

a d v e n t i s t

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N U M B E R

# THE EDITOR'S STUMP

WHILE reading the sixteen articles written by twenty-four prominent and scholarly local Huntsville writers, I exclaimed with prayerful words of joy: Who can argue with success!

Success is what Oakwood College is! It was Ellen G. White who wrote in 1904 in the *Adventist Review* that Oakwood was "to give evidence that Seventh-day Adventists mean to make a success of whatever they undertake." Success is what our writing team has experienced as we have concluded our writing assignments for *Adventist Heritage*. Success is what this issue is all about.

I am ecstatic about having been invited to be the guest editor for this issue of *Adventist Heritage*. I am equally pleased to have shared my responsibility for this issue with gifted writers who readily and proudly accepted my invitation to research and write on specific topics related to Oakwood's history. Writers spent months in the Oakwood College Archives researching and writing their stories. Never before have the Archives been explored by such an exciting group of eager and focused researchers. My usual twelve-hour days became eighteen-hour days as I rendered service to those who came in the late evening hours and as I read and reread articles presented for proofreading.

You will sit in awe as you read the results of their thorough historical research and enjoy the journalistic quality of the finished product, which contains some never-before-told stories of Oakwood's history. These articles will make a revolutionary impact on thousands of people around the world as they celebrate with us Oakwood's centennial and rejoice in discovering how God's hand has guided this institution since its inception.

In preparation for the celebration of our centennial, a truly amazing and moving demonstration of teamwork was evidenced at the meetings of the Oakwood College Archives Historical Research and Preservation Committee (OCAHRP) held every other Sunday from September through November, 1995. At these meetings, writers reported, discussed, reviewed, and exchanged historical findings on Oakwood College history for this issue of *Adventist Heritage*.

As a third-generation Adventist, and after having spent four years obtaining a degree from Oakwood College and twenty-five years serving the institution in middle-management roles, I know personally that all of the writers have excellent reputations and fall in one of the following seven professional areas:

editors of magazines (Roberts, Stephens, Carney); college and university professors (Barnes, Cantrell, Groom, Lacy, Lewis, Ostermann, Saunders, Stephens); retired educators (Allston, Brantley, Brown, Chambers, Jones, Millet, Roache); other educational employees (Stennis, Thompson); pastor (Foster); and local historians (Barnes, Chambers, Dixon, Jones, Luttrell, Roberts, Saunders).

With some suggestions from Managing Editor Gary Chartier, I selected the topics of the articles, but I must admit that these sixteen stories do not fully cover the abundant and powerful 100-year history of Oakwood College. Readers are invited to add to this collection of stories information contained in the recently published book on Oakwood College history by Dr. Mervyn A. Warren.

This very important journalistic undertaking could not have been accomplished without my Heavenly Father, who supplied me with His boundless gift of energy and strength while I undertook many other major enterprises for the Centennial Celebrations. I am deeply thankful for His care and love toward me.

Words cannot fully express my appreciation to the people behind the scenes who helped me with the proofreading of the stories before they were presented to the typist: Clarence Barnes, Alice Brantley, Naomi Bullard, Marjorie Cooper, Cecily Daly, Oliver Davis, Kyna Hinson, Joni Pierre-Louis, Edna Roache, Douglass Tate, Cleveland Tivy, and Florence Winslow.

I wish to thank my Archives assistants for aiding me with hundreds of routine tasks and minor searches; my husband, Elder D.J. Dixon, who forgave me for many uncooked meals; my grandchild, Jesika, who called often to see when was I coming home; and the chairs of the Centennial Committee, the Special Events Committee, and the Alumni Public Relations Committee, who excused my absences from their meetings. I am especially grateful to Debbe Miller, a Certified Professional Secretary, who not only efficiently entered the stories into a computer, but gave careful attention to the content and accuracy of each article. Last, but not least, my deep and grateful appreciation is extended to Gary Chartier for choosing Oakwood's history as the theme for the Spring 1996 issue of *Adventist Heritage*, in commemoration of Oakwood College's centennial.

—Minneola L. Dixon



# HUNTSVILLE AND OAKWOOD COLLEGE

*John R. Jones and Frances Roberts*



*Ellen White's counsel that the school which was to become Oakwood College should*

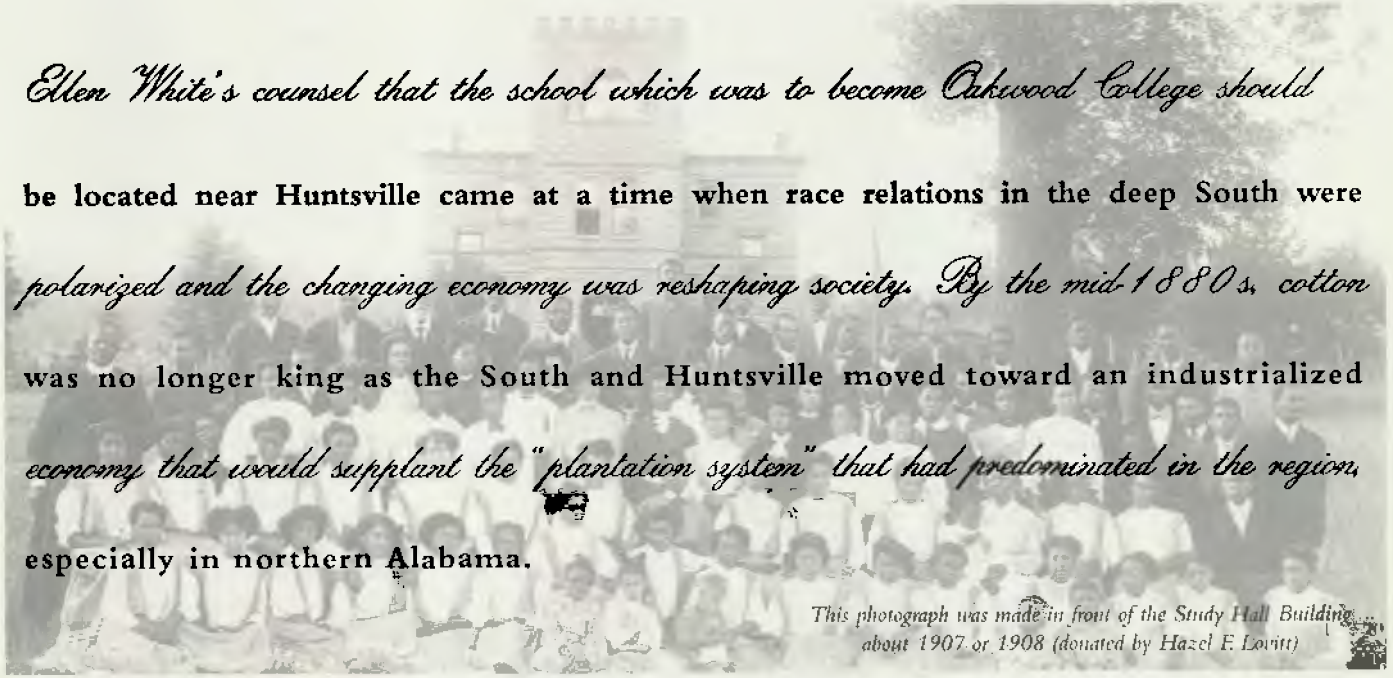
**be located near Huntsville came at a time when race relations in the deep South were**

*polarized and the changing economy was reshaping society. By the mid-1880s, cotton*

**was no longer king as the South and Huntsville moved toward an industrialized**

*economy that would supplant the "plantation system" that had predominated in the region,*

**especially in northern Alabama.**



*This photograph was made in front of the Study Hall Building about 1907 or 1908 (donated by Hazel E. Lovitt)*

The rise of the tenant farming system, in which both freed slaves and whites were employed, the rapid appearance of a new north-south railroad line in 1887, the opening of the Huntsville Cotton Mill in 1881, followed by the Dallas Manufacturing Company—all indicated that Huntsville's future was to be associated with industry, as northern capital was invested in the city's land and businesses. New job opportunities brought both the black and the white unemployed into the city in search of work—a fact which was, in turn, to produce new tensions.

Race relations in the city had been strained in post-reconstruction Huntsville, but the black population had notable champions in Daniel Brandon, Henry Claxton Binford, and Charles Henley, Jr. All three were teachers and noted members of the Republican Party. The town's only black physician, Burgess E. Scruggs, was beloved by both the black and white communities. Samuel R.

Lowery was among the first black attorneys admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court. William Hooper Council was principal of the Huntsville State Normal School for Negroes, later to become Alabama A & M University. All of these men provided inspired direction for their community. Before the enactment of Alabama's jim crow laws, eight black citizens served as city Aldermen: Thomas W. Townsend, Nelson Hendley, Burgess E. Scruggs, William H. Gaston, Charles Ware, Lucien Jones, Daniel S. Brandon and Henry C. Binford.

The influential Huntsville Gazette, published by Charles Hendley, Jr., characterized relationships in Huntsville as follows:

The state of Alabama is ten years behind Madison County . . . Cultured Madison is trying to let justice and fair play regulate the Negro question . . . [Peaceful] and friendly relations exist. . . In Madison the Negro is accorded rep-

resentation in the jury box, while in its county seat, Huntsville, he is found on the police force, in the city council, largely makes up the city employees and is generally treated by capitalist, merchants, business men, officials, with consideration and respect.<sup>1</sup>

But that changed radically in 1901 when the new Alabama Constitution effectively stopped black participation in elections through the cumulative Poll Tax requirement which prevented black people from voting. Thus, the decision of the General Conference to allocate funds for an industrial school for black young people came at a time when opposition to full black participation in social, economic, cultural, and political life seemed increasingly entrenched.

George A. Irwin, Ole A. Olsen and N. Lindsey came to Huntsville in 1895 looking for land for an industrial school authorized by the General Conference. They were successful in buying more than 350 acres known locally as the

Irwin Farm, northeast of the city but near the major roads to Athens, Alabama, to the west, and Nashville, Tennessee, to the north. The property was originally purchased by David Maxwell on January 7, 1811, two years after the initial Federal land sales of the newly acquired Mississippi Territory by the federal government.<sup>2</sup> In 1839, Mr. Maxwell sold this property in Township 3, Range 1 West Section 20 to Hugh Nichols,<sup>3</sup> who in turn, sold the property to Mary J. Irwin in 1848.<sup>4</sup> This became the nucleus of the Irwin Farm. In 1863, James and Harriet Beasley sold property in Sections 19, 20 and 29 in the same Township to Clara B. Lightfoot.<sup>5</sup> On her death, the administrator of her estate sold this property to W.C. Irwin in 1869.<sup>6</sup>

Through the 1870s and 1880s, Irwin was forced to mortgage his property numerous times. In December of 1881 he sold 322 acres to John N. Ford of Memphis, Tennessee. The Fords had previously purchased the northeast and northwest quarters of Section 20 from the estate of Charles P. Cabaniss, which now gave them the entire section 20 of Township 3, Range 1 West. In 1888, William Irwin decided his remaining property to Michael J. O'Shaughnessy.<sup>7</sup>

The O'Shaughnessy brothers, Michael and James, had come to Huntsville in 1881 and were instrumental in creating the North Alabama Improvement Corporation which would be responsible for much of the industrial development of the city for the next twenty years. In 1896, Michael O'Shaughnessy deeded his purchase of the former Irwin Farm to representatives of the General Conference. Included was the Northwest Quarter of Section 29, Township 3 Range 1 West, which had been purchased in 1811 by Peter Blow. Among the slaves owned by Mr. Blow was one named Dred who would become famous for his role in the Dred Scott case. (Peter Blow's son, Taylor, gave Dred Scott his freedom in 1857.)

On September 10, 1918, the General Conference added a significant new purchase of 618 acres sold by J.N. Ford and his wife, July, to the Church. This land, a significant portion of the original Irwin Farm, nearly doubled the land holdings of Oakwood College from its original size of about 360 acres to more than 1,054 acres.<sup>8</sup>

The original purchase from William C. Irwin consisted of some four buildings, nine tenant houses, and the plantation house. By mid-November of 1896,

eight male and eight female African American students, together with three white teachers, began to build an educational institution. Although the property was purchased in 1896, the deed of transfer would not be registered in the Probate Office until March 31, 1904.<sup>9</sup> Title was held by the General



*The Oakwood College Sanitarium (East Hall), built in 1909.*

Conference, which transferred ownership to the Southern Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists of Graysville, Rhea County, Tennessee. On April 5, 1916, the land was vested in the North American Corporation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

It is hard to document the early relationship of Huntsville to the new college. First of all, the College was located in the county—though near the City. Second, the Adventist church was somewhat out of the mainstream of American Protestantism—for Huntsvillians, as for other Americans, the older, established



*Oakwood College directional sign (early 1900s)*

Christian groups: the Methodists, the Baptists, the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, and the Church of Christ. Huntsville residents were unfamiliar with Adventism's distinctive variety of sectarian Protestantism. Contributing positively to the public response to Oakwood was, however, the perception that the educational philosophy of Mrs. White and her teachers, so closely modeled after that of George Washington Carver, was a necessary stage in the

advancement of the black community toward meaningful employment—the most pressing problem for both black and white young people. Because of the college's location in the county rather than the city, Huntsville's long-term contract with the institution over the next fifty years was largely that of an employment market for Oakwood's student and graduates.

Initially, the institution was unchartered, and was called Oakwood Industrial School. On April 29, 1912, it was incorporated as Oakwood Manual Training School before Judge William T. Lawler. It was at that time that the purpose of the institution was clearly stated:

Said Corporation is for educational purposes—along evangelical, industrial and all other useful lines—and not for gain. The Corporation is hereby further empowered to operate farm, dairy, shops and other industries for the training of students in agricultural and other vocational pursuits, and to provide employment for students pursuing their education in the college. It shall be empowered to sell the surplus production of the farm, dairy, shops and other industries and it shall apply the proceeds toward the promotion of the object for which the Corporation is created.<sup>10</sup>

Although Oakwood considers 1917 as the date when it became a junior college, the legal proceedings necessary to effect that change came much later. At a Fort Worth, Texas, session, on October 26, 1936, the General Conference agreed to a name change which was approved by the Probate Court of Madison County on May 12, 1938. With the addition of the third and fourth years of instruction, the institution—following a General Conference action taken in Takoma Park, Maryland, on November 1, 1943—submitted new papers of incorporation as Oakwood College. This change was approved by the Probate Court on April 4, 1944.

Students were noted in the community for their dignity, their industry, their seriousness of purpose, and their total commitment to their religion. And the institution served the students well in preparing them for the numerous occupations associated with industrial programs such as shoe repair, the dairy, farming, janitorial and printing. The development of a traditional liberal arts curriculum was to await the revolt of 1931 and the change of institutional leadership that resulted.

Throughout the nineteenth and half of the twentieth centuries, Huntsville remained a small town county seat. By 1925, the city limits were essentially two

miles in each direction of the town square. Until the early 1950s, the mill communities of Dallas, Lincoln, Merrimack, and West Huntsville were considered separate entities, with a combined population equal to that of the city—a total of some 16,000 citizens.

The 1950s which saw a dramatic



"The Old Mansion"

increase of the city's population from 16,000 to 72,000 and from some 3,000 acres to over 32,500. From 1950 to the end of 1955, the city annexed eight parcels of land containing almost 7,000 acres. On April 16, 1956, the state legislature approved an act to redefine the city's boundaries and to incorporate an additional 14,000 acres in five tracts, including the college property.<sup>11</sup>

One consequence of this expansion was that the city became more directly concerned with the welfare of the college. Although Huntsvillians were well acquainted with the music programs offered by the institution since the early 1930s, prior to 1953 little attention had been paid to other needs of the institution. This response was hardly atypical; around the nation, sponsoring churches were generally viewed as responsible for sectarian colleges and universities. But in 1953, Milton Cummings, an influential citizen and cotton broker, successfully led a drive among the Huntsville leadership to raise \$25,000 for a new college gymnasium. In 1990, the Newhouse Foundation, the parent company of the Huntsville Times, made a \$2 million grant to Alabama institutions of higher education; the Times was successful in securing \$300,000 for Oakwood.<sup>12</sup>

During the last thirty years, four events were to be of great consequence for the institution. The first was the substantial increase of the United Negro College Fund in 1964, which would assure a steady flow of funds for private black colleges and universities. The second was the creation of the Developing

Institutions Program (Title III) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, which would provide significant federal funds for the creation of new programs at institutions which served disproportionate numbers of disadvantaged students. A modification of that Act in 1984 created a separate program for the historically black colleges and universities, which provided annual funding for these institutions based upon enrollment and their students' graduate work.

The third was the recognition Oakwood College received in the wake of its accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1958. One sign of this recognition was Oakwood's acceptance into the consortium comprising Alabama A&M University, Athens College, John C. Calhoun State Community College, and the University of Alabama in Huntsville. This occurred in 1977 and had the effect of opening all programs at these institutions to Oakwood student. Consequently, any eligible student could enroll at any of the member institutions for any program not offered at the student's home institution. Thus, for instance, Oakwood's well-known music program was accessible to students from the other member institutions of the consortium, of which Oakwood remains a vital member.

### The College and the City

The impact of Oakwood College on Huntsville has been great. It must be remembered that the small group of people who created the institution also brought Adventism to Huntsville. Today, there are seven Adventist churches in Huntsville and the county; others are located in nearby Athens, Decatur, Courtland, Florence, Stevenson, and



A slave hut where male students lived in 1896

Scottsboro. The church also operates two homes for the elderly. The institution and its students are active in youth programs

supportive of various Huntsville projects. Its graduates, noted for their emphasis on proper diet, operate fresh produce shops. Its students and faculty have been active in civic undertakings such as the Red Cross, disaster relief, and the United Way. Its administrators participate in the Mayor's Vision 2000 program, which brings together area leaders concerned with the future of the city.

The colleges operates a Center for Community Service which feeds the hungry. And all of Huntsville takes pride in the success of Oakwood's best-known recent graduates, the musical group Take 6. (The members of Take 6 are not the only local students to achieve success as musical performers; another former Oakwood student, internationally-acclaimed soprano Shirley Verrett, opened the year-long celebrations for the institution's one hundredth year.)

Oakwood has built a fruitful relationship with the Huntsville community, which has, in turn, supported the college in various ways. This partnership is one element in Oakwood's success; and its ability to make a difference in its local community is a significant measure of its continued seriousness about the commitment to mission that inspired its founding.

<sup>1</sup>Qtd. in Elise Stephens, *Historic Huntsville: A City of New Beginnings* (Windsor 1984) 68-9.

<sup>2</sup>Madison County Public records, Office of the Probate Judge, Tract Book.

<sup>3</sup>Madison County Public Records, Office of the Probate Judge, Deed Book 4: 329.

<sup>4</sup>Deed Book X: 33.

<sup>5</sup>Deed Book DD: 628.

<sup>6</sup>Deed Book LL: 394.

<sup>7</sup>The Irwin sale to J.N. Ford is recorded in Deed Book III: 51, 351 (1884); the Irwin sale to Michael O'Shaughnessy is found in Deed Book PPP: 567.

<sup>8</sup>The O'Shaughnessy sale to the church is recorded in Deed Book 7: 349. The Peter Blow purchase is recorded in the original Tract Book, Section 29, Township 3, Range 1 West: 33. The Ford sale to the Church is found in Deed Book 116: 249. Prior to their removal to Missouri, Peter and Elizabeth Blow sold their land to James W. Camp (Deed Book H: 79; 1821). For a full discussion of the Blow-Dred Scott background, the reader is directed to Norman M. Shapiro, "A Man Named Sam, A Boy Named Dred," *Valley Leaves* [Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society, Huntsville, AL] 23.3 (March 1989): 143-6.

<sup>9</sup>Deed Book 93: 240-3.

<sup>10</sup>See Incorporation Books, Probate Office, 2: 303 (1912); 3: 456 (1936), and 3: 565 (1944).

<sup>11</sup>See Linda Bayer and Juergen Paetz, "How Huntsville Grew: Boundary and Annexation Survey, 1810-1993," and Frances C. Roberts, "The Public Square in Madison County," both of which appear in *Huntsville Historical Review* 20.2 (Sum.-Fall 1993). Bayer and Paetz are members of the staff of the Huntsville Planning Commission; Roberts is Professor Emerita at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

<sup>12</sup>Oakwood College, Vertical File, Heritage Room, Huntsville Public Library.

# "ANGEL AT THE GATE" THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF OAKWOOD'S HISTORY

*Elise Stephens*

▲ ▲ ▲

Founders of Oakwood  
College: O. A. Olsen,  
S. M. Jacobs,  
and G. A. Irwin.



ONE morning in 1895, a three-member committee from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists stood at the gateway to the 360-acre Beasily estate, about five miles northwest of Huntsville, Alabama. They were O.A. Olsen, president; G.A. Irwin, Superintendent of the Southern Union District; and Harman Lindsay, a former treasurer. Friends who knew that they were seeking a location for an industrial school for black youth had directed them there.

During antebellum days the owners had maintained a beautiful mansion and well-kept lawns shaded by sixty-five stately oak trees (hence the eventual name Oakwood). Within the decades following the War between the States, however, the buildings and the property had decayed. The three men, standing at

the gate, saw latent possibilities in the place and arranged for its purchase. But J.A. Mitchell of California, appointed the first manager, was not equally impressed. Arriving several days later with Olsen, Mitchell found the scene so uninviting that he resigned on the spot.

The beginning may have seemed inauspicious. But Solon M. Jacobs, the first principal, has been quoted as saying that a "mighty angel" stood at Oakwood's gate, guaranteeing its success.

Olsen, Irwin, and Lindsay were followed by a farmer and his wife, a handful of dedicated teachers and, most importantly, students ready to throw their young minds and bodies into what they believed to be God's work. These were the essentials of Oakwood's beginnings. The script was penned by Ellen White, initiated by her son, James Edson White, and orchestrated by a small band

of Adventist leaders. Race had everything and yet nothing to do with the founding and early development of the college.

History tells us that 1896 marked the beginning of a dark and ugly chapter in race relations in the southern United States. The "separate but equal" doctrine donned the black judicial robes of the Supreme Court in Plessy v. Ferguson and stepped heavy-footed onto the American stage, snuffing out brushfires of black freedom. Considered by dissenting Justice John Marshall Harlan to be as pernicious as the decision made by the nation's highest tribunal in the Dred Scott case, the court's ruling came down on May 18, 1896, within weeks of Oakwood's beginning. Into that darkness at noon came the crew of the , their mission of education and salvation for blacks as timely as that of Frederick Douglass's



Solon M. Jacobs, Oakwood principal from 1896-1902. His sound judgment and Christian kindness made many friends for the college.

North Star had been in the fight against slavery.

In 1891, Ellen White wrote *Our Duty to the Colored People*; and, in response, her son, J.E. White, built a peculiar-looking steamboat with the novel idea of carrying God's message South on a vessel turned into a chapel and portable mission school. Built in Michigan, towed across Chicago, and put down in the Illinois River, the craft attracted the attention of F.W. Halladay, who left his Ottawa, Illinois home and joined the crew. Halladay would become the steamer's engineer and in later years become preceptor and teacher of astronomy at Oakwood. Days spent aboard the *Morning Star* spreading the gospel along the Mississippi Delta made the two men painfully aware that the needs of former slaves had to be addressed with permanent missions and schools.

Olsen and Irwin came to Huntsville, Alabama, in search of a site for a school. The presence of William Hooper Councill's State Normal Industrial Institute for Negroes, which had in recent years gained land-grant status, served as a gauge predicting a favorable response to their plan in the Tennessee Valley town of cotton brokers, mills, and Confederate dead.

Irwin knew about Confederate dead and even more about Yankee dying, having spent eight months in Georgia's Andersonville Prison during the Civil War. A veteran of seventeen battles and

engagements, his four years of Union service engendered in him a deep interest and sympathy for the south and its people.<sup>1</sup> His Adventist commitment enlarged his sense of responsibility for the South, especially for those denied the opportunities of full citizenship. As Superintendent of the Southern District of the General Conference, Irwin took a leading role in locating a site for the Huntsville school.

After looking over several available tracts of land, Irwin was drawn in to the drive of a seemingly deserted plantation. A sense of God's presence came over him, he reported; he concluded that he had found the site God intended for the school. His companions came to agree. History was present in the run-down condition of the land, long exhausted by its single-crop dependence on cotton production. History still stared gauntly from the weathered old plantation mansion, its nine slave cabins still bearing silent testimony of lives spent laboring. But fresh-faced history came calling that day, inviting the three men to enter the east gate of a property not marked for sale, yet destined to become Oakwood College.

Solon M. Jacobs, the school's first principal, wrote several years later that G. C. Tenney had confided to him once that "time after time . . . a holy, quiet, subduing influence comes upon me the moment I enter Oakwood's ground."<sup>2</sup> Jacobs, a farmer who came to know every acre of the school perhaps better than anyone else, wrote that he often thought about Tenney's comment. As he saw it, there was only one explanation for this influence, if any was needed: a mighty angel stands there at the gate. Speaking to students as late as 1920, Jacobs re-asserted, "I believe the angel is still there [at the gate]."<sup>3</sup>

The success of the school, begun as a response to Ellen White's urgings, because a moral imperative. Those who served there came to their task inspired by religious commitment.

Oakwood's first principal, S.J. Jacobs, was a beacon light in those early years. An experienced agriculturist with work habits to prove it, Jacobs possessed teaching and managerial skills as well. He was thorough in his work and his teachings, a trait praised by Ellen White. Others noted his caution and conscientiousness in making friends of both races. He put Oakwood on the right course, and his influence was still felt years later. When C.J. Boyd arrived at Oakwood in 1907, Jacobs had been gone for four years. The farm, Boyd observed, had not done as well since Jacobs left as it had during his tenure, so Boyd and the faculty called upon Jacobs to come back to Oakwood for a week of timely counsel.

Little is known about Oakwood's second principal, S.H. Shaw, whose term began in 1897 and led into 1899, when B.E. Nicola became the third principal. Nicola, who served until 1904, left diaries for the years 1902 and 1903. His jottings illuminate the dynamics of time, place and people and facilitate the formation of a complete and complex picture of Oakwood's early years. It is through an analysis of his writings and those of Mrs. White that a surer assessment may be attempted of the intricate relations of all the participants in the workings of the young school.

Loose pages of a diary long since lost reveal secrets of Oakwood's third principal that bear witness to his initial feelings. Later diaries for the years 1902 and 1903 give daily musings that are noteworthy for their lack of any sign of prejudice. Among the many accomplishments of the new school was the dissolution of barriers to brotherhood. Nicola's diary entry for Monday, July 17, 1899, reads:

Still hot & a slight shower, cloudy PM. We work in timber all day getting logs to mill for

lumber for the new Dormitory & school buildings. Its somewhat odd to yoke up with a regular Alabama . . . [black man] and do work with him of a decidedly menial sort. But I'll try to get some good out of it.



The Mississippi River boat The Morning Star. It featured a home for church workers, a chapel, and a printshop.



Another scattered page, dated Monday, 31 July 1899, expounds on his new experience:

Well this is a somewhat new experi-



A model of Edson White's Morning Star.

ence 1st rolling logs, 2nd pulling cross-cut saw, 3rd in rooling [sic] with a big . . . [black man] 1st breasting a log at my side 2nd wrestling a stone shoulder to shoulder with me or taking his turn with the hanuner. But I hope I ll learn the lessons the Lord must design in it.

As one reads the continuous, almost daily thoughts and actions of this busy man, written in 1902 and 1903, the school's promise and its problems are manifest.

A decayed rabbit was found in the well (18 Jan. 1902); nature study class dissected and studied an old cow (2 Jan. 1902); Brother Thompson Lowry's wife visited. Says I talk too loud to my classes. I ll watch it. (30 Jan. 1902); traveled to Montgomery and visited the capital, then to Tuskegee, where he met Prof. Carver, agriculturist (12 & 13 Aug. 1902). Today a surrey of folk drove out from H ville to make inquiry about our work & particularly as to a girl to cook. Mr. & Mrs. Hikes & Mrs. & Mrs. Moss. (16 Nov. 1902), Thanksgiving Day, suspended three boys after getting out of hand at a social (27 Nov. 1902).

