

GUADALUPE COLLEGE:
A CASE STUDY IN NEGRO HIGHER EDUCATION
1884-1936

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THESIS

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PREFACE

As a resident of Seguin since 1945 and a member of a third-generation Guadalupe County family, I have long been exposed to the stories and legends that form the tradition of this area of Texas. In pursuing a thesis topic, I was interested in adding to the historical knowledge of my community. For this reason, when my friend and fellow Seguinite Ann Malone suggested that a comprehensive study of Guadalupe College would be a worthwhile project, my curiosity was immediately aroused. The ruined buildings and deserted campus of the old school had fascinated the youth of my generation. Isolated from black history by the wall of segregation, we had viewed the defunct college as somewhat of a mystery. Like most area citizens, I possessed a little knowledge about the institution, but I had no understanding of its true significance. The search for a factual history of Guadalupe College proved to be a challenging and rewarding endeavor.

In my quest for information about Guadalupe College, I became acquainted with a number of black Baptists who were intimately associated with the institution. Their generous cooperation in sharing their memories was essential to the development of my thesis. I shall always remember with

pleasure the hours we spent discussing Guadalupe College; I am deeply grateful for the support and encouragement that they gave to my project.

Likewise, I am grateful to the members of my thesis committee--Dr. Everette Swinney, Dr. Emmie Craddock, and Dr. Theodore Hindson--for their thoughtful and constructive suggestions. The final product reflects their extensive knowledge of the art of writing history.

In conclusion, I would like to dedicate my thesis to the many friends and alumni of Guadalupe College. Through my research into their story, I have increased my knowledge of Guadalupe County and its citizens, as well as my appreciation of the beauty and tragedy of black history.

CHAPTER I

BLACK EDUCATION IN TEXAS: AN OVERVIEW

Guadalupe College, "a negro institution, owned, officered, managed, patronized, and supported by the negroes themselves,"¹ was established in Seguin, Texas, in 1884 and "entered upon the work of higher education among Negroes of the Southwest" in 1887.² The story of this school--its strengths and weaknesses, its achievements and failures, its good days and bad--forms a part of the larger history of black education in the South following the Civil War. While Guadalupe College had some unique characteristics, in many ways its development paralleled that of other privately-controlled Negro educational institutions. Its hopes and dreams were similar to those of other schools, as were its problems and shortcomings. The forces that shaped Negro institutions elsewhere also had a profound effect on the development of the Seguin facility. Although several black colleges in Texas endured for a longer period of time,

¹U.S., Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, History of Education in Texas, by J. J. Lane, Circular of Information No. 2, 1903 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), p. 118.

²David Abner, Jr., Letter to the Editor, Seguin Enterprise, 3 February 1893.

Guadalupe College can serve as an example of the determined effort of the Negro people to obtain an education for themselves and their children.

In order to understand and appreciate the importance of Guadalupe College, it is necessary to examine briefly the background of black education in Texas. Prior to the Civil War, harsh laws forbidding the instruction of slaves in the basic learning skills had been passed as a defensive measure throughout the South; not more than ten percent of the Negro population of the United States could read at the time of the Emancipation Proclamation.³ In the postwar years, education became the cherished goal of the Negro race. Eager to learn, the newly freed slaves "flocked to the groves, to the church on Sunday and weekdays, by day and by night," to attend the impromptu schools that sprang up.⁴ The Freedmen's Bureau, created by Congress in 1865 to promote and supervise the interests of the former slaves, assisted missionary and philanthropic agencies in the organization of Negro schools. The Bureau provided funds for salaries and buildings; the American Missionary Association supplied the teachers.⁵

³Seventh Census of the United States cited in Dwight Oliver Wendell Holmes, The Evolution of the Negro College (New York: n.p., 1934; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, 1970), p. 10.

⁴Frederick Eby, The Development of Education in Texas (New York: Macmillan Company, 1925), p. 264.

⁵Ibid. The American Missionary Association, a non-secretarian organization established in 1846, had long been engaged in antislavery activities and led the way in Negro education after the Civil War. It eventually became the principal agent of the Congregational Church.

By 1867 some 4,198 students attended the 102 Freedmen's Bureau schools in Texas, staffed by 98 teachers, both black and white; in 1868 the number of pupils enrolled in the "higher branches" was 240.⁶ The Bureau continued to aid and protect the benevolent organizations in the promotion of black education until the end of 1870, when it began to withdraw from the field and to shift educational responsibility to the churches, the states, and the Negroes themselves.⁷

In the meantime, the state of Texas made its first tentative effort to provide for Negro education in the Constitution of 1866. While specifying that income from the public school fund be employed exclusively for the education of white children, the Constitution empowered the legislature to levy a special tax for educational purposes. All money raised from Negroes under this tax was "to be used for the maintenance of a system of public schools for Africans and their children."⁸ The state, however, did nothing specific to implement such a system. White opposition to black education was formidable, as evidenced by the burning of Freedmen's Bureau schools and the frequent intimidation and

⁶"History of Schools for the Colored Population" in Special Report of the Commissioner of Education on the Improvement of Public Schools in the District of Columbia, 1871 (reprint ed., New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), p. 390.

