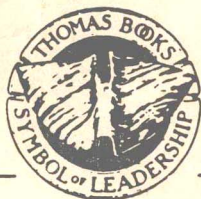


A HISTORY OF AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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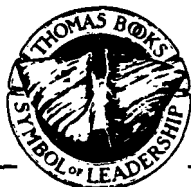
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PREFACE

HIGHER education in the United States can probably be described as vocationally oriented. Certainly not all institutions have as their major purpose the preparation of graduates to assume specific (or generic) jobs; there are liberal arts institutions and also liberal arts degrees in more general institutions and these, traditionally, do not include job preparation as a major goal. Nevertheless, research studies have found that by far the major purpose of the students in colleges and universities is to end up with better jobs than they would be able to obtain if they did not have college degrees. A report in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in early 1982 quoted Alexander Astin as having found in a major survey of freshmen at 368 colleges that 65% of students surveyed set "being very well off financially" as a very important goal of their college education (compared with 49% who expressed this goal in the 1969 survey).*

The first colleges in this country were actually vocationally oriented, too, since their major purpose was to prepare ministers for the associated churches (or perhaps it would be more correct to say that the purpose was to prepare an "educated clergy"). However, the psychology of the times was such that training of the mind became a more general, more important, and more pervasive purpose of the colonial colleges before very long in their history. As a matter of fact, it became very difficult for leaders to install vocational programs in colleges very early in our development, as we shall see. Benjamin Franklin, practical person that he apparently was and strongly favoring the education of the people in practical matters (witness his

*"This Year's Freshmen Found Oriented toward Financial Success," (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 17, 1982).

"Juntos," a very early form of continuing education for adult citizens, with their emphasis on discussions to improve citizenship), was nevertheless in favor of the classical curriculum in colleges. Thomas Jefferson wanted to incorporate into the University of Virginia a vocational possibility, in that students could elect the courses they would take. However, this election was (a) only between schools, that is, the student was free to choose which of the available schools he would attend (there were eight — ancient languages, modern languages, mathematics, natural philosophy, natural history, anatomy and medicine, moral philosophy, and law), for degree-seeking students or (b) truly free, that is, a student could take any course he chose if the goal was not to obtain a degree. Within the schools the degree programs were fixed and they were also highly classical.

The young United States (even before it was the United States and was referred to as "the American Colonies," or more simply as "America") was a very practical country. There was little time for the "foolishness" that German universities were engaging in — research — and so it was a long time before the university came into being here. Strangely, though, the real practical area that one would assume our forebears would have been concerned with — agriculture (and a bit later industry) — was not a part of the early institutions of higher education in this country. As a matter of fact, the two areas mentioned came into prominence only after the Civil War in universities that grew out of the Morrill Acts.

So, higher education in young America (the title of this book uses "America" rather than "United States," not because the book is intended to encompass higher education in all of North, Central, and South America of today, but rather because "America" of our early history really meant the colonies that gave rise to the United States) was, perhaps, somewhat unusual. It was vocational because of the practicality of the population, but it was not related to the basic activity of most of that population. It was, or became, liberal (in the sense of mind training) in what was really a very non-liberal setting. As we shall see, it was narrowly religious in a country that began because of religious oppression. Although in many ways it was patterned after institutions in the "mother countries" of those who began

higher education in America, it remained unlike the major institutions, the universities, for some long time. What were the causes of these and many other uniquenesses in our history?

While the major purpose of this book is to provide an account of our higher education history, the highlights, the milestones, the major developments, the great changes both within higher education and outside but related to higher education, and to describe in some detail the nature of selected institutions, their operating arrangements, and their influences, there will also be some attempts to relate the developments in institutions to those in the country at large. The "frontier colleges" provide one natural example of this; since the country was really moving at the frontier in a geographical sense it had to happen that special colleges were developed at appropriate geographical locations and with appropriate purposes to match this movement. Of course, there is also the fact that evolution in one existing college almost inevitably influenced changes in other colleges. To what extent did the great plans and arrangements that developed at Wisconsin influence the structure and functioning of Illinois, or Purdue, or Iowa? Did the state universities have any major influence on the private universities or was Chicago actually the model for all of them? Some of these questions will be examined and answers may or may not be forthcoming.

