MEMORIES OF MONT AMOENA FEMALE SEMINARY: "AN ISLAND OF CULTURE IN THE DIFFICULT YEARS," 1859-1927

by

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in
Public History

Charlotte

2017

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ABSTRACT

DENISE MELANIE MCLAIN. Memories of Mont Amoena Female Seminary:
"An island of culture in the difficult years," 1859-1927.
(Under the direction of DR. AARON SHAPIRO)

In 1851, the North Carolina Lutheran Synod (NCLS) selected the small, remote village of Mount Pleasant, North Carolina as its center for secondary education. Mount Pleasant Female Academy's future was uncertain, at best, when it opened as a finishing school on the brink of the Civil War in 1859. The isolated location and poor timing of its foundation set the stage in a continuous battle for financial stability and accessibility. Closed during the war years, it reopened in 1869 as Mont Amoena Female Seminary under the auspices of the NCLS; however, the Civil War and its aftermath altered the future of Mont Amoena and Mount Pleasant such that neither ever fully recovered. Although Mont Amoena evolved into a degree granting junior collegiate preparatory school, it paradoxically held on to the antebellum structures that defined traditional Southern culture as it sought to be a haven of stability for the region's young white elite Christian women.

The ideology of the New South created social and economic changes that challenged the model used to create Mont Amoena and split the membership of the NCLS as it determined to consolidate power. Ultimately unable to keep pace with changes in education and the interests of the church, the synod withdrew its support in 1927. Mont Amoena reflected the strong bonds of community, kinship, religion, gender, and race, intrinsic to the period's Southern female seminary education, as well as to the rural identity of Mount Pleasant at the peak of its prosperity. As such, Mont Amoena Female Seminary remains an important part of the town's historical memory.

DEDICATION

To the memory of the faculty and students of
Mont Amoena Female Seminary.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely thank the members of my Advisory Committee, Dr. Aaron Shapiro, Dr. Karen Cox, and Dr. Sonya Ramsey, all from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, for their guidance and support toward the successful completion of my studies. I am particularly indebted to my advisor, Dr. Shapiro, whose knowledge and enthusiasm for Public History challenged me to think in new ways and explore new media.

My collaboration with the Eastern Cabarrus Historical Society proved invaluable throughout the research process. The volunteers and staff were more than accommodating, and director, Ben Callahan, not only suggested Mont Amoena Female Seminary as a thesis topic, but generously provided insight and resources as I researched the society's Mont Amoena collection. I also greatly appreciate the assistance and access to special collections provided by Burl McCuiston at the Lenoir-Rhyne University Archives in Hickory, North Carolina, and Shannon Smith at the James R. Crumley Jr. Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Columbia, South Carolina. Additionally, the Lore Local History Room of the Cabarrus County Public Library in Concord, North Carolina provided numerous sources for research.

I am truly grateful for all I have learned from my professors and colleagues in the Graduate History Department and others at the university. A special thanks goes to Dr. Anabel Aliaga-Buchenau for encouraging me to pursue the Public History program and Dr. Susan Cernyak-Spatz for showing me that it is never too late to learn or inspire others.

Lastly, I am forever grateful for the love, support, and patience of my family, especially my husband David McLain and son Kyle McLain, who as a fellow graduate history student, bravely sat next to his mother in class.

INTRODUCTION

> How much have we not already lost, by educating our sons and daughters in the schools of other denominations?...Not only do we need a college for the thorough education of the sons, but we need, and ere long must have, a college to educate the daughters of the church. No nation or people can be what they should be without female education… An ignorant, coarse-bred, uneducated mother, can never raise a family of refined and intelligent children.[1]

North Carolina Evangelical Lutheran Synod president, Rev. Levi C. Groseclose, made this declaration at the organization's annual meeting held at St. Paul's Church in Alamance County, North Carolina on April 29, 1858. Because the North Carolina Synod (NCLS) had no denominational colleges in its own territory, Groseclose went on to blame Lutheran forefathers for putting the church "50 to 100 years behind the age in every laudable enterprise…I rejoice that soon the time will arrive when all will see and feel it to be a mistaken notion, that women ought not to be as well educated as men."[2]

The early nineteenth-century Protestant religious revival movement in the United States, known as the Second Great Awakening, promoted the growth of evangelical culture among the laity and supported expanding roles for women to spread its influence. The result was a broad increase in church sponsored secondary female academies and seminaries. Although modeled after prominent northern schools, educational institutions in the American South had a unique difference: the classical liberal arts curriculum that served to educate young white females incorporated the values of traditional southern class, culture, and religion. Mont Amoena Female Seminary, an enterprise of the NCLS, was one such school.

Compared to other southern Christian denominations, the NCLS was late to establish Mont Amoena in Mount Pleasant, Cabarrus County, North Carolina. It chose

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[1] *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina, 1858*, JRCA, 10-11.
[2] Ibid.

Mount Pleasant because of the area's antebellum economic prosperity, optimistic congregational support, and the moral and health benefits of its rural, isolated location; however, the Civil War and its aftermath altered the future of Mont Amoena and Mount Pleasant such that neither ever fully recovered. During its tenure, Mont Amoena became a source of social importance and stability in the community through the turmoil of Reconstruction and helped young women find a voice in regard to their expanding public and social roles in the often repressive New South. Paradoxically, it also sought to maintain the romanticism of the ideal southern lady; according to one alumna it "was an island of culture in the difficult years" that followed the war.[3]

In the twentieth century, the Southern seminary model did not adapt fast enough to trends in women's education and had difficulty competing with advances in the public school system. Mont Amoena closed its doors for good in 1927 after the NCLS withdrew its support. Although demolished in 1967, Cabarrus County still considers it an institution of historical importance. Many who are native to Cabarrus County and the surrounding region can trace family members to the school. Mont Amoena reflected the strong bonds of community, kinship, religion, gender, and race that were an integral part of the identity of Mount Pleasant at the peak of its prosperity. As such, it is still an intrinsic part of the historical memory of Mount Pleasant, long after its demise.

The past fifty years have seen tremendous growth in the historiography of nineteenth-century female education in the United States. Prior to the 1960s, much of the scholarship regarding education for girls and women, as well as schooling in general, focused primarily on utilitarian sociology. Written by educators for education students, it

[3] Raymond M. Bost and Jeff L. Norris, *All One Body: The Story of the NCLS, 1803-1993*, (Salisbury, NC, 1994), 200.

emphasized institutional patterns such as comparisons between northern and southern schools as well as male versus female curriculums. All the while, it celebrated the success of American morality and intellectual democracy.[4] With few exceptions, historians were slow to give much attention to the subject, although they recognized differing societal attitudes toward women's education between the North and South. As the suffrage movement propelled women's issues into the 20th century, much of the early scholarly focus of women's education examined the growth and progress of schools and colleges, rather than their educational origins or the students who attended them.

A new era of social interest arose during what became known as the "second wave of feminism" in the 1960s and 1970s. The civil rights era broadened the debate of women's rights and gender inequality, including that of educational equity. As the interest in women's studies grew, and the passage of the 1972 Title IX Education Amendment garnered attention, so did the interest in female education standards.

Feminists viewed antebellum female-focused curriculum as historically disadvantageous in regard to differences in women's domestic, economic, and political power.[5] A re-examination of women's education history reflected this critical attitude in a new wave of scholarly work that broke from analysis alone and turned to an increased interest in race, gender relations, culture, identity, community, and the ideology of power as it relates to womanhood. Ronald Hogeland submitted that Ohio's Oberlin College, noted for being the first American institution of higher learning to admit black (1835) and female coeducation students (1837), actually did so with covert "masculine priorities in mind."

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[4] H. Warren Button, "Creating More Useable Pasts: History in the Study of Education." *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 8, no. 5 (May 1, 1979), 4.

[5] C. N. Trueman, "Feminism and Education." *History Learning Site*, May 22, 2016, http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk..

Although the school provided young women opportunities for education, it expected them to be "catalysts for cultivation, reservoirs for wifedom and redemptive agents for male sensuality."[6] Similarly, Keith Melder argued that although female seminaries sought to demonstrate women's intellectual capacities, they instead supported the academic, religious and social inequality of the sexes.[7] Susan Phinney Conrad analyzed the paradox that nineteenth-century Romanticism played on female intellectualism, noting that the period's educational experiments created or maintained the Romantic notion of a perfect balance between femininity and intellect while the "cult of true womanhood" masked women's inferior status with rhetoric extolling their maternal wisdom and moral virtue.[8]

Considered by historians to be a groundbreaking analysis of the role of women's participation in the American Revolution and their status in the new republic, Linda Kerber's *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America (1980)*, became a standard text on the subject. Since its publication, historians have measured the lives of early American women by Kerber's model of "republican motherhood." Kerber found that consensus developed in the years immediately following the Revolutionary War around the idea that success of the republican experiment demanded an educated citizenry. Women committed to the service of their family might serve a political purpose by raising patriotic children and guiding them on the paths of morality and virtue.[9] Bible-based literacy became a key aspect of this instruction.

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[6] Ronald W. Hogeland, "Coeducation of the Sexes at Oberlin College: A Study of Social Ideas in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America." *Journal of Social History,* Vol. 6, no. 2 (December 1, 1972), 160-172.
[7] Keith Melder, "Mask of Oppression: The Female Seminary Movement in the United States." *New York History* 55, no. 3 (July 1, 1974), 261.
[8] Susan Phinney Conrad, *Perish the Thought: Intellectual Women in Romantic America, 1830-1860*, (New York, 1976), 21.
[9] Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. (Chapel Hill, 1980), 189-191, 283-284.

By the late eighteenth century, southern evangelical Christians quickly went from biblical teachings at home to promoting advanced education for women based on the moral imperative to train them in correct submissive female behavior and to save an unenlightened world.[10] Elite families started to abandon home tutoring and chose instead to educate their children in church sponsored academies and seminaries. Jane Turner Censer's study of North Carolina planter families found that they highly valued a thorough education for their daughters. They considered a curriculum strongly based in academics, and secondarily in ornamental subjects, such as needlework, art, and music, useful for doing their duty in managing, raising and instructing children, and preserving their virtue.[11]

Additionally, historians studied the interior lives of female students: focusing on the community of women within the schools along with gender relationships as women became more active in the public sphere and transformed their social identities. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz finds that the designs of early female institutions consciously intended them as a place and space for the exclusive use of women.[12] Margaret Nash counters that class and race were more important than gender in the construction of such educational institutions. Individuals who saw themselves as members of a newly emerging middling class struggled for self-definition, making education an emblem of class status. Furthermore, the support of educational opportunities for women did not imply support for legal, political or economic equality. Rather, society regarded a woman's capacity for high intellectual attainment as separate from other arenas in life.[13] Mary Kelly

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[10] Ann Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930*, (Charlottesville, 1995), 7.
[11] Jane Turner Censer, *North Carolina Planters and Their Children, 1800—1860*, (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1990), 44.
[12] Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s*, (Amherst, 1993), 4.
[13] Margaret A. Nash, *Women's Education in the United States, 1780-1840*, (New York, 2005), 1, 55-60.

argues that with a curriculum that often matched the course of study at male colleges, women's liberal learning cultivated one of the most profound changes in gender relations in the nation's history: the movement of women into public life.[14]

Southern institutions offered women an education designed to be equivalent to that of men, while maintaining and nurturing the gender conventions epitomized by the ideal of the Southern belle. Christie Anne Farnham questions the functions and meanings of female education in a white dominated slave society and the paradox of offering women an education while maintaining and nurturing southern gender conventions of ladylike values and etiquette. Farnham examines a full range of female social protocol and how it determined relationships both inside and outside the school. Rather than the northern fear that education was a threat to femininity and an attack on the sex segregation of the professions, southern women made no such challenge; the desire for a classical education was a mark of gentility and class.[15] Farnham recognizes that the antebellum South was an "innovator in collegiate education for women," but it failed to keep up with the advances achieved by women's education in the North. She furthers her study by examining the demographic, economic, social, political, and cultural characteristics that have accounted for the delay and the many variations between the education of Southern women and women in the rest of the nation.[16] Amy Thompson McCandless continues the work of Farnham by extending the study of southern female

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[14] Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand & Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic*, (Chapel Hill, 2006), 15.
[15] Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South*, (New York: NYU, 1994), 18-19.
[16] Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle*, 18-19.

education into the 20th century and how both black and white women simultaneously used conformity and rebellion to undermine social structures.[17]

Jean E. Friedman connects the delay in educational advances to the complex structures of women's identity in the South by demonstrating how the evangelical communities — a church-directed, kin-dominated society — linked plantation, farm, and town in the predominantly rural South.[18] The symbiosis of church and community were key to the establishment of Lutheran higher education in North Carolina. The church sought out healthy, virtuous environments in the founding of its schools in its desire to provide male students for theological training, and female students for training as minister's wives and teachers.

Although the NCLS had long supported the ideal of an educated ministry and Sunday Schools for the purpose of the virtuous education of children, it was not until 1851 that it made a "Plea for Female Education." Richard W. Solberg examines the promotion of education by early German settlers in Pennsylvania and the difficulties of establishing both male and female Lutheran institutions of higher learning as they moved south into the Carolinas,[19] while Raymond M. Bost and Jeff L. Norris consider the development of the NCLS and follow its path to educate the daughters of the church in the Carolinas.[20]

Despite financial struggles and its conservative view of womanhood, the NCLS held the position that the young women of Mont Amoena deserved the same access to collegiate level education available to its young men. But Mont Amoena is also a case

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[17] Amy Thompson McCandless, *The Past in the Present: Women's Higher Education in the Twentieth-Century American South*, (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1999), 17.
[18] Jean E. Friedman, *The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900*, (Chapel Hill, 1990), xii-xvi.
[19] Richard W. Solberg, *Lutheran Higher Education in North America*, (Minneapolis, 1985).
[20] Bost, and Norris, *All One Body*.

study of the ways in which the church and community resisted women's educational reform after the Civil War, resulting in a model that would prove unsustainable. Ultimately, the rise of public schools, progressive New South ideals, and the centralization of NCLS authority challenged Mont Amoena's traditional rural existence. As part of Cabarrus County's remembered past, its influence touched many local families and remains an indelible part of its regional history.

The primary focus of this study is the institutional history and memory of Mont Amoena Female Seminary and its relationship to the NCLS and Mount Pleasant. The curriculum and internal structure of Mont Amoena were not necessarily unique when compared to other southern denominational postbellum female seminaries. What distinguished it was its kinship network with the church, North Carolina College, Mount Pleasant, and the surrounding community. Its impact was primarily local and regional at best, but its ties to the community ran deep. This work is not intended to be a history of southern female education, Lutheranism in North Carolina, or a study of gender social structures. A number of historians have already studied these subjects, as well as the development of women's education within the context of Southern society, and the impact of the cultural construction of femininity among Southern elite women. I address these topics only as supporting information and explore them further in the accompanying digital project, *Memories of Mont Amoena*: *Educating Young Women in Mount Pleasant, NC 1859-1927* (www.montamoena.org).

The core primary sources for this study include: documents and meeting minutes from the school's board of directors and the NCLS; school catalogues and newsletters; private correspondence of both faculty and students; minutes from Mont Amoena's

Bernheim Literary Society; programs from events, performances and graduation; student journals and scrapbooks; and newspaper articles and published reminiscences of former students and faculty. The goal in using these sources is to support the examination of Mont Amoena as a case study in the exploration of the complex issues of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rural southern denominational female education and reasons why the southern seminary model failed to endure. Additionally, the reconstruction and analysis of its history and the society in which it existed helps explain Mont Amoena's local impact and outlines the limitations on the school's ability to grow and meet the changing needs of its students and the church.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. Because the roots of Mont Amoena are in its past, chapter one provides background for its founding prior to 1860. It examines the rise of nineteenth-century female education and the seminary movement, the establishment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North Carolina, German Lutheran settlement in eastern Cabarrus County, and the establishment of Mount Pleasant as an educational center. Chapter two considers the impact of social and cultural changes on Mount Pleasant Female Seminary (Mont Amoena) and its students after the war, confronts the limitations of the seminary as an institution of the NCLS, and explores the network of support created between the seminary, North Carolina College, and the town of Mount Pleasant through the first decade of the twentieth century. Chapter three examines the period of rebuilding Mont Amoena and the challenges it faced as it fought to keep pace with changes in education and the conflicting interests of the community and the church. The Epilogue concludes with a brief sketch of the aftermath of the seminary, the effect of the closures of the Lutheran educational institutions in Mount Pleasant, and the lasting memory of Mont Amoena.

The public history digital project, *Memories of Mont Amoena*: *Educating Young Women in Mount Pleasant, NC 1859-1927* (www.montamoena.org) is produced in partnership with the nonprofit Eastern Cabarrus Historical Society (ECHS) in Mount Pleasant, North Carolina. Drawing upon colleted material, the online portal provides free public access to a digital repository of primary sources and an assortment of curated resources that tell the history of Mont Amoena Female Seminary, including biographical information on students and faculty. The site has three goals: to document and preserve the archive of Mont Amoena in an accessible digital format; to tell the story of Mont Amoena in the context of local and regional history and as an example of the nineteenth-century southern seminary movement; and to be a forum for the community's collective memory of the Mont Amoena experience. While the thesis provides a broader context for Mont Amoena within the history of southern women's denominational education, the digital project reflects the interests and needs of ECHS to promote and preserve its collection and provides a platform for community dialogue and engagement.

The digital project's intended audience are those interested in post-bellum southern women's education as it transitioned into the twentieth century, educational institutions of the Lutheran church, and Mont Amoena and its people in relationship to the town of Mount Pleasant and Cabarrus County history. I anticipate engaging both the casual viewer, as well as the history scholar. Cataloging and digitization of items is ongoing and I will continue working with ECHS to add them to the website. The value of these sources extends beyond the study of educational history; this project aims to expand their utility as sources for a broader analysis of cultural history and memory.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ECHS	Eastern Cabarrus Historical Society, Mount Pleasant, NC
JRCA	James R. Crumley Jr. Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Columbia, SC
LRUA	Lenoir-Rhyne University Archives, Hickory, NC
MPCI	Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute
NCLS	North Carolina Lutheran Synod
ULCA	United Lutheran Church of America

CHAPTER 1: NINETEENTH-CENTURY FEMALE EDUCATION, THE NORTH CAROLINA EVANGELICAL LUTHERANS, AND MOUNT PLEASANT BEFORE 1860

"It is really mortifying Sir, when a woman possessed of a common share of understanding considers the difference of Education between the male and female Sex, even in those families where Education is attended to," wrote future first lady, Abigail Adams, in 1778. Adams, frustrated by the educational advantages afforded to sons while daughters were left comparatively neglected, realized the very practical need of female education for "the care of a family and the first instruction of Children falls to their share." Additionally, she reasoned, "why should the [male] sex wish for such a disparity in those whom they one day intend for companions and associates."[21]

The roots of nineteenth-century female seminary education, and that of Mont Amoena Female Seminary, are in America's early national period when educational opportunity for women expanded. Believing that the future of the republic rested on the virtue of its citizens, communities enlisted churches, schools, and families to fulfill this function. What began with biblical teachings at home quickly expanded to the belief that women could benefit society outside of their families. To further spread Christianity, evangelical Christians promoted advanced education for women based on their affirmation of a moral imperative to save an unenlightened world.[22] German Lutherans carried such

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[21] Abigail Adams, "Letter to John Thaxter," Massachusetts Historical Society Digital Edition: Adams Papers, February 15, 1778, https://www.masshist.org. John Thaxter was a cousin of Abigail Adams, a law student of John Adams, tutor to the Adams children, and John Adams's foreign secretary.