⁷Holmes, Evolution of Negro College, p. 48.

⁸Eby, Development of Education, p. 266.

harassment of those whites who had come from the North to teach.⁹

The imposition of Congressional Reconstruction in 1867 brought sweeping changes to the educational system in Texas. The "radical" Constitution of 1869 and the subsequent implementing legislation provided for a highly centralized system that permitted no discrimination. This legislation guaranteed Negroes an equal share of the monies appropriated for public schools; attendance was made compulsory for all children, black and white.¹⁰ Bitter opposition to the system arose immediately, labeling it as corrupt and tyrannical. Whites suspected that Republican leaders favored the education of blacks in order to gain their political support; many state officials refused to cooperate with the program. When the Democrats regained control of the Texas legislature in 1872, the objectionable elements of the public school system were quickly nullified or destroyed.¹¹

The constitutional convention that met in 1875 so hated the radical school system that it dismantled the entire organization, destroying its good features along with the bad.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 264-65.

¹⁰ Lawrence D. Rice, The Negro in Texas: 1874-1900 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), p. 10; Ann Baenziger [Malone], "Bold Beginnings: The Radical Program in Texas, 1870-1873" (Master's thesis, Southwest Texas State University, 1970), pp. 51-53; Eby, Development of Education, p. 266.

¹¹ Rice, Negro in Texas, pp. 10-11; Eby, Development of Education, pp. 162-65; Baenziger [Malone], "Bold Beginnings," pp. 50-60, 69-70.

The Constitution of 1876 authorized the legislature to establish and support "an efficient system of public free schools." Facilities for the two races were to be separate, although black children were to share in the annual educational appropriations.¹² The resulting school law of 1876 created the "community system" whereby parents and guardians organized themselves into school communities and submitted to the county judge a list of students for their particular school. The judge then appointed three trustees, who employed the teacher and supervised the school. This process had to be repeated yearly. The school communities had no definite boundaries; any group of parents, no matter how few, could form a school and share in the state funds. This cumbersome system continued essentially unchanged until 1905, adversely affecting the development of adequate facilities for either race.¹³

With the instigation of the "community system," white antagonism toward education for blacks was superseded by an attitude of indifference. Since the organization of schools was optional with each local community, and since no central authority enforced the founding of colored schools, Negro education was largely neglected. With the state adopting a passive role, responsibility for both elementary and higher education fell to Northern leadership and to the Negroes

¹²Texas, Constitution (1876), art. VII, sections 1 & 7.

¹³Eby, Development of Education, p. 172.

themselves.¹⁴ Southerners were particularly skeptical of the value of higher education for the freedman. Typical of this attitude was the statement of a Southern writer: "It is indisputable that, as a race, the African is inferior to the Caucasian in intelligent comprehension, reasoning, and constructive power." The Negro, therefore, should be given a "good common school education," rather than high-school training that would "deluge the country with school teachers."¹⁵ Another gentleman observed that "this higher education, as it is called, is being applied to a majority of the rising generation, unfitting them for useful work, and giving them ideas altogether unsuited to their condition in life." He criticized in particular the "ill directed philanthropy of those excellent Northern people who have founded schools at the South to give to the Negro the advantages of a classical education."¹⁶

Northern philanthropy had indeed led the way in establishing colleges for the freedman in many Southern states, including several in Texas. "The Negro in his intellectual and moral nakedness aroused the missionary enthusiasm as nothing else could do," wrote Negro scholar and educator

¹⁴William R. Davis, The Development and Present Status of Negro Education in East Texas (New York City: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1934), p. 135.

¹⁵James B. Craighead, "The Future of the Negro in the South," Popular Science Monthly 26 (November 1884):39-46.

¹⁶Edmund Kirke, "How Shall the Negro Be Educated?" North American Review 143 (November 1886):421-26.

Kelly Miller. "It was in a spasm of virtue that the foundation of the higher life of the Negro was laid."¹⁷ These good people, never doubting the intellectual capabilities of the black man, considered it their duty to give him a chance, through Christian education, to move upward in life. Northern religious bodies most prominent in establishing and maintaining colleges for Negroes were the Baptists, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Congregationalists.¹⁸

Northern denominational boards established four black colleges in Texas between 1873 and 1887. The earliest was Wiley College, founded in 1873 by the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church and located in Marshall. Tillotson College in Austin was founded in 1877 by the American Missionary Association of the Congregational Church, although it was not actually opened until 1881, the same year that Bishop College was established in Marshall by the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Mary Allen Seminary, a girls' school owned and controlled by the Presbyterian Board of Missions for Freedmen, opened its doors in 1887 in Crockett. Several other institutions were founded in later years, including Samuel Huston College in Austin, which

¹⁷Kelly Miller, "The Higher Education of the Negro is at the Crossroads," Education Review 72(December 1926):272. Professor Miller was long associated with Howard University, as professor of mathematics and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

