

Courtesy Pamela R. Dennis

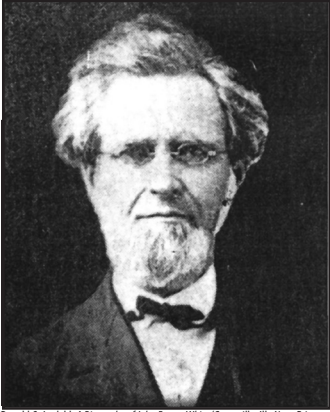
BROWNSVILLE BAPTIST FEMALE COLLEGE

Pamela R. Dennis

A quiet, unassuming town, Brownsville, Tennessee, is nestled in West Tennessee on the edge of the Mississippi delta, four miles off Interstate 40 and fifty-six miles northeast of the Memphis metropolis. Brownsville was laid out in 1823 and named for Revolutionary hero Jacob Brown. Schools were established almost immediately, working under the subscription plan. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Brownsville was a major player in the building of railroads, connecting the area to the rest of the country in every direction. Known for its culture and well-educated townsfolk, the small town of approximately 3,000 inhabitants boasted one male and three female institutes of higher learning. Though the Civil War had a major impact on the economy and social makeup of the town, one institution survived the war and flourished into the twentieth century—Brownsville Baptist Female College.

Baptists settled in West Tennessee as early as the 1820s and established the Baptist State Convention of West Tennessee in 1835. Education was an important part of the growth of communities, and the Baptists in Tennessee recognized that fact. Like other denominations, they were quick to create educational institutions including, among others: Union University of Murfreesboro (1841),

Mossy Creek Missionary Baptist Seminary (now Carson-Newman) (1851), Tennessee Baptist Female Institute (later Mary Sharp College) (1851), Madison College (formerly Spring Creek), 1852, Holston Baptist Female Institute (1853), Morristown Female Academy (1858), Southwestern Baptist University (1875), Sweetwater Seminary for Young Ladies (1886), Boscobel College (1889), and Tennessee College for Women (1907).¹



Donald C. Jordahl, *A Biography of John Brown White* (Greenville, Ill.: Naco Printing, 1984), [102].

John Brown White

Working under the premise that local schools would receive local patronage, they knew that they must create a credible school that would offer advantages over other schools in the area. Following the lead of the Presbyterians who had founded the Brownsville Female Seminary in 1842, the West Tennessee Baptist Convention established the West Tennessee Baptist Female College in 1850 as a result of a subscription by the Brownsville Baptist Church of \$10,000, and hoped the school would be as successful as the Middle Tennessee schools—Union University (Murfreesboro) and Mary Sharp College.

The thirty-seven-acre property was purchased from Louis Jansen of Hardeman County for \$4,000, and after some selling of property over the next eight years, resulted in a four-acre campus that sat on a prominent hill in the center of town, where the building remains to this day.

Trustees were appointed by the convention and included Judge W. P. Bond, R. S. Thomas, Hon. D. B. Thomas, and Dr. J. C. Jones. Opened in September 1851 under Harvey Ball, professor of languages, and his daughter Susan, the school was chartered in 1852.

Most resources credit John B. White as the first president; however, he was delayed in his appointment by sickness in his family and did not preside over the school until the end of 1853. His assistant, Jonathan Merriam, professor of music, arrived in April 1853 and remained at the school until 1856.²

A local newspaper advertisement for the Brownsville Male Academy states that Champ C. Conner was president by 14 June 1853. Conner was pastor of Brownsville Baptist Church from 1851 to 1853. It was not unprecedented for local pastors to serve as presidents of nearby colleges in addition to their pastoral duties but, in this case, he appears to be president of the board of trustees for the school rather than its academic president.³

Wake Forest College president John Brown White served as president of the Brownsville school until 1855. Born in 1810 in New Hampshire, he was a graduate of Brown University and a

strong advocate of female education, stating that these schools were established “to prepare leaders for society by enlightening the intelligence of young ladies who were to become mothers.”⁴

The school boasted a new building costing \$12,000 and a library of about 2,000 volumes. There were six faculty members, and the 100 plus students studied the literary and ornamental branches. Expenses were as follows:

English branches including ancient languages—\$10 to \$20 (based on grade)

Board per month including fuel, lights, washing, etc.—\$8

Incidental expenses—\$1

Extra charges for modern languages—\$10 each

Music on piano, organ, Seraphine, Aeolian, and guitar—\$27 each with use of instrument

Drawing and painting—\$15⁵

The report of the trustees after the first year was favorable with examinations in the areas of penmanship, mathematics, Latin, French, botany, history, geography, reading, and moral science. The music department, under the leadership of Professor and Mrs. Merriam, included foundational work in harmony, transposition, vocal music, sight reading, and ear training. The public was promised by trustee Thomas Owen that “no pains will be spared to make this Institution one of the best in the country.”⁶

Prices remained nearly the same the next year with additional instruction on harp at \$40 per term of 40 weeks and needlework at \$15 per term. Languages were listed specifically as Hebrew, Greek, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. A preparatory department was added under W. W. Hawkins, who led briefly as president pro tem between the departure of President White and the election of William Shelton in 1856. It was through Shelton's leadership that the school survived the war, remaining open to local students throughout this period. The neighboring Presbyterian institute did not fair so well, never reopening after the war.⁷

Professor Charles Hess came to the school from Chattanooga in 1858 as music director. It was under his leadership that a concert hall was constructed in 1859.⁸

During the 1858 commencement exercises, President Shelton declared that the “shams” of French and Latin salutatory and valedictory addresses would be abolished for “plain English.” For

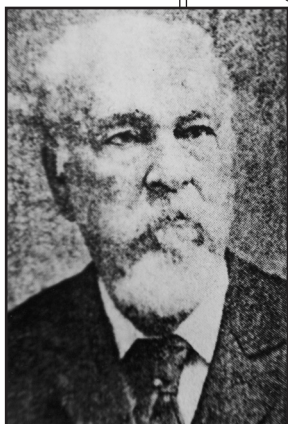


Courtesy of Pamela Dennis



the first time, the audience actually was able to understand the student addresses. Because of the heat tolerated during this commencement, two newspaper articles stated that a new, larger hall would be built in time for the next commencement exercises.⁹