[22] Nash, *Women's Education in the United States,* 55-60.

doctrine with them to their settlements in North Carolina, but despite the enthusiasm of the NCLS to educate women in its own territory, poor timing and the choice of a remote, rural location established the foundation of Mont Amoena's continuous struggle for survival.

Denied participation in public life and the full rights of citizenship, society often considered academic pursuits for women of the colonial and new republic eras unnecessary and self-indulgent. American men entering the Revolution did not consider the agency of women in their vision of a new social order. Linda Kerber writes that Enlightenment thought suggests that a woman's relationship to society was a secondhand experience through her husbands and sons, and therefore education was only necessary to provide "sensible companions and mothers."[23] Clearly defined masculine and feminine roles had separate spheres of influence based on "biological makeup" as well as the will of God: men inhabited the public sphere – the world of politics, economy, commerce, and law, while women occupied the private realm of domestic life, child rearing, housekeeping, and religious education. Nonetheless, the sacrifice and struggle for survival in war did challenge women to commit themselves politically and then justify their allegiance through patriotism. Even so, few women prepared to be independent political beings. It raised the question of what form female patriotism might take in support of the new nation.[24]

The rhetoric of the Revolution, full of insistence on rights and freedom, failed to define a program for the participation of patriotic women in the public arena. Using the Enlightenment ideal of a woman's sphere of influence, and sustained by the idea that success of the republican experiment demanded a well-educated citizenry, women created one for themselves through what Kerber terms "republican motherhood."

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[23] Kerber, *Women of the Republic,* 27.
[24] Ibid, 9, 31-36.

A consensus developed around the idea that a mother committed to the service of her family and to the state might serve a political purpose by raising a patriotic child and guiding them on the paths of morality and virtue.[25]

Literacy was key to developing advanced education for women. New England achieved the highest and earliest levels of literacy. It had compact patterns of settlement and a great emphasis on religious teachings that mandated reading the Bible. Girls more often learned to read than write. Women taught both subjects, plus simple arithmetic, at home or in private "dame schools" out of their own homes. Literacy was almost universal among New England women after the American Revolution.[26]

The South's agrarian society and scattered settlements handicapped female literacy. In the colonial period, wealthy planters sent their children abroad or hired tutors to teach in the home. Some girls attended "French Schools" that ranged from simple day schools to fashionable boarding schools. They emphasized polite education and "accomplishments," or the ornamental branches, including French, reading, basic arithmetic, needlework, music, and dancing. Along with dame schools, some areas had neighborhood schools or "Old Field Schools" that taught fundamentals to children of both sexes for a fee. For the vast majority though, illiteracy remained high for women in the colonial South.[27]

The American Revolution was the impetus for two movements in the advancement of female education in a society dominated by religiosity and guided by morality and virtue. It broke many of the intimate ties that traditionally linked religion and government, especially those with the Anglican Church, turning religion into a voluntary affair; and as

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[25] Ibid, 189-191, 283-284.
[26] Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle*, 35-36.
[27] Ibid, 36-39.

American society became more democratic in the early nineteenth century, middling people rose to dominance and brought their religiosity with them.

In the North, this newly formed "middling class" gave rise to female academies as women sought to distinguish themselves in the midst of an increasingly industrial capitalist system. Education was central to the aspirations of the middling people and contributed greatly to the growth of female education. Antebellum benevolent and self-improvement movements advocated common school reform insisting that schools would preserve social order by inculcating the right values. With traditional male professions closed to them, women took advantage of newly emerging opportunities to be writers and teachers. Society associated teaching young children with childrearing and therefore it did not greatly stretch the roles of women. In doing so, they crossed from the domestic sphere to the public sphere.[28]

While virtually all colleges before 1830 were male-only institutions, academies and seminaries became the chief institutionalized forms of advanced female education in the nineteenth century. Generally speaking, a college was a degree-granting, three- or four-year course of study primarily designed to prepare students for the ministry, law, medicine, or another profession. The term "seminary" is from the Latin *sēmināriu*m, meaning seed or nursery garden, suggesting a place to grow.[29] Although "seminary" often defines a theological educational institution in preparation for ordination as clergy or other ministry, it was also used to describe private female educational institutions. According to Margaret Nash, the terms academy and seminary were often interchangeable, but trustees and the proprietors of these schools were more likely to name institutions

[28] Ibid, 53-54.
[29] "Seminary," Dictionary.com. Accessed December 12, 2016. http://www.dictionary.com.

"academies" in the early republic and "seminaries" in the antebellum era. With the increasing number of female academies, the term "seminary" tended to refer to female schools with high academic standards and were more serious than a finishing school.[30]

It was at this time that three influential pioneers in women's education founded institutions that served as models for many others to follow: Emma Willard at Troy Female Seminary in New York (1821); Catharine Beecher at Hartford Female Seminary in Connecticut (1832); and Mary Lyon at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in Massachusetts (1837). Public opinion on the "absurdity" of college education for women was still widespread, but each of these schools offered academically rigorous educational programs.[31] Women at such New England institutions still supported "separate spheres" and "feminine accomplishments" combined with strict religious teachings and discipline in student life. Lyon praised such self-discipline within a framework of conventional gender roles. As a consequence, her students acquired advanced educational training and a missionary zeal to "reform the manners and morals of their charges."[32]

During this period, denominational institutions also grew as early nineteenth-century evangelical religious activists pulled away from the church hierarchy and made Christianity a deeply personal experience. This so-called Second Great Awakening resulted in a massive outpouring of evangelical religious enthusiasm. It differed from the First Great Awakening that swept Europe and British America in the 1730s and 1740s in that it reached out to convert the "unchurched" rather than focusing on already committed members. Contrary to the experience of eighteenth-century Europeans whose Enlightenment rationalism tended to erode their allegiance to religion, religion in

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[30] Nash, *Women's Education in the United States, 1780-1840*, 6.
[31] Ibid, 83.
[32] Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle*, 63.

America rejected Enlightenment rationalism and gained in authority precisely because of its separation from governmental power.[33]

Evangelicals took pride in having ministers taught only by revelation, but as the movement expanded, it prompted a need for an educated clergy. Evangelicals believed that true Christians had an obligation to perform good works and convert nonbelievers. The need for ministers, as well as a call for men to serve in foreign and domestic missionary movements, helped account for the rapid growth of denominational colleges, primarily for men.[34] With this growth came the need for such men to have adequate partners in life.

Nash explains that evangelical Christians promoted advanced education for women based on their affirmation of a moral imperative to save an unenlightened world. Evangelicalism assumed women's moral superiority and their propensity for self-denying labor. Education, advocates argued, was a tool that would better prepare women for their work. Although moral education was at its core, the philosophy prohibited no subject when understood in the light of a divine requirement, because, "[e]very science, every branch of knowledge, may promote the glory of the Devine Master."[35] The flow of single female northern teachers to the South increased dramatically by the 1840s as a consequence of the spread of female seminaries and denominational rivalries that competed to take a leading role in female education.[36]

The American South imported education from institutions in the north, but in its incorporation into southern life, it took on additional functions and meaning. The ideal educated antebellum Southern belle did not exemplify the new role of women from the

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[33] Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815*, (Oxford; New York, 2009), 576.
[34] Nash, *Women's Education in the United States, 1780-1840,* 55.
[35] Ibid, 55-56.
[36] Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle*, 64.

industrialized and urbanized North, for the South remained tied to commercial agriculture. Christie Ann Farnham writes that they instead represented a romanticization of white domination in a slave society.[37] By merging the ideology of separate spheres with notions drawn from chivalry and a glorification of myths from Anglo-Saxon culture, they reinforced the hierarchy of elite white women. Private southern schools utilized both the formal curriculum of the liberal arts and the informal curriculum of instructing in ladylike values and etiquette to inculcate this Southern version of femininity.[38]

In the South, with few exceptions, only the daughters of planters, prosperous farmers owning slaves, prominent ministers, and well-to-do businessmen and professionals could afford to remain in school long enough for advanced seminary or college training. Unlike young women in the North, southern women in the antebellum period never intended to work outside the home, so they did not pose a threat to occupational segregation. Higher education became emblematic of class and a means to refinement.[39] The aftermath of the Civil War forced women to face significant challenges regarding class, race, gender, politics, and social norms while they struggled to hold on to conventions of Southern aristocratic culture.

German Lutherans Follow the Great Road to the Carolinas

The communities of eighteenth century German Lutherans that settled in Cabarrus County, North Carolina focused first on their sense of ethnicity and communal identity, then later on denominational considerations. As with other southern Lutheran settlements, they endured a period of ethnic isolation and then established themselves as part of a

[37] Ibid, 2, 64.
[38] Ibid, 2.
[39] Ibid, 3.

larger white southern environment. Highly influenced by the evangelical religious surroundings in which they lived, by the time of the Civil War, they were ardent defenders of southern liberty.[40] The road to Mont Amoena began with the story of these disciples of the Protestant Reformation leader, Martin Luther, seeking to escape oppression after exile from their home in the Rhineland.

The first large migration of Germans Lutherans involved the Palatines, a faction from the principality of Palatinate in the valley of the Rhine, who sought refuge in England. They fled due to hardships resulting from war, the unprecedented severity of the winter of 1708-09, and religious oppression.[41] But the biggest cause for the mass migration of the mostly impoverished Palatinates to England was the Crown's promise of free land in the American Colonies. Parliament discovered in 1711 that several “agents” working on behalf of the Colony of Carolina promised the peasants around Frankfurt free passage to the plantations. As thousands descended the Rhine for England, the influx of poor refugees became a drain on the English economy.[42]

The Carolinas did not turn out to be the primary destination in North America for resettlement: in return for passage to America and in payment for their subsistence on the land, the Palatines contracted to produce tar, hemp, and ship masts for the British government in indentured work camps in the Hudson River valley. Groups of the German refugees soon migrated inland. Attracted by William Penn's promise of religious freedom in the colony of Pennsylvania, they went to the Philadelphia region in significant

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[40] Susan Wilds McArver, “A Spiritual Wayside Inn: Lutherans, the New South and Cultural Change in South Carolina, 1866-1918,” (PhD diss., Duke University, 1995), 18.

[41] Clifford E. Nelson, Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Lutherans in North America*, (Philadelphia, 1975), 22-23.

[42] Daniel Statt, *Foreigners and Englishmen: The Controversy over Immigration and Population, 1660-1760,* (Newark, DE, 1995), 122-130.

numbers. Many brought with them their Lutheran faith and formed congregations. By the late 1720s, the flood of German immigrants continued to pour into Pennsylvania despite a lack of good remaining farmland.[43]

The southern frontier became especially attractive as word quickly spread of unclaimed tillable land in Carolina. Germans from Pennsylvania, along with Scots and Irish from Maryland, loaded up their belongings into covered wagons and traveled into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, then south to the Carolinas.[44]

They followed the route known as the Great Wagon Road. Originally called the "Indian Trading Path," the Great Wagon Road began as passageway for Indians between Maryland and Georgia.[45] The five hundred mile journey from Pennsylvania was slow and physically taxing as travelers herded livestock ahead of the wagons on the primitive trail. Early efforts to establish German settlements in the American South were often fleeting or met with great hardship. Settlers struggled with disease, significant mortality, isolation, and hostile relations with Native Americans. Estimates suggest that by the late 1750s, two thousand settlers made their way southward through the Shenandoah Valley each year.[46]

Although immigration continued through the Revolutionary War, the largest percentage of German migrants arrived in North Carolina between 1750 and 1760. The heaviest concentration was in the area south of Salisbury in Rowan County and east of Concord in Cabarrus County, about two miles north of the current town of Mount Pleasant on Dutch Buffalo Creek (now called Big Buffalo Creek).[47] These German-speaking people

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[43] Nelson and Tappert. *The Lutherans in North America*, 24.
[44] Ibid.
[45] J. K. Rouse, *The Great Road through Cabarrus County, North Carolina*, (Kannapolis, N.C, 1985), 9.
[46] Bost and Norris, *All One Body*, 20-21.
[47] John A. Suther, Rev. Dr. Mark J. Ericson, eds., "The Heritage of St. John's," www.stjohnslutheranchurch.net; and Clarence E. Horton, *Variations on a Bicentennial Theme, Historical Addresses, 1990-1992*, (Concord, NC, 1993), 118.

had little knowledge of English. They were farmers, builders, and artisans who were stubborn individualists that hung on to their language and customs. Described as "fervently religious," they kept to themselves for generations and had little contact with their Scots-Irish and English neighbors living in other parts of the counties.[48]

Denominationally speaking, they were a mixture of German Reformed and Lutheran. While both are branches of Protestantism, German Reformed have a strong affiliation with Calvinist orthodoxy and differ from Lutherans on the interpretation of scripture, the Eucharist, predestination, and routes to Salvation.[49] At first they had neither a church nor a pastor and held meetings in homes, with the host or some other literate person reading from sermon books brought with them from Europe.[50] Then for a number of decades, both groups jointly supported a teacher to instruct their children and shared common hymnals and places of worship. Unlike other German migrant groups, such as the Salzburgers or Moravians, they did not bring clergy with them from Pennsylvania. Because there was such a shortage of clergy, they accepted the ministrations of an ordained pastor from either the Reformed or Lutheran tradition.[51]

Schools were a way to hold onto the traditions they knew in Germany, including their language and the Lutheran or Reformed faith. A pastor might serve as a schoolmaster, or the teacher might read services on Sunday in the absence of a pastor. Education and religion were bound together. The Bible became a textbook, supplemented by a basic curriculum of spelling, arithmetic, and language. Advanced students might learn English, Latin, or Greek. The people spoke a mixture of broken English and

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[48] Bost and Norris, *All One Body*, 15.
[49] Douglas Lindee "Differences between Reformed and Lutheran Doctrines," *Intrepid Lutherans*, April 13, 2011, http://www.intrepidlutherans.com.
[50] Bernard W. Cruse, et al., *Foundations of Lutheranism in North Carolina.* (North Carolina, 1973), 17.
[51] Bost and Norris, *All One Body*, 24.

German, similar to "Pennsylvania Dutch," which reportedly was still in use as late as 1900, but has since disappeared.[52]

The two groups in Cabarrus County used the "Dutch Buffalo Meeting House" for about thirty years and then separated around 1773 when they recruited a Lutheran pastor, Rev. Adolphus Nussmann and a schoolmaster, John Gottfried Arends, from Hanover, Germany. The Lutherans relocated near where St. John's Lutheran Church now stands northwest of Mount Pleasant, and the Reformed congregation moved eastward several miles to the present site of Bethel (Bear Creek) Reformed Church. In 1775 Arends became ordained as a minister for the Rowan County Lutherans, while Nussmann served the Mecklenburg (Cabarrus) Lutherans.[53]

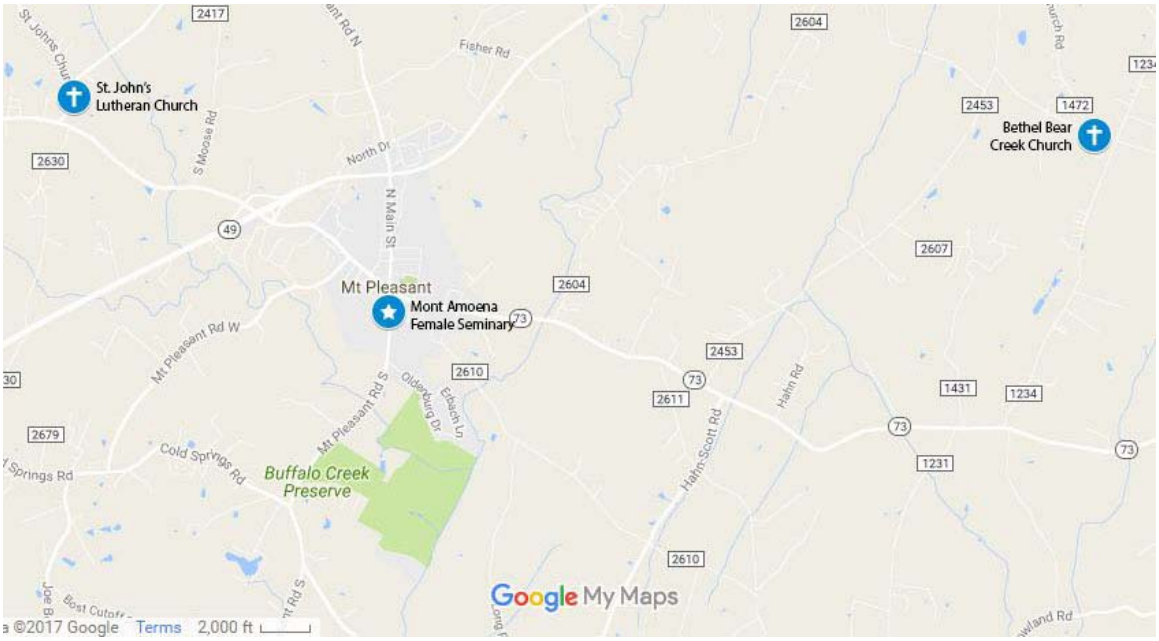

Figure 1: Map of Mount Pleasant relative to Lutheran and German Reformed settlement.

[52] Ibid, 15.
[53] Ibid, 7, 19.

