addition must deliver from memory in chapel at least one original composition annually.”⁴²⁵ Students could enroll in the scientific course without having attended the industrial course, so long as they had an equivalent education to that offered at the college. However, if a student received all of their schooling from Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, graduating from the scientific course after having completed the industrial course, they would have attended school for nine years. In the 1894–1895 academic year, there were 250 students enrolled in the industrial course and 54 enrolled in the scientific course.⁴²⁶

The expansion of the curriculum at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College to include industrial and business courses reflected a trend of industrialization in Mississippi. In the years between 1850 and 1880, manufacturing businesses increased by 69% and by 1910, more than 50,000 Mississippians were employed in manufacturing.⁴²⁷ Opportunities in industry abounded for both Black and white Mississippians, but careers were segregated. Cresswell suggested that, “an examination of the census returns for a city like Vicksburg shows a stark racial division by type of job. Laborers, porters, and wagon drivers were black. Cooks, babies’ nurses, and laundresses were also black. On the other hand, clerks, telegraphers, and

⁴²⁵ *Catalogue of the Officers of Alcorn A.&M. College, 1894–1895*, 19.

⁴²⁶ *Catalogue of the Officers of Alcorn A.&M. College, 1894–1895*, 16.

⁴²⁷ Cresswell, *Rednecks, Redeemers, and Race*, 130.

bookkeepers were white.”⁴²⁸ The industrial and business courses offered opportunities to Black students who needed vocational training in order to advance in industry. Students could leave the college with a basic understanding of subjects like mathematics and history while also proficient in a trade like blacksmithing or shoe making. In 1896, students from the industrial course received medals at the Atlanta Exposition for “best two horse wagons and best dozen pairs of shoes. This in competition with the largest factories of [*sic*] United States.”⁴²⁹

The training offered by Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College opened a door for Black Mississippians, offering them skills to advance in a trade. But the industrial course was a stark departure from the curriculum offered even a few years earlier before Alcorn University became Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, and it was an even more stark departure from the curriculum offered when Alcorn University first opened. Over the decades, Mississippi legislators had funded public higher education for Black Mississippians based on which group of influential voters they were attempting to gain support from. During Reconstruction, Alcorn University had been founded and generously funded by the Republican legislature as a concession to Black voters. As Reconstruction gave way to Redemption and Republican rule to Democratic rule, Black voters were replaced by White agriculturalists as the influential group that politicians sought to accommodate. In September 1895, Booker T. Washington addressed the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta. At the time of the speech, Washington was the president of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, and he championed education that was vocational in nature, and which would prepare Black students for work in the trades. In his speech, Washington suggested that,

⁴²⁸ Cresswell, 57.

⁴²⁹ “Farmers Department,” *Canton Times*, January 10, 1896. Chronicling America.

Our [Black southerners] greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the production of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labour, and put brains and skills into the common occupations of life; shall prosper in proportion as we learn to draw the line between the superficial and the substantial, the ornamental gewaws of life and the useful. No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.⁴³⁰

Washington's ideas about racial uplift through labor were not universally accepted by Black leaders. But in Redemption Mississippi, where Democratic leaders were accommodating White agriculturalists and their racist grudges in order to stay in power, providing financial support for a form of education that was for vocational preparation and not liberation likely held appeal.

Co-Education at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College

The change to a more industrially focused curriculum was not the only change to Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College as the college approached the start of the twentieth century. The college also expanded to include women among its student body. The move toward co-education started with a small notice in the catalog for the 1894–1895 announcing the expansion of the curriculum to include courses for women. “Through the action of the Board of Trustees in recent session, we can now announce to the colored girls of Mississippi that Alcorn is no longer for boys only. It will not be possible to arrange dormitories for girls for the coming year, but we expect to have every facility arranged for September 1896.”⁴³¹ The notice went on to announce that new courses of study such as sewing, cooking, and home economics would soon be

⁴³⁰ *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, vol. 3, 1889-95, ed. Louis R. Harlan (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 584.

⁴³¹ *Catalogue of the Officers of Alcorn A.&M. College, 1894–1895*, 31.

introduced. The introduction of co-education was of great importance to President Calloway, but his time as president would end before the college became co-educational. Despite the announcement in the 1894–1895 catalog, the College would not become co-educational until 1903 under the Presidency of W.H. Lanier. In his 1902 address to the Mississippi legislature, Governor Andrew H. Longino seemed to offer support for education for Black women, stating that,

No race of people was ever brought up to those standards of morality and social decorum, so indispensable to good citizenship, by educating only the men and withholding from its women those means by which intelligence is fostered and virtue exalted. It must be admitted that social and moral improvement is the hope of the negro race, and as proven by the experience of all the past such reforms must begin with the wives, daughters, and mothers, in the chastity and sanctity of the home.⁴³²

The politically appointed board of trustees pushed forward with making the college co-educational by hiring faculty to support their education. At their January 1903 meeting, the trustees appointed a Matron of the Girl's Department, an instructor of dressmaking, and an instructor of domestic science.⁴³³ The college opened Truly Hall, a women's dormitory, in 1903, and the School of Nursing was established in the same year.⁴³⁴

The course offerings for women at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College were similar to the industrial courses offered to men. Women could study dressmaking, laundering, sewing, or could enroll in the nurse training school. Students studying sewing engaged in

⁴³² *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi at a Special Session in the City of Jackson, January, February, and March, 1902* (Nashville: Brandon Printing Company, 1902), 36–7. For more on the education of Black women in the antebellum and postbellum periods, see Linda Perkins' extensive body of work on the topic.

⁴³³ "Untitled," *Port Gibson Reveille*, January 15, 1903. *Chronicling America*.

⁴³⁴ Davis, *Pushing Forward*, 35.

practical exercises in basting, darning, hemming, gathering and button-holding, making clothes from patterns, overcasting, and patching.⁴³⁵ The description of the course of study for laundering is less specific: “our girls will be taught the art of competent hand laundering.”⁴³⁶ The nursing school was a three-year course “under the general supervision of the college physician and under the immediate charge of a trained nurse.”⁴³⁷ Students in the school studied anatomy and physiology, general nursing, materia medica, and obstetrics and engaged in practice nursing and dispensary work.⁴³⁸ Unlike the preparatory and scientific programs offered to male students, there were no entry requirements listed for the courses for women.

At the time that it became co-educational, Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College was the first college in the state to offer educational opportunities to women. And in 1903, over five hundred women applied to attend the college in its first year of co-education.⁴³⁹ As Soares wrote, “most black communities developed a broader definition of citizenship that included black girls and women. They understood citizenship to include access to social institutions, economic independence, and social responsibility.”⁴⁴⁰ In his 1904 message to the legislature, Governor Andrew H. Logino praised the developments at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, suggesting that the college,

is doing splendid work for the education and industrial training of the negro boys and girls of the State. The present attendance is the largest in the history of the College and everything is working harmoniously and successfully. The industrial features of the

⁴³⁵ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1906–1907, Alcorn Mississippi, and Announcements for 1907–1908* (Jackson: Tucker Printing House, 1907), 23–4.

⁴³⁶ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1906–1907*, 24.

⁴³⁷ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, Alcorn, Mississippi, 1905–1906 and Announcements for 1906–07* (Jackson: Tucker Printing House, 1906), 22.

⁴³⁸ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1906–1907*, 23.

⁴³⁹ Posey, *Against Great Odds*, 20.

⁴⁴⁰ Soares, “Higher Ambitions for Freedom,” 21.

institution are emphasized it is yearly turning out a number of experienced workmen in the various industrial and mechanical trades.⁴⁴¹

The move toward co-education at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College benefitted women in that it gave them skills to support domestic work that could generate income for their families, but it also worked to control them by offering them limited educational choices. Lanier, the president of Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College at the time it became co-educational, was influenced by Booker T. Washington's ideas about education of Black people for vocational training. As Posey suggested, "he [Lanier] believed, like Booker T. Washington, that the special mission of black colleges was in the realm of industrial training."⁴⁴² In the same way that the expansion of the industrial curriculum was likely appealing to legislators because it provided education for vocational preparation rather than liberation, the expansion of the industrial curriculum to include women would have been palatable to those funding Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College because it was for career preparation.

Conclusion

In 1904, representatives from the Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College attended the World's Fair in Saint Louis to offer an exhibit on farming and industry in the state. "The chief feature of the exhibit will be furniture and vehicles made by the students of the college in the shops on the college grounds."⁴⁴³ The college also offered examples of ironwork and footwear created by students at the school as well as "samples of Mississippi's hard woods and specimens of grain, corn, hay, vegetables, and cotton grown on the college farm."⁴⁴⁴ Attending

⁴⁴¹ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi at a Regular Session Thereof in the City of Jackson, January, February and March, 1904* (Nashville: Brandon Printing Company, 1904), 25–6.

⁴⁴² Posey, *Against Great Odds*, 19.

⁴⁴³ "Preparing an Exhibit," *Port Gibson Reveille*, December 17, 1903. *Chronicling America*.

⁴⁴⁴ "Preparing an Exhibit."

this event gave the college an opportunity to demonstrate the work of its students on an international stage.

By 1905, Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College was nearly unrecognizable from the university that had been founded in 1871 as a concession to the Black voters in Mississippi whose support the Republicans needed to remain in power. When Democrats returned to power at the end of Reconstruction, they began eliminating the rights of Black Mississippians as a concession to the White Mississippians that had voted for them. Included in that was the establishment of an agricultural and mechanical college for White students and a diminishing of the importance and status of Alcorn University as a Black college through its reestablishment as Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College with its vocational mission and white board of trustees. Though Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College was the first college in Mississippi to admit women, the curriculum offered to female students was as restrictive as the one offered to their male counterparts.

The assault on the rights of Black Mississippians, including public education, continued well into the modern era. In 1904, Democratic Governor James K. Vardaman had secured the votes of poor White Mississippians through the use of racist rhetoric and the suggestion that “the negro belongs to a race which education harms instead of helps.”⁴⁴⁵ Vardaman’s distaste for the idea of education for Black Mississippians was not merely a talking point he employed to secure his election. He went on to veto funding for a normal school in Mississippi that had trained thousands Black teachers since it opened in 1873. As Anderson suggested, “the state’s only obligation, according to Vardaman, was to provide vocational and moral training.”⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁵ “The Vardaman Matter,” *The Muskogee Cimeter*, August 11, 1904. Chronicling America.

⁴⁴⁶ Anderson, “Philanthropy, the State, and the Development of Black Public Colleges,” 297.

Alcorn University's establishment, and its standing as one of three institutions given an appropriation by their states from the proceeds of the sale of land scrip given to states as a provision of the Morrill Act of 1862, reflected a moment in Mississippi history. And the ways in which White legislators in post-Reconstruction Mississippi continued to diminish the school's standing reflected a different moment. In the years between 1872 and 1905, Mississippi grew and changed most notably regarding industrialization. While the state economy remained largely agrarian by 1905, a growth in industry offered "an alternative to agriculture for state workers—one that had not really been available in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War."⁴⁴⁷ For formerly enslaved Mississippians who had spent their lives tending to crops, education through Alcorn University and, later, Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College offered new—though limited—educational and career opportunities.

Alcorn University and, later, Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, became a land-grant college in the face of the state's commitment to upholding white supremacy and systemic racism. As Soares suggested about higher education for Black southerners, "long after the collapse of Reconstruction in the former slaveholding South, the institutions black leaders built stood as reminders of a vision for equal political rights, full citizenship and upward mobility."⁴⁴⁸ Certainly Alcorn University stood as a reminder to Mississippians of a time when Black Mississippians received concessions from the Republican government in exchange for their votes. And Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College stood, at least for a time, as a reminder of time when Black men were replaced by White agriculturalists as the influential group of voters receiving concessions from Democrats and when Black men were given educational opportunities for job preparation and not for liberation. While the college's

⁴⁴⁷ Cresswell, *Rednecks, Redeemers, and Race*, 235.

⁴⁴⁸ Soares, "Higher Ambitions for Freedom," 236.

complicated history is a part of its development as a land-grant college, so is the fact that it offered education to Black men and women in Mississippi in a time not that far removed from the antebellum period in which the economy was supported by the labor of enslaved people.

CHAPTER 6

AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANIC ARTS COLLEGE TO POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE:
THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL
COLLEGE

During its 1871–1872 session, the legislature of the Commonwealth of Virginia debated which college should receive proceeds from the sale of land scrip given to the commonwealth as a provision of the Morrill Act of 1862. *The Daily State Journal*, a Richmond newspaper, suggested that the money should be allocated to a single institution rather than dividing the funds between multiple schools. “The Land Scrip bill should be framed...with reference to a single application of the fund, which should be thrown open to competitive localities, giving the people in any part of the State an opportunity to avail themselves of its advantages, by holding out the greatest inducements for its bestowal upon their locality.”⁴⁴⁹ In the previous two legislative sessions, nearly every school in the state had attempted to lay claim to the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip, leading the Richmond *Daily Dispatch* to ask in the title of an article published during the 1870–1871 session, “The Colleges and the Agricultural Land Scrip—Who Shall Have It?”⁴⁵⁰ By the end of the 1872 session, the Virginia Legislature settled on dividing the funds between two schools. The Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute would receive one-third of the proceeds and Preston and Olin Institute, which would become the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, would receive two-thirds of the proceeds.

⁴⁴⁹ “The Land Scrip Bill,” *The Daily State Journal*, January 27, 1872, *Chronicling America*.

⁴⁵⁰ “The Colleges and the Agricultural Land Scrip—Who Shall Have It?,” *Daily Dispatch*, December 16, 1870, *Chronicling America*.

This decision to allocate funds to establish a new college was comparable to the decision made in other states to establish a new college rather than to append a school of agriculture and mechanic arts onto an existing college or university. The Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (VAMC) was founded as a new college whose emphasis would be on training young men for careers in agriculture or the mechanic arts. In adopting this identity, the college could distinguish itself from other colleges and universities in the state whose curricular focus was on a more classical curriculum for the development of learned men. Within this framing, leaders of VAMC worked in the school's early years to identify the optimal balance of agriculture, mechanic arts, and military tactics education with different institutional leaders favoring emphasis on different areas of the curriculum. Settling on a curriculum for the college was made all the more difficult during the 1880s and 1890s as Virginia's state government changed hands between political parties with each new government demanding a reorganization of the college, including its faculty and board. And in the 1890s, VAMC adopted a new identity as it added engineering degrees to its agricultural and mechanic arts offerings.

This chapter explores the transformation of VAMC from an agriculture and mechanic arts college with two courses of study to a college with multiple courses of study, a graduate program, and a robust military program. In doing so, it considers not only the transformation in organization and curriculum, but also how Virginia state politics influenced the development of the school. By understanding the role that politics played in the shaping of VAMC over time, we can better understand the development of land-grant colleges in the region.

Higher Education in Virginia Prior to the Establishment of VAMC

Higher education in Virginia began in the colonial era with the establishment of the College of William & Mary in 1693 by a royal charter of the British government. Prior to the

Revolutionary War, the college was comprised of schools of divinity and philosophy, a grammar school, and a school for the education of Indigenous students.⁴⁵¹ In the late 1770s, Thomas Jefferson proposed a reorganization of the institution through commonwealth legislation and then in his role as a trustee. He was successful in some areas, including the closing of the grammar school, the elimination of chairs in the divinity school, and the creation of chairs in law, modern languages and medicine. Though it was left unoccupied, the professorship in the Indian school was not eliminated in the hopes that it could attract funds.⁴⁵² The college shut down during the Revolutionary War in 1780 and after it reopened in 1782, it struggled for decades, and according to an institutional historian “Jefferson’s great reform unravel[ed].”⁴⁵³ While the college occasionally received funds from the Virginia legislature, it might best be considered a private college in the period.⁴⁵⁴ And though the College educated many influential leaders in colonial times, Virginia legislators in the nineteenth century were often educated at the University of Virginia.

Planning for the more clearly public University of Virginia started with Jefferson’s 1779 considerations of how education might be delivered within the commonwealth.⁴⁵⁵ And, while he

⁴⁵¹ *The History of the College of William and Mary from its Foundation, 1660, to 1874* (Richmond: J.W. Randolph & English, 1874), 46. The College of William and Mary was established prior to the American Revolution as a colonial college. One of the conditions of its founding was to educate the Indigenous people in Virginia. As Bobby Wright noted, the college “did not actually enroll Indian students as baccalaureate candidates. At best, the Brafferton School served as a preparatory school with the ultimate aim of matriculation for its Indian students.” Bobby Wright, “The ‘Untameable Savage Spirit’: American Indians in Colonial Colleges,” *Review of Higher Education* 14, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 432.

⁴⁵² *The History of the College of William and Mary*, 52; Susan H. Godson et al., *The College of William & Mary: A History, vol. 1, 1693–1888* (King and Queen Press, 1993), 130–136.

⁴⁵³ Godson et al, *The College of William and Mary*, 168.

⁴⁵⁴ Colleges formed under royal charter, such as William and Mary, had an interesting relationship to the states in which they were situated after the Revolutionary War. Even when they received state support, they were not considered public universities. In 1819, the United States Supreme Court rules in the case of Dartmouth College vs. Woodward that the college’s royal charter was a contract between England’s king and the trustees of the college and, therefore, it could not be amended by the state of New Hampshire. For more on the Dartmouth Case, see Eldon L. Johnson’s “The Dartmouth Case: The Neglected Educational Meaning” and “How to Think About the Dartmouth Case” by John S. Whitehead and Jurgen Herbst.

⁴⁵⁵ *A Sketch of the University of Virginia* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1885), 4.

had been able to foster some change toward his vision at William and Mary, he remained unsatisfied with the overall progress and character of the institution, especially as his reforms were undone. Jefferson more fully realized his idea for public higher education when the Virginia legislature passed an act creating the University of Virginia in January of 1819. Per the act,

In the said university shall be taught the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages, Spanish, Italian, German and Anglo Saxon, the different branches of mathematics, pure and physical—natural philosophy, the principles of agriculture, chemistry, mineralogy, including geology, botany, zoology, anatomy, medicine, civil government, political economy, the law of nature and nations, municipal law, history, ideology, general grammar, ethics, rhetoric, and belles letters.⁴⁵⁶

The act also decreed that the number of professors should be limited to ten. While the curriculum outlined in the legislation that established the University of Virginia included a variety of subjects, of note is the study of the principles of agriculture. The inclusion of agricultural education in the University's curriculum was influenced by division in the state over the establishment of the school. The "sectional bitterness" was along geographic lines, with citizens of western Virginia opposing the University "chiefly on the grounds that it unjustly took money from the support of free schools."⁴⁵⁷ The University began offering courses in March 1825 and in its earliest years the university had eight professorships: ancient languages, modern languages, mathematics, natural philosophy, natural history, anatomy and medicine, moral philosophy, and

⁴⁵⁶ *Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Begun and Held at the Capitol, In the City of Richmond, on Monday, the Seventh Day of December, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighteen, and of the Commonwealth the Forty-Third* (Richmond: Thomas Ritchie, 1819), 16.

⁴⁵⁷ Duncan Lyle Kinnear, "A History of Agricultural Education in Virginia with Special Emphasis on the Secondary School Level" (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1952), 112–3, ProQuest (AAT 0024538).

law. Responsibility for teaching the principles of agriculture fell to the professor of natural history who taught the subject as rural economy and was also responsible for teaching botany, zoology, mineralogy, chemistry, and geology.⁴⁵⁸

Established by the legislature in 1836, the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), Virginia's other institution of public higher education, was opened in 1839 and focused its curriculum on military training and engineering education.⁴⁵⁹ The act that established the institute did not prescribe a set curriculum for the school, but did state that the Board of Visitors "shall have power to appoint one or more professors qualified to give instruction in military science, and in other branches of knowledge, which the said managers may deem essential."⁴⁶⁰ In addition to the instruction that cadets received at the Institute in the engineering and science of war and in infantry tactics, they took courses in natural philosophy and chemistry, rhetoric and English literature, mathematics, French and Latin, and drawing.⁴⁶¹ In describing the purpose of the Institute, supporter John T. L. Preston suggested that "military education should not 'antagonize' the established system of classical education but should prepare students for 'the practical pursuits of life.'"⁴⁶² By establishing schools with different curricular emphases, Virginia established a complementary set of schools of higher education. But in a similar way to how the residents of the western part of Virginia felt bitterness at the founding of the University of

⁴⁵⁸ *Enactments by the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia for Constituting, Governing & Conducting That Institution* ([Charlottesville?]: University of Virginia, 1827), 16–7.

⁴⁵⁹ Peter Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech, Land Grant University, 1872–1997: History of a School, a State, a Nation*, 2nd ed. (Blacksburg: Virginia Tech Publishing, 2021), 22.

⁴⁶⁰ *Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, Passed at the Session Commencing 7th January, and Ending 10th April, 1839, in the Sixty-Third Year of the Commonwealth* (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, 1839), 18.

⁴⁶¹ *Register of the Officers and Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute*, Lexington, VA. ([Lexington]: R.H. Glass, 1843), 12.

⁴⁶² Rod Andrew Jr., *Long Gray Lines: The Southern Military School Tradition, 1839–1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 15.