At least one professor was on the faculty of both the Baptist and Presbyterian schools. John Paul Wendel, born in 1809 in Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany, immigrated to the United States about 1856. In addition to teaching at the schools, he was organist at Zion Church (now Christ Episcopal) throughout his life, a position assumed by his daughter for many years afterward. Wendel wrote opening and parting songs for the Presbyterian school each year and was highly praised for his musical and teaching abilities. He donated a \$100 melodeon to the church around 1857 and land for its parsonage in 1871. By 1872 he appeared on the roll of the faculty at the Baptist school, a position he held probably until his death in 1892 when Professor J. I. Ayres was listed as the music director of the school. At least three of Wendel's daughters graduated from the Baptist College and went on to teach music themselves.¹⁰



Courtesy of Gore Research Center, MTSU, Murfreesboro, TN

William Shelton

In 1865 the West Tennessee Baptist Convention paid off the college's debt of \$2,000. The school suspended operations for one year after Shelton resigned, but reorganized under the presidency of A.B. Cabaniss who remained in the position until 1868.¹¹

J. R. Branham served as president for six years, beginning in 1868. There were 160 students enrolled by 1872, and the faculty that year was comprised of J. R. Branham (president and instructor of moral and mental philosophy); W. B. Crawford (natural science); Charles Lane (mathematics); Mrs. J. R. Branham (modern languages and preparatory department); Miss Cooke (drawing and painting, and assistant in literary department); J. P. Wendell (director, Music Department); and Kate Bradford (assistant, Music Department). An 1872–73 city directory described the school as follows:

There are two large buildings connected together, making a beautiful front of 130 or 140 feet; two full stories' high, in suitable ratio to the large size of buildings. Such is the full capacity of the College buildings as to furnish large concert hall and chapel study halls, recitation rooms, society rooms, libraries, apparatus room, studio for art department, etc. The grounds are large and well shaded, and water of the best quality. Brownsville is an old town noted for its wealth and refinement, and high social rank of its people. The families in such rank, will feel an earnest sympathy for young ladies sent there to be educated, and will co-operate with the College in promoting

their advancements in the school work. . . . This school having been chartered in 1851—24 years ago, furnishes the glorifying fact if it had not given entire satisfaction in every respect, otherwise, it would not be in existence today.¹²

Expenses at the college per session of five months were:

Board, room furnished with lights, fuel (gas), washing, etc.)	90.00
Board, rooms furnished and fuel	80.00
Preparatory Department	15.00
Academic Department	20.00
Junior Class, Collegiate Department	25.00
Intermediate Class, Collegiate Department	27.00
Senior Class, Collegiate Department	30.00
Contingent fee	2.00
Wax work, etc.	15.00
Diploma fee	10.00 ¹³

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A series of short presidencies followed including G. W. Johnston (1876–78), R. A. Binford (1878–80), and Sue Young and Mary Thomas (1880–81) during which time there is little information available.¹⁴

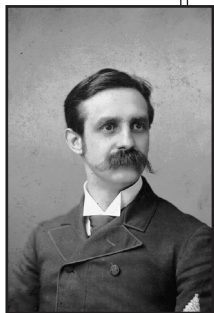
New life was breathed into the school during the next decade. Patrick Eager assumed the presidency in 1881. Faculty included Mrs. S. E. Rowan, lady principal; Miss M. P. Thomas, principal of primary department; Sallie Anderson, principal of elocution and art; Annie E. Linn, principal musical department; and Emma Alston, matron. Trustees were Hon. H. B. Folk, A. M. Austin, E. A. Collins, Hon. D. O. Thomas, A. C. Estes, and Hon. P. T. Glass. Under Eager's leadership and that of J. D. Anderson (president, 1887–88), the school expanded both physically and financially.¹⁵

In addition to the Baptist schools within the state, more and more schools were coming on the scene, including Baylor University (Texas); Southwest Virginia Institute for Young Ladies (Glade Spring, Virginia); Washington and Lee University (Lexington, Virginia); Southwest Virginia Institute (Bristol); Bethel College (Russellville, Kentucky); Georgetown College (Kentucky); Jasper, Alabama, Male and Female Academy; Judson Institute (Marion, Alabama); and Limestone College (Gaffney, South Carolina), among others. Even Brownsville itself now had another female school—Wesleyan Female College, established in 1869. It was time to move forward, and the school was reorganized in 1888 to compete better with the other schools.¹⁶

By the time of the reorganization, the school's enrollment had dropped to 43. However, there was a 50 percent increase

the following year, and by 1890, the school boasted 135 students hailing from seven states (Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas). Enrollment continued to rise over the next several years as faculty were added to the roster.

In 1890 Thomas Smith became president and taught Greek. A new building (probably a dorm) was built in time for the start of the fall semester of 1891. Faculty included Carey A. Folk (German), Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Talley, Mrs. Dunn, Miss Thomas, and Prof. Ayers (Music). That summer, the school graduated ten students—Anne E. Carlton, Arkansas; Phredonia Estes, Tennessee; May B. Folk, Tennessee; Emma Hodges, Tennessee; Edna May Hodges, Tennessee; Daisy Keemon, Alabama; Willie T. Parrish, Kentucky; Medora Rice, Tennessee; Birdie Scott, Louisiana; and Fannie Windes, Tennessee. According to E. E. Folk, editor of the *Baptist and Reflector* (father of May Folk one of the graduates), the girls were “as beautiful, lithe, perfect and graceful in mind, charming and lovely in disposition as any ‘sweet girl graduates’ I ever saw.”¹⁷