Martin Luther was a strong proponent of the doctrine of vocation, rooted in the concept of the priesthood of all believers: the education of all was necessary in preparation for service to God and to society. To assure its well-being, a community must have both capable men and women. For this reason Luther urged "the establishment everywhere of the very best schools for both boys and girls." Schools to supply this wide range of needs required a classical curriculum grounded in the liberal arts: language (Latin, Greek, and Hebrew), history, poetry, rhetoric, and music. Additionally, there was math, the natural sciences, and religious instruction provided by Luther's Catechism. It was in this spirit that Lutherans set out to establish educational institutions in America. But in the years after the American Revolution, the Lutheran ministerium struggled to find clergy and enough qualified teachers for theological training. The congregations were too poor to provide adequate support, and Enlightenment rationalism created a general religious apathy causing a modification of certain traditional Lutheran practices.[54]

Rev. Nussmann sought help from Germany. Since there was no college in America to train Lutheran ministers, he requested more pastors be sent from Europe.[55] A group of German professors put together a missionary society called the Helmsted Enterprise for the main purpose of sending capable preachers to North Carolina. Nussmann wanted a school for each of the twenty North Carolina congregations he supervised, and the Helmsted professors prepared textbooks for that purpose.[56]

The Second Great Awakening rejuvenated and empowered churches of all denominations to promote the "golden day of democratic evangelicalism."[57] What began

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[54] Solberg, 16-17, 44.
[55] Ibid, 22.
[56] Cruse, et al., *Foundations of Lutheranism*, 22, 33.
[57] Bost and Norris, *All One Body,* 49.

with religious revivals at New England colleges such as Yale and Princeton, quickly spread west around the turn of the nineteenth century. A proliferation of independent denominational colleges materialized to advance an educated ministry.

The Lutherans first permanent institutional venture was Gettysburg Seminary, founded in Pennsylvania in 1826. Its primary purpose was to provide the linguistic and literary foundation for the study of theology. The school grew with an expanded course of study that attracted non-theological students as well. It eventually received a college charter and became Gettysburg College in 1832.[58]

Two Lutheran schools opened in central Ohio in the 1830s to serve a large influx of German immigrants: Wittenberg College in Springfield and Capitol University in Columbus. Each held vastly different philosophies. Wittenberg College patterned itself after New England colleges that embraced the liberalism of so-called "American Lutherans" and affirmed use of the English language, while Capitol University held conservative "Old Lutheran" values that considered the German language as the guardian of a pure doctrine. These two philosophies represented a growing split in the Lutheran church that went beyond Ohio. Progress versus tradition became a dominant issue that would persist in the church for the next ninety years.[59]

Southern Lutherans faced a number of deterrents to establishing institutions of higher learning, including their relatively small numbers, the scattered nature of their settlements, and the persistent rivalries and doctrinal disputes amongst the Lutherans themselves. The larger population of English speaking neighbors made it difficult to maintain their Lutheran identity and organize schools for the preservation of German

[58] Bost and Norris, 54-56.
[59] Ibid, 62-67.

culture. After 1800, the English communities dominated by Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists made inroads, especially among the younger German Lutherans, through the popularity of their religious revivals. The success of the revival preaching, which rejected rationalism and appealed to emotionalism, even suggested to many that formal education inhibited rather than enhanced the ministry of the gospel. There was some basis for concern that dominance of other denominational institutions in the area would further weaken the Lutheran church in succeeding years. Their strength led the Germans to adopt one part of the new revivalism, the camp meeting, as a way to keep their heritage alive.[60]

In 1803, four pastors met to organize what would later become the North Carolina Evangelical Lutheran Synod (NCLS). In its early form it had very limited functions. Its primary intention was to provide congregations with adequately prepared ministers, but due to internal strife it was not well organized. A conservative faction split from the organization and formed the Tennessee Synod in 1830. Despite its name, the Tennessee Synod still covered territory in North Carolina. This split greatly weakened the influence of Lutheranism in the region.[61]

In its early years, the NCLS supported male theological seminaries outside its territory. In 1816, it founded a school in Green County, Tennessee, but it failed due to the leadership split. It then supported the seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, which produced a number of leaders for the ministry. Meanwhile, the South Carolina Synod established the Classical Literary School and Theological Seminary in Lexington, South Carolina in 1830. It opened with favorable prospects and proved to be prosperous. In order to consolidate funding efforts, the North Carolina and South Carolina Synods

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[60] Ibid, 95-97.
[61] H. George Anderson, *The NCLS through 175 Years, 1803-1978*, (1978), 5.

combined their support for the Lexington seminary in 1836 and jointly operated it with two boards of directors.[62]

Despite the Lutheran doctrine of vocation for all, education did not extend to black slaves. Like many antebellum southern evangelicals, Lutherans took a stance of noninterference; it was a matter of the separation of church and the laws of the state. The purpose of the church was for the saving of souls, not the reform of society.[63] For Germans in the Piedmont of North Carolina, slavery was a fact of life and they were not immune to slave ownership. The 1790 census reveals that 30.7 percent of North Carolinians were slaveholders. Of those with German heritage, 12.4 were slaveholders. Two-thirds of all the German families in the Piedmont lived in the Salisbury District, which included Mecklenburg County and what is now Cabarrus County. Of this group, twenty percent of the families owned slaves: sixty percent held one slave, ten families held eleven or more. The largest number was nineteen. Overall slave ownership in the Piedmont sharply increased in the decades before the Civil War. Esther Phifer's ninety slaves in Cabarrus County in 1845 is the largest known group owned by an individual with a German surname.[64]

For the most part, Lutheran clergy accepted pastoral responsibility for slaves owned by members of their parishes and ownership itself tended to be patriarchal in character. Pastors baptized the children of slaves provided the owners assumed Christian nurturance. In 1814 the NCLS made a provision for black worshippers to have separate seating in Lutheran church buildings. While most of the membership supported slave baptism, some feared that a

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[62] G. D. Bernheim, and George H. Cox. *The History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina, in Commemoration of the Completion of the First Century of Its Existence*, (Philadelphia, 1902), 66-67.

[63] Anne C. Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: 1980), 203-205.

[64] Bost and Norris, *All One Body*, 78.

negro's conversion to Christianity implied liberation from slavery and an eventual uprising. The 1831 rebellion by Nat Turner, a literate, pious slave from Southhampton, Virginia, seemed to support that fear. The synod condemned the ensuing acceleration of northern abolitionist agitation. Southern Lutherans who felt themselves accused of professing a religion tainted by slavery and rebellion were in no way hesitant to countercharge that northern Lutherans confused Christianity with "Lincolnism." As sectionalism grew, the Lutherans, like most other North Carolinians, defended the South, the doctrine of white supremacy, and the institution of slavery, in the years leading up to the Civil War.[65]

The decade of the 1850s witnessed a remarkable growth of Lutheran interest in higher education in the South. Regional economic prosperity contributed to this new wave of enthusiasm. Conditions in the southern states were better than at any time in the nation's history. Tobacco production doubled between 1849 and 1859, and cotton prices were at an all-time high. Southern Democrats controlled the nation's land and tariff policies, and a strong sense of southern nationalism found expression in the desire to develop leadership and maintain the standards of a "southern way of life."[66]

Traditional concerns for theological training were never absent, but there was a new surge of interest and support in the church for general secondary and collegiate education and a strong emphasis on education for women.[67] The various synods were aware of each other's schools and competed for the recognition and prestige of having their own institutions. In September 1854, the synod of Western Virginia resolved to

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[65] Bost and Norris, 80-85; and Russell C. Kleckley, "Abolition and Confessionalism" in *Lutheranism with a Southern Accent: Essays and Reports of the 17th Biennial Meeting, Rincon, Georgia, 1994*, Vol. 16, 169.
[66] Solberg, *Lutheran Higher Education,* 107.
[67] Ibid.

appoint a female education exploratory committee. The NCLS reported this action at their annual meeting in May of 1855.[68]

But the NCLS was not yet willing to support a female institution until it established one for men. Since its inception, it was the desire of the NCLS to have a classical literary institution of its own, in its own territory, where it could educate pious young men for ministry and support missionaries to explore, settle, and cultivate new territory.[69] In his report to the synod in 1852, President Rev. Joseph A. Linn challenged membership to sponsor a male academy.

The NCLS Chooses Mount Pleasant

The synod called a special meeting on July 21, 1852 in Concord, North Carolina for the express purpose of creating a plan for what would be the Western Carolina Male Academy. Although the synod resolved to support such a plan ecclesiastically, it could not do so financially due to its existing commitment to the Classical Literary School and Theological Seminary in Lexington.[70]

The cooperative effort with Lexington lasted until 1855 when the South Carolina Synod moved the school to Newberry, South Carolina, reestablishing it as Newberry Lutheran College and Theological Seminary, a designation making it a degree granting institution. The NCLS withdrew from the compact and transferred its funds, then

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[68] Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina, *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina: Convened at Frederick Town, Davidson County, North Carolina, Friday May 4, 1855*, (Salisbury, 1855), 9.

[69] Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina, *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina, 1858,* 9.

[70] Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina. *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina : Convened at Newton, Catawba County, N.C., April 29th, 1853*, (Salisbury, 1853), 9.

amounting to $1,040.05 for its own institutional interests.[71] The board of the Western Carolina Male Academy chose Mount Pleasant, Cabarrus County as the seat of the academy on December 2, 1852.[72]

At the time, Mount Pleasant was a sleepy unincorporated farming village of a few hundred. It had been part of the German Lutheran community since their settlement in the 1740s. They shared it with the Methodists who arrived in the 1830s. Located at the intersection of two major roads, local tradition maintains it was the location of a campsite called "Mount Comfort," that provided a stopping place between Salisbury to the north and "Charles Town" to the south, also Fayetteville to the east. Over the years it grew into a permanent settlement and emerged as a small village in the 1830s. The name Mount Pleasant appears in records about 1839. Legend claims the name derived from its picturesque location and high elevation between Adams and Buffalo Creeks.[73]

The NCLS considered Mount Pleasant a favorable location because it was in “one of the most healthful sections of the state.” Nearby mineral springs had water thought to possess valuable properties conducive to good health. An 1869 broadside for Mont Amoena describes Mount Pleasant as having “pure air, good water, and an entire absence of all such malignant diseases, resulting from malaria…nor will the pupils be so closely confined as is necessary in city life.”[74] Nineteenth-century cities were often thought to be breeding grounds of ill health and immoral influences. In an era of heightened concern

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[71] Bernheim, and Cox, *The History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod,* 66-67; and Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina. *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina*, 1856, 11.

[72] Lutheran Synod, *Minutes*, 1853, 25-26.

[73] “Historic Mount Pleasant,” accessed November 11, 2016, http://mtpleasantnc.org; and Clarence E. Horton and Kathryn L Bridges, *Piedmont Neighbors: Historical Sketches of Cabarrus, Stanly, and Southern Rowan Counties from the Pages of Progress Magazine*, (Concord, N.C., 1999), 399.

[74] “North Carolina College, Mt. Pleasant, Cabarrus County, N.C.,” *Duke Digital Collections*, 1869. This is a 2-sided broadside flier promoting North Carolina College on one side, and Mont Amoena Seminary on the reverse.

for urban sanitation and public health and hygiene, the church considered Mount Pleasant's remote location a positive attribute.

Before the Civil War, Mount Pleasant, along with the rest of Cabarrus County, remained on the perimeter of the State's economic mainstream. Small, self-sufficient farms were still the rule, but a cash crop agriculture was beginning to emerge as farmers produced larger amounts of cotton. Specific records for Mount Pleasant are sparse and prevent a detailed picture of the village for this period, but it functioned primarily as a trading community serving a rural area.[75]

At the 1853 NCLS annual convention, the board approved and ratified the plan for Western Carolina Male Academy, but it still needed funding.[76] Patronage grew over the next few years and in 1855 it opened its doors with a substantial endowment, but because the academy did not grant degrees, it struggled to retain candidates for the Lutheran pastorate.

Rev. Levi C. Groseclose gave special attention to education in his 1858 NCLS President's Report. He lamented a loss in membership and recognized the inability to cultivate, educate, and propagate new pastors in North Carolina. The result was the abandonment of churches or occupation by other denominations. It was at this time Groseclose decried, "How much have we not already lost, by educating our sons and daughters in the schools of other denominations?"[77] By the end of the meeting the synod resolved to amend the charter of Western Carolina Male Academy to make it a college of the NCLS with the power of conferring degrees.[78]

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[75] "Historic Mount Pleasant," accessed November 11, 2016. http://mtpleasantnc.org.
[76] Lutheran Synod, *Minutes*, 1853, 26.
[77] Ibid,1858, 10-11.
[78] Ibid, 20.

The board appointed Reverend Daniel Howard Bittle, Professor of Ancient Languages at Roanoke College, its first president.[79] A native of Middletown, Maryland, Rev. Bittle graduated from Gettysburg College, was ordained in 1849 by the Miami Synod in Ohio, and married Susan E. Biglow in Collamer, Ohio that same year. Before coming to Mount Pleasant, he taught several years at Lane Seminary, where prominent New England pastor and abolitionist, Lyman Beecher, was a former president.[80] The Bittles purchased property directly across the street from the college.[81]

In August of 1858, Rev. Bittle opened a special session of the NCLS that met for the purpose of considering the permanent location of the newly proposed North Carolina College as the replacement of Western Carolina Male Academy. The NCLS already had a process for establishing colleges and seminaries in which they invited communities to enter bids involving pledges of cash, land, and buildings. They also studied accessibility, health factors, and promise of future community growth.[82] The larger city of Concord argued its location: unlike the small rural village of Mount Pleasant nine miles to the east, Concord had a station for the North Carolina Railroad, and as the county seat, was home to Cabarrus County's political and social leaders. A delegation from Mount Pleasant attended the special session hoping to convince the synod to base the college at the already established male academy campus, in a community already dominated by the Lutheran church's presence. The remoteness of Mount Pleasant offered a certain autonomy for the church. Because the cost of living was lower than in an urban community, the church could

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[79] Daniel Howard Bittle was the brother of Roanoke College president, David Frederick Bittle. "Appointed President," *The Richmond Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), October 11, 1858, 1.
[80] Lutheran Church in America, NCLS, *Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers: North Carolina and Tennessee Synods, 1773-1965*, 1966, 22.
[81] "Unique Construction is Revealed, 'Mystery House' is Razed," *Winston-Salem Journal Sentinel* (Winston-Salem, NC), September 22 1957.
[82] Solberg, *Lutheran Higher Education*, 54.

charge a lower tuition rate, making it more economically available to a broader base of possible applicants. The NCLS reasoned what it lacked in accessibility, it made up for in affordability. That is perhaps why after hearing arguments, the synod resolved the college should stay in Mount Pleasant in a vote of fourteen in favor, and eleven against.[83]

The resolution could not have been more important to the prosperity of the village. Thrilled by the outcome, the citizens of Mount Pleasant vowed support of the college. The following is from the papers of educator and local historian, Dr. R. Brown McAllister, titled, "A Joyous Occasion the Illumination at Mt. Pleasant," regarding the 1858 celebration in the village upon the return of the delegation:

> When the joyful tidings, that the college of the Lutheran Church in North Carolina was to be located at Mt. Pleasant, every man, woman and child in the place seemed to be anxious to celebrate the event in some form or other; as the delegation returned…already at a distance could college and church bells be heard, and as they approached nearer, the sound of music reached the ear, and the whole village was alive with procession, flag, transparencies of various colors…the college campus was illuminated with the discharge of Roman candles, the whizzing of rockets, the graceful curve of fireballs…The next evening witnessed a still more gorgeous display, every little cottage, every habitable dwelling sent forth rays of rejoicing, every pane of glass was made brilliant with light…[84]

The people of Mount Pleasant met at the college chapel and stated their sentiments in the following resolution: "Resolved that we citizens are anxious to express the feeling of our community for the location of the college respectfully solicit their co-operation in promoting the prosperity of the college and that we hereby extend unto them and all others, the free and cordial hospitality of our village whenever they may feel

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[83] Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina, *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina: Convened in St. James' Church, Concord, North Carolina, Thursday April 28, 1859 : With Minutes of the Synodical, Missionary and Educational Society, Appended, (*Salisbury, N.C.), 1859, 4-6.

[84] Horton and Bridges, eds., *Piedmont Neighbors*, 401-402.

disposed to visit us and our institution."[85] Mount Pleasant's future prosperity and citizenry were now inexorably tied to Lutheran education. By 1859, the NCLS officially changed the name of Western Carolina Male Academy to North Carolina College with the ability to confer degrees to its graduates. That same year, the village of Mount Pleasant became an incorporated town with a board of elected officials.[86]

As consolation for Concord's "liberal offer" to accommodate the male college, the synod pledged cooperation with Concord in the establishment of a female college and requested a proposal for consideration.[87] Concord made no such proposal, so nothing came of the resolution except that it made the subject of female education more prominent and fostered a growing interest in its support.[88] The prominent leaders of Concord, including textile industrialist J. W. Cannon, later funded their own female academy in 1886.[89]

Most southern Lutheran female seminaries established before the Civil War were founded privately by Lutheran pastors and laypersons, and supported by tuition and private gifts. The establishment of Mont Amoena followed the same model. Rev. Bittle and seven other associates pushed for the formation of a female school. It was in part seen as a membership-building and financial opportunity for the church; Lutheran families could educate both their sons and daughters in one place.