¹⁸Holmes, Evolution of Negro College, p. 67.

opened in 1900.¹⁹

The curricula of these institutions followed in general the pattern of the classical academies and colleges in which the white faculties had been trained, a situation which generated considerable criticism and ridicule among Southern whites. Stories were told of "the kitchen scullion descanting upon Kant" and "the hotel waiter revelling in the glories of the Renaissance."²⁰ Many educators, black and white, eventually questioned the value of the traditional classical education for either race. Nevertheless, the early founders, through their dedication and high ideals, "gave to the freedmen a more precious heritage than any type of curriculum could possibly provide."²¹ "However mistaken the Northern denominational bodies may have been in their educational theories, without their zeal the Negro race would have been lacking the leadership which the first generation out of slavery furnished, the greater part of which was the product of these schools," wrote one historian of the movement.²²

¹⁹U.S., Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, Negro Education: A Study of the Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States, by Thomas Jesse Jones, Bulletin, 1916, Nos. 38 and 39 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917; reprint ed., 2 vols., New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 2:580-84, 594, 596 (hereafter cited as U.S. Bur. of Ed. Bulletin, 1916).

²⁰Kelly Miller, "The Practical Value of Higher Education of the Negro," Education 36 (December 1915):238.

²¹U.S. Bur. of Ed. Bulletin, 1916, 1:56.

²²Holmes, Evolution of Negro College, pp. 70-71.

Inspired by the example of the Northern-sponsored schools, church boards of the various Negro denominations established additional institutions. Recognizing that blacks could not depend indefinitely on white benevolence, they were determined to help themselves wherever possible. The Texas Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church established Paul Quinn College in Waco in 1881. The various Negro Baptist conventions founded Hearne Academy in Hearne (1881), Guadalupe College in Seguin (1884), Houston College in Houston (1885), Central Texas College in Waco (1901), and Butler College in Tyler (1905), as well as several less important schools. Texas College, opened in 1895 under the auspices of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, was also located in Tyler.²³ These Negro-sponsored institutions adopted the same curricula as those schools under the direction of white boards.

In attempting to provide Negro youth with an opportunity for a higher education, the intentions of whites and blacks alike were beyond reproach, but the lack of cooperation and planning was appalling. Two Negro institutions existed simultaneously in each of four Texas cities (Marshall, Tyler, Waco, and Austin), while five such schools were located within a sixty mile radius in East Texas.²⁴ Kelly Miller observed that "every denomination is anxious to

²³U.S. Bur. of Ed. Bulletin, 1916, 2:576, 586-89. The only state-supported school, Prairie View Industrial and Normal College, was established in 1879.

²⁴Davis, Negro Education in East Texas, p. 108.

have its own schools, to enforce its own principles, and inculcate its own doctrines . . . [thus] denominational rivalry impedes cooperation."²⁵ Some of the schools were organized to satisfy the ambitions of a church or an individual desiring to manage a school. The result was a wasteful duplication that made financial support for each inadequate.²⁶

Another serious problem that affected all of the so-called colleges, in Texas as in other states, was the necessity of offering remedial work to the poorly prepared students. The inferior quality of elementary schools and the scarcity of Negro high schools made it imperative for the black colleges to direct much of their attention to work on a lower level. A large portion of the instruction was given in the primary and secondary departments; only a few students were engaged in collegiate work. Even when the public school system achieved some degree of proficiency on the elementary level, the church-related schools were reluctant to discontinue remedial work. At the same time, the Negro institutions were determined to offer college-level work, although their funds and facilities were severely strained. "Every school that teaches the least bit of classics is ambitious to confer the academic degrees," wrote Professor Miller. "The smaller and feebler colleges seem to make up

²⁵Kelly Miller, "The Education of the Negro in Report of the United States Commissioner of Education for 1900-1901, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1902), 1:837 (hereafter cited as Miller, Com. of Ed. Report, 1901).

²⁶U.S. Bur. of Ed. Bulletin, 1916, 1:151; Davis, Negro Education in East Texas, p. 110.

their deficiencies by the number and variety of degrees which they confer." In effect, the Negro institutions were attempting to take care of every phase of education from the elementary school through the college. Professor Miller earnestly recommended that the black colleges consolidate and coordinate their efforts; that the work of primary grade be relegated to the public schools; that the number of schools offering collegiate work be reduced, with some concentrating on thorough secondary work; and that those continuing to offer collegiate instruction raise their standards to an acceptable level.²⁷ His advice was not heeded.

Still another devisive element in the early history of black education was the controversy over the role of vocational courses in the institutions of higher learning. General Charles Chapman Armstrong, founder of Hampton Institute in Virginia, was among the first to challenge the prevailing educational methods, advising that an "abstract cultural curriculum was inadequate as a requisite program for the whole equation of racial needs."²⁸ In Armstrong's opinion, "the education needed is one that touches upon the whole range of life, that aims at the formation of good habits and sound principles, that considers the details

²⁷ Miller, Com. of Ed. Report, 1901, 1:831-42.