Courtesy SBHL&A

**E. E. Folk editor
of the Baptist
and Reflector
whose daughter
graduated from
Brownsville**

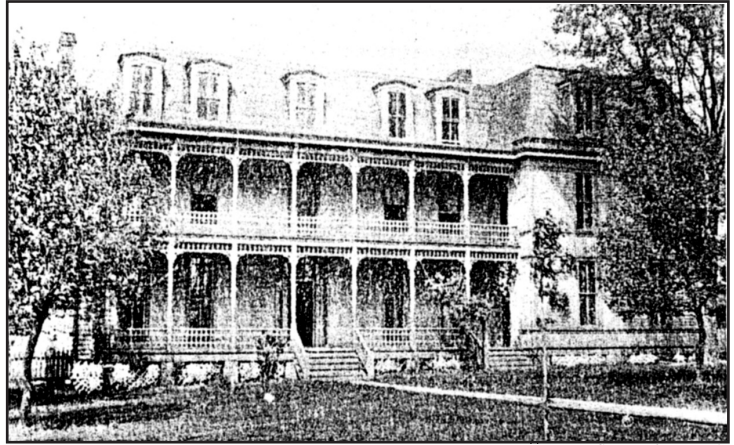
As in most schools of the time, graduation ceremonies lasted four days. G. A. Lofton of Nashville delivered the baccalaureate sermon that year. Monday's activities included elocution and musical programs. Tuesday involved events for the alumni in the morning including an address (that year by W. Haywood of Dyersburg) and an evening music concert. The major event on Wednesday was graduation. There were now 153 students and the new slate of trustees included William Thomas, Esq.; Dr. T. K. Powell; Dr. W. B. Moore; Capt. T. H. Norvell; P. Anderson, M.D.; J. S. Patton, M.D.; H. P. Hudson, M.D.; E. E. Folk; F. R. Boston, D. D.; R. J. Willingham, D.D.; W. L. Estes, M.D., Pennsylvania; J. M. Wells, D.D., Texas; J. R. Garlick, D.D., Virginia; Col. A. F. Fleet, Missouri; J. M. Moody, D.D., California; C. G. Skillman, D.D., Missouri; J. H. Prestridge, D.D., Kentucky; John Bagby, M.D., Arkansas; and J. R. Trotter, M.D., Mississippi.¹⁸

President Smith had contracted with the school to serve as president for six years and that time expired at the end of 1893. He left the school to become president of Dorcas College in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, and Carey A. Folk, a graduate of Richmond College and current faculty member of the Brownsville school, served as president from 1894 to 1899. His motto for the school was “Forward.”¹⁹

Fortunately, there is an extant catalog for 1895–96 that includes all alumni since 1856 including their husbands' names. The concert hall on campus was seventy-five by fifty feet, housed ten pianos for teaching, one grand piano, guitars, mandolins, vi-

olins, and flutes, and could accommodate nearly one-third of the town for programs.

Similar to the Memphis Conference Female Institute in Jackson, Brownsville Female College admitted eighteen little boys during



Courtesy of Pam Dennis

the term. President Folk taught Latin, Greek, and Anglo-Saxon.

Dorm, Brownsville Baptist Female College

Other faculty included W. H.

Harrison: higher mathematics, French, German; Mrs. C. A. Folk: history, English literature; Mary G. Hutchison: mental and moral science and logic; Mary P. Thomas: Primary Department, Spanish; Esther Wingo, assistant in primary department; Annie E. Carlton: assistant in mathematics; May B. Folk: elocution and physical culture; Nelle Nance: director of vocal and instrumental music; Lena Given: mandolin and guitar; Rosa O. Bond: art; and Mrs. M.E. Goodson: Matron.

Trustees were A. M. Austin, Esq., president; Hon. D. O. Thomas; J. H. Estes, Esq.; S. F. Thomas, Esq., treasurer; Thomas E. Glass, Esq., secretary; R. G. Thomas, Esq.; W. B. Moore, M.D.; William Thomas, Esq.; C. A. Folk, Esq.; J. R. Allen, M.D.; and Rev. L. A. Little.²⁰

There were six courses of study at the school:

MEL [Mistress(!) of English Letters]—graduate in literary course—English course, French, German, history

MS—graduate in scientific course—natural science, English program, history and math

AB—English language and literature, mental and moral science, history, political economy and civics, Latin language and literature, math

AM—English language and literature, Latin language and literature, French language and literature, German language and literature, natural science, mental and moral science, math, history, political economy and civics

Mus.B.—Musicae Baccalaurea—music

OB—Elocution—Oratoria Baccalaurea²¹

Religion was emphasized, and students were required to attend Sunday School and church every Sunday. If they wanted

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to attend a church other than the president's, they had to receive parental permission. Sunday evening services were held at the College House. According to the president and other school officials, "if the education is not a Christian one, it is often worse than no education."²²

Regular exercise was also encouraged with daily walks, and students were expected to behave properly both on and off campus. Though the students were allowed to go into town if accompanied by a teacher, they were not allowed any communication with gentlemen unless by written permission of parents.²³

New buildings were built and renovations took place in the 1890s. New faculty were added. However, E. E. Folk, the Baptist newspaper editor, stated that West Tennesseans did not truly appreciate the school.

The more I learn by personal observation of our College at Brownsville, Tenn., the more I am convinced that our people, especially in West Tennessee, do not properly appreciate its merits and the advantages in many ways to be gained by patronizing it. The buildings are commodious, convenient and attractive without display. The campus is large, beautifully set with grass, forming a carpet of green and studded with cedar, willows, maple, elm and sycamore, casting a cool, dark shade over the grounds. The people of Brownsville are highly cultured, zealously religious and pre-eminently hospitable. The trustees are all men of excellent business and moral character. The president, though young, has a head on his shoulders and a heart in his bosom. His associate teachers, in every department, are competent and capable and thoroughly consecrated to their noble work. With these facts it is not surprising that the school is a success.²⁴

By October of 1895, the school was bursting at the seams. However, there were technical issues involved in the ownership of the school.