In March of 1859, a group of stockholders for a "contemplated" female seminary met at the home of William A. Smith to discuss the purchase of his property. Speculation

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[85] Ibid.
[86] Lutheran Synod, *Minutes,* 1859, 19.
[87] Ibid, 6.
[88] Benehim and Cox, *History of Evangelical Lutheran Synod*, 72.
[89] The non-denominational Concord Female Academy opened in 1887 and operated until becoming a Concord public school in 1891. "A Female Seminary in Concord," *The Concord Times* (Concord, NC), July 8, 1886, 3; and "The Brief History of the Concord Public Schools," *The Concord Times* (Concord, NC), May 27, 1903, 5.

was in the air for there was a quick succession of property transactions before Mr. Smith finally sold the parcel to "The Trustees of Montamoena Seminary."[90]

On March 29, 1859, a newly formed board of trustees submitted Articles of Agreement to the North Carolina Secretary of State in application of incorporation for the purpose of "forming a Literary Institution for the promotion of education under the corporate style of The Montamoena Female Seminary, to pursue the business of a high school to encourage education at Mount Pleasant in the county of Cabarrus, for the term of thirty years." The act was a purely private enterprise, entered into without any consultation or help from the NCLS.[91] Approval of their application came on April 2, 1859.[92]

The location for the new school consisted of two tracts on South Main Street, just a few blocks from the heart of Mount Pleasant's primary intersection with Franklin Street. The trustees sold stock certificates at a rate of $25 each in support of the construction of the first building, completed that same year.[93] It was two stories high and contained eight rooms measuring 20'x20', and two rooms 20'x30.' Each room had a fireplace. Other amenities included an attached brick kitchen, a smoke house, stables, and a well.[94]

Rev. Bittle's wife Susan, an accomplished artist and proponent of female education, acted as principal and oversaw the boarding house that was first called Mount Pleasant Female Seminary, later Mont Amoena Female Seminary (Latin for Mount Pleasant). The two names appear interchangeably until 1892, but the name Mont Amoena (or "Montamoena") appeared on legal documents. It officially opened in 1859 as a

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[90] Notes from the stockholder meeting at the home of W. A. Smith, March 14, 1859, Sharon Barrier Horton Collection, ECHS.
[91] Benehim and Cox, *History of Evangelical Lutheran Synod*, 72.
[92] "Mont Amoena Female Seminary Charter," http://digital.ncdcr.gov.; and *The Laws of the State of North Carolina Passed by the General Assembly at the Session of 1852*, (Raleigh, 1853), 128-129.
[93] Ben Callahan, director of the ECHS, provided a deed history for the Mont Amoena property.
[94] "Seminary Building at Mount Pleasant," *North Carolina Advertiser* (Raleigh, NC), October 28, 1865, 2.

private boarding school to provide an education for young women and "to inspire their minds with a love for the beautiful, the good and the truth."[95]

Mont Amoena Presidents, Principals

1859-1860	Mrs. Susan Bittle	1876-1882	Mr. L. H. Rothrock
1860-1860	Rev. G. F. Schaeffer	1882-1883	Rev. G. F. Schaeffer
1860-1861	Miss Lathrop	1885-1891	Rev. J. A. Linn
1867-1868	Rev. C. F. Bansemer	1892-1897	Rev. C. L. T. Fisher
1868-1869	Rev. G. D. Bernheim	1897-1902	Rev. H. N. Miller
1870-1871	Rev. D. I. Dreher	1902-1914	Rev. J. H. C. Fisher
1871-1872	Mr. W. A. Barrier	1913-1921	Rev. R. A. Goodman
1872-1874	Mrs. Virginia Ribble Hubbert	1921-1927	Rev. J. H. C. Fisher
1874-1876	Rev. & Mrs. P. A. Strobel		

Figure 2: Table of Mont Amoena Presidents and Principals

Mrs. Bittle was a reluctant first principal. Board of Trustees meeting minutes from 1859 state that an active search for teachers had no response. Mrs. Bittle agreed to be the teacher and to take charge of the boarding house at a rate of $600 for the academic year, with her salary covered by tuition fees. Advertised tuition for the two lower classes was $16 and $24 respectively.[96] Response must have fallen short, for in November of 1859 Mrs. Bittle resigned as principal and declined to teach any more classes unless the Board made up the difference of her fee. In addition, she demanded they pay for a piano she ordered and a carriage. The Board resolved to meet her demands for the remainder of the session ending in July 1860. Mrs. Bittle finished the year at the seminary while her husband educated the boys in North Carolina College. She assured the public that the school provided "the usual English branches" of instruction as well as Latin, French, and

[95] Ben Callahan, *Mt. Pleasant by the Minutes*, (Mt. Pleasant, NC, 2002), 102.
[96] "Trustees of Montamoena Female Seminary Meeting Minutes," July 25, 1859.

Music.[97] Although still legally a private venture, the seminary acted as an affiliate of North Carolina College and the Lutheran church.

The 1860 catalog for North Carolina College reported that the Mount Pleasant Female Seminary academic year would begin the last Wednesday in September and run for 42 weeks under the operation of Principal Rev. George Francis Schaeffer, newly arrived from Somerset Academy in Cumberland, Pennsylvania. Rev. Shaeffer expanded the curriculum and structured it in three levels: first was spelling, writing, reading and oral arithmetic; second was English grammar, geography, arithmetic, and U. S. history; third was algebra, geometry, natural and mental philosophy, rhetoric, and ancient history. Music, painting, drawing and all ornamentals were extra.[98] The catalog described the virtues of the town of Mount Pleasant, "Its seclusion is altogether favorable to study, and the student is here preserved from those allurements of vice and extravagance that too generally beset Schools in more public places. By act of the Legislature, all gambling, exhibitions of an immoral tendency, juggling, and the sale of spirituous liquors, are prohibited under a heavy penalty within three miles of the College."[99] Unfortunately, Rev. Shaeffer lasted only a few months, tendering his resignation in December of 1860. The board elected Miss Lathrop as the next principal.

That same year at the annual NCLS meeting, the Committee on Education recommended the church make a provision to meet the growing demand for a female institution.[100] Lutheran synods often recognized and recommended privately established schools, but they were rarely under direct synodical sponsorship or control. The NCLS had

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[97] Bost and Norris, *All One Body,* 200.
[98] "Trustees of Montamoena, *Minutes*, March 3, 1860.
[99] Ibid, 171.
[100] Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina, *Minutes of the Fifty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina*, May 3, 1860, 21-22.

an interest in Mount Pleasant Female Seminary, but there was as yet no formal agreement; however, the 1860 Lutheran Almanac listed "Montamoena" as a female seminary under the general caption "Literary and Theological Institutions sustained by churches in connection with the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the U. S."[101]

While the NCLS worked to establish its own denominational schools, the seed of public education had already taken root in North Carolina. In the 1838-1839 session of the North Carolina legislature, Governor Dudley recommended the establishment of public schools and the employment of a general superintendent. Based on this recommendation, the first public school law passed on January 8, 1839. The law provided for a vote at the next congressional election as to whether taxes should increase to establish common schools within each district. Those counties where the vote carried would elect superintendents of common schools. Cabarrus County, along with the majority of the other counties in the State, voted in the affirmative.[102]

In 1841 Cabarrus County began laying out thirty-six school districts for children from age five to twenty-one, typically offering up to grade seven. School terms varied from two to four months and attendance was often irregular. Districts with a school population of one hundred or more built one-room schoolhouses to accommodate fifty to eighty pupils. Most were without desks or blackboards. Students sat on benches and shared books and slates. Only one teacher oversaw all grades in each school. The grades were "open" in that each child progressed at his or her own pace. Curriculum focused on the practicalities of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Although tax supported, they still required a nominal subscription,

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[101] "Mont Amoena Seminary" historical sketch, LRUA, citing Mary E. Markley, *Some Chapters on the History of Higher Education for Women*, (Philadelphia: Board of Education, United Lutheran Church in America), 1923.

[102] Harris, "Rural Public Schools," 23-24; and Horton and Bridges, eds., *Piedmont Neighbors*, 207.

something out of reach for many in rural communities. Teacher pay was irregular and teachers often rotated boarding with families of their students. As a result of high demand but low pay, standards and qualifications required for competent teachers were inconsistent. By 1857 teacher qualification required a certificate from an examining board.[103]

Mount Pleasant fell in Cabarrus County's Common School District 32, where the county established two publicly supported one-room schools about 1858. On the north end of town was Tammany Hall and on the south end was one called South Boston (since during this period Boston, Massachusetts was considered the center of learning in the north, the patrons of this school found it fitting to call it South Boston). In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century other local rural schools opened, including Peck Academy, Hahn School, and Bear Creek School.[104]

By 1860, forty-one teachers (thirty-one male and ten female) taught in thirty-six Cabarrus County common schools with a total enrollment of 1,685 students, an increase from 241 in 1853.[105] By the time the Bittles founded Mount Pleasant Female Seminary, almost every part of Cabarrus County had a public schoolhouse. The elite planter families and the devout Lutheran community still considered private denominational education far superior to the irregular and limited rudimentary teachings of the primitive common schools attended by the children of laborers.

With the outbreak of the Civil War in May of 1861, both North Carolina College and Mount Pleasant Female Seminary shut their doors. As southerners closed ranks, societal pressure and the sectional differences between the NCLS and the national Lutheran Synod forced northerners, such as Miss Lathrop and the Bittles, to abandon

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[103] Harris, "Rural Public Schools," 61-62.
[104] Horton and Bridges, eds., *Piedmont Neighbors*, 208, 243-244.
[105] Ibid, 207; Harris, "Rural Public Schools," 23-24, 29.

their schools, homes, friends, and community. Miss Lathrop requested a discharge as principal of the seminary so she could return to her home in the North. Rev. D. H. Bittle and Susan Biglow Bittle remained until Rev. Bittle requested dismission from the NCLS on October 8, 1861.[106] Susan Bittle later wrote, "The happiest part of my life was spent as Dr. Bittle's wife, and in the dearly loved Southern states."[107]

By 1860, the Lutheran Church in North America had spread west with German Lutherans in Missouri and Texas, and Scandinavian Lutherans in the Midwest and northern plains. Nationally, the church oversaw ten theological seminaries; eleven colleges, and an equal number of academies for male education; and eleven female seminaries.[108]

For forty-one years the NCLS maintained a connection with the Lutheran General Synod North and to Pennsylvania and the Gettysburg seminary, but even these familial, educational, and organizational ties did not supersede the debate over states rights. In 1862, the NCLS took a leading part in the organization of other southern state synods (South Carolina, Virginia, Southwest Virginia, and Georgia) in a split from the national church organization, forming the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Confederate States of America. Russell C. Keckley observed that the Civil War, not the

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[106] The couple moved to Austin, Texas where they ran a school for young women until the end of the war. Rev. Bittle returned to Roanoke College where he stayed two years, and then to Shepherdstown, West Virginia where he served four years. In October of 1871, he assumed charge of the Lutheran church in Savannah, Georgia, and died on January 14, 1874 at the age of 54. In later years, Susan Bittle remarried and lived in San Francisco, California. After the death of her second husband, Rev. Abraham Myers, she continued with her art and work in the church, but lost everything in the great earthquake of 1906. Susan Biglow Bittle Myers died in 1907 at the age of 78 in San Luis Obispo, California where she lived with her brother. Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina, *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina*, May 1, 1862, 4; John McClintock and James Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature: Supplement*, (New York, 1885), 514; "Mrs. Myers Survives," *The Concord Times* (Concord, North Carolina), June 26, 1906, 3.; Gilman Bigelow Howe, *Genealogy of the Bigelow Family of America, from the Marriage in 1642 of John Biglo and Mary Warren to the Year 1890*, (Worcester, Mass, 1890); and "Deaths," *The San Francisco Call* (San Francisco, California), November 6, 1907, 11.

[107] Letter from Susan E. B. Myers to Mrs. W. S. Bowman, CA, November 25, 1897, ECHS.

[108] McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia*, 514.

change from German to English, finally brought southern Lutherans for good into southern culture. Although traditional folkways of the German Lutherans continued past the turn of the century, they fully entered into southern life by fighting, and dying, for the white South.[109]

When news of the war came to Mount Pleasant, the Confederate army recruited students and faculty from North Carolina College to enlist in Company H, 8th North Carolina Troops out of Cabarrus County, also called the "Cabarrus Phalanx." The spirit to fight for the South ran high at the college. On enlistment day, officials made inspiring speeches to the men and boys who gathered as a band marched up and down the campus playing patriotic tunes. One hundred and fifty-eight men signed up from Mount Pleasant and the surrounding eastern part of Cabarrus County. Eighty-two left for training in September 1861 under the command of Mount Pleasant's own Rufus Barrier, while others joined Company F of the Ninth Regiment, known as the Cabarrus Rangers cavalry unit under Concord's Rufus Barringer. Reportedly, rugs from the floors of the schools were used to make blankets for Confederate soldiers and pages from books made patches for their muskets.[110]

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[109] Russell C. Kleckley, "Abolition and Confessionalism" in *Lutheranism with a Southern Accent: Essays and Reports of the 17th Biennial Meeting, Rincon, Georgia, 1994*, Vol. 16, 161-171.

[110] "Mont Amoena Seminary Founded – 1857," *The Concord Tribune* (Concord, NC), August 29, 1971.

CHAPTER 2: A REFUGE AFTER THE STORM, 1865-1910

"Now, that the storm is over, and quiet is being restored, the opportunity is offered those having management of the Church to exert themselves in repairing the injuries done during the raging tempest."[111]

– Committee member of the General Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the
Confederate States of America, 1866.

Both before and after the Civil War, the American South was a region characterized by its rural, agrarian nature, conservative social positions, and stubborn isolationism. By the twentieth century, the ideology of the "New South" brought significant changes. Industrialization, the growth of towns and cities, and new public roles for women, combined to create a significant social and cultural transformation. This chapter explores the impact of these changes on Mount Pleasant Female Seminary (Mont Amoena) and its students, confronts the limitations of the seminary as an institution of the NCLS, and examines the network of support created between Mont Amoena, North Carolina College, and the town of Mount Pleasant through the first decade of the twentieth century.

The Civil War had a devastating effect on higher education in the South and many Southerners worried that the effects of the war would create an entire generation of uneducated men and women. An editorial in the *Greensboro Patriot* declared "It is deeply to be regretted that the present disturbed state of affairs is having such a disastrous effect upon the schools of the country. Several of our most flourishing institutions of

[111] Bost and Norris, *All One Body*, 155. From the meeting minutes of the General Synod of the Confederate States of America (GSCSA), Concord, NC, 1866, 4.

learning, both male and female, either have already suspended or are expecting shortly to suspend. It is of the utmost importance that our schools should be maintained, and that our children should be educated."[112]

During the war, the seminary property on South Main Street was in flux. For two years the Board of Trustees rented the buildings and their contents. It was then sold at public auction to one of the trustees. By the time the conflict ended, the property changed hands several more times.[113]

In 1866, Rev. Gotthard Dellman Bernheim, president of the NCLS and board member of North Carolina College, held a lease on the property and then bought it in order to take over operation of the seminary.[114] He proposed to make it an institution of the NCLS and offered it to them in 1868 for $2,000.00, but the synod was unable to finance the purchase. Before the war, North Carolina College invested heavily in Confederate bonds. The now worthless bonds and poor economy proved a heavy burden on the church. Bernheim agreed to act as the synod's agent for the procurement of voluntary contributions to liquidate the debt, and until he raised the funds, agreed to pay interest and taxes on the property. As a fundraising incentive, the board even offered naming rights to anyone who donated more than $500, but had no bids. In 1869 he secured enough to pay the debt and all necessary expenses and conveyed the title of the seminary property to the synod.

Now the NCLS had two educational institutions under its control, North Carolina College and Mount Pleasant Female Seminary; however, it delegated any future financing of the seminary to the principals and the Board of Trustees. The synod's offer

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[112] "Keep Up The Schools," *The Greensboro Patriot* (Greensboro, NC), May 31, 1861, 3.
[113] The property was sold to trustee John A. Troutman on April 2, 1863.
[114] Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes, February 28, 1863; and Ben Callahan, "Deed History of Mont Amoena."

of organizational and moral support without financial commitment would prove to be an ongoing issue throughout the school's history. Rev. Bernheim left for Wilmington, NC and Rev. Daniel I. Dreher succeeded him as principal.[115]

The 1869-1870 school year opened with fifty-four students from Cabarrus and the surrounding North Carolina counties of Rowan, Stanly, and Union, and one from Charleston, South Carolina. Entrance to the seminary was a matter of paying tuition, having references from a previous school, and passing a simple entrance exam. The school catalog emphasized that the faculty aimed to "prepare young ladies for an intelligent and cheerful performance of the duties of subsequent life. They will endeavor to unite the cultivated mind, the sanctified heart, refined manners, and a healthy development of physical powers." It described the community of Mount Pleasant as highly moral and "growing in intelligence and refinement."[116]

During Reconstruction, Mount Pleasant Female Seminary became a refuge for its students. Teachers and principals tried to instill a sense of normalcy. Families entrusted the seminary with their daughters knowing it provided firm moral guidance, a healthy environment, and reinforced the conservative social conventions of ladylike refinement they knew before the war. In return, the school offered a thorough and practical education at an affordable price. Firm rules required implicit obedience, but administrators hoped discipline would come through self-government rather than punishments and rewards. Daily prayers and Bible recitations supplemented Sunday School each Sabbath at the Lutheran or Methodist church.

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[115] Bernheim and Cox, *History of Evangelical Lutheran Synod*, 73-74.
[116] *Mont Amoena Female Seminary Catalog, 1869-1870*, 7.

The course of instruction encouraged student participation and served a broad range of ages. Administrators "classed" them according to their ability and they could not advance until they mastered the coursework. There was a Primary Department for juvenile students, a Junior Course, a Senior Course, and a two-year liberal Collegiate Department for those "who stayed long enough to graduate." From the beginning, commercial studies received special attention so that "greater intelligence and independence may be secured to women in the management of business." Ornamental branches were electives. The Senior Course had three literary branches: Latin, Greek, and French. The Collegiate Department was a preparatory two-year program. In the era before the establishment of high schools, the seminary filled the gap between common school education, which ended at grade seven, and normal (teaching) or business schools. Many students attended for only one or two years and did not complete the course levels or graduate. In its early years, the seminary did not confer diplomas; instead, graduates earned certificates of completion.[117]

During this period, the NCLS was in transition and leadership at the seminary proved unstable, resulting in a quick succession of principals.[118] With the defeat of the Confederacy, the name of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Confederate States of America changed to the Evangelical Lutheran General Synod South in 1866. The NCLS stood independent from 1870 to 1880, but then took a leading part in organizing a merger between the Tennessee Synod and the General Synod South in 1886, renaming it the United

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[117] Ibid, 9.

[118] Rev. Dreher's untimely death in February of 1871 cut short his tenure. Wiley Alexander Barrier was principal for one year. Following Barrier was the co-principalship of Mrs. Virginia Hubbert and her sister, "Miss Ribble," and then the Rev. Philip A. Strobel and his wife Eliza. Rev. Lewis Rothrock provided some stability from 1875 to 1882. The return of Rev. George F. Schaeffer lasted only from 1882-1883.

Synod South. This newly formed body declared that for theological and confessional reasons the Lutherans in the American South would remain distinct. For the first time, almost all southern Lutherans incorporated into one body. They would not join the rest of the Lutheran church until the formation of the United Lutheran Church in America in 1918.[119]

The church promoted a process of reconciliation, but the memory of the Civil War hit home on a very personal level for the seminary students, faculty, and Mount Pleasant community. Already sparsely populated, the loss of men had a devastating effect on the town and North Carolina College. Of those who returned, some found a home in the Lutheran schools as revered teachers and students at the college.