The year came to smashing end when the principal had to admit to his diary:

After prayer meeting this eve Fri. Prof. Melenday collared 2 boys in study

hall for noise & brought them to my office. Isaac G. & Will Bell, and as they were leaving after a correction and Isaac stomped in walking & I seized him and yanked him back into my office & shook him, when Oscar Sinclair joined in & demanded my cessation & commenced to put hands on me roughly, & I turned to eject him and this precipitated a commotion. He struck me quite hard twixt eyes & in nose & bld me but I kept after him till he was within the middle of chapel and other boys took his side & some (all the older substantial ones) our side. This caused some excitement as a no. of girls were yet present yet I calmed him down and talked to them. [5 Dec. 1902]

Nicola's deep concerns show through a few days later in his assessment of the year:

I feel now at the close of the year that the burdens are heavy and perplexities many. The troubles with the boys have especially worried us but thankful that they are settled considerably. The yr. Has been with all an eventful one to have no great things happen. [31 Dec. 1902]

One of the great things that did happen in Nicola's life was the ripening of an enduring friendship with William Hooper Councill, the black President of Normal, the school fated to become Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical University. The two men exchanged visits on a regular basis. Nicola took his visitors to Normal so they could meet Councill and see his work. Many diary entries mention eating at Normal and attending services on Sunday. Nicola met Bishop Turner of Atlanta and many of Councill's visitors. The friendship included exchanges of assistance (with, e.g., the repair of Nicola's buggy), advice, and respect. Nicola's relationship with Councill undoubtedly bolstered the white man's status among his own students and their families.

When a student whose father took an active part in Oakwood affairs was accused of an indictable offense, Councill came to the young man's defense. An AME minister who was also educated in the law, Councill was a person to be heeded. His love of classical music and his familiarity with the Greek and Roman classics made for long evenings of good talk between the friends. Nicola also shared his educational aims, both believing that the head as well as the hands and heart should be educated. Finally, they believed that all their talents and those of their students should be used in service of God.

For all that may be said in praise of the Nicola, he was not able to complete the job he was called upon to do. Repeated diary entries give evidence of his insecurity. As much as he admired Solon Jacobs, he also viewed Jacobs as a threat. He was susceptible to flattery and to gossip regarding his fellow workers. When Jacobs left Oakwood, the man sent to replace him apparently knew little about

farming. This blow to the school, though not Nicola's fault, undermined the school's slender finances and adversely affected its agricultural base in 1902-4.

Control over other aspects of the program slipped increasingly from Nicola's hands, as F. R. Rogers, selected to replace the agriculture supervisor came to be viewed as a likely replacement for Nicola. Entries dated August 29 and

30, 1903, depict some of the shadows gathering:

I hear it about that the OS is run down and that Bro. Jacobs is to be put back there with as much or more praise as when he left, & put things in order. So what of [the] rest of us.

It is also talk that F.R. Rogers is to come in as Prin. In the reorganized state of affairs.

Even when Nicola initiated the first Summer Institute, the Southern Missionary Society leader, J. E. White, in a letter from Vicksburg, Mississippi,



The Morning Star bell.



requested that he close it at once. As a last gesture of independence, he and the faculty voted not to close. Even the students rallied to his side and declared that they

would finish the course at their own expense if necessary.<sup>4</sup>

Someone with Ellen White's substantial responsibilities in those years when Oakwood was struggling to reach its tenth birthday might simply have overlooked the small college. But she became personally involved at the very time that Nicola was the most puzzled, and she put her finger on the weak spots, calling for action on several fronts. Money was necessary and lots of it. Oakwood was owed the generosity of the better-endowed associations and schools. But on-campus conditions had to be addressed, too. She came to Huntsville to see for herself the place that had been on her mind and worried her heart. On June 7, 1904, she spoke to the faculty and students of Oakwood in the Chapel. She admonished the students to seek to understand the Scriptures, that God would help them and would send angels to open their understanding. Regarding the school's poverty-stricken condition she maintained:

Had our people in the Southern

States taken the interest in the Huntsville School that God would have been pleased to see them take, this institution would now be on a high vantage-ground . . . I have been burdened so heavily over this matter, that I have felt that if my strength would be sufficient to enable me to travel from place to place in the south, and arouse our people to fulfill their duty toward this school, I would then be willing to die. From the light given me, I know that God is in earnest with us regarding our neglect of duty toward this institution.

Her manuscripts contain an account of her to the school:

That afternoon we were taken over a portion of the school farm. We find that there are nearly 400 acres of land, a large part of which is under cultivation. Several years ago Brother S.M. Jacobs was in charge of the farm, and under his care it made great improvement. He set out a peach and plum orchard, and other fruit trees. Brother and Sister Jacobs left Huntsville about three years ago, and since then the farm has not been so well cared for. We see in the land promise of a much larger return than it now gives, were its managers given the help they need.

Writing to Elder and Mrs. E.R. Palmer, July 8, 1904, she argued that "those who have had charge of the school have not felt the importance of putting brain, bone, and muscle to the task in an effort to make the school a success." In her evaluation of Oakwood's needs, she persisted in calling for fresh leadership. At the Southern Union Conference Committee meeting in Huntsville, she later wrote that a heavy burden rested upon her, explaining:

I knew that there

must be a change in the faculty that more thorough men must take up the work. When a man has occupied the same position for years, and yet the school, in its inside and outside working, is still far from what it ought to be, a change must be made. A man must be put in charge who knows how to govern himself and others, and how to make the school show constant improvement.

That man for the job was E.R. Rogers. In a letter to Frank Foote, dated July 6,



1904, she described Rogers as a teacher of experience and a capable manager. With Rogers at the helm Oakwood could count on reaching the close of its first decade with renewed sense of purpose and support from the wider community. The angel was still at the gate.

<sup>1</sup>See the 1946 *Acorn*.

<sup>2</sup>See the 1946 *Acorn*.

<sup>3</sup>"Letter from Oakwood's First Principal,"

*Acorn* (1946).

<sup>4</sup>See Nicola's diary for August 18, 1903.



Emma and James Edson White

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# PRESIDENTS OF OAKWOOD COLLEGE

*Short Biographies*

## **James I. Beardsley**

1917-23



He graduated from Union College in 1908. The first junior college graduation exercises were held in this era.

## **Joseph A. Tucker**

1923-32

He graduated from Union College in 1917. The *Acorn*



(school paper) was first published in this era.

## **James L. Moran**

1932-45



During his administration, the first baccalaureate degree was awarded. Moran Hall is

named in his honor.



**Frank L. Peterson**

1945-54

The first black graduate of Pacific Union College. He promoted the largest grouping of industrial training programs at Oakwood College. Peterson Hall is named in his honor.

**Garland J. Millet**

1954-63

Dr. Millet earned two degrees from Pacific Union College and taught at Oakwood in the 1930s and



1940s. During his presidency, Oakwood's enrollment doubled, faculty doctorates octupled, and the college was accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.



**Addison V. Pinkney**

1963-6

Received his BS degree from

Morgan State University in 1925, and an MS degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1965. The college became a member of the United Negro College Fund during his administration.



**Frank W. Hale, Jr.**

1966-72

He was a student at Oakwood College in 1944. He received a PhD from Ohio State University in 1955. Among the fruits of his administration are the Office of Student Affairs, the Office

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of Development, Alumni Homecoming Weekend, and the Oakwood College Advisory Board.



**Calvin B. Rock**

1971-85

During his administration, enrollment increased 132%, international students increased 66%, faculty membership increased 85%, doctorates increased 184%, and the college achieved national recognition as one of America's premier institutions producing black entrants into medical schools.

**Benjamin F. Reaves**

1985-present

During his tenure, Dr. Reaves has turned around enrollment decline and established a trend of enrollment increase up to institutional capacity. The Placement Office operation has expanded, and the Second Mile Service pro-



gram designed to improve "customer service" has been initiated. The academic excellence of the College has been enhanced through the credentials of the faculty, reflected in awards and the

national accreditation of the social work program. The new women's dormitory, Wade Hall, has a capacity of 348, and the renovation of the historical East Hall represents a step in the master plan for the development of the campus.

# SPIRITUAL LIFE AT OAKWOOD Garland Millet

Oakwood's first chapel building, 1907.



In America's early history, religious groups were the first to establish schools and colleges, among them Harvard and Yale, founded by Congregationalists in 1636 and 1701, respectively; Princeton by Presbyterians in 1746; Columbia, by Episcopalians in 1754; Brown, by Baptists in 1764; Dartmouth, by Congregationalists in 1770; and Oberlin, by Presbyterians in 1832.

After the Civil War, church organizations sought to meet the post-emancipation needs of black people by starting schools, some of which grew into colleges and universities. The American Missionary Association established Atlanta (1865), Talladega (1867), Fisk (1866) and Toogaloo (1869) Universities. The American Baptists Home Mission Society started Augusta Institute (1867), which later became Morehouse College. In 1867, Methodist-Episcopalians started Centenary Biblical Institute, the forerunner of Morgan State College; Presbyterians founded Barber-Scotia College in 1867 and Stillman College in 1876.

Early in its history, Seventh-day Adventism became active in education. Adventists founded Battle Creek College (Michigan) in 1872; in 1882, South Lancaster Academy, which became Atlantic Union College (Massachusetts)

and Healdsburg College, later, Pacific Union College (California); in 1891, Union College (Nebraska); in 1892, Graysville Academy, forerunner of Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists (Tennessee); and Walla Walla College (Washington); and in 1894, Keene Academy, forerunner of Southwestern College of Seventh-day Adventists (Texas). But the Oakwood Industrial School was the first venture by Adventists specifically for black students. It opened on November 16, 1896, with sixteen students: eight men and eight women.

From the outset they were surrounded by religious influences. Established and funded by a religious organization, with an Adventist faculty and a curriculum that included Bible courses, the school offered a program of activities that reflected its Adventist roots. Even courses not concerned directly with religious topics reflected a Christian and Adventist point of view. Oakwood's founders sought to embody in the institution they led the educational philosophy later expressed by Ellen White:

To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose of his creation might be realized this was to be

the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.<sup>1</sup>

Committed to global mission, Oakwood's Adventist leaders saw what they regarded as an obvious need for schools to develop persons equal to the stupendous world-wide task they believed Adventism had been given. This need was essentially the same as that which faced the founders of Battle Creek College in 1872. The Battle Creek planning committee wrote:

It is proposed to make provision for instruction in all branches of education, so that, while persons are equipping themselves from the armory of Bible truth, their educational deficiencies may at the same time be supplied, and they go forth, after a due course of training, prepared to wield those weapons for the advancement of the cause. . . . The need in this direction is so urgent, that it is decided at once, to enter upon the experiment. We believe it will be a success.<sup>2</sup>

The Oakwood Industrial School *Bulletin* for 1896-7 expressed an additional immediate goal:

The managers and many other deeply interested persons have desired to see a school established in the South, where worthy young colored men and women might be educated in the lines of moral, mental, and physical culture, which prepare for the practical duties of life.

Ellen White, whose counsel



C. E. Moseley, first black pastor of the Oakwood College Church.

helped to inspire the establishment and early operation of a system of schools and colleges that now belts the globe, wrote specifically about the Oakwood School, visited the campus in 1904 and in 1909, and addressed the faculty and



Elder Osterman, Oakwood's first ministerial graduate (1911).

the students. She declared that God had led in the establishment of the school, and she admonished neatness and care in even small matters. Training in trades, including carpentry and agriculture, was emphasized. Speaking with Oakwood's staff and students on June 21, 1904, she said:

Seek to understand the Scriptures. . . [This] is the Lord's institution, in which the students are to be taught how to cultivate the land, and how to labor for the uplifting of their own people. Ye are God's building. Do not bring to the foundation that which is represented as wood, hay, and stubble; for such material will be destroyed by fire. Bring the

material that is spoken of in the word of God, as gold, silver, and precious stones. This will stand the test. He has bestowed on the colored race some of the best and highest talents. You are to place your feet on the platform of eternal truth, the platform that no storm or tempest can sweep away. Do you ask what this platform is? It is the law of God. He says that if you will keep His commandments, you shall be a kingdom of priests. heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

We may be sure that the religious life at the Oakwood School was enhanced by the counsel given by Ellen G. White. She had more than a passing interest in Oakwood. She was deeply burdened

for its success. After her first visit she zealously solicited an increase of financial support for institution. She wrote:

It was in the providence of God that the Huntsville school farm was purchased. Tried men should have gone from church to church in the Southern field, setting before our people the needs of . . . [this school]. I have been burdened so heavily over this matter, that I have felt that if my strength would be sufficient to enable me to travel from place to place in the South, and arouse our people to fulfill their duty toward this school, I would then be willing to die.<sup>3</sup>

The 1897-8 *Bulletin* highlights the religious emphasis that was crucial to Ellen White and the institution's founders:

The school is a denominational institution, founded and managed by the General Conference of SDAs, yet in no way will religious views be forced upon anyone. Such religious meetings will be held during the

week as will be deemed most conducive to the spiritual growth of those in attendance. The seventh day of the week will be observed as the Sabbath, and all are expected to conform to this plan so far as not to interfere with observance of the day in its proper spirit. The Bible will be one of the regular studies taught in both the day- and the night-school. There will be a students prayer meeting and students missionary society organized



Early ministerial students and Bible workers taught by W. L. Byrd.

at the beginning of each school year, which all are invited to attend. All students are expected to attend the regular

meetings on Sabbath, or present satisfactory excuse for absence. The Student will be required to work 40 hours each week for the school, for which the latter will furnish board, washing, mending, and tuition . . .

The eighth annual announcement of the Oakwood Industrial School for the Colored, 1902-3, gives more details:



The faculty who helped to secure Oakwood College's accreditation, 1958.

The seventh day being the Sabbath, it is so observed, but while all are required to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position, being upon the premises of those who observe the Sabbath, yet each is left free to follow his own convictions, and no religious views will be forced upon anyone. Prayer and social meetings are held each Friday

evening, and Sabbath School and church services each Sabbath. The object sought will be to develop and train every part of the being, physical, mental, and moral

Additional insights can be gained from the *Oakwood Manual Training School Bulletin*, 1908-9 (p. 7):

The proper development of character is the most important part of a student's education. Accordingly, the school has



*E. E. Rogers, retired Professor of Religion at Oakwood.*



*The procession from Ashby Hall to the ceremonial opening of Oakwood's first official church building (1977).*



*A view of Oakwood's earliest property.*

but one aim, and that is to assist its students in forming a well balanced and symmetrical character, which will enable them to render useful service in this life, and finally to enter the great school above. With this in view, it is the aim of the management to conduct the work in broad principles, combining literary, industrial, and Christian training.

The ongoing religious life program—sustained through the diligent involvement of faculty and staff members and students—offered repeated reminders of the aims of Oakwood College life. In dormitories, students attended morning and evening worship services, most often conducted by the home deans. Before cafeteria meals, public prayers were offered. Private devotional exercises and prayer bands were encouraged. Classes and most work sessions began with prayer. Chapel exercises were held on some school days each week.

Not to be overlooked was the influence of student church leaders, prominent visiting speakers, and Week of Prayer preachers. Through the years, sundown vespers on Fridays were a well-loved time for singing, testimonials, praise, and presentations regarding sacred themes. Deep were the spiritual impressions gained at these particular sessions. As the campus bell tolled, students crossed the campus, the men usually in white shirts and trousers, the women in blue skirts and white middies—all quietly headed for vespers in the sanctuary. Similarly the Sabbath School exercises and the Sabbath church services were unforgettable, as religious influences flowed from heart to heart. On each Wednesday evening, especially in recent years, the prayer meeting has included a time for prayer partners to confide their mutual trust in God, to praise God, and to pray for divine guidance.

Oakwood students have had many Christian outreach opportunities. They have assisted neigh-



*Ellen G. White*

borhood churches, encouraged the sick, distributed literature, and engaged in prison ministry. Wide participation in choirs and quartets not only brought joy and inspiration to listeners, but aided their members as well.

Annual campaigns such as Ingathering in various cities provided practical experiences. Some Oakwood students have served overseas as student missionaries. Others have earned tuition money through literature sales throughout the country. Others have assisted in student recruitment.

Descriptions in print cannot convey the full spiritual impact of the Oakwood experience. The words of M. A. Bob Mounter, a former Oakwood student who now serves as a Seventh-day Adventist minister, may help to convey the flavor of the religious experience fostered by the college:

When one thinks of Oakwood College, immediately the Religion Department, with its strong legacy of instruction, comes to mind. Yes, the religious aspect of our school is something to be admired and envied. However, out of the religious comes the spiritual, for the religious without the spiritual is dangerous. It is important to emphasize, therefore, that Oakwood College is a spiritually-based and spiritually-driven institution whose legacy has impacted me from both the instructional perspective and the student association.

Since my days at the Oaks, I have reflected frequently and fondly on my classroom contacts with my instructors. These were men and women who have



sacrificed and continue to do so in order that we could be recipients of their knowledge and experience. These spiritual contacts were not just limited to the classroom. I have been privileged to dine in many of their homes. I have been dri-



E.E. Ward

ven to my home in their cars. I have sat in their offices and dialogued about matters that go beyond the classroom. I have strolled the lovely campus while chatting with a teacher about anything and everything. These moments were not covered by the cost of tuition, but it was a reflection of their social and, more so, their spiritual graces that have influenced our lives.

Another aspect of the spiritual is the association one shares with fellow students, whether in dorm worship or during Power Hour in Moran Hall at noon each day. It may have been during a Week of Prayer when ministers such as Wintley Phipps or David McCottry made the call and you were moved by the Holy Spirit and found yourself at the altar, joining hands with a fellow student. Perhaps it was a quiet moment under a tree when a text crystallized for you and you shared that moment with another student.

Once such moment that has made an

indelible impression on my life occurred in Moran Hall. It was prayer time at Power Hour and I knelt in prayer with Diane Parker. I cannot recall anything that I said in prayer but Diane's prayer for me, her prayer partner, brought me to silent tears. How could she know the needs of my wife and me and our three elementary-age daughters unless prompted by the Holy Spirit to speak words of comfort, cheer, and encouragement? I will remember her prayer on our behalf and remind her always of the moment when two struggling students knelt in prayer and entered into the throne room of the Almighty.

For most of Oakwood's history, church services were held in small chapels located within the buildings such as the Old Mansion, the study hall, the old Chapel Building, Moran Administration Building Chapel, and the Ashby gymnasium. Finally, on September 3, 1977, the beautiful Oakwood Church complex was opened. From 1896 to 1931 white



Church members exiting Sabbath services in Ashby Hall.

16 students to a major accredited college of 1,600 students. That history is incomprehensible unless the spiritual dimension of campus life is taken into account. The commitment of Oakwood's founders; the religious seriousness of faculty members who have inspired and supported students; and the spiritual sensitivity of those who have attended there



A scene of dormitory worship in Cunningham Hall (women's dormitory), Ruth Mosby, dean.

minister-teachers pastored the church: S.M. Jacobs, W.J. Blake, W.L. Bird, W.H.L. Baker, U. Bender, and T.V. Counsell. Since 1931, the following ministers, many of them former Oakwood students, have been responsible for the church: C.E. Moseley, R.L. Woodfork, C.T. Richards, J.R. Wagner, J.T. Stafford, J.J. Beale, V.G. Lindsay, N. Lindsay, R. Tottress, W.L.

DeShay, E.C. Ward, and L.N. Pollard. Across the years many student assistants enhanced their spiritual experiences through active church participation in worship, religious studies, and related activities.

Oakwood has grown enormously in the course of its hundred-year history, from a very small industrial school with



E. E. Cleveland, 1941 Oakwood College graduate, author, evangelist, and professor.

and the nurture they have provided each other, have all contributed to making Oakwood the institution it is today.

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Education (Mountain View, CA: Pacific 1903) 13.

<sup>2</sup>"The Proposed School," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald May 7, 1872.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, "Our Duty towards the Huntsville School," The Southern Missionary Sept. 1, 1904.

# OAKWOOD'S HISTORY: THE CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

*Emmanuel Saunders and June Rice-Bacon*



In 1896, a defunct one-time plantation in Huntsville, Alabama, became a manual training school for former slaves and their children in the southern United States. As the college developed, its founders and their successors quietly reached beyond regional limits and no doubt circumvented xenophobic attitudes to craft an international, multicultural center of higher education. Oakwood's current mission statement clearly defines its role in our multicultural society as one that facilitates "the . . . spiritual development" of students "from diverse geographical, cultural . . . and socio-economic backgrounds . . ."

Today, Oakwood College has become a polyglot community of people from Third World cultures from as far away as New Guinea to the shores of Caribbean. In addition, one can also find cultural elements reflecting the influence of such societies as England, Canada and Australia. By the 1970s, Oakwood's student population comprised citizens of more than twenty different countries. The majority of these hailed from the Caribbean basin. In fact, some of the earliest students from outside the United States to attend Oakwood came from the Caribbean. Caribbean students made their first appearance on campus in the 1940s. The nucleus of Oakwood's cultural composite a half-century ago, students from the Caribbean now make up the majority of internationals on the campus.

A common history unites black stu-

dents from Caribbean with those from the United States; these two groups of New World blacks share memories of slavery under Anglo-Saxon domination. The cultural dynamics of the African American community of which Oakwood is a part can be easily identified and understood in light of the historical development of a plantation experience that has also shaped Caribbean black life. It is no surprise that such cultural elements as racial attitudes and skin color-related perceptions, and other such qualities common to blacks in the Caribbean and the United States, can be found at an institution like Oakwood.

As an historically black college, Oakwood has succeeded in crafting its own cultural identity, one that distinguishes it from other Adventist colleges in the United States. Having been subjected to varied forms of racism, Oakwood's students from the Caribbean and the United States share a common background and outlook, an outlook shaped by a plantation legacy. And whatever hopes for education were envisaged by blacks with the end of slavery, the post-emancipation period (1835-1865) brought no significant changes in the status quo in the regions where Anglo-Saxon values became the dominant culture.

In the United States, the election of Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876 clearly marked the beginning of a downward spiraling of African Americans' dreams for educational opportunities in the

*A gift of the United Student Movement of 1979-80, these twenty-eight flags join the United States flag in representing the twenty-nine nations from Oakwood students come—Anguilla, the Bahamas, Bermuda, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Grenada, Great Britain, Jamaica, Liberia, Netherlands, Panama, St. Lucia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Canada, Dominica, Ghana, Guyana, Haiti, Kenya, Montserrat, Nigeria, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago, the Virgin Islands, and the United States.*

South. Two decades later, whatever expectations remained among blacks were finally shattered with the Supreme Court endorsement of the "Separate but Equal" doctrine in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). When Radical Reconstruction (1867-77) failed to provide adequate educational opportunities for blacks, it was the religious denominations, along with philanthropists like George Peabody, Anna T. Jeanes, John D. Rockefeller, and others, who laid the underpinnings of black education in the South. In both the North and the South, pervasive racism led to the founding of such institutions as Oakwood College, Tuskegee and Hampton Institutes, and Howard University. While Howard University became the great incubating center of a core of Third World professionals and African American intelligentsia, Oakwood College was doing the same for blacks within the Seventh-day Adventist church. From their beginnings, both Howard University and Oakwood College experienced cultural links with the Caribbean at both the student and

faculty levels. This intellectual association of New World black cultures continues to the present time.

Historians of comparative New World slavery have correctly underscored that blacks in the Caribbean and the United States have shared a common plantation experience that was born in chattel slavery and shaped by Anglo-Saxon racist values. The slave experience in both regions showed a striking resemblance in terms of the slave codes and master-slave relationships. "As regards to Negro slav-

in response to the same socio-political forces as in the United States. One emerged under colonialism, the other under "jim crowism"—though in both cases the underclass was rejected by the master class. The black experience in the United States, embodied in laws that gave overt expression to this rejection, was different from the black experience under British rule in the Caribbean, marked by a kind of benign neglect. In the United States, de jure racism fostered a climate of resentment. And having been rejected by the majority culture, many African Americans crafted forms of religious practice which became vehicles of protest, resistance, and emotional demonstration and which were characterized by 1) stamping, 2) hand clapping, and 3) shouting. African American worship therefore came to be identified with a pattern of unrestricted movement (as Frederick Olmsted observed in the antebellum South).

In the Caribbean, black Adventists were strongly influenced by white conservative missionaries who tended to draft a product in their own cultural image and likeness. Over time these missionaries were able to establish the parameters of Adventism in terms of their liturgical style and their perception of Adventist worship services. Many members of the "over-fifty" generation of Caribbean immigrants were ill-prepared to accept the typical black style of worship in the United States when they arrived there. They did not bring with them an indigenous liturgical creation of their own. For years these older immigrants defended English and American ideas of worship as theirs.

Over the past twenty-five years or so, there has been a distinct moderation of the harsh anti-black worship rhetoric voiced by some of the older black immigrants from the islands. As Oakwood graduates impact Afro-Caribbean and African American communities, they carry with them that flavor so often referred to as the Oakwood Experience. In such cosmopolitan areas as New York and Washington, DC, today, one finds a

distinct blending of cultures in such churches as the Metropolitan Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hyattsville, Maryland (although this congregation is culturally Caribbean in its orientation). At the Oakwood College Church, recent trends suggest that the cultural divide has been considerably narrowed: some older immigrants now participate in such African American characteristics as mass choirs and hand clapping. Integration into the religious cultural experience of African Americans is becoming more the rule than the exception at Oakwood church services.

### *The International Influence at Oakwood*

The number of international students on Oakwood's campus during the first four decades of its existence was so small that their cultural impact was rather insignificant. A close analysis of the available statistical data reveal that they were all from the Caribbean or Panama (the Canal Zone). The building and completion of the Panama Canal by a Caribbean work force facilitated the arrival of a new breed of black immigrants to the United States, including both persons seeking educational opportunities abroad and thousands of others who began leaving the islands for economic reasons.

During and immediately after the First World War, the United States Congress considered a series of anti-black bills. One of these called for an end to all black immigration to the United States. Though most of these bills failed in Congress, those that passed did not prevent the proverbial Jamaican (a euphemism for all West Indians) from



*Cultural diversity at Oakwood is acknowledged and celebrated at the Oakwood College church.*

ery, the history of the West Indies is inseparable from north America. In . . . [the West Indies] the plantation originated and reached its greatest scale and from them the institution of slavery was extended. Thus the resultant slave heritage is a cultural legacy that is shared by both African Americans and the people of the Caribbean."<sup>1</sup>

### *Common and Divergent Cultural Traits*

Though Oakwood is an international campus, many students and faculty members from different countries emerge from cultural settings that give rise to experiences that are shared across national boundaries. Migration and emigration make it even more likely that persons from different locations will nonetheless have significant experiences in common. The culture of the campus as a whole definitely reflects the common experiences of the members of various cultural groups. This is especially true when dealing with the worship styles of African American and Afro-Caribbean peoples.

To some extent, there has been a polarization of African American and Caribbean cultures because of their different socio-political experiences. Many Caribbean Adventists regard African American worship as unacceptable because of its emotionalism. But black Adventism did not evolve in the islands



*A scene from the International Day celebration at Oakwood College.*

migrating to the United States. Once sharing certain experiences common to most southern blacks in those years, these Caribbean immigrants became part of the black exodus from the south to the

urban and industrial centers of the North. This post-Reconstruction demographic shift reached its apogee around 1916, when European immigrants dropped dramatically because of the war. It is not unreasonable to assume that the fallout from the Panama connection or the desire to migrate had its impact on enrollment at black institutions of higher learning like Oakwood College.

In the Caribbean, the colonial system of government discouraged higher education for blacks beyond the elementary level. It was not until the mid-1950s that the first university-level institution, the University College of the West Indies, was established in Jamaica. Before the 1940s, empirical evidence strongly suggests that the earning of college degrees by many blacks in the Caribbean was tantamount to the weakening of colonial control in the long run. But even before the Second World War, Adventist institutions such as West Indies College in Jamaica and Caribbean Union College in Trinidad, at first staffed by white Americans, were at first as insensitive to black higher education as were the colonial rulers. Further, at the time, even a secondary education was still the preserve of the very small black bourgeoisie and the planting class in the islands. More than anything else, the appalling economic conditions of the black masses in the Caribbean actually determined the limits of most students' dreams of going abroad to study. Even the privileged few who escaped in search of higher education had to do so by winning government scholarships. England, of course,



International students stand with flags representing their countries.

was the preferred choice of most. Most black Adventist students were directed to the white colleges rather than to Oakwood.