It is an interesting fact, which was brought out by recent investigation, that the title of this property has been resting for twenty years in the defunct West Tennessee Baptist convention. This convention, when it dissolved, transferred the property by vote to the present Board to be held in trust for the Baptists of West Tennessee. No legal transfer, it seems, was made, and this is what is now delaying us in our contemplated improvements. The matter is in the hands of a lawyer, and will soon be properly arranged.²⁵

One source states that the school was officially closed in 1897 and was rented as a school by F. R. Ogilvie until it was purchased

by the county for a high school in 1911.²⁶

It was at this point that the Convention authorized the Brownsville Baptist Church to take charge of the school. Under its new organization, the school made a quick recovery and added faculty. Attendees at graduation events were given special rates on the L&N Railroad from McKenzie and Memphis. A gymnasium was added in 1898 and advertised “wall machines, Indian clubs, dumbbells, springs, trapeze, ladders and all necessary apparatus, and regular time given for physical culture.”²⁷

Though the school boasted continued admissions, an article in the spring of 1899 begged for more money. “Oh! For a Rockefeller to donate us \$10,000.” The school was billed as the “only real Baptist college in the State” in 1900. President Folk left to teach at Boscobel College, and President Robert Edward Hatton began his three-year presidency (1900–03), teaching courses in history, philosophy, and pedagogy. Commercial courses were added to the curriculum in the fall of 1901, and the school’s faculty included:

- Orville Eustace Baker, Latin and higher mathematics
 - Ada Belle House, English and modern languages
 - Rosa Neal Davis, geography and sciences
 - Virginia Cameron Miller, English language
 - Bessie E. Speers, reading, orthography and stenography
 - J. B. Lawrence, Bible and Christian evidences
 - Edouard Meretzki, Director of Music
 - Mrs. J. A. Cathey, voice culture
 - Virginia C. Miller, piano and Superintendent of Piano Practice
 - Bessie E. Speers, elocution, oratory and physical culture
 - B. Opie Mulheron, art and needle work
 - Mrs. R. E. Hatton, Lady Principal and Home Department
- The librarian position was open.

Trustees were A. M. Austin, Esq. and president; Hon. D. O. Thomas; J. H. Estes, Esq.; S. F. Thomas, Esq., treasurer; R. N. Bond; W. B. Moore, M.D.; William Thomas, Esq.; N. B. Keathly, C. L. Anderson; R. M. Chambliss, Esq.; J. T. Allen, M.D.; T. E. Glass, secretary; B. A. Powell Jr.; and R. G. Thomas Sr., all from Brownsville except for Estes who was from Orysa, Tennessee.²⁸

President W. L. Abbot (1903–04) tried to save the school with more emphasis on commercial programs and music. Though articles and advertising no longer appear in the *Baptist and Reflector*, extant catalogs for 1902–03 describe the school in detail.

The benefits of the commercial program were touted in the 1902–03 catalog, citing President Harper of the University of Chicago, as follows:

The school was billed as the “only real Baptist college in the State” in 1900.

The work done by correspondence is even better than that done in the class-room. Students who come to us after a year of such work are better prepared than those who have taken it with us in the class-room. The correspondence student does all the work himself. He does it in writing. He does twenty times as much reciting as he

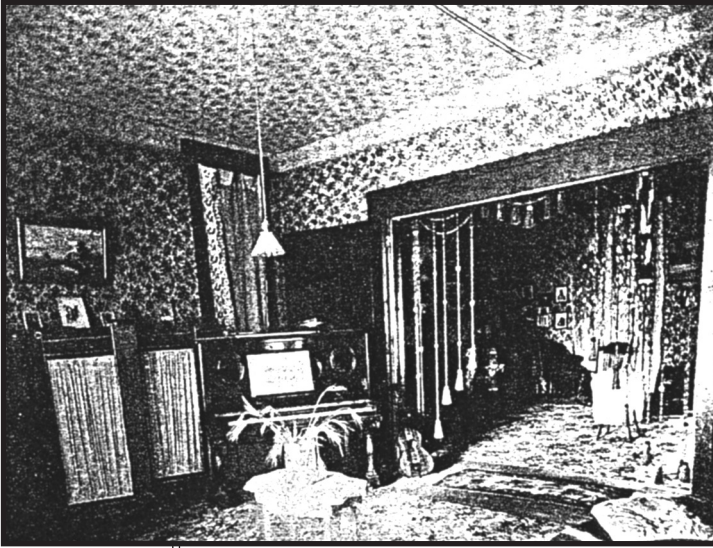
would in a class of twenty people. He works out the difficulties by himself and the results stay by him.³⁰

The major benefit for the student in correspondence was the lack of residence work. The program was specifically designed for public school teachers without certificates; persons who had not had access to education; students

who were "too old to go to school"; students living in the country or in other isolated places; students with financial difficulties; students who planned to pursue careers as stenographers, bookkeepers, or telegraph operations; students working on entrance examinations; and students who simply wanted to improve themselves intellectually.

Non-resident teachers included: J. H. Hatton (president, Grand River College, Missouri—Latin, Greek, and philology); S. H. Hatton (president, Powhatan College, West Virginia—history, pedagogy, and philosophy); William H. Foster (professor, Simmons College, Texas—astronomy and physics); M. W. Hatton (president, Clearmont College, North Carolina—English, Anglo-Saxon, Gothic and Sanscrit); and L. M. Hatton (president, Tampa Business College—commercial branches).³¹

In 1904 the main building had newly papered and painted walls, and the nearby concert hall contained ten rooms for piano practice on its second floor. Adjoining this building was the three-story college house, and the modern campus was lighted with electricity and included bathrooms with hot and cold water. The aim of the school was "to equip young women for useful living. . .