As Charles Reagan Wilson notes, leaders of denominational institutions often believed that teachers who were former Confederate officers "carried into the institutions they served the most pronounced religious spirit," while the former Confederate students were serious "crusaders for culture." Because they retained their Old South-Confederate values, their presence in the classroom had a strong influence on tradition for another generation of Southerners. Mount Pleasant reinforced a deep sense of social unity by enthusiastically supporting and honoring these Confederate fathers, sons, brothers, and friends through its Lutheran educational institutions. Although the Lutherans did not seem to incorporate what Wilson terms the "civil religion" of Lost Cause mythology into their teachings as much as other evangelical denominations, Confederate tradition further strengthened the connection between Southern identity, the ideals of Southern virtue, and Christian values.[120]

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[119] Nelson and Tappert, *The Lutherans in North America*, 247.
[120] Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920*, (Athens, Ga., 2009), 1, 143.

Some former Confederate soldiers with strong ties to the NCLS, North Carolina College, and Mount Pleasant, became seminary faculty members. Wiley Alexander Barrier, Captain of Company F, 1st North Carolina Cavalry, was principal from 1870-1871. Reverend Lewis H. Rothrock, son of NCLS president Samuel Rothrock, served in the sixth North Carolina regiment out of Rowan County before becoming a lifelong educator. He was principal from 1876 to 1882.[121] Official Company H historian and former unit drummer, Henry Thomas Jefferson (H. T. J.) Ludwig, was one of the first graduates of North Carolina College after the war. For more than twenty-five years he acted as a community leader and the chair of mathematics, physics and astronomy of his alma mater.[122] Additionally, Dr. Ludwig oversaw higher mathematics and the Normal Department of Mont Amoena in the 1890s. Dr. Paul Alexander Barrier, a physician and assistant surgeon in Company H, practiced medicine in Mount Pleasant for forty years and served as a professor of chemistry, anatomy, and physiology at Mont Amoena, and as a physician for both the college and the seminary.[123]

The Mount Pleasant home of Company H commander, Rufus A. Barrier, and his wife Roxanna, "Miss Roxie," became a favorite place for daylong gatherings and evening socials for the seminary students. Those who knew Miss Roxie remembered her as a gracious hostess and excellent cook who prepared sumptuous meals and delicious refreshments. Taffy pulling, making popcorn balls, and singing around the piano were some highlights of the get-togethers. Miss Roxie taught Sunday School for many years and always had time to listen to and advise "her girls."[124]

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[121] Lutheran Church in America, *Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers*, 178.
[122] *History of North Carolina: North Carolina Biography,by Special Staff of Writers*, (Chicago, 1919), 281..
[123] *Mont Amoena Female Seminary Catalog, 1897-1898*, ECHS.
[124] Horton and Bridges, eds., *Piedmont Neighbors*, 430, 433.

The people of Mount Pleasant supported the Lutheran educational institutions in other ways. They were always among the first to donate money for fund drives and opened their homes to boarding students. In return, the schools attracted people to Mount Pleasant and promoted its growth, vitality, and culture.[125]

The town had no Lutheran church until Rev. L. C. Groseclose, the pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, organized a congregation in the chapel of the North Carolina College. Congregants worshipped there for five years until the construction of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church on South Main Street next to the seminary. Holy Trinity opened it in 1872 and served the spiritual needs of the students. The Methodists opened a church the same year next to the college. A close association existed between the churches and the two schools throughout their history. Holy Trinity became an integral part of seminary-related activities and the pastors typically served as professors and principals. Church membership reinforced interdependent kinship connections, and in rural towns such as Mount Pleasant, kinship determined identity. The grid of personal, kin relationships spread outward from the church.[126] For the Lutherans of Mount Pleasant, Holy Trinity came to serve as both a place of spiritual solace and social fellowship, further strengthening the ties between the town and the educational institutions.

As the NCLS moved into the 1870s, it returned to an emphasis on an education, but debt continually plagued its schools. With the South still recovering from wartime economic and material devastation, the financial depression meant its primarily farming congregants had little disposable income. North Carolina College was in dire need of repairs and enrollment did not meet expectations. In 1870, enrollment at the seminary

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[125] Ibid, 402.
[126] Friedman, *The Enclosed Garden,* 3.

was fifty-seven students. The next year, the NCLS incorporated Mount Pleasant Female Seminary. Although its enrollment remained stable for next few years, it soon experienced financial difficulties as well.[127]

Meanwhile, the Cabarrus County public school system continued to reorganize and expand. The minutes for the Cabarrus County Board of Education in 1877 note that there were 3159 children of school age in the county. Like the private schools of this period, county board leadership was unstable until the turn of the century. Redistricting occurred several times and the superintendents turned over regularly.[128]

Despite efforts to reduce the debts and increase enrollment, conditions continued to deteriorate at both Lutheran institutions until they were forced to close for the 1883-1884 school year. Prior to the start of the year, synod leaders at the annual convention proposed two steps to remedy the problem: voting to merge the schools into a single coeducational institution, and creating a committee to investigate whether North Carolina College should consolidate with either the South Carolina Synod's Newberry College or the Tennessee Synod's Concordia College in Conover, North Carolina. Neither plan came to fruition, but the proposals show that the NCLS had an early and clear interest in pursuing alternatives to the support of its Mount Pleasant institutions.[129]

Coeducation was a topic of ongoing debate. In an effort to broaden its base of support, the seminary board voted in 1876 to allow small boys under the age of 8 to attend school in the Primary Department, although it is unclear if many did.[130] In 1895, Principal Rev. Charles Lee Thornton (C. L. T.) Fisher experimented with the idea of coeducation;

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[127] Bost and Norris, *All One Body*, 212.
[128] Harris, "Rural Public Schools," 37.
[129] Bost and Norris, *All One Body*, 212.
[130] Mont Amoena Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes, September 6, 1876, ECHS.

reportedly a young man enrolled at Mont Amoena that year. The feasibility of consolidating Mont Amoena with North Carolina College came up again in 1897.[131]

Even into the twentieth century, while women in the North were making inroads in coeducational Lutheran colleges, the more conservative South seldom considered it appropriate to mix the sexes in higher education. Arguments against coeducation included: women were innately inferior and would lower standards and ruin tradition, they would distract men from their studies, and the masculine nature of campus life would corrupt women and cause them to lose their feminine refinement. Additionally, Amy Thompson McCandless suggests the South's opposition to coeducation closely paralleled its opposition to integration. Women demanding the vote or attending an historically male college conjured up fears of similar demands by southern blacks.[132] In North Carolina, the first "progressive" Lutheran coeducational institutions were the Missouri Synod affiliated Concordia College in Conover, established in 1877, and Tennessee Synod affiliated Lenoir College in Hickory, established in 1891. The more conservative NCLS wanted its all-male college to remain primarily oriented to pre-theological preparation.

Both North Carolina College and Mount Pleasant Female Seminary reopened after a short period. The college devised a plan to secure an endowment through membership in a "College Benefit Association," with a goal of recruiting two hundred people to pay ten dollars a year for five years. Members would receive tuition discounts. The board ultimately deemed the plan impractical and resumed merger talks with the

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[131] "Believes in Co-Education," *Daily Concord Standard* (Concord, NC), November 4, 1895, 1; and "A Joint Meeting," *Daily Concord Standard* (Concord, NC), March 3, 1897, 3.
[132] McCandless, *The Past in the Present*, 105.

Tennessee Synod. The seminary, on the other hand, reported in 1885 it was "in flourishing condition," with a debt of only $300.[133]

In an effort to boost its reputation and support, the seminary students began a long tradition of hosting events, such as fundraising concerts, recitations, and plays for the public. These events further expanded the public sphere of the girls and reinforced ties with the community. In 1886, a last minute public concert to help reduce the debt of the seminary asked an admission of 15 cents, with reserved seats for 25 cents. *The Concord Times* reported, "It was well attended and the music and recitation "gave abundant proof, if proof were necessary, of the superior advantages of the school."[134].

End-of-year commencement exercises were becoming one of the local social events of the season. By the late 1880s, graduation was a joint effort of the seminary and North Carolina College, later growing into a week-long production involving the whole town. Invited special guest speakers drew regional audiences.

A few early graduation celebrations did not go as planned. In May of 1878, the school year ended with a measles epidemic. Thirty cases broke at the same time, causing many to wonder if closing exercises would go on at all. They did, but without a number of students or the primary program organizer, music teacher Miss Ella Hargrave.[135] An observer at the 1883 program complimented the evening's excellent entertainment, but complained of the disrespectful and ungentlemanly conduct of a few men and boys.[136]

Seminary education afforded other opportunities for the students to expand their public sphere, all the while staying within conservative gender roles. One of the core

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[133] Bost and Norris, *All One Body*, 213.
[134] "Concert at Mt. Pleasant Seminary," *The Concord Times* (Concord, NC), February 18, 1886, 3; and "Concert at Mt. Pleasant Seminary," *The Concord Times*, February 25, 1886, 3.
[135] "Mount Pleasant Seminary," *The Charlotte Democrat* (Charlotte, NC), May 31, 1878, 3.
[136] "Mt. Pleasant Seminary Commencement," *The Concord Register* (Concord, NC), June 1, 1883, 3.

tenants of the Lutheran Church is missionary work through proclamation and service. The seminary supported self improvement and community betterment through the formation of voluntary associations. Anne Firor Scott writes that the foreign mission movement helped produce as an unintended byproduct opportunities for women to form their own organizations, gain leadership skills, and grow in self confidence.[137] Through the organization of missionary societies, the young ladies studied geography and raised money in support of people recruited to go to remote parts of the world.

In 1885, the NCLS formed the Woman's Home and Missionary Society. Its function was to raise funds for mission work, primarily for teachers to educate, spread the gospel, and grow church membership in the Far East. Leadership in the missionary society mostly included female faculty, graduates or other adult women affiliated with Mont Amoena and Holy Trinity Church. Soon students formed a Young Women's Home and Missionary Society group at the seminary. It supplemented the synod's national youth organization called the Luther League. School administrators thought participation to be especially beneficial to the students for understanding church interests and preparing them for leadership in church work.[138]

As the decade of the 1880s came to a close, the village of Mount Pleasant and its Lutheran educational institutions began a period of stability and growth. The schools attracted students and their families, and town commerce increased as goods became more readily available by rail through Concord. In 1889, *The Concord Times* reported that Mount Pleasant boasted a population of about 350 people. Businesses in the village

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[137] Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930*, (Charlottesville, Va, 1970), 137-138.

[138] *Mont Amoena Female Seminary Catalog, 1912-1913*, 15, ECHS; and Mary E. Markley, "Mont Amoena Female Seminary, Mt. Pleasant, N. C.," Historical Sketch, undated. LRUA.

included: two hotels, two mercantile shops, a drug store, a harness shop, a shoe repair, two blacksmiths, a wagon maker, a mill-wright, two steam cotton gins, three doctors, and two churches. The reporter emphasized that there were no saloons.[139] That same year, Mont Amoena's Board of Trustees approved an enlargement of the seminary. Advertisements show the fall session as forty weeks with tuition, including room and board, running from $109 to $145.[140]

Despite this period of optimism, the seminary entered the 1890s under the most unfortunate of circumstances. Tragedy tested its reputation, and that of Mount Pleasant, as a healthful environment. In the late fall of 1890, typhoid fever broke at the seminary. Poor sanitation and poor hygiene are usual causes of typhoid, the bacterial infection due to Salmonella Typhi. It is typically spread by eating or drinking food or water contaminated with the fecal bacteria of an infected person. The nation was in the midst of an epidemic; Chicago alone reported 2000 deaths in 1891.[141] Understood to be symptomatic of urban living, it was a surprise to many to see it take hold in rural Mount Pleasant. Administrators attributed the cause to a cellar under the building and ordered a complete disinfection of the school. They suspended classes and sent the students home. The episode took a toll; one student died and only one other, Lula Fisher, graduated in June 1891.[142]

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[139] "Mount Pleasant," *The Concord Times* (Concord, NC) January 4, 1889, 7.
[140] Mount Pleasant Female Seminary," advertisement, *The Standard* (Concord, NC), July 19, 1889, 2.
[141] "Typhoid By Another Name." *The British Medical Journal* 1, no. 1638 (1892): 1100.
[142] Genolia Miller, a twenty-two year old senior student and sister of the wife of Principal J. A. Linn, died in November. Students Lula Fesperman, Josie Linn, and Minnie Cassaday were ill in December 1890. Principal Linn resigned and the remainder of the year was under the management of teachers Miss Ella Belle Shirey, head of the Literary department, and Mrs. Kliffmuller, in charge of Music and Art. In later years other students would succumb to typhoid fever: Kate Walton, the seminary's 20-year-old music instructor, died in September of 1893; former student Julia Ludwig in 1898; second year student, Ella Belle Stirewalt, who was the sister of music teacher Ada Stirewalt, died in 1908; and Maggie Misenheimer and Carrie Young in 1909. "Mt. Pleasant Items," *The Standard* (Concord, NC), December 18, 1890, 3.

Rev. Charles Lee Thornton (C. L. T.) Fisher transferred into the NCLS in 1890 and assumed the position as principal of Mount Pleasant Female Seminary in the fall of 1891. In addition to his duties at the seminary, he taught Latin and Greek at North Carolina College and was a pastor at Holy Trinity Church. One of the most important changes under the tenure of Rev. Fisher was when he presented "An Act to Incorporate the Trustees of Mont Amoena Seminary" to the General Assembly of North Carolina. Not only did the name of the school officially become Mont Amoena Female Seminary, the incorporation granted it the power to confer degrees and "marks of literary distinction as are usually conferred by similar institutions of learning."[143] Ever concerned about the virtue of the seminary students and community morals (and the potential for raising funds), the writers of the act included a clause making sure Mount Pleasant remained a dry town:

> It shall be unlawful for any person or persons within three miles of said Mont Amoena Female Seminary to buy, sell, give away or otherwise dispose of any spirituous liquors…and any person or persons so offending shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof before any justice of the peace in Cabarrus county be subject to a penalty of fifty dollars, one-half to the person suing for the same and the other half to the use of said Mont Amoena Female Seminary, or be imprisoned not exceeding thirty days or both.[144]

In 1892, the program at Mont Amoena covered eight years: two Primary (equivalent to grades five and six), two Preparatory (equivalent to grades seven and eight), and four years in the Collegiate Department (equivalent to four years of high school). The Collegiate Department considered itself a "fitting school," or feeder program for those wanting to attend college or normal school to earn a teaching degree. The liberal arts curriculum leaned heavily toward languages, mathematics and the natural sciences. Music and Art were still prevalent and available for an additional fee. The school

[143] "An Act to Incorporate the Trustees of Mont Amoena Seminary," ratified February 14, 1891, typed copy, JRCA.
[144] Ibid.

considered the commercial branches of bookkeeping and penmanship as increasingly important and made them available at no additional charge. The 1892-1893 year had 92 students from six different states.[145]

The students and faculty alike held Rev. C. L. T. Fisher in high regard, although he was paternalistically firm when it came to reinforcing discipline, especially when it came to overzealous male interference with his female students. This sometimes stressed the relationship between the village and the seminary. In March of 1895, Rev. Fisher made a complaint to the Town Council at the Mount Pleasant Board of Commissioners meeting for "permanent relief" from the aggressive and annoying young men loitering in front of the seminary. He complained that their interference encouraged the female students to violate the rules and caused antagonism with school authorities. Rev. Fisher even made a not-so-veiled threat to "let someone take our place" if the board did not immediately implement a promised ordinance. The Town Council acquiesced by adopting one that made it a misdemeanor, subject to a fine, for anyone who willfully created a distraction, disruption, or unlawfully assembled.[146] Similarly, a 1898 ordinance prevented flirting with seminary students so that, "every person who shall, without permission of the principal…, willfully interrupt or attempt to interrupt by word, sign or otherwise…shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be fined $5 for each offence."[147]

Although students from the two schools attended social functions together, a former student recalled that the seminary was strictly off limits to the young men of North Carolina College. The rules did not allow gentleman callers unless they were fathers, brothers, or uncles. Girls sitting on the lawn could not speak to boys passing on

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[145] *Mont Amoena Female Seminary Catalog, 1892-1893*, 8, ECHS.
[146] Ben Callahan, *Mt. Pleasant by the Minutes*, (Mt. Pleasant, NC: 2002), 31, 35.
[147] "Odd Items of State News," *The Goldsboro Headlight* (Goldsboro, NC), March 10, 1898, 2.

the sidewalk, or acknowledge their presence in any way, even if only a few feet away. The penalty to the girls was demerits, probation, or both.[148]

Faculty closely monitored excursions and outside correspondence. On Mondays the girls took chaperoned walks to the business district of Mount Pleasant to visit A. W. Moose Drug Store, Heilig's General Store, or some other point of interest. School representatives in horse-drawn carriages, or in later years motor cars, met the girls who traveled by train at the depot in Concord to personally escort them to the seminary. When each girl entered Mont Amoena for the fall term, she gave the principal a list of no more that six people with whom she could correspond. Writers who tried to mail extremely "fat" envelopes, containing letters for those not on the list might end up in the principal's office.

Still, the rules did not suppress thoughts of matchmaking. Tucked among the pages of an ledger used in the J. J. Misenheimer store were hand written minutes of the Young Ladies Single Blessedness Debating Society. The minutes were similar in form to the meeting minutes of the seminary's literary society. Attendees met at the residence of Polly Jane Pratt to discuss the "rights of the fair sex." A list of local young bachelors included an accompanying status, such as: Mr. Turner Seaford – cornered, Mr. Paul Nussman – to be had for the asking, and Mr. Hoyle Long – nothing doing. The fifteen members of the society sang club songs, such as, "We Are Laying Plans to Catch You," "Kind Friends We Come to Greet You," and "No One to Love, None to Caress."[149] Some prospects worked out: Mont Amoena student, Ina Belle Barringer (class of 1896) married

[148] "Seminary Operated Over 100 Years Ago," *The Concord Tribune* (Concord, NC), June 3, 1962, 1B.
[149] Horton and Bridges, eds., *Piedmont Neighbors*, 403-404.

Turner Seaford in 1901, and Margaret "Annie" Welsh (class of 1900) married the disparaged Hoyle Long in 1909.[150] Such were the entertainments in a small town.