Virginia, those affiliated with the University of Virginia were dismissive of the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) because of its focus on practical education.

Prior to the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862, the VMI offered training in both engineering and in agriculture. Johnson Miller wrote that the focus on engineering and allied subjects “provided remedial training for the generally ill-educated class of boys entering the school.”⁴⁶³ Though a formal course of study in agriculture was not yet established, agricultural education began at the school in 1852 when Chemistry Professor William Gilham became the State Agricultural Chemist, and a department of scientific agricultural chemistry was established.⁴⁶⁴ The School of Agriculture was established in 1859, at which point students could study in the Academic School, the Special School of Agriculture, or the Special School of Engineering. Courses in Special School of Agriculture included animal toxicology and veterinary practice, botany, chemistry, civil engineering, domestic economy of agriculture, drainage and irrigation, field fortification, geology, histology, history, human physiology, hygiene and dietetics, meteorology, mineralogy, moral philosophy, natural philosophy, political economy, practical agriculture, rural architecture and mechanical drawing, vegetable physiology, and zoology.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶³ Jonson Miller, “Citizen Soldiers and Professional Engineers: The Antebellum Engineering Culture of the Virginia Military Institute” (PhD diss., Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2008), 184, <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/handle/10919/29135>

⁴⁶⁴ Michael Mitchell Wallace, “Agricultural Education at the Virginia Military Institute During the 1850s: Forerunner of Practical Education in the South” (EdD diss., University of Alabama, 2018), 102–3. ProQuest (AAT 10816238)

⁴⁶⁵ *Register of the Officers and Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Va.* (Richmond: MacFarlane & Ferguson, 1860), 14.

Antebellum and Early Postbellum Politics and the Founding of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute

The politics of the early postbellum period in which Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute was founded had their start with the establishment of the Restored Government of Virginia in 1861. This government was comprised mainly of counties in the northern and western parts of Virginia whose representatives had voted against secession, was formed in June 1861 with Francis H. Pierpont as its governor and Wheeling as its capital.⁴⁶⁶ When West Virginia was admitted as the 35th state in 1863, the Restored Government relocated to Alexandria where it remained until 1865 when it again relocated, this time to Richmond. After the end of the Civil War, the United States government recognized the Restored Government of Virginia as the commonwealth's government and Pierpont as its governor. He remained in office until the state was put under military supervision in 1868.

In the time between his appointment as the governor of Virginia and the beginning of military reconstruction, Pierpont attempted to restore order in the commonwealth. In a surprising turn given his personal opposition to Virginia's secession from the Union, Pierpont chose not to deal harshly with former Confederates in the early postbellum years. According to Richard Lowe, Pierpont "believed that they had learned their lesson at Appomattox, that they would heed the counsels of the North, repudiate their old leaders, and deal fairly with the freedmen, and that they would do all of these things of their own free will."⁴⁶⁷ His approach sat poorly with the Virginia Republicans who had supported Pierpont as a leader of Virginia's Restored Government and saw his approach toward the secessionists as a betrayal of his wartime values. And his view

⁴⁶⁶ Richard Lowe, *Republicans and Reconstruction in Virginia, 1856–70* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 12.

⁴⁶⁷ Lowe, 31.

that former Confederates should have their voting rights restored resulted in former Confederates winning most offices in the statewide elections in summer 1865. A rift grew within the Republican party when Pierpont found himself at odds with one of the Virginia Republican party's founders, John C. Underwood, over Underwood's practices of confiscating of the property of former Confederates.⁴⁶⁸

Unionists who opposed Pierpont's policies also opposed the return of former Confederate Virginians to political power, and they knew that keeping secessionists out of office would require more votes than they had. It was this desire to stay in power, rather than a desire for equality motivated by their progressive racial views, that drove their support of enfranchisement for Black Virginians. In fact, even as they supported their right to vote, the Unionists did not see Black Virginians as their equals in politics. Rather, Unionists,

regarded the freedmen as a means to an end; their votes would enable good Union men to replace rebels in positions of power and lead the Old Dominion into the new age. In this view, only white Republicans had the education and experience to handle the reins of government; freedmen should recognize their deficiencies and follow the advance of their white allies.⁴⁶⁹

Despite the fracture within the Republican party and the views of the Unionists regarding newly enfranchised Black Virginians, the Republican party stayed in power in 1867 because of Black voters. Of the sixty-eight Republicans who won seats in the Virginia legislature, sixty were elected in majority Black voting districts, and twenty-four of them were Black legislators.

It was against this backdrop of increased political participation of Black Virginians on one hand, and a sense of those Black Virginians as inferior people on the other, that Hampton

⁴⁶⁸ Lowe, 35.

⁴⁶⁹ Lowe, 73.

Normal and Agricultural Institute was founded as a private school in 1868. Hampton's principal, Samuel Armstrong, believed that Black people should not have an equal role in Reconstruction politics as their White counterparts. According to James D. Anderson, Armstrong believed that "freedmen should refrain from participating in southern political life because they were culturally and morally deficient and therefore unfit to vote and hold office in 'civilized' society."⁴⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the segregated school system developed as part of the Constitutional Convention of 1868 was in need of teachers with 130,469 students enrolled in public schools in Virginia in 1872.⁴⁷¹ Hampton aimed to serve as a school for the education of Black teachers who could join in educating these students.

Hampton, founded as a religious college through an affiliation with the American Missionary Association, was incorporated through an act of the Virginia legislature. At the time of its incorporation, the legislature stated that the institute's purpose was "the instruction of youth in the various common school, academic and collegiate branches, the best methods of teaching the same, and the best mode of practical industry in its application to agriculture and the mechanic arts; and for the carrying out of these purposes, the said trustees may establish any department of schools in the said institution."⁴⁷² Through the use of the phrase "agriculture and the mechanic arts," the legislature set the groundwork for making the Institute a recipient of a portion of the proceeds from sale of the land scrip when the time came to allocate the funds. In the institute's first year of incorporation, 86 students were enrolled in the junior, middle, and senior classes. Each class studied in agriculture, history, housework, language arts, mathematics,

⁴⁷⁰ James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 38.

⁴⁷¹ "Virginia Schools," *The Southern Workman*, January 1872. American Antiquarian Society Historical Periodicals Series.

⁴⁷² *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, Passed at the Session of 1869-'70* (Richmond: James E. Goode, 1870), 165.

natural science, and penmanship.⁴⁷³ Education at Hampton included not only classroom instruction but also manual labor.

In describing this course of instruction, Armstrong suggested that “plainly a system is required which shall be at once constructive of mental and moral worth, and destructive of the vices characteristic of the slave. What are those vices? They are improvidence, low ideas of honor and morality, and a general lack of directive energy, judgement, and foresight.”⁴⁷⁴ He described the educational philosophy of Hampton, suggesting that “we are trying to solve the problem of an education best suited to the needs of the poorer classes of the South, by sending out to them teachers of moral strength as well as mental culture. To this end the most promising youth are selected.”⁴⁷⁵ For Armstrong, this type of education was a combination of industrial education, moral, and mental education. Its purpose was not solely to prepare Black students to teach in the Virginia public education. As Anderson noted,

Most important, however, Armstrong viewed industrial education primarily as an ideological force that would provide instruction suitable for adjusting blacks to a subordinate social role in the emergent New South. Significantly, he identified Hampton with the conservative wing of southern reconstructionists who supported new forms of external control over blacks, including disfranchisement, segregation, and civil inequality.⁴⁷⁶

Armstrong’s approach to education as well as his beliefs about the role of the Black Virginian in the Reconstructed South, may have been the reason why the Virginia legislature was interested

⁴⁷³ *Catalogue of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, Hampton, Va., for the Academical Year 1870-71* (Boston: Press of T.R. Marvin & Son, 1871), 13-4.

⁴⁷⁴ *Catalogue of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, 1870-71*, 19.

⁴⁷⁵ *Catalogue of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, 1870-71*, 20.

⁴⁷⁶ Anderson *Education of Blacks in the South*, 35.

in allocating proceeds from the sale of the land scrip to Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute when the time came to finally claim and allocate the funds.⁴⁷⁷

Allocation of the Land Grant Funds and the Establishment of VAMC

Discussion of how the proceeds from land scrip allocated to the commonwealth of Virginia should be distributed began before the commonwealth even received the scrip. In his message to the Virginia legislature in December 1865, Pierpont suggested that Virginia would benefit from having a polytechnic school and that the Virginia Military Institute would be an ideal location for such a school.⁴⁷⁸ In his message to the legislature for the following year, Pierpont again mentioned the land scrip funds but this time suggested that the College of William and Mary could be a beneficiary. He revisited his comments from the previous year, stating that the school who received the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip should be “a polytechnic school, teaching modern languages, mathematics, natural philosophy, geology, vegetable and mineral chemistry, and chairs of design, botany, and agriculture, with military tactics to complete the list.”⁴⁷⁹ Conversation about allocation of the proceeds from sale of the land scrip quieted between 1866 and 1870 as politics in Virginia drew the attention of the legislators away from higher education in the state.

⁴⁷⁷ Booker T. Washington, arguably Hampton’s most famous graduate, became the principal of Tuskegee Normal School for Colored Teachers in 1881. Washington brought Armstrong’s model of education coupled with mental and moral training to Tuskegee. This form of education for Black students became known as the Hampton-Tuskegee model. James D. Anderson writes in *Education of Blacks in the South* that “following Armstrong’s death in 1893, he [Washington] became the chief spokesman for the Hampton-Tuskegee idea. Washington fully embraced Armstrong’s philosophy of racial progress, which urged Afro-Americans to remain in the South and seek their fortune, primarily in common agriculture and domestic labor.” (p. 102). In the literature on the Hampton-Tuskegee model, Washington and W.E.B. DuBois have famously been pitted against each other with Washington championing the Hampton-Tuskegee model and DuBois championing education for the “talented tenth” of Black men who had the capacity to be leaders.

⁴⁷⁸ “Governor Pierpont’s Message,” *Daily Dispatch*, December 9, 1865. Chronicling America.

⁴⁷⁹ “Governor’s Message,” *Daily Dispatch*, December 5, 1866. Chronicling America.

In 1868, Henry Wells replaced Pierpont as part of the military occupation of Virginia during Reconstruction. Wells remained in power until 1869 when he was defeated in the gubernatorial race by fellow republican Gilbert Walker who became the last of the postbellum Republican governors in Virginia until Linwood Holton's election in 1969. Born in New York, Wells had moved to Virginia in 1864 to practice law in Norfolk. As he campaigned for governor, he was aware of his role as an outside and adopted son of Virginia. Whoever was to win the election needed the votes of newly enfranchised Black Virginians; an article in the *Shenandoah Herald* a few days before the election asked, "How will the colored man vote?" In describing Wells, the article noted "The negroes are blindsided by this carpetbag influence and will find in their day of need, they will be deserted and left to contend with a race that has always been victorious."⁴⁸⁰ The article went on to suggest that "Col. Walker is a *gentleman* of character and position. If elected, he will be the Governor of the whole State, and consult the interests of its citizens in his administration. The rights of the poorest freedman will be as zealously guarded and as religiously respected as those of the richest property-holder in the land."⁴⁸¹ Walker's commitment to supporting education, though of a segregated nature, drove his suggestion to appropriate at least some portion of the land scrip proceeds to an institution devoted to the education of Black Virginians.

As the deadline for accepting the land scrip drew near, the legislature had not come to any conclusions about which school, or schools, should receive proceeds from the sale of the land scrip. In February 1872, the legislature began the process of allocating the proceeds of the scrip by authorizing the Virginia Board of Education to accept and sell the land scrip. In addition to authorizing the sale of the scrip, the act stated that,

⁴⁸⁰ "How Will the Colored Man Vote," *The Shenandoah Herald*, July 1, 1869. Chronicling America.

⁴⁸¹ "How Will the Colored Man Vote."

with the proceeds of such sale the said board shall purchase bonds of the state of Virginia or of the United States, or of any other safe bonds or stocks, not bearing less than five per cent interest, and shall set the same apart, and constitute them into an education fund, for the endowment, support, and maintenance of one or more schools, in accordance with the act of congress...⁴⁸²

In his message at the beginning of the session, Governor Walker reminded the legislature of his remarks from his 1870 address where he advocated for Black Virginians to have access to education, albeit segregated education.

The land scrip sold by the state of Virginia represented 3,355 parcels of Indigenous land that totaled 299,115 acres of land, most of which was in the western United States.⁴⁸³ The largest parcel of land was 186 acres in modern day Jefferson County, Colorado, which was ceded by treaty with the Arapaho of Upper Arkansas and the Cheyenne of Upper Arkansas in February 1861 and for which the United States paid \$1.00.⁴⁸⁴ Governor Walker sold all of the scrip for \$0.95 cents per acre to a single buyer, Gleason F. Lewis.

In the course of the 1871–1872 session, the Virginia legislature considered various ways to allocate the proceeds of the sale of the land scrip before finally landing on a division of one-third of the proceeds going to an institution to educate Black students and two-thirds of the proceeds going to an institution to educate White students. The obvious choice for receiving the proceeds for the education of Black students was Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. The legislature had a much more difficult time deciding on how to appropriate the funds for the educating of White students. The biggest questions for legislators seemed to be whether a single

⁴⁸² *Acts and Joint Resolutions Passed By the General Assembly of the State of Virginia at its Session of 1871-'72* (Richmond: R.F. Walker, 1872), 48.

⁴⁸³ “Land Grab University.”

⁴⁸⁴ “Land Grab University.”

school should receive the funds or if it should be divided between multiple institutions, and whether a new state college for agriculture should be established for the purpose of teaching agriculture and mechanic arts. The Virginia Military Institute might have been an ideal institution to receive the proceeds of the land scrip given its commitment to practical education and its burgeoning agricultural and engineering programs. But there were those who opposed appending a college of agriculture and the mechanic arts onto an already existing college.

William T. Sutherlin, an industrialist and member of the House of Delegates of Virginia who opposed allocating the funds to an existing school for White students, wondered “could this law have been studied by those who advance the claims of institutions where agricultural science was only a secondary course or an optional branch of study and whose object it was to fit men for professional life and not to make them farmers of mechanics?”⁴⁸⁵ He went on to lay out a vision for a state college of agricultural and, according to news coverage at the time,

showed at length the great advantage which a purely agricultural college would be to the State in turning out annually a large number of thoroughly-educated, practical farmers; in improving the condition of our impoverished lands; in making farming what it is now—successful—and in the cultivation of an experimental farm for the benefit of the whole State.⁴⁸⁶

The discussion of how, and to whom, the proceeds of the sale of the land scrip should be allocated for the purpose of educating White students in Virginia continued until March of 1872 when the Virginia legislature passed an act allocating the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip.

⁴⁸⁵ “General Assembly of Virginia,” *Richmond Dispatch*, January 25, 1872. Chronicling America.

⁴⁸⁶ “General Assembly of Virginia.”

This legislation allocated one-third of the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip to Hampton and two-thirds of the proceeds to the Preston and Olin Institute, located in Blacksburg. Originally opened in 1853 as the Olin and Preston Institute, the school was established as a men's college affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church.⁴⁸⁷ In 1869, the Institute was renamed the Preston and Olin Institute, though it retained its relationship to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Institutional histories of VAMC suggest that the institute pursued the land-grant designation and proceeds from the sale of land scrip because of financial hardship. Clara B. Cox suggests that the institute's interest in the land-grant designation was not born of desperation or financial hardship, noting that in 1870, the institute enrolled 99 students and was meeting its financial obligations.⁴⁸⁸ Instead, Cox suggests that what drove Preston and Olin Institute's leaders to pursue the land-grant designation and associated land scrip funds was the prospect of the financial gain to the town that would be associated with bringing the college to Blacksburg.⁴⁸⁹

As part of receiving the proceeds, the Preston and Olin Institute changed its name to the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and the trustees were ordered to "transfer, by deed or other proper conveyance, the land, buildings, and other property of said institute, to the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College," effectively ending the Institute's relationship with the Methodist Episcopal Church.⁴⁹⁰ The act also described the curriculum that should be taught at VAMC, stating "the curriculum of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College shall embrace such branches of learning as relate to agriculture and the mechanic arts, without

⁴⁸⁷ Clara B. Cox, "The Early Years of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University: Part I," *The Smithfield Review*, 19 (2015): 61.

⁴⁸⁸ Clara B. Cox, "Olin and Preston Institute and Preston and Olin Institute: The Early Years of Virginia Polytechnic and State University: Part II," *The Smithfield Review*, 20 (2016): 10.

⁴⁸⁹ Cox, 16.

⁴⁹⁰ *Acts and Joint Resolutions Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Virginia at its Session of 1871-'72* (Richmond: R.F. Walker, 1872), 312.

excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics.”⁴⁹¹ The description in the commonwealth’s legislation of what the curriculum should be at the Virginia land-grant colleges was nearly identical to the description of land-grant college curriculum in the Morrill Act of 1862.

The Founding Organization and Curriculum of VAMC

The first meeting of VAMC’s Board of Trustees was held in March 1872, shortly after the act establishing the college was passed in the legislature. A primary task was taking possession of Preston and Olin Institute’s property, which they did at a second meeting later in the month. In July, the board members visited Blacksburg, where they toured the grounds of VAMC. At that meeting they established a plan of organization which would set the college on a course to open on October 1, 1872.⁴⁹² Three trustees—William H. Ruffner, William T. Sutherlin, and Joseph R. Anderson—formed a committee to establish the plan or organization. Ruffner was an ex officio member of the Board through his role as the Superintendent of Public Education in Virginia. Anderson and Sutherlin were appointed by Governor Walker to the Board for terms of three years and one year respectively.

In their plan of organization, Ruffner and his colleagues began by considering who the college should serve and how. Based on their reading of the federal and commonwealth legislation that founded and funded the college, the committee suggested that VAMC was meant to serve the industrial class. The authors defined the industrial class as “not the bankers, capitalists, merchants, or men belonging to the learned professions, but they are the men who handle tools, the men of the field, the mine, and the workshop.”⁴⁹³ While the focus on training

⁴⁹¹ *Acts and Joint Resolutions Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Virginia at its Session of 1871–’72*, 313.

⁴⁹² *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 3.

⁴⁹³ *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 22.

the industrial class did not preclude the teaching of the liberal arts, VAMC's Board of Visitors believed that the focus of all education at the college should be on its practical application. When considering how VAMC should serve students, the authors of the plan suggested that "the new college should trench as little as possible upon ground well occupied by institutions already existing in the State" and went on to state that "if our funds can be applied in providing forms of education different from any provided our existing institutions it would seem manifestly wise so to employ them."⁴⁹⁴ When thinking about the type of education that the college should be providing the industrial class of the state, the authors suggested that "the proper sphere for the proposed college is that of a middle grade agricultural and mechanical school—one which teaches chiefly results and practical methods, and only so much of mathematics and physical science as may be necessary to render results and methods fully intelligible."⁴⁹⁵ Those charged with overseeing VAMC wanted to develop a school whose curriculum served the White industrial class of Virginia, and offered a practical education that was unique among the other colleges and universities of the state.

The plan of organization also included an outline for the curriculum at VAMC. The authors of the plan envisioned a three-year course of study in which the first year would have a common curriculum, and the second and third years would have separate curricula for agriculture and the mechanic arts with some courses common to both. In their first year, all students would study commercial arithmetic, book keeping, algebra, English grammar and composition, geography, descriptive astronomy, penmanship, freehand drawing, French or German, farm or shop practice, and military tactics and lectures on physiology and hygiene.⁴⁹⁶ Subjects studied

⁴⁹⁴ *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 23.

⁴⁹⁵ *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 25.

⁴⁹⁶ *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 27.

across both curricula in the second and third years were business economy, ethics, French or German, government, history and literature, political economy, and psychology.⁴⁹⁷

The agricultural curriculum included courses in both the theory and practice of farming. In their second year, students studying agriculture would study agricultural architecture and machines, agricultural physics and mechanics, mensuration, and surveying and agricultural engineering. In their third year, students would take courses in agricultural botany and zoology; agricultural chemistry and geology; farm economics; and systems of farming, planting, gardening, dairying, fruit growing, and stock raising.⁴⁹⁸ Similarly, the mechanic arts curriculum included courses related to both theory and practice. In their second year, students studying mechanic arts would study descriptive geometry, and physics and mechanics. In their third year, students studying mechanic arts would study analytical geometry, building and building materials, drawing, industrial chemistry, machinery, mineralogy and metallurgy, and would receive lectures on the resources of Virginia.⁴⁹⁹

Finally, the plan addressed the topic of education in the area of military tactics. The committee suggested that many schools established with funds from the sale of land scrip had not given full attention to education in military tactics. The plan's authors suggested that, while the law exists, military tactics must be taught in some form. We do not understand that the term 'military tactics' covers the whole ground of military science and tactics, but has special references to field evolutions. Therefore an opportunity given to the students for military drill would satisfy the law. Some of the disciplinary regulations

⁴⁹⁷ *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 28.

⁴⁹⁸ *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 27-8.