By the 1950s, a cultural realignment was becoming obvious. In fact, as early as 1944, international students began making Oakwood their first choice. This was the beginning of a trend that blossomed under the Rock administration (1971-1985). Of the three international stu-

dents listed in 1944, one was Emerson Cooper, who arrived from the Canal Zone. There was also Moses Mayne from Jamaica and Carmen Phipps from Santo Domingo. These students had chosen Oakwood College instead of such schools as Atlantic Union College (AUC) or Emmanuel Missionary College (Andrews University since 1962). Generally, they were more mature students. A few had been drafted into the armed forces. Having served and having shared a common experience of racial injustice with their American counterpart, they were now willing to own a black college culture.

In the 1950s, when more students from the islands began leaving to go abroad to further their education, they were often introduced to AUC or EMC by missionaries who were alums of these institutions and who were teaching in the Caribbean. Oakwood College was stereotyped and maligned as a pariah institution of blacks whose academic and intellectual standards were deficient when compared with those of white schools.

But a common cultural heritage appeared to be a much more attractive force than the negative attitudes expressed by some regarding Oakwood College. Between 1954 and 1955 when the total enrollment of Oakwood College was only 252, there were eleven students listed from foreign countries. Among them were Sylvanus Merchant (the Canal Zone), William Grant (Jamaica), Victor Castello (St. Vincent) and Ethel Richardson (Trinidad). The statistics of the Self Study of 1969-71, which reflect conditions obtaining in the late 1960s, suggest that the international students base was widening to include at least one student from China and one from Ghana. The same data show that the overwhelming majority of the sixty-nine foreign students were still being drawn from the various geo-political regions of the Caribbean. For example, there were then sixteen students from Bermuda, twelve from Jamaica, and ten from the Bahamas. In the 1970s, the trend continued. Between 1971 and 1975, three African countries were represented at Oakwood: there was one student from Uganda, two from Liberia, and five from Nigeria. In 1974, some eighteen different clubs were represented at the annual International Day celebrations. The Spreading Oak reported that, at the Saturday night program, "The air was alive with West Indian calypso, African High Life, Jamaican reggae, and Bermudan pop music." The special guest at this international jamboree was James

L.F. Simelane, the Ambassador from Swaziland.

In the 1980s, President Rock consciously internationalized the campus, transforming it from a closely knit black community formed at the turn of the century in response to racial discrimination in the United States to an academically serious center of higher learning. Rock was able to achieve this goal by recruiting a number of international staff



Oakwood President Benjamin Reaves is shown his name in Arabic.

and faculty, most of the latter with earned terminal degrees. Unquestionably, this is a centrally important legacy of the Rock era.

Today one finds a richly woven fabric of different cultural identities on Oakwood's campus. On any given day it is possible to hear the sound of Jamaican or Zimbabwean accents or to smell the aroma of an ethnic cuisine like roti. College thought leaders are convinced that, for a student body ill-prepared for the basics in human geography, cross-cultural exposure is especially important as a means of learning enhancement. Oakwood attempts to foster such exposure both through its academic offerings and by facilitating informal social contacts.

Oakwood College has a proud past and a promising future, not only academically, but as a context within which students can come to terms with cultural diversity and explore its meaning. Oakwood has stressed mutual responsibility and highlighted the importance of the things that unite those on campus rather than those which divide them. Oakwood's diverse on-campus population has played a key role in determining the distinctive quality of the Oakwood experience, and it will no doubt continue to shape the lives of students and faculty and to enrich their engagement with issues of cultural difference in church and society.

<sup>1</sup>U. B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (New York 1952) 46.

# INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION

## AT OAKWOOD C.J. Barnes



The General Conference Committee met at Battle Creek, Michigan, on October 31, 1895, and discussed the feasibility of establishing an "industrial school for black youth" of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>1</sup> The discussion ended with the appointment of a committee to study the matter and bring back specific recommendations.

The committee made its report on November 3, 1895, and unanimously voted that G.A. Irwin, H. Lindsay and President O.A. Olsen proceed to purchase land for the construction of an "industrial school for Blacks." A survey of the land revealed sixty-five large oak trees, and it was decided the name of the planned educational institution should include the word "Oakwood."

The name chosen set the stage for the direction the school took during its early decades. The General Conference Committee voted that the new institution would be an "industrial school," and the school board complied by designating it "Oakwood Industrial School." Several name changes followed—e.g., "The Huntsville Industrial Academy" and "The Huntsville Training School."

While leaders planned for and talked of the industrial school, Mrs. White spoke of "Our School in Huntsville," or "The Huntsville School"<sup>2</sup> She argued for a balanced curriculum equally divided between academic subjects and the industries. She admonished church leaders against copying other schools. For example, she maintained that if the new school's "responsible men seek

White had specific views of what Adventist education should be. She demanded balance :

In order to have an education that was complete, the time of study must be divided between the gaining of book-knowledge and the securing of a knowledge of practical work.<sup>4</sup>

If the youth can have but a one-sided education, which is of the greater conse-

quence, a knowledge of the science, . . . or a knowledge of labor for practical life? We unhesitatingly answer: The latter. If one must be neglected, let it be the study of books.<sup>5</sup>

Education does not consist of using the brain alone. Physical employment is a part of training essential for every youth. An important phase of education is lacking if the student is not taught how to engage in useful labor.<sup>6</sup>

Why then did Church leaders establish an "industrial school"? They were influenced by the social and political constraints of the time which frowned on "Yankee comes South to teach n—equality."<sup>7</sup> Along with other Adventists, R.M. Kilgore, H.M. Van Slyke, and Joseph Clarke and his wife had attempted to work for blacks in Texas and Missouri during the 1870s and suf-



*A worker caring for young calves at Oakwood's dairy.*

to reach the world's standard, if they copy the plans and methods of other colleges, the frown of God will be upon our school."<sup>3</sup> But early leaders did copy other schools. C. J. Boyd spent days at Tuskegee with George Washington Carver studying his methods. Tucker spent time at Berea and recommended to the Oakwood board that it adopt the Berea program.

ferred the wrath of Southern whites. Some blacks who cooperated with Edson White were whipped and driven out of town and White himself was threatened with lynching. To appease Southern whites, therefore, he suggested that the church open an "industrial school."<sup>8</sup> Schools in the South established for blacks during this period were primarily industrial. This was true of Alabama Agricultural and Industrial College, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College and Tuskegee Institute, just to name a few. Schools founded by Northern churches between 1865 and 1885, such as Shaw (American Baptist), Clark (Methodists), Stillman (Presbyterian), Daniel Payne (Baptist Home Missionary Society), Knoxville (United Presbyterian Church), and Biddle (Presbyterian Church) all had one common denominator: their curricula included "manual training."<sup>9</sup>

#### *Oakwood Under White Administrators*

When Jacobs became Oakwood's first principal in 1896, America was sliding into the Panic of 1897. The General Conference, heavily in debt due to overexpansion in many areas of the world, had borrowed the money used to purchase the Oakwood property and could not, at that time, finance its development. The survival of the school hinged on Jacobs's ingenuity, thoroughness, and hard work. He turned the principalship of the school over to H. S. Shaw in 1897, and assumed the role of business manager. He borrowed \$1,000 from a Mrs. A.S. Steel, of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and, with a group of prospective, industrious students, he went to work. They cleared the land, constructed dwellings and classrooms, and cultivated crops which provided food as well as cotton which generated some income. By November 1896, Jacobs had completed enough construction to make possible the formal opening of school, and he declared school open on November 16, 1896. With sixteen students and three white teachers, school officially began.

#### *School Policies*

Jacobs designated the first bulletin issued, *Announcement of Oakwood Industrial School 1896-97*. It appeared thereafter annually until 1914, when the *Oakwood Bulletin* took its place. These announcements set forth school policies; announcements to students, parents, and friends of the school; and the annual Principal's report to Board members.

From the very first issue of the *Announcement*, specific policies regarding physical work and industrial training appeared; they continued to appear thereafter during the first three and a half decades of Oakwood's history. The faculty required work of all students. The *Announcement* made clear that the "twelve hours of labor required of each student every week, are not simply for the purpose of meeting expenses, but for discipline and instruction as well."<sup>10</sup> A student who could not finance her or his own education enrolled under an agreement whereby she or he worked for a year to build up credit before beginning formal study. For their work, male students received \$8 a month and girls \$5 a month.

By 1902, the monthly manual labor requirement of each student had risen from twelve to fifteen hours, and

matic suspension from school. The policy also stipulated: "Students will not receive pay for work which has been carelessly or improperly done but will be held to the task until they become efficient."<sup>13</sup> Moreover, work took precedence over study and had to be done at the time required by a student's work supervisor. The policy said "students must arrange with the head of the Industrial Department so that they can be ready for duty whenever the work is offered." In times of emergency the students had to be prepared "cheerfully" to work more hours than they agreed to work in their contracts. The manual work requirement for nurses exceeded that required of students in other disciplines. For example:

Eight hours a day manual work will be required, and five hours on Sabbath, if necessary; making fifty-three hours per week. This work will be such as to give an experience necessary in order to become an efficient nurse; and other times will be made only by specific arrangement. For any time more than required, nurses will be paid at the rate of five cents per hour. Credit for class work will not be given until corresponding practical work is completed.<sup>14</sup>

The nursing students did the greater part of their work in the sanitarium and this provided "an excellent opportunity to combine practical work with theoretical instruction."

Under this work-study program it took thirteen years from the opening of school in 1896 for students to make it to the first graduating class in 1909. The first five graduates were nurses. It took another three years before the first ministerial student, Alexander Osterman, graduated.<sup>15</sup>

C.J. Boyd, who came to Oakwood in 1907, played an important role in developing the college. Apart from his teaching assignment, he supervised the farm and the garden work programs. In 1910, Principal W.J. Blake asked to be released from his duties because he wanted to move to an area where he could find better schooling for his children. The board asked Boyd to assume the responsibilities of the principal. He accepted the position but requested a leave of absence in order to acquire skills he knew he needed to serve efficiently in his new position. At the same time, he used his leave of absence to obtain equipment for the building of the school.

During the winter of 1911, Boyd mixed study at Valparaiso University and solicitation of equipment and materials in many states. He traveled



*A scene from the International Day celebration at Oakwood College.*

no student was "retained who proved unfaithful" as an employee. Student who partially financed their studies through their labor worked thirty-five hours each week and attended classes from 7:15 PM to 9:00 PM, with all lights extinguished at 9:15 PM.<sup>11</sup>

A student who failed to report for a work assignment paid a fine of an amount equal to her or his hourly rate of pay until she or he completed the work.<sup>12</sup> Three absences brought an auto-

throughout Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin and collected two railroad car-loads of articles including agricultural machinery, grindstones, belting, stoves, water pumps, wire fence material, bath tubs, plumbing supplies, furniture, fruit jars, and dishes. From the northeast he collected a road grader and tools for the wood-work shop, and persuaded the railroad company to contribute a part of the freight to move the collection to Huntsville.<sup>16</sup>

With his refresher courses completed, Boyd returned to

Oakwood in the spring of 1911 and took on the duties of Administrator. Boyd and his small company of students tackled the monumental task of hauling his collection of equipment to Oakwood's campus. To accomplish it he constructed a road to connect the campus to Huntsville. Next he launched his ten-year program of development which accelerated building construction and industrial expansion.

He made other institutions for blacks his model as he planned Oakwood's development. He visited Hampton Institute, Southern Alabama, and Tuskegee, where he spent three to five days at a time with Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver. Much of the time was spent in Carver's laboratory, with the scientist discussing the sweet potato, the peanut, and other crops.

Boyd employed Oakwood's first black staff member, F.W. Clark, who supervised the construction of Henderson Hall and other buildings. With the aid of student labor, he installed two and one-half miles of wire fence on cedar posts, built a hard top road to connect Oakwood to the city of Huntsville, and constructed a garage, barn, wagon house, canary, and potato house. During one season he and his students canned 35,000 cans of peaches and 10,000 cans of tomatoes, and stored 2,000 bushels of potatoes. Corn, sorghum, peas, beans, and peanuts were also stored. He cultivated vegetables in abundance to supply campus needs. The excess was sold to the

Huntsville market; but the main objective was to make the school supply its own needs and provide training for its students.<sup>17</sup> Boyd maintained a dairy which provided milk for the school. His poultry farm had 800 laying hens. His



*Oakwood's first cannery and potato house (no longer in existence), 1906.*

blacksmith shop served both the school and the community. Students made harnesses, brooms, tents, mattresses, uniforms for young women, and overalls and work shirts for young men.

Since there was no electricity at the school, Boyd made the forest the campus's source of energy. Male students felled trees, split them, and hauled them to the campus to supply fuel for all of Oakwood's heating, cooking, and canning needs. These were the days of the wood stove, wheelbarrow, and lantern; there were constant demands on students' time.

Under Boyd's administration, Oakwood made rapid progress in physical plant development, industrial growth and academic achievements. When he became principal in 1911, Oakwood offered coursework up to the eighth grade level. In 1916, he persuaded President I.H. Evans of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists that more attention should be given to Oakwood. Evans agreed to hold the Division Council meeting on the campus to permit committee members to make their own evaluations. Boyd then drew up a long-range plan for development and presented his program to the Council, which met at Oakwood in April of 1917. To accommodate the seventy members of the Council, Boyd and his students made and pitched a number of tents. Boyd then lectured the members of the board for one hour. He reviewed the history of his students, beginning with their ancestral home in

Africa, describing their ancestors' passage across the Atlantic on slave boats, and concluding by describing their impoverished condition at Oakwood. The board members were convinced of the appropriateness of Boyd's program, and they voted \$60,000 for college improvement. This was the largest layout of funds made by the General Conference to Oakwood up to that time. It was enough to double the physical capacity of the school. The committee also voted to raise Oakwood Manual Training School to Junior College level; at the same time, because Boyd did not hold a college degree, the board called J.I. Beardsley to become the first President of Oakwood Junior College. Beardsley graciously resigned when asked, and took other assignments in Panama, Central America, and in Trinidad in the Caribbean, where he built other schools.<sup>18</sup>

When Beardsley accepted the presidency of Oakwood Junior College in 1917, he inherited plans for development already laid by his predecessor, as well as money for the implementation of those plans already voted by the General Conference. But Beardsley had even greater plans for Oakwood's development. In 1918, he persuaded the General Conference to purchase the "Ford Land," thereby adding 618 acres to the school farm.<sup>19</sup>

Boyd had stored 2,000 bushels of sweet potatoes; Beardsley asked the Board for a house capable of storing 4,000. In 1921, the South suffered economically. Cotton sold for thirty-five cents per pound in 1920, for only nine in 1921.<sup>20</sup> As a result, Beardsley planted no cotton in 1921, instead concentrating on food production. The school was abundantly supplied with tomatoes, several kinds of vegetables, and a variety of peas and beans, sorghum, and fruits. Students worked at the college mill and produced cornmeal and flour from the corn and wheat they cultivated on the farm. Administrators, faculty members, and students all worked to make the college self-supporting. They purchased only those things that the school could not produce. To improve the water system, Beardsley constructed twelve concrete cisterns and connected them by pipes. He erected a pumphouse for the distribution of water to the various buildings and built two cottages for teachers as well as an educational building.<sup>21</sup>

Beardsley worked at ensuring that students gained practical skills that

would benefit the community. He made courses in agriculture a requirement for all students, with each one given a plot of land where she or he could apply the theory learned in the classroom. At



Farmers and plowmen at Oakwood in the early 1900s.

Oakwood many students had their first contact with the soil. Students also built wagons for campus and the community. Sundays they reserved for community service; students were divided into groups and sent by pairs into preassigned areas to do missionary work.<sup>22</sup>

J. L. Shaw visited Oakwood in June 1921, and reported an atmosphere of industry and discipline. He found no students idle; each, he said, was occupied in accomplishing some particular task. He observed teachers working side by side with their students in the college's classrooms and in its industries. He found sixty acres of corn, forty-nine of oats, seventeen of wheat, and thirty of vegetables, as well as 800 fruit trees. Students operating the sawmill turned the hickory, oak, and chestnut into lumber. He saw Oakwood's industrial program as a model for other Adventist colleges.<sup>23</sup>

One Huntsville road sign in 1919 read: "Oakwood 1 Mile East; Blacksmithing, wagon making, lumbar sawed, shingles made, charges moderate." The entrance to Oakwood left no doubt in the visitor's mind regarding the school's curriculum. The industrial tools inwrought in the archway spoke volumes to the beholder.<sup>24</sup> There was not a word said about academic programs. All on-campus work—building, manufacturing, planting, cultivating, reaping, and storing—was done by students and faculty; the student body numbered less than one hundred. Thus, it is understandable that administrators and faculty failed to give sufficient attention to the development of Oakwood's academic programs. The school day began at 5:30 AM and ended at 9:30 PM. Many students worked eight hours each day while others worked even more. In 1922, less than one percent of the students met their obligations using cash. Ninety-nine percent did so through work in the college's industries, and not a single student paid his or her

full way that year.<sup>25</sup> The school year was divided into four quarters of twelve weeks each, so that there was all-year employment in the industries.

Jessie Jones from the United States Department of the Interior visited Oakwood during May of 1913, and again during February of 1915. He found much work and little study. He recommended that more attention be given to the academic program. He found full-time students working all day and attending classes from 7:00 PM to 8:45 PM.<sup>26</sup>

Tucker reported that within a few months, the students had sawed 60,000 feet of lumber, and hauled another 40,000 feet from the Oakwood forest to the mill. As a result, the school had enough lumber to meet all building needs, with more stocked for sale. Tucker constructed a central septic tank. To provide enough water, he built a reservoir of 50,000 gallon capacity. He reconstructed a new poultry house, added bathrooms to buildings, and installed furnaces and a new pump at the well. He re-roofed the machine shop, built an office for the farmers, and had twenty concrete cisterns connected by a maze of pipes and gutters.<sup>27</sup>

Tucker visited Berea College in Kentucky, studied its work program and recommended that the board adopt a similar program for Oakwood. Yearly, the president gave detailed reports to the board regarding industrial development. For example, in 1927, students and faculty produced 2,000 bushels of corn, 200 tons of hay, 750 gallons of syrup, 1,000 bushels of sweet potatoes, and \$2,000 worth of vegetables. Tucker increased the dairy from 20 to 60 head of cattle. It ranked second in the state in the quality of milk produced. Students and teachers did all the work necessary to build and operate the institution. The machine shop, garage, electric shop, plumbing, farm, dairy, garden, and grounds furnished work for the young men while the young women were kept busy with work in the laundry, and in the print shop, store, and tailor shop. Tucker also requested permission from the board to build six family houses in order to carry out the counsel of Ellen G. White that "families should come to Oakwood to receive training in practical industries."<sup>28</sup>

### Instructional Curriculum (1896 to 1932)

The *Announcement* of 1896-97 listed only one department, the "Industrial Department," but intimated that there were plans for a balanced program to include both "literary" and "industrial" studies. According to the *Announcement*, "One of the distinctive features of Oakwood Industrial School is that it purposes to furnish the student instruction and training in Agricultural and Mechanical work, to be carried on at the same time he is pursuing his literary course." The *Announcement* indicated that, through the work program at Oakwood, the "student will . . . be taught the dignity of labor, and how to be master of labor, rather than its slave." The *Announcement* contain no similar statement regarding academic studies. However, Bible is listed as one of the regular courses taught in both the day and the night school. Observation showed that all students studied Bible, but this was not explicitly indicated in the *Announcement*.

By 1902, the number of subjects listed under the "Industrial Department" had significantly increased and included domestic work, cultivation of the farm, general housework, cooking, sewing, carpet weaving, and chair caning. Students also learned many skills by doing work. They cleared the land; planted, cultivated, cared for, and gathered farm and garden crops; cared for horses and cows; worked in the orchard, vineyard, and apiary; and gathered wood to supply the needs of kitchen and furnaces.<sup>29</sup>

Although the *Announcement* listed no academic department, it listed three "courses of study" for the training of nurses, teachers and ministers. Courses for ministers and teachers could be completed in four years of study while those for nurses would take two years. However, this was true in theory rather than practice.

During the first year ministerial and teaching students studied Bible, granular, arithmetic, geography, spelling, writing, and drawing. During the second



Inside the sawmill at Oakwood College, 1919.



year they studied Bible, arithmetic, anatomy and physiology, and United States history and government. The third year courses were Bible, rhetoric and composition, physical geography I, elementary botany, and bookkeeping. For the fourth year, ministerial students would study general history, nursing (hygiene and simple treatment), astronomy I, algebra, and higher mathematics. Students preparing for teaching studied general history, nursing (hygiene and simple treatment), pedagogy I, educational psychology, and methods. Nurses followed the program outlined for ministers and teachers for one year. For the second year they studied physiology and hygiene, hygienic cookery, diet reform, dress reform, and physical culture.<sup>30</sup>

These programs which appeared to be short and simple often took twelve to sixteen years to complete because all students had to include in their studies at least one industrial course for each term spent in school. All students had to develop proficiency in some industrial art. Agriculture and horticulture, as part of the regular manual training program, were required of all students and had to be taken in connection with all academic work. If financial need determined that a student could take only one course for a term, it had to be industrial. For example:

Students should remember that their FIRST INTEREST is to make themselves practical, all-rounded useful men and women, who in an emergency can do the work necessary to be done. The physical powers should be developed in proportion to the mental faculties; this is essential to an all-rounded education. They will then be at home in any place. They should be prepared to teach others how to build, how to cultivate the soil, and how to care for an orchard.

A man may have a brilliant mind, he may be quick to catch ideas; but this is of little value to him and to others if he has no knowledge of practical work, if he does not know how to put his ideas into execution.

Such a one is only HALF EDUCATED.

No amount of intellectual culture can compensate a young woman for lack of training that should make her a homemaker in the practical as well as the spiritual sense. She should learn to do skillfully and with ease all ordinary duties of a well-ordered home. Thrift and economy are essential qualities in the character of every Christian woman.<sup>31</sup>

Not only were the industrial courses to be the students' first choice, but these courses were required for graduation from any program pursued. Moreover, students had to take an exit examination for each program of study and each student had to achieve passes in at least three industrial areas.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, each student had to achieve proficiency in at least one trade, and had to pass qualifying examinations in both theory and practicum.<sup>33</sup>

As the school developed over the years, the faculty added more courses of study in both the industrial and the academic branches of the curriculum. However, the preponderance of emphasis remained on the industrial. Students who entered at the seventh grade and completed the tenth were required to complete twelve courses in industrial training. The next highest number of required courses—in grammar—was six. Those who entered at the ninth grade and completed high school were required to complete ten courses of industrial training. None of the academic disciplines required more than three courses.

In his annual report to the Board of Trustees in 1919, President Beardsley said:

In the eleventh grade agriculture we have completed the text as far as dairying and farm animals, covering the subjects of corn culture, wheat, oats, cotton,

legumes, meadows, trees, and vegetables. In the eighth grade we have finished the study of soil, seeds, vegetables, gardening and care and use of tools . . .

This semester we have classes in Dairying, Agriculture, Gardening, Printing, and Broom making for young men, giving all that is essential knowledge of each subject.<sup>34</sup>

An examination of the courses of study for ministers, teachers, or nurses, make it quite evident that the academic was required. For example the nursing program, by 1914, students admitted to the three-year program had to present proof of completion on the ninth grade level.

When the manual work required of each nursing student is taken into consideration and added to the academic program outlined above, it is evident that these students were achieving some degree of balance in their education. This is true also of students preparing for the ministry and for teaching.

In his progress report to the North American Division Conference Council, President Boyd acknowledged the sparsity of the school's academic offerings; however, by 1917, that deficiency had changed, he noted, and the school had grown beyond its twelfth grade status. He said:

When the work first opened up at Oakwood, class work was necessarily quite limited, but the course of study has grown until now it is a fourteen-grade school. Students finish its academic course from the twelfth grade. The Ministerial course at present requires the completion of thirteen grades; the normal the completion of twelve, the secretaries' twelve, and the Nurses' and Bible Workers', ten. A few manual training classes are carried, but the larger part of the industrial knowledge gained by the

## N u r s e s C o u r s e s<sup>35</sup>

### *First Year*

Bible—Life of Christ  
Anatomy  
General Nursing  
Physiology  
Hydrotherapy (Practical)  
Massage (Practical)  
Physical Culture  
Cooking  
Domestic Economy  
Operating Drill

### *Second Year*

Bible—Acts of Apostles  
Physiology  
Massage  
Physical Culture  
Hydrotherapy (Practical Electricity and Theoretical)  
Medical Gymnastics  
Bible Hygiene  
Nursing (Practical)  
General Diseases  
Medical Lectures

### *Third Year*

Bible Doctrine and Testimonies  
History of Missions  
Gynecological and Obstetrical Nursing (For Women)  
Children's Diseases  
Men's Diseases (For Men)  
Materia Medica  
Bandaging  
Chemistry and Analysis of Urine  
Physical Culture  
Tropical Diseases  
Hygiene and Sanitation  
Nervous Diseases I

students comes from actual work. They learn to do by doing. It has been the policy of the institution since it has been established to make the school serve its own needs. . . . We endeavor to produce such things as we consume. The girls make their own uniforms, and the larger part of our sewing is done in the sewing department. With very few exceptions our buildings have been constructed by student labor under the leadership of our teachers.<sup>36</sup>

The strange fact here is that so very little was said about academic attainment of students. In 1917, according to Boyd, 75% of all colored SDA ministers, teachers, nurses and secretaries in North America were graduates of Oakwood Manual Training School. Many students from Haiti, Jamaica, Panama and other countries who had completed their work at Oakwood returned to their own countries and were succeeding in their vocations. Boyd said:

The greatest personal satisfaction I get out of this work is to see boys and girls succeed in the field. . . . I have seen enthusiastic crowds of 500 to 700 people gather around a tent, eager to hear a young man preach who only a short time before was driving a span of mules of these plows.<sup>37</sup>

However, the heavy emphasis on the manual to the neglect of the academic continued through the 1920s. This emphasis later militated against white administrators during that era of increased sophistication among blacks who were turning from the practical in education to the academic.

Disputes related to industrial education, including two student strikes, erupted during the presidential term of James I. Beardsley (1917-23). Beardsley left Oakwood in 1923, and Joseph A. Tucker succeeded him as President. Tucker, a hard worker, strove to build Oakwood. He accomplished much in the improvement of the physical facilities and the student body increased. He organized a group of student singers and toured the country from New York to California to raise money for the college. He visited the homes of his black students and accepted entertainment from their families. He steered the school through the depression of the 1930s. Yet despite these efforts, Oakwood's third and worst strike came during Tucker's administration. Responding to student concerns about, among other things, Oakwood's industrial curriculum, the

college board replaced Tucker with a black president, Professor J. L. Moran.

Thirty-six years of dedicated service, sacrifice, commitment, and hard work came to an abrupt end with the jettisoning of white administration. It may be that white administrators had



*Oakwood students haul lumber in the college's forestry program.*



pushed the industrial too far. However, they saw industry as the tool whereby they could develop a school for blacks in a society that frowned on the education of the Negro. Ellen White had given specific counsel urging that Oakwood was to be industrial and academic; they had tried to implement her counsel.

Factors such as racial prejudice and economic destitution of their students frustrated white administrators as they sought to fashion Oakwood into a successful industrial school. Their consciousness of the moral, social, and economic value of physical work led them to place too little emphasis on academic attainment. They failed to set criteria by which to evaluate the degree to which they were achieving balance. They were not sufficiently alert to the potential of social convulsion which surrounded them and soon engulfed the campus. Nevertheless, they were successful in some areas. They taught the dignity of labor by their own examples of physical work. Their students developed many useful skills and learned trades which enhanced their success in actual life. They saw work as a means of survival and they performed it with zest and courage.