The Paradox of the New South: Tradition Versus Progress

When the architects of the New South stepped forward with a much needed plan for economic revitalization in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the new changes, particularly in its growing towns and cities, proved consequential for the southern rural Lutheran churches and their communities. Advocates of New South ideals combined material progress, modernization, scientific management, southern superiority, and evangelical piety, into a vision of economic prosperity and progress. Embraced by an increasingly better-educated, rising middle-class town clergy and laity, its effects caused Mont Amoena to be caught in a conflict between those who supported extending the church beyond its traditional boundaries and those who reacted against it.[151]

Susan Wilds McArver found that growing divisions over the progressive social and cultural transformations happening in the New South paralleled what was happening within the Lutheran church. Until the turn of the century, church life remained primarily rural and fairly consistent in many ways. By the early twentieth century, congregations began to follow member migration to the cities, resulting in two different constituencies: one consisted of college-educated, middle-class business leaders who were increasingly conscious of comparisons with secular education models, while the other group remained mostly rural

[150] *North Carolina Marriage Records, 1741-2011*, database, www.Ancestry.com, 2015, accessed February 27, 2017.
[151] McArver, "A Spiritual Wayside Inn," 123-124.

with church-centered traditions that bound together family, neighbors, and wider networks of kin into a community of care and support defined primarily by its local character.[152]

Complicating matters were efforts by southern Lutheran leaders to create efficiency and unity that sometimes resulted in the opposite effect in their churches. The more locally-oriented rural culture came into conflict with denominational leaders attempting to ease power and control away from community congregations into a centralized authority. What denominational leaders considered willful stubbornness or narrow parochialism on the part of rural congregations, in fact represented the growing tensions between the two fundamentally different world views.[153]

One of those who wanted to extend the Lutheran message was Mont Amoena's popular and successful principal, Rev. C. L T. Fisher. In 1897 the seminary suffered the indignity of losing him to establish, along with Lutheran Synod trustee Charles Banks King, a private four-year college for women in Charlotte called Elizabeth College. The city of Charlotte encouraged its location by donating the site and ten thousand dollars toward construction. Governed by an all Lutheran board and held in trust by the Lutheran Synod South, Elizabeth College served women at the bachelor's degree level. The NCLS did not oppose the school within its territory, despite its potential as a serious competitor to Mont Amoena.[154] Rev. Fisher remained as vice-principal of Elizabeth College until 1904. A number of other Mont Amoena faculty would go to, and come from, Elizabeth College until it consolidated with Virginia's Roanoke College for Women and closed in 1915.

When Rev. Fisher departed for Elizabeth College, an air of uncertainty was cast over the future of the seminary. While once again considering consolidation with North

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[152] Ibid, 3, 67.
[153] Ibid, 315.
[154] Bost and Norris, *All One Body*, 214.

Carolina College, the seminary board hired Rev. Dr. Henderson N. Miller as principal of Mont Amoena on a trial basis. In Miller's letter of acceptance, he assured the board that "the seminary is not dead." He believed that although the city people had their eyes set on Charlotte, the bulk of the rural people still had faith in Mont Amoena. All the school needed was practical business management and effective advertisement.[155] The 1897 to 1898 school year saw enrollment increase from sixty-nine the previous year to seventy-two, fifty-four of which were boarding students. Dr. Miller expanded the Commercial Department curriculum to include bookkeeping, stenography, and typewriting, as well as a post-graduate course. By the fall of 1898, enrollment was up to 89.[156]

Rev. Miller, along with Rev. C. L. T. Fisher's younger brother, Rev. James Henry Cornelius (J. H. C.) Fisher, as vice-principal, pushed the board to approve funds for capital repairs and improvements on the grounds they could solicit additional funds from the churches within the synod. They also made a case to expand the seminary due to increased enrollment and overcrowded conditions.[157] In an act of faith, the financially strapped North Carolina College made a $1,473.43 loan to Mont Amoena for the purchase of property near the seminary.[158]

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[155] Henderson N. Miller, Letter of Acceptance, April 8, 1897, ECHS.

[156] *Minutes of the Ninety-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina*, 1898, 17-18.

[157] Ibid.

[158] In May of 1898, the Mont Amoena Board of Trustees wrote an indenture of indebtedness to Jonas Cook, treasurer of the Board of Trustees for North Carolina College, in the sum of $1473.43, to be repaid within one year at an annual rate of 6% interest. Failure of repayment would result in the sale of the property at public auction. The loan was repaid in full. "An Indenture between the Boards of Trustees of Mont Amoena Female Seminary and North Carolina College," photocopy, from the Collection of Sharon Barrier Horton, ECHS.

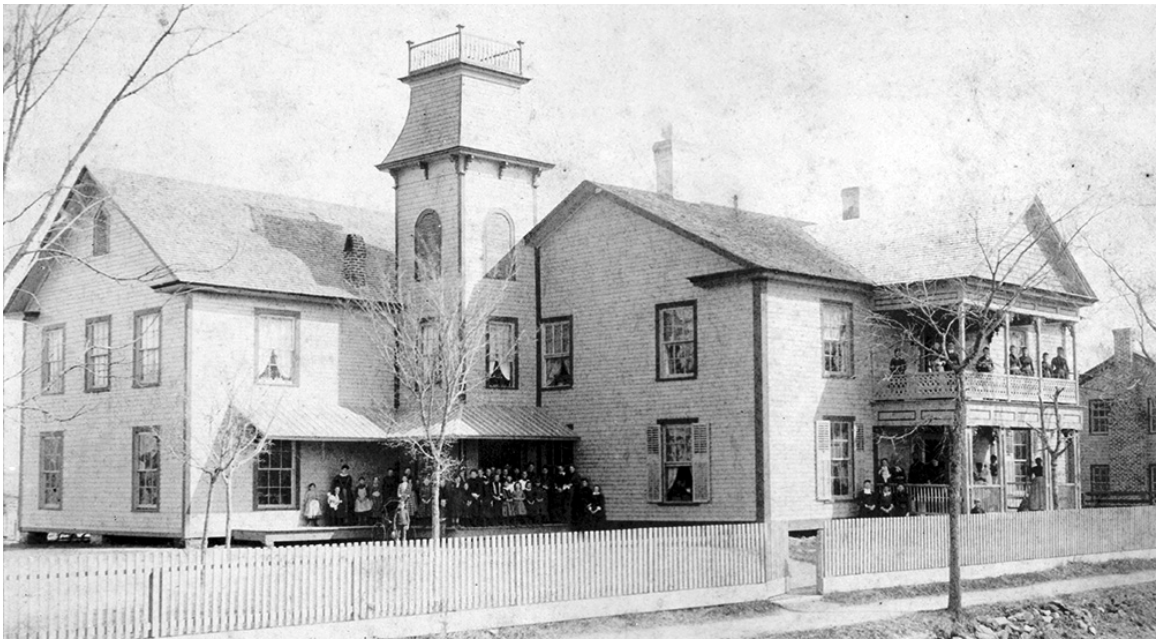

Figure 3: Mont Amoena Female Seminary, c. 1899-1910.

An advertisement for the fall 1898 session touted Mont Amoena as greatly enlarged and improved with modern conveniences. One of the greatest improvements was a new annex for the music department. Unlike the main building which used wood-burning fireplaces and stoves for heat, the music building had steam heat. Ten new dormitory rooms anticipated an increased enrollment and included additional closets and bathrooms with hot water. Each room had an "art square" rug, iron bead, oak bureau, washstand, and chairs.[159] As part of Mont Amoena's "new look," all boarding students wore a uniform Oxford cap with the initials "M.A.S."[160]

Another exciting new bit of technology was the instillation of a program clock with electric bells attached throughout the halls and recitations rooms. It rang for rising at 6:00 a.m. and retirement at 9:45, and each schedule change in between. Classes began at 8:45 and continued until twelve. One hour was allowed for lunch and classes continued from

[159] "Mont Amoena Female Seminary," *The Standard* (Concord, NC), August 4, 1898.
[160] "Mont Amoena Seminary Notes," *The Enterprise,* (Albemarle, NC), November 17, 1898, 1.

one until four. Music and art classes fell between their other studies. Students considered the new clock a great improvement to ringing hand bells.[161]

Helen Misenheimer, a Mont Amoena graduate and teacher, described the attributes of the seminary during this period:

> The building contained everything needed by the students including a large kitchen in the back and a dining hall for all meals. Miss Lundy Freeman took care of all laundry needs with large black wash pots behind the building. Big brick ovens baked the bread that could be smelled over the entire town. Downstairs were classrooms, a chapel, and several smaller practice rooms with a piano in each one for the use of music students [a baby grand was used in the chapel]. The second story contained dormitory rooms for the girls. The curriculum consisted of mathematics, English, spelling, history, geography, writing and elocution. There were no electives except music and art, and these available only at extra cost and only for those who could afford them."[162]

Rev. Miller considered ways to keep the seminary vital, competitive, and relevant. His attempts at creative marketing met with varying degrees of success. One that proved not so successful occurred in the summer of 1899. Rev. Miller organized a fundraising train excursion to Asheville, North Carolina. According to a report in the *Daily Concord Standard*, the idea was to sell 280 tickets to a "select crowd" for an overnight trip, with stops to pick up riders between Concord and Cleveland, North Carolina. He arranged a refreshment car prepared with "lemonade, parched goobers, peanuts, and pinders." Although the package did not include overnight lodging, the Oaks Hotel in Asheville offered a special party rate of $1.25 per day. On July 6, the day of the event, 40 passengers boarded in Concord. At the last passenger pick up in Cleveland, Rev. Miller announced that they did not have the necessary number of people needed to continue to Asheville and the excursion was over. They would have to return to Concord or lose

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[161] "Ibid; and MA School Catalog 1899-1900, 25, ECHS.
[162] Horton and Bridges, eds., *Piedmont Neighbors*, 241.

more money. As it was, the trip was a loss of $150. Another promotional idea had new students wear ribbon badges made of the seminary colors of blue and orange on their journey to and from home to Mount Pleasant, thereby striking up word-of-mouth conversations about the school.[163]

Beginning in the fall of 1898, Rev. Miller started production of a 16-page, student edited, quarterly newsletter/journal called *The Mont Amoenian*. Single copies sold for 10 cents, or 25 cents for one year (stamps also accepted in payment). Unfortunately, there are no found copies beyond the April 1899 issue. Such a publication was befitting of a literary institution such as Mont Amoena. Supported by advertisement and sales, it provides glimpses of seminary life hidden in the brief notices, such as, "One of the young ladies after spending the night in town was heard to remark: 'My lips are so sore I can't go to walk.'" It included seminary and alumnae news, news from Mount Pleasant, and it also reported on the activities of the Bernheim Literary Society, such as essays commenting on contemporary social issues: "Should Woman Have Representation in the Boards of Female Schools? We will conclude by...affirming."[164]

The Bernheim Literary Society became one of the most successful, popular, and enduring programs from the tenure of Rev. Miller. Early in it existence, Mont Amoena initiated two Greek literary societies, Philokosmian and Philomathian, also referred to as Alpha and Omega. They acted as competing debate clubs modeled after the literary societies at North Carolina College. In 1898, the two societies consolidated into one organization called the Bernheim Literary Society. The name was in honor of Rev. Gotthard Dellman Bernheim, the former principal and key financial agent connected with

[163] "The Excursion to Asheville," *Daily Concord Standard* (Concord, NC), July 6, 1899, 1; and "A Novel Idea for the Coming School Girls," *Daily Concord Standard* (Concord, NC), August 30, 1899.
[164] *The Mont Amoenian*, April 1899, Vol. II, No. 3, ECHS. There are no other issues found after this date.

the founding of Mont Amoena as a synodical school in 1869.[165] All boarding students and those in the in the collegiate preparatory classes participated in the Bernheim Literary Society. Meetings worked around the presentation of speeches, essays, poetry, music, written criticisms, and debates on the topical issues of the day or questions drawn from history, literature, philosophy, logic, and religion. Alpha and Omega remained as rival literary groups within the Society, and each class level had Alpha and Omega debate teams. Literary Critics evaluated the presentations and interpretations of the literature, while Vigilant Critics enforced parliamentary procedure and the laws of the society. Each meeting opened with a hymn and devotional exercises conducted by the Chaplin. The Society was student run but organized and overseen by the faculty.[166]

Literary societies in higher female education were a distinctive kind of social organization, often taking on the characteristics of a type of sorority. Societies were most often Latin-named and -themed organizations. It is from the collegiate literary societies with Latin names that the earliest Greek sororities and fraternities evolved.[167] In an agrarian society with high rates of illiteracy, the importance of oratory in gaining and sustaining leadership roles was well understood by elite women. By providing opportunities to develop social skills, genteel manners and knowledge of political issues, these organizations complemented the curriculum of their schools and met the desires of young women searching for ways to set themselves apart from the typical student.[168]

In the post-Civil War years of industrialization, economic adjustment, and the broadening of academic curriculum, literary societies in general fell into decline as

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[165] "Mont Amoena Seminary Notes," *The Enterprise* (Albemarle, North Carolina), November 17, 1898, 1.
[166] *Minutes of the Mont Amoena Female Seminary's Bernheim Literary Society, 1917-1920*, JRCA.
[167] Thomas Spencer Harding, *College Literary Societies: Their Contribution to Higher Education in the United States, 1815-1876*, (New York, 1971), 1.
[168] Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle*, 148-154.

educational pursuits became more practical.[169] But in private southern female denominational schools, such as Mont Amoena, literary societies continued as a means for young women to train themselves to think, write, and speak; especially those who planned to be active in missionary work, teaching, or public life.

Many Berheim Literary Society functions centered on public social activities that became preeminent events of the year. These events provided opportunities for the ladies to exploit their skills, all the while reinforcing the notion of genteel southern womanhood and earning them a reputation as excellent hostesses. Members conducted fall book receptions and held an annual spring reception typically tied to end-of-year ceremonies featuring music and elocution. A newspaper reported of one of their hosted events, "It is impossible for us to decide the beautiful decorations, and the still more beautiful members of the society…A beautiful programme, consisting of instrumental and vocal combinations, together with recitations and tableaux, was rendered...Long live the Bernheim Literary Society."[170]

Before Rev. Miller's arrival, graduation exercises combined programs of both the college and seminary with the celebrations lasting throughout the week, but beginning in 1899, they shortened to a three-day weekend.[171] Saturday was the Senior Reception and Baccalaureate Sermon, Sunday was an address by a guest lecturer to the seminary students, and Monday was graduation exercises. Graduating seniors still presented essay addresses.

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[169] Henry N. Snyder, "The College Literary Society." *The Sewanee Review* 12, no. 1 (1904): 78–91.

[170] "Society Meeting: Mont Amoena's Doors Thrown Open to the Public Last Night – Excellent Exercises and Reward Game," *The Standard* (Concord, North Carolina), May 25, 1899, 3.

[171] The week-long commencement celebrations typically included: a Monday evening presentation of lighthearted declamations [oratory] and dialogues by North Carolina College; a Tuesday evening declamation contest of the college literary societies at Holy Trinity; a Wednesday noon alumni address by a guest speaker, usually someone from within the NCLS, and a seminary music department concert in the evening; a Thursday address to the literary societies; and Friday, essay presentations and the graduation exercises.

As they prepared to enter a new century, the ladies considered the changing roles of women. Toinetta Lathan's 1899 essay asked, "Will the 20th Century Change the Position of Woman?" and Rosa Miller posed, "The Victory of Women's Education."[172]

But what of their prospects after graduation? Barbara Miller Solomon observes that women with higher education had unusual advantages, leaving them to wonder how they would prove their worth as educated adults. Although Solomon referred to college educated women, the same was true for the graduates of Mont Amoena at the turn of the century.[173] Education carried a double-edged message; to be useful but womanly. Options for single women differed from those of married women. Once married, they typically accepted their traditional role as wife and mother. Others who remained single chose college, positions in business or as teachers, often at the seminary.

One of the practicalities of Lutheran female education was training in preparation as a minister's wife. An educated minister needed an educated helpmate to support him and the duties of the church. As a "helper of man" she worked in the church but was not viewed as a rival or antagonist. In addition to caring for her home and children, the expectation was that a minister's wife would have a relationship with her husband's congregation, take a leadership role in the benevolent institutions of his church, and visit the sick and poor. An English observer questioned the burden of such duties in an editorial in *The Lutheran Visitor*. He criticized the fact her husband received an income in acknowledgement of his service and she received none, but he reasoned, "if a minister's wife expects to be treated as the commander-in-chief of all the ladies in the congregation, she must not wonder if

[172] *The Mont Amoenian*, April 1899, Vol. II, No. 3.
[173] Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, (New Haven, 1985), 115-116.

she is looked to for work corresponding to the positions she desires. If she wants an official position she must perform official duties."[174]

Mont Amoena principals who were church pastors had wives who served both as teachers and in the benevolent organizations of Holy Trinity Church. 1889 graduate, Leah Jeanette Blackwelder, married longtime principal and seminary financial supporter, Rev. J. H. C. Fisher. In doing so, she was able to raise her four children in the community of the seminary while devoting her life to female education, first as an art teacher and later as seminary matron. Other minister's wives took leadership positions in Holy Trinity's Women's Missionary Society.