⁴⁹⁹ *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 27-8.

might be usefully adopted, if it should be concluded to board all of the students on the college grounds.⁵⁰⁰

The plan of organization set the priorities for the college and offers insight into what the board saw as the role of VAMC within the commonwealth's public higher educational offerings. Emphasis was placed on advanced education for the industrial class in agriculture and mechanic arts, and education in military tactics had a limited place within the college.

The board supported the plan put forward by Ruffer, Sutherlin, and Anderson. But when VAMC opened in October 1872, the curriculum was not what had been proposed by the trio. Upon opening, VAMC had three departments: the Literary Department, the Scientific Department, and the Technical Department. The college offered a three-year curriculum, with the agricultural and mechanic arts students taking a common curriculum in their first two years with some courses common to both curricula in the final year. In those years, students studied algebra, arithmetic, chemistry, English grammar and composition, English literature, geometry, geography, French or German, Latin or Greek, natural history, physics, rhetoric, surveying, and trigonometry.⁵⁰¹ In the final year, students studying agriculture took additional courses in agriculture and students studying the mechanic arts took additional courses in mechanics and mechanical drawing. All students took courses in algebra, astronomy, bookkeeping, conic section, history, English literature, and moral philosophy.⁵⁰² The course bulletin for 1872–1873 devoted a single sentence to the study of military tactics. “Instruction in Military Tactics is given throughout the course, from which no student is exempt unless physically disabled; and each

⁵⁰⁰ *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 33.

⁵⁰¹ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Virginia Agricultural & Mechanical College, First Session, 1872–1873* (Richmond: Clemmitt & Jones, 1873), 15. The study of Latin and Greek were optional for students.

⁵⁰² *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Virginia Agricultural & Mechanical College, 1872–1873*, 15.

student not so exempt is required to provide himself with the prescribed uniform as soon as he enters the college.”⁵⁰³

The biggest difference between the curriculum designed by the Board of Visitors and what was offered at the college was the shift from technical education to a more literary and scientific focused curriculum. This change in focus was initiated by the Board of Visitors who, despite wanting the school to be technical in nature, saw the importance of balancing the technical and the theoretical. In a statement sent to Virginia newspapers in late July 1872, William Ruffner wrote that “the course of instruction, though aiming at practical results will not, as before intimated, exclude liberal studies. Practice is to be reached through science, and a degree of general culture will be imparted to the student, in order that greater practical skill may be obtained.”⁵⁰⁴ Though the board had initially been adamant that VAMC’s curriculum would not overlap with other schools in the commonwealth, the change in curricular focus reflected the idea that graduates would need more than just technical training in agriculture and mechanic arts to succeed in postbellum society.

The Minor Administration and VAMC’s Early Years

Under the direction of Charles Minor, VAMC began its first year with only 43 students enrolled but ended it with 132. Some of this increase can be attributed to the free scholarships offered by the college as a condition of its establishment. In his first annual report, Minor described VAMC’s student body, writing that “it was to be expected that our working youths would come to us, as they do, very ill-prepared for a college course. If the privilege of entering

⁵⁰³ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Virginia Agricultural & Mechanical College, 1872-1873*, 15–6.

⁵⁰⁴ “Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College,” *Daily State Journal*, July 27, 1872. *Chronicling America*.

were restricted to such as are properly prepared, the number who could come would be few indeed, and, moreover, would consist only of the sons of men of exceptional wealth.”⁵⁰⁵

In July 1873, Governor Walker gave the commencement address at the close of VAMC’s first academic year. In the address, he considered the role of agricultural and mechanic arts education in society. Walker suggested that there was time when a career in agriculture or the mechanic arts was left for “the poor, the ignorant, and the servile” as “agriculture and mechanics possessed no allurements for the energetic, the intelligent and the ambitious.”⁵⁰⁶ As the worth of those careers was made more apparent in the postbellum era, the demand for agricultural and mechanic arts education grew. Walker stated that,

Not only have those industries been raised to the position which their inherent worth entitles them to occupy, but another advanced step has been taken. The conviction has slowly but surely fastened itself upon the public mind that ignorance is as incompatible with success in these as in other pursuits, and that experience, education and special training are relatively as fundamental conditions of success to the mechanic and agriculturalist as to the lawyer and physician.⁵⁰⁷

Walker pointed to the promotion of agriculture and mechanic arts education as VAMC’s primary goal, saying that “he who shall have thoroughly mastered all will go forth to the great battle of life more serviceably panoplied than Achilles, more powerfully armed than Richard Coeur-de-Leon.”⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁵ *Report of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 4.

⁵⁰⁶ *Address of Gov. Gilbert C. Walker at the Commencement of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, July 9, 1873* (Richmond: Enquirer Book and Job Office, 1873), 3.

⁵⁰⁷ *Address of Gov. Gilbert C. Walker, July 9, 1873*, 4.

⁵⁰⁸ *Address of Gov. Gilbert C. Walker, July 9, 1873*, 5.

VAMC offered courses in military tactics in accordance with the provisions of the Morrill Act of 1862, and General James Henry Lane was hired to be the college's first Commandant of Cadets. Lane had graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1854 and served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War; he was appointed to VAMC at the rank of Colonel.⁵⁰⁹ Though the college's course catalogs offered brief description of military tactics education, VAMC developed a vibrant military culture. In its inaugural year, the College adopted a uniform made of plain gray cloth with black trim with accessories that differed depending on whether the student was a commissioned officer. Additionally, General Lane expected the students to follow an unwritten honor code. "In those early days the code was not expressed in writing but was more of an understanding than a system, but everyone understood his obligation as a gentleman."⁵¹⁰

Students developed camaraderie within their classes, beginning in their freshman years as they endured hazing at the hands of their older classmates. As students advanced at the college, they gained both more privileges and more authority. "The Class System grew into a dominant role in cadet life, and yet in terms of the outside world's concepts the Corps of Cadets went into its subsequent years as a classless society."⁵¹¹ Throughout the 1870s, the official training in military tactics existed alongside the development of a military culture at the college. From the time of VAMC's establishment, a difference of opinion existed among the faculty about how the college should approach disciplining students. One faction, represented by President Minor, believed in a more relaxed disciplinary structure. Minor viewed the training in

⁵⁰⁹ Commission for James Lane, 18 March 1874, James H. Lane Papers, 1874-1880, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Libraries.

⁵¹⁰ Harry Downing Temple, *The Bugle's Echo: A Chronicle of Cadet Life at the Military College at Blacksburg Virginia, the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute*, vol. 1, 1872–1900 ([Blacksburg?]: Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets Alumni, 1996), 32.

⁵¹¹ Temple, *The Bugle's Echo*, vol. 1, 64.

military tactics as a means for students to develop not only skills, but “good habits” like “the improvement in neatness, and the gain of a soldierly and graceful figure.”⁵¹² Regardless of whether a VAMC student intended to pursue a career in the military after graduation, studying military tactics was an important part of the maturation process for students at the college. The other view, espoused by General Lane, believed that the college should have a stricter disciplinary structure more closely in line with a military college. Though VAMC was not established as a military college, according to Harry Dowling Temple, Lane “took seriously the responsibility thrust upon him by law to carry out the College’s secondary requirement for excellence in military training,” and saw strong discipline as an important part of achieving that goal.⁵¹³ The relationship between the two men deteriorated, and a faculty meeting in March 1878, they came to blows in a fist fight.

Minor remained in the role of VAMC’s president until 1879. Throughout the first decade of the college’s existence, its faculty and administrators focused on supporting the educational needs of young men in Virginia’s industrial class who aspired to be farmers and mechanics. The new college, meant for the education of the industrial class, grew quickly. By the 1875–1876 academic year, 245 students had enrolled—nearly double the number enrolled in the college’s inaugural year. In its report to the General Assembly for the 1877–1878 academic year, the Executive Committee of the Board of Visitors reported that “if the graduate is not encouraged by his diploma to enter into competition with the graduates of the best colleges in the learned professions, he finds himself equipped to be a very formidable competitor with practical farmers or mechanics who lack his special training.”⁵¹⁴ A drop in enrollment at the college took its

⁵¹² *Report of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 3.

⁵¹³ Temple, *The Bugle’s Echo*, vol. 1, 136.

⁵¹⁴ *Report of the Executive Committee for the Board of Visitors of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Virginia, for the Year Ending August 14, 1878* (Richmond: P. Keenan’s Steam Book and Job Presses, 1878), 8.

student body down to only 50 students by 1879, and those in charge of running the school grew concerned about the prospects for its future. Political turmoil in the commonwealth did little to allay those concerns, and the 1880s became a challenging decade for the college.

The Readjuster Government and the Reshaping of VAMC

At the time when those in charge of VAMC were worrying about its future, the Virginia Conservative Party suffered a fissure that resulted in the development of two factions: the Funders and the Readjusters. At issue was debt accrued prior to the Civil War which was used to improve roads, railroads, and canals in the commonwealth. In order to fund these improvements, the commonwealth government issued bonds which paid 6% interest and would mature in 34 years. At the time of the Civil War, the commonwealth's debt was nearly \$35 million. Most of the improvements paid for by the bonds were destroyed during the war, and the debt rose to \$45 million because the commonwealth paid no interest on the bonds during the war. In 1871, the Conservative legislature passed the Funding Act of 1871 which authorized the state to issue new bonds to replace the old ones, but at 2/3 of their value. In order to keep from having to exchange all of the old bonds for news ones, the commonwealth made coupons that would be receivable for taxes, but in doing so they reduced tax revenue and were forced to lower the interest on the bonds to 4%.

Funders believed that Virginia should pay the entire amount of its debt, including interest, in order to remain in good standing with creditors. Jane Dailey writes that, "the majority of funders were professional white men in cities and towns; the faction (and later, the party) was dominated by doctors, lawyers, newspaper editors, businessmen, and merchants: men who professed to hold the sanctity of contract as a tenet of faith."⁵¹⁵ By contrast, the Readjusters were

⁵¹⁵ Jane Dailey, *Before Jim Crow: The Politics of Race in Postemancipation Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 31.

largely made up of “urban black and immigrant white workingmen, black agricultural workers and farmers in the heavily black eastern counties, and western white landowners.”⁵¹⁶ The Readjusters supported a reduction of Virginia’s prewar debt but argued that relief from higher taxes and support for the newly established public school system were more important than the credit-worthiness of the commonwealth. In addition to supporting a readjustment of the commonwealth’s debt, the Readjuster platform included a repeal of the poll tax and an increase in support for public schools and other public works. In adopting such a platform, Readjusters appealed to their faction of Conservatives, Democrats, and some Black and White Republicans.

In 1878, the Readjusters won a legislative majority by focusing on the debt and the damage that the commonwealth’s financial troubles had caused to the public school system. Upon taking control of the legislature in 1879, the newly elected Readjuster Senate introduced a bill to dismiss VAMC’s entire board of visitors.⁵¹⁷ Because the board was appointed by the governor, at the time a Funder, there was great interest on the part of the Senate in replacing it with one more sympathetic to the Readjuster cause, but the bill had little support outside of those in the Senate who championed it. The legislation did not advance, and the desired reorganization did not come to pass, at least in part because the governor, Frederick W.M. Holliday, did not support the move to replace the board he appointed and would also have had the power to appoint a board to replace the one that had been dismissed.⁵¹⁸

In the Summer of 1879, the board of visitors met, having recently avoided being replaced. Amid the political swirl and the personal animosity between Minor and Lane, the board

⁵¹⁶ Dailey, 32.

⁵¹⁷ John Perry Cochran, “The Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College: The Formative Half Century, 1872–1919, of Virginia Polytechnic Institute” (PhD diss., University of Alabama, 1961), 107. ProQuest (AAT 6104234)

⁵¹⁸ In the 1878 session, the legislature also took up legislation related to the debt. It revisited the issue of paying taxes with bond coupons, requiring that people pay 70% of their taxes with money. It also issued new bonds to replace the ones issued in 1871 which matured in 40 years, paid a variable rate of interest over time, and could be receivable for taxes.

decided to act swiftly to bring strict discipline to VAMC. In doing so, the board sided with Lane and with the faculty who preferred that the college be run like a military academy. The board issued a resolution that included the opinion that, “strict military discipline is best suited to the management of students of the age and number likely to attend said College, it is ordered that rigid military discipline be established and enforced in its management.”⁵¹⁹ The resolution directed that students would be required to live on campus, that a board-appointed superintendent would oversee the college, and that a committee comprised of board members would be appointed to consider a reorganization of the college, presenting its findings when the board reassembled in November 1879.⁵²⁰ All of these actions signaled to the Senate that the politically appointed board took seriously its role, regardless of who was in control of the commonwealth’s government.

The decision made by the board of visitors to institute a policy of strict military discipline was not universally accepted among the people of the commonwealth. Those who opposed the change did so on the grounds that VMI, not VAMC, was the commonwealth’s military college. If a culture of strict military discipline was an important component of the land-grant college mission as understood by VAMC, they argued, the legislature should have given the proceeds from the sale of land scrip to VMI instead of funding a second military college. According to an article in the *Richmond Dispatch*,

If the Visitors really believe that the true interests of education, as represented in the school at Blacksburg, require a complete military organization, and really desire the income at their disposal to be economically disposed in this behalf, let them recommend

⁵¹⁹ “Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical School,” *Richmond Dispatch*, August 26, 1879. Chronicling America.

⁵²⁰ “The Agricultural and Mechanical College at Blacksburg,” *Southern Planter and Farmer*, September 1879. Proquest American Periodicals Series.

to the Legislature its totally dissolution there and reestablishment in connecting with the Institute at Lexington. The people cannot afford, and will not sanction, the extravagance of having two military schools under State auspices.⁵²¹

Despite those who disagreed, the board did not change course. The instruction that students received in military tactics remained unchanged, and living conditions at the college were reshaped to resemble those of a military college. Students woke for the day at 6:30am, marched to their classes and back, and were only allowed to leave campus at certain times of day. Further, students had to be in the dorms from 7 p.m.–9 p.m. each evening for a mandated study period, and the day ended at 10 p.m.⁵²² These changes were meant to improve student conduct through stricter discipline, giving students better habits and developing student character.

When the board reconvened in the fall, it did not entertain a reorganization of the college. It made a change in leadership, though, relieving Minor of his duties in December 1879. John Lee Buchanan replaced Minor in February, becoming the second president of the college. Buchannan came to VAMC after serving a single year as president of Vanderbilt University, and his initial appointment at VAMC would be even shorter. In March of 1880, the Virginia legislature resolved that “the offices and members of the present Board of Visitors of the Virginia Agricultural and at Blacksburg, shall be vacated on the 4th day of June, 1880.”⁵²³ As part of the resolution, the legislature directed a newly installed board to replace the faculty of the college by the start of the 1880–1881 academic year. Buchanan was included in this directive and was replace by the board with an interim president who served for the 1880–1881 academic year. This time, the resolution to remove the board had greater public support, and the members

⁵²¹ “Proposed Changes in the State Agricultural College,” *Richmond Dispatch*, September 12, 1879. Chronicling America.

⁵²² Temple, *The Bugle's Echo*, vol. 1, 150.

⁵²³ “Legislature,” *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser*, March 4, 1880. Chronicling America.

board resolved on June 7, 1880 to “vacate all of the offices of the college at the close of the current term.”⁵²⁴

In their annual report to the Virginia legislature, the outgoing Executive Committee of the Board of Visitors reflected on the board’s decision to vacate their seats. The committee reported that it had resolved to vacate their seats and remove the faculty in accordance with the directive from the legislature, and stated that,

It was impossible to mistake either the opinion or the purpose of the Assembly in this legislation. It was obvious that in the judgement of the representatives of the people the college had failed to answer the expectation of its friends and of the public, and that the way to amendment lay through some radical changes in management.⁵²⁵

Board members were under no obligation to vacate their seats, as the governor had not removed them. But the resolution from the legislature convinced them that they had fallen short of their obligations. In its final report, the outgoing board assigned blame to the college’s students for some its problems, suggesting that the students arrived at the college without the education required to succeed. As a result, “it [VAMC] must be burdened with an amount of elementary work ordinarily finished in public schools of a very moderate grade.”⁵²⁶

Holliday, the Funder governor, appointed a new board which proposed a reorganization of the faculty to include a president who would also teach mental and moral philosophy; a professor of English who would manage the Preparatory Department and who would also be qualified to teach Latin and French; a professor of chemistry, natural history, and agriculture; a professor of mathematics and natural philosophy, and a professor of mechanics and drawing who

⁵²⁴ *Report of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Virginia, for the Year Ending June 12, 1880* (Richmond: R.F. Walker, 1880), 5.

⁵²⁵ *Report of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Virginia, 1880*, 5.

⁵²⁶ *Report of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Virginia, 1880*, 5.

would run the workshop and would also be the Superintendent of Grounds and Buildings. Additionally, the faculty would also include an instructor for the Preparatory Department, a manager of the farm, and a treasurer.⁵²⁷ The reorganization, which diminished the role of military tactics, resulted in the resignation of Colonel Lane.

The first step in implementing this proposed reorganization was to reinstate Buchanan as president. He oversaw a college made up of four departments: agricultural, mechanical, literary and scientific, and business. Even with the addition of the literary and scientific department and the business department, VAMC only offered degrees in agriculture and mechanics. Though it did not offer degrees, the newly created business department was touted as offering students the option of taking business courses in their junior and intermediate years to support what they were learning in the agriculture and mechanics programs. The 1881–1882 course catalog suggested that the business classes would be useful for “those students who wish to fit themselves for mercantile pursuits.”⁵²⁸ Courses were in offered in business forms, commercial arithmetic, elements of mercantile law, penmanship, political economy, and single-entry and double-entry bookkeeping.⁵²⁹ The establishment of the Business Department advanced the college’s mission of practical knowledge for the industrial class. Having knowledge of business practices would be useful to graduates, whether they pursued a career on the farm or in the machine shop.

After a calm start to the 1881–1882 academic year, VAMC was shaken up again as William E. Cameron took his place as the Readjuster Governor of Virginia. With Cameron’s ascendancy in 1882, Readjusters held both the legislature and the Governorship. Once again, VAMC faced reorganization, this time at the hands of the Readjuster government. The first

⁵²⁷ *Report of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Virginia, 1880*, 6.

⁵²⁸ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agriculture and Mechanical College, Blacksburg, Montgomery Country, Session 1881–2* (Wytheville: D.A. St. Clair, 1882), 11.

⁵²⁹ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agriculture and Mechanical College, 1881–2*, 11.

change to the college was the removal of the board appointed by Holliday and the installation of a board appointed by Cameron, which would be even more sympathetic to the Readjuster cause. The second change at the college was the appointment of Thomas N. Conrad as the college's third president. Appointed to VAMC in 1882, Conrad was returning to the campus in Blacksburg having previously served as the president of Preston and Olin Institute. In December 1882, Conrad submitted his first annual report on the college. The report described the changes made to the college after the installation of Cameron's board. Conrad described the "deplorable" conditions they had found upon their arrival at the college.

The workshop, the practical part of the Mechanical Department was closed, and its costly engine had slept the sleep of months. The farm, the practical part of the Agricultural Department, was without proper organization and had been for years. The Military, one of the most attractive and useful features of the College, had been shoved into a corner and paralyzed.⁵³⁰

In the report, the board described another reorganization of the college, which left no aspect of the school unchanged. Among the changes was that the Academic Department had begun granting A.B. degrees to students who completed the literary and scientific course.

The inadequacy of education in military tactics was particularly concerning to the board. Throughout the college's history, the Military Department had been the source of conflict as presidents and boards of visitors attempted to find the right balance between military training and culture on one hand and academic studies on the other. In their report, the board suggested that it had "given it [military training and culture] that prominence its importance required" and noted that "a distinguished graduate of the Virginia Military Institute has been made commandant of

⁵³⁰ *Report of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Virginia for the Year Ending July 11, 1882* (Richmond: R.W. Walker, 1882), 5.

Cadets, and Professor of Tactics, thus meeting the requirements of the Federal Law in the fullest sense.”⁵³¹ That distinguished graduate was William Ballard Preston, who had graduated with distinction from V.M.I. in 1879. Preston immediately set to work on rebuilding the military culture at the College. Temple noted that “military regulations and schedules gradually were expanded. Cadet officers were given added responsibilities in the government of daily life, both in and out of the barracks and mess halls. Drill instruction was intensified, and classes in military science and tactics were strengthened.”⁵³² As a result “the Cadet Battalion of two companies soon developed into a well-disciplined and smartly trained unit, and cadet morale and esprit de corps took a conspicuous turn for the better.”⁵³³

The description of the Military Department in the course catalog was a good signal of how important military training and culture was to VAMC at any point in time. After the reorganization described in the 1882 report, the course catalog for the 1882–1883 academic year offered the most detailed description of the Military Department of any course catalog in VAMC’s short history.

The course of instruction pursued will consist of the practical duties of the soldier as exemplified on the field, by the schools of the soldiers, Company and Battalion, Skirmish Drill, Guard-mounting, duties of the sentinel and the daily routine of Garrison life supplemented by such courses of class-room work in the department of Military Science as shall be deemed necessary or advisable.⁵³⁴

⁵³¹ *Report of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Virginia for the Year Ending July 11, 1882*, 8.