### **Oakwood Under Black Administrators**

Soon after blacks took the helm at Oakwood, it moved rapidly to senior college status. However, industrial education still played an important role during the early days of black leadership.

J.L. Moran came to the presidency in the summer of 1932, at a time of financial crisis for the United States and the world. As he made plans for his first school year he observed that many buildings on the campus needed repair. He went to work, built a scaffold, took paint and brush and began painting and patching the buildings himself. This act engendered a spirit of work and self-help among the faculty and students and, within a short time, with their help, he had the campus ready for the beginning of a new school year.<sup>38</sup> During the economic crunch of the 1930s, Moran used logs from Oakwood's forest to fuel the school's industries and homes in place of coal. He often led the "axe gang" to the forest and challenged any of the young men to outdo him in cutting logs.

Moran discontinued the granting of certificates for proficiency in the trades; he added a "Department of Vocational Training (Practical)" and raised the offerings in that department to the same level as those of the academic departments. According to the 1936-7 *Bulletin*:

Educational institutions everywhere are coming to realize that a knowledge of books alone is not sufficient and are placing in their courses of study Vocational Training subjects (Industrial), which will fit the student for some practical place in life. The educational department has arranged for such sub-



*A student at work milking cows in the Oakwood dairy.*

jects in both academic and Junior College departments. These subjects will be required for graduation. The custom of granting certificates is now discontinued as all students will receive institutional credits for all subjects pursued in these lines. The vocational training studies will consist of both theory and practice.<sup>39</sup>

The subjects designated "vocational" were agriculture, gardening, home economics, woodwork, carpentry, building, cabinet making, painting, typewriting, architectural drawing, mechanical drawing, industrial arts education, industrial electricity, mechanical arts, plumbing and heating, farm shop, printing, soils analysis, and tailoring.<sup>40</sup> On the academic side of the curriculum, students studied biology, chemistry, physics, history, religion, English, literature, speech, French, Spanish, music, art, mathematics, education, psychology, sociology, business, library science, home economics, economics, geography, physiology, and Greek.<sup>41</sup>

In Moran's day many poor students came to Oakwood with the notion that the government owed them a livelihood. Moran made it his first duty to teach them to work. "Work in the fields, gardens, pastures, in the quarry, in herding sheep and milking cows," he said.<sup>42</sup> But policies were not as specific as in earlier years. For example:

For the help of the institution and the students, the school maintains and operates a line of industries. More than two hundred acres of land is cultivated in farm and garden, providing for school consumption such things as can be grown in our latitude and furnishing employment for students who desire to work part of their way through school. The school operates its own blacksmith shop, printing office, saw mill, cannery, apiary, laundry, and sanitarium. The work in these departments is carried on in an educational way.<sup>43</sup>

Discussions centering on the practical side of the curriculum occupied a large portion of the time of the college board. At almost every meeting from 1932 to 1956, the black administrators pleaded for improvement and expansion of the industries to provide work for students and also to provide balance in the educational program. At a board meeting on Oakwood's campus on March 6, 1935, members voted that teachers spend time regularly in the industrial departments of the school to direct and to work along side students.<sup>44</sup> Much of the discussion on May 6, 1935, focussed on plans for the establishment of a barber shop, a food factory, a breakfast food factory, and a

hosiery industry. On April 15, 1937, the Board voted that the administration adjust teachers' loads so that they could spend time with their students in manual training.<sup>45</sup>

Although work was endorsed



*Oakwood College students working in tent factory.*



*Oakwood women working in the clothing factory.*



*Oakwood students working in the mattress factory, 1915.*



*Oakwood College students pose for a picture in the Sewing Department.*

and credit offered for practical learning, specific policies regarding the work program were obscure. Moran's most specific statement appeared in 1938: "Each student is required to work at least one hour each day"<sup>46</sup> By 1943, the language shifted again. For example:

Labor is vital to the threefold development of Christian character. A training along industrial line is a primary importance. Much study has been given to the development of industries that are necessary in the student's life and at the same time afford some remunerative returns. Experience has demonstrated the value of each student having a part in such a program. All the resident students are required to perform a reasonable amount of manual labor.<sup>47</sup>

It is not clear who would determine what was "reasonable."

President Moran left Oakwood College in 1945, and F.L. Peterson (1945-1954) became Oakwood's second black president. Under his administration, industrial-related courses in the curriculum, such as agriculture, animal husbandry, building, cabinet making, carpentry, food and cookery, gardening, industrial and mechanical arts, interior decoration, laundering, painting, plumbing, printing, soil analysis, tailoring, and wood work, became more prominent than under any other administration. During Peterson's administration, the Oakwood curriculum included more for-credit industrial-related courses than at any other time in the history of the school. The list below represents a summary of courses appearing by decades, in the *Bulletins* from 1930 to 1980.

The BS degree in agriculture was offered for the first time in the history of the school; the major requirement was fifty semester credit hours, while the requirement was thirty semester credit hours in each of the other disciplines for which the BA or BS was obtainable. The 1946-7 *Bulletin* shows forty-nine semester credit hours available in mechanical and industrial art courses.

Peterson implemented programs to develop in his students responsibility, respect for manual labor, and acquaintance with handicrafts and other forms of useful work.<sup>48</sup> But policies regarding work lacked the specificity of former days. For example:

Should a student find it necessary to be absent from work, he must immediately make arrangement with his work superintendent. In case of illness, he will also inform the health service. For tardiness or failure to report to work without making satisfactory arrangements, a student is fined. Those who repeatedly absent themselves unnecessarily will be subject to severe discipline.<sup>49</sup>

The amount of the fine is not specified, and what constituted "severe discipline" is left to the imagination of the reader.

Industrial arts, though prominent in the curriculum, were no longer

required for graduation. Proficiency in a trade for each student was no longer required. However, the work program remained in the curriculum, and students continued to work.

At the end of the Second World War, many veterans enrolled at Oakwood College. The shortage of classrooms and living space created by this upturn in enrollment created an immediate problem. President Peterson appealed to the General Conference and the college board for help, but got far less than he wanted. He challenged his faculty and students to provide for their own needs by their own labor. They joined their president in one of the greatest building expansion programs in the history of the school. They built new dormitories, a library, a science building, a central heating plant to serve the campus, and houses for teachers. Peterson added new industries. In 1951, he persuaded the Board to establish an industrial council with the business manager as its chair and the directors of the industrial departments as members.<sup>50</sup>

Peterson left Oakwood in 1954, and C.E. Moseley was elected the college's third black President. He knew the problems Peterson had faced in operating the school and a month of negotiation by the Board failed to persuade him to accept the presidency. Therefore G.J. Millet, a minister who had mathematics and English at Oakwood in the 1930s and '40s, was selected as President. During his administration (1954-63), Oakwood gained accreditation as a senior college; at the same time, however, the industrial phase of its educational program declined. In spite of a building program during 1954-1963 which included the construction of a large commercial bakery, a commodious, well-equipped laundry, and a first-class dairy, the gradual decline in student interest and participation in the work program continued.

Years before Millet accepted the presidency, winds of change had begun blowing across the Oakwood campus. In December of 1950, President

Peterson informed the board that its students, especially those from the northern states, were increasingly new and "sophisticated Negroes." These students demanded an accredited educational program. Because the school was not accredited, it was common for a student to come to Oakwood, complete a year of training, then left for an accredited northern school.<sup>51</sup>

This matter was discussed by the board on many occasions. Debate at the board meeting of March 1, 1952, revealed a division between those who supported a strong academic program and those who—mindful of Ellen White's counsel that if one branch of the curriculum were to be dropped, it should be the academic and not the practical—supported the industrial program. After much discussion, the board committed itself to the support of both branches of Oakwood's educational program.<sup>52</sup>

In spite of the efforts of the board and the administration to maintain a viable work program, Oakwood continued to experience a decline in enrollment, especially in vocational arts. Both students and parents demanded accreditation. Promises were not enough; they wanted action immediately.

While the administration worked to develop a balanced curriculum, problems of a different kind arose. The Supreme Court of the United States handed down its famous *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision. As a result of this decision, the publicly supported schools of Madison County, the county in which Oakwood is located, began laying plans for desegregation. L.R. Rasmussen and W.H. Williams, two General Conference administrators who were members of the college board, argued that it was no longer necessary to support Oakwood as a segregated senior college. On the completion of their junior college work, Oakwood students could be sent to Southern College in Tennessee. The board voted that Oakwood should not seek accreditation

as a senior college but as a junior college.

This shocked the black members of the board. Oakwood, the only SDA institution of higher education they could call their own, was threatened. They requested that the board appoint a committee to study the problem and



Oakwood students repairing farm machinery.

report on its findings to the General Conference. The request was granted. The black caucus of the board met and requested that the implementation of the board's action be deferred for two years in order that more time be given to the study of enrollment trends. Meanwhile Oakwood was to continue seeking accreditation as a senior college.<sup>53</sup>

During the two-year interim, the black members of the board united their efforts with those of the college administration and the faculty to defend senior college status for Oakwood. They embarked upon a campaign to alert the American black Adventist community to the threat the college faced. They redoubled their efforts to recruit students, and enrollment surged. They pointed to increased enrollment as a reason Oakwood should be a senior college; the board granted their request.

Oakwood was accredited by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges in 1958. However, in the final drive for accreditation, the supporters of the school decided they could not financially maintain both the academic and the practical elements of the curriculum, and they committed themselves to meeting the standards for accreditation. As a result, except for some on-the-job training, practical study was dropped and emphasis was placed on the development of academic excellence. During the 1960s, not one course of the practical industrial arts was retained in the curriculum. Work requirements and policies faded from the *Bulletin*, and Oakwood became a liberal arts college with some vocational, though not industrial arts, programs.

President C.B. Rock observed that:

Table 1  
A Summary of the Highest Number of Industrial Subjects

Decades	Highest Number of Industrial Courses Taught
1930-1940	10
1940-1950	55
1950-1960	4
1960-1970	0
1970-1980	3

In the 1900s the main curriculum consisted of organized agriculture, carpentry, blacksmithing, and other industries such as broom-making, dress-making, knitting and manufacture of boys clothes. The students now pursue majors in biology, business administration, business education chemistry, history, home economics, mathematics, and so forth.<sup>54</sup>

The 1980 *Bulletin* does not mention student employment. Administrators during the 1960s and 1970s continued to seek for ways to establish industries as sources of student employment rather than as an integral part of education.

The absence of specific work requirements from the *Bulletin* saw a sharp decline in student labor in the college industries and a compensatory rise in staff employment. This resulted in increased tuition and student fees. An examination of the yearly balance sheet of seven industries from 1960 to 1980 reveals that in 1960, student labor accounted for 61.57% of the total salaries paid in the bakery, cafeteria, laundry, physical plant, college store, farm, and dairy. Wages paid student employees in the same industries amounted to 9.71% of the total salary budget for these areas in 1980.<sup>55</sup>

This decline in self-support saw also a significant rise in student aid. Some 97% of Oakwood's students received one type of aid or another during the school years 1970 to 1977. The vote of the board was the *coup de grace* to the effort of black administrators to preserve balance. Industrial-related education went from fifty-five courses in the late 1940s to zero courses in the 1960s.

<sup>1</sup>General Conference Association Minutes (1895).

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, "The Huntsville School," *Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 12X* (Nashville, TN: Southern 1909).

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific 1968).

<sup>4</sup>Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Brookfield, IL: Pacific 1913).

<sup>5</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific 1923).

<sup>6</sup>Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern 1923).

<sup>7</sup>R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific 1979).

<sup>8</sup>Louis B. Reynolds, "The Oakwood School" (unpublished ms.).

<sup>9</sup>C. W. Hall, *Black Vocational Technical and Industrial Arts Education: Development and History* (Chicago: American Technical Society 1973).

<sup>10</sup>*Annual Announcement of the Oakwood Industrial School, 1896-97* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1896).

<sup>11</sup>*Annual Announcement of Oakwood Industrial School, 1902-1903* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1902).

<sup>12</sup>*Annual Announcement, Oakwood Manual Training School, 1905-1906* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1905).

<sup>13</sup>*Annual Announcement, Oakwood Manual Training School, 1905-1906* (Huntsville, AL: Oak-

wood 1905).

<sup>14</sup>*Annual Announcement, Oakwood Manual Training School, 1908-1909* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1908).

<sup>15</sup>*Annual Announcement, Oakwood Manual Training School* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1915).

<sup>16</sup>C. J. Boyd, unpublished diary in the possession of the author (Huntsville, AL).

<sup>17</sup>*Acorn* [Oakwood College yearbook, Fiftieth Anniversary ed.] 1896-1945 (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1946).

<sup>18</sup>Boyd, diary.

<sup>19</sup>*Acorn 1896-1945*

<sup>20</sup>J. I. Beardsley, "Oakwood Junior College," *Adventist Review* 98.16 (1921).

<sup>21</sup>*Acorn 1896-1945*.

<sup>22</sup>Beardsley, "Oakwood Junior College."

<sup>23</sup>J. L. Shaw, "Four Days at Oakwood," *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald* 98.23 (June 9, 1921).

<sup>24</sup>*Oakwood College Calendar of Events* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1978).

<sup>25</sup>*Oakwood Bulletin, Oakwood Manual Training School* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1923).

<sup>26</sup>T. J. Jones, "Negro Education: A Study of the Private and High School for Colored People in the United States," *Bureau of Education Bulletin* 39.2 (Washington, DC.: Department of Interior; GPO 1917).

<sup>27</sup>*Oakwood Junior College Bulletin* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1924).

<sup>28</sup>*Oakwood Junior College Bulletin* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1929).

<sup>29</sup>*Annual Announcement of the Oakwood Industrial School* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1902).

<sup>30</sup>*Annual Announcement of the Oakwood Industrial School* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1902).

<sup>31</sup>*Annual Announcement of Oakwood Manual Training School* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1908).

<sup>32</sup>*Annual Announcement of Oakwood Manual Training School* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1912).

<sup>33</sup>*Annual Announcement of Oakwood Manual Training School* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1915).

<sup>34</sup>J. I. Beardsley, "President's Annual Report to Constituency Meeting," *Oakwood Bulletin* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1919).

<sup>35</sup>*Annual Announcement of Oakwood Manual Training School* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1914).

<sup>36</sup>C. J. Boyd, "Oakwood Manual Training School" (unpublished ms., 1917, in possession of the author).

<sup>37</sup>C. J. Boyd, "Oakwood."

<sup>38</sup>Reynolds.

<sup>39</sup>*Oakwood Junior College Bulletin* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1936).

<sup>40</sup>*Oakwood College Bulletin* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1943); *Oakwood College Bulletin* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1946).

<sup>41</sup>*Oakwood College Bulletin* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1943).

<sup>42</sup>James L. Moran, *Adventist Review and Herald* July 18, 1940.

<sup>43</sup>*Oakwood Junior College Bulletin* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1936).

<sup>44</sup>Minutes, Oakwood Junior College Board, March 6, 1935 (Oakwood College Archive).

<sup>45</sup>Minutes, Oakwood Junior College Board, May 6, 1935; April 14-15, 1937.

<sup>46</sup>*Oakwood College Bulletin* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1938).

<sup>47</sup>*Oakwood College Bulletin* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1943).

<sup>48</sup>*Oakwood College Bulletin* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1946).

<sup>49</sup>*Oakwood College Bulletin* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood 1946).

<sup>50</sup>Minutes, Oakwood College Board, April 1,



Oakwood College dairy building, which functioned from 1900 to 1989.

1951 (Oakwood College Archive).

<sup>51</sup>Minutes, Oakwood College Board, Dec. 24, 1950 (Oakwood College Archive).

<sup>52</sup>Minutes, Oakwood College Board, Mar. 3, 1952 (Oakwood College Archive).

<sup>53</sup>Minutes, Oakwood College Board, April 26, 1955 (Oakwood College Archive).

<sup>54</sup>Calvin B. Rock, *North American Informant* 31.2 (Mar.-April).

<sup>55</sup>Clarence J. Barnes, "Physical Work as an Integral Part of Education at Oakwood College in Light of Ellen G. White's Writings (EdD diss., Wayne State U 1982).

# THE STUDENT

## STRIKE OF 1931

*Zeola B. Allston and C.J. Barnes*

▲ ▲ ▲

THE white teachers and administrators who served Oakwood from 1896 to 1931 were hard-working, self-sacrificing, dedicated, and committed women and men who often jeopardized their lives in building a school for blacks during an age of extreme racial prejudice. At times, they were even subjected to physical assaults.

They shared long hours of toil and sweat with their students as they worked by their sides on the farm, in the forest, at the sawmill, in the woodwork shop, in the cannery, at building classrooms, dormitories, cottages, and furniture, and on all the other tasks necessary for the operation of the Oakwood school.

Yet, for all this, they themselves succumbed to the environmental pressure and racial prejudice that plagued Southern society in the early decades of the twentieth century. Local customs regarding mixing races in eating facilities, classrooms, and even in some phases of worship prevailed. A business manager recommended the discontinuation of the integrated communion service he found on his arrival at Oakwood because he feared such practices would come to the attention of Huntsville business people who would mob the school. In time, some students called this condition a reflection of the overseer-slave relationship that had obtained on the antebellum plantations of the South.

This change resulted not so much from the negative attitudes of some of Oakwood's white administrators and faculty, but rather from a number of social environmental factors which exacerbated racial tension between whites and blacks in the United States during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Oakwood did not escape this social ferment.

During World War I, many young blacks were inducted into the army and

served in Europe; they saw more clearly what they had already discerned prior to their military service—that they could perform the same jobs as whites. They reasoned that, if they were good enough to fight for their country, they were also good enough to share the blessings of democracy. They returned home from Europe to propagate their ideas in a social environment already affected by the Washington-Dubois debate and electrified by the charismatic personality and influence of Marcus Garvey. Moreover,



*The late A. Samuel Rashford.*

the cessation of hostilities in Europe and elsewhere brought a sense of freedom. The Harlem Renaissance also inspired hope. The nearby Scottsboro case, however, stirred bitter emotions, and racial atrocities in many parts of the United States, including the lynching of many returning black soldiers, created racial tension and anger.

America was born in the grip of a malignant disease called slavery, and the aftereffects of this disease linger today in many forms, both subtle and overt. Sometimes it is clothed in democracy,

and at other times free enterprise; but inevitably the ugly duck will raise its head and quack loudly enough that momentarily all will stop and listen.

As white administrators strove to build Oakwood, they saw depression, panic, and war as among the factors which demanded the development of a school that had to be self-supporting for its very survival. They also argued that they were carrying out Ellen White's counsels, which mandated settlement on the land to make possible the cultivation of fruits and vegetables, and which dictated that manual training should be part of every student's school experience. They took literally her statement that faculty members and administrators should devote several hours of each day to working with the students in some line of manual training. Moreover, many students were poor; the only means of financing their studies was work, and this often required a student to spend many years completing a program of study.

Student demands for more academic and less industrial coursework came to a head in 1918 when Elise Graves, a student, led a two-day strike to protest the excessive work program. However, the message did not get through to the white administrators who saw "self support" as the school's and the students' means of survival.<sup>1</sup> Two years after Graves' strike, President Beardsley attempted to discipline Lawrence Longware, a student who had broken school rules. He demanded that Longware leave the campus and Longware refused. Beardsley and some faculty members tried to evict Longware physically. A campus-wide boycott erupted as all students sided with Longware and refused to attend classes until the president agreed to hear their grievances and make concessions to them.

Beardsley left Oakwood in 1923, and

was succeeded by Joseph A. Tucker. Tucker worked hard on behalf of the college. He brought about improvements in the college's physical facilities, and the student body increased. He also organized a group of student singers who toured the country from New York to California to raise money for the college. He visited the homes of his black students and accepted hospitality from their families. He steered the college through the beginning of the Great Depression. Nonetheless, Oakwood's third and most significant strike came during his administration.

Among the principal causes of the strike were the following:

- Some white teachers evinced racial prejudice.
  - Segregation was practiced in chapel and church seating.
  - Some college rules were paternalistic and excessively restrictive.
  - There were significant shortcomings in the curriculum.
  - A relatively low value was placed on academic excellence. There was a marked imbalance between the time provided for academic work and that allotted for participation in the college work program. Work loads were excessive, a fact which negatively affected students' academic progress.
  - A need for black leadership (including a black president), black role models, and faculty student camaraderie was perceived.
  - The college wage scale was discriminatory. Some white teachers received higher wages than any of the few black teachers. For example, a white assistant farm manager received more pay than a black teacher with two academic degrees.<sup>2</sup>
- Monroe Burgess assumed the leadership of the student body in 1930, and organized the students to resist the "all work" mentality. In September 1931, Allan A. Anderson, another student with exceptional organizing ability, arrived on

campus. Anderson and the other leaders—Herman Murphy, A. Samuel Rashford, and Walter W. Fordham—argued that, in order to gain the support of the Oakwood constituency, resistance should focus on principles rather than personalities. Students should demand that Oakwood be given a black president; that Negro Adventist ministers

largely white—and its insensitivity to the needs of black students, a change was essential.

The students' plan of action was well organized and executed. At breakfast on October 8, 1931, a day on which the college board was scheduled to meet, student leader Samuel Rashford rang a bell and announced that students would be

on strike. Students refused to go to classes and met in the assembly hall, where a letter to General Conference President Watson—identifying central student concerns—was read. A copy of the letter was sent to the black ministers arriving on the same day.

Class and work activities came to standstill. The only students who worked were those assigned to milk the cows. Student

monitors were placed in charge of each male and female residence home and the dining hall. Barricades were erected to blockade the campus to ensure that no one could leave and that city officers were unable to enter during the strike. Sincere and serious, the students maintained perfect decorum. Before the strike, they had held an all-night secret prayer meeting, reading the Bible and the writings of Ellen White. Now, they stood together as one and declared they would not resume their ordinary routine until given audience by the board.

The board was divided on the question whether or not the students should be heard. Some members called for the immediate dismissal of the student leaders; the vice chair of the board ordered the students to cease the strike and return to their classes. Other board members argued that no one should be condemned without a hearing. Finally, the student leaders were allowed to appear before the Board one at a time. Though they spoke individually, their demands were consistent. They requested

W.W. Fordham, a leader of the 1931 student strike, went on to serve the church as a pastor, evangelist, and administrator.

from all geographical areas of the United States from which Oakwood students came serve on the college board; that all incompetent teachers, black and white, be replaced; that the curriculum be upgraded so that students could prepare for careers other than teaching and the ministry; that campus conditions and rules be altered; and that the "Plantation System"—marked by long hours of work that gave students practically no time for academic study—be discontinued.<sup>3</sup>

While they were keenly aware of differential treatment, students also felt the need for enriching the curriculum and for expanding the faculty. Many students had become dissatisfied with what they felt to be faculty unconcern about students concerns and that students would not be given an audience to discuss their grievances. Each school year would end and the next session would begin again with no changes made to address the problems students experienced. It was generally felt that, due to the ethnic make-up of the faculty—which was

a new president, they wanted many campus rules revoked, and they wanted better food. Many board members realized that the time had come for change. They issued unaccepted invitations to white church workers, L. W. Cobb and D. A. Ochs, but ultimately installed J. L. Moran as Oakwood's first black president.

Additional northern blacks were also chosen to serve on the Board and some changes in the faculty were also made. After several hours of discussion by the members of a committee of students, faculty and board representatives, the students agreed to go back to school with the understanding that the General Conference would give

attention to the needs that had prompted the strike.

The five student leaders were expelled for the remainder of the 1931-2 academic year, and were prohibited from returning during the 1932-3 academic year. Although some board members had warned that defiance of the church could make it impossible for students to secure subsequent church employment, four of the five strike leaders did so, and all contributed to the life of the church.

Herman R. Murphy became a successful Seventh-day Adventist minister. He served as conference evangelist for the Alabama-Mississippi Conference, as the first president of the South Central Conference, and as president of the Southwest Region Conference. He later gave distinguished service as director of the Sabbath School and Religious Liberty Departments of the Northeastern Conference. He held the same office in the Atlantic Union Conference, and also served on the Oakwood College Board.

Alan A. Anderson worked as an evan-

gelist in Washington, DC, Maryland, and Ohio. He pastored for a time in Dayton, Ohio, and Charleston, West Virginia, before beginning an extended career in government service. He was the first black head of the Bureau of Statistics. For years he functioned as an editor and as chief of advanced telecommunications



*Oakwood student body in 1931.*

systems development.

A. Samuel Rashford, a businessman, gave enthusiastic support—in the form of time and in the form of money—to Christian education. He served on the boards of R. T. Hudson School and of Northeastern Academy. His support of Oakwood College included his service on the Oakwood College Board, his quarter-of-century presidency of the New York chapter of the Oakwood alumni association, and his membership, as an officer, of the executive committee of the New York office of the United Negro College Fund.

Walter Wraggs Fordham served the Seventh-day Adventist Church for half a century as an evangelist and as president of three regional conferences (Southwest Region, South Central, and Central States). He later became associate director of the Regional Department of the General Conference. (Most of his administrative positions gave him ex officio membership on the Oakwood College board.)

Monroe Burges worked as a teacher in

Washington, DC, and as a minister in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Kansas. He served as a leader in education, youth, and Sabbath School work in Pennsylvania, and as Departmental Secretary of the Central States Conference in Kansas City, Missouri. He also served as president of the Interdenominational Alliance in Kansas City, and worked with the NAACP, the Urban League, CORE, the Citizens Coordinating Committee, and the Committee on Religion and Race.

Especially remarkable for the time and place at which it occurred, Oakwood's third student strike was a watershed in the history of the college. While those who led the college prior to the strike had sought sincerely to defend Oakwood's interests and promote the well being of its students,

new perspectives on the part of faculty members and administrators were needed if the college were to address the concerns of its students and constituents. The strike brought about a change in leadership that gave black leaders the opportunity to direct Oakwood in its efforts to do so. Thus, the strike changed the history of the college. Through the leaders who emerged from the student body before and during the strike, leaders who went on to play important roles in the Adventist community, the strike made its mark on the history of Oakwood's sponsoring church as well.

<sup>1</sup>Jacob Justiss, *Angels in Ebony* (Toledo, OH: Jet 1975).

<sup>2</sup>See Mervyn A. Warren, *A Vision Splendid* (Collegedale, TN: Southern College 1996). Warren interviewed several participants in and witnesses of the '31 strike.

<sup>3</sup>Justiss.



# THE NURSING PROGRAM

## AT OAKWOOD *Faye Groom and Edna Roache*



*Nurse Myrtle Bain with the Oakwood College nursing class, c. 1920.*

AT the turn of the century, an electric trolley rolled along the downtown streets of Huntsville for the first time. Two churches for Negroes were built or completed during this period: a brick Methodist church was completed on Church Street, and a new Cumberland Church was dedicated. The city's first smallpox scare also occurred during the early 1900s. City officials were so frightened that they passed a local ordinance requiring everyone to be vaccinated. A hospital called the Pest House was established specifically to serve small pox patients.

When Oakwood was established in 1896, Ellen White recommended that students should be taught nursing there. Thus a building called the Sanitarium was constructed to facilitate the instruction of students in the care of the sick.

Today that building is called East Hall. In 1902, Jennie Williams, a Battle Creek Hospital graduate, and Lottie C. Isbell Blake, a physician, came to the Oakwood School to teach personal hygiene, physiology, and simple treatments.

In the fall of 1902, the school board had begun laying the groundwork for educating students in the field of nursing. In 1903, when General Conference President George Butler visited the Oakwood School, he and the school officials decided to spend some time with officials of Alabama A & M University to inquire about the obstacles which stood in the way of their institution's graduates.

The Oakwood leaders knew that their students were being well trained in their industrial education program. Oakwood students were prepared to meet the needs

of industrialized society as carpenters, masons, brick layers, plumbers, and practitioners of other trades. But, like A & M graduates, they encountered racial prejudice in the trade unions of the industrialized South. During their visit at A & M, the delegates from Oakwood were assured that black people, male or female, who were well trained nurses would be well received by others of any race. This

information prompted Ellen White to advise the Oakwood School that nursing should immediately become a part of the regular instructional program. She wrote:

Huntsville has been especially pointed out as a school in connection with which there should be facilities for thorough training of consecrated colored youth who desire to become competent nurses.