This book is not the result of an historical research study. Of course, a lot of reading of historical accounts has preceded its writing, but the data from this reading has not been assembled and analyzed as it would have been in a research project. Also, unlike the procedures that I would have followed in a research project, I have not gone back to original documents but have relied upon secondary information (and have trusted those secondary sources). Consequently, this book is not intended for the research scholar but rather for the general student of history, the student of higher education, the professor of either of these, and anyone who is interested in learning more about our antecedents in this country.

I write as I talk (or is that *like* I talk?) and this is sort of informal. I never mean to be flippant and I certainly revere the individuals who contributed to our history in higher education; however, some of their actions, viewed in today's light, do appear strange, and I may say so at times. Try to ignore such comments, if they disagree with

your own views, and read the book for its intended purpose, as an historical account that attempts to put together the events that seem important into a chronological description of higher education in America.

Although I have avowed that this is not the result of a research study, I have given credit to those references from which I took information in a specific way. The only way in which I can give credit to all the other sources that I read is to acknowledge here that there was a large number of them and to thank their authors collectively. I must also give credit to my students in higher education classes; surely the greatest motivator, as well as the most powerful process, for learning is to attempt to teach others.

P.W.

INTRODUCTION

EDUCATION is timeless. Higher education, as a separate institutional arrangement, can be dated in some ways. Socrates was a higher educator, if you will, and the so-called Socratic method remains not only a viable but also a desirable procedure for the instruction of adult learners — especially if the instruction is in thinking areas rather than in skill areas. Plato and Aristotle can also be pointed to as prominent teachers as well as outstanding scholars and it might be interesting to notice throughout the account here presented how much, or even whether, scholarship and teaching are tied together. From these Greek scholars there did develop certain traditions that are still entrenched in higher education. From the Greeks in general we inherited the categorization of disciplines, the trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and logic — and aren't these still the fundamentals in our college general studies curricula?), the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music), and the professions (law and medicine). The quadrivium was the course of study between the equivalent of a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in the medieval universities, and we shall see how it entered into the American colleges, as well. And, of course, most modern universities (or at least university systems) have associated with them a school of law and a school of medicine, as well as other professional schools more recently developed. So one could date some aspects of higher education to somewhere around 300-400 B.C.

In the Catholic church the monasteries certainly have had a lot to do with higher education, as centers for learning, as locations for book copying before the invention of the printing press, and as sources of thought stimulation (remember, Martin Luther was a monk). The earliest record of a monastery is around A.D. 330 and the

location was on the Nile River. We have no specific effects of this monastery on higher education, but in A.D. 528 St. Benedict did codify schooling under the 73 article Rule of Benedict; the codification included specific reading requirements following the trivium and the quadrivium and also included church history and canonical law. Some two centuries later Charlemagne (A.D. 742-814), while encouraging the continued development of monastic schools, established what might have been the first private school, a palace school for the education of the sons of noblemen; was this an early separation of church and state education?

From the ninth until the seventeenth centuries A.D. scholasticism was the dominant philosophical movement and, within this movement, there had developed by the twelfth century A.D. major monastic schools. In these schools the basic teaching procedure was that the teacher read material and the learners copied it down (shades of lectures and notetaking in today's universities). However, there had also developed by this time the procedure known as disputation, which was primarily a debate using logic more prominently than factual information. Disputation found its way into the early American colleges. Following the Crusades, Aristotelian science was introduced into the teachings of scholasticism through the efforts of returning crusaders who had learned it from the Saracens (who controlled Spain at that time). Logical science played an important role in colonial curricula; experimental science entered the curricula only with great difficulty much later.

During this period of gradual evolution schools came to be centered at cathedrals (the natural locations for basically religious training) and they became more and more organized. Eventually, in the same way that unions developed in America, guilds were formed within the schools for protection against those who might seek to regulate them — kings, bishops, etc. Before long the basic guild separated into student guilds and teacher guilds. (Guilds were *universitas*; teacher guilds were *facultas*.) As organization continued the *facultas* elected *deans* as their heads and the student guilds elected *councilors*. What would be more natural than that the deans and councilors, the guild leaders, should form a *council* and elect a sort of supreme head, a *chancellor*? So, there was in the cathedral schools of Europe an organization not totally unlike that which exists in American universities today.