While many students still looked at education as a means to a good marriage match to a member of the class of educated clergy, farmers, and businessmen, others determined to have a career in teaching or business and remained single. By the late nineteenth century, society viewed teaching as an accepted occupation for single women. If married, teachers typically taught with, or were in a subordinate position to, their husband. Jane Turner Censer writes that even though some women did not necessarily prize the unmarried state, they also did not welcome the constraints of marriage on their autonomy.[175]

David Silkenat notes that female students increasingly saw education not only as a symbol of social status, but also as a means of financial advancement. The post-Civil War generation became teachers in record numbers as the profession gradually transitioned from a male-dominated field into a female field.[176] By 1899, 69 percent of the graduates

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[174] "Minister's Wives!" *The Lutheran Visitor*, (Columbia, SC), January 1868, Vol. III, No. 1, 25.
[175] Censer, *White Southern Womanhood*, 41.
[176] David Silkenat, "'In Good Hands, In a Safe Place': Female Academies in Confederate North Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. 88, No. 1, January 2011, 68.

of Mont Amoena engaged in teaching after graduation and proudly reported that theirs was "a practical education with wholesome Christian influences."[177]

By the late nineteenth century, education leaders wanted education recognized as a profession, and Professor H. T. J. Ludwig, mathematician and special instructor to Mont Amoena's Normal Department, pushed for new approaches to teacher training. Ludwig was also a Supervisor of Public Schools and viewed teaching school a science with principles just as essential to a teacher as the knowledge of underlying principles were to a lawyer or physician. As demand rose for higher quality teachers, he advanced that it was no longer sufficient to suppose that anyone educated in the "ordinary branches" of learning was competent to teach school. The growing interest in psychology and "development of the mind" meant additional preparation.[178] Ludwig understood such preparation was necessary for Mont Amoena students to be competitive and take advantage of the growing opportunities in both private and public schools; however, Rev. Miller reminded teachers at an Educational Day address presented in Concord, it was not a profession one went into for the money, "the highest ruling motive should be love of the work."[179]

Ludwig's philosophy toward the professionalization of women teachers inspired many students to pursue post-graduate work. A star pupil who took his philosophy to heart was 1896 graduate Constance Cline. After completing studies at Mont Amoena, she went on to Massachusetts Normal and Columbia University. For six years she served as principal of the preparatory department of Queens College in Charlotte, only leaving to

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[177] *The Mont Amoenian*, February, 1899, Vol. II, No. 2, 7, LRUA.
[178] Ibid, 1-3. Ludwig's untimely death to tuberculosis in 1900 was a great loss personally, professionally, and philosophically, to those training in Mont Amoena's Normal Department.
[179] "Love Vs. Money," *Daily Concord Standard* (Concord, NC), February 14, 1899, 2.

accept a position with Concord public schools where she became the first district supervisor of grammar schools.[180]

Entering the new century, the fortunes of North Carolina College were in dire straits. Despite efforts of the trustees to put accounts in good order, it lost its accreditation as a junior college in 1902. The NCLS voted to suspend operations and again explored a merger with the Tennessee Synod at Lenoir College.[181] Unable to reach an agreement, they entered into an arrangement with Professor George F. McAllister and Rev. H. A. McCullough to operate a private school on the campus grounds. After one year, the trustees of North Carolina College resolved to reopen their male educational institution under McAllister's leadership as a secondary preparatory school called Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute (MPCI). Its stated goal was to prepare young men for college, and prepare for life those not attending college or university. In 1907, MPCI introduced a modified military system, complete with uniforms and a rigidly enforced code of discipline. It remained a preparatory school and not a military school, having no service obligations after graduation.[182]

While the NCLS offered only tentative support to its schools in Mount Pleasant, a revival of public education reform took place in Cabarrus County and across the state. From 1901 to 1905, North Carolina governor, Charles B. Aycock, pushed public education as a wise investment for North Carolina and hoped to gain support from disaffected "ignorant" rural whites who challenged New South development. He reasoned that education encouraged whites to vote and would lead to more individual wealth for each

[180] "Miss Constance Cline Dead At Home Here," *Concord Daily Tribune* (Concord, NC), January 25, 1926.
[181] NC Synod Meeting Minutes, 1899.
[182] National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute Historic District, item 8, page 3, http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/CA0005.pdf.

North Carolina citizen, resulting in more collective wealth across the state. Aycock devised a systematic campaign for local taxation, consolidation of districts, better schoolhouses, and longer school terms. But Aycock also endorsed Jim Crow laws, white supremacy, black disenfranchisement, and segregated schooling; his plan called for the white-tax base to fund white public schools and the black tax base to fund black public schools.[183]

The popular Governor Aycock made an appearance in Mount Pleasant in October of 1904 in an effort to win over support for public education. His many Democratic supporters made preparations and met him with open arms. A parade with decorated floats advanced to the MPCI campus where Professor McAllister introduced Gov. Aycock to the waiting crowd. The *Concord Daily Tribune* set the scene, "The people who love and honor the Governor were there from all sections of Cabarrus to listen to the elegant truths for two hours as they fell from the lips of the most patriotic Aycock." The town constructed a four hundred foot long table on campus to host the immense crowd of 2000 that gathered for a basket dinner.[184] By all appearances, McAllister's grand reception for Gov. Aycock exhibited support for public education, countering the best interests of his own private denominational institution. Although his motivations are not clear, McAllister possibly intended to show the governor the positive attributes of MPCI in order to gain political favor and financial backing.

After Aycock's visit, public school building improvements spread throughout Cabarrus County. From 1901 to 1906, the district built nineteen schools for whites, costing from $500 to $1100 each, and four for blacks, costing from $200 to $400 each. Total student enrollment for Cabarrus County in 1905 was 2867 white and 1242 colored.

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[183] "Charles B. Aycock (1859-1912)," *North Carolina History Project*, http://northcarolinahistory.org; and James L. Leloudis*, Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill, 1996), 136-138.

[184] "An Aycock Day and Democracy," *The Concord Daily Tribune* (Concord, NC), October 18, 1904, 1.

The construction of Mount Pleasant Graded School consolidated Mount Pleasant's Tammany Hall and South Boston schools, and the school district expanded to several miles beyond the town limits.[185]

Development grew as Mount Pleasant emerged as a rural textile community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With a population of 375 in 1890, the town embarked on a period of small manufacturing development that considerably increased employment and proved more significant than its earlier commercial expansion. The Kindley and Tuscarora Cotton Mills, and the Mount Pleasant Milling Company, opened in 1890. The Miller Lumber Company followed in 1895.[186] Between 1900 and 1910 the population rose from 444 to 753, an increase of 41 percent.[187]

The town still held out hope for a railroad connection. Since the end of Reconstruction, the New South built railroads faster than anywhere else in the nation. More than any other single factor, the railroad transformed the rural countryside and brought employment, prosperity, and interest to any town where it stopped.[188] In 1912, the Norfolk Southern made a serious gesture toward Mount Pleasant, but all hope was lost when textile industrialist and president of Tuscarora Mills, James W. Cannon, reported to his trustees that the railroad chose a different route. He advised the company not to expand. The railroad's announcement decisively limited future prospects for Mount Pleasant's economic growth.[189]

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[185] Harris, "Rural Public Schools," 38-39, 64.
[186] Peter Kaplan, *The Historic Architecture of Cabarrus County North Carolina*, (Historic Cabarrus, 1981), 22-23.
[187] The United States Census Bureau, Decennial Census of Population and Housing, https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html.
[188] For more about the expansion of the railroad, see Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction*, (New York: 1992), 9.
[189] "A Short History on the Town of Mount Pleasant, North Carolina," The Town of Mount Pleasant, http://mtpleasantnc.org/index.php/town-history/11-historic-mount-pleasant; and *The Concord Times* (Concord, NC), September 2, 1912, 4.

CHAPTER 3: FROM RESURRECTION TO CONCESSION, 1911-1927

To show her loyalty to the institution when the distress signal was out, the citizens accepted and said we will go to the rescue. They have. But when that old father of education in Mt. Pleasant…– Capt. Jonas Cook – arose and in just one word said the school must go on, it went like an electric thrill through the audience.[190]

Just before 9:00 p.m. on Thanksgiving night, November 30, 1911, Mont Amoena Female Seminary burned to the ground. While most of the students and staff members were away for the evening attending the semi-annual school play at the town auditorium over Cook and Foil's store, a wood stove located in a second floor dormitory of the expansive wood structure created a fire that ultimately engulfed all of its fifty-five rooms and threatened the whole town of Mount Pleasant. An alarm quickly spread throughout the building as a number of students were still preparing their work for the next day's recitations. With no fire fighting equipment of their own, the townspeople created a bucket brigade and saved the surrounding structures as well as some of the personal effects of the students. Mrs. Leah Blackwelder Fisher, wife of seminary principal Rev. J. H. C. Fisher, narrowly escaped when she became trapped by flames on the second floor. The fire forced her to jump from a window, but people on the ground below caught her, uninjured.[191] Thankfully, there were no fatalities. They saved three of the school's six pianos, but everything else connected with the main seminary building and the annex

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[190] "Seminary to Resume Work January 2, 1912," *The Concord Daily Tribune,* December 2, 1911, 1. Capt. Jonas Cook served with the Confederate army, Company H, 8th North Carolina Troops, also called the "Cabarrus Phalanx." He was owner of Cook and Foil's general store, a civic leader, textile mill investor, lay delegate of the NCLS, and administrator of North Carolina College and M. P. C. I.

[191] "Mont Amoena Seminary Will Not Suspend Session," *The Charlotte Observer (Charlotte, NC),* December 2, 1911, 1.

burned. One particularly difficult loss was the library collection. The fire affected about 75 people, including faculty and 54 boarding students. President Rev. J. H. C. Fisher took a personal loss of $3,500 and the total loss to the NCLS was $15,000, with insurance covering only $5,500.[192]

The fire forced school officials and the NCLS to consider their options for Lutheran female education. To rebuild Mont Amoena raised concerns about the challenges the seminary model faced as it fought to keep pace with changes in education and the conflicting interests of the Mount Pleasant community, seminary leadership, and the church. Negotiations between Mont Amoena administrators and the NCLS would prove that an uncertainty of purpose prevented them from any decisive action to fully commit to providing support or leadership to ensure Mont Amoena's future.

The day after the fire, the citizens of Mount Pleasant vowed that the school must go on. They pledged support for the common cause of the institution and care for the moral, financial, and boarding needs of the students until the completion of a new building. Holy Trinity's congregation led an effort to raise funds toward construction and formed a committee to solicit subscriptions of cash, material and labor, and another to acquire building plans and secure additional property. The Mont Amoena Alumnae Association pledged $2,000.[193] Although their children were not students, the local African American community expressed sympathy for the loss, for they lost employment in the laundry and other service positions.[194]

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[192] "Mont Amoena Seminary Burned Last Night," *The Concord Daily Tribune* (Concord, NC), December 1, 1911, 1; and *Lutheran Church Visitor* (Columbia, SC), December 7, 1911, 17. Rev. J. H. C. Fisher funded a renovation and refurnished many of the rooms the previous summer at a personal cost of about $3,500. Insurance covered the majority of his loss, except for about $300. Insurance did not cover his costs for an additional $300 worth provisions and 150 cords of wood.

[193] "Seminary to Resume Work January 2, 1912," *The Concord Daily Tribune,* December 2, 1911, 1.

[194] "Card of Sympathy from a Colored Man," *The Concord Daily Tribune,* December 2, 1911, 1.

Through sheer determination, classes resumed on January 2, 1912. MPCI offered part of its building for seminary use and the town auditorium and several vacant buildings were also made available. Private homeowners housed the girls and teachers, and students traveled to the teachers for their lessons. The addition of an exterior staircase at the Lentz Hotel allowed the girls to enter and leave their rooms on the second floor without passing by other guests in the lobby.[195] Similar arrangements continued during the 1912-1913 session, although enrollment dropped to 43 due to the lack of facilities. Still, the senior class gave a Lost Cause inspired play called "A Fighting Chance," with proceeds to support a library fund. The following May, seven senior girls graduated to a full music and literary program dressed in red and wearing red carnations. Miss Olive Gnann read a valedictory speech bidding farewell to the seminary. *The Concord Times* reported there was not a dry eye in the house.[196]

Despite community loyalty and over fifty-years of support from its citizens, the decision by the NCLS to rebuild Mont Amoena in Mount Pleasant was not a foregone conclusion. Nevertheless, there was no question that female education would somehow continue in NCLS territory. A special commission formed in January of 1912 at a meeting in China Grove to take bids for a female college, not just a seminary. The lack of direct railway access in Mount Pleasant was still at issue. Mount Pleasant feared a better offer to relocate would come from a larger rail line community, such as Concord, Salisbury, or perhaps Charlotte. Other small, rural communities of China Grove, Landis, Lexington,

[195] Horton and Bridges, eds., *Piedmont Neighbors*, 242.
[196] "The Commencement at Mount Pleasant," *The Concord Times* (Concord, NC), May 29, 1913, 2.

and Albemarle, also expressed interest. Mount Pleasant argued that under the rules of the school charter, it was impossible for the synod to relocate Mont Amoena.[197]

But the decision for the building location was in the hands of the NCLS. The fire provided an opportunity for the board to think about the future and look at options for female education beyond junior college status. They considered financial incentives and whether their aspirations for female education had outgrown Mont Amoena and Mount Pleasant. Options included a generous offer by the city of Salisbury for a degree-granting college or consolidation of both Mont Amoena and MPCI with Lenoir College. Consolidation raised questions about the feasibility of coeducation and who would have leadership control. After all the interested parties made bids, reports suggested they favored the Salisbury offer.[198]

Committee representatives presented arguments at the May 10, 1912 meeting of the 109th annual convention of the NCLS in Charlotte. The main topic of discussion was the legality of relocating the school and the continuation of male education. Salisbury submitted that the Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina synods should forge a triple alliance and establish a large college for women there. The NCLS deferred the option of merging with the Tennessee Synod at Lenoir College due to concerns about profitability.

As the discussion progressed, synod representatives came to understand that the Mount Pleasant delegation was correct when it suggested relocation of Mont Amoena violated the charter and the special commission overstepped its authority by requesting bids for a college instead of a seminary. Knowing that the financial prosperity of Mount

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[197] "To Decide Question Here," *The Charlotte Observer (Charlotte, NC)* (Charlotte, NC), January 18, 1912, 7; and "Location of Mont Amoena College Before Lutherans," *The Charlotte News* (Charlotte, NC), May 10, 1912, 1.

[198] "Lutheran Synod Convenes Today," *The Charlotte Observer (Charlotte, NC)*, May, 1912, 7.

Pleasant greatly depended on the schools, the delegation argued that the seminary filled a vital need by providing the people of one of the strongest Lutheran settlements in the South education for their daughters at a reasonable price. A college would prove entirely beyond their means. Furthermore, the Mount Pleasant community was ready and willing to assume the largest share of the burden for replacing the school.[199]

The final decision of the NCLS came down to dollars and cents: would the obligation of the synod to rebuild Mont Amoena as a seminary in Mount Pleasant be financial or merely moral? Mont Amoena president, Rev. J. H. C. Fisher assured the contingent that moral support was all they asked. The backers of Mont Amoena would conduct their own financial appeals. The synod unanimously resolved to rebuild Mont Amoena Seminary in Mount Pleasant. With no financial obligation to Mont Amoena, the NCLS was free to continue the discussion of a joint venture with another synod for a female college.[200] The decision placed a heavy burden on Mont Amoena's supporters.

Construction commenced immediately. The former building stood behind a white picket fence just a few feet from South Main Street; the new building was set back about 250' from the road. Rev. J. H. C. Fisher owned a large portion of the land and sold it to the NCLS through the Board of Trustees of Mont Amoena Female Seminary. They purchased additional smaller tracts bordering South Main Street for a total of 6.8 acres.[201]

The synod chose architect Christopher Gadsen Sayer. Sayer was a South Carolina architect who for many years worked extensively across North Carolina, on his own and in partnership with James J. Baldwin. Although his practice encompassed many types of

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[199] "Rebuild Seminary at Mt. Pleasant," *The Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), May 11, 1912, 6.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ben Callahan, "Deed History of Mont Amoena," Item 80, ECHS. Additional tracts were purchased from James L. Lefler, C. G. Heilig, and Paul K. Dry.

buildings, he became the leading architect of public schools in North Carolina during a period of unprecedented state and local investment in education during the 1910s and 1920s. Most of Sayre's schools were of brick with terra cotta or stone trim, two or three stories tall, and usually with double-loaded corridors flanked by classrooms. The largest schools had gymnasiums, cafeterias, auditoriums, and other facilities.[202] The new Mont Amoena Seminary Building fit the latter description.

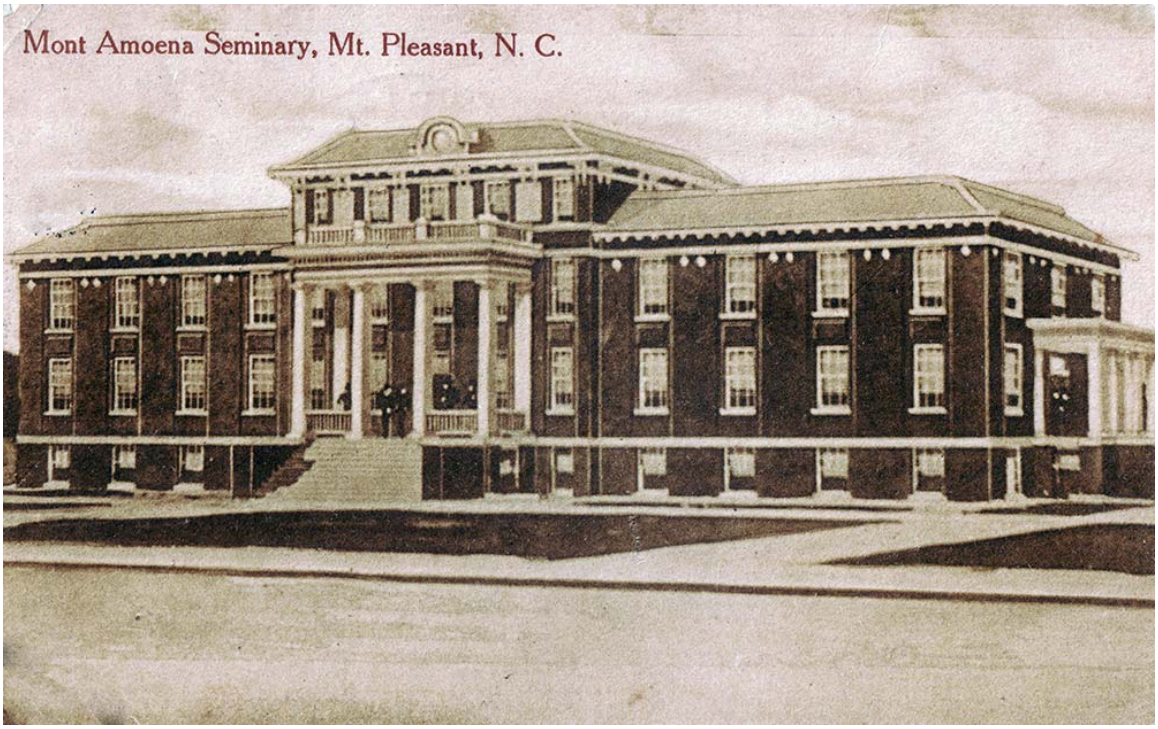

Figure 4: Postcard of the second Mont Amoena Female Seminary building, c. 1913.

The new brick structure was on a grand scale, with a large front portico supported by massive columns. As Catherine Bishir writes, southern landmarks created in this period often used architecture to assert a definition of the past and its relationship to the present and the future. It symbolically represented a reclamation of regional and national

[202] John E. Wells, Update: Catherine W. Bishir. North Carolina Architects & Builders: A Biographical Dictionary, North Carolina State University Library, 2009. http://ncarchitects.lib.NCLSu.edu/people/P000086.

power through the association of classical architecture with idealized southern virtues. For white society, such classicism in institutional buildings reinforced the ideal of a venerable and stable hierarchy.[203]

The new and improved Mont Amoena opened September 30, 1913, with eight teachers and seventy-eight students. It contained fifty-eight rooms consisting of classrooms, dormitory space, offices, a dining room, gymnasium, library, laundry, and bathroom facilities. On the first floor there were the assembly room, music rooms, social room, library, president's office, president's and vice-president's living rooms and a few student's rooms. First floor dormitory rooms were the most desirable for they were single occupancy with connecting baths. The second and third floors housed double occupancy student rooms, each with a window, and bathrooms with hot and cold water pumped from a well. The seminary basement held a state-of-the-art kitchen along with steam heating and electrical lighting plants. The president and teachers lived in the seminary to assist students at all hours. The total building cost came to $31,000 (about $751,537 in 2016).[204] Rev. J. H. C. Fisher resigned as president the previous May and the board elected Rev. Reuben Alonzo (R. A.) Goodman of Holy Trinity Church as his replacement. Rev. Fisher stayed on as vice-president.