⁵³² Temple, *The Bugle’s Echo*, vol. 1, 172.

⁵³³ Temple, 172.

⁵³⁴ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, Blacksburg, Montgomery County, Session 1882–83* (Wytheville: D.A. St. Clair, 1883), 15–6.

After years of fighting within the faculty and administration of the college—including actual physical altercations—military training and culture finally took its permanent place alongside agricultural and mechanic arts education as a core feature of the school.

In the 1883–1884 session, VAMC expanded yet again to include courses in engineering. Under this new organizational structure, a student would choose to study either agriculture or mechanics in their senior (third) year and then add a fourth year of study to obtain either a bachelor of arts, a degree in civil engineering, or a degree in mining engineering. Students could also study business, as they could under the previous organizational structure. Students obtaining a bachelor of arts degree took courses in astronomy; calculus; constitutional history; English language, literature, and criticism; French; German; Latin; and solid geometry,

Students obtaining the degree in civil engineering would take courses in assaying, bridges, calculus, civil engineering, determinative mineralogy, drawing, metallurgy, mining, roads and railroads, and solid geometry.⁵³⁵ Students obtaining the degree in mining engineering took courses in analytical chemistry, assaying, calculus, chemistry, determinative mineralogy, drawing, metallurgy, mining, and solid geometry.⁵³⁶ In order to accommodate these changes to the curriculum, the Mechanics and Metallurgy Department was reorganized into two departments: a Physics and Mechanics Department and a Chemistry and Metallurgy Department. This continued expansion of degrees, and its focus on the theoretical rather than the practical, represented drift in the original mission of the college of practical education for the industrial class.

⁵³⁵ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, Blacksburg, Montgomery County, Session 1883–84* (Wytheville: D.A. St. Clair, 1884), 15.

⁵³⁶ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1883–84*, 15.

The Return of the Democrats and the Presidency of Lunsford Lomax

In 1882, the commonwealth government again passed legislation related to its debt. The Riddleberg Act of 1882 reset the commonwealth's public debt from over \$45 million to \$21 million. It also replaced state bonds yet again, with bonds that would pay 3% interest, mature in 50 years, and could not be used to pay taxes. Funders, unhappy with how the Readjusters had managed the public debt, joined with the Conservatives to form a new Democratic party in the state. Yet rather than focusing on issues related to the debt and to the public schooling system, the Democrats focused on issues of race and on the rights that Black Virginians had accrued during Reconstruction. In 1883, the Democrats won both houses of the legislature, creating a divided government in the state. They soon passed a resolution to replace VAMC's Board of Visitors but William E. Cameron, the Readjuster governor, was not compelled by law to act upon the resolution, so he did not.

In November 1885, Fitzhugh Lee was elected as the first Democratic governor of Virginia in the postbellum era and at that point the Readjuster era was complete. Upon taking office, he immediately appointed four new members to VAMC's Board of Visitors. One new member, Colonel John D. H. Ross, was active in the State Agricultural Society. Another, General W. H. F. Lee, was the Governor's cousin and a member of the State Agricultural Society. A third, Charles E. Vawter, was President of the Miller Manual Society.⁵³⁷ When the Board of Visitors reconvened in March 1886, they elected Lunsford Lomax as the fourth president of VAMC. Though Lomax had no experience in higher education, he did have a connection to the governor. Lomax graduated from West Point, where he was classmates with Fitzhugh Lee.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁷ "Blacksburg College," *Richmond Dispatch*, January 3, 1886. Chronicling America.

⁵³⁸ "Gleaned from the Mails," *Staunton Vindicator*, April 2, 1886. Chronicling America.

In March 1886, the Virginia legislature responded to the federal conversation about supporting agricultural experiment stations at land-grant colleges by passing legislation to establish one in the state. “Be it enacted by the general assembly of Virginia that an agricultural experiment station be and is hereby established at the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College at Blacksburg, the same to be maintained by appropriations made by the congress of the United States.”⁵³⁹ This call to run the experiment station served as a reminder to the VAMC’s Board of Trustees of the college’s mission to provide agricultural education at a time when it seemed more interested in putting resources into developing engineering education. In August 1886, the Executive Committee of the State Agricultural Society passed a resolution related to the advancement of agricultural interests in the state. The resolution largely addressed the establishment of a State Board of Agriculture, and in it there was a provision for the establishment of three agricultural experiment stations in the state, “one of the stations shall be at or near the College at Blacksburg, one at or near the University of Virginia, and the third near Hampton Normal School.”⁵⁴⁰ Despite the interest in an agricultural experiment station on the part of the Virginia legislature and the State Agricultural Society, the agricultural experiment station was not established at VAMC until 1888.

The 1886–1887 academic year brought revisions to the curriculum that kept VAMC on its trajectory from a college created for the practical education of the industrial class in agriculture and the mechanic arts to a college of technology for the advancement of science. The courses in agriculture, mechanics, and business remained. The degree in mining engineering was eliminated, though the degree in civil engineering remained. The biggest change to the

⁵³⁹ *Acts and Joint Resolutions Passed at the General Assembly of the State of Virginia During the Session of 1885–86* (Richmond: A.R. Micou, 1886), 354.

⁵⁴⁰ “A Bill to Advance the Agricultural Interests of Virginia,” *Staunton Spectator*, September 15, 1886. *Chronicling America*.

curriculum was that the bachelor of arts, created just a few years prior, was terminated and a new bachelor of science was offered. The course catalog for 1886–1887 stated that the general course, resulting in the bachelor of science, “is arranged to give a general and less technical education in subjects of science and language, to meet the wants of those students who have selected no definite vocation in life, as well as those who propose ultimately to engage in teaching or in some commercial or manufacturing enterprise.”⁵⁴¹ Students studying for the bachelor of science degree studied some of the same courses as those who had previously studied for the bachelor of arts, including calculus, English, and Latin. Students studying for the bachelor of science would also study analytical chemistry, analytical geometry, biology, electricity, general chemistry, geology, heat, industrial chemistry, magnetism, mineralogy, natural history, and surveying. This curricular change moved the college away from a more generalized literary curriculum to a more generalized scientific one.

In his report to the Virginia Board of Education for 1886–1887, Lomax described his understanding of the purpose of VAMC as directed by the legislation that founded the college, stating that “the leading object of the College, in conformity with an act of Congress and acts of the State Legislature, is to teach the principles of and the application of science.”⁵⁴² He went on to suggest that the purpose of the course of study was “to give prominence to the sciences and their applications, especially those that relate to agriculture and the mechanic arts, so far as the facilities at its disposal will permit; and, at the same time, the discipline obtained by the study of

⁵⁴¹ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1886–87* (Lynchburg: J.P. Bell & Co., 1887), 15.

⁵⁴² *Report of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College to the Board of Education of the State of Virginia* ([Richmond?]: [n.p.], [1887?]), 87.

languages and other studies is not to be neglected.”⁵⁴³ Lomax’s representation of the purpose of the college aligned with its changing trajectory.

This articulation of the college’s mission as the teaching of both the principles of science and their application was included in the report of VAMC’s Agricultural Department for 1886–1887. The report’s author discussed the unique role that theory and practice each played in educating students.

Agriculture separates into two branches—Scientific and Practical. The latter, or the art of agriculture, consists in putting into operation the process by means of which plants and domestic animals are developed to the greatest degree of perfection. The science governs the facts and determines the laws whose application by the farmer is practical agriculture. The science informs us how crops grow, and how crops feed; how the forces and the materials of nature can be utilized to secure the best results in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, in order to conduce to welfare of the human race.⁵⁴⁴

By emphasizing the equal treatment of theory and practice, the college deviated from what its original Board of Trustees saw as its mission. In 1872, Ruffner and his colleagues had described VAMC as a college “which teaches chiefly results and practical methods, and only so much of mathematics and physical science as may be necessary to render results and methods fully intelligible.”⁵⁴⁵ This move from a more applied curriculum to a more theoretical one had begun with the bachelor of arts degree, which had been awarded to students who completed the literary and scientific curriculum. It continued with the bachelor of science degree, which shifted the

⁵⁴³ *Report of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College to the Board of Education of the State of Virginia*, 87.

⁵⁴⁴ *Report of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College to the Board of Education of the State of Virginia*, 92.

⁵⁴⁵ *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College: Its History and Organization*, 25.

curriculum from a more generalized literary curriculum to a more generalized scientific one. While some drift in mission might to be expected over time, the equal treatment of theory and practice represented a fundamental shift in the mission of the college.

Two developments within the federal government impacted VAMC at the close of the 1880s and the beginning of the 1890s. In 1889, the War Department fortified its relationships with land-grant colleges in an attempt to provide consistent training in military tactics across the institutions. “Efforts were initiated to obtain full faculty status for professors of military science and tactics, to require uniforms to be worn at all times by military students, and to make standard the mandatory feature of military training. VAMC met all of these requirements fully and was held by the Army as a model for other land-grant colleges to emulate.”⁵⁴⁶ By the 1889–1890 academic year, the college had 7 officers, 20 non-commissioned officers, and 112 privates in the Corps of Cadets.⁵⁴⁷

The second development was the passage of the Morrill Act of 1890. In February 1894, the Virginia legislature enacted legislation to accept the funds allocated to the commonwealth as a provision of the act. As with the proceeds from the sale of land scrip given to states as part of the Morrill Act of 1862, the appropriations in Virginia were split between VAMC and Hampton Normal and Industrial Institute with two-thirds going to VAMC and one-third going to Hampton.⁵⁴⁸ In enacting this legislation, the legislature decreed that this division of funds between the two schools was “equitable and just.”⁵⁴⁹ Between the \$15,000 annual appropriation

⁵⁴⁶ Temple, *The Bugle's Echo*, vol. 1, 253.

⁵⁴⁷ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1889–'90* (Lynchburg: J.P. Bell Company, 1890), 27.

⁵⁴⁸ “Agricultural Work,” *The Plain Dealer*, April 17, 1891. America's Historical Newspapers.

⁵⁴⁹ *Acts and Joint Resolutions Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, During the Session of 1893–'94* (Richmond: J.H. O'Bannon, 1894), 409.

for the experiment station and the appropriation from the Morrill Act of 1890, VAMC received a significant financial windfall.⁵⁵⁰

After a challenging start to the 1880s, under Lomax's leadership VAMC was able to reorganize itself to an extent that the legislature of the commonwealth found acceptable for a few years. But Lomax's political acumen did not outweigh his lack of experience in the administration of education as Virginians grew increasingly dissatisfied with the college. Rural groups like the Farmers' Alliance attacked VAMC for its mismanagement of the experiment station and "for not accomplishing immediate results having immediate application for the 'practical farmers' of the state."⁵⁵¹ Dissatisfaction with VAMC intensified, and calls for the removal of the college from Blacksburg grew louder with *The Roanoke Times* suggesting "now that the State Mechanical and Agricultural College at Blacksburg is to be removed Roanoke should step forward and secure the prize."⁵⁵² Despite these calls, the legislature did not move to remove the college or its associated land scrip funds from Blacksburg. Still, the VMAC Board of visitors recognized the need for change. In early 1891, the board determined that the college was not adequately meeting its educational obligations to the state. "The Board decided that the primary objective of the institution was not to furnish a cheap, low-grade college education to students who could afford no other, but that the mission of the institution was much greater than that being achieved under existing conditions."⁵⁵³ Sensing that it needed to win support from

⁵⁵⁰ In addition to the financial support it received from the Virginia government from funds from the 1862 and 1890 Morrill Acts, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute received significant financial support from white philanthropists during the 1890s and 1900s. After Armstrong's death, white philanthropists became institute trustees, such as George Foster Peabody, who played a significant role in the development of UGA's College of Agriculture. The institute's name changed in 1930 to Hampton Institute and to Hampton University in 1984. For more on Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, see Troy A. Smith's "Not Just the Raising of Money: Hampton Institute and Relationship Fundraising, 1893-1917."

⁵⁵¹ Duncan Lyle Kinnear, *The First 100 Years: A History of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University* (Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute Educational Foundation, 1972), 132.

⁵⁵² "Roanoke is the Place," *Roanoke Times*, April 28, 1891. Chronicling America.

⁵⁵³ Cochran, *The Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 156.

members of the commonwealth, the board replaced Lomax with John McLaren McBryde in April 1891.

President McBryde and the Establishment of Virginia Polytechnic Institute

Unlike his predecessor, President McBryde came to the presidency of VAMC with a background in educational administration. He was educated at the University of Virginia, and after the Civil War he studied agricultural chemistry. In 1879, McBryde was appointed as a professor of agriculture and botany at the University of Tennessee.⁵⁵⁴ McBryde moved to the South Carolina College in 1882 to take a job as department chair and ascended to the presidency in 1883, where he remained until assuming the VAMC presidency in 1891.⁵⁵⁵

Upon his arrival at VAMC, McBryde set upon the task of drafting a plan of reorganization for the college, which he presented to the Board of Visitors in July 1891. In the preamble to his plan, McBryde wrote,

A careful examination of the wording of the two acts, and a study of the educational conditions prevailing at the time of their passage, will force the conclusion that it was clearly the intention of Congress to establish and endow schools in which agriculture and mechanics should hold the leading positions, and that the classics, literature and the sciences, without immediate bearing upon these two branches, should, if allowed at all, be held strictly subordinate and secondary. But the framers of the act held rightly that the sciences underlying them—mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, mineralogy and geology—should be given prominent places in the curricula of the new colleges. In other

⁵⁵⁴ Lyon G. Tyler, *Men of Mark in Virginia: Ideals of American Life: A Collection of Biographies of Leading Men in the State*, vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Men of Mark Publishing Company, 1907), 228.

⁵⁵⁵ Tyler, *Men of Mark in Virginia*, vol. 3, 231. University of South Carolina had several name changes over time, including South Carolina College and South Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanics. The school was called South Carolina College at the time of McBryde's appointment.

words, they intended that the training should be scientific and professional as well as practical.⁵⁵⁶

Under Lomax in the 1880s, VAMC had begun to move away from its identity as a college for the practical education of the industrial class and, here, McBryde emphasized that the shift in identity would only continue. And the board's belief that the college was meant to provide a more meaningful educational experience guided McBryde's work in reorganizing the college.

McBryde proposed a reorganization of VAMC which centered the college's efforts on the teaching of science. Under his plan, the College would offer a bachelor of science degree with concentrations in either agriculture or mechanics. The concentration in agriculture would allow for further specialization in agriculture, horticulture, and applied chemistry and the concentration in mechanics would allow for specialization in civil engineering, mechanical engineering, mining engineering, and electrical engineering. Both concentrations would include courses in subjects such as English, modern languages, and political economy. In addition to the bachelor of science degree, VAMC would offer short courses in agriculture and in mechanics that "should be made very special and technical, so as speedily to give young men special training for industrial life in order to avoid interference with the degree courses."⁵⁵⁷ This reorganization eliminated the general course of study and folded the remaining business courses into the general curriculum.

VAMC's Board of Visitors supported McBryde's plan of reorganization, which was implemented in the 1891–1892 academic year. The agricultural and mechanical courses of study, which set students on separate tracks in their first year, had several courses in common:

⁵⁵⁶ *Report of President McBryde on Organization, Scope of Work, Courses of Study, &c.*, 1891 ([Blacksburg?]: [n.p.], [1891?]), 2. Reprinted from *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1889–90—1890–1891* (Richmond: J.H. O'Bannon, 1891). Citations refer to reprint.

⁵⁵⁷ *Report of President McBryde on Organization, Scope of Work, Courses of Study, &c.*, 1891, 4.

mathematics, surveying, book-keeping, English, modern languages, general and constitutional history, mental and moral science, political economy, general and analytical chemistry, physics, botany, physiology, shop and field work, and military tactics.⁵⁵⁸ In their first year, students studying in the two-year courses for certificates in agriculture took the same courses as those enrolled in the four-year courses. In their second year, students in the special certificate program for practical agriculture studied agriculture, ethics, inorganic chemistry, farm work, military science and tactics, political economy, structural and systematic botany, and veterinary science.⁵⁵⁹ In their second year, students in the in the special program for practical mechanics studied elementary mechanics, mechanical drawing and technology, military science and tactics, and they also engaged in shop work.⁵⁶⁰ The 1891–1892 academic year also marked the beginning of graduate education at VAMC. The college offered a master of science degree but had very loose requirements for the completion of the program. “Required, in addition to the degree of bachelor of science for the completion of any one of the undergraduate courses, at least one year’s resident study, with proficiency in a graduate course of not less than three studies.”⁵⁶¹ These changes, taken together, bifurcated the college. Students could study to obtain a practical education in agriculture and the mechanic arts through the special certificate course. But those who preferred a more scientifically focused curriculum could study in the four-year course.

The changes proposed by McBryde and approved by the board represented the first time that a reorganization of the college was designed by the president and the faculty of VAMC and not its Board of Visitors. Because the governor was given the responsibility of appointing

⁵⁵⁸ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891–’92* (Richmond: Everett Waddey Co., 1892), 14-15.

⁵⁵⁹ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891–’92*, 17-18.

⁵⁶⁰ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891–’92*, 18.

⁵⁶¹ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891–’92*, 64.

members of the board, appointees were often personal or political allies of the governor, and many had no relationship with the College. In March 1892, the Virginia legislature approved an act which changed who could serve as part of the VAMC Board of Visitors. “The governor, by and with the advance and consent of the senate, shall appoint eight persons from farmers, mechanics, and graduates of said college as visitors of said college, selecting, if practicable, two from each of the four grant divisions of the state.”⁵⁶² This provision did not prevent a governor from appointing friends or those to whom he owed political favors. But it also put into a position of decision-making power those with experience in agriculture and the mechanic arts at a time when the college was emphasizing scientific education as much as, or more than, practical education.

The military aspects of the college continued to evolve, as well. The catalog for the 1891–1892 academic year also devoted several pages to description of the training in military tactics and military science. Students at VAMC were given theoretical instruction, guard duty, visual signaling, and military science and drills were held four days per week. In addition to the classroom instruction, “special attention is paid to the ‘setting up’ and general physical development of the students. Military discipline is enforced in the barracks and mess. The rooms of the students are subjected to a strict system of inspection, with the view of teaching all students neatness and regular and orderly habits.”⁵⁶³ In the same year, there were two developments in the life of the cadets. First, a group called the “Corps of Cadets” was organized. “That entity was established as a means of differentiating the cadet student body from the cadet battalion as a military structural unit.”⁵⁶⁴ Second, a group of six cadets formed the Cadet Drum

⁵⁶² *Acts and Joint Resolutions Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Virginia During the Session of 1891–92* (Richmond: J.H. O'Bannon, 1892), 864.

⁵⁶³ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891–'92*, 58.

⁵⁶⁴ Temple, *The Bugle's Echo*, vol. 1, 280.

and Bugle Corps, enthusiasm over which led to the establishment of a marching band. The combination of changes in the military training curriculum and in the student life of the cadets that happened in these years created the basis for the traditions of the Corps of Cadets that persist into the modern era.

At the start of the 1894–1895 academic year, First Lieutenant David Carey Shanks, Jr., was appointed as the Professor of Military Science and Tactics and the Commandant of Cadets. Shanks, a native Virginian, was a graduate of the United States Military Academy and served as a career officer in the United States Army. The military aspects of the College had grown steadily over time, and by the time that Shanks, Jr. arrived it was a robust part of both the educational and social life of the campus. According to Henry Temple, “the Cadet Battalion now was made up of a Battalion Headquarters, the Battalion Band, a Drum and Bugle Corps, four Infantry Companies (Companies A, B, C, and D), and one Artillery Battery (Company E).”⁵⁶⁵ The course catalog for the 1894–1895 academic year devoted six pages to the description of the Department of Military Science and Tactics, the most space devoted to the department in a catalog up to that point. The catalog outlined the process for the promotion of both commissioned and non-commissioned officers, including physical, moral, and mental examinations. Moral examination “includes the official record of the candidate (especially demerits) during the period of connection with the College,” and the mental examinations included both written and parade elements.⁵⁶⁶ In addition to these examinations, the catalog outlined the cadet uniform, and noted the change in military drill from four times per week to six.

⁵⁶⁵ Temple, *The Bugle's Echo*, vol. 1, 367.

⁵⁶⁶ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1894–'95* (Lynchburg, Va.: J.P. Bell Company, 1895), 61–3.

Shanks, Jr. continued the tradition of military education and discipline begun by his predecessors.

By the 1894–1895 academic year, VAMC had robust programs in both agriculture and mechanics. The college oversaw the experiment station which was “devoted to experimental purposes” and where “numerous scientific investigations, including chemical analyses, study of injurious fungi and insects, and the value of fungicides and insecticides, microscopic examinations of diseased tissues, culture of pathogenic bacteria, experiments in stock feeding, etc., are not in progress.”⁵⁶⁷ The college also had a creamery, a cheese factory, and a farm which was “considered a laboratory in its fullest sense, to broaden and develop in the student a desire to investigate the mysteries of nature.”⁵⁶⁸ For those studying mechanics, there were two buildings on campus that housed a wood-working room, a forge shop, a machine shop, and a foundry. In the Department of Shop-Work, “the method of instruction combines lectures and practical work. Before any operation is begun it is fully discussed from every standpoint, and the lectures and recitations are made to illustrate the principles advanced and the methods employed.”⁵⁶⁹ The system of reorganization put forward by McBryde in 1891 placed an emphasis on scientific education and on the training of engineers. Yet the college’s name reflected its original mission of practical education in agriculture and the mechanic arts for the industrial class.