Remember, these were church schools and, despite the guilds, they were still controlled by the church and by the individual who was head of the particular church. The schools were allowed to operate (*chartered*) by that church head — a king, an emperor, the pope — depending upon the location of the particular school. And the chancellor was given the authority to issue *licentia docendi* ("teaching licenses") to qualified students. You see, the basic reason for becoming educated in a cathedral school was to become able to educate others, so the "degree" was certification that you had acquired the information and skills necessary to instruct others. A few of the largest and most prominent schools were given authority to issue *licentia docendi ubique*. Note the forerunners of bachelor's degrees in the basic license and of master's or even doctoral degrees in the "ubique" license. Note also the terminology we have adopted from the cathedral schools — university, faculty, dean, council, chancellor; in one school, Bologna, the student guilds actually controlled the operation and the guild *rector* headed the school; hence, we sometimes call our university head a rector today.

From the cathedral schools it was as simple as making a name change to have a city school. Of course, once the change was made the character of the school began to change also. The University of Salerno (ninth century A.D.) was among the earliest of the city universities; the University of Paris (ca. A.D. 1160) became the greatest of them, encompassing some 40 colleges in its organization. Oxford was modeled after the University of Paris (A.D. 1167) and, as hinted above, succeeded in having looser papal supervision than prior schools had. (In A.D. 1209 a group of Oxford scholars became dissatisfied with the operation of that school and founded Cambridge University. We shall see this very thing happen also in the colonial colleges of America.)

Earlier I pointed out the antecedents of our present-day basic degrees; actually there was in Europe an even closer set of forerunners. In the twelfth century A.D. students studied until they could demonstrate proficiency in Latin in the areas of study; at that point they were termed *bachelors*. After 4-7 more years of study, when they had learned to dispute effectively and had developed and defended a "masterpiece," they became known as *masters* (meaning teachers). The whole practice developed from the need for a clergyman to: (1)

be able to thoroughly understand Latin writings and (2) be able to defend religious doctrine against anyone who might disagree with it. We, of course, still carry on the tradition of requiring a defense of the doctoral dissertation (the “masterpiece”) if not of the master’s thesis in modern universities.

The Renaissance (fourteenth through seventeenth centuries A.D.) in Europe was a period of speeded up changes in politics, religions, economics, and in education. Also, the arts grew tremendously and the humanistic influence of the arts affected this evolution. During this period secularism continued to grow in education and the Catholic church was effectively “unseated” as the manager of higher education. (Martin Luther lived A.D. 1483-1546 and John Calvin A.D. 1509-1564; of course, there were many others who contributed to the changes — Gutenberg invented the printing press in A.D. 1450.) After Luther’s death, Protestantism became splintered and grew even faster and larger than before and this growth had a profound influence on higher education. This influence was centered in Germany. In Luther’s day the German universities were subject to protectors (usually dukes) who ruled the area in which they were located. In the states of Saxony, Bavaria, Thuringia, Brandenburg, etc., there were the universities of Leipzig, Munich, Erfurt, etc. Luther had been a professor at Erfurt and at Wittenberg. As the beliefs of protectors varied and as the political unrest in Germany grew from the religious unrest (started through the normal practice of debate, by the way), the universities came to be the stable institutions. After all, a protector could proclaim certain beliefs, but information remained the same, or essentially the same, despite beliefs. The German universities had by this time become respected seats of learning and this respect only grew through the unrest.

The German universities had a great influence upon American institutions. The essential freedom to discover new information, to do research, known as *lehrefreiheit*, is one of these influences that is still profoundly visible here. The whole movement toward academic freedom carried by the AAUP (which we will learn about much later) was based on this idea. And the *wissenschaft*, investigation and, more importantly, writing (publishing) is also prominent in today’s higher education systems in this country. Actually, the *lehrefreiheit* was the idea that new knowledge was valuable whether or not it made a

contribution to everyday life; the counterpart for students was *lernfreiheit*, the freedom to learn what one desired and, at least in part, this idea had an influence upon our elective systems. Interestingly, Laurence Vesey* suggests that the German universities were not really as America saw them. The research, while it may have been scientific at times, was more likely to consist of philosophical examination of ideas or of rather loose collection of data. (There did develop in the German universities, however, a tradition of painstaking attention to details in a study and, of course, this has become a part of formal research procedures universally utilized.)