Rev. Goodman oversaw a number of changes in the curriculum. Since the 1891 incorporation, the charter rated Mont Amoena as a junior college. With the opening of the new school, Goodman found it difficult to live up to that rating and so revised the

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[203] Catherine W. Bishir, "Landmarks of Power," in Where These Memories Grow, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill, 2000), 140-141.

[204] Ben Callahan, "Deed History of Mont Amoena," Item 82, ECHS; and "Report to the Board of Trustees for Educational Institutions," February 20, 1928, LRUA. Inflation calculator: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, https://data.bls.gov/.

curriculum to conform to that of a seminary rating.[205] He felt the new seminary structure met the needs of a broader number of students; those who wished to be trained for "useful spheres of life" in a limited time and at a moderate cost.

Graduating students received either a Classical Diploma, English Diploma, or Music Diploma. Some students graduated in multiple years with different diplomas. In order to keep costs low for all, the seminary did not offer scholarships. Annual tuition for boarding students ranged from $135 to $170. For day students it was $40 annually plus additional fees for electives. Although school leaders proclaimed that education and training of Christian women no longer needed defense or apology, they still touted that its intended purpose was for the safety of the home, the Church and the State. Through teaching, "she was the mother of the coming generation.."[206]

The new curriculum also included athletics and a callisthenic program as a way to encourage overall health. Previously, student exercise consisted of light exercise on a tennis and croquet field, or going for walks through town or on the seminary grounds. Now there was a dedicated grass court for croquet, tennis, and basketball. Teams formed and played against each other. In addition to maintaining good health, calisthenics helped give "graceful movements to the body." Exercise included free gymnastics and dumb-bell drills. The new building had a gymnasium large enough to accommodate the entire school.[207]

Obviously aware of the criticism of Mont Amoena's remote location, the writer of the 1913-1914 school catalog reinforced the its positive attributes:

> The small town possesses advantages over large cities, as a location for a school, in not requiring so many restrictions…Place a school of our advantages in a city and we would be compelled to increase our rates in proportion to the greater cost

[205] "Letter from R. A. Goodman," April 6, 1946. LRUA.
[206] *Mont Amoena Female Seminary Catalog, 1913-1914*, 7, ECHS.
[207] Ibid, 33-34, ECHS.

> of living, servant hire, etc. So instead of apologizing for our location, we urge it as one of our greatest advantages…Our location is no hindrance to our development or the development of our students is attested by the past success of the institution and its large annual enrollment.[208]

The catalog further emphasized the ease of communication and transportation. Mont Amoena connected to the leading towns of North and South Carolina by long distance telephone, and locally by telephone and telegraph to Concord. Two livery stables and public service automobiles made travel convenient.[209]

Unsurprisingly, the seminary Board of Trustees found the obligation to independently solicit funds in support of the school to be an overwhelming burden. When the initial enthusiasm for rebuilding Mont Amoena dwindled, the dependence on community and congregational support went far beyond what tuition fees covered. Holy Trinity Church had its own financial problems, but continued to aid Mont Amoena in paying off their debt. When the seminary needed $3,000 to complete payments on the new building in 1915, the council of Holy Trinity voted to mortgage its parsonage and lot for $2,500.[210]

War struck once again in 1918, causing additional financial stress and interruption of the education of the young men of MPCI. In addition to the general demoralization of WWI, conscription now included eighteen- and nineteen-year-olds. A number of the faculty also left for military service. Still, the school enrollment benefited from those wanting MPCI's military training.[211] The town of Mount Pleasant participated in a

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[208] Ibid, 9-10.
[209] Ibid,10.
[210] Horton, *Variations*, 121; and Horton and Bridges, eds., *Piedmont Neighbors*, 405.
[211] *Minutes of the One Hundred and Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina, May 15, 1919*, 57-58.

"Liberty Loan" fund drive to raise $30,000 and seminary students participated in a rally where they played music and dressed as Red Cross nurses to promote support.[212]

The period also brought new developments in the public schools as Cabarrus County aggressively expanded the system. In 1917, it introduced a program of modernization, standardization, and consolidation, including the construction of new brick buildings in rural districts. In May of 1923, the Cabarrus County Board of Education unanimously resolved to become a special school taxing district and establish a system of high schools throughout the county.[213] The initiation of high schools and a six-month term severely encroached upon the niche best served by Mont Amoena and MPCI.[214]

The threatened spread of public high schools caused Dr. C. M. Van Poole to ask on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Mont Amoena at the annual meeting of the NCLS in May of 1919, "What is the future of Mont Amoena?" Ever conscious of outside competition, the seminary board felt it had done all it could to keep the school alive. Unless the synod was willing to give substantial aid, "a day of reckoning is surely coming."

Despite their previous agreement, the seminary felt handicapped by obligations it felt the synod should assume. First, there was the ever-present debt. Although reduction on the principle fell from $18,000 to $13,066, the balance was still too large for a board with no assets. Second, the school could not properly teach science without a laboratory. Van Poole proposed the synod should take immediate steps to supply this need. Third, the only way to combat public schools drawing on the seminary patronage was to return the seminary standard to that of a junior college. He further argued that because the seminary

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[212] "Mount Pleasant Triples Her Liberty Loan Quota," *The Charlotte Observer*, (Charlotte, NC), April 30, 1918, 3.
[213] Harris, "Rural Public Schools," 44-47, 51, 55-59.
[214] Bost and Norris, *All One Body*, 236.

did not meet such a standard, it had difficulty receiving State recognition. Van Pool threatened that if the NCLS did not vouch for the seminary and take steps to gradually liquidate the debt, the board was powerless to move forward.[215]

After this plea, the NCLS launched a fundraising campaign in January 1920 for both Mont Amoena and MPCI. Mont Amoena's wish list included: to be free from debt, to improve the main building, build an additional dormitory, accommodate an infirmary, and purchase supplies for a laboratory, the library, classrooms and the music department. Additional requests included a principal's house and endowment funds to guarantee a full-time principal and teachers' salaries.

The Lutheran Bureau in New York gave a call to action and authorized a plan to raise a $150,000 endowment ($100,000 for the MPCI and $50,000 for Mont Amoena). It assigned representatives to each of the fifteen districts in the NCLS to put pressure on the seventy-six congregations for contributions. According to a report by the *Charlotte Observer*, the a total membership was 16,617 with 9,239 active members.[216] The church reasoned that if membership could meet the wartime call of the Red Cross and Liberty Loans, and the demands of international missionary work, then they should give no less attention toward the requirements of the synod's educational institutions. A brochure outlined how the war made the need even more urgent: the war increased costs, the demand for education was higher now that the United States was a world power, and the

[215] *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1919*, 52-54. Although President Goodman succeeded in having Mont Amoena placed on the accredited list of the University of North Carolina, with the addition of a science laboratory, it could be on the list of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

[216] "Lutherans Launching Campaign for $150,000," *The Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), January 23, 1920, 4.

institutions must be ready to meet educational needs of returning soldiers. The internal call was, "Do it! No church is greater than its schools."[217]

The public campaign motto was "Let's do the square thing," similar to Theodore Roosevelt's "Square Deal" progressive domestic program a decade earlier that denounced social iniquities. An advertisement for the endowment campaign used similar rhetoric claiming that while North Carolina stood among the highest of the states in terms of education enrollment, it ranked 45 out of 49 in terms of per capita appropriation for schools. It stated that while living wages for the labor force doubled since 1914, those for educators remained a fraction of the average labor wage. The ad asked, "Have you done the square thing for Christian Education in North Carolina?"[218] In the aftermath of WWI, the campaign had difficulty advancing its cause; however, it did attract a key supporter.

Daniel Efird Rhyne, a textile manufacturer, banker, and philanthropist, took an interest in funding Lutheran education. As a graduate of North Carolina College and someone with no direct heirs, he became a dependable backer for the interests of the NCLS. Rhyne donated $2000 to the Mont Amoena fund: $1000 of which was applied to the requested science laboratory and the rest toward the debt. Others followed and gave money for scholarships and improvements. The United Lutheran Church appropriated monthly installments of $1000 toward ongoing expenses. Still, the campaign did not produce results they hoped. At the NCLS annual meeting in May 1920, the boards of trustees for the two schools reported the campaign resulted in $54,615.20 pledged, with only $11,550.25 paid. Subtracting $4,081.15 in expenses, the net result to date was a total

[217] "$150,000 Equipment and Endowment Fund," Campaign brochure, 1920, ECHS.
[218] "Lets Do the Square Thing," *Winston-Salem Journal* (Winston-Salem, NC), February 14, 1920, 2.

of $7,469.10. The board blamed the lackluster amount on “unavoidable hindrances” such as the flu pandemic.[219]

By the end of the campaign, Rev. R. A. Goodman, who served as president of Mont Amoena and pastor of Holy Trinity Church since 1913, decided it was time to move on. In January of 1921 he tendered his resignation and left for the South Carolina Synod’s Newberry College where he became professor and chair of the department of Religion and Christian Ethics, a position he held for the next thirty-six years. Rev. J. H. C. Fisher resumed his position as president of Mont Amoena.

Rev. Goodman left frustrated by the lack of synod support and knowing that Mont Amoena’s days were numbered. After nearly two decades of discussion to unify Lutheran educational efforts in North Carolina, the NCLS announced a merger with the Tennessee Synod in June of 1921. The merger was part of a larger 1918 consolidation of power. All synods in the United States now fell under one national Lutheran church organization, the United Lutheran Church of America (ULCA). The goal of the ULCA was to unify the efforts of the church to promote education and Progressive Era values, such as temperance, within the confines of a conservative social order.[220]

The ULCA education policy promised the development of all the institutions within the newly united NCLS, but it was soon evident that the aim of the merger was the improvement of Lenoir College. The resources of the NCLS and Tennessee Synod united in support of a single four-year college. In 1922, a $300,000 gift in the form of land and

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[219] *Minutes of the One Hundred and Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Ministerium of North Carolina, China Grove, NC, Beginning May 11, 1920*, 49-54, JRCA.

[220] Bost and Norris, *All One Body*, 221.

an endowment from Daniel Rhyne further boosted the fiscal stability of Lenoir College, and its name changed to Lenoir-Rhyne College.[221]

The defeated Mont Amoena Board of Trustees submitted a bill to the North Carolina General Assembly to repeal its charter of 1891. They determined that "the business and purposes for which it was created no longer existed" and suggested the closure of its corporate books. All the interests and benefits of Mont Amoena were turned over to Lenoir-Rhyne College. The bill dissolved the independent Mont Amoena board and authorized the united NCLS Board of Trustees for Education to act on its behalf and that of MPCI.[222] Although the NCLS continued to make gestures of support, including a new dormitory for MPCI, the writing was on the wall for the Lutheran educational institutions of Mount Pleasant.[223]

At the April 9, 1926 NCLS Board of Trustees meeting in Mount Pleasant, Rev. Fisher requested they take over management of Mont Amoena Seminary in view of the planned construction of a new $50,000 public high school in Mount Pleasant.[224] He did not feel able to assume the financial risk of continuing the seminary. Although the board took the request under advisement, by May of 1927, they decided to shut the doors of the

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[221] Horton and Bridges, eds., *Piedmont Neighbors*, 238; and Solberg, *Lutheran Higher Education*, 112.

[222] "A Bill to be Entitled an Act to Dissolve the Charter of Mont Amoena Female Seminary," typewritten transcription from the original, undated, LRUA; *Public Laws and Resolutions Enacted by the Extra Session of the General Assembly of 1921*, (Raleigh: State of North Carolina), 1922, Chpt. 2, 3-4; and *Mont Amoena Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, 1921-1929,* November 8, 1921, LRUA.

[223] "Report to the Board of Trustees, 1922-1924, LRUA. Mont Amoena continued to reduce debt and increase enrollment. Rev. J. H. C. Fisher reported that from 1922-1923 the debt fell from $17,623 to $4,875, with a student body of 109. The following year proved less successful with a debt reduction of only $700. Holy Trinity Church covered an additional $1,700. The student body dropped to 94

[224] North Carolina implemented a public school plan of consolidation and construction that took effect in 1927, marking a turning point in the development of rural education in Cabarrus County. Growth was rapid and by 1932 every white student in the county had access and transportation to a standard high school. There were twenty elementary schools and seven accredited high schools. Mount Pleasant High School had seven teachers and an enrollment of 221. Harris, "Rural Public Schools," 44-47, 51,55-59. The 1930 population of Mount Pleasant was 838, *The United States Census Bureau, Decennial Census of Population and Housing,* https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html.

grand, fourteen-year-old building on South Main Street.[225] Local girls who wished to finish out their degree program could transfer to MPCI. There were no additional solicitations for female students and no admission of female boarding students. A total of eight transferred.[226]

The board determined the total indebtedness of Mont Amoena to be $13,964.80, with about half of that owed to Rev. J. H. C. Fisher. The value of the land and property was about $50,000. They resolved to pay off the debt, dispose of the seminary property, and transfer the laboratory equipment and contents of the library to MPCI.[227]

The onset of the Great Depression put a final end to the Lutheran educational institutions in Mount Pleasant. The announcement in 1931 that MPCI would close as well caused Lisette Bernheim Hood, former Mont Amoena student and teacher and daughter of seminary agent and benefactor, Rev. G. D. Bernheim, to write an editorial in *The Charlotte Observer*. Although she thought both schools still had a purpose to serve in closing the gap between high school and college, her concern for the people of Mount Pleasant surpassed her distress over the closing of the schools, "I feel still more deeply regretful of the action that will plunge this dear little town from a 75-year-old educational center into a state of 'innocuous desuetude.'"[228]

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[225] "Report to the Board of Trustees for Educational Institutions," April 9, 1926, LRUA.
[226] G. F. McAllister, "Report of the Principle to the Board of Trustees," December 8, 1927. ECHSM.
[227] "Report to the Board of Trustees for Educational Institutions," February 20, 1928 and May 17, 1928, LRUA.
[228] "Old Teacher Protests," *The Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), February 18, 1931, 8.

EPILOGUE

After Mont Amoena Female Seminary closed in 1927, the Cabarrus County Schools utilized the basement of the building for the elementary grades of the Mount Pleasant Graded Public School. A portion of the building became rental apartments. Rev. J. H. C. Fisher and his wife stayed as tenants in the building as a stipulation of the insurance coverage.

Before the Depression hit, the building and property had a value of $50,000. After 1929, the NCLS board tried to sell it for $20,000, with no offers. They finally agreed to an offer from a commercial college for $12,500, but the deal fell through due to title irregularities. Rev. Fisher, who for so many years faithfully acted as president and financial backer of the seminary, held the mortgage and a $2,268.00 claim against the property. The board owed another $2,500.00 of unsecured debt to Holy Trinity Church. The board had nothing to offer in the way of debt repayment but the deed to the now unsellable property. Rev. Fisher died in 1933 without compensation. The Board of Trustees transferred ownership to the Elders of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in settlement of their claim and left them to assume the obligation to Rev. Fisher's heirs.[229]

In later years the seminary building served a variety of uses. Holy Trinity rented out apartments during the World War II housing shortage and used a portion of the building for its weekly Sunday School program. In 1945 the church sold the property.

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[229] Letter from H. E. Isenhour, Chairman of the Special Committee of the NCLS Board of Educational Institutions, to The Board of Trustees for Mont Amoena Seminary, October 21, 1931; and Letter from H. E. Isenhour to Dr. H. B. Fisher, president of Lenoir Rhyne College, December 19, 1933, ECHS.

Various local civic clubs and organizations continued using it as a meeting place. After awhile it sat abandoned and fell prey to vandals and the ravages of time. It was both too expensive to restore and too expensive to tear down. By the 1960s, the building was in ruin. The trustees of the Mount Pleasant First Baptist Church purchased it in 1965, and in 1967, demolished the once grand Mont Amoena Female Seminary building. Today the property is a community park and playground of the First Baptist Church.[230]

After the doors of MPCI closed for good in 1933, the synod sold the property at public auction in hope of repaying its debts. It, too, was rented for a number of years as apartment and office space before falling into disrepair.

In 1973, a group of citizens formed the Eastern Cabarrus Historical Society in an effort to save the main MPCI building from destruction. They purchased the property and began the task of restoring it with the intention of turning it into a museum. A Mont Amoena Seminary committee organized to assist with fundraising.

The National Register of Historic Places recognized the group of buildings affiliated with MPCI in 1980, and the museum opened to the public in 1981. The various rooms of the former school each represent different cultural aspects of Mount Pleasant and eastern Cabarrus County history. Mont Amoena is memorialized in a third floor room set up in the fashion of a typical period dormitory room. It contains original furniture and donated memorabilia used at the seminary. The building adjacent to the museum, the former MPCI Society Hall, is a community center and houses an archival collection of

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[230] Ben Callahan, *Deed History of Mont Amoena,* Item 82. Also, deed agreements from the State of North Carolina, Cabarrus County: between the Trustees of Mont Amoena Female Seminary and the Trustees of Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, November 28, 1933, p. 305; between Trustees of Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church and B. Elwood Durham and R. J. Goodman, October 30, 1945, p. 314; between B. Elwood Durham and R. J. Goodman, and the Trustees of the Mount Pleasant First Baptist Church, September 2, 1965, record no. 352, p.308;

sources, artifacts, and photographs for Mont Amoena and MPCI, as well as a local history genealogical collection. A writer for *Progress* magazine wrote in 1985:

> The influence of the two colleges on the town and its people has been overwhelming and was the greatest influence on the growth of the early 1900's. They have always been missed by the townspeople. The museum will keep them alive. This project, started and supported mainly by local people or descendants of the schools' people show the love and interest that is still in the town.[231]

Mount Pleasant remains a small and moderately prosperous town with a 2015 population of about 1,800.[232] The bulk of the economic growth in Cabarrus County still takes place in and around Concord and Kannapolis. Mount Pleasant finds itself again a community in transition as it looks to create a modern identity while holding onto the memory of its past; first as an educational center, then as a small town manufacturer, and now as an emerging bedroom community for the greater Charlotte region.

[231] Horton and Bridges, eds., *Piedmont Neighbors*, 421.
[232] The United States Census Bureau, Population and Housing Unit Estimates, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest.html.

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The Standard (Concord)
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