In 1896, the Virginia legislature enacted legislation to rename the college and place the engineering aspects of the school on equal footing with its agricultural and mechanic arts courses. The act decreed that “it being deemed advisable to add to the name of said college the words ‘and polytechnic institute,’ so that said college shall be hereafter known as the Virginia

⁵⁶⁷ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1894– ‘95*, 66.

⁵⁶⁸ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1894– ‘95*, 32.

⁵⁶⁹ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1894– ‘95*, 49.

Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute,” and asserted that all of the previous acts relating to VAMC and its Board of Visitors would also apply to the renamed institution.⁵⁷⁰ Those who were pleased with Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute’s (VPI) name change had much affection for the school’s earlier name and academic focus. But they saw the college’s new name as a more accurate reflection of its evolving curricular focus. “The Polytechnic Institute in every way signifies so much more clearly the direction and character of the work done here that it is appropriate.”⁵⁷¹

On the heels of this change, the course catalog for 1896–1897 noted the establishment of a graduate-level course in mechanical engineering. This course of study was “intended as far as possible to familiarize the student with the practical work of the engineer” and included coursework in civil engineering, engineering contracts and specifications, shop organization and management, materials of construction, and mechanical laboratory.⁵⁷² Though students could pursue graduate study in other subjects, this articulation of the graduate program in mechanical engineering was the first time a particular course of graduate study was described specifically.

As VPI approached the twentieth century, nearly every aspect of its organization and curriculum was different from that of its earliest years. President McBryde had worked to transform all aspects of the College, and his report to the Board of Visitors for 1898–1899 reflected this transformation. In describing the students, he stated,

We have had the most orderly, well behaved and studious body of students assembled together here during my incumbency to the Presidential office. Coming better prepared

⁵⁷⁰ *Acts and Joint Resolutions Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, Session of 1895–’96* (Richmond: J.H. O’Bannon, 1895), 914–15.

⁵⁷¹ “Very Much Please with the New Name of the Blacksburg College,” *Richmond Dispatch*, March 8, 1896. *Chronicle America*.

⁵⁷² *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute, 1896–’97* (Salem: Salem Sentinel Publishing Company, 1897), 50–1.

than heretofore, they have cheerfully submitted to the rigid discipline enforced this session and shown themselves loyal and devoted to the best interests of the College.⁵⁷³

McBryde's work during the 1890s to improve the standards of not only the curriculum but the standards for entrance meant that students entering VPI were of a higher standard than in other generations. But these changes took the school farther from its original stated mission of instruction in agriculture and the mechanic arts for the industrial classes.

Andrew Soule and the Conflict Over VPI's Service to the Agriculturalists of Virginia

Even as VPI developed courses of study that focused on the theoretical study of science, the college remained tethered to its original mission of education in agricultural and mechanic arts through two-year certificate programs. The college also remained tied to its agricultural mission through its administration of the agricultural experiment station. The station was established as a department of VPI and was overseen by the college's president and board of visitors. Station administrators set aside plots for experiments and "tests of more than two hundred varieties of vegetables and six hundred varieties of fruit are annually made."⁵⁷⁴ Amid VPI's seeming divestment from agricultural and mechanic arts education, a conflict between the agricultural experiment station director and his staff drew the attention of President McBryde and exemplified the conflict between the college's old identity as an agricultural and mechanic arts college, and its blossoming into a polytechnic college focused on scientific training.

The first foray into disseminating practical knowledge to farmers within Virginia actually happened in the form of farmers' institutes, which were sponsored by the State Agricultural

⁵⁷³ McBryde to Trustees, 20 June 1899, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors Official Minutes (1898–1909), Records of the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors, Special Collections and University of Archives, Virginia Polytechnic and State University Libraries.

⁵⁷⁴ *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute, 1901–1902* (Lynchburg: J.P. Bell Company, 1902), 82.

Society and began in 1901. Commissioner George Koiner, a member of the society's executive committee, was invited to speak at two institutes in Pennsylvania in June 1900, and was impressed with their organization and the schedule of events.⁵⁷⁵ He brought the idea back to Virginia, and in July 1900 the State Board of Agriculture appropriated \$3,000 for the purpose of holding farmers' institutes in each district of the state.⁵⁷⁶ The inaugural institutes were held in spring 1901 with much excitement from those in attendance. It was reported at the time that "a meeting that was more productive in real, genuine, lasting good to the people of Rockingham was never held in our county in its history than the farmers' institute held in the courthouse yesterday. In fact, it is apparent that it will mark an epoch in the history of farming."⁵⁷⁷ Building on this enthusiasm, VPI held farmers' institutes in Pulaski and Abingdon Counties in 1901. In his president's report, McBryde suggested that "the meetings were attended by representative farmers of the two counties and, I am informed, were well received."⁵⁷⁸ After this inaugural set of institutes, VPI continued to offer institutes across the state.

In June 1904, the executive committee of the Board of Visitors was given authorization to offer Andrew M. Soule the deanship of the Agricultural Department and the directorship of the experiment station at an annual salary of \$3,500.⁵⁷⁹ Soule came to VPI with experience in agricultural education, having served as a professor at the University of Tennessee and director of the agricultural experiment station there. Soule quickly endeared himself to the people of Virginia and one newspaper wrote of him, "in the person of Professor Andrew Soule, dean of the

⁵⁷⁵ "Good of Farmers' Institutes," *Richmond Dispatch*, June 10, 1900. Chronicling America.

⁵⁷⁶ "Farmers' Institutes: State Board of Agriculture Makes Appropriation to Them," *Richmond Dispatch*, July 18, 1900. Chronicling America.

⁵⁷⁷ "The Farmers' Institute," *Richmond Dispatch*, March 12, 1901. Chronicling America.

⁵⁷⁸ McBryde to Trustees, 14 June 1901, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors Official Minutes (1898–1909), Records of the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors, Special Collections and University of Archives, Virginia Polytechnic and State University Libraries.

⁵⁷⁹ Trustees, 14 June 1904, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors Official Minutes (1898–1909).

agricultural college of V.P.I., and director of the Virginia agricultural experiment station, the State has a leader who is leaving no stone unturned for the improvement of agricultural conditions in Virginia.”⁵⁸⁰ In his report for the 1904–1905 academic year, McBryde described Soule with effusive praise. “Professor Soule has shown wonderful energy in the reorganization of his department and the station.”⁵⁸¹ He went on to suggest that “Prof. Soule is a remarkable easy and voluminous writer and is doing everything in his power to bring our agricultural work before the people of the state. He will undoubtedly make his department one of the most popular and valuable, not only of the College, but in the South.”⁵⁸²

Not everyone at VPI held Soule in high regard. Kinnear wrote that, “Andrew Soule, as dean of agriculture and director of the Experiment Station was a promoter and a showman to the very core. His activities on behalf of his department had alarmed many of the faculty, who felt that the agricultural department under Soule was about to swallow up everything in sight.”⁵⁸³ At a January 1906 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Virginia Farmers’ Institute, Soule presented on the work of VPI’s Department of Agriculture and of the experiment station. He talked about how the results of experiments conducted by these units had saved farmers in the state thousands of dollars, he suggested that appropriation made to these units by the commonwealth’s legislature fell significantly behind those made by legislatures in other states. At the end of his presentation, the committee resolved that “the present Legislature should be petitioned for \$75,000 to complete and equip the agricultural building at Blacksburg, and to provide \$10,000 a year additional for the maintenance and support of the Experiment Station.”⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸⁰ “Work of the Virginia Experiment Station: The Farmers’ Institute at Roanoke Will Be a Helpful Factor,” *Times-Dispatch*, July 2, 1905. Chronicling America.

⁵⁸¹ McBryde to Trustees, 13 June 1905, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors Official Minutes (1898–1909).

⁵⁸² McBryde to Trustees, 13 June 1905, Virginia Tech Board of Visitors Official Minutes (1898–1909).

⁵⁸³ Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 177.

⁵⁸⁴ “The Experiment Station Needs Fully Discussed by Executive Committee of Virginia State Farmers’ Institute,” *Times-Dispatch*, January 21, 1906.

Soule became emboldened by this success, suggesting that “without money for new positions and better salaries, VPI was rapidly degenerating into a second-rate institution.”⁵⁸⁵

In his 1906 report to the president, Soule reported that in the 1905–1906 academic year the agricultural department had taught 435 students across 41 classes. He noted that “while there has not been as large a number of individual students in this department as in some others, the work incumbent upon our professors is quite great.”⁵⁸⁶ He also emphasized the dual purpose of the department, with faculty teaching academic courses to students and working at the college’s experiment station. In much the same way that Soule had argued to the Virginia Farmers’ Institute for additional funding for VPI’s agricultural work, he used this report to the president to lobby for additional resources. “The teaching work of the department will expand rapidly in the immediate future, so much so in fact that some additional assistance will of necessity have to be provided in several of the more important departments.”⁵⁸⁷ Soule’s belief was that the agricultural college was underfunded relative to its importance to the success of agriculturalists in the state.

Those who saw Soule as a self-promoter grew tired of his bravado and at a June 1906 meeting, the board entertained charges made by three professors employed at the experiment station. The professors questioned Soule’s fitness as both an instructor of agriculture and a director of the experiment station. Among the charges, they suggested that Soule had not taught a single class since his arrival at VPI and “has shown no interest whatever in the teaching work beyond an attempt to change the course.”⁵⁸⁸ Further, the professors charged that “Mr. Soule has

⁵⁸⁵ Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 177.

⁵⁸⁶ Andrew M. Soule to J.M. McBryde, 2 June 1906, Records of the Office of the President, John McLaren McBryde, 1900–1907, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Polytechnic and State University Libraries.

⁵⁸⁷ Andrew M. Soule to J.M. McBryde, 2 June 1906.

⁵⁸⁸ Price, Ferguson, and Moncure to Board of Visitors, 27 June 1906. Virginia Tech Board of Visitors Official Minutes (1898–1909).

not come in contact with the students in the Agricultural Department” and had on several occasions spoken negatively of higher education, advising “a capable student not to pursue an advanced course of instruction.”⁵⁸⁹

The professors went on to question Soule’s fitness as director of the Agricultural Experiment Station. They suggested that one of the experiments run by the station, published in the Bulletin titled *Feeding Experiments with Dairy Cows* was not properly conducted and that “the results here presented are not only worthless but are positively misleading.”⁵⁹⁰ They also charged that the articles that Soule was writing to newspapers on the work of the Agricultural Experiment Station were “self-advertisement, and that they fail to present the true attitude of this Institution toward agriculture.”⁵⁹¹ And they suggested that in his position as director, Soule had “pursued the policy of an agitator and not that of an educator.”⁵⁹² The appraisal of Soule was perhaps most damning because it came from his colleagues.

Soule was given the opportunity to respond to these charges and began his rebuttal by dismissing the claims. “It is surprising to me that a paper based on such absurd and ridiculous statements and having so little real substance in it should receive any consideration when it is such a patent reflection on the judgement and wisdom of the President and Board of Visitors of this institution.”⁵⁹³ He defended his teaching by suggesting that he had not been asked to teach a course in his first year and “the fact that my life and energies have been devoted for the last twelve years to teaching and research work is the best evidence of my belief and higher

⁵⁸⁹ Price, Ferguson, and Moncure to Board of Visitors, 27 June 1906.

⁵⁹⁰ Price, Ferguson, and Moncure to Board of Visitors, 27 June 1906.

⁵⁹¹ Price, Ferguson, and Moncure to Board of Visitors, 27 June 1906. Emphasis from the original document.

⁵⁹² Price, Ferguson, and Moncure to Board of Visitors, 27 June 1906.

⁵⁹³ Soule to Board of Visitors, 28 June 1906. Virginia Tech Board of Visitors Official Minutes (1898-1909), Records of the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Polytechnic and State University Libraries.

education.”⁵⁹⁴ In defending his work at the Agricultural Experiment Station, Soule suggested that “it seems to me that all that has been said with reference to the Station work, its organization and management is a direct reflection on the President and the Board,” and offered to change his tactics if the Board preferred him to act differently.⁵⁹⁵ In addressing the accusation of self-promotion, he suggested “I have publicly and privately referred to the excellent work Messrs. Ferguson and Price are doing, and have defended them on more than one occasion.”⁵⁹⁶ At nearly every turn in his rebuttal, Soule framed his accusers as airing petty grievances and questioning the wisdom and good judgement of the president and board.

While the Board of Visitors may have found some truth in the accusations of the professors, it was not enough to lead to Soule’s termination. Soule resigned in 1907 to take a position at the University of Georgia as the president of their reorganized College of Agriculture. While Soule’s departure to Georgia came with a large increase in salary, he suggested in the newspapers that it was not a decision rooted in finances. Rather, McBryde noted in a letter to the Board of Visitors that “it was due to the fact that he failed to receive cooperation from those from whom he had a right to expect it.”⁵⁹⁷ Through his work at the Agricultural Experiment Station, Soule was able to share knowledge about practical agriculture with farmers in Virginia. But his excessive demands for financial support won him no fans in an institution that was attempting to move in a more scientific direction.

Conclusion

In his report to the Board of Visitors dated October 19, 1906, McBryde resigned, citing his failing health.

⁵⁹⁴ Soule to Board of Visitors, 28 June 1906.

⁵⁹⁵ Soule to Board of Visitors, 28 June 1906.

⁵⁹⁶ Soule to Board of Visitors, 28 June 1906.

⁵⁹⁷ McBryde to Board of Visitors, 3 April 1907. Virginia Tech Board of Visitors Official Minutes (1898-1909).

I cannot give adequate expression to the pain this decision causes me. For upwards of fifteen years my heart has been in the work of building up the institution committed to my care. In my thoughts its interests have been present day and night. To sever my connection with it is the breaking up of the very foundations of my being.⁵⁹⁸

The Board reluctantly accepted his resignation, effective at the end of the 1906–1907 academic year. At the time of his retirement, McBryde had been in office for 16 years and VPI had been under the leadership of only five presidents. By 1907, McBryde’s fingerprints were on nearly every aspect of life at VPI.

In the 35 years between the founding of VAMC in 1872 and the end of McBryde’s presidency in 1907, the College grew from a small agricultural and mechanical college charged with bringing practical education to the industrial class of the state into a complex school that supported a variety of educational programs. VPI continued to support practical education in agriculture and the mechanic arts through special certificates. But it grew to support four-year courses in agriculture and engineering, established a bachelor of science, and expanded to include graduate courses. The story of VAMC—later VPI—is not only about the growth of a college to expand its educational mission. It is also about how the college met the call to support training in military tactics, supporting both classroom instruction and a military culture that instilled discipline in its students. Though the extent to which the military aspect of the institution was foregrounded varied over time, by 1907, many of the traditions that shape the Corps of Cadets in the modern era were already in place.

These changes to VPI were coordinated by the college’s administrators and board and were influenced by changes in state politics over time. In his 1882 report, President Conrad

⁵⁹⁸ McBryde to Board of Visitors, 19 October 1906. Virginia Tech Board of Visitors Official Minutes (ad1898-1909).

suggested that that Board of Visitors that had been installed in 1882 had found the conditions at the college to be “deplorable” and had set upon a course of reorganizing nearly every aspect of the college. In 1887, the VAMC Agricultural Department suggested that the study of agriculture should be both scientific and practical and in 1891, President McBryde suggested that the science underlying agriculture and the mechanic arts should be given as much prominence at the college as their practical application. McBryde’s vision was fundamentally different than legislator William T. Sutherlin’s, who decades before had argued for allocation of the land scrip proceeds to a college which could succeed in “[educating] a large number of thoroughly-educated, practical farmers; in improving the condition of our impoverished lands; in making farming what it is now—successful—and in the cultivation of an experimental farm for the benefit of the whole State.”⁵⁹⁹ The story of VAMC is that of an institution whose leaders strove over time to move the college a polytechnic university and away from being an agricultural and mechanical college that educated the children of the industrial class.

⁵⁹⁹ “General Assembly of Virginia.”

CHAPTER 7

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

In chapters 4–6, I made arguments about the development of Alcorn University, the University of Georgia (UGA), and Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (VAMC). I provided evidence, in the form of primary and secondary sources, to support those arguments about how each college developed within its state context. These chapters were especially concerned with how internal factors within each institution and external influences within each state shaped the development of these colleges. In this chapter I present my findings from looking across cases to understand larger themes in the development of southern land grant colleges.

When looking across cases, five themes emerged. The first theme is the role of politics in the development of land-grant colleges. This extended in both directions, as state legislatures influenced the development of land-grant colleges and also trustees and administrators of land-grant colleges influenced how state legislatures supported the development of these colleges. A second theme concerns the beliefs that college trustees, college administrators, legislators, and the public held about land-grant colleges and the influence they had on the development of colleges in the study. These beliefs were related to the educational purposes and obligations of land-grant colleges as well as who was meant to attend these colleges and for what reasons. The third theme is the impact that race and racism had on land-grant college development. Issues of race and racism were not limited to colleges for Black students, as racism permeated land-grant colleges from the time of their founding. A fourth theme is the relationship between land-grant

colleges and a changing southern social order. As southern states considered how life in the postbellum South would either deviate from, or return to, the antebellum social order, land-grant colleges both reflected and influenced that tension. Finally, and related, is the relationship between land-grant colleges and the changing roles of agriculture and industrialism in the new South. The South's economy had been primarily agrarian in the antebellum period and for many years in the postbellum period as well. But in the 1880s, leaders in the South began to preach the idea that an economy which combined agriculture and industry would benefit the South in the twentieth century and beyond. Land-grant colleges were largely seen as the tool for providing education to the industrial class and, therefore, played a role in educating young southern men as future agriculturalists and mechanics.

In this chapter, I discuss these five interconnected themes and support them with findings from individual cases. These themes are not mutually exclusive; the evidence used to support one theme also supports other themes. The themes should be seen as accordant. Taken together, they offer insight into land-grant college development across the southern United States. In this study, the evaluation of each case is useful for understanding what could be learned about the development of a land-grant college within its unique state context. Looking across cases is useful for identifying the ways in which cases are alike and where similar ideas and issues emerge across disparate institutions.

Theme 1: The Role of Politics in the Development of Land-Grant Colleges

The provisions in the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 provided funding for higher education and advised states on how money should be allocated, including the types of institutions that the states should fund. These provisions necessarily tethered together state legislatures and the land-grant colleges they established. But the relationship between state-level

politics and land-grant college development was symbiotic and extended beyond resource allocation. State legislatures influenced the activities at land-grant colleges, and the colleges and their administrators influenced state politics. As the political concerns of one era gave way to the political concerns of the next, land-grant colleges developed in response to those changes.

Alcorn University's founding was the result of a compromise between Black Mississippians who demanded access to public higher education and those who refused to consider integrating the University of Mississippi, both on the school's faculty and in the legislature. Black Mississippians became a large voting block after being enfranchised because of the Fourteenth Amendment. Republicans in Mississippi, desperate to stay in power, wanted to offer Black Mississippians the opportunity to pursue college education that they were demanding. A challenge for these Republicans is that there were many in the state who did not support the integration of the University of Mississippi, including the university's faculty. John N. Waddell, Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, publicly suggested that the university could not integrate because its faculty and trustees could not override the original intent of the university's creation, "the education of the white race."⁶⁰⁰ Governor James L. Alcorn also tried to defuse the tension, suggesting that "during the canvass of last Autumn, the colored men were as earnest in their demand for separate schools as any white man that spoke to me on the subject."⁶⁰¹ In making this argument, Alcorn could appeal to both the Black Mississippians who demanded equal access to higher education and the White Mississippians who opposed the integration of the flagship college. Alcorn continued to advocate for the establishment of a university for Black Mississippians, suggesting that the school for Black students should receive

⁶⁰⁰ Waddell, *Memorials of Academic Life*, 466.

⁶⁰¹ James L. Alcorn, "The Feelings of the People Respecting Separate and Mixed Schools—Letter from Gov. Alcorn."

three-fifths of the sale of proceeds of the sale of land scrip and \$50,000 annually from the state's seminary fund.