²⁸ General Charles Chapman Armstrong quoted in Miller, "Higher Education at Crossroads," p. 273.

of each day."²⁹ At Hampton he stressed manual training and industrial arts.

Armstrong's pupil and protege, Booker T. Washington, applied these same principles at Tuskegee Institute, which he founded in 1881. Questioning the emphasis on classical studies in most Negro colleges, Washington urged that "the education of the people of my race be so directed that the greatest proportion of the mental strength of the masses will be brought to bear upon the every-day practical things of life, upon something that is needed to be done, and something which they will be permitted to do in the community in which they reside."³⁰ He was concerned that young men were being educated in astronomy and Latin, but not in carpentry, architectural drawing, farming or engineering. He was discouraged to find young women who knew much about geography or theoretical chemistry, but nothing about nutrition and hygiene.³¹ The curriculum at Tuskegee included thirty-three trades and industries; the students learned by actually doing the work and were paid for the commodities they produced, thus enabling them to pay part or all of their expenses. Nevertheless, Tuskegee from the first maintained an academic department, recognizing that

²⁹General Armstrong quoted in U.S. Bur. of Ed. Bulletin, 1916, 1:10.

³⁰Booker T. Washington, "Industrial Education for the Negro" in The Negro Problem (New York: James Patt & Co., 1903; reprint ed., Miami: Mnemosyne Publishing, Inc., 1969), p. 17.

³¹Ibid., pp. 13-16.

the successful teaching of vocational courses involved a certain amount of scholarly preparation. Another goal of the school was to supply well-equipped teachers--"teachers able and eager to teach gardening and carpentry as well as grammar and arithmetic."³² According to the "Tuskegee Idea," correct education began at the bottom and expanded naturally as the necessities of the people expanded.³³ Washington explained:

I would not by any means have it understood that I would limit or circumscribe the mental development of the Negro student. No race can be lifted until its mind is awakened and strengthened. By the side of industrial training should always go mental and moral training, but the pushing of mere abstract knowledge into the head means little. . . .

I would not confine the race to industrial life, not even to agriculture, . . . but I would teach the race that in industry the foundation must be laid--that the very best service which any one can render to what is called the higher education is to teach the present generation to provide a material or industrial foundation. On such a foundation as this will grow habits of thrift, a love of work, economy, ownership of property, bank accounts. Out of it in the future will grow practical education, professional education, positions of public responsibility. Out of it will grow moral and religious strength. Out of it will grow wealth from which alone can come leisure and the opportunity for the enjoyment of literature and the fine arts.³⁴

Foremost of those who opposed the "Tuskegee Idea" was

³²Booker T. Washington, ed., Tuskegee and Its People: Their Ideals and Achievements (n.p.: D. Appleton & Co., 1905; reprint ed., New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), pp. 58, 61-62; Washington, "Industrial Education," pp. 20-21.

³³Washington, Tuskegee and Its People, p. 11.

³⁴Washington, "Industrial Education," pp. 16-18.

the Harvard-educated scholar W. E. Burghardt DuBois. Convinced that the Negro race, "like all other races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men," he urged that education of blacks deal first with this "Talented Tenth." This would be accomplished by the maintenance of a few quality institutions on the order of Atlanta, Fisk, and Howard Universities, offering a curriculum that emphasized Latin and Greek, English and modern languages, history and social science, natural science, mathematics, philosophy, and pedagogy, in that order.³⁵ DuBois held that Washington's program of industrial education had become "a gospel of Work and Money to such an extent as apparently almost completely to overshadow the higher aims of life," and he accused Washington of accepting the alleged inferiority of the Negro race.³⁶ While affirming the necessity of teaching the Negro to work steadily and skillfully and the importance of industrial schools in accomplishing these ends, DuBois nonetheless insisted that it was "industrialism drunk with its vision of success, to imagine that its own work can be accomplished without providing for the training of broadly cultured men and women to teach its own teachers, and to teach the teachers of the public schools."³⁷ Any attempt to

³⁵W. E. Burghardt DuBois, "The Talented Tenth" in The Negro Problem, pp. 33, 45-49.

³⁶W. E. B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folk (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1903; reprint ed., New York: New American Library, 1969), p. 87

³⁷DuBois, "Talented Tenth," p. 61.

establish a system of common or industrial schools without first providing for the higher training of teachers was a waste of money. Thus for DuBois, an effective system of education for blacks began with a quality college or university, competent to train the best of the Negro youth as teachers, professional men, and leaders.³⁸

The spirited warfare that arose between the two types of education was well underway by the 1890's and continued to be a controversial issue for some twenty-five years. Negro leaders in Texas, as elsewhere, generally preferred the classical type of school. They interpreted the trend toward vocational education as an effort to hinder their intellectual and social progress and to keep them confined to the "lower order of occupations."³⁹ Believing that advancement depended on their having the same cultural training as whites, they were slow to realize that both forms of education were essential to a full development of the race. Only a few of the early Negro leaders recognized that vocational education was a growing trend in white as well as black education. "Hampton and Tuskegee typify national, rather than racial educational ideals," wrote Kelly Miller in 1915. "The two types of education are no longer contrasted as antagonistic and inconsistent, but

³⁸DuBois, Souls, p. 90; "Talented Tenth," pp. 58-59.