Courtesy of Pamela Dennis

Dorm Parlor

. Knowledge derived from books is of no value unless the possessor becomes by it wiser, stronger, better and more efficient as a member of society.”³²

Levels of study were the following:

Primary: spelling, reading, literature, fairy tales, phoenetics, numbers, history, geography, nature, penmanship, singing and calesthenics—developing the child including moral education

Preparatory: grounding in elementary branches and removal of bad habits

Normal Course: for training teachers—courses required for lifetime State certificate

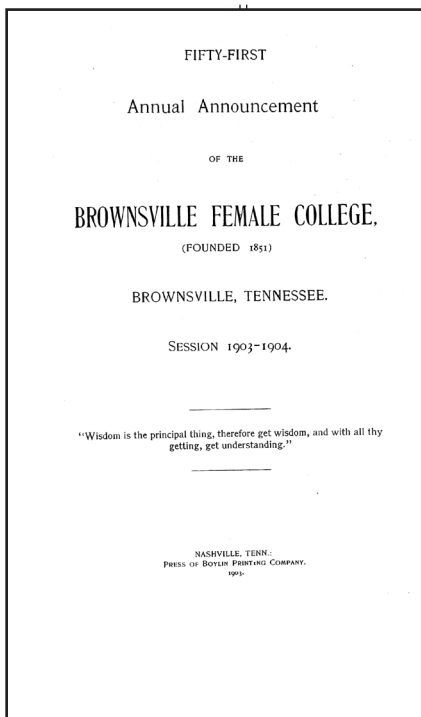
Teacher's Training Class: practice teaching³³

In addition to previously mentioned academic courses, the conservatory of music provided courses that were considered “a necessary part of a young lady's education.” Elocution enabled the student to develop as graceful and natural readers, and their education was rounded off with art, including landscapes, figure painting, drawing, China painting, etching, and engraving.

Degrees offered were Bachelor of Arts (AB)—classical course; Bachelor of Science (SB)—scientific course; Bachelor of Literature (LB)—literary course Bachelor of Pedagogy (BP) – normal course; Bachelor of Accounts (B.Accts.)—commercial course; Bachelor of Music (BM)—music course, Bachelor of Oratory (BO)—elocution course; and corresponding masters' degrees.³⁴

Students could participate in two literary societies—Phi Alpha and Polymnia—where they learned about parliamentary procedure and literature. They published a monthly college magazine called “College Banner,” and planted a “class tree” each Spring. Orchestra and choral groups were established, and private help and classes were offered for “backward” students coming from the country with no graded high school. Upon entering the school, students were expected to provide: one pair sheets, one counterpane [bedspread], one pair blankets or comforts, one pair pillowslips (22 x 35 inches), two towels, napkins, umbrella, overshoes, toilet soap, toothbrush, comb and hair brush, thimble and thread, and students were allowed 100 pieces of washing at no extra charge. Discounts were given to local ministers and to groups of students from one county.³⁵

Expenses were as follows:



Courtesy of Pam Dennis

Primary:	5 months		\$12.50
1 month		3.00	
Preparatory:	5 months		17.50
1 month		4.00	
Collegiate:	5 months		22.50
1 month		5.00	
Bed and tuition:	5 months		85.00
Commercial (per term):			20.00
Short hand (per term):			20.00
Typewriting (per term):			20.00
Shorthand and typing (per term):			30.00
Board, tuition and music (1 hr/day):	5 months		110.00
Incidental fee	5 months		1.00
<i>Special studies</i>			
Elocution (in classes)	10 months		20.00
Elocution (private—two in a class—10 months)			30.00
Elocution (private—only one in class)—10 months			40.00
Physical Culture—per session			10.00
Instrumental music—Piano, Organ, Violin, Guitar, Mandolin, Cello, Flute, and Banjo, from first to sixth grade per term			20.00
One month		4.00	
Above fifth grade	per term		25.00
One month		5.00	
Use of instruments, one hour a day—10 months			15.00
Use of instrument, each additional hour—10 months			10.00
Vocal Lessons 10 months			40.00
Art—Charcoal Drawing, for beginners—per month			3.00
Crayon—per month			3.00
Landscape painting—per month			4.00
China painting—per month			5.00
Portrait drawing in crayon and oil—per month			5.00
Needle Work—per term			7.50
Diploma and Graduating fee			10.00
Certificate of Proficiency			1.00
Certificate of Proficiency, Graduation			3.00
Board, including fuel, lights, and servant's attendance —per month		12.50	
Library Fee—per term			1.00
Laboratory fee by those who take experimental Science			1.00
Laundry (extra) per month, about			1.00 ³⁶

Parents were urged to give their daughters a proper education to prepare them for a time when they might have to provide their own incomes. A word to parents included in the 1903–04 catalog read as follows:

No one will dispute the abstract assertion that any given girl may some day have herself and perhaps her family to support; and yet our schemes of education for girls are framed precisely as if this were not and could not be true. As a rule, no provision whatever is made for such a contingency in the education of girls, no recognition whatever is given to the fact that the chance exists. We shut our eyes to the danger; we hope that the ill may never come, and we put the thought of it away from us. In brief, we trust to luck, and that is a most unwise thing to do. Each one of us has known women to whom this mischance has happened, and each one of us knows that it may happen to the daughter whom we tenderly cherish; yet we put nothing in her hands with which to fight this danger; we equip her for every need except the sorest of all needs; we leave her at the mercy of chance, knowing that the time may come when she whom we have not taught to do any bread-winning work will have need of bread, and will know of no way in which to get it, except through dependence, beggary, or worse. Is it not beyond comprehension that intelligent and affectionate fathers, knowing the dreadful possibilities that lie before daughters whom they love with the fondest indulgence, should neglect to take the simplest precaution in their behalf? It seems to us that every girl is grievously wronged who is suffered to grow up to womanhood, and to enter the world without some marketable skill.³⁷

However, the enrollment had dropped to 60 by the fall of 1903, less than a fifth of the enrollment of 1856. The meager faculty included Mary G. Hutchison, presiding teacher, English, and assistant in Latin, mathematics, and science; Anna Austin, French, German, and physical culture; Elizabeth Mann, Primary Department, Assistant in English; Mrs. G. B. Williams, voice culture; and Mrs. W. L. Abbott, manager of the College Home. There were vacancies in Latin, history and civics; music (both director and assistant, though "Miss Ford" is penciled in the library's copy); elocution; stenography and typewriting; and art and needlework. Trustees remained the same as the previous year. The president began selling school property the following summer. Items listed for sale were:



Courtesy of Pam Dennis

Dorm Room
Note the single electric bulb hanging in the center of the room.