The Georgia legislature founded the Georgia State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts (GSCAMA) with funds from the sale of land scrip appropriated to the state as a provision of the Morrill Act of 1862. While the legislature created the act that established GSCAMA, they took the details of the act from a plan devised by the UGA Trustees. There were those in the state who opposed UGA receiving the land scrip funds and the land-grant designation because they opposed the idea of appending a school for industrial education to a "literary college." E.M. Pendleton, a prominent Georgia agriculturalist suggested, that "no man who has devoted his life to the abstract sciences, as taught in books, is fit to be a teacher in the practical department of an agricultural college."⁶⁰² Nevertheless, UGA's administrators and trustees lobbied the legislature for the funds and the land-scrip designation. Chancellor Lipscomb suggested to the trustees that "the objects of this Fund can be best observed by giving it to the University; the machinery of education already existing here can readily be made subservient to its highest utility; every dollar of it can be made more productive, and the specific ends of the grant as to the kind and quality of the instruction be more fully and wisely attained."⁶⁰³ The Georgia state legislature had been both slow to accept the land scrip and slow to sell it while it attended to the work of Reconstruction and, as a result, the deadline by which the funds had to be allocated quickly approached. In March 1872, the UGA trustees met in the Georgia Senate chamber and approved a resolution that set forth a more fully formed vision of the school they called the Georgia State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts. Governor James Smith,

⁶⁰² E.M. Pendleton, "Our Agricultural College."

⁶⁰³ Chancellor Lipscomb to Trustees, 25 August 1871, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 4, 1858–1877), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

the first Democratic governor since the state of military reconstruction, adopted the board's resolution and UGA was given both the land scrip funding and the land-grant designation.

Changes in political power at the state level could impact the organization of the land-grant colleges. For the VAMC, this first occurred when the Readjusters, a faction of the commonwealth's Conservative party, came into political power in 1879. In early 1879, the newly elected Readjuster Senate introduced a bill to remove the entire VAMC Board of Visitors. Because the board of visitors was appointed by the governor, it could be stacked with political appointees and those to whom the governor owed favors. As a result, the politically appointed board would be more likely to advance initiatives at VAMC that aligned with the political goals of the governor. As the state's government changed hands between political parties, it was logical that the board of visitors would be caught up in the shuffle of realigning of political appointees. The measure failed in the House, and the current board of visitors remained. In 1880, the Virginia legislature resolved that "the offices and members of the present Board of Visitors of the Virginia Agricultural and at Blacksburg, shall be vacated on the 4th day of June, 1880."⁶⁰⁴ This resolution influenced the board of visitors to vacate their seats and in June 1880, the board and the president were replaced along with most of the faculty at VAMC. The new board of visitors set into a motion a reorganization of VAMC that turned it from a strictly agricultural and mechanical college into a college that was comprised of agricultural, mechanical, literary, scientific, and business departments.

The end of Reconstruction and the return of the Democrats to power brought changes to Alcorn University that were more significant to its organization than those seen at VAMC throughout the 1880s. When the Democrats returned to power in Mississippi, they took a

⁶⁰⁴ "Legislature." *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser*.

position of retrenchment and austerity, and their support for both the University of Mississippi and Alcorn University waned. At the same time that the Democrats returned to power in 1876, White agriculturalists became more politically influential. Farmers' Alliance members focused their efforts on the establishment of a college for agricultural and the mechanic arts for White Mississippians. "Only by educating young, potential agriculturalists could agrarians hope to operate their agricultural pursuits on a level playing field with those who had taken and would continue to take advantage of uneducated farmers."⁶⁰⁵ In February 1878, an act established the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi, which was called in a footnote in the legislation an "agricultural college for white youth."⁶⁰⁶ The same piece of legislation also called for the reorganization of Alcorn University and its renaming to the Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, suggesting that the Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College should be "an agricultural college for the education of the colored youth of the State."⁶⁰⁷ This legislation changed how Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College would be supported with funds from the Morrill Act of 1862. The proceeds from the sale of land scrip that had previously been appropriated to the University of Mississippi would be given to the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi. Additionally, Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College would no longer receive three-fifths of the proceeds from the sale of land scrip. Instead, the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi and Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College would split the money equally. In order to ensure that the newly established Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi was on the same financial footing as Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, the legislation provided that "a sum equal to the amount heretofore

⁶⁰⁵ Ballard, *Maroon and White*, 4.

⁶⁰⁶ *Laws of the State of Mississippi*, 1878, 119

⁶⁰⁷ *Laws of the State of Mississippi*, 1878, 119.

appropriated to the Alcorn University out of the principal arising from the sale of said land scrip [sic], is hereby appropriated to the college provided for in section 2d of this Act.”⁶⁰⁸ The establishment of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi gave the White agriculturalists in Mississippi what they desired with regard to agricultural education. The reorganization of Alcorn University and its renaming to Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College gave them the opportunity to divest from a serious and meaningful investment in the education of Black Mississippians, which they also desired.

At UGA, the progressive era found Chancellor Walter B. Hill and philanthropist George Foster Peabody working to secure funding for financial support from the Georgia legislature for the establishment of a College of Agriculture. UGA had suffered from years of minimal support from the Georgia legislature, as agriculturalists became politicians and used their power to penalize GSCAMA for not reaching its full potential and being of greater assistance to the agriculturalists in the state. The 1890s were full of attempts by those legislators to remove the land-grant designation and associated land scrip funds from UGA in favor of establishing a college of agriculture and the mechanic arts in Griffin, Georgia, where the state’s agricultural experiment station had been established. As late as 1902, Representative J.J. Conner of Griffin introduced a bill to “separate the College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts from the State University.”⁶⁰⁹ In 1904, Chancellor Hill suggested that “in Georgia the case has been aggravated by the fact that dissatisfied parties for thirty years have dinned into the ears of the farmers that the School of Agriculture is a failure.”⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁸ *Laws of the State of Mississippi*, 1878, 122–3.

⁶⁰⁹ *Journal of House of Representatives of the State of Georgia*, 1902, 439.

⁶¹⁰ Walter B. Hill to Henry McDaniel, 24 May 1904, Box 2, folder 2, Walter B. Hill Papers.

In 1904, Hill and Peabody devised a plan to take influential Georgians on both sides of the removal issue on a train trip to the University of Wisconsin. Among the traveling party were state legislators, members of the media, and members of UGA's Board of Trustees. Much like UGA, the University of Wisconsin was a flagship state university. But unlike UGA, the University of Wisconsin also had a flourishing college of agriculture that was given financial support by its state legislators. Hill and Peabody gambled that by seeing a school like Wisconsin doing so much to support agricultural education, those in the traveling parties who opposed UGA would change their minds. The trip was a great success, and in 1905 their gamble paid off in the form of a \$100,000 appropriation to support the establishment of a college of agriculture at UGA. The bill's sponsor, J.J. Conner, was quoted as saying, "I believe a plan can be secured by which the disjointed members of our university may be brought together for the benefit of the farmer. It will be my delight to vote for increased appropriations so that the farmers may have equal advantages with those of Wisconsin."⁶¹¹ Though the appropriation was not approved until 1906, a year after Chancellor Hill's sudden death, Peabody and Hill influenced politics in the state by convincing legislators that, with ample funding, UGA could be a vibrant university in service to all people in the state.

In each of the cases, state-level politics impacted the development of the land-grant colleges. But what was also clear is that the relationship between the state legislatures and land-grant colleges was not unidirectional. Administrators at each college shaped to some extent how state legislators supported their institutions. In his work, Scott Gelber addresses this connection between politics and higher education the Populist era, coining the phrase "academic Populists." He suggests that academic Populists "identified with the movement's ideology and believed that

⁶¹¹ "Develop Agriculture, Say Georgia Trustees."

state universities could demonstrate solidarity with the struggles of ordinary farmers.”⁶¹² Michael Dennis brings this same consideration to the relationship between politics and higher education, focusing on the Progressive era. He writes, “Southern universities were at the forefront of the southern progressive movement.”⁶¹³ In returning to this theme, the unsettled politics of the Reconstruction era and its immediate aftermath was a catalyst for many developments in this relationship, suggesting that in the same way that there are academic Populists or academic Progressives, there are academic Reconstructionists.

Theme 2: Beliefs About Land-Grant Colleges Held by Administrators, Trustees, and the Public

It is tempting to think of land-grant colleges as the “Democracy’s Colleges” that Ross described in his book. And while these colleges did provide educational opportunities to the industrial class that may have previously been unattainable given the poor (or even nonexistent) status of the primary and secondary school systems in southern states, these institutions also reified the status of the industrial class through their curricula and beliefs about what was possible for the young people of the industrial class to attain. Lower admissions at land-grant colleges opened the door to agricultural and mechanic arts education for many people, but they did not offer opportunities that could prepare students for careers outside of machine shops or off the family farm.

The administrators and trustees of these schools had beliefs about what land-grant colleges were meant to do, and for whom. At the time of the VAMC’s founding, the trustees who wrote the plan of organization suggested that the focus of the curriculum should be on practical education for the betterment of the industrial class who were “not the bankers, capitalists,

⁶¹² Gelber, *The University and the People*, 13.

⁶¹³ Dennis, *Lessons in Progress*, 3.

merchants, or men belonging to the learned professions, but they are the men who handle tools, the men of the field, the mine, and the workshop.”⁶¹⁴ The trustees saw the purpose of the college as offering men of the industrial class the tools to better themselves, but they offered the narrow view that those men of the fields, mines, and workshops should be better prepared to work at those stations but not to rise above them.

At the time of its founding, Alcorn University was a different type of college than the VAMC. Though the university was founded with funds from the 1862 Morrill Act, the school did not receive a land-grant designation and the statute that established it did not outline what its curriculum should be. Governor Alcorn installed Hiram Revels, a Black politician, as Alcorn University’s first President. The school’s curriculum in its earliest years included a preparatory course, a classical course, and a scientific course. In the years after its founding, Alcorn University was a liberal arts college for Black students in Mississippi that was funded with proceeds from the sale of land scrip rather than an agricultural and mechanic arts college. Those who studied the classical curriculum studied languages, literature, history, philosophy, mathematics, and sciences. Those who studied the scientific curriculum studied modern languages, mathematics, and applied sciences. Neither track had traditional agricultural or mechanical courses. Alcorn University offered Black students a curriculum similar to what they might have received at the University of Mississippi had they been able to attend.

In the years following the establishment of these land-grant colleges, administrators and trustees changed their views on the students at these colleges based on their performance or behavior. In some cases, the colleges even went so far as changing the colleges based on what they saw as the deficiencies of the students. At UGA, Chancellor Henry Holcombe Tucker

⁶¹⁴ *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 22.

continually expressed disdain for the students at GSCAMA. The students who attended GSCAMA were able to pursue a college education because of its low admissions standards relative to the university's liberal arts college, Franklin College. The GSCAMA students, whose families came from the industrial class, did not have the benefit of a private school education. In many cases, students came to GSCAMA with no common school education, and required several years of preparatory courses before they could even consider taking the GSCAMA curriculum.

Tucker excoriated the GSCAMA students and those in the public who believed that UGA was not adequately supporting them. In his 1878 report to the Board of Trustees, Tucker described what he saw as the problem with so many GSCAMA students needing remedial education.

We cannot do otherwise than teach these [State College] students what they are obliged to learn before they can learn anything else. When after a year or two they return to their parents, and it is discovered that they have learned nothing what they might have been taught as well, or better in a common academy at home, saving the expense of board and travel, there is deep disappointment. Thus the Institution loses its hold on the public confidence.⁶¹⁵

Most students who attended GSCAMA needed several years of remedial courses. Tucker resented the fact that students arrived at the college needing such significant support, and he went so far as to suggest that the UGA should be reorganized entirely, bringing the admission requirements of GSCAMA in line with those of Franklin College. He also resented the fact that the public blamed UGA for not moving the students more quickly through the preparatory courses on to agricultural or mechanic arts education, rather than blaming the inadequate public

⁶¹⁵ Tucker to Trustees, 17 July 1877, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 4, 1858–1877), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

school system for producing students who were ill-prepared to succeed at GSCAMA. Tucker devoted at least some space in each of his annual reports to the Board of Trustees to addressing how poorly prepared GSCAMA students were for the university and how short-sighted the public's views on GSCAMA were.

While Tucker focused on the abilities of GSCAMA students to succeed in the classroom, administrators and the Board of Visitors at VAMC focused on how students behaved outside of the classroom. In the years after its founding, President Minor and Commandant Lane disagreed on how large of a role military tactics should have in VAMC's curriculum. At the same time, problems in student conduct increased as students were undisciplined and behaving badly. As the college's administrators and Board of Visitors considered the deteriorating state of discipline at the college, the board convened in the summer of 1879 to consider how the college might be organized. The board sided with Commandant Lane's view that the college should have stricter discipline, resolving that,

As the terms of endowment by the Federal Government of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College require that tactics shall be taught in the institution and the Board of Visitors being of the opinion that strict military discipline is best suited to the management of students of the age and number likely to attend said College, it is ordered that rigid military discipline be established and enforced in its management.⁶¹⁶

This rigid discipline was not reflected in a curricular change. Rather, students had to wake at 6:30 a.m., march to and from their classes, and had to be back at the dorms by 7 p.m. at the start of the mandatory 7–9 p.m. study period. This stricter discipline, and new rules, were meant to

⁶¹⁶ "Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical School."

solve problems in student conduct at VAMC by instilling a rigid order in the hopes of making the student body more disciplined.

Finally, beliefs about land-grant colleges were not limited to what administrators, trustees, and the public thought about curriculum or student behavior. These beliefs extended to what land-grant colleges could do to be in service to the states in which they were located. For many years, UGA was at odds with the public and with legislators about whether the university was doing enough to be in service to the state of Georgia. In an address from early in his time as chancellor, Walter B. Hill at UGA offered a new vision of what the modern university could be. Hill offered a vision of the twentieth-century university that differed significantly from how UGA had positioned itself in years past, suggesting that, “the University of the Twentieth Century will be differentiated from his predecessors with this: it will connect its activities more closely with the business and life of the people.”⁶¹⁷ Hill believed not only that UGA should align its work closely with the goings on in the state, but also that it should work alongside the state in solving its problems. This positioning of the modern university deviated from the view of his predecessors, who believed that rather than working alongside the people of the state to solve their problems, UGA should prepare the best and brightest men for careers in which they could solve the state’s problems themselves. It was a shift in thinking that reflected Hill’s career in law, and his life outside of the academy.

The beliefs held about land-grant colleges shaped their development and also shaped the impact that the colleges had on the states in which they were located. The belief that land-grant colleges, with their lower admissions standards, were meant for the industrial class not only offered opportunities for students who could not have reached college but also limited the

⁶¹⁷ Walter Hill, “The Twentieth Century University,” unpublished speech, no date, box 8, folder 7.5 Walter B. Hill Papers.

opportunities available to them. Students who attended land-grant colleges were often unprepared for anything more advanced than a preparatory curriculum, and public sentiment about agricultural education at land-grant colleges was that students did not learn anything of value beyond what they could have learned by staying at home on the family farm. Because of the poor, or often nonexistent, public schooling in southern states, these land-grant colleges were constrained in what they could offer the students who arrived with little preparation. In their earliest years, supporters of land-grant colleges saw them as a democratizing force in higher education, but this was more theoretical than realistic. Eldon L. Johnson wrote of land-grant colleges that “their early contribution was their ardent conviction and the provisions of opportunity, the expectation, and the ideal, not the actual achievement.”⁶¹⁸ And while the colleges were established with the goal of offering opportunities to the industrial class, they were not established with the goal of offering opportunities that moved their students beyond the industrial class into a better life.

Theme 3: The Impact of Race and Racism on Land-Grant College Development

The connection between race and the development of land-grant colleges in the South might be most obvious in the case of Alcorn University, the university for Black Mississippians founded with funds from the Morrill Act of 1862. But issues of race are not limited to Alcorn University, or to Mississippi for that matter. Issues of race and racism are found in the stories of land-grant college development across the region from their founding until the modern era. Georgia, Mississippi, and Virginia received a total of 8,637 parcels of Indigenous land totaling nearly 778 thousand acres of land the principal of which totaled \$525,000 for the land-grant colleges in these states.⁶¹⁹ As I discussed in chapter 3, land-grant historiography is expanding to

⁶¹⁸ Johnson, “Misconceptions About the Early Land-Grant Colleges,” 338.

⁶¹⁹ “Land Grab University.”

include considerations of how Indigenous dispossession shaped the development of land-grant colleges. When considering the role of race and racism on the development of three colleges under study, the funding mechanism that undergirded their founding is an important place to begin this consideration.

Alcorn University and UGA were on opposite sides of the same racially motivated decision regarding integration of the flagship state universities. Both the founding of Alcorn University and the \$8,000 annual appropriation given to Atlanta University at the time of GSCAMA's founding at UGA were done to offer education to Black students without having to integrate the flagship state universities. Alcorn University was founded in order to give educational opportunities to Black men in Mississippi without integrating the University of Mississippi. In Georgia, Atlanta University was allocated \$8,000 per year to further the education of Black students in exchange for not demanding that UGA be integrated. In discussing the appropriation to Atlanta University, the Special Committee appointed by the legislature to consider the appropriation wrote in their report, "we are assured by Professors Brown and Ware, and the leading friends of education, both white and colored, and by our own good sense that the State's protection of this College for the education of the colored people, would be a safeguard thrown around the University and the other Colleges of Georgia."⁶²⁰ In the cases of both Alcorn University and Atlanta University, the founding of colleges for Black students "safeguarded" the University of Mississippi and the University of Georgia from having to accept Black students.

Atlanta University and Hampton Normal and Industrial College in Virginia, which received one-third of the proceeds from the sale of land scrip in Virginia, were both founded by

⁶²⁰ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia at the Annual Session of the General Assembly, Commenced at Atlanta, January 14, 1874*, 398.

the American Missionary Association. The American Missionary Association, founded in 1846 in New York, was established for the purpose of Christian missionary work, first outside of the United States and then in the south at the close of the Civil War. One way in which they ministered to the newly emancipated Black Southerners was through education. A history of its work written by the Association suggested of Black Southerners that immediately after emancipation that, “their physical destitution was no more manifest than was their eagerness for learning. In the midst of pinching want, amounting almost to starvation, they seemed for anxious for schools than for food.”⁶²¹ While Black Southerners who had been starved of educational opportunities needed instruction, there was little appetite in the south to integrate the public-school systems. These segregated school systems needed instructors and the American Missionary Association believed that,

It was more and more evident that this people must become largely their own educators. Hence the policy of the Association, to form permanent educational institutions for them, took more definite shape. Graded and normal schools, colleges, incipient universities and theological classes were established—the design being to plant a school of high grade in each of the principal cities or centres of population, and one college or university in each of the large Southern States.⁶²²

James D. Anderson suggests that missionary philanthropists like the American Missionary Association saw a future where formerly enslaved Black people would be assimilated into the larger American culture. “They assumed that the newly emancipated blacks would move into mainstream national culture, largely free to do and become what they chose, limited only by their

⁶²¹ *History of the American Missionary Association*, 13.

⁶²² *History of the American Missionary Association*, 25.

own intrinsic worth and effort.”⁶²³ In service of this end, “education, then, according to the more liberal and dominant segments of missionary philanthropists, was intended to prepare a college-bred black leadership to uplift the black masses from the legacy of slavery and the restraints of the postbellum caste system.”⁶²⁴

In order to achieve such a goal, Black students would need not only to be educated, but would also need to be taught discipline. Anderson suggests that for missionary philanthropists, including the AMA, “slavery had generated pathological religious and cultural practices in the black community. Slavery, not race, kept blacks from acquiring the important moral and social values of thrift, industry, frugality, and sobriety, all of which were necessary to live a sustained Christian life.”⁶²⁵ Samuel Armstrong, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute’s principal, suggested that “plainly a system is required which shall be at once constructive of mental and moral worth, and destructive of the vices characteristic of the slave. What are those vices? They are improvidence, low ideas of honor and morality, and a general lack of directive energy, judgement, and foresight.”⁶²⁶ Armstrong’s system included not only classroom instruction but arduous menial labor. In supporting Atlanta University and Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, legislators in the state of Georgia and the commonwealth of Virginia could claim support of Black students while backing a version of education that was meant to control and constrain them.

With its specific consideration for Black land-grant education, the Morrill Act of 1890 offered states the opportunity to fund Black land-grant colleges similarly to 1862 land-grant colleges, though the absence of a percentage that should be allocated to each college ultimately

⁶²³ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 240.

⁶²⁴ Anderson, 240–41.

⁶²⁵ Anderson, 241.

⁶²⁶ *Catalogue of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, 1870–71*, 19.

meant that Black land-grant colleges remained underfunded relative to the colleges for White students. The allocation of Morrill Act funds at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, formerly Alcorn University, and at UGA exemplified how race and racism shaped land-grant colleges. Alcorn University had already undergone a transformation in 1878 with the founding of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi, not only with a shift to a strictly agricultural and mechanic arts curricular focus, but also in its funding structure. Upon its founding as Alcorn University, the college received three-fifths of the proceeds of the land scrip with the University of Mississippi receiving the other two-fifth. Upon the founding of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi, the renamed Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College was required to split the proceeds of the sale of land scrip evenly with the land-grant college for White students in Mississippi. When the state of Mississippi received the proceeds from the Morrill Act of 1890, the legislature split the money evenly between Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College and the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi. In discussing this decision, Governor John Stone stated that, “although the educable children of the colored race exceed in number those of the white, the enrollment and attendance at the Agricultural and Mechanical College being uniformly larger than at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College.”⁶²⁷ The Department of the Interior intervened, demanding a more equitable distribution of Morrill Act of 1890 funds. Faced with losing the funds entirely or distributing them in a more equitable fashion, state legislators reallocated the funds with Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College receiving 55% of the funds received by the state.