³⁹Eby, Development of Education, p. 271.

compared as common factors of a joint product."⁴⁰ Both Miller and Dr. Horace Bumstead, president of Atlanta University, urged that education for Negro youth be adapted to the needs, capacities, and probable vocation of the individual student. Negroes did not form a homogeneous mass; varied forms of educational effort were needed. An ideal system, wrote Bumstead, would offer "to every negro youth, as to every white youth, an educational opportunity commensurate with his ability as an individual."⁴¹

That Negro colleges, for a variety of reasons, failed to adapt to the needs of the race was indicated in a massive study of private and higher schools for Negroes published in 1917. The purpose of this comprehensive survey, conducted through a cooperative effort of the United States Bureau of Education and the Phelps-Stokes Fund, was "to supply through an impartial investigation a body of facts which could be available to all interested, showing the status of Negro education, by an examination of the various colleges and public and private schools for colored youth in the United States." It was believed that such a thorough and impartial examination would bring about improvement in education for blacks and increased support for the more

⁴⁰Miller, "Practical Value of Higher Education," pp. 235-36.

⁴¹Horace Bumstead, "Higher Education of the Negro, Its Practical Value" in Report of the United States Commissioner of Education, 1902, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 1:224-25; Miller, Com. of Ed. Report, 1901, 1:784.

capable and deserving institutions.⁴²

The status of Negro education in the United States, as determined by the experts who conducted the survey in 1914 and 1915, was most unsatisfactory. While recognizing the efforts of many to provide for the race, the committee concluded that "inadequacy and poverty are the outstanding characteristics of every type and grade of education for Negroes in the United States. No form of education is satisfactorily equipped or supported." This was particularly true of those institutions claiming to give college education. To begin with, only ten percent of the total enrollment of these so-called colleges were actually doing college-level work, while up to seventy-five percent of the pupils were elementary. Maintaining college classes for so small a number worked to the detriment of the elementary and secondary departments, as well as to the development of any real college program. Yet most of the institutions included a college department, in part because of the desire of different denominations to have the members of their church attend their own schools.⁴³

The Negro colleges were further handicapped by their continued emphasis upon classical rather than practical education. The committee observed that the directors of these schools "have had an almost fatalistic belief not only

⁴²U.S. Bur. of Ed. Bulletin, 1916, 1:xii. The Phelps-Stokes Fund, established in 1910, made its greatest contribution to Negro education as a source and a disseminator of information.

⁴³Ibid., 1:9, 55-56.

in the powers of the college, but in the Latin and Greek features of the course. The majority of them seem to have more interest in the traditional forms of education than in adaption to the needs of their pupils and their community." This attitude was attributed to the isolation of Negro educators from modern educational trends due to segregation and to their distrust of any departure from methods and customs which they thought were standard in white institutions. Limited income and faculties, along with inadequate laboratory and library facilities, made the introduction of newer college courses even more difficult for the Negro institutions.⁴⁴

A further hindrance was the poor quality of management, particularly in those schools owned and managed by Negro denominational boards. While noting that "it is not to be expected that the pioneer efforts of a race will be made without faults and weaknesses," the survey committee concluded that the organization and administration of a large number of institutions were seriously deficient. The most common defects were inadequate financial accounts and school records, elaborate organization of work, and irresponsible or indifferent boards of trustees. Incompetent financial accounting, without adequate checks on either income or expenditures, was a universal failing; audits were frequently made by ministers or laymen with practically no knowledge of

⁴⁴Ibid.

bookkeeping. The difficulty of finding capable men to direct the denominational schools was complicated by the interplay of church politics and personal rivalries.⁴⁵

Foremost among the problems that hampered the development of quality education for Negroes was the lack of financial support. Private institutions provided most of the educational opportunities above the elementary level; only 28 institutions of higher learning were under public control at the time of the Bureau of Education survey, as opposed to 625 Negro schools under private control.⁴⁶ The latter were almost entirely dependent upon private funds. The survey report stated: "Though private aid has been liberally given and a number of the private institutions do very effective work, Negro schools in the aggregate undoubtedly form the most impoverished group of educational institutions in the United States." The committee issued an emphatic appeal to county, state, and federal governments to increase their support of Negro education. At the same time, it urged the black leaders to concentrate on developing a few well-selected institutions of genuine college grade and to adapt their curricula to the needs of modern society.⁴⁷

The publication of the Bureau of Education report caused considerable dismay and concern; institutions of

⁴⁵ Ibid., 1:13-15, 151-53.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 1:303.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1:7-8.

higher learning for blacks needed immediate and serious attention. After reacting initially with disappointment and resentment, all groups involved began a concentrated effort to correct deficiencies and upgrade the quality of the Negro institutions. Although slowed by World War I, improvements and adjustments were evident during the next decade, and interest in standardization and accreditation began to emerge.⁴⁸