The entire outfit of furnishings for the home, including cooking range and fixtures, dining room and kitchen furniture, tableware, 2 dining tables, 36 dining chairs, 8 iron beds, 5 wood beds with mattresses and springs, 12 washstands, 10 dressers, 7 rocking chairs, 10 carpets, mattings for 6 rooms, hall matting and carpets, 2 parlor tables and 15 other tables, 5 pairs of pillows, 1 book case, 1 office desk, 1 piano, 1 lot school desks, 1 lot physical and chemical apparatus, phaeton [a horse-drawn four-wheeled carriage] and harness, milk cow, garden tools, wood-workers tools, 6 heaters, 15 bowls and pitchers, 15 slop buckets, shovels, etc., etc.²⁹

In a last attempt to save the school, Man-Hutchison School was combined with Brownsville Female Academy. But it was too late. In 1907 the board of trustees sold the school to the trustees of the Brownsville Training School for \$5,000, and the training school sold the building and grounds for \$9,000 four years later to the mayor and aldermen of Brownsville to establish the Haywood High School. In the fall of 1970, Haywood County built a



Courtesy of Pam Dennis

The president's home is on the National Register of Historic Homes

new high school in Brownsville, and the old Brownsville Female College site became the Haywood County museum, protecting the memories of former days.³⁸

Though the school survived the war, it could not withstand the competition of the free public school nor the end of the genteel society. It succeeded, however, in graduating many fine students during its sixty years and the legacy remains in the small town. According to a local historian:

Some of the most refined and cultured women of the South were attendants of this institution and many of the distinguished men of the day were the sons of the women of this institution and thus will influence lives for ages to come.³⁹

Notes

1. Albert W. Wardin Jr., *Tennessee Baptists: A Comprehensive History, 1779–1999* (Brentwood, Tenn.: Tennessee Baptist Convention, 1999), 135–36, 167–174, 240–42, 319–26; Elizabeth Patton Hollow, "Development of the Brownsville Baptist Female College: An Example of Female Education in the South, 1850–1910," *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers* 32 (1978): 51. Though no records are available at the Presbyterian Historical Foundation in Pennsylvania for the Brownsville Female Seminary (Institute) begun by the Presbyterians, numerous articles and ads in local city directories and newspapers tell of its fine history.

2. "S. J. Thomas, "A History of the Brownsville Baptist Church," *Minutes Brownsville Baptist Church*, Vol. 2, 1887, cited in *History of Brownsville Baptist Church*, unpublished, 8; *Proceedings*, West Tennessee Baptist Convention, 1850, 21; *Proceedings*, West Tennessee Baptist Convention, 1852, 9–14; *Proceedings*, West Tennessee Baptist Convention, 1853, 14–15; Wardin, *Tennessee Baptists*, 173; "Brownsville Female College," *Tennessee Baptist*, 7 January 1854. The original advertisement was dated 17 December 1853 and stated: "The Spring Session of this Institution will commence on the second Monday in January next. President White, with his family, is now in Brownsville, and will enter on his duties at that time."

3. "School for Civil Engineering, Etc.," *Memphis Daily Appeal* 2(14 June 1853):6. Conner is listed as president of the Board of Trustees by *Proceedings*, West Tennessee Baptist Convention (September 1852), 11; *History of Brownsville Baptist Church*, 8–9. Champ Carter Conner was born in Culpepper County, Virginia, on 13 March 1811 and died in Lauderdale County, Tennessee, on 14 February 1875. In addition to his Brownsville affiliations, he was president of the Baptist Female College at Hernando, Mississippi, pastor at the Hernando Baptist Church and St. Francis Street Baptist Church of Mobile, former moderator and president of the West Tennessee Baptist Convention, and served four churches in Lauderdale County (Grace, Society Hill, Woodlawn, and Zion) at the time of his death (Joseph H. Borum, *Biographical Sketches of Tennessee Bap-*

tist Ministers [Memphis: Rogers & Co., 1880], 172–76).

4. Allan H. Keith, "Traditionally GC: A History of Rev. John Brown White & Almira College," reprinted from *The Greenville Advocate* and available at www.greenville.edu/backup/traditionallygc/jbwhistory.shtml.

5. *Proceedings*, West Tennessee Baptist Convention (1854), 17–18; "Brownsville Female College," *Tennessee Baptist* (22 April 1854). A Seraphine is a keyboard instrument created in 1834 and related to the harmonium (Willi Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music* [Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1974], 371).

6. "Brownsville Female College," *Tennessee Baptist* (29 July 1854).

7. *Proceedings*, West Tennessee Baptist Convention, 1856, 16; "Brownsville Female College," *Tennessee Baptist* (5 August 1854), and (15 September 1855). William Shelton was born in Smith County, Tennessee, on 4 July 1824. A graduate of the University of Nashville and Madison University of New York, he previously pastored Clarksville Baptist Church before becoming professor of Greek and Theology at Union University of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. In addition to presiding at the Brownsville Female College, he was pastor of Brownsville Baptist church from 1856 to 1866, before returning to the Murfreesboro campus to teach Theology. Shelton became president of West Tennessee College in Jackson, Tennessee (1865–69), and financial agent and professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy at the University of Nashville by 1873. In 1874 he became the first president of Southwestern Baptist University in Jackson, Tennessee. He served additional presidencies at Ewing College, Illinois (1878–83), Los Angeles College (1883–96), and Stanford Female College in Kentucky (1896). (*History of Brownsville Baptist Church*, 9; Pam Dennis and Jimmy Davis, "West Tennessee College: Part 3: The Demise (1865–1874)," *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers* 58 (2005): 61; John Howard Brown, *Cyclopedia of American Biography, Comprising the Men and Women of the United States Who Have Been Identified With the Growth of the Nation*, 7 (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger Press, 2006 reprint), 52, available at books.google.com. According to *Proceedings*, West Tennessee Baptist Convention, Shelton refused to come to the school until a dispute between Hawkins and Merriam was resolved, resulting in the dismissal of both professors (*Proceedings*, September 1856, 13; and September 1859, 7).