When it came time for the Georgia legislature to allocate the funds from the Morrill Act of 1890, the provision in the state’s constitution that the University of Georgia would administer

⁶²⁷ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi, 1892, 26–7.*

all public higher education in Georgia gave UGA the advantage it sought in securing the funds. UGA's trustees placed great importance on the funds, not because they would help the state provide education to its Black citizens, but because they needed to find additional sources of funding after having lost the Agricultural Experiment Station. The trustees adopted Henry C. White's plan to appropriate only some of the funds from the Morrill Act of 1890 to newly formed Georgia State Industrial College, keeping the remainder of the funds in Athens for the funding of UGA.⁶²⁸

Race and racism shaped the development of southern land-grant colleges from their very foundations to their funding mechanisms. White legislators funded Black land-grant colleges in an attempt to "safeguard" White colleges from integration rather than in an attempt to expand the opportunities available to Black students in their states. And when they did fund Black colleges with proceeds from the sale of land scrip, they were often colleges administered by White missionaries who used their missionary work as a chance to both educate newly emancipated Black men and, in Anderson's words, "introduce the ex-slaves to the values and rules of modern society" to ensure they would not "become a national menace to American civilization."⁶²⁹

Theme 4: The Relationship Between Land-Grant Colleges and a Changing Southern Social Order

In the years after the end of the Civil War, the established social order of the antebellum South was upended. The establishment of Republican governments in many southern states and the disenfranchisement of most men who participated in the Confederate government meant that people who had not been politically powerful before assumed power. Additionally, the

⁶²⁸ Henry C. White to Trustees, 28 July 1890, box 2, folder 8, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

⁶²⁹ Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 242.

devastation of the southern landscape and the emancipation of enslaved Black men and women changed both the economic and social order of the South, as the planter class lost not only prestige but also financial stability. This changing social order allowed newly enfranchised Black men to become a powerful voting block and also allowed yeomen farmers to come together through the Farmers' Alliance to demand social and educational reform. These changes were reflected in the development of the land-grant colleges under study in this project as each institution contented with the unique changes in their states.

During the time of Reconstruction in Mississippi, newly enfranchised Black men became an influential group of voters due to how many of them there were. This is a position that they had never held before, and they used their power to demand greater educational opportunities. As their calls for the integration of the University of Mississippi grew louder, Governor James Alcorn, a former enslaver, felt pressure to respond. Alcorn championed educational opportunities for all Mississippians, but he did not support the integration of schools. After the university was founded in May 1871, Governor Alcorn chose Hiram Revels as the first president of the university. Revels had served in the Mississippi Senate and was seen by his White colleagues as a palatable Black politician because of "his past educational and religious experiences, and because of the knowledge which he had gained of White America as a free black who had traveled widely in the United States before the Civil War."⁶³⁰ The changing social order of the South that gave newly enfranchised Black men the opportunity to shape the future of the region was reflected in the development of Alcorn University and in the installment of Hiram Revels as its first president. Democrats returned to power in Mississippi by gaining the support of White agriculturalists who were angry at how the Republicans had ignored their interests in favor of

⁶³⁰ Thompson, "Hiram Rhodes Revels, 1827–1901," 298.

championing the interests of Black Mississippians. In order to advance educational opportunities for White students of the working class, the Democrats established and funded the Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College.

For the University of Georgia, the changing southern social order was reflected in the lower admission standards at the GSCAMA relative to the admissions standards at UGA's historic Franklin College. In the 1872 course catalogue, the terms of admission to Franklin College included knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Mathematics.⁶³¹ The standards of admission for GSCAMA were less rigorous. "For admission into the State College, the candidate must be not less than sixteen years of age, and have a fair knowledge of Arithmetic, English, Geography, and History of the United States."⁶³² The lower admissions standards for GSCAMA reflected the fact that it would attract a different type of student than Franklin College, specifically students of poorer families who likely would have had either low quality schooling or no schooling at all prior to attending the school. In the antebellum period, those who attended UGA would have been members of the planter class who had access to private schooling and who attended Franklin College to acquire the knowledge and social connections to perpetuate the existing social order. In the postbellum era, children of the industrial class were able to attend GSCAMA to acquire knowledge and skills to help them succeed in trades or in agriculture. There was also a changing opinion of what UGA owed the people of the state as part of having the land-grant designation. Many agriculturalists in the state criticized UGA for not using proceeds from the sale of land scrip to truly advance agricultural education. In 1876, the *Southern Cultivator*, a news magazine marketed toward farmers in the South, suggested that,

⁶³¹ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Georgia, 1872*, 18. The Latin requirement was a knowledge of Caesar and Virgil. The Greek requirement was knowledge of the Greek Reader. And the Mathematics requirement was knowledge of arithmetic, algebra, and geometry.

⁶³² *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Georgia, 1872*, 18.

In the case of Georgia, instead of the funds being employed to expand and develop the scientific department, that department, which bears directly upon Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, a very large part, perhaps half or more, of the income therefrom is devoted to paying salaries of professors who now hold the *same* chairs, and perform the *same* duties which they did before the Agricultural College was established.⁶³³

Critiques like this predated the allocation of the proceeds of the sale of the land scrip to UGA. As agriculturalists in the state gained political power during the postbellum period, they were able to use that influence to demand that UGA either change its approach to education or face removal of the land-grant designation and of the funding that accompanied it.

Similar to GSCAMA, the curriculum at the VAMC afforded opportunities to members of the industrial class who had not had educational opportunities previously through the public colleges in Virginia. In describing what form education for the industrial classes might take, the VAMC Board of Trustees envisioned that “the proper sphere for the proposed college is that of a middle grade agricultural and mechanical school—one which teaches chiefly results and practical methods, and only so much of mathematics and physical science and may be necessary to render results and methods fully intelligible.”⁶³⁴ The VAMC Board of Trustees saw training in military tactics as important in meeting the provisions of the Morrill Act of 1862, but also saw it as being limited in scope. “We do not understand that the term ‘military tactics’ covers the whole ground of military science and tactics, but has special references to field evolutions. Therefore an opportunity given to the students for military drill would satisfy the law.”⁶³⁵ Charles Minor, the

⁶³³ “Agricultural Colleges—Has the Fund Donated By Congress Been Properly Used?”

⁶³⁴ *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 25.

⁶³⁵ *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, 33.

first President of VAMC, had a different interpretation and placed greater emphasis on military tactics education. He suggested that,

This course proves to be of much value, beyond the preparation given for possible future duty as soldiers, and the prompt obedience and other good habits belonging to a military training. The improvement in neatness, and the gain of a soldierly and graceful figure, manner and carriage, is of especial value to those who might otherwise be hindered in their advancement in life by the awkwardness of appearance which is apt to be caused by rustic training and hard labor.⁶³⁶

For those coming to VAMC from a childhood in the industrial class, the type of discipline instilled in students studying military tactics would help them improve their habits and change how they carried themselves. Taken in sum, the organization and curriculum offered at the founding of VAMC offered members of the working class the opportunity to receive education to make them more efficient and disciplined workers, but not to take on new careers outside of the class to which they were born.

As the social order of the South shifted in the postbellum period, the planter class lost prominence and other groups like yeomen farmers and Black men became more influential voting blocks. This change in social order was reflected in the development of land-grant colleges, especially in the curriculum and admissions standards. As the southern social order shifted, the land-grant colleges under study in this project offered education to students who had not previously had such opportunities. In the cases of Alcorn University and VAMC, the colleges were newly organized and were offering educational opportunities for the first time. In the case of UGA, the agricultural and mechanic arts college was appended to the existing historic

⁶³⁶ *Report of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College*, [1873], 3.

Franklin College and students from a working class background were being educated among the children of the state's current and former elite class. In all cases, a tension still existed between those trustees and administrators who represented the old order and wanted to offer students the opportunity to be educated in order to obtain skills for employment and the disinterest in helping those students advance beyond their place in the industrial class.

Theme 5: The Relationship Between Land-Grant Colleges and the Development of Industry in the Region

One aspect of the changing social order in the South was the movement from a primarily agrarian economy to an economy supported through a combination of agriculture and industry. Influenced by the New South Creed, leaders in southern states called for an increase in industrial education. Land-grant colleges considered how to expand their offerings to meet these demands, often adding engineering and business courses to their agricultural and mechanic arts courses. While this shift in curricular focus reflected a change in how southerners saw the future of economic development in the region, it was not a complete departure from the land-grant college mission of education for the industrial class. By training the industrial class to thrive in an economy driven by both agriculture and industry, land-grant colleges were preparing them to work in the industrialized new South.

For UGA, meeting the demands of those who embraced New South ideology meant fighting for the right for Athens to be the home of the School of Technology. As those who supported growth in industrial education became more vocal, a familiar argument emerged. GSCAMA had fallen short, they argued, of providing sufficient training in areas that would prepare students for careers in emerging areas of industry. Henry Grady, a prominent Atlantan and proponent of the New South ideology, suggested that "as matters stand a classical education

is a hindrance rather than a help to a young man starting out in practical life.”⁶³⁷ In 1885, the Georgia legislature passed legislation that established the School of Technology. It may have seemed like a sure thing that the new school would be established in Athens, but instead the legislature established a commission to decide the best location for the school. All of the major cities in Georgia submitted bids to be the home of the new school. After 24 ballots, the Committee agreed to make Atlanta the new home for the School of Technology. Because the school was established as a branch campus of UGA, the school in Athens still benefitted from the \$65,000 that was appropriated to the school. But Atlanta established itself as the center of the state’s activities by being chosen as the home of the newly established institution.

At VAMC, the curriculum was revised in the 1883–1884 academic year to include courses in engineering. Under this new organization, students would study either agriculture and mechanics and then remain at the college for an additional year to obtain a degree in either civil engineering or mining engineering. In 1886–1887, VAMC added a bachelor of science degree to its offerings. In his report to the Virginia Board of Education for 1886–1887, President Lunsford Lomax suggested that “the leading object of the College, in conformity with an act of Congress and acts of the State Legislature, is to teach the principles of and the application of science” and “to give prominence to the sciences and their applications, especially those that relate to agriculture and the mechanic arts, so far as the facilities at its disposal will permit; and, at the same time, the discipline obtained by the study of languages and other studies is not to be neglected.”⁶³⁸ The consideration of both the principles and the application of science signaled a shift from the ideals upon which VAMC was originally founded, to provide an education to the

⁶³⁷ “Practical Education,” *Atlanta Constitution*.

⁶³⁸ *Report of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College to the Board of Education of the State of Virginia*, 87.

industrial class that was strictly practical in nature. This movement toward more scientifically minded education crystalized in the July 1891 reorganization of VAMC. In his report to the Board of Visitors, President John McLaren McBryde suggested that those who supported the Morrill Act of 1862 “held rightly that the sciences underlying them—mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, mineralogy and geology—should be given prominent places in the curricula of the new colleges. In other words, they intended that the training should be scientific and professional as well as practical.”⁶³⁹ Though the agricultural and mechanical courses of study survived the reorganization, McBryde’s assertion in favor of scientific education was the strongest defense yet of this move away from strictly practical education. In 1896, the Virginia legislature passed an act to rename VAMC to Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute. The institution’s new name reflected its evolving curricular focus.

For Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, the expansion of the curriculum to encompass industrial education occurred with the establishment of the five-year industrial course in the 1894 academic year. The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi had already expanded its curriculum to include a mechanical arts department, a fact that was lauded by Governor John Stone in his 1894 report to the Mississippi legislature. “The Agricultural and Mechanical College is now complete in all its departments. For years it was a mechanical college only in name, but the organization of the Mechanic Arts department is now complete, and it is an Agricultural and College in fact.”⁶⁴⁰ While the School of Technology at UGA and the engineering courses at VAMC focused on engineering and technology, the industrial course was focused on the trades. The five-year industrial course was “so arranged that each student in this course can take a trade in some of the Industries. All students in this course must enter upon the

⁶³⁹ *Report of President McBryde on Organization, Scope of Work, Courses of Study, &c.*, 1891, 2.

⁶⁴⁰ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi*, 1894, 22.

learning of some trade under the same requirements as classroom work.”⁶⁴¹ Black Mississippians could be part of the industrial development in the region, but their opportunities would be limited. Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College taught courses in blacksmithing, carpentry, printing, and shoe making and repair. Students in the industrial course would develop a proficiency in one of these trades along with taking courses in a more generalized curriculum that included agriculture, book-keeping and business papers, drawing, English grammar and literature, geography, mathematics, Mississippi history and government, penmanship, physiology, rhetoric, United States history, and vocal music.⁶⁴² This industrial course offered students at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College vocational preparation for a career in an increasingly industrial economy.

Each land-grant college in this study expanded its curricular offerings to reflect the change in the region from an economy based largely on agriculture to a New South, whose economy was diversified to include both agriculture and industry. Though the land-grant colleges had always nominally included instruction in both agriculture and the mechanic arts, the focus of these colleges had been more directed toward agricultural education. Meeting the demand to more deliberately address the “M” in A & M education ended up disrupting each college in a different way, and the disruption was more shocking to some colleges than others. But each college in some way met the challenge established by this aspect of a changing southern social order, in the movement of an antebellum south whose economy was largely driven by agriculture to a postbellum South who looked to rebuild by diversifying its economy.

⁶⁴¹ *Catalogue of the Officers of Alcorn A.&M. College, 1894–1895*, 18.

⁶⁴² *Catalogue of the Officers of Alcorn A.&M. College, 1894–1895*, 18–9.

Conclusion

The state contexts in which Alcorn University, UGA, VAMC were situated were unique and caused each school to develop differently. Chapters 4-6 reflect what can be understood about each college's development. In addition to what can be understood about each college, the five themes discussed in this chapter cut across cases and can be woven together to understand land-grant college development in the southern United States. Each college was influenced by state-level politics and influenced how state legislators supported higher education in the state. Each college both shaped and reflected the public's beliefs about the purpose of land-grant colleges. Each college was shaped by race and racism and reflected the changing southern social order in the postbellum period. Through an examination of these themes, the commonalities between the schools—as well as their uniqueness—can be understood.

By putting these institutions into conversation through the themes that emerged across cases, a fuller understanding of land-grant college development in the postbellum South is possible. Unlike land-grant colleges in other regions, southern land-grant colleges were influenced by Reconstruction and the rise and fall of Republican governments in the region. They reflected the changing social order in the south, including the rise of the New South creed, which suggested that the region should move from a primarily agrarian economy driven by plantations to a more diversified economy that included yeomen farming and industrialization. And they were all impacted in some way by race and racism, including how states allocated funds from the Morrill Act of 1890 to Black land-grant colleges and land-grant colleges for White students. By examining how each theme is embodied at the colleges in this study, it becomes possible to see how the story of southern land-grant college development both reflected and shaped larger regional developments in the postbellum period.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Though they would continue to grow and change during the twentieth century, by 1910, Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, the University of Georgia (UGA), and Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (VPI) had each become robust versions of land-grant colleges.⁶⁴³ Each college developed differently, according to the unique political and social context in which it was situated. But each contended with the changing social order of the South, during and after Reconstruction. By understanding the events in the specific cases and the themes that extend across them, this study extends our understanding of how land-grant colleges developed in the postbellum South.

In chapters 4–6, I discussed the development of Alcorn University, UGA, and Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (VAMC) as land-grant colleges. In these chapters, I identified internal and external influences that impacted the development of each college and utilized primary source evidence to support historical arguments. In chapter 7, I discussed themes that were present across cases to understand the development of land-grant colleges across states in the southern United States. This final chapter brings together the findings in the chapters that come before it. After a discussion of findings, I consider implications of those findings and suggest an agenda for future research.

⁶⁴³ The names used here are the names of the colleges in 1910. By 1910, Alcorn University had been renamed Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College and Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College had been renamed Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute. The names used in the remainder of the chapter are the names of the colleges at the time of their founding.

Discussion of Findings

The broad question that guided this study is “How did land-grant colleges develop in the postbellum South?” Within this larger question are two additional questions:

- 1.) What factors internal to southern land-grant colleges affected their development?
- 2.) What external influences affected how southern land-grant colleges developed?

In this context, “external influences” can be understood as the political, social, and economic contexts of the states in which the institutions are located.

The development of UGA as a land-grant college was marked by the struggle to build a cohesive university structure that included both a classical curriculum and instruction in agriculture and the mechanic arts. The land scrip allocated to the state of Georgia arrived at a time when UGA was struggling financially. The economic devastation of the region due to the Civil War left the university with few operational funds and the proceeds from the sale of the land scrip helped keep it running. They would also require that its administrators and trustees fundamentally alter the university by making attendance at Georgia State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts (GSCAMA) a more achievable goal for the children of Georgia’s industrial class, largely through admissions requirements that were lower than those of Franklin College, UGA’s historic liberal arts college.

An internal factor related to the struggle to build a cohesive university structure was the university’s administration and the trustees themselves. Even before GSCAMA’s founding, Chancellor Andrew Lipscomb doubted the efficacy of education specifically in agriculture and the mechanic arts. In a report to the trustees, he wrote, “The education of agriculturalists and mechanics as such is neither possible nor expedient and hence our aim should be to educate men

together so that they can act and interact on one another.”⁶⁴⁴ His successor, Henry Holcombe Tucker, took an even stronger stance against GSCAMA’s students, calling them “students of a low grade of culture.”⁶⁴⁵ Tucker resented that the public blamed UGA for not moving these students more quickly through the preparatory program, rather than understanding that the students arrived at the university with such poor preparation that they required extensive preparatory training.

External influences on the development of GSCAMA were the people of the state of Georgia and their views on higher education. The agriculturalists of the state and, later, to a lesser degree those who supported technological education, saw the university as having mismanaged the proceeds from the sale of land scrip by using the funds to support Franklin College rather than developing GSCAMA. As a result, UGA spent most of the 1890s defending itself against calls for the legislature to remove the land-grant designation and associated land scrip funds from the university. It was not until the 1900s, under Chancellor Walter B. Hill, that UGA managed to build a cohesive university structure. By cultivating successful relationships with both the Georgia legislature and with private philanthropists, Hill was able to leverage financial resources to establish the College of Agriculture at the university.

In its development as a land-grant college, Alcorn University is the college in this study that was most obviously influenced by state politics. An external influence on the development of Alcorn University was the changing view of education for Black Mississippians during and after Reconstruction. While Governor Alcorn believed in education for all Mississippians, a progressive view for the period, the establishment of Alcorn University was at least in some

⁶⁴⁴ Chancellor Lipscomb to Trustees, 25 August 1871, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 4, 1858–1877), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

⁶⁴⁵ Tucker to Trustees, 24 July 1878, University of Georgia Board of Trustees Minutes (vol. 5, 1878–1886), University of Georgia Board of Trustees Correspondence and Reports.

measure also politically expedient. Republicans had remained in power thanks in no small part to Black voters, and one person who was cynical about the establishment of the university suggested that, “Alcorn’s degradation of the colored citizen was concocted with no other purpose in mind than to aid Mr. Alcorn with a half-million of the people’s money, to buy up a set of renegades and traitors to their race.”⁶⁴⁶ Regardless, Alcorn appointed Hiram Revels, a Black politician, to the presidency and installed a board of trustees to oversee the institution which included both Black and White politicians.

The end of Reconstruction in Mississippi was marked by the return to power of the Democratic party, and a commitment to white supremacy. White agriculturalists in the state were largely responsible for handing the Democrats this victory, having mobilized them to vote for John M. Stone for governor after they grew frustrated by the concessions to Black Mississippians during Reconstruction. After the Democrats assumed power, White agriculturalists became even more influential through groups like the Grange and the Farmers’ Alliance which, by 1888, had 60,000 members in Mississippi.⁶⁴⁷ These White agrarians championed the development of agricultural and mechanic arts education separate from the University of Mississippi, with a curriculum that focused on practical education. In 1878, the Mississippi legislature removed the land-grant designation and associated land scrip funds from the University of Mississippi and established the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi as the land-grant college for White students. At the same time, Alcorn University was reestablished as Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, and gained the designation as “an agricultural college for the colored

⁶⁴⁶ “R.W. Flournoy Again,” *The Weekly Clarion*.

⁶⁴⁷ Cresswell, *Rednecks, Redeemers, and Race*, 24.

youth of the State,” and was directed to offer a curriculum of agriculture, mechanic, arts, and military tactics.⁶⁴⁸ The two colleges then split the proceeds from the sale of land scrip equally.

Much as with UGA, the faculty and administrators were an internal factor in the development of Alcorn University as a land-grant college. In 1874, trustee Samuel Ireland was accused of mismanaging funds and stealing \$35,000 from the university. The *Weekly Clarion* suggested that Ireland acted as a de facto president and that “the Trustees, at Ireland’s request, deprived him [Revels] of all executive powers, and then set him to the dignified task of overlooking the wood choppers’ and janitor’s duties.”⁶⁴⁹ Revels was sidelined from his duties by a corrupt board of trustees, but was also held responsible for their misdeeds. Revels offered his resignation in July 1874, though he was reinstated in 1876. Some historians believe that he was removed because the public believed that someone needed to be held accountable for the financial scandal. Later, John Burrus spent his time as Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College’s president championing an agricultural and mechanic arts curriculum. He worked to unite the theory and practice of agriculture in the curriculum. He also established a Trade Department at the college to advance the study of mechanic arts. In addition to classroom training, students worked on the college farm or by performing maintenance on campus buildings.