At the same time that the U.S. Bureau of Education made its study of Negro education, the Texas State Department of Education began its effort to standardize all institutions of higher learning, black and white, and to bring them up to the level of genuine college work. The Superintendent of Public Instruction had been authorized by the legislature in 1893 to issue state teachers' certificates and to determine which institutions would be recognized as colleges or universities of the "first class." However, standards were low and degree requirements were lax.⁴⁹ Then in 1915 the State Board of College Examiners, working with the College Section of the State Teachers' Association, adopted stricter criteria for evaluating colleges and universities. Minimum standards were set for departmental organization, faculty qualifications, laboratory and library

⁴⁸Holmes, Evolution of Negro College, pp. 161-62, 181.

⁴⁹H. P. N. Gammel, comp., Laws of Texas, 1822-1897, 10 vols. (Austin: Gammel Book Co., 1898), 10:635; Eby, Development of Education, p. 298.

facilities, teaching loads, and other facets of institutional operation. Any four-year college or university meeting these requirements was placed on the accredited list, and the graduates of such institutions might then be granted permanent teaching certificates valid anywhere in the state of Texas. The Board of Examiners also established the procedure by which an institution secured recognition as "first class."⁵⁰ Although most teachers continued to obtain certificates by taking state examinations, the setting of minimum standards for senior colleges was a major step toward the standardization of Texas' institutions of higher learning.

Even more significant in the standardization movement was a law passed in 1921 by the Texas Legislature which stipulated that, except for certain temporary certificates, all teaching certificates in Texas would be based on college training. In preparation for implementation of the law in 1925, the Board of Examiners in 1923 adopted minimum standards for junior colleges, teachers' colleges, and colleges for special subjects; standards previously adopted for senior colleges remained in effect. If an institution was ranked by the Department of Education as "first class"

⁵⁰ Texas, Department of Education, Minutes of the State Board of Examiners, 1915-1931, Texas Education Agency, Division of Teacher Education, Austin, Texas, p. 33 (hereafter cited as Board of Examiners Minute Book); Texas, Department of Education, The Certification of Teachers in Texas, Bulletin, July 1915, No. 43, pp. 19-21, 26.

in any of these groups, work done therein was accepted for Texas teachers' certificates. In order to be placed on the accredited list, an institution made application to the Board of Examiners. The board then sent a qualified examiner to inspect equipment and standards of instruction in the school making application; upon his recommendation the school received "such rating as the standards of its work may justify." Each school placed on the accredited list was to be thoroughly inspected from year to year and could be suspended if it failed to maintain the approved standards of classification. In order to upgrade the teaching profession, the law required that more emphasis be given to courses dealing with teaching methods.⁵¹

The 1921 certification law, which remained in effect for many years, greatly stimulated the development of Negro colleges in the 1920's and 1930's, increasing their enrollment and strengthening their role as the primary training ground for black teachers. Attendance steadily increased in the decade following World War I, in part because of the teacher training function, but also because of higher wages in general and federal aid to ex-soldiers.⁵² The shift in

⁵¹Board of Examiners Minute Book, pp. 220-22; Texas, Department of Education, Rules and Regulations Governing State Teachers' Certificates, Bulletin, 1926, No. 201, pp. 13-14, 23-27.

⁵²Harry W. Greene, "The Present Status of Negro College Education in Texas" in Proceedings of the First Annual Session of the Conference on Education for Negroes in Texas, Prairie View Standard 17(June 1930):27; Eby, Development of Education, p. 273.

the distribution of students from lower to higher levels was even more notable. Of the total enrolled in Negro institutions of higher learning in 1921-22, only fifteen percent were of college grade; eighty-five percent of the work was still being done on the high school and elementary levels. By 1931-32, sixty percent were college students, a remarkable reversal of distribution in just eleven years.⁵³ Only in the years after World War I could the Negro institutions be designated as colleges in the true sense of the word, so strong had been the elementary and secondary emphasis before that time.⁵⁴

Although the Negro colleges made remarkable progress along many lines, a second survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Education in 1926-28 revealed persistent weaknesses. When measured by American collegiate standards as a whole, the black institutions under private control were found deficient in financial support, in library facilities, in scientific equipment, in pay scale, and in administration.⁵⁵ Negro educators were well aware of the frustrations of their profession: the shortage of well-trained teachers, the low

⁵³Fred McCuistion, Higher Education of Negroes (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, 1933), pp. 12-14.

⁵⁴Holmes, Evolution of Negro College, p. 184.

⁵⁵U.S., Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, Survey of Negro Colleges and Universities, Bulletin, 1928, No. 7 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1929), pp. 35-49. While not as extensive as the 1916 report, this survey supplied a valuable body of factual material relative to the Negro college.

salaries and lack of advancement, the large yearly turnovers in staff, the high teacher-pupil ratio, and the cultural and intellectual isolation of the black professor. They knew that their curricula lacked breadth, lagging behind in vocational and laboratory courses; they continued to offer traditional subjects because these could be taught more cheaply. They listed insufficient income and endowment as a perennial problem.⁵⁶ The onset of the Great Depression greatly intensified these problems, making it increasingly difficult for black institutions to keep up with modern demands. "The depression bears hardest upon the Negro who is least able to bear it, and makes him least competent to maintain his own educational enterprise," wrote Kelly Miller in 1932.⁵⁷

When in 1930 the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools assumed responsibility for examining and rating the Negro colleges in its area, its findings confirmed what was already known about the deficiencies of the black institutions. When measured by the same standards used for white schools, only five Texas institutions were approved

⁵⁶Jackson Davis, "Outlook for the Professional and Higher Education of Negroes," Journal of Negro Education 2(July 1933):404; Charles H. Thompson, "The Problem of Negro Higher Education," Journal of Negro Education 2(July 1933):267; Greene, "Present Status of Negro Education," pp. 29-32.

⁵⁷Kelly Miller, "Editorial Comment: Negro Education and the Depression," Journal of Negro Education 2(January 1933):2.

as meeting requirements of the Southern Association.⁵⁸

While commenting favorably on the great advancement made by the black institutions, the Southern Association made the following comments in 1933:

The lack of financial support and security constitutes the outstanding problem of the private colleges, many of which are experiencing great difficulty in supporting an adequate program manned by a sufficiently-trained personnel. . . .

Another major problem of higher education is that of the small college. Much of the highest quality of college work has been and is being done by the small independent college which has had wise leadership and a reasonable income. This type of college has succeeded because it has placed the emphasis on quality of work instead of enrollment and buildings. Such colleges will continue to live and serve along with the larger and stronger public and private institutions which are developing.

On the other hand there are entirely too many small anemic institutions suffering from lack of support, lack of vision, denominational prejudice, etc. . . . Denominations and boards of control are struggling to maintain many of these schools, and are expending funds out of proportion to the quality of work offered or number of students served. They are not necessarily poor because they are small but too often they are small because they are poor. . . .

. . . There are simply more institutions of this type than are needed or can expect to live and serve on a plane worthy of the church.

The future of these small, struggling colleges is one of the serious problems connected with higher education. Most of them have personal and denominational ties which are of long standing and will be difficult to alter. However, when we consider that the purpose back of them is to develop character and leadership for the church and the race, it seems that farsighted church leaders would realize these purposes could be attained

⁵⁸McCuistion, Higher Education, p. 27. The five institutions were Bishop College, Wiley College, Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College, Mary Allen Seminary, and Houston Municipality Junior College for Negroes.

much better and at equal or less cost, by maintaining fewer but better institutions. . . .⁵⁹

Thus, the fate of the Negro college remained uncertain as the depression deepened. Of the Texas institutions, some failed, others struggled to stay open, and a few grew stronger. Guadalupe College, beset by the problems identified in the various reports, continued to operate until the summer of 1936. A disastrous fire, which destroyed the main building on February 9th of that year, dealt a blow from which the school never recovered.

The story of Guadalupe College, as a part of the history of education for blacks, merits closer investigation and interpretation. The individuals, locations, and events described in the following chapters touch upon the lives of many persons in Guadalupe County and upon Negro Baptists throughout the state. It is the purpose of this study not only to chronicle events in the history of the school, but also to evaluate its contribution to the larger development of the Negro people.

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 21-24.

CHAPTER II

GUADALUPE COLLEGE: THE EARLY YEARS

1884-1906

The development of education for Negroes in Guadalupe County followed the pattern prevalent throughout Texas. The Negro churches, which emerged after the Civil War as social and cultural centers for the race, provided the earliest learning opportunities. The first school for blacks in Seguin was opened in a one-room Methodist church, in an area known as "Methodist Hill." Pupils of all ages attended; the teacher was a Mr. VanDine, a Northerner who came to Seguin during Reconstruction.¹ A school was conducted for some time in a small building on East Court Street; a congregation of black Baptist worshipped in the same structure. When the Baptists moved to "Baptist Hill" in 1874, they erected a twenty-by-forty foot frame building to serve as a church and a public day school.²

¹Interview with Mrs. Marian Fennell, Seguin, Texas, 2 May 1979. The area on West Court Street near the present location of Wesley-Harper United Methodist Church was called "Methodist Hill" because members of that denomination concentrated their homes around their church. The area on Guadalupe Street bordering the Second Baptist Church was known as "Baptist Hill," according to Mrs. Fennell.

²Second Baptist Church, Celebrating Our 112th Church Homecoming Anniversary (Seguin, Texas: 609 S. Guadalupe,

The church-sponsored schools were the only facilities for blacks until the implementation of the "community system" in 1877. At that time, Guadalupe County residents organized some fifty-seven school communities; those established by Negroes included Cottonwood, Sweet Home, Zion Hill, Abraham Lincoln, and Capota Community Schools.³ When local citizens created the Seguin Independent School District in 1892, Lincoln School, located within the city limits, came under the jurisdiction of the district, along with Seguin High School. Both facilities included grades one through nine.⁴

With children in rural areas attending the numerous one-room community schools and those within the city limits attending Lincoln School, education for blacks was slowly making progress. Much of the success was due to the efforts of the Negro Baptists of Guadalupe County, who led the way in organizing community schools, in supplying teachers, and in supporting the system as best they could. They were guided in these endeavors by the Reverend Leonard

1977), p. 3; Guadalupe Baptist District Association, Centennial, 1873-1973 (n.p., 1973), p. 75: Fennell Interview. This is one version of the founding of schools for blacks in Seguin; another oral tradition holds that the first school for blacks was established by W. B. Ball in 1871 at a different location. There are no records extant.

³Guadalupe County, County Treasurer's School Account Register, vol. A, pp. 7-26, Courthouse, Seguin, Texas.

⁴Seguin Independent School District, Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 12 July 1892-8 January 1915, Administrative Offices, Seguin, Texas.

Ilsley, a white itinerant preacher from Bangor, Maine. Although he had served in the Confederate Army, Ilsley considered himself a special missionary to the Negroes and devoted his life to the religious and educational needs of the race.⁵ He founded several black Baptist churches in the area and was instrumental in the organization in 1873 of the Guadalupe Baptist District Association, consisting of congregations located in Guadalupe and surrounding counties. From this organization came the leaders who established Guadalupe College; several of the founders of the school, including Hiram Wilson, William B. Ball, M. H. Bradford, and Peter Mays, were Baptist ministers and "moderators" of the Guadalupe Baptist District Association.⁶

Foremost of the early black leaders was the Reverend Dr. William Baton Ball, who served eight years as president of Guadalupe College and thirty-seven years as pastor of the Second Baptist Church. Ball, a veteran of the Civil and

⁵Seguin Enterprise, 10 July 1903 and 17 July 1903. Ilsley had come to Seguin before the Civil War; under his ministry the first white Baptist church was built in 1858. He served as a private in Company K of the Eighth Texas Infantry Regiment, C.S.A., a unit raised in Guadalupe County by Captain John Ireland. After the war Ilsley moved to a piece of land on the Guadalupe River, where he farmed rice and built a gin. He also raised broom corn, which he used to make brooms in "the first factory in Guadalupe County." A bachelor, he gave generously of his time and his means to the Negro people. In his last years he lived with the president of Guadalupe College, dying in 1903. Seguin Enterprise, 10 July 1903, 17 July 1903: Alwerd Max Moellering, "A History of Guadalupe County, Texas" (Master's thesis, University of Texas, 1938), pp. 126, 236; Fennell interview.

⁶District Association, Centennial, p. 75. The title of moderator is equivalent to president or chairman.

Indian Wars, arrived in Seguin in 1871; he quickly became involved in the education of his people.⁷ It was Ball who, at a meeting of the Guadalupe Baptist District Association, first presented the idea of a Negro Baptist college to train leaders in religion and education. Led by Ball, Ilsley, Wilson, and Mays, the Association made plans to purchase a school building owned by Jesuit priests and to establish an institution of higher learning.⁸

The property in question, located three blocks west of the Court House square, had housed schools of one kind or another since the 1850's. The facility was purchased in October, 1884, from Father Louis Morandi by the trustees of the Guadalupe Baptist District Association for the sum of sixty-five hundred dollars. The trustees who signed the promissory note were W. B. Ball, M. H. Bradford, John Sheffield, H. R. Green, Jeff Hysaw, Peter Mays, Isham

⁷William B. Ball to George W. Brackenridge, 18 September 1919, Personal Files of Gilbert Denman, Jr., San Antonio, Texas; A. W. Jackson, A Sure Foundation (Houston, Texas: By the Author, 3304 Holman Avenue, n.d.), pp. 587-88. Ball taught in the early church sponsored schools and then in several of the community schools throughout the county, including Lincoln School from 1877-1893. When that school became part of the Seguin Independent School District, Ball was elected principal in 1893, but he declined for reasons unknown. He accepted the position in 1896 and held the job until he resigned in 1906 to become president of Guadalupe College. In 1925 Lincoln School was renamed Ball High School in his honor. County Treasurer's School Account Register; Minutes of the Board of Trustees, S.I.S.D.

⁸District Association, Centennial, p. 75.

McKnight, Louis Stephens, and Cy Walton.⁹ The property comprised Lots One, Two, Three, and Four in Block Thirty of the Acre Lots of Seguin, and a strip of land sixty feet wide adjoining Block Thirty on the west side, to be held in trust "for the uses and purpose of a school for said Association." Included were a three-story stone building and two frame structures. The trustees paid Morandi twelve hundred dollars in cash and executed notes for the balance, to be paid in full by October, 1887.¹⁰

For several years thereafter Ball conducted a public school in the facility acquired from the Jesuits. Then in 1887 the dream of a Negro Baptist college became a reality when the first session of Guadalupe College opened and the institution "entered upon the work of higher education among Negroes of the Southwest."¹¹ In March, 1888, the