Finally, I would be remiss in not mentioning in this introduction that there were no less than ten universities in Central and South America prior to the opening of Harvard. The two oldest of these were the Royal and Pontifical University of Mexico and the University of San Marcos in Peru.[†] Both were established in A.D. 1551.

So, with this background we now turn to American higher education and begin the accounting of its history.

P.W.

*Vesey, Laurence R.. *The Emergence of the American University*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 125 ff.

†Brubacher, John S. and Willis Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition*, (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1976).

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CHAPTER 1

THE FIRST COLONIAL COLLEGES

IN December of 1606 Captain John Smith (26 years old at the time, short, bearded, and hot-tempered) set out with a group of potential colonists for America. They came in three ships: the *Susan Constant* (largest at 100 tons displacement), the *Godspeed* (40 tons), and the *Discovery* (20 tons). They landed at Jamestown in May 1607 with the goal of "conquering Virginia." By 1622 some 6,000 colonists had arrived, but only about 2,000 of them had survived. These were not the Puritans (they came just a bit later and it was that group of dissatisfied emigrants from England who, perhaps partly due to their dissatisfaction, saw the need for an institution of higher education in the new world). The Jamestown colonists had come for different, more economically based reasons, and perhaps this differing background did not require continuing higher education.

The colony to which the Jamestown settlers came (Virginia) had been chartered by the English Royal Crown to the London Company and so was a private venture. However, in 1624 King James I revoked the charter and the settlement became a royal colony. Under private management the colony had not done well, but as a royal colony it prospered and, as we shall see, opened the second of the colonial colleges in America.

The group of religious dissenters (and they were truly dissenters, as part of the body were known as "Separatists") who came to be called Puritans left England in 1608 to settle temporarily in Holland. How this came about and how some of the group ended up in America is an interesting story.*

*Information taken from Feenie Ziner *The Pilgrims and Plymouth Colony* (American Heritage, the Magazine of History, Harper and Row distributors 1961)

Following the Reformation in Germany, there were wars and shifts of allegiances in European countries. Holland ended up as a completely Protestant nation by 1648. France remained embattled, although the Huguenots were granted partial freedom for a time. England vacillated. King Henry VIII separated the country from Catholicism and proclaimed himself the head of the Protestant Church in England (eventually to be known as the Anglican Church) and his son, Edward VI, enhanced this stand. However, the next ruler (Edward's half sister, Mary) proclaimed a return to Catholicism and the following queen (Mary's half sister, Elizabeth) returned to Protestantism once more. The church retained many of the Catholic rituals (and added some of its own) and those who read the Bible carefully were unable to find a basis for many of these practices. When they protested that the church should simplify its operations, they were sneered at, and when they insisted that the church must return to its former *purity*, they came to be called Puritans, derisively.

During this period of stormy arguments, Cambridge was a stronghold of Puritanism. Four of the Puritan leaders studied there: William Brewster, Robert Browne (so violent in his opposition to the Anglican Church practices that he urged separation of his followers from the mother church and his followers thus became known as Separatists), John Penry, and John Greenwood. It was Browne who led a group of Puritans to Holland. In 1593 both Greenwood and Penry were hanged for their heresies. Brewster met a young man named William Bradford who was part of the Puritan movement in a sort of quiet way at the time and took him into his home; both hoped that the Puritan cause in England would be helped by the new ruler, James I (who had been James VI of Scotland and who was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots). However, James believed in the divine right of kings and resisted any moves that might diminish his own power. (He also had a fiery temper and reacted harshly when the Puritans proposed that one of their rights was to choose their own ministers rather than have them appointed.)

Among the good results of the Puritan "rebellions" in England was the translation of the Bible into the beloved King James Version. The Puritans had suggested that a new translation was desirable (in 1604) and James took up this suggestion and assigned some