8. Born in Belgium ca. 1818, Charles Hess and his wife Johanna had seven children by 1860 and were living in Brownsville. Their eldest daughter, Mary, was also a music teacher. The family had moved to Tennessee by 1851 when their third child was born in the state. Prior to his work in Chattanooga, he was on the faculty at the Nashville Academy of Music and Fine Arts. The family appeared in the Chicago 1870 census (Acts of the State of Tennessee, 29 October 1855; United States, Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860 [Washington DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860], available at ancestry.com; United States, Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870 [Washington, DC, National Archives and Records Administration], available through ancestry.com); "Brownsville Female College," *Memphis Daily Appeal* (21 July 1858): 2 (advertisement); "Professor Hess," *Weekly Journal* (Brownsville) 2 (7 August 1858): 2; "Brownsville Female

College," *Brownsville Journal* 3 (6 January 1860): 1. The only known copy of the Brownsville newspaper, 1856–1860, is located in the archives at Lambuth University, Jackson, Tennessee. That copy is now being microfilmed by the Tennessee State Library and Archives for preservation.

9. "Brownsville Female College," *Tennessee Baptist* (14 August 1858): 1; "Brownsville Female College," *Memphis Commercial Appeal* 2 (10 July 1857): 3; "Brownsville Anniversaries," *Memphis Commercial Appeal* (20 July 1858).

10. Correspondence with Bernie Hirsch, great-great-grandson of John Paul Wendel, 2007; Robert Mann, *History of Christ Episcopal Church, Brownsville, Tennessee* (Memphis: Memphis Printing Service, 1970), 6–7; *Weekly Journal* (3 July, 1858): 2; *Home Journal* (25 June 1859): 1; "West Tennessee Combination Directory Containing the Histories and Directories of Jackson, Brownsville and Trenton, the Representative Towns of West Tennessee, Together with Historical Sketches of Milan, Denmark and Spring Creek" (Louisville, Ky.: Circulating Directory Company, 1872), 66; "Brownsville Female College, Again," *Baptist and Reflector* (16 June 1892); "Register of Alumnae," *Fiftieth Annual Announcement of the Brownsville Female College, Brownsville, Tennessee: 1902–1903* (Nashville: Boylin Printing Company, 1902), 47–48; "Little ol' Lady, with Music in Her Soul" [Dora Gray Wendel], *The Etude* 70 (December 1952): 20ff.

11. Wardin, *Tennessee Baptists*, 219. Little information was found about this man, and some of that is conflicting. An A.B. Cabaniss (also spelled Cabiniss) and his wife were missionaries to China in the 1840s and 1850s. ("China Mission reports, 1846–1855, Shanghai Mission," available at <http://archies.imb.org/images/China,%201846-1855.pdf>). An A. B. Cabiniss also edited a book of Chinese hymns, published in Shanghai ("A List of Chinese Christian hymn Books published between 1807–1912," available at http://medlibrary.org/medwiki/List_of_Chinese_Hymn_Books). An A.B. Cabiniss died in Trenton, Tennessee, in 1907, at the age of eighty-four and was a former missionary to China (*Tennessee Republican* (7 June 1907), available at <http://archiver.rootsweb.com/t/read/TNCARROL/2006-04-1146345206>). Pastorates for people by this name were at Clarksville Baptist Church in Mecklenburg County, Virginia (1849) and at Wynne's Creek Baptist church in Halifax County, Virginia (November 1864–69) (Wirt Johnson Carrington, "A History of Halifax County (Virginia)," available at <http://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/va/halifax/churches/churches01.txt>; "Clarksville Baptist Church History," available at <ftp://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/va/mecklenburg/church/chcb0001.txt>). These dates conflict with the dates that he was at Brownsville Female College.

12. "West Tennessee Combination Directory," 131.

13. "West Tennessee Combination Directory," 176.

14 The West Tennessee Baptist Convention dissolved in 1874 as a state convention was founded, and control of the school was turned over to the board of trustees (Deed Book 14, p. 405, 3 April 1891, Haywood County Court House, Brownsville, Tennessee); Wardin, *Tennessee Baptists*, 242; *Proceedings*, West Tennessee Baptist Convention, September 1874, 20). George Washington Johnston was born in Missouri and graduated from William Jewell College in 1855. After serving as a chaplain in the Civil War, Johnston became president of the Ma-

sonic College at Macon, Tennessee for six years, also pastoring Macon Baptist Church. He later became president of the Baptist Female Seminary in Jackson, Tennessee, and pastor of Humboldt Baptist Church for two years. Because of financial problems at the school, he was forced to leave and assumed the presidency of the Odd Fellows' Female College in Humboldt for two years. He became president of the Brownsville school in 1875 where he remained until around 1878. The trustees spoke highly of him in their annual trustee's address in 1876 when they stated that he was "a scholar and teacher of acknowledged ability and experience, and for years distinguished in the southwest as an educator of young ladies. . . . He has raised the standard of female education in extent, method, thoroughness and utility, and has given complete organization to every department, comprehending the entire education for young ladies as to the physical, intellectual and moral. The thorough methods of the advanced university for men has been adopted and subsidized in the more solid and efficient education of women." (Borum, *Biographical Sketches of Tennessee Baptist Ministers*, 369–72).

15. *History of Tennessee from the Earliest Time to the Present* (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1979, reprint of 1887 Goodspeed edition), 828. J. D. Anderson was born in Tippah County, Mississippi, in 1852 and was educated at Mississippi College and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Greenville, SC), followed by two years at the University of Mississippi where he graduated in five departments. He was pastor of the Baptist church at Germantown for four years and was "strongly in favor of prohibition." His only term of office in Brownsville was 1887–1888. The faculty under J. D. Anderson were Mrs. S. E. Trotter, Lady Principal; Miss S. Anderson, Miss Mamie R. McLemore, Miss M. P. Thomas, and Mrs. W. F. Talley (advertisement in loose file located at Elma Ross Public Library, Brownsville, Tenn.).