VAMC’s development was profoundly influenced by internal factors related to the curriculum and military culture. Its early years as a land-grant college were characterized by the expansion of the college to support a variety of educational programs. At its founding, VAMC was established as an agricultural and mechanic arts college which would bring practical education to the industrial class. Between its founding in 1872 and the end of John McLaren

⁶⁴⁸ *Laws of State of Mississippi, 1878*, 119.

⁶⁴⁹ “Alcorn University: Why That Institution is a Failure and What Went with the Money.”

McBryde's presidency in 1907, the college expanded to include multiple courses of study, a graduate program, and a robust military culture. This transformation also included a name change for the college from VAMC to VPI.

When the Virginia legislature appropriated two-thirds of the proceeds of the sale of land scrip given to the commonwealth of Virginia, it suggested in the legislation that, "the curriculum of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College shall embrace such branches of learning as relate to agriculture and the mechanic arts, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics."⁶⁵⁰ In their plan of organization, the VAMC Board of Visitors wrote that "the proper sphere for the proposed college is that of a middle grade agricultural and mechanical school—one which teaches chiefly results and practical methods, and only so much of mathematics and physical science as may be necessary to render results and methods fully intelligible."⁶⁵¹ This narrow sense of purpose guided VAMC in its earliest years.

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, VAMC's curriculum expanded beyond its original curriculum. Between 1881 and 1886, the college established a Business Department, expanded to offer degrees in civil and mining engineering, and began offering a bachelor of science degree which was "arranged to give a general and less technical education in subjects of science and language, to meet the wants of those students who have selected no definite vocation in life, as well as those who propose ultimately to engage in teaching or in some commercial or manufacturing enterprise."⁶⁵² In 1891, President McBryde proposed a reorganization of the college which centered the college's efforts on the teaching of science rather than on practical

⁶⁵⁰ *Acts and Joint Resolutions Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Virginia at its Session of 1871–'72*, 313.

⁶⁵¹ *Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College: Its History and Organization* ([Blacksburg?]: [n.p.], [1872?]), 25.

⁶⁵² *Catalogue of the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1886–87* (Lynchburg: J.P. Bell & Co., 1887), 15.

agricultural and mechanic arts education. In discussing this reorganization, McBryde suggested “the framers of the [Morrill] act held rightly that the sciences underlying them—mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, mineralogy and geology—should be given prominent places in the curricula of the new colleges. In other words, they intended that the training should be scientific and professional as well as practical.”⁶⁵³ Under this new organization, the college offered special certificates in agriculture or the mechanic arts as well as a bachelor of science degree with concentrations in either agriculture or mechanics. Reflecting the changes in curriculum over time, and the college’s changing academic mission, the college was renamed in 1896 to the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute.

As VAMC was establishing itself as a college for the education of the industrial class, it was also establishing military tactics education. In 1879, the college’s board of visitors resolved that “strict military discipline is best suited to the management of students of the age and number likely to attend said College, it is ordered that rigid military discipline be established and enforced in its management.”⁶⁵⁴ As part of this military resolution regarding student discipline, the board of visitors directed that students would be required to live on campus, would be required to march to and from classes, and would be required to be in their dorms by 7 p.m. for a mandatory study period. The military culture at VAMC also continued to develop throughout the 1880s and 1890s. In addition to courses in military tactics and the culture of military discipline which existed at the college, the Corps of Cadets was formed in the 1891–1892 academic year along with a Cadet Drum and Bugle Corps.

⁶⁵³ *Report of President McBryde on Organization, Scope of Work, Courses of Study, &c.*, 1891 ([Blacksburg?]: [n.p.], [1891?]), 4. Reprinted from *Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1889-90—1890-1891* (Richmond: J.H. O’Bannon, 1891). Citations refer to reprint.

⁶⁵⁴ “Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical School,” *Richmond Dispatch*, August 26, 1879. Chronicling America.

The development of VAMC as a land-grant college was influenced by the politics of Virginia, especially during the late 1870s and early 1880s when the Funders, Readjusters, and Democrats struggled for power. In 1879, the newly elected Readjuster Senate introduced legislation to dismiss VAMC's Board of Visitors which had been appointed by their political rivals. The legislation ultimately failed because it lacked popular support, but it drove the board to act quickly to bring discipline to the college. It issued a resolution that included the opinion that, "strict military discipline is best suited to the management of students of the age and number likely to attend said College, it is ordered that rigid military discipline be established and enforced in its management."⁶⁵⁵ In 1882, William E. Cameron was elected as the Readjuster Governor of Virginia. The Senate once again put forward legislation to replace VAMC's entire Board of Visitors. This time the legislation was successful, and Cameron appointed a new board which in turn appointed a new president. Cameron's board put forward a plan for a total reorganization, having found "deplorable" conditions upon their arrival to campus.

Looking across cases, another answer to the questions guiding my study emerged in the form of themes that were common to all cases. These five themes were:

- 1.) The role of politics in the development of these land-grant colleges
- 2.) The impact of beliefs carried by college trustees, college administrators, and the public about the purpose of land-grant colleges
- 3.) The role of race and racism in the development of these land-grant colleges
- 4.) The relationship between these land-grant colleges and the changing social order in the postbellum south

⁶⁵⁵ "Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical School," *Richmond Dispatch*.

5.) The impact of the changing role of industrialism on the development of these land-grant colleges

Taken together, they show that land-grant colleges in the postbellum South were influenced in their development by state-level politics and a changing southern social order that included a move toward an economy that was based on both agriculture and industry. Land-grant colleges in the postbellum South were also affected by race and racism, both in their founding and in how the state and commonwealth legislatures decided to appropriate the funds given to them as a provision of the Morrill Act of 1890. Finally, land-grant colleges in the postbellum South were influenced by how various internal and external stakeholders viewed the purpose of land-grant colleges, including their educational purpose and who was meant to attend them.

Implications

The implications for this study are related to its contribution to the historiography of higher education and its contributions to the methods and methodological discourse. In the case of historiography, this study exists at the intersection of the literature about land-grant colleges and the literature about southern higher education. It serves to extend our understanding of both. Methodologically, this study uses bricolage and incorporates elements of case study methodology, librarianship, and historical research methods.

In its broadest sense, this study contributes to the historiography of land-grant college development by extending the regions of the United State under study. Two recent works, Sorber's *Land-Grant Colleges and Popular Revolt* and Gelber's *The University and the People*, focused on the influence of Populist leaders on the development of higher education in the postbellum period. In the introduction to his book, Sorber acknowledges that land-grant colleges were "born amid a civil war that confronted irresolvable visions of the future of the United

States,” and even uses the phrase “antebellum” to describe the developments in agricultural education before the Civil War.⁶⁵⁶ Despite these considerations, Sorber’s book focuses on land-grant college development in the Northeast.⁶⁵⁷ Gelber suggests that his book “concentrates on the South and the West,” which is true; Gelber writes about Kansas, Nebraska, and North Carolina.⁶⁵⁸ These books make significant contributions to the study of land-grant college history, but do little to close the gap in the literature around how the political, economic, and social conditions of the postbellum South influenced the development of land-grant colleges in the region. Here, I focus specifically on the South and look at colleges across the region. In doing so, I consider how conditions unique to region impact the development of land-grant colleges there.

This study also contributes to the historiography of southern higher education, discussing the development of a type of institution within the region. Almost sixty years ago, Allan M. Cartter wrote that between the end of the Civil War until the start of World War I, southern higher education suffered because of “lack of money, reflecting the lower levels of per capita income and wealth in the region, lack of understanding of the function of higher learning, lack of experience, lack of motivation.”⁶⁵⁹ The colleges in this study had periods of financial struggle and faced challenges when students arrived without the proper preparation to succeed without significant remedial education. And while these colleges stumbled at times during their development, their development also included bright spots. By contributing nuance to each body

⁶⁵⁶ Sorber, *Land-Grant Colleges and Popular Revolt*, 5.

⁶⁵⁷ Sorber’s book focuses on developments in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

⁶⁵⁸ Gelber, *The University and the People*, 14. Gelber notes that “these states do not constitute a representative sample of American higher education.”

⁶⁵⁹ Cartter, “The Role of Higher Education in the Changing South,” 286.

of literature, this study extends what we know about land-grant college development and higher education in the South.

This study makes three specific historiographical contributions. The first is in its examination of the relationship between state-level politics and land-grant college development. In each case, state or commonwealth governments passed legislation which established the land-grant college and appropriated some portion of the funds from the sale of land scrip. In each case, that legislation included a provision that gave the governor the power to appoint a board of trustees or visitors for the college. So while the boards acted independently from the state to provide administrative oversight and set direction for the colleges, the boards served at the pleasure of the governor. In discussing state control of land-grant colleges, Eldon L. Johnson suggests that,

State control developed more or less in tandem with state support, replacing the early practice of state chartering with essentially private control through self-perpetuating boards of trustees. This evolution, beyond the space available here, gives still more evidence that state support and state control were public tastes that had to be acquired. Whether entrapped or not by accepting the Morrill Act's conditions, all states eventually conceded, however reluctantly and tardily, that state patronage should follow, that the new institution was a child of the state, and that the full faith and credit of the state were involved; but "eventually" was the key.⁶⁶⁰

Financial devastation in the South following the Civil War limited what states could, or were willing to, spend to support these land-grant colleges. And in each case, the return of Democrats to power at the end of Reconstruction often resulted in even more limited financial support based

⁶⁶⁰ Johnson, "Misconceptions About the Early Land-Grant Colleges," 344.

on conditions of retrenchment and austerity in the states and commonwealth. But this study demonstrates that state or commonwealth governments were in control of the development of these land-grant colleges, through legislation that either established, funded, or changed the schools.

The second historiographical contribution is related to the first but is narrower in scope. This study offers an examination of Reconstruction-era politics and their influence on land-grant college development. Of the three cases included in this study, the relationship between Reconstruction and land-grant college development is most obvious in Mississippi with the founding of Alcorn University. But in each case, there is political intrigue and consideration of what educational opportunities should be afforded to formerly enslaved people in the state or commonwealth. In Georgia, this relationship is seen in the \$8,000 appropriation given to Atlanta University to ensure that the University of Georgia would not have to consider desegregating. And in Virginia, this relationship is seen through the state support of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, whose founder believed that “freedmen should refrain from participating in southern political life because they were culturally and morally deficient and therefore unfit to vote and hold office in ‘civilized’ society,” but who also championed education for Black men that would not only taught their minds but instilled a morality that would prepare them for Christian life.⁶⁶¹ In his book, Gelber coined the phrase “academic Populists,” suggesting that “academic Populists identified with the movement’s ideology and believed that state universities could demonstrate solidarity with the struggles of ordinary farmers and laborers.”⁶⁶² In the same way that the Populist movement created conditions for people to consider issues of access to higher education, Reconstruction also created conditions for people to consider issues of access

⁶⁶¹ Lowe, *Republicans and Reconstruction in Virginia, 1856–70*, 73.

⁶⁶² Gelber, *The University and the People*, 13.

to higher education, in this case what educational opportunities should be given to formerly enslaved people.

The final historiographical contribution is the way in which this study puts into conversation the development of Black land-grant colleges and those of their White counterparts. Scholars have considered the development of land-grant colleges for Black students and for White students, but much of the literature considers their development independent from one another. John Wennersten suggests that, “the black land-grant schools of the South did not have a happy birth.”⁶⁶³ Wennersten goes on to suggest that, “the general quality of education at the black land-grant schools at this time was inferior; and the major concern of state officials was to meet the legal requirements to divide the federal appropriation with a school for Blacks in order to not jeopardize federal funding of white schools.”⁶⁶⁴ In order to fully understand this unhappy birth, the relationship between Black land-grant colleges and their counterpart schools for White students must be put into conversation. This is especially true when it comes to issues of underfunding by state or commonwealth legislatures, where appropriations were allocated differently between institutions. This is not to suggest that work on the development of HBCUs or the underfunding of those colleges in the modern era does not already exist. But the development of Black land-grant colleges as part of the land-grant college movement has been understudied. The contribution that this study makes is an explicit discussion about these relationships and the ways in which legislatures and governors were complicit in the treatment of Black land-grant colleges relative to the colleges for White students. By illuminating not only the development of Black land-grant colleges as institutions, but also the relationship between Black

⁶⁶³ John R. Wennersten, “The Travail of Black Land-Grant Schools in the South, 1890-1917,” *Agricultural History* 65, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 54.

⁶⁶⁴ Wennersten, “The Travail of Black Land-Grant Schools in the South” 56.

land-grant colleges and the land-grant colleges for White students, the current underfunding of Black land-grant colleges can be better understood.

The contribution that this study makes into the methodological discourse relates to the idea of methodological bricolage and the use of case study methodology for research design and research methods influenced by practices in librarianship and by historical research methods. The use of case study methodology in historical research is not novel. John L. Rury writes about the use of case study methodology in historical research, warning that one of its drawbacks is that case study methodology is not generalizable. He offers a solution for this problem of generalization, suggesting that “researchers undertaking this form of investigation should always take pains to consider the larger context of the phenomena they are examining.”⁶⁶⁵ The contribution this study makes to the methodological discourse comes through the inclusion of chapter 2, on methods and methodology. By explicitly discussing aspects of research design related to case study methodology, such as bounding of the multicase study and case selection, I am able to ensure sincerity, credibility, and meaningful coherence. Also, the inclusion of a cross-case analysis chapter and the use of Stake’s Worksheet 2 [Themes (Research Questions) of the Multicase Study] and Worksheet 5a [Matrix for Generating Theme-Based Assertions from Case Findings] to develop themes based on my research questions and apply those themes to findings to identify themes that emerged in each case made use of specific case study methodological tools in order to provide additional insight to the research questions that guided my study.⁶⁶⁶

An additional contribution to the methodological discourse was a direct engagement with the principles that undergird how decisions made by archivists during the arrangement and description process impact the sources of data available for study. As I gathered data, there were

⁶⁶⁵ Rury, “The Power and Limitations of Historical Case Study,” 263.

⁶⁶⁶ Stake, *Multiple Case Study Analysis*, 43, 51.

more documents available to me at UGA than at either of the two other colleges. I was able to overcome this limitation by augmenting the primary sources I gathered with sources like newspaper or farming journal publications, course catalogs, and legislation. While I wrote chapters that contained viable historical arguments, the evidence I had to back up my claims was more plentiful in some cases than in others. Historians are confronted continually with an incomplete archival record and often respond by using sources that are kept outside of traditional archival settings. Increasingly, historians are naming archival erasure and considering the challenges it creates. In this study, it was important to me as a librarian to make clear connections between principles of archival arrangement and description and the creation of the archival record. By contextualizing the archives as constructed spaces, I connected my professional experience as a librarian with my experience as a researcher. In doing so, I offer a contribution to the methodological discourse in using archival theory to address the causes of erasure of marginalized voices in the archive.

This study's contributions in the historiography of higher education and the methodological discourse have implications for future research in both spaces. This study works to fill gaps in the historiography of land-grant colleges and southern higher education by providing insight into the development of three land-grant colleges in the South. It also works to expand a methodological conversation about bricolage and about the use of case study methods in historical research through an explicit discussion of research design and data collection. The implications of these contributions are an expanded understanding for both historians of education and qualitative methodologists.

Opportunities for Further Study

Based on the findings of this study, there are multiple avenues for future research on the topic of southern land-grant college development. The first, and most obvious, is that this study considers the implications of federal policy implementation but does not explicitly engage with any theories of the policy process. An avenue for further study would be connecting the findings of this multicase study with policy implementation theory. An example of this type of connection would be engagement with the model developed by Robert S. Montjoy and Laurence J. O'Toole. Based on my reading of their work, I believe that the Morrill Act of 1862 is a "Type A" mandate, where the mandate is vague and specifically allocates resources to support the mandate.⁶⁶⁷ Using a specific policy implementation model, such as the one developed by Montjoy and O'Toole, could extend the implications of this study into the policy history community.

Second, because of the temporal boundaries of this study, the development of land-grant colleges for women in the South is largely absent. Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College was the first land-grant college in this study to admit women, and chapter 5 discusses the courses that women at the college could take. While taking care to note that his book focuses on the experience of women at northeastern land grant colleges, Sorber suggests that "coeducation would become standard practice at land-grant colleges by 1914."⁶⁶⁸ By attempting to extrapolate larger understandings about the experiences of women at land-grant colleges based on the experiences of women in a limited geographic region, Sorber misunderstands the experiences of women who pursued schooling at land-grant colleges. Women in the South were not given the opportunity of coeducation until well into the twentieth century, and schooling for southern

⁶⁶⁷ Robert S. Montjoy and Laurence J. O'Toole, Jr., "Toward a Theory of Policy Implementation: An Organizational Perspective," *Public Administration Review* 39, no. 5 (September–October 1979): 466.

⁶⁶⁸ Sorber, *Land-Grant Colleges and Popular Revolt*, 150.

women in the late nineteenth century focused on teacher training through normal schools or training for domestic work through industrial schools. Although this study also does little to extend our understanding of women's experiences at land-grant colleges, it does begin that to explore that experience through a discussion of the curriculum for women students at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College. While women were admitted to Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College in the early twentieth century, women were not allowed to enroll at UGA until 1918 and at VPI until 1921. Because UGA and VPI admitted women outside of the temporal boundary of this study, their attendance at these colleges was not discussed. An opportunity for future research would be an expansion of these cases to include a discussion of the admission of women and the courses they could take and further consideration of why, where, and in what ways they were excluded.

Third, this study focuses on land-grant college development in Georgia, Mississippi, and Virginia. An opportunity for further study would be to look at land-grant college development in other states within the region. For example, successful challenges to the Universities of Alabama and South Carolina over their land-grant designations and associated land scrip funding resulted in the establishment of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama (now Auburn University) and Clemson Agricultural College of South Carolina (now Clemson University). Future studies should expand upon this work to examine the development of other land-grant colleges in the region. Doing so would allow for a more nuanced understanding of how the themes that are common across cases are embodied over a greater number of cases.

Fourth, this study implicates issues of class as each state or commonwealth considered how to use the proceeds from the sale of land scrip to establish colleges for the education of the industrial classes. An opportunity for further study would be to examine more closely issues of

class to understand how views of the industrial class held by legislators, college trustees, and faculty influenced the development of southern land-grant colleges. Especially useful would be a study of agricultural and mechanic arts education at land-grant colleges that were appended to existing flagship universities, as this brought students from the former planter class together with students from the industrial class. Engaging in this work would not only extend what is known about land-grant college development, but would also extend conversations about the role of class in the history of higher education.

Finally, an opportunity for further study would be to broaden the study of land-grant college development to more thoroughly contextualize their development for Black students and White students within the existing public higher education system of a state or commonwealth. Included in this work should be a consideration of financial support for Black colleges and universities by state legislatures in the years before the Morrill Act of 1890. A version of a comprehensive examination exists on the state of Mississippi in the form of David G. Sansing's *Making Haste Slowly*. A similarly thorough examination of the development of higher education in the state of Georgia and the commonwealth of Virginia would be a useful addition to the literature on higher education in the region. Additionally, an examination of the development of the state of West Virginia as it relates to the commonwealth of Virginia, and a consideration of how higher education developed similarly and differently in the two areas would be an additional valuable expansion of this study.

Conclusion

This study engaged with the question, "How did land-grant colleges develop in the postbellum South?" and, in doing so, extended our understanding of both land-grant college development and the history of southern higher education. In becoming land-grant colleges,

Alcorn University, UGA, and VPI were shaped by Reconstruction era politics and their aftermath in their respective states. Leveraging the capacity of multicase study to reveal what each case has to offer as well as what can be learned across cases, this study considers developments of individual colleges and larger, regional developments. Each college was shaped by internal and external influences unique to its state or commonwealth; their developments also had commonalities.

Farmers in the postbellum South believed that the unique composition of southern soil required the special training of those who farmed it. Similarly, the social and political contexts of the postbellum South are unique circumstances from which the southern land-grant colleges in this study emerged. The southern land-grant colleges in this study eventually embodied the Morrill Act of 1862's call for agricultural, mechanic arts, and military tactics education. They also embodied the tension in the postbellum South that resulted from a consideration of the type of opportunities that should be afforded to formerly enslaved Black men and to White men of the industrial class. Stetar suggests that "both Southern culture and higher education were, in the latter third of the nineteenth century, distinct from those in other sections of the nation."⁶⁶⁹ Alcorn University, UGA, and VAMC are both uniquely land-grant and uniquely southern. In considering their development, this multicase study extends our understanding of what was involved in becoming a land-grant college.

⁶⁶⁹ Stetar, "In Search of a Southern Direction," 344.

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