Using the knowledge, experience and instruction of Jennie Williams, physicians Lottie Blake (the first black Adventist female physician, as well as the founder and operator of the Rock City Sanitarium in Nashville) and Amy Bascom, and other Oakwood personnel, the first Oakwood Nursing Department was organized in 1907.

In Huntsville at this time, no professional medical care was provided to

blacks, neither was there professional nursing training for blacks. A black nurse could expect to receive hands-on bedside training from a physician. But with the completion of a Huntsville Hospital—once called The Pest House because it had originally been built to treat small pox victims, but named the Huntsville Infirmary in 1904—Huntsville began to serve the health needs of its citizens. There was still, however, no accommodation for Negroes.

Once it was completed in 1909, the Oakwood Sanitarium at the Oakwood Manual Training School proudly and efficiently filled that need. It provided an appropriate setting for nursing education and was recognized as a center for the treatment of the sick. Hundreds of northern Alabama blacks came to receive medical care at the hands of Oakwood's nursing students and staff. The Sanitarium also functioned as a clinic for the faculty and student body.

On the first floor of the Sanitarium, the medical superintendent and his wife occupied two rooms. The kitchen and dining room were used for meal preparation and cooking classes. On the second floor, seven patient rooms were comfortably furnished for the sick who needed longer-term medical care. In the basement, patients received physiotherapy treatments—cold and hot sprays, salt glows, shampoos, sitz baths, fomentations, electric light and sweat baths. (Because of this building's unique history in the early nineteenth century, the Alabama Historical Commission certified in 1987 that it was a significant landmark and added it to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.)

In 1909, under the instruction of

physician Amy Bascom, five female students completed the nursing course in the Oakwood's first graduating class. Joining the caucasian Bascom were Drs. M.M. and Stella Martinson, also caucasian, who came from the Western Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek to become the Medical Superintendents of the Sanitarium in 1910.

In the same year, Huntsville Hospital acquired a Negro annex as the result of a gift from Virginia McCormick. It was a

conduct the Sanitarium work, under the direction of the school physician." The bulletin goes on:

A deposit of \$25 is required to be used in part payment of incidental expenses, or to pay car fare in case of discontinuance of the course. Six months probation is required of each student. During this time, he has regular theoretical and practical instruction. If he decides to continue the course, he must agree to remain a full two years. If his work during these six months is such

that the faculty deem him qualified physically, mentally, and spiritually to become a missionary nurse, he is accepted on their vote. If not accepted, the balance of the deposit will be refunded. Student nurses are expected to perform seven hours of manual work daily, plus five hours on Sabbath. Tuition cost is \$2 per month. The length of the program is two years.



*Nursing graduates, 1930.*

small cottage, located across the street from the hospital. Much of it was furnished by the servants of Ms. McCormick. One particular room was decorated in memory of Mammy, an ex-slave whose face was made famous through the artistic works of Maria Howard Weeden. The Annex ceased to function at the same time as its white counterpart, in 1926.

#### **Requirements for Entering the 1907 Nursing Program**

In order to be admitted to the nursing program in its early years, a prospective student was required to be a good Christian and in good health. The student was expected to be between nineteen and thirty-five years old, and to have a good grammar school education. The curriculum consisted not only of theory but also of clinical experience gained at the Sanitarium.

According to the school bulletin, "nurses in training" were "expected to

Oakwood graduated its first class in 1909, consisting of five nurses. Of the ten graduates the following year, three were nurses. During the next decade, nurses were in each graduating class, except in the years 1915, 1919, and 1920.

Men and women were both attracted to the nursing program at Oakwood. Clifford Hill was the first young man to graduate, in 1911. In 1913, three men were the only nurses graduating. From 1909 to 1924, twenty-seven students received nursing certificates. The two-year program was discontinued in the 1920s and was not reopened for decades. Subsequently, Ruth Stafford came to Oakwood to lead the Nursing Department; she was able to help in establishing a pre-nursing program in the 1930s. Pre-nursing students would spend one year at the Oakwood School and transfer to nursing programs at other institutions. The pre-nursing program ended in 1972.

During the 1920s and 1930s, doctors and nurses were instructors, but during the 1940s, the focus of the nursing curriculum changed from on-site preparation of nurses to the provision of pre-nursing courses. Oakwood students interested in becoming nurses took general education courses that prepared them for admission to Adventist hospitals across America where they took clinical courses and studied for licensing examinations.

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, black medical doctors entered the area to provide services to the blacks in the Huntsville community. Burgess E. Scruggs, an outstanding doctor and an ex-slave, had obtained his formal training at Central Tennessee Medical College, later renamed Meharry Medical College. He was admired and loved by both black and Caucasian Huntsville residents. Scruggs was a politician, landowner, and educator, and an important force in opening doors for improvement for blacks even when times were quite dismal.

Two other very prominent black Huntsville physicians were Claxton Perry Binford and Samuel Beard. Binford, a Meharry Medical School graduate, set up a general medicine practice in 1927 at 201 Church Street. Beard moved to Huntsville in 1930 and set up a clinic at 211 Church Street, delivering babies and administering general care to the black community. Both assisted Oakwood physicians M. M. Martinson and S.O. Cherry in providing medical care to Oakwood students, faculty and staff.

### *Reasons for an Associate Degree Program at Oakwood College*

The need for a full-fledged nursing program for blacks was felt by both local medical personnel and college administrators. Black nursing students were hampered by prejudices on every hand. Understanding the times certainly did not blunt the hurt, shame, or anger they must have experienced as they were admonished, in effect, "Go—not just West, young person, but North as well—anywhere except here."

Despite some opposition, many church leaders and community members strongly supported the creation of a

ored students. We have two in the school. Occasionally we have difficulty in assigning them to certain areas, and we feel we can minimize this problem if we limit the number of students we accept . . . [P]erhaps we ought not to have more than two in the school at one time . . . Incidentally, \_\_\_\_\_ [an Oakwood student] is having a difficult time in making the adjustment here. [No wonder!—writer's comment] She is trying very hard, and we hope that she will be able to keep up with the required scholastic standing. She looks attractive in her uniform and is very well accepted among the students. We hope she will find it easier as she gets a little further along in her program. We are concerned



*First graduation of nursing students from the Associate degree program (1975). Their degrees were presented by Edna Roache.*

nursing program at Oakwood. Prejudice still stood in the way of black nurses, but Federal law came to the rescue: hospitals receiving Hill-Burton funds or any other federal dollars were obliged to provide care to clients and learning opportunities to students without regard to race.

Two letters describe the prejudices which existed prior to the 1970s that hampered the work of the nursing program at Oakwood and other Adventist nursing schools that served black students. A January 12, 1954, letter from a nursing director at an Adventist hospital to Oakwood's nursing director read:

\_\_\_\_\_ (institution's name) is a very small school, with an enrollment around 35 students. This represents a problem in the matter of accepting col-

about your girls, and hope that none of those who are really qualified will have to be disappointed about getting into nursing school.

An Oakwood student received this letter in January, 1954:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_: By having taken pre-nursing at Oakwood College, I take that you are of the colored race. I am sorry to tell you that \_\_\_\_\_ Missionary College School of Nursing has no facilities to accommodate colored applicants. Problems of this nature have not been cleared, and we feel to advise our prospective students from Oakwood to apply to one of the schools farther north. We will be so happy when Christ returns that all the problems of this world will be at an end. May the Lord guide you in your preparation for His

work.

One alum from this shameful era spoke very emphatically about writing to a top church official and receiving a reply that said: "I am sure that the Lord will understand it if you enroll in an out-



*Flora C. Johnson, Instructor in Nursing, and Deborah Jean King, during the Department of Nursing Senior Pinning Service, Sabbath, May 31, 1975.*

side school."

The conditions which this student and others faced made it necessary for Oakwood to have its own program, and with the full support of Calvin Rock, the newly-appointed college president, plans were begun to inaugurate a two-year



*Oakwood College nursing students.*

Associate in Science degree program in nursing at Oakwood.

Tawanna Marshall was named Interim Director of the program in January of

1972. Among the key persons involved in the planning process were Rock, Emerson Cooper, who served as Academic Dean at the time, Edna Roache, the first departmental director, several consultants, including Mazie Herrin and others, who spent countless hours garnering support for the planned program. Their work proved that there was a perceived need, and students confirmed this judgment as they came from all over the country to enroll in Oakwood's nursing program.

The Nursing Council of SDA Directors of Programs in Nursing offered its support for the planned program in April, 1972. According to the council:

- The various schools already functioning recognized that they were not appealing to all the black students interested in nursing;
- Existing programs seemed unable to attract black faculty members;
- Oakwood's proposal would not lead to an unnecessary proliferation of nursing education programs because it served a distinct need on the part of black Adventists; and
- Oakwood's program was long overdue.

With approval from the Alabama State Board of Nurses Adventist Nursing Council, the Oakwood Associate of Science in Nursing program began.

In July, 1972, Edna Roache was asked to chair the Department of Nursing. In September, 1973, forty-two students were admitted to the first class. In June, 1975, twenty-five of those first enrollees received AS degrees in nursing.

#### **Admission Criteria for the AS Degree Program**

Criteria for admission to the program included graduation from high school or a GED certificate; a student's high

school curriculum was expected to have included chemistry, physics, mathematics, and language. This became known as the college prep course, and while GPA was not necessarily calibrated, it was suffi-

cient to note that students who successful completed the college prep course usually survived nursing school.

While small in number, nursing class-



*Myrtle Bain, nursing instructor, 1928.*

es were of high quality. The curriculum included: anatomy and physiology, microbiology, chemistry, health principles, psychology, sociology, and introduction to nursing. The curricula of other comparable Adventist nursing programs included the same courses—which reflected the fact of ongoing cooperation among educational institutions, hospitals and sanitariums.

Before students received clinical experiences in the Huntsville hospitals, the two Adventist hospitals in the Nashville, Tennessee, area (Riverside Hospital and Madison Hospital) were used as training sites. In this way, students were to the Adventist health care system environment; the Oakwood nursing program also provided an employment pool for the Tennessee institutions.

The 1975 graduates of the faced two days of licensing examinations held nationwide on the same days. They sought jobs from employers who had no knowledge of Oakwood College or of the quality of its nursing graduates. Many graduates took jobs at Riverside and other Adventist hospitals in order to gain experience and earn good references for future use in other work settings, Adventist and non-Adventist.

#### **The Bachelor of Science Program**

A graduate of the AS program who



*Student nurse Lashia Roga taking the temperature of another student, portraying a patient.*

wished to earn a bachelor's degree in nursing had to enroll elsewhere in order to do so. But in 1988, thirteen years after the first AS graduates received their degrees, the Alabama Board of Nursing gave approval for Oakwood to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. In 1990

including hospitals, nursing homes, physicians offices, and other structured health care agencies. The program is accredited by the Alabama Board of Nursing.

An early part of the curriculum at Oakwood, nursing education was dis-

Naomi Naylor Lokko, a wife who was then the mother of three preschool children, received the first BSN from Oakwood, graduating magna cum laude.

From 1975 to 1995 the nursing program has graduated over 300 students. Currently, the Department of Nursing offers the Bachelor of Science and Associate of Science degrees in nursing. The program prepares students to function as in various health care settings,



*Ruth N. Stafford.*

continued for a considerable period of the college's history. But since the initiation of the new nursing program, the training of nurses has again come to play an important role in the college's life, as nursing graduates live out the vision of service acquired at their alma mater around the world.

## N u r s i n g I n f o r m a t i o n

*Some of those who have served in the Nursing Department over the years include:*

Amy I. Bascom, MD; Edna P. Roache, MEd; Brenda Daniels, BSN; Therica Powell, MS; Caryll Domer, PhD; Tawanna Marshall, MSN; Flora J. Flood, MSN; Katherine Gibb, MSN; Cynthia Maycock, BSN; Aline Dormer, MSN; Jeane Fische, BSN; Anne Meyer, MSN; Gwendolyn White, MSN; Selena Simons, MSN; Alma F. York, MPH; Charlie Morgan, PhD; Sheila Davis, PhD; Naomi Bullard, MSN; Lydia Andrews, MSN; June White, BSN; Carol Edwards, BSN; Ruth Stafford, RN, MA; Harriet Moseley; Susan Greco, MSN; Sheila Hopper, BSN; Linda Williams, MSN; JoAnn Breach, BSN; Sherry Lee, AS; Marilyn Pase, BSN; Rise Lowery, MSN; David Pointer, BS; Frankie Cantrell, MS; Monique Okizie, MSN; Ruth Warren, BSN; Rochelle Hendricks, MSN; Karen Britton, MS; Barbara Maddox, MSN; Jackie Wilson, BSN; Rita Jones, BSN; Floris Freeman, BSN; Katherine Alexander, BSN; Kera Gwebu, GSN; Lavonne Dixon, BSN; Sonia Bucknor, MSN; Ruth West, MSN; Mary Browne, BSN; Bridgette Prophitt, BSN; Jeane Cates, BSN; Michelle Camwright, RN; Lennox Marr, RN; Hvovi Patel, MD; Esther Powell; Current Nursing Staff; Selena Simons, MSN—Interim Director; Caryl Dormer, PhD; Kera Gwebu, GSN; Hvovi Patel, MD; Gwendolyn White, MSN.

*Current number of students in the nursing program: 75 registered; 34—Level I; 41—Level II; 3—BS Program.*

# MUSIC AT OAKWOOD

*Lucile C. Lacy and Eurydice V. Osterman*



The 1916-17 Oakwood College Brass Band

**I**N the early history of our nation, it was the songs of the slaves that sustained them through their hour of trial. From that day to the present, music has been the medium through which this experience has been passed on from generation to generation. "Music," says the 1919-20 *Oakwood Junior College Bulletin*, "is one of the most potent factors in gospel work. It is one of God's best gifts to man, and when consecrated to Him will prove of inestimable value to the Christian worker."<sup>1</sup> This statement expresses a conviction of importance to Oakwood from its very beginning.

The record shows that as early as 1902 music lessons in organ and voice (for \$0.25 each) were offered not only to help students learn to read music readily and acquire a taste for that which is elevating and substantial,<sup>2</sup> but to teach them to function in worship services as well. By 1906, lessons were listed in the *Bulletin* under the "Sacred Music Course," and an organ rental fee of \$0.25 per week was assessed.

In 1912, the Sacred Music Course was expanded to include piano,

organ, voice, and harmony. By 1920, choir, band, violin, and orchestra were added to the curriculum. Inflation brought about an increase in lessons and rental fees from \$0.25 to \$4.00 per term for piano rental and lessons, and \$2 for organ.

In 1934 the curriculum was again expanded to include theory, history, harmonic analysis, and form and analysis; then lessons in wind instruments (1936) and conducting (1938), as well as a bachelor's degree in music (1946), were offered. The curriculum basically remained the same until the early 1980s, when a Music Education course was added. Today, the Music Department offers three degrees in music: the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science (Music Education and Music Business), and Bachelor of Music.

In the early days, teachers at Oakwood wore many hats. Thus those who were talented in music became the music teachers. In 1919, F.L. Peterson became the first head of the Music Department, assisted by Jennie Stratton. In 1924, others who assisted with the Music Department were J. Wagner, C.W.

Salisbury, and C.E. Moseley. In 1930, Otis B. Edwards became head of the Music Department and taught piano, voice, conducting, and orchestra. In her Music Appreciation class, one of his colleagues stressed the evil of jazz, lauded the inspiring strains of the classics, honored the sentiments of the spirituals.<sup>3</sup> Other instructors were Joseph F. Dent (voice), Calvin E. Moseley (director of the choir), and Owen Troy (violin and director of the male chorus). Ruby Bontemps-Troy taught piano and theory, and directed the glee club. In 1946, Inez Booth (piano and organ), Eva B. Dykes (College Choir and Aeolians), Anne Galley (piano), Harvey Huggins (voice), and Samuel C. Jackson (College Choir) joined the music faculty.

From 1951-1968, Inez Booth headed the Music Department and taught piano and organ. She also taught pastoral musicianship. Serving under her were John Dennison (academy choir director), Eva Dykes (choral), Evelyn Jackson (piano), C.E. Moseley (male chorus), Allene Dumas Lee (voice), and Joni Robinson-Pierre-Louis (voice). From 1968-1970, Jon Robertson served

as chair of the department, piano teacher, and director of the group, *Ars Nova*. It was during this time that the words and music to the Oakwood school song, *To Thee, Our Dear Oakwood*, were written by Harold Anthony and Otis B. Edwards.

Harold Anthony briefly chaired the department from 1970-2. He taught

Osterman (College Choir, organ, piano, theory), and Marcus Thompson and Stanley Ware (voice).

From 1983 to 1987 John Dennison became head of the department; he taught voice and directed the Chamber Singers, and eventually the Aeolians. Serving under him were



*Oakwood's first orchestra (1917), directed by Frank L. Peterson and Jennie Stratton.*

theory courses, organ, piano, voice, and was the director of the College Choir and the Aeolians. Under his leadership

Shirley Beary (piano and history), Alma Blackmon (Aeolians, voice, piano, and theory), Lucile Lacy (music appreciation, music education), and Eurydice Osterman (College Choir, organ, piano, theory).

In 1987 Lucille Lacy became chair of the department, teaching music appreciation and music education courses. She was the first department chair who also served as Minister of Music for the campus church. Others in the department were Shirley Beary (piano and history), Ricky Little (voice and Aeolians), and Eurydice Osterman (piano, organ, theory, College Choir). In 1994 Eurydice Osterman became head of the depart-

ment, teaching theory courses and directing the Aeolians. Those serving under her leadership are Ginger Beazley (voice), Audley Chambers (history and piano), Beatrice Renee Collins-Williams (piano, orchestra), and Lucile Lacy (music education, music appreciation).

As enrollment increased, so did the need for adjunct faculty. One of the first people to serve in this capacity was Henry Bradford (1967), former chair of the Department of Music at Alabama A&M University. Those currently on the adjunct faculty are Michele Cleveland (College Choir and voice), Doris Hall (band and woodwinds), Peter Lott (brass), Katherine Nevins (voice), Marx Pales (strings), and Arthur Wesley (percussion).

Music plays a very prominent part in campus life at Oakwood. The first and last comment of many visitors and students is, "Oh how I enjoy the good singing at Oakwood."<sup>4</sup> These words are as current today as when they were first penned almost 60 years ago. The plethora of extracurricular quartets and other musical groups can be traced from the early days to the present. Some of these groups were:

1924-29: Jubilee Quartet; Nightingales; Male Chorus (C.E. Moseley, Director)

1930-39: The Quartet; A Capella Choir (J.F. Dent, Director); Male Quartet; Female Quartet; Academic Octet (J.F. Dent, Director); Vibratones (M. Murphy, Director); Alabama Singers (O. Troy, Director); Lyric Club (O. Troy, Director); Male Chorus (O. Troy, Director)



*The Male Chorus Reunion Concert, directed by C. E. Moseley, 1974.*

were Inez Booth (organ and piano), Lucile Lacy (music appreciation), and Stanley Ware (voice). From 1972 to 1983 Inez Booth once again led the department. Serving during this time were Harold Anthony (voice, piano, College Choir), Alma Blackmon (Aeolians, theory, voice, piano), Lucile Lacy (music appreciation, theory, piano), Eurydice



*The Oakwood Male Chorus, under the direction of C. E. Moseley (1951).*

1940-49: Summertones; The Aeolians (E.B. Dykes, Director); Alabama Singers (Male Chorus) (C.E. Moseley, Director); Echoes of Harmony

1950-59: Girls Chorus (E.B. Dykes, Director); Madregaleans/Academy Choir (J. Pierre-Louis, Director); The Cathedral Quartet; Vibratones; Chordsmen; Quadrachords

1960-69: Girls Chorus (G. Winston-Foster, Director); Evangeleers (J. Dennison, Director)

1970-79: Mellophonics; Capella Choral (C. Wilson, Director); Remnant (J. Wilson, Director); Way Back When (quartet, and, later, choir); Distinctive Friends of Jesus

1980-Present: Blessed Peace; Step Up to Happiness; Royal Sous of Sound; Alliance (later, Take 6); A Special Blend; Unity; Revelation 14; Dynamic Praise; Voices of Triumph

It is interesting to note the dominance of quartets and small groups up to the 1970s. After the emergence of Edwin Hawkins family gospel choir, student-led choirs ranging from 25 to 200 members have become the trend. However, in spite of all of the groups that have come and gone with time, there are

ensembles.

It was in 1946 that the Aeolians (a nucleus formed from the College Choir) was formed by Dr. Eva B. Dykes. Since 1978 each has become a separate choir, and these groups have become a tool for recruitment, touching many through their ministry throughout the United States, Canada, Bermuda, the Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, Romania, England, Scotland, and Wales.

Under the leadership of Dr. Dykes (1946-56); Mrs. Joni Robinson Pierre-Louis (1957-65); Mr. Harold Anthony (1965-68); Jon Robertson (1968-71, who named his group *Ars Nova*); Mr. Marcus Thompson; Mrs. Alma Blackmon (1973-85); Dr. Ricky Little (1988-93); and Dr. Eurydice Ostermann (since 1994), the Aeolians have given memorable performances at New York's Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Operation PUSH in Chicago, the World's Fair in 1964, 1982 and 1984; and at three sessions of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The Aeolians have performed before two United States Presidents, with

in New York City, under the direction Ricky Little.

Several audio records have been



*Angelique Clay, Aeolian soloist.*

produced through the years. The Aeolians have appeared on state and national television, performing on Alabama PBS, *Breath of Life* telecasts, ABC's *Good Morning America*, and CBS *Good Morning*.

Although Oakwood College is dedicated to academic excellence, the social and cultural areas of campus life have not been neglected. Lyceum programs were a part of campus activities not only to provide entertainment and social interaction, but to help cultivate and develop appreciation for good music.

According to the 1940 *Acorn*, noted artist Bohumir Kryl and his Symphony Orchestra appeared in concert on December 4, at 8:15 PM. Kryl, the famous virtuoso and conductor, had been called the most remarkable cornetist in the world, and had also been referred to as a

director without peer. During a period of thirty-six consecutive seasons, Kryl had presented over 12,500 concerts and appeared at more than 100 colleges and



*The Aeolians of 1994, under the direction of Ricky Little.*

only two that have remained constant throughout, the College Choir and the Aeolians, which are part of the music curriculum, and are the official school

the most recent performance having occurred in March of 1994 when they performed for President Clinton at the UNCF 50th Anniversary Board Dinner



universities annually. His performance at Oakwood was an outstanding event of the school.

During the 1945-46 school year, a Lyceum course was offered to further cultural development among the students. The course included a series of lectures, concerts, and pictures. The following artists appeared in the Lyceum course series: the Hallelujah Quartet; Margaret Montgomery, contralto; Louia Vaughn Johnes, violinist; Hazel Harrison, pianist; Harvey Huggins, baritone; and Elizabeth Mayle, soprano.



The Aeolians of 1976, directed by Alma Blackman.

Aeolians, a double octet of eight men and eight women, who gave concerts on

campus and at nearby college and churches. Handel's *Messiah* was an annual event attended by hundreds of townspeople and music lovers from around the state. Leading Aeolian soloists included Joni Mae Robinson (Pierre-Louis), Minneola Dabney (Dixon), Lois Bookhardt, and Russel Bates. At these programs a variety of music was used, including Negro spirituals, hymns, and work songs. Traditional favorites included "Italian Street Song" and "You'll Never Walk Alone."

During this era, two of the many outstanding quartets that shared the gift of music with the Oakwood community were the Echoes of Harmony (Milton Young, William DeShay, Russell Bates and Leland Mitchell), and The Summertones (Lyle Folette, Donald Blake, Julian Williams and Clarence Goldbourne).

According to the 1953 *Acorn*, the historic *Messiah* program, which began with a candlelight procession and

concluded with the majestic Hallelujah Chorus, was directed by Samuel C. Jackson, head of the Music Department. This was Mr. Jackson's fourth year of directing the *Messiah*. The sixty-voice choir drew talents of six students in solo roles. The female soloists were: Pearl Harvey, soprano; Ruby Smith, contralto, freshman music major from North Carolina; Hanna Clarke, junior music major from Portland, Oregon. The male soloists were Elbert Shepperd, William Scales, and James Edgecomb, all religion majors. Assisting the Columbia and New York University-trained director were pianists: Ernestine Owens, freshman; Edward Daniels, one of the college's many Latin-American students; Kathryn Wilson from Nashville, Tennessee; and Mrs. Inez Booth, organ, faculty member in the Music Department.

Before a packed auditorium of music lovers, the 75-voice Oakwood College Choir sang a major oratorio, *The Messiah*, for the first time under the direction of Mrs. Joni Mae Robinson Pierre-Louis on Sunday, December 18,



## LEON BATES

"...no is an elegant player with a keen ear for color and a keen for phrasing."  
— New York Times

including Negro spirituals, hymns, and work songs.

## Eastman Brass

"Elegant agility"  
New York Times



Barbara Butler, Trumpet  
Charles Geyer, Trumpet  
Verne Reynolds, Horn  
John Marcellus, Trombone  
Cherry Beauregard, Tuba

1955, in the College Auditorium. Dressed in maroon and white robes, the choir preceded the oratorio with the traditional Christmas time candlelight procession, entering a darkened auditorium with lighted tapers caroling *Adeste*

Fideles on their way to the auditorium stage.

The 1955 *Messiah* soloists were Dorothy Dorsett and Hannah Clarke, soprano, music majors; Vivian Steele, contralto; E. Wayne Shepperd, tenor; William C. Scales, baritone; and James Edgcomb, bass, religion majors.



the New York Harp Ensemble

Accompanists were Kathryn Wilson, piano; Lucille Herron and Mrs. Inez Booth, organ, music faculty.

On December 16, 1956, the traditional presentation of *The Messiah* by the 80-voice choir and six soloists directed by Mrs. Pierre-Louis highlighted the holiday season. Soloists were Willie Lothan, bass; Josephine Phillips, contralto; Ruby Smith, soprano, Alfred Boyce,

Rivers and Marcellus Breach were the pianists and Mrs. Booth was the organist for the majestic performance.

On February 18, 1956, Earl Calloway, tenor, a former Oakwood student, drew a large crowd from the Oakwood circle, as well as Huntsville and Birmingham communities, when he presented a concert during the Black History month.

On April 8, 1956, Mrs. Allynne Dumas Lee, internationally-famous concert artist and an Oakwood alum, swept the Oakwood audience with her vocal appeal as she sang dynamically in concert.

Oakwood was stirred and awed by Mrs. Lee's lovely voice. The audience was thrilled with her appealing dramatization of *Scandalize My Name* and *Old Woman*. The German selections were superb, and she concluded with an oriental bow that swept the floor.

Each year, the College Choir followed the tradition of presenting Handel's *Messiah*. In 1967 the choir, accompanied by the Huntsville Ensemble, under the director of Professor Harold Anthony, gave two renditions. Soprano soloists were Brenda Spraggins and Andrea Bradford; Raymond Humphrey, baritone; and Helvius Thompson, trumpet.

As usual the audience came from surrounding cities to hear the Oakwood Choir sing *The Messiah*. Each year the choir sang to a large, standing-room-only audience. This tradition grew until it was necessary to do two performances each year, which continued until the College changed from the semester to the quarter system. The Oakwood community, as well as the Huntsville and neighboring communities, looks forward to returning each year to hear *The Messiah*.

The 1975-76 Lyceum Series, under the leadership of Lucile Lacy,

commenced on October 12, 1975, with Herndon Sillman, organist, who performed on the Rodger Concert Touring Organ. Spillman, a native of Huntsville, and a frequent recitalist in France, made the first recording of the complete works of Maurice Durufle. On February 29, 1976, under the direction of Jon Robertson, the twenty-five members of the New England Sinfonia gave one of the most exciting performances on the concert scene that year.

The Aeolians presented a concert in Ashby Auditorium on March 28, 1976. (During the Spring of 1973 the choir had made a five-week tour of the west coast, and thereafter completed a twelve-week concert tour that took them to eleven major cities including Boston, New York, and Washington, DC, where they performed at the embassy of Sierra Leone. As a result, an invitation was extended to the Aeolians to tour several West African countries. The 1975-76 Lyceum season ended on April 11, 1975, with Frances Walker, pianist, who performed published and unpublished works by Black composers, both historic and contemporary.

Alma Blackmon served as the chair of the Lyceum Committee during the years 1973 to 1975. During this time some of the artists who visited the campus were: The New England Orchestra, directed by Jon Robertson; McHenry Boatwright, vocalist from the Ohio State University School of Music; The Brothers of Washington, DC; and Virgil



Harvi Griffin

baritone; Allen Reid, tenor; and David Green, tenor. Mrs. Anne Galley, Winifred



Leona Mitchell



# WE REMEMBER

## OAKWOOD, WHEN

*Alice Brantley, Jodie Stennis, and*  
**Morna Thompson**

▲ ▲ ▲

FOR many alumni and friends, the mention of the name Oakwood evokes fond memories of Friday night vespers, quartet singing, Ingathering, prayer bands, weeks of prayer, marches, and dormitory life. Students came from north, south, east and west, some from across the ocean, to begin their college journey at Oakwood. Preparing to attend Oakwood was exciting and challenging. Many former students' most vivid memories are of traveling far away from home to enroll in the small, private school in Huntsville they had chosen to attend.

Among the members of the college community are a number of people, presently in their 80s and 90s, who recall—and can thus help others to imagine—Oakwood's past. In this article, we will attempt to paint a portrait of Oakwood in "the good old days" by drawing on the experiences and nostalgic memories of: Lawrence Jacobs, former manager of the college farm; Thelma Kibble, for many years a teacher in the Seventh-day Adventist school system; Ruth Stafford, a staff nurse and professor of health education at the college; Calvin E. Moseley, former pastor of the college church and chair of Oakwood's Department of Theology, who also served for many years as field secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; Dreadsie J. Dixon, a former pastor in the Southwest Region, Central States and Ohio Conferences; Lillian Jones, a former church school teacher; and Alice Brantley, a former school teacher, principal and missionary.

### History

Prior to its purchase by the General

Conference, the Oakwood property had been a slave plantation. At the time of purchase there were several slave cabins still standing, we are told. Lawrence Jacobs is the source of the following information about this period:

My grandfather, John Thomas Moore, an ex-slave, was in charge of transporting goods to Huntsville, Alabama. When he passed through this property he could hear the cries of the slaves calling "Mercy, mercy!" In cold weather they did not have proper clothes and many times would have ice on their bodies.

In later years, as a free man, Thomas Moore purchased 160 acres of land, one acre of which he donated to the Alabama-Mississippi Conference for the construction of a school so that his grandchildren could receive a Christian education. (At that time there were forty or more such schools.) This school, called Moore's Chapel, became one of the locations for the evangelistic outreach of the college. Students as well as teachers became involved. One student who was called to teach at Moore's Chapel one year came to the Oakwood church on Sabbath bringing his "sheaves" (some ten persons) with him for baptism. The student was R.T. Hudson, who later became president of the Northeastern Conference.

### First Impressions

Lillian Jones, whose parents moved to Oakwood when she was two years old, spent her growing years on and near the college campus. She remembers many large oak trees on a campus which seemed to be infested with snakes rattlers, copperheads, moccasins, and chicken snakes. The chicken house had to be protected against the snakes, which

would otherwise eat the eggs. Frogs were in abundance.

1922: Thelma Kibble remembers primitive conditions. There was no electricity. Coal oil lamps were used for light. These were set on the porch twice per



*Thelma Kibble, 1928 Oakwood graduate and retired school teacher.*

week for filling. Since there was no indoor plumbing, there were no bathrooms. Water was drawn from the pump by using pitchers and pails.

1924: Ruth Stafford arrived in Huntsville via train, riding the "jim crow car." She rode from the station to the campus in a tin Lizzie (Model T Ford) sent by the college to pick her up. She remembers the slogan "Early to bed, early to rise"—and her consequent exit from bed every morning at 5:30. Everyone came to worship fully dressed,

she recalls. Some classes began at 7:00.

1924: Calvin Moseley remembers the poor condition of the road leading to Oakwood, describing it as rough and rutty (the common term for such thoroughfares was "washboard roads"). He saw no gate at the entrance:

We just came up the road and there was a little slant off the left that went on the campus grounds from the regular farm road that passed Oakwood College in those days.

1925: Dreadsie Dixon came to Oakwood from Chicago, also by "jim crow" train. He remembers the chapel, a two-story, cement block structure in which all classes were held. He remembers that everyone had to work, regardless of financial standing.

1932-34: Alice Brantley, who also remembers primitive conditions, was surprised to find that most of the students were in the academy (some in grade school) but were much older than those now attending college. There were few college students. Several students from such cities as New York, Chicago, and Washington, DC, were in attendance during those years and afterward.

### Campus Life

Once students became accustomed to their surroundings and settled in their rooms, they followed a strict schedule, says Ruth Stafford. From the 5:30 rising bell until the lights went out at 9:00 there were no wasted moments; time was well accounted for. Classes took place in the chapel, which also housed the auditorium where church was held. The Business Office and other administrative offices were in the same building. There were two stairways, one on each side of the entrance. One was for the women and the other for the men. Chapel seats were assigned. Separate seating was the order of the day.

### Work Program

After spending part of the day in classes, all students went to work. Two hours of free were expected of all. Students were paid for work above this minimum. The rate for student labor was \$0.10 to \$0.15 per hour, depending on the type of work and the commitment of the student. Since tuition was only \$25 per month, the pay scale was commensurate. Students found employment in various

locations, including the farm, the wood-working shop, the cafeteria, the laundry, the broom factory, the cannery, and campus offices. There was plenty for everyone to do.

### Social Life

This program was not an ordeal of all work and no play, however. Students had ample opportunity to participate in various social activities. Calvin Moseley remembers one activity that the students really enjoyed: the march.

We usually had marches . . . in the worship rooms. The chairs were all pushed to the walls of the worship room in Henderson Hall . . .

It was customary for the boys and girls to be on opposite sides of the room, so when the marches started the boys would go over and choose the girls they wanted to march with. Then they had what was called the Tag March. You'd choose your partner and march for about five or six minutes and then the one in charge would say, Tag! and that means that the young man had the liberty to go out and touch the other young man and march with the girl he wanted to march with, and that young man would have to sit down . . . We had a good time, and of course we got to march with many of the girls, and the girls came to know many boys.

Picnics were very popular. The students would leave the campus early in the morning and walk through the woods to the picnic grounds. Here they would play games, including baseball, races, and beanbag. When dinner time came, they would be ready to eat the food provided for them: sandwiches, potato salad, deviled eggs, and lemonade. The best part of the outing would be the hike to the top of the mountain. The dessert, homemade ice cream and cake, would be waiting when they returned to the picnic grounds. After a fun-filled but exhausting day, they would return to the campus.

### Religious Activities

No student who went to Oakwood in the early days could leave without feeling



D. J. Dixon, 1928 Oakwood graduate.

the impact of the vesper services on Friday nights. In preparation for these services, about two hours before sunset on Friday afternoon a bell would ring. This bell was a signal to quit work and begin to prepare for the Sabbath. Two more bells would ring, the last one fifteen



Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Jacobs.

minutes before sundown. By this time every student was either in her or his seat or on her or his way to the chapel. Let Ruth Stafford tell about it:

By the time it was sunset, we were all seated comfortably in the Chapel, ready for the services to begin. We [the women] had to wear uniforms on the weekends. The uniforms were what we call middy blouses [military-type blouses] and skirts and thin ties. Even though they were uniforms, it's surprising how innovative some of the young ladies

were in their appearance in these; all beautifully attired with the greatest of taste, you might say. A very beautiful sight as we think back over those days.

As the students gathered to welcome the Sabbath, there was a song service in which both sides of the congregation were involved, each side alternating in the choice of a favorite song. After opening prayer there might be special music or a skit. Usually there was a speaker; teachers often took turns in speaking. As one person says, "It was not a medium of entertainment for the student body, but it was a time for students to fellowship with one another and turn their focus from their studies to worshipping the Lord." To quote another student who gave his thoughts in the school

three or four miles from the campus. Later a tank-type pool was constructed behind Moran Hall for baptismal purposes. The pastor of the college usually performed these ceremonies.

### Buildings

Buildings on the Oakwood Campus during the '20s and early '30s were the cannery, the laundry, the print shop, the store, the saw mill, farm buildings (the barn and the dairy), Morning Star (a small school for the children of white teachers), Butler Hall, the chapel, Henderson Hall, Hilltop, Irwin Hall, the Normal Building, Oaklawn (the principal's home), Old Mansion, the orphanage, the sanitarium, and West Hall.

### Faculty and Staff

A partial list of faculty and staff members during the '20s and '30s would include: N.E. Ashby, A.N. Atteberry, Corrine Bass, Julia Baugh, Lottie Bell, J.I. Beardly, Arna Bontemps, Hilda Booker, S.A. Brantley, Maxine Brantley, I.J. Bryant, Espie Carter, Mrs. Bessie Carter, Ivan Counsel, Mrs. E.I. Cunningham, Alice Dent, Joseph Dent, Harry Dobbins, Jennie Dobbins, Bonnie Dobbins, Otis B. Edwards, Roberta Edwards, Mrs. Eggleston, Marian Gresham, Louis Johnson, Margaret Johnson, R.W. Jorgenson, A.W. Kimbrough, Anna Knight, Garland Millet, J.L. Moran, Mercedes Moran, C.E. Moseley, Mrs. Harriet Moseley, John Oss, E.L. Peterson, Bessie Peterson, Celestine Reid, Mrs. Millie Rowe, Charles Saulsbury, John Street, Mrs. Evelyn Street, L.F. Thiele, Alma Tibbs, O.A. Troy, Mrs. Ruby Troy, and J.A. Tucker.

### Conclusion

In comparing the good old days with the present, the old timers would not want to trade. They feel that today's students miss out on much that is worthwhile. No doubt contemporary students

value their experiences as well. In any case, the memories of those who attended Oakwood in earlier years help to illustrate the experience of the pioneers of African American higher education in the Adventist church, and to keep alive awareness of a past that continues to influence life at Oakwood today.



Lillian Jones, 1928 graduate (left) and Mrs. Harvey, 1930 graduate (right).

newspaper, "Vespers is indeed a sacred hour, a golden hour in which I, overwhelmed by the wonder of it all, sit and whisper to myself, Truly I sit in the kingly presence of God!"

Sabbath services followed what was then the customary Adventist format: Sabbath School, divine worship and MV (Missionary Volunteer Society), which followed dinner.

Baptisms were frequent, so the college baptismal site was important. In the early days the students walked to Indian Creek, a body of water some

# HUNTSVILLE—MY

## HOME TOWN *Frankie L. Mitchell Cantrell*



**M**Y earliest recollection of Huntsville is from about 1933 when I first went to town with my mother, Laura Moore Mitchell. To the country people of those days, Huntsville, the seat of Madison County, was a very important place.

Huntsville received its name from an early settler, John Hunt, who explored the area on foot and settled near the Big Spring, from which water flows today. I was born five miles west of Huntsville on Route 72 (Lee Highway) on the Mitchell family farm in a two-room house that was built by my dad, Frank Mitchell. The house, located on a small hill in the middle of the farm, had a well of sweet water in front near the highway, which refreshed many weary travelers. My great grandfather, Moses Sheppard, a freed slave, and his son-in-law, Alexander Mitchell, purchased the land soon after Alexander married Moses Sheppard's only child, Virginia, on November 17, 1887. Their house was some distance away on Old Monrovia Road.

We went to town on Saturdays. First we would go to Grandma's house. There, we would wait for a ride in her four-door Ford sedan. No one in the family could drive a car, so Johnson Adams, a skilled driver from nearby Beasley's farm, was hired to drive and maintain the car. Johnson would let the car roll backward out of the garage. Then he would insert the crank in an opening in the front of the car under the radiator and rotate it vigorously. When the engine of "Old Lizzie" sputtered to life, he had to rush to the driver's seat and operate something he pushed and pulled on the dashboard, along with a foot pedal on the floor, to keep the car running.

Mama and Dad had four daughters. Each had her turn to go to town with Mama during the summer months. What an exciting day that was! The "one horse town" of Huntsville was filled with farm

folk. Negroes and whites had come to town to buy, sell, socialize, swap gossip, and just to see and be seen. Negroes congregated on Holmes Street between Jefferson Street and just west of Church Street at the Princess Theatre. Whites gathered from Washington Street to the courthouse southward to what is now



Greene Street, eastward. Within the white area were two theatres, The Grand and the Elk. The Negroes area had only one theatre, the Princess.

Mama would leave me with Grandma while she went to deliver her "engagements" of fresh eggs, buttermilk, and butter. These sales and the washings she took in provided the only cash she would have until the end of harvest, in late November, when our cotton was sold.

Holmes Street would be crowded with Negroes who had come to town at the end of a long hard work-week. We would have to wind our way through the thick crowd. Every few steps we would meet and greet a friend, neighbor, or fellow church member, or stop in one of the stores to buy some needed item.

Fresh fish was purchased from Brocato's or Tumminello's, two Italian-run grocery stores catering to Negro customers.

More of the Negro businesses were located on a strip of Holmes Street between Jefferson and Church streets. Lee Lowery, father of Joseph Lowery, operated the pool hall. (Dr. Lowery is a Methodist minister and leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.) C.K. Binford owned and operated the Royal Funeral Home. Matthew Ross operated a barber shop; his beautiful daughter was Ninell. Willie Lee Mastin, Sr., operated Mastin Dry Cleaners, where we could get our hats blocked and buy, clandestinely, one of the "up North" Negro newspapers, The Pittsburgh Courier or the Chicago Defender; Mr. Mastin had a daughter named Gussie. A white man ran the Princess Theatre for the Negroes. He always had an attractive Negro lady in the booth to sell the tickets to the "picture show" (as the movies were called then). Negro businesses were on the left side of Holmes Street going east. This approximately one-block-long strip was known as "Black Main Street."

On the corner of Church and Holmes Streets was the famous Sweet Shop, owned and operated by Rubin Cabiness. This family-run business was a meeting place for country Negroes. Grandma would eat her lunch here. Her lunch consisted of fried fish, ice cream, and a beer; she would order a bologna sandwich, a bottle of Nehi orange soda, and some candy for me. The Sweet Shop was always crowded on Saturdays. Country folk could sit in the Sweet Shop all day without buying anything. No one would ask them to leave.

Going north on Church Street (from Holmes), before reaching the Negro churches, we saw other Negro businesses and the offices of Negro professionals. The Welch & Harris Funeral Home

(now Helms Memorial Funeral Home) was located along here. The operator/mortician of this facility was a woman. Blaine New, the only Negro medical doctor in town, had an office in the same building in which a Negro pharmacist, Wesley Donegan, operated a drug store. John L. Cashin, Sr., John and Herschel Cashin's father, was a dentist with a predominantly white clientele. Henry C. Fearn, a Negro dentist, was patronized mostly by the Negroes. Then there was Charles V. Henley, who was the first Negro to practice law in Huntsville.

After lunch, Grandma and I would inch our way back to Holmes Street to the Royal Funeral Home, the pre-arranged place for us to meet Mama. The waiting room of the Royal Funeral home had a plate glass window overlooking the street. We would find seats in the straight-backed chairs that lined the wall and watch the crowd go by. As a result of Mr. Binford's kindness, his business became a rest stop for weary Negro town goers.

There were few telephones in those days. Mr. Binford allowed free access to his office telephone. The Royal Funeral Home served as a communication center for Negroes in and around the Huntsville community. Phone messages from distant relatives would come to the Royal Funeral Home indicating that a relative was ill or had died. These messages would be conveyed by a messenger sent in a company car to find the person to whom the message was sent, a service the Negroes came to value greatly.

When Mama had finished delivering her "engagements," she would meet us at the Royal Funeral Home. She would retrieve me from Grandma and sacrifice the five cent admission fee that permitted a child to enjoy "the picture show" at the Princess Theatre. There I enjoyed seeing a Western movie, always the special for Saturdays.

I remember my first trip to the Longview Cotton Gin with Dad. The Longview gin was owned and operated by a group of independent Negro farmers (Negroes who lived on white-owned farms had to take their cotton to the white-owned gin). The day before the trip, we would have finished picking enough cotton to make up a bale. Dad would have trampled down the cotton to pack it tightly within the wagon's sideboards. Before sunrise, I would be dressed, breakfasted, and ready to climb to the top of the mule-drawn wagon bed. Dad would hitch the two mules to

the wagon and our trip would begin as they pulled the loaded wagon onto gravelled Old Monrovia Road. At the intersection with US 72, a paved road, we turned left. Dad kept half the wagon on the pavement and half on the shoulder, causing the wagon to tilt to the right. I had to hold tightly to the driver's seat to avoid sliding over the side of the wagon. When we passed Ed Kinnebrew's Country Store, we were half way to town. The country stores always smelled of fruit, leather, cloth, and hoop cheese; the smells stimulated the imagination of a little girl, creating a desire for things not ordinarily found at home. Other wagons like ours were ahead of us and behind us, also on their way to the cotton gin. There were not many cars on the road in those days. When we reached the city limits, US 72 (Lee Highway) became Holmes Street. We turned on Brown Street and into the entrance of the Longview Gin. That day, I saw how cotton was ginned and made into bales. My day was completed when Dad gave me a lollipop for being a good girl.

In 1938, I came to live in Huntsville with my uncle, Herman Mitchell, a retired soldier, and his wife Corrine. They had no children, and reared me as their own child, sending me to Oakwood College and giving me in marriage to my husband, Theodore W. Cantrell of Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

### *My School Years*

My early school years were spent at the Lincoln School. My first teacher was Frances Dillon, who began the school year after all the cotton had been picked. The children of farmers were needed to help pick cotton and gather in the corn. Many parents would not permit their children to go to school if the crops were still in the fields, though my parents did not keep their children out of school to help gather in the crops.

The next school year, Rosetta Powell became the Lincoln School teacher. She lived in town and would park her car at Lowe's Methodist Church and walk the rough, neglected dirt road to the school. Her husband was the only Negro mail carrier in town. He delivered mail to the Northwest homes with a horse and buggy.

The William Hooper Councill High School, commonly called Councill High School (CHS), was the only Negro high school within the city limits. It offered

grades 1 through 12. It was located in a Negro neighborhood called The Grove near the town's garbage dump. It was a two-story red brick building with blackened floors that were oil-soaked, supposedly to keep the dust down. In 1939 I entered grade 5B at CHS. Frances Swoope was my teacher.

I received my high school diploma on May 31, 1946, at 8:00 PM in the Councill High School Auditorium, along with twenty-six classmates. CHS teachers who motivated me to achieve at each successive grade level were: Frances Swoope, Annie Hendley, Helen Fearn, Susie B. Gandy, Edward Johnson, and J.H. Richards, all of whom are deceased; Annie Pearl Campbell, Adlai Harper, and Ethel Richards are alive at this writing. (These teachers are not listed in the order of the grades they taught.)

CHS offered only the college preparatory classes. There was no laboratory for the chemistry class. No commercial classes were taught, and there was neither a band nor a viable football or other competitive sports program. There was an active choir directed by Susie Gandy and Edward Johnson. This choir, of which I was privileged to be a member, competed with other schools in North Alabama.

I became a Senior Service Girl Scout in the troop led by Myrtle Turner, principal of the Winston Street Elementary School. A boys' troop was also in existence, at the time led by Dave Kelley.

In the spring of 1946, with the war behind us, veterans were returning home. Across the nation, colleges were filled to capacity. My Aunt Corrine had selected Wilberforce College in Ohio as the place she wanted me to attend. I had been into their program after graduation from CHS.

On Easter Sunday evening of the year I graduated from CHS, I was invited to the local Seventh-day Adventist church as a guest of Mrs. Johnnie Smith. The church was a clapboard shot-gun style building on Madison Street. Friendly Oakwood College students greeted us at the door, but on my way to an empty pew the floor gave way under me and one foot went through the floor. An embarrassed young senior ministerial student, Joseph Powell, pulled me out of the hole and a student sat beside me during the entire service that followed. I was not injured; but the teacher accompanying the students insisted that the students transport me home in their car. Their persistent follow-up resulted in my



attending all the evangelistic meetings scheduled and deciding to be baptized on the evening Charles Bradford preached.

Students participating in the meetings were Donald Crowder, Eugene Carter, and Margaret Daniels. Special music for the services was supplied by an Oakwood College quartet composed of Charles Graham, Lucius Daniels, Charles Dudley, and Lee Paschal.

Those who joined the church as a result of the series I attended received Bible studies from Bernard Cayton and his wife Juanita, both junior ministerial students. They appealed to me to consider attending Oakwood College. Through their influence, President Frank L. Peterson accepted my application on the condition that I stay on the campus and work all summer with Oneïda Taylor, the college librarian. From June 1946 until May 30, 1950, I studied at Oakwood College, a place with which my family had historical ties.

From early childhood, I had heard how my enslaved great grandfather, Moses Sheppard, had met and married my enslaved great grandmother, Louesa, and lived on the plantation where Oakwood College was later established. Moses was in his '30s when he was emancipated. After he married, he and his wife moved to a nearby farm. Their one daughter, Virginia, my grandmother, was born and grew up in the same area where her parents lived.

Years later, the plantation on which my great-grandparents had lived became the property of the institution that was to become Oakwood College. A neatly organized oval-shaped campus had been developed when I arrived in 1946. The main gate to the campus was reached by way of unpaved Oakwood Road. The campus entry-way ran by the homes of the president and the business manager. I remember the old stone library building where I spent many hours studying and working. East of the library was Butler Hall, dormitory for women attending the academy; across the campus was Moran Hall, housing administrative offices and classrooms; and Henderson Hall, residence hall for young men; Omega House, for adult men. Married couples' residences were in Trailorville and off campus in Tin City. Teachers' homes were built across Oakwood Road from the oval campus. Some teachers lived in Old Mansion, East Hall, and other buildings west of the campus.

Students communicated with their

families and friends off campus by mail. There were not many cars on or around the campus, so there were no parking problems and no campus police issuing tickets for parking violations. There was only one telephone on the campus and it was in the administrative offices. The country was recovering from the war and the small campus was crowded. Four young people were usually assigned to each room.

Individually, students were growing

each of its students to give unselfish service to the world. The concern Oakwood sought to develop in its students moved many of its graduates to satisfy the need for teachers, scientists, clergypersons, and business professionals in many countries around the world. Along with many other graduates, I have given many years of service overseas. I spent eighteen years in medical and educational work in East and West Africa. The years spent at Oakwood developed my mind,

trained my hands, and filled my heart with a love for all humankind.

This is how I remember my early years in Huntsville.



*Country Houses*



spiritually, socially and intellectually. Oakwood College was growing, too, virtually bursting at the seams with students; the symbiotic relationship between the institution and its students was commendable.

In a real sense, students came to Oakwood seeking an educational experience that was broader in its scope and higher in its aims than those offered by most colleges. Oakwood sought to promote the harmonious development of the physical, mental, and spiritual potential of each student. It sought to prepare

# ONE HUNDRED BRIEF FACTS ABOUT OAKWOOD COLLEGE

*Minneola Dixon*

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**D**ID you know that . . .

1. Oakwood College, an offspring of *The Morning Star* steamboat school operated by Seventh-day Adventists in Vicksburg, Mississippi, opened with sixteen students. Its first principal was Solon M. Jacobs, from Iowa, and the initial faculty members were Hattie M. Andre, A.F. Hughes, H.S. Shaw, and Mrs. Solon M. Jacobs.

2. Oakwood College was carved out of a former slave plantation, where the founders (General Conference President O.A. Olsen, General Conference Treasurer H.A. Lindsey, and Southern Division Superintendent G.A. Irwin) were so impressed by a grove of sixty-five towering, majestic oak trees that they named the new school "Oakwood."

3. In 1895, even before the school was opened, the founders reported that they had chosen the farm because of the impression they received when they entered the gate of the property. Another member of the team of educators, G.C. Tenney of the Southern Junior College, exclaimed: "I do not know why it should be so, but it is so, that a holy, quiet, subduing influence comes upon me the moment I enter Oakwood's ground."

4. One of the college site's claims to fame in the nineteenth century was that President Andrew Jackson had once stretched his legs in the Old Mansion.

5. After opening the school on November 16, 1896, Principal Jacobs worked with the students in continuing the clearing up of debris and preparing the land for farming. One year later, the campus began to take on a distinctive appearance with the destruction of the old slave buildings, gruesome reminders of past injustice.

6. Oakwood's history is divided into four periods: the embryonic years between 1896 and 1904; the formative years between 1904 and 1917; the sprouting years between 1917 and 1943; and the expansive years after 1945. For the first twenty years, Oakwood operated as a twelve-grade school (1896-1916). For twenty-six years, it operated as junior college (1917-1943); it has been a senior college since 1943.

7. The Oakwood School was ably administered by seven caucasian principals who brought leadership and stability to the young school in its early stages. The principals and the years in which they served are listed on page \_\_\_\_\_.

8. 1917 marked the ending of the twelve-grade school and the beginning of

the junior college. James I. Beardsley became the school's first president.

9. The first school bulletin, dated 1896, states: "The desire of the administration and faculty is to establish and maintain a wholesome spiritual environment."

10. Making friends in the community has been the Oakwood College benchmark since 1896, when Principal Jacobs, then hated by the neighboring farmers, voluntarily took Oakwood students to their farms and provided services that saved their dying lands during a very bad harvest season. Jacobs' acts of kindness began a hundred-year pattern of Oakwood College hospitality—a pattern of hospitality marked by friendliness, warmth, and hospitality which gives concrete expression to the college slogan: Oakwood College, a place where love-liness keeps house.

11. According to reports in the early years from some students who had come from Vicksburg, the diet at the college was rather spartan: cornbread, pumpkin, and beans cooked in water without seasoning. In 1897, the eight young men and eight young women were enjoying only one copy of the reading textbook to go around among them all.

12. West Hall was the first new building to be erected for the young school. It was a small, two-story frame building; male students lived on the second floor and classes were taught on the first floor. There was no steam heat, no electricity, and no running water; simple furnishings were provided. Despite the inconvenience, students and faculty rejoiced in the new building.

13. During the early years of Oakwood's existence, white teachers and school managers often faced threats from misinformed and misguided Southern white people in their attempt to provide educational opportunities to blacks in this school. Jacobs and others were constantly explaining to Huntsville officials and Oakwood's neighbors that their purpose in educating black students was first to teach the men how to make money honestly and then how to save it, and to teach the women to be useful and supportive. Principal Jacobs's kindness, fearlessness, and persistence in training the early Oakwood students resulted in praise and appreciation from community members.

14. The first sixteen students were: Frank Brice, George Graham, Ella Grimes, Robert Hancock, Etta Littlejohn, Mary McBee, Nanie McNeal, Charles Morford, Mary Morford, Thomas Murphy, Lela Peck, Daily Pollard, Harry Pollard, Grant Royston, Samuel J. Thompson and Frances

Worthington. Many of these students completed their courses and began serving their church, their schools, and their communities.

15. One of the first sixteen students, Etta Littlejohn Bradford, was first taught on *The Morning Star* steamboat school in Vicksburg, Mississippi. As a nursing graduate of the Oakwood School she continued her training at New England Sanitarium in Massachusetts, where she had the unique distinction of providing nursing care to Ellen G. White.

16. Etta Littlejohn later married Robert Bradford, an Oakwood student, and became the mother of Charles E. Bradford, himself an Oakwood graduate, who became a well known Adventist leader and the first black person to serve as president of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

17. In 1904, the nation's first black Seventh-day Adventist physician, Lottie C. Blake, joined the teaching staff and provided professional assistance in developing the Nursing Department of the Oakwood Industrial School. Blake practiced in Nashville and Birmingham, commuting to the Oakwood School in Huntsville, and gave invaluable service to Oakwood's caucasian pioneers.

Christian education meets the student where she or he is and moves her or him where she or he should be. This is what Oakwood's early instructors did. They built on whatever knowledge their students arrived with—knowledge of farming, industrial skill, or gardening technique. When the teachers mixed their industrial training with some academics, the results were astonishing.

18. Ellen G. White once said of Oakwood, "Never, never part with an acre of this land. It is to educate hundreds. If those who come here as teachers will do their part, if they will take up the work in God's name, sending their petitions to heaven for light and grace and strength, success will attend their efforts."

19. In 1904, two black Seventh-day Adventists were added to the previously all-white college board. They were Louis C. Sheafe and William Brandon.

20. After visiting Oakwood in 1904, General Conference President A. G. Daniells wrote that it must be put in a higher plane with better facilities, or discontinued. This was stimulus enough, and beginning that year new faculty homes were erected. This was the beginning of notable improvement.

21. In 1905 the physical plant was worth

\$15,437—more than double the original price.

22. Church officials resolved to maintain a sound health program, and when they presented plans to the General Conference, an appropriation was granted for a small two-story sanitarium building which was completed in 1909. By 1908, Chapel Hall had been replaced by a three-story frame building, Butler Hall, which was used exclusively as a boys' home for nineteen years.

23. The main school building—Study Hall—burned to the ground on October 12, 1906. The fire started in the basement and had plenty of fuel to work on, since there had been forty tons of coal in that area. The building was destroyed; the broom-making machinery, carpenter tools, and carpet-loom were also consumed in the flames.

24. A student, Alfred Willingham, lost his life in the fire which destroyed the College's main building.

25. In 1907, the bulletin announced that a sacred music course was to be offered at the school. By 1908, the women were wearing uniforms at \$1 per uniform, with boys to be uniformed the coming year at \$8 per uniform.

26. In the early days of Oakwood's existence, students came to Oakwood from the former slave plantation, the farms, the mountains, and the valleys of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Florida and Tennessee. To these students, Oakwood was a home away from home—to many, their only home. As early as 1909, students came to Oakwood from nearly every state in the South; some arrived from the North as well.

27. Even in this early period, several students came from the West Indies, South America, Haiti, Jamaica, and Panama. One wonders what activities were used in this international student environment to bring balance and enjoyment for all students. . . .

28. Since the printing of James Edson White's *Gospel Primer*, a beginning textbook issued in 1895 to help older blacks to read and write for the first time, the printing enterprise has interested black people. In 1910, the revised *Gospel Herald* became the official periodical of the Negro Department and was printed at the Oakwood School by Oakwood students.

29. Between 1907 and 1917, General Conference President G.A. Irwin visited Oakwood frequently, spending from one to three weeks at a time on the campus.

30. In 1914 F.W. Clark, a contractor and Negro member of the faculty, directed the entire work of completing a women's dormitory (Henderson Hall) which remained a home for women students for twelve years.

31. In 1917, it was Principal Boyd who proposed to the North American Division Conference that \$100,000 be raised to convert Oakwood into a fourteen-grade school (while permitting the school to continue charging no tuition), support the teachers, and expand the campus. After his urgent appeal and on the basis of his positive report regarding the state of the campus, the entire

Conference Council took a tour of the school grounds, while the school band played on the steps of Henderson Hall. In 1917, it was voted that \$60,000 be appropriated for campus improvements and that \$10,000 would be raised by the colored churches. It was voted to offer fourteen grades at Oakwood and change the institution's name from Oakwood Manual Training School to Oakwood Junior College.

32. In 1917, the school welcomed its first president—James I. Beardsley—a college-degreed caucasian from Iowa, who led the school until 1922. Subsequently he invited Frank L. Peterson to become the first full-time black teacher in 1917; in 1945, Peterson became president himself.

33. Oakwood's early leaders believed sincerely that the Oakwood School was the most important in the world and they emphasized the urgency of preparing black students to work for members of their own race. There was a growing sentiment in the South against the teaching of black people by white teachers, so it was imperative that the Oakwood School prepare black students to teach their own people.

34. There were three major fields of academic study at the Oakwood Manual Training School: teacher education, nursing education, and religious education.

35. In 1920, some of Oakwood's personnel were: F. L. Peterson, Dean of Men and specialist in music and English; W.L. Bird, head of the Bible department, the library, and printing; E.I. Cunningham, Dean of Women (also in charge of other activities); Jeff Stevens, at the mill, sawing logs into lumber and, in some secluded spot, manufacturing the most delicious sorghum ever tasted; Mrs. Olmstead, the nurse; Ethel Field Allen, in the training school along with Frances Baugh Pearson (both single at the time); Mrs. Cook at the orphanage; the W.L. Lewis family; K.F. Ambs, business manager; and Roy Jorgenson, in charge of the science department.

36. In 1920, Roy Jorgenson introduced the first radio on the campus. He was liberal enough to allow those interested to put on earphones and listen to this wonderful apparatus.

37. In 1932, the school elatedly welcomed its first black president J.L. Moran, who was elected to satisfy the demands of the black students who had gone on strike. The historic student strike took place in 1931, and was strategically timed to occur when the college board's on-campus annual meeting was taking place.

38. During the 1932-33 school year, Oakwood published the first issue of its campus newspaper, *The Acorn*—a name given it by one Fred B. Slater, a student who later became a minister. *The Acorn's* first editor was Alice Blake Brantley, who received high marks for the paper she and her fellow students produced. She lives near the campus now, and is still very active in journalistic writing.

39. In 1938, the first Youth Congress for

the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists was held at Oakwood College. The first Temperance Rally was held, and W.W. Fordham won the Oratorical Society Contest.

40. The college colors—blue and gold—were recommended by the students in the Junior Class of 1932, and were chosen by vote of the student body.

41. In the '30s, Oakwood's enrollment passed 100. The Northern states outnumbered the Southern states three to one. The first ministerial seminar (Forum, as it is called today) was led by student R.T. Hudson.

42. In the '30s, students from Oakwood went to Alabama A&M University to hear Booker T. Washington, the renowned black educator and founder of Tuskegee Institute.

43. In the '30s, the Rock Island Railway Company gave Oakwood students special fares of \$10.75 to Washington, DC. Also in the '30s the new college bus took the Alabama Singers across the country on a concert tour from Moran Hall.

44. In the '40s, under President Peterson's leadership, Oakwood offered more industrial education courses for credit than at any other time in the history of the college.

45. In 1943, Oakwood became a senior college. In 1945 the first baccalaureate degrees were conferred by J.L. Moran, the first Negro president of the college and former principal of the New York Harlem Academy.

46. The school's first yearbook was published in 1946.

47. In 1946, Dr. Eva B. Dykes organized the first Aeolian choir.

48. The college celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1946.

49. In the '40s, students were reminded of the world which had just emerged from World War II, for which America spent 300 billion dollars and lost 325,000 of the flower of her youth, and in which a million veterans were left crippled for life. When the enrollment of large numbers of World War II veterans necessitated an accelerated building program, college leaders discovered by examining the school's forest resources that hundreds of thousands of board feet of lumber were in their possession, sufficient for the construction of ten barracks-type buildings with a scarcely observable decrease in timber acreage.

50. Timber utilization and reforestation made it possible to offer a small forestry education program in 1947.

51. In 1951, the college board appointed an Accreditation Committee which met regularly and worked diligently toward qualifying the school for recognition and approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Two of Oakwood's presidents, F.L. Peterson and G.J. Millet, with their administrative officers and staff members, worked unrelentingly for the attainment of this goal.

52. In 1956, the College celebrated its sixtieth anniversary.

53. In 1958, Oakwood was accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

54. In 1961, Oakwood was elected to membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

55. In 1964 Oakwood became a member of the United Negro College Fund.

56. In 1971, Oakwood's accreditation was reaffirmed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

57. As of 1974, 1,035 students from 37 states and 21 foreign countries enrolled. On October 2 of that year, Corliss Claibon was recognized as the one thousandth student.

58. In 1974, Oakwood's Teacher Education Program was accredited by the State Board of Education and by NAS-IDTEC.

59. In 1975, Oakwood awarded its first Associate Degree in Nursing.

60. Oakwood celebrated its eightieth anniversary in 1976.

61. In 1977, the Oakwood College Church was completed and dedicated under the pastoral leadership of Eric C. Ward.

62. In 1978, Oakwood's radio station, WOCG-FM, went on the air for the first time.

63. Three athletic fields were constructed at Oakwood in 1980-1.

64. In 1981, Oakwood's accreditation was reaffirmed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

65. In 1982, Oakwood's teacher training program was accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

66. The Social Work Department, which was granted accreditation candidacy status in 1986-7, moved into its second phase toward full accreditation.

67. On August 13, 1987, East Hall, the historic sanitarium building, was added to Alabama's official register of Landmarks and Heritage.

68. In 1987, the English Communications Department became a part of the BCTN (Black Colleges Telecommunications Network), which provides a broad range of educational, cultural, and informative programs through live or videotaped presentations.

69. A new academic senate began operation for the first time in the history of the college during the 1987-8 school year.

70. Oakwood College accepted a proposal from the Marriott Corporation to operate the Oakwood College Cafeteria in 1988.

71. In 1988, Oakwood received a \$400,000 grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

72. In 1988, a group of enthusiastic lay people led by Adell Warren, former Business Manager of Oakwood College, organized the Committee of 100, Inc. for Oakwood College.

73. Oakwood launched a comprehensive College Master Plan entitled

"Countdown Centennial . . . 1996" in 1988.

74. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools received a request from Oakwood in 1988 for permission to offer credit courses at Bethel Adventist College in Butterworth, Transkei, South Africa, toward the Bachelor of Arts in Ministerial Theology and the Bachelor of Arts in Religion.

75. In 1989, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Oakwood College Chemistry Departments entered into an agreement to exchange professors. Dr. E.A. Cooper taught a course for Dr. Arthur Ellis in Madison, and Ellis taught a course for Cooper at Oakwood College.

76. In 1989, the college was threatened by a devastating tornado which touched down in Huntsville during rush hour, about 4:37 PM. Oakwood suffered no damage.

77. Alabama Secretary of State Perry A. Hand was guest speaker at a special assembly of Oakwood Academy upperclass students on Wednesday, October 18, 1989, in Moran Hall.

78. An estate valued at \$76,900 was bequeathed to Oakwood College by a friend of the school in 1989.

79. In 1990, the Seventh-day Adventist Church's prestigious Daniel and the Revelation Committee met on the campus of Oakwood College.

80. In 1990, Miss America, Debbye Turner, was the featured speaker at Oakwood College's Black History Banquet.

81. Also in 1990, actress Dawnn Lewis (of the then top-rated NBC TV program *A Different World*) was one of the featured speakers at the 1990 UNCF banquet held at the Von Braun Civic Center.

82. In 1990, the Adventist Association of Collegiate Admissions Officers and Registrars (AACAOR), which includes recruitment, marketing, institutional research and Board of Higher Education personnel, held its annual conference at Oakwood.

83. The Committee of 100 for Oakwood College reached its first \$50,000 in assets during 1990.

84. At midnight, April 3, 1990, fire destroyed one wing of the Anna Knight Building which housed several of Oakwood Academy's elementary classrooms.

85. World-renowned lyric-spinto soprano Leona Mitchell was presented in concert by Oakwood's Arts & Lectures Committee during the 1990-91 school year.

86. In 1991, the offices of Grants Management and Trust Services were established to aid in strengthening the financial status of the college.

87. As part of a \$2 million donation to the United Negro College Fund from the Newhouse Foundation, Oakwood College received \$300,000 through *The Huntsville Times* for scholarships for deserving students.

88. On the weekend of January 10-13,

1991, Oakwood College conducted its first Major Donor Weekend Initiative under the leadership of Winton Forde, Director of Trust Services.

89. In 1992, the Aeolians appeared in concert at the Alabama Music Hall of Fame, and were invited to return in 1993.

90. President Reaves and the Aeolians appeared on ABC TV's *Good Morning America* in 1992.

91. Former United States Representative Bill Gray gave the keynote address at the annual UNCF banquet.

92. The graduating class of 1992 numbered almost 200; the speaker for its commencement service was J. Richard Munro, CEO of Time Warner, Inc.

93. In 1992, fall enrollment topped 1,350 students.

94. In 1992, the president of Paine Webber, Inc., spoke at Oakwood's Academic Convocation.

95. Bradford College in Massachusetts and Oakwood College participated in a faculty exchange program during 1992.

96. Beginning with the first semester of the 1992-93 school year, a dual degree program leading to a BS/BA degree in physical science or mathematics from Oakwood College and a BS degree in a branch of engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, became available to qualified students.

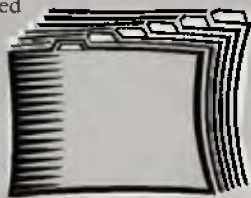
97. In June of 1992, Oakwood's Office of Grants and Contracts secured a \$20,000 contract with the US Army Missile Command to investigate nonlinear optical properties of colloidal suspension.

98. Oakwood's 1994 commencement services were held at the Von Braun Civic Center in downtown Huntsville.

99. As a result of a feasibility study of various academic systems, the Academic Division instituted the semester system at Oakwood College beginning in the fall of 1995.

100. Among those students who have attended Oakwood over the years, the scene of notable alumni presents an array of leaders *within* the Adventist Church which like Abraham's seed is proverbially as numberless as the stars of heaven.

<sup>1</sup>Review and Herald Feb. 18, 1904.



# A MAN NAMED SAM

*Thomas Frazier and Tom Carney*



STROLL across the green lawns of Oakwood College and you will see faces all around you, eager for an education. But if you could travel back in time 175 years, you would see the face of another man on these same grounds, slaving in a cotton field, a man who was destined to change the history of America.

Today, books are being rewritten to include this famous man as a part of Huntsville's history. His name was Sam. No middle name. No last name. Just plain Sam. For any traveller passing by the cotton fields on the outskirts of Huntsville, there was nothing to distinguish him from countless other slaves.

He was simply another faceless slave, bent over in the hot sun picking cotton, a piece of human chattel worth about \$500 on the open market. But if the traveler had paused in his saddle long enough to take a good look at this particular slave, he would have seen the face of a man destined to become one of the most controversial people in our country's history.

Sam, this faceless slave, would ultimately embroil our nation in a legal battle that would accelerate us into our most terrible war. Hundreds of thousands of people would be killed, brother would fight brother, and our country would forever be changed because, in part, a black man who was a slave in Huntsville wanted to be free.<sup>1</sup>

Although historians cannot agree on Sam's exact year of birth, most agree that it was probably around 1795. He was born in Southampton County, Virginia, on a plantation near Edom owned by a planter named Peter Blow.<sup>2</sup> Peter Blow owned two plantations, one near town

and the other, a large spread of 860 acres, about 20 miles away near a community called Sweet Gum.<sup>3</sup>

As was common in the days of slavery, Sam was raised on the same plantation where his master lived. This was not an act of kindness; it was pure economics. Small slaves grew up to become adult slaves, and adult slaves were worth a lot

sent to Blow's other plantation. This farm was a typical cotton plantation, which meant that everyone had to work in the fields. Though children of Sam's age were too young for much physical labor, they were nonetheless valuable because they could perform many chores.<sup>5</sup>

Southampton County had been the site of several small slave uprisings, and

Sam undoubtedly heard stories of them as he labored in the fields. Many of his fellow workers were from Africa, and their stories of a long-lost freedom would have inspired many young slaves. Ironically, on a nearby plantation just seven miles from where Sam labored, another slave also grew up listening to the same stories. This slave, Nat Turner, would also end up in the history books.<sup>6</sup>

Peter Blow's father had been moderately successful as a cotton grower and plantation owner. Unfortunately, by the time Peter inherited his land, the already poor soil had been depleted by years of continuous cotton growing. In 1814, 1815, and 1816, Peter had to borrow money to keep the plantations going. Not only was the soil practically useless by now, the price of Virginia cotton had plummeted to an all-time low.<sup>7</sup> To compound

the problems, Peter had acquired a habit of excessive drinking. Normally a well-spoken, quiet man, he became abusive when drunk. Unable to see his own faults as a poor businessman, he blamed his financial reversals on those around



*Dred Scott*

of money. Infant mortality among slave children was high, so Blow, like most other planters of the day, kept the infants near the big house so he could constantly monitor their health.<sup>4</sup>

At the age of eight or nine, Sam was

him, including his slaves.<sup>8</sup>

By 1818, Blow's creditors were demanding payment. He reasoned that the best thing to do was to go somewhere else and start over again. He had been hearing reports of new land available in Alabama. This land was supposed to be reasonably cheap and fertile for growing cotton.

With a decision made, Blow began to sell off his Virginia holdings. Along with the land he sold many of his slaves. Most of the money went to pay off creditors. He had no feelings for Sam the slave, and made arrangements to sell him also.<sup>9</sup> When Sam's mother, Hannah, heard of the impending sale she implored Blow to change his mind. Hannah was Blow's house servant and had been given to him by his father. Blow reversed his decision to sell Sam, most likely because he realized he would need field hands when he got to Alabama.<sup>10</sup>

Books about Huntsville's early history are full of descriptions of new settlers migrating to Madison County. In one probably typical account, a writer tells of a family moving from Virginia with the husband walking in front of an ox-pulled cart heavily laden with all sorts of household goods. Following the cart came the slaves, herding all types of fowl, milk cows, goats and other farm yard beasts.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the Blows' caravan looked something like this one.

On October 5, 1819, Peter Blow purchased a quarter section of land from the United States Land Office for his new plantation in Alabama.<sup>12</sup> Immediately, so as to be ready for the next planting season, he started Sam and the other slaves clearing the land and erecting crude shelters in preparation for the oncoming winter.<sup>13</sup>

Ironically, this quarter-section of land is now the home of Oakwood College. When Oakwood was founded, some of the students were housed in old log cabins that were originally slave quarters. Tradition has it that these cabins were some of the earliest buildings erected on the grounds. If so, it is quite likely that some of the college's students were

housed in buildings that Sam helped to build.<sup>14</sup>

Though now in a new location, Peter Blow's fortunes and disposition had not improved. He had not calculated how much time and money it would take to start a new plantation. His disposition was probably not helped any by Sam. The slight-built slave had become careless in dress, had a swaggering walk and a tendency to gamble—habits unlikely to endear a black slave to a white master.<sup>15</sup>

Whether it was the alcohol Blow was consuming in prodigious quantities or Sam's troublesome behavior that caused Blow to begin to whip him, no one knows. In an interview with *The St. Louis Dispatch* many years later, Peter Blow's son, Taylor Blow, indicated that



*A slave cabin at Oakwood College, 1896.*

one of his earliest memories was being forced to watch while his father whipped Sam.<sup>16</sup>

During this time Sam met and began courting a young woman who was a slave on a nearby plantation. They were soon married.<sup>17</sup> No records of this marriage are extant. Nothing indicates what her name was or whether their union produced children. Most slave families were close and there is no reason to believe that Sam's was any different. When one of his younger brothers died, Sam began using his name for some reason, perhaps affection. Now instead of Sam, he insisted on being called Dred.<sup>18</sup> (It is quite possible that the original Dred is buried in an unmarked grave somewhere on the grounds of Oakwood

College.)

By 1821, Peter Blow finally realized he was not cut out for the life of a cotton grower. A few miles west of Huntsville, in Florence, fortunes were being made. The new town had attracted investors such as Andrew Jackson, James Madison, John Brahan, and LeRoy Pope. The more Blow heard about the new settlement, the more he became determined to move there.

Short of cash, as usual, Blow borrowed \$2,000 from John Jones of Huntsville pending the sale of his property. As security, he put up his land and slaves. Fortunately for Blow, a buyer by the name of James Camps purchased the land for \$5,000, enabling Blow to repay the loan.<sup>19</sup>

While Blow was preparing to move, Sam, now known as Dred, was caught in a moral dilemma similar to others that had faced his people since the beginning of slavery: Should he obey the law of the land, move with his master, and leave his wife, or . . . ? There was no other choice. Some historians have claimed that Dred tried to run away during his sojourn in Huntsville, but no proof that he did so has ever been offered. In the end, he moved to Florence with his master, Peter Blow, while his wife remained in Huntsville. They would never see one another again.<sup>20</sup>

At first, prosperity smiled on Blow. He gave up the idea of being a cotton planter and opened a hotel bearing his name in Florence. The Peter Blow Inn was evidently a leased building, since there is no record of purchase. Judge William Basil Wood, Lauderdale County's first historian, recalled Dred's presence in Florence.<sup>21</sup> In his 1876 memoirs, Judge Wood identified the inn as one of Florence's early hotels and wrote that Dred served in this establishment as the hosteller, or keeper of the horses for the guests.

Taylor Blow felt deep affection for the slave now known as Dred. Though much of this affection probably stemmed from

the natural relationship that occurs when two people grow up together, one must wonder how much of it was caused by their mutual dislike for the elder Blow's drinking and abuse.<sup>22</sup>

For the first time, it appeared that Peter Blow was going to be a success. His inn had become a popular gathering place for travelers, and by 1827 he had grown prosperous enough to buy two lots in downtown Florence. The first was purchased February 28, 1827, from the trustees of the Cypress Land Co. Less than a month later he bought the adjoining lot from Patrick Andrews. Today a parking garage and a church occupy the lots.<sup>23</sup>

Like other boom towns, Florence began temporarily to decline after its first spurt of prosperity. By 1829, Blow had decided again to seek his fortunes elsewhere. This time, his sights were set on St. Louis, Missouri, the great gateway to the west.

At 53, he no longer had the grandiose visions he had had as a young man. Now he was satisfied to become the proprietor of a men's boarding house called the Jefferson Hotel. He still owned slaves, including Dred, and employed them in his new business.<sup>24</sup> Within two years he had run up large debts and was forced to close the hotel. Though the town was full of single men looking for sleeping accommodations, he was just not a business person.

Suddenly, on June 23, 1832, Peter Blow took sick and died.<sup>25</sup> When his creditors heard of his death they all demanded payment from his estate. Dred, probably the most valuable property Blow had owned at the time of his death, was seized and sold to satisfy the creditors' claims.<sup>26</sup> He was purchased for \$500 by a Dr. John Emerson, who was about to enter the military.

Over the next decade, Dred traveled with Emerson as his body servant to numerous outposts throughout the west. At once such post, after observing Dred's small build (he was only 4 feet 11 inches tall), soldiers began jokingly to compare him with General Winfield Scott, a veritable giant of a man who stood well over six feet. The nickname stuck and Sam, the slave who had changed his name to Dred while living in Huntsville, became known as Dred Scott.<sup>27</sup>

In 1846, Dred Scott filed a petition in the Missouri court at St. Louis. In his suit, he maintained that because he had lived in states and territories where slavery was illegal, he was no longer a slave.

This case would drag on in court for almost ten years.

In the so-called Dred Scott decision, the Supreme Court ruled against Dred—thus inadvertently inflaming the already hostile relationship between the North and the South. Most historians agree that this decision helped to put the two regions on the collision course that led to the Civil War.

Within several months of the court's decision, Dred Scott was purchased by Taylor Blow and awarded his freedom. During Scott's 10-year court struggle, Taylor had been one of his biggest financial and moral supporters. Among the story's numerous ironies is that Taylor, though he supported Scott, did not believe in abolition; during the Civil War he was a staunch advocate of the Confederate cause. Perhaps the ultimate irony is the that while Dred labored in the cotton fields, a young man by the name of LeRoy Pope Walker also lived in Huntsville. Years later, he would become Secretary of War for the Confederate States of America.

Dred Scott died on May 4, 1858, in St. Louis.<sup>28</sup> On the preceding day, in a town 120 miles away, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas resumed their arguments regarding the Dred Scott decision in the fourth of their historic debates. Lincoln's argument in this debate was a major factor contributing to his election two years later as president of the United States.

Inadvertently, the slave once known as Sam had a dramatic impact on the history of the United States. And through him, Oakwood College is linked with one of the momentous events in the American past.

<sup>1</sup>The fact that Dred Scott lived in Madison County is well documented. Among the many references are the *Dictionary of American Negro History*, *Dictionary of American Negro Biographies*, and Fehrenbacher, *The Dred Scott Case*.

<sup>2</sup>*History of Southampton, Virginia*. Also Southampton Co. Land Records.

<sup>3</sup>Land Records of Southampton Co., Virginia.

<sup>4</sup>John A. Bryan, *The Blow Family and Their Slave Dred Scott* (Missouri Historical Society).

<sup>5</sup>Walter Erlich, *History of the Dred Scott Case*.

<sup>6</sup>Kenneth Uptain, *Slavery in Antebellum Virginia*; Southampton Co. Land Records.

<sup>7</sup>A. Howard, *The Day of Cotton*; Southampton Co. Court Records.

<sup>8</sup>Interview with Dred Scott, *The St. Louis Dispatch*, 1856; interview with Taylor Blow on file at the St. Louis Historical Society.

<sup>9</sup>Interview with Dred Scott, *The St. Louis Dispatch*, 1856; Southampton Co. Land Records.

<sup>10</sup>Interview with Dred Scott, 1856, on file at the St. Louis Historical Society.

<sup>11</sup>Louis Renfro, *The Old South*.

<sup>12</sup>*Valley Leaves* [Huntsville, AL] March, 1989.

<sup>13</sup>There was no one else to build the cabins or to clear the fields so the slaves had to do the work. It would be unthinkable to imagine that a healthy slave like Dred Scott did not help with the work.

<sup>14</sup>Madison Co. Land Records, Oakwood College Archives.

<sup>15</sup>Erlich. Though Erlich probably did not know it at the time this reference to Scott pertained to his sojourn in Alabama as contemporary sources clearly stated that this description of Scott was prior to his first marriage.

<sup>16</sup>Interview with *The St. Louis Dispatch*, 1869.

<sup>17</sup>In many interviews, Scott acknowledged that he had been married while farming in Alabama. Madison County was the only place he worked on a farm in Alabama.

<sup>18</sup>*Valley Leaves* March, 1989. A special word of appreciation for Norman M. Shapiro, of Huntsville, who in two paragraphs re-wrote the history of Dred Scott. Until Shapiro's article explaining how Sam acquired the name Dred appeared, historians had reached the heights of absurdity in trying to stretch and bend their theories to fit the story. Hopefully the next historian to write a book about Dred Scott will read Shapiro's article.

<sup>19</sup>Madison County Court Records.

<sup>20</sup>Interview with Dred Scott, St. Louis Historical Society.

<sup>21</sup>Historical Address of the Hon. William B. Wood, July 4, 1876, at Florence, Alabama.

<sup>22</sup>Interview with Taylor Blow, 1857, *The St. Louis Dispatch*.

<sup>23</sup>William Lindsay McDonald, "A Renowned Slave in the Early Life of Florence," *Tennessee Valley Historical Society* 8 (1980); Also see Lauderdale Co. Deed Records for Feb. and Mar. 1827, and Feb. 1831.

<sup>24</sup>Fehrenbacher.

<sup>25</sup>Probate Court Records, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>26</sup>Probate Court Records, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>27</sup>Fehrenbacher, Erlich.

<sup>28</sup>Historians for well over 100 years have debated Dred Scott's actual date of death. For some reason none of them checked the local St. Louis newspaper, which clearly stated on May 5 that he had died the previous day of consumption.

Reprinted with alterations from *Old Huntsville Magazine*.

# FIVE NOTABLE WOMEN IN THE HISTORY OF OAKWOOD COLLEGE

*Jannith L. Lewis*



**W**OMEN have been very important in the historical development of the African American Seventh-day Adventist church. Among some of the most outstanding are Anna Knight, pioneer nurse, missionary, teacher, and church administrator; Lottie Blake, brilliant pioneer physician; Eva Dykes, distinguished educator and author; Nateljka Burrell, beloved educator and author; and Ruth Frazier Stafford, devoted nurse, educator and health administrator.

## **Anna Knight (1874 -1972)**

Anna Knight was born in Mississippi in 1874. She was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist church in Graysville, Tennessee, in 1893.<sup>1</sup> In 1894 she was given help to attend Mount Vernon Academy in Ohio. In 1898 she was able to graduate from Battle Creek College as a missionary nurse. She returned to Jasper County, Mississippi, and started a self-supporting school for Negro children and adults as a pioneer teacher.<sup>2</sup>

Anna Knight was influenced by Dr. John H. Kellogg at Battle Creek to answer a call to become the first colored woman to serve as a missionary to India. In 1901 she went to Calcutta as a nurse and rendered magnificent mission service for the church.<sup>3</sup> In 1909, she was called by the Southeastern Union to serve in Atlanta, Georgia, as a nurse, teacher and Bible worker. When the Southeastern Conference and Southern Conference merged to become the Southern Union, she served in the edu-

cational department until Regional conferences were established.<sup>4</sup> She retired in 1946 at age 76.

In her autobiography, *Mississippi Girl*, Anna Knight recorded her extraordinary work throughout the Southern states. She indicated that she had held 9,388 meetings, made 11,744 missionary visits, written 48,918 letters and traveled 554,439 miles in appointments.<sup>5</sup> She served in the Southeastern Union Conference concurrently as an associate secretary for the Home Missionary, Sabbath School, Missionary Volunteer



and Education Departments.<sup>6</sup>

Miss Knight was the organizer and leader of the first YWCA organization for Negro people in Atlanta, Georgia. She established in the early twenties the National Colored Teachers Association (NCTA).<sup>7</sup> She served as president of the NCTA educational organization until she died on June 3, 1972 at 98 years of

age. The Department of Education of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists awarded Anna Knight the Medallion of Merit Award for her outstanding meritorious service to Seventh-day Christian education a few months before her death.<sup>8</sup> This award is the highest honor given by the church for extraordinary service in the field of Adventist education.

## **Lottie Isbell Blake (1876-1976)**

Lottie Isbell Blake was born in Virginia in 1876. She became the first Negro physician in the SDA church. In 1902, she graduated from the American Medical Missionary College in Battle Creek, Michigan. Dr. John H. Kellogg urged her to go to the South and establish a sanitarium for her people. She opened a sanitarium treatment room in Nashville, Tennessee, around 1903. When an epidemic of illness broke out among some children at the Oakwood orphanage in Huntsville, Alabama, she was asked to connect with the Oakwood School as a resident physician. She went to Birmingham, Alabama from Huntsville to work with J. Pearson in his treatment rooms. At that time she married David Blake who was an SDA minister. Later, in 1912, her husband completed the medical course at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. They moved then to Columbus, Ohio. From there the two Drs. Blake went to Panama and opened several treatment rooms from 1912 to 1916. Later, after the death of her husband, Dr. Blake went to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to join Dr. S. Cherry in his



medical practice. She continued her professional service there until 1955.<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Blake initiated the first Adventist medical program designed for the health needs of African Americans when she



started her medical career in 1902. She also organized a training program for nurses at Oakwood Manual Training School in 1903. Later, with her husband, she began the Rock City Sanitarium in Nashville. Her contributions as a pioneer Adventist woman physician serving African Americans were unmatched.

In 1957 Dr. Blake retired at the age of 81. The American Medical Association honored her for her medical service of 50 years. On November 16, 1976, she died in Huntsville, Alabama at 100 years of age.<sup>10</sup>

### **Eva Beatrice Dykes (1893-1986)**

Eva Beatrice Dykes was born in Washington, DC in 1893. She graduated from Howard University summa cum laude in 1914 with her first undergraduate degree. In 1917, she was awarded an additional Bachelor of Arts degree in English magna cum laude from Radcliffe College and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. She received a Master's degree the following year at Radcliffe. She received her PhD from Radcliffe in 1921. She was the first Negro woman to meet the requirements for a doctoral degree in the United States, and was one of the first three Negro women to receive a PhD degree. She became a faculty member at Howard University in 1929. She accepted an invitation to join

the faculty at Oakwood College in 1944 and became the head of the English Department. She retired in 1968 and returned to teach from 1970 to 1975.<sup>11</sup>

She authored several scholarly books and many articles for various educational journals and church publications. Her column for *Message* magazine ran for more than fifty years. In 1973 a Certificate of Merit was awarded to Dr. Dykes by the SDA General Conference Education Department at the dedication ceremony for the Eva B. Dykes Library which was named in her honor. In 1975 at the General Conference session held in Vienna, Austria, a Citation of Excellence was presented to Dr. Dykes in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the SDA world program of Christian education. A biography of Dr. Dykes, *She Fulfilled the Impossible Dream*, was written by DeWitt Williams.

Dr. Dykes has been described by Louis B. Reynolds as a demanding teacher and a devout and uncompromising Christian who set a worthy example to students.<sup>12</sup> In the book, *Black Women in America*,



she was described as a paragon of academic excellence because she served the Black community throughout her life by using her knowledge to educate thousands of young people, leaving them an enduring legacy of excellence and service.<sup>13</sup> She died on October 29, 1986 at the age of 93.

### **Natelkka E. Burrell (1895-1990)**

Natelkka Burrell was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1895. She attended South Lancaster Academy in Massachusetts and graduated with honors. The Southern New England

Conference hired her to teach in a one-room school in Connecticut. When that school closed after two years, she taught a small group of Negro children in a New Haven church school. Next she taught and became the principal of the Baltimore Academy. Oakwood College called her in 1939 to become Dean of Women. Later she assumed a teaching position in the department of education. She became the chair and constructed and implemented a new curriculum for



teaching. She served at Oakwood College for twenty-one and a half years.<sup>14</sup> Dr. Burrell earned a BS from Emmanuel Missionary College, an MA from the University of Wisconsin, and an EdD from the Teachers College, Columbia University. She co-edited 61 books used as basal readers and guides in Adventist grade schools. In 1964 she started teaching at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. She served 50 years in the Seventh-day Adventist educational system. She was named to the Andrews University Alumni Association Hall of Fame in 1973.<sup>15</sup>

Dr. Burrell received a citation from the General Conference at its session in Vienna, Austria, which identified her as one of the Ten Most Outstanding Women of the SDA Church in 1975. She received many other honors and awards her during her long educational career. She wrote many articles for various Adventist periodicals and an autobiography entitled *God's Beloved Rebel* as well as another book about the life of her adopted daughter. She at the age of 95 on February 21, 1990.<sup>16</sup>

### Ruth Frazier Stafford (1909- )

Ruth Frazier Stafford was born in Montgomery, Alabama in 1909 as the sixth child of a ten-sibling family. Her parents financed the education of all ten of their children in Adventist schools. Ruth attended Oakwood Academy and graduated from Oakwood Junior College in 1927.<sup>17</sup> She left the South to attend the School of Nursing at Hinsdale Sanitarium in 1927. She and Harriet Slater Moseley were the only two Negro students enrolled in the Hinsdale nursing program at that time. In 1931, she completed her nursing courses and accepted a position with Shiloh Academy in Chicago, Illinois. There she served as a registered nurse and an elementary school teacher. She also served the health care needs of many people at the Shiloh SDA Church Health Clinic at the same



time. Next, in the mid '30s, Ruth served as school nurse at Oakwood Junior College. In 1937, she joined the nursing staff of the Riverside Sanitarium and Hospital an Adventist medical institution in Nashville, Tennessee, which provided health care for Negro people who traveled there from many areas of the United States. Ruth became the Director of Nursing Service at Riverside, ending her almost twenty years of service there in 1950.

Ruth continued her education in 1938 by earning a BS in nursing from Pacific Union College in California. She received an MA from Fisk University in Nashville in 1941.<sup>18</sup> When nursing education was difficult to secure within the SDA denomination, she was a strong supporter of the young people who entered Meharry's School of Professional Nursing in Nashville. During her time in Nashville, she married Joseph T. Stafford

who was a teacher at Oakwood<sup>19</sup> and who became principal of Oakwood Academy.

From 1951 to 1977, she served at Oakwood College as Director of Health Service and Assistant Professor of Nursing Education. For many years, she was a very active president of the Oakwood College National Alumni Association.<sup>20</sup> In 1972, she received the Oakwood College Alumna of the Year Award. During her service at Oakwood, she wrote regular articles for *Message* magazine and took advanced courses at the University of Minnesota and Columbia University. She gave 47 years of dedicated service as a Christian nurse, educator and health administrator, and retired from active service at Oakwood College in 1977. She received the 1993 Lamplighter Award from the Alabama League for Nursing in recognition of her outstanding contribution of nursing service to mankind.

All of these women made outstanding contributions to the development and growth of Oakwood. Anna Knight served as an Oakwood board member in the 1930s. She arranged for many Adventist teachers to attend summer school sessions at Oakwood. She influenced some teachers—including Trula Wade and L. Henrietta Emanuel—to join Oakwood's staff. She spent most of her retirement years at Oakwood and died there. She planted beautiful flowers and mimosa trees throughout the campus. The present Education Department is housed in a remodeled building named in her honor.

Lottie Blake left a legacy at Oakwood through her two daughters and grandson. Frances Blake served Oakwood as a dean of women and Alice Blake Brantley has been an Oakwood elementary and academy teacher and administrator. Her grandson, Paul Brantley, a college teacher, has served as chair of the Department of Education at Oakwood College.

Eva B. Dykes played a significant role in Oakwood's efforts to secure accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1958. She directed choral groups and established an organization for female students to promote their development as women. The present library, built in 1973, was named in her honor.

Natelkka Burrell organized a Future Teachers of America chapter at Oakwood which was the first in the state of Alabama. In 1990, the Education

building was named in her honor. (Today the English and Communications Department is housed in that building.) Ruth Stafford sponsored a pre-nursing club named El Kappa Blanca during her nursing service at Oakwood.

All of these distinguished Christian women have been marvelous role models whose inspirational service has contributed significantly to the growth of Oakwood College a distinctive and successful institution of higher education.

<sup>1</sup>Louis B. Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow* (Washington, DC: Review 1984) 113-4.

<sup>2</sup>*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Review 1976) 743.

<sup>3</sup>Reynolds 115.

<sup>4</sup>*Encyclopedia* 743.

<sup>5</sup>Anna Knight, *Mississippi Girl* (Nashville: Southern 1952) 224.

<sup>6</sup>Knight 193.

<sup>7</sup>Harold D. Singleton, "Vanguard of Torchbearers," *The North American Informant* March-April 1968:1-2.

<sup>8</sup>*Encyclopedia* 743.

<sup>9</sup>Reynolds 137-40.

<sup>10</sup>Stephanie D. Johnson, "Dr. Lottie Isbell Blake: Dean of Black SDA Physicians," *The North American Regional Voice* March 1987: 3.

<sup>11</sup>Jessie Carney Smith, ed., *Notable Black American Women* (Detroit: Gale 1992) 304-5.

<sup>12</sup>Reynolds 207.

<sup>13</sup>Darlene Clark Hine, ed., *Black Women in America* (Brooklyn: Carlson 1993) 1: 372-3.

<sup>14</sup>"Portrait of a Great Lady," *North American Regional Voice* April 1990: 2.

<sup>15</sup>"Former Oakwood Teacher Named to Andrews University Hall of Fame," *The North American Informant* Sept.-Oct. 1993: 1.

<sup>16</sup>*North American Regional Voice* April 1990: 3, 17.

<sup>17</sup>"Ruth N. Stafford, RN," *Oakwood Magazine* Spring /Sum. 1990: 30.

<sup>18</sup>"Ruth N. Stafford, RN" 30.

<sup>19</sup>Reynolds 145.

<sup>20</sup>"Ruth N. Stafford, RN" 30.

# OAKWOOD'S CAMPUS: PERPETUAL PROGRESS

*Gilbert J. Foster*



ONE Hundred years ago, a 380-acre parcel of property which contained sixty-five oak trees, four formal buildings, and nine slave huts was purchased by the General

stand an uncounted number of college facility buildings. The original cost of the Oakwood property was \$6,700, with a market value of \$10,157.57. The market value of the present property and buildings is more than \$14 million; and Oakwood's growth is not yet finished.

Moran Hall was hewn out of a rock quarry right here on the original property.) College structures have stood the test of time and even tornadoes. Huntsville's history is pockmarked with destructive tornadoes that have demolished buildings of every description and left human death in their wakes. To date, no Oakwood buildings have been destroyed



*W.J. Blake Administration Building (1969)*



*Eva B. Dykes Library (1973)*



*Henderson Hall (women's dormitory), 1914.*



*Blake Center*



*Edwards Hall*



*Huntsville Training School (c. 1901).*



*Campus Scene*



*H. E. Ford Science Hall (1954).*



*Men's dormitories, Irwin Hall (built 1912) and Butler Hall (built 1910).*

Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to establish a training school for black young people. Today, the school erected on that site, now an award-winning campus, has grown to 1185 acres on which

Old colonial-style, all-wood-framed buildings, and largely undeveloped landscaping, have given way to beautiful, architecturally sound and functional buildings of steel, aluminum, brick, block, wood and stone. (It may be of some interest to note that the stone for

by violent storms nor have any lives been lost on the college campus.

The campus is distinguished by year-round budding flowers and plants, multi-colored shrubs, manicured lawns, stately



Library and home economics building, 1945.



The Sanitarium building (1909)



The Normal School building (1930).



The Morning Star Cottage (early 1920s).



East Hall



Oakwood College President's home, 1940.



Old Dorm



The Normal School building (1930).



The "Pines" teachers' cottage (1920s).

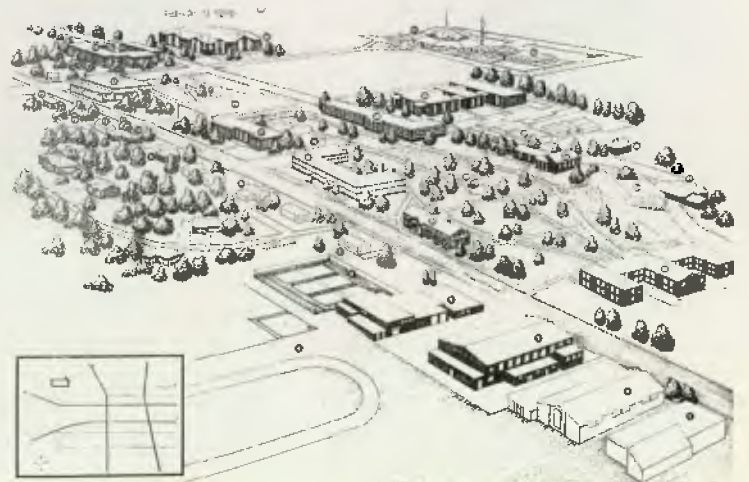


"Old Mansion Residential Hall" (no longer in existence), 1896.

trees, richly mulched flower beds and exotic plants, international flags unfurled in the breeze, stained glass pictorial windows on the church and religion complex buildings, and an imposing bell tower. Richly embellished buildings feature huge glass windows and doors that in many cases make artificial lighting unnecessary during daylight hours. Functional lobbies, hallways, lounges, dining and meeting halls, classrooms of every description—all are impressively decorated, completely air-cooled, centrally heated. Everywhere there is recessed efficient lighting, exceeding the most critical standards. All buildings are equipped with provident electronic

devices (even renovated ones); entryways are designed for easy access and exit (even for the handicapped).

Please permit me to offer a footnote to this overview of Oakwood's physical plant in somewhat faulty English: *We are impressed by Oakwood's perpetual progress, and unequivocally state that, by God's grace, we ain't done yet!*



The orphanage, Oakwood College.



An old frame building, called the "Sunnyside," where teachers once lived, in 1914.

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# BLACK CHURCHES AND BLACK COLLEGES: PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

*Benjamin F. Reaves*

▲ ▲ ▲

**B**LACK churches and black colleges enjoy a relationship as partners in progress. Over the years, they have nourished each other. The powerful synergy of this partnership has impacted in an enormously positive way on African Americans in particular and on the nation as a whole.

The historical record documents the black church as the oldest institution in the African American community. Born in the crucible of slavery, suffering, and segregation, it flourished in response to the spiritual, physical, social, and educational needs of an oppressed people.

Such white religious organizations as the American Missionary Association (AMA), the American Baptist Home Mission Society and others contributed significantly to the founding of black colleges; but black people themselves early placed high value on educational achievement. We also took the initiative for educating ourselves and for financially supporting our schools. Many schools were set up in black churches and nurtured to maturity by black congregations. Several institutions, such as Morehouse and Spelman, share a history of holding classes in church basements.

Many colleges founded in the 1800s

were secondary schools. Their leading purpose was to train young men to be teachers and preachers. Young women were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic as well as domestic skills.

The years surrounding the Emancipation Proclamation saw the rapid development of black schools by both black and white religious organizations. The AMA was responsible for founding several black colleges, including Fisk University (1866), Atlanta University (1865), and Talladega College (1867).

As informal black churches grew and formed their own denominations, they were able to further strengthen black colleges. Among black denominations still affiliated today with black colleges are the African Methodist Episcopal Church (Wilberforce University), the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (Livingstone College), and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (Lane College).

The black church's influence on the historically black college and university has made central the values of social concern, service, and responsibility. As a multi-purpose institution, the black church ministers to the needs of the

whole person. Black colleges also feel a duty to nourish the mental, spiritual, and physical well-being of their students. Thus, Oakwood College, owned and operated by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, prepares students for service to humanity and to God through the harmonious development—mental, physical, and spiritual—of the whole person.

Black colleges have in turn strengthened the black churches by contributing a long line of outstanding graduates who as clergymen have ministered to the black church and to society as a whole; notable examples include Howard Thurman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Andrew Young, and United States Representative Floyd Flake. Black colleges have also produced a vibrant array of lay church members—women and men committed to the work of the church and its mission.

The dynamic relationship between black churches and black colleges must continue and be enhanced. These two institutions, so vital to the strengthening of African Americans and the nation as a whole, share a priceless legacy.

Reprinted from *A Mind Is . . . : A Publication of the College Fund/UNCF*

# CONTRIBUTORS



**Zeola Germany Allston** recently retired from teaching elementary school after forty years in education. She obtained a BS from Oakwood College and an MA from Loma Linda University. She co-edited *A Star Gives Light: SDA Black History Resource Guide*. She and her husband Thomas have four adult children and four grandchildren.

**June Rice-Bacon** is a native Huntsvillian. She is a graduate of Roosevelt University in Chicago, where she majored in sociology education. June believes that life is most fulfilling and rewarding when you use your talents and skills to improve the quality of life of others.

**C.J. Barnes** is Professor of History Emeritus at Oakwood College, where he currently serves as an adjunct professor of denominational history. He chaired the History Department from 1975 to 1988. He received a BA from Atlantic Union College, an MA from Howard University, an EdS from Eastern Michigan University, and an EdD from Wayne State University. His doctoral dissertation examined "Physical Work as an Integral Part of Education at Oakwood College in Light of E.G. White's Writings."

**Alice Brantley** is the daughter of the late Drs. David and Lottie C. Blake. Dr. Lottie Blake was the first black Seventh-day Adventist medical doctor to have graduated from the American Medical Missionary College (a predecessor of Loma Linda University)—in 1901. Mrs. Brantley is an Oakwood alum who went on to receive an elementary education degree from Akron University. She has served many years as an elementary teacher, a principal, and a missionary to the West Indies (West Indies College, Jamaica) and South Africa (Bethel College). Since 1932, when she became editor of the school paper at Oakwood College, she has followed her avocation: writing poetry and articles.

**Frankie Lee Mitchell Cantrell** is a great-granddaughter of Moses and Louisa Sheppard, slaves who lived on the plantation that became Oakwood College. She was baptized in the Oakwood College Seventh-day Adventist Church by C.E. Moseley in 1946. She has been a medical missionary nurse in Africa, has taught academy and college classes, and has offered continuing education classes for missionary nurses from Ethiopia,

Kenya and Tanzania. For three years, beginning in July 1988, she taught Medical-Surgical Nursing in the Department of Nursing at Oakwood. Mrs. Cantrell was featured in *Who's Who* publications from 1990 to 1994 and is a member of the National League for Nursing and the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Nurses.

**Tom Carney**, a native Huntsvillian, is the editor of the *Old Huntsville* magazine, published in Huntsville, Alabama. He travels extensively and makes contacts all over the country as he unearths interesting and previously stories about old Huntsville which have not been written about before. State-of-the-art equipment and reference sources support his research.

**Mimeola L. Dixon**, who serves as Guest Editor for this issue, is an assistant professor and director of the Archives and Museum at Oakwood College. She received a BS from Oakwood College and an MLS, with an emphasis in Archival Management, from the University of Alabama. In 1991, she received the Oakwood Alumnus of the Year award; as a result of her work in four middle management positions at Oakwood College over the past twenty-five years, she was recently honored by Oakwood for her commendable service. In connection with the Centennial Celebration, she has assumed several responsibilities in the area of historical research and news-writing. For five years, she has hosted the radio program, "Oakwood Heritage Moments," on WOCC-FM radio and has appeared on several other local radio programs. She is a member of several professional archives and museum organizations and serves as a member of the Huntsville/Madison County Historical Society.

**Gilbert J. Easter** is a retired Seventh-day Adventist minister from the Northeastern Conference, who has lived in Huntsville, Alabama since 1988. He is presently serving as a volunteer counselor for freshmen male students of Peterson Hall on the Oakwood campus. He is married to the former Ruby E. Charles of New York City. Their three children, Stephen, Preston and Pamela, are all products of Christian education (Pine Forge Academy, Oakwood College, and Andrews University), who have pursued further education at Harvard and at Clark University in Atlanta, Georgia. Gilbert enjoys

gardening and golfing with fellow retirees, while Ruby is successfully completing her education through Oakwood College's LEAP Degree Program.

**Thomas Frazier** is a prolific writer of native history and local stories. His Huntsville history stories often involve the history of families and family activities.

**Faye C. Groom** was born in Birmingham, Alabama. She received a BFA from Xavier University in New Orleans and has worked as an artist in Atlanta, New Orleans, Boston, Los Angeles and Huntsville. Among her most cherished accomplishments is her creation of a uniform (jump suit) patch for the Physics Department of Alabama A & M University, which was worn by both the ground and space crews for a NASA space flight missions in the early 1980s. She is presently a graphics design/publications specialist at Alabama A & M and anticipates serving on the Renovations/Restoration Committee there. She is an active member of the Huntsville Historical Marker Society.

**John Rison Jones, Jr.** is a Huntsville native. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of the South (1949) and a PhD from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He undertook further graduate study in the Faculty of Letters of the University of Paris as a Fulbright Scholar. He has taught at several southern institutions, including Southern Methodist University, where he directed the Honors Program. From 1966 until his retirement in 1986, he lived in Washington, DC, where he as Senior Education Specialist at the US Department of Education. There, he was associated with such well-known programs as Upward Bound and Tide III.

**Lucile C. Lacy** is Associate Professor of Music Education at Oakwood College, former chair of the Department of Music, chair of the Arts and Lectures Committee, and minister of music at the Oakwood College Campus Church. Lucile earned a BA at Oakwood College, an MME at George Peabody College for Teachers, and a PhD at Ohio State University. As a music consultant at state and national levels, and the recipient of many awards, she has been recognized in *Who's Who in Entertainment, American Music and Musicians, Religion, and American Education*, as well as the *International Directory of Distinguished Leadership*.

**Jannith L. Lewis** is a pro-

fessor and Director of Library Services at Oakwood College. She received a BS from the University of Kansas and an MA and PhD from Indiana University. She was the first Seventh-day Adventist woman to earn a doctorate in the field of library science. She joined the Oakwood College faculty in 1953 and has been library director since 1955. She has received an Exemplary Service Award from the Alabama Association of College Administrators and the *Message Magazine* Excellence Award for distinguished service to the Seventh-day Adventist church and community.

**Garland Millet** considers himself an adopted Oakwoodite. During the 1930s and '40s, he taught at Oakwood, where he was President from 1954-63. In 1965, he completed studies for a PhD in educational administration at the George Peabody College for Teachers at Vanderbilt University. After editing *The Message Magazine* for three years, he served the General Conference as Associate Director of Education and editor of the *Journal of Adventist Education* during 1970-8. He and his wife Ursula retired in Huntsville, Alabama, a few blocks from Oakwood College.

**Eurydice V. Osterman**, a native of Atlanta, Georgia, earned BMus and MMus degrees from Andrews University, and a DMA in composition from the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. She has conducted numerous seminars throughout the United States, Europe and Brazil. She is currently chair of the Music Department at Oakwood College, where she is professor of music.

**Benjamin F. Reaves** is President of Oakwood College.

**Edna P. Roache** is completing her fifty-first year of nursing practice. She is a graduate of Harlem Hospital School of Nursing, Loyola University Chicago Teachers College, and Teachers College, Columbia University. From 1972 to 1977, she was the head of the Nursing Department at Oakwood College. She was director of Student Health Services from 1982 to 1988. She holds membership in the Beta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, American Nurses Association, National League for Nursing, ASDAN and ABAN.

**Frances Roberts** is Professor Emerita of History at the University of Alabama, and is

active in historical preservation. She is editor of the *Historical Review*.

**Emmanuel Saunders** is chair of Oakwood's Department of History and Political Science. A native of Trinidad, W.I., he has been on staff at Oakwood since 1977. He received a BA, MA, and PhD from Howard University in Washington, DC. Saunders has done significant research and published articles in professional journals on such subjects as the Portuguese conquest of Angola, Booker T. Washington's position on black migration to the cities, the appropriateness of civil rights for minorities, and the emotional dynamics of the black church.

**Jodie Jones Stennis** is a native of Mansfield, Ohio, joined the Oakwood College staff in the spring of 1992 as Interim Program Director at WOCC-FM radio station. That fall, she became the station's Program and Music Director. She received an AA from Ohio State University and a BA in telecommunications from Alabama A&M University. She is an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and a member of the Oakwood College Archives Historical Research and Preservation Committee. Linked with her interest in music and writing is her newly developed taste for digging around in the Oakwood College archives with Mimeola Dixon.

**Elise Stephens**, a member of Phi Beta Kappa, has been associate professor of history at Alabama A&M University in Huntsville, Alabama. Before coming to AAMU, she taught at Texas Southern University in Houston, Texas. She received an MA in history from Yale and did further study at Tulane University in New Orleans. She has authored several books, the latest of which is *Historical Huntsville: A City of New Beginnings*. She recently researched and wrote the text for the documentary video *From Mill Village to Main Street*. She is currently the editor of the *Huntsville Historical Quarterly*, a member of the Huntsville Historical Foundation, and an active participant in the activities of the Huntsville Historic Convention Village.

**Morna Thompson** is a retired civil service employee, and the mother of five children, three of whom attended Oakwood Academy and Oakwood College. She has nine grandchildren, and is currently employed at Oakwood College.

Lawrence T. Geraty *La Sierra University*  
**Editor-in-Chief**

Dorothy Minchin-Comm *La Sierra University*

Gary Land *Andrews University*  
**Associate Editors**

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*The Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society and the Alabama Historical Association have approved the erection of an official marker with this text to honor Oakwood College. Oakwood will join Alabama A & M University as the only two predominantly black institutions of higher learning to be recognized by the Historical Association as historical sites in northern Alabama. Oakwood College is one of five area sites selected by the Historical Society Marker Committee to be honored with historical highway markers during 1996. An unveiling and dedication ceremony has been planned tentatively for April 7, 1996 at Oakwood College.*

## We Salute Oakwood College!

### Oakwood College

*Founded in 1896*

Oakwood College, which began as an industrial school, was founded by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1896 to educate African Americans in the South. The school was erected on 380 acres purchased during the previous year for \$6,700. Additional property secured in 1918 nearly tripled its land holdings. The school underwent several name changes over its history:

- 1896: Oakwood Industrial School
- 1904: Oakwood Manual Training School
- 1917: Oakwood Junior College
- 1943: Oakwood College

In 1958, Oakwood was granted full accreditation by the Southern Association of colleges and Schools. Oakwood prepares students from more than forty states and many nations to serve the world in a variety of positions and careers, reflecting its motto, "Today's College for Tomorrow's Leaders."

On this site, too, stood the Peter Blow Plantation which counted Dred Scott among its slaves in 1819. In 1857, Scott captured national attention by virtue of his appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court for his freedom in Missouri after sojourning in the free state of Illinois.

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