16. Advertisements in local and Baptist newspapers between 1865 and 1900; "West Tennessee Combination Directory," 86; "Brownsville Female College," *Baptist and Reflector* (11 September 1890).

17. *Baptist and Reflector* (10 September 1891); *Baptist and Reflector* (28 April 1892); *Baptist and Reflector* (9 June 1892). Thomas Smith was a graduate of the University of Virginia and former professor at Georgetown College, Kentucky. His tenure as president at the Brownsville Female College was from 1888 to 1893.

18. *Baptist and Reflector*, (9 June 1892).

19. *Baptist and Reflector* (24 May 1894). At some point, Carey served as assistant treasurer of the State of Tennessee ("Tennessee Since the War, 1865–1909," in *The Southern States of America*, 2 (Richmond, Va.: Southern Publication Society, 1909), available at <http://www.clectricscotland.com/history/america/south/south42.htm>.

20. Interview with Susan Sills, 28 September 2007, owner and restorer of the president's home of Brownsville Female College; *Forty-Fourth Annual Announcement of the Brownsville Female College, Brownsville, Tennessee: 1895–96* (Brownsville: States-Democrat, 1896), 2, 4, 14.

21. *Forty-Fourth Annual Announcement of the Brownsville Female College, Brownsville, Tennessee: 1895–1896*, 18.

22. *Ibid.*, 16.

23. *Ibid.*, 27.

24. S. C. Hearn, "Brownsville Female College," *Baptist and Reflector*, 21 June 1894.

25. *Baptist and Reflector*, 17 October 1895.

26. *History of Haywood County, Tennessee* (Brownsville: Haywood County Historical Society, 1989), 235.

27. *Fiftieth Annual Announcement of the Brownsville Female College, Brownsville, Tennessee: 1902-1903*, 25; *Baptist and Reflector*, 28 May 1896; 6 May 1897; 22 December 1898.

28. *Baptist and Reflector*, 15 April, 1899; 22 June, 1899; 20 September 1900; 18 July 1901; 17 October 1901; 28 August 1903; 14 September 1902; 17 June 1904; 19 August 1904. An article in the *Baptist and Reflector* stated that Professor Mack resigned and Hatton was elected President (*Baptist and Reflector*, 28 June 1900). Possibly Professor Mack served as president during the interim year of 1899–1900. Robert Edward Hatton was a graduate of the University of Missouri where he received his M.A. and Ph.D. Prior presidencies include McGee College, Missouri; Ewing College, and LeMar (or LeMoss) Normal College, Iowa. After leaving Brownsville in 1903, he served as president at Roanoke Female College in Danville, Virginia (1903–07), and Liberty College in Glasgow, Kentucky (1907–11) ("Robert Edward Hatton," available at <http://www.averett.edu/library/collections/Presidents/Hatton.pdf>; *Baptist and Reflector*, 28 June 1900; "Local News," *States Graphic*, 26 June 1903, available at <ftp://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/tn/haywood/newspapers/graphic-may-dec1903.txt>); *Fiftieth Annual Announcement of the Brownsville Female College, Brownsville, Tennessee: 1902-03*, 2–3.

29. "For Sale at Brownsville Female College," *States-Graphic*, 17 June 1904. W. L. Abbott was an honor graduate of Emory College in 1890. Following a principalship at Hogansville High School in Oxford, Georgia, in 1897, he became superintendent of schools in Madison, Georgia, in 1898 (*Fifty-First Annual Announcement of the Brownsville Female College, Brownsville, Tennessee: 1903-04* (Nashville: Boylin Printing Company, 1903), 40–41).

30. *Fiftieth Annual Announcement of the Brownsville Female College, Brownsville, Tennessee: 1902-03*, 38–39.

31. *Ibid.*, 39–40.

32. *Fifty-First Annual Announcement of the Brownsville Female College, Brownsville, Tennessee: 1903-04*, 8.

33. *Ibid.*, 11–12. The Normal Course included four years of study and prepared students for teaching, a much needed commodity in the town. Brownsville's free public schools were established on 30 June 1885. At that time, there were forty white schools and fifty-seven "colored." The teacher population included nineteen white males, twenty white females, three hundred thirty-nine black males and one black female, teaching an enrolled population of 671 white males, 95 white females, 1,480 black males, and 505 black females (*History of Tennessee from the Earliest Time to the Present*, 828).

34. *Fifty-First Annual Announcement of the Brownsville Female College, Brownsville, Tennessee: 1903-04*, 12–28.

35. *Ibid.*, 29–36. A portion of the first page of the February 1888 issue of the “College Banner” is extant and is located at the Elma Ross Public Library in Brownsville. Officers of the Longfellow Literary Society included Miss Dalia Booth, President; Miss Isabella [indecipherable], Critic; Miss Mollie Anderson, Miss Mary Bussry, and Miss Annette Pierce, Librarian. Literary editors were Miss Maggie Mann, Miss Mollie Powers, Miss Lucia Mae Watkins, and at least one other. Local editors were Miss Clara Borum, Miss Gertrude Glass, and Miss Grace [indecipherable]. With a United States flag on its masthead, the twenty-five cent issue’s motto was “In the name of God we set up our banner.”

36. *Fifty-First Annual Announcement of the Brownsville Female College, Brownsville, Tennessee: 1903–04*, 37.

37. *Ibid.*, 33.

38. *Ibid.*, 39; Deed Book 46, 486, 17 January 1912. Haywood County Court House, Brownsville, Tennessee, cited in Hollow, “Development of the Brownsville Baptist Female College,” 58.

39. Manuscript history of the Brownsville Baptist Church, written by Spencer Thomas and Mrs. T. E. Glass, cited in Hollow, “Development of the Brownsville Baptist Female College,” 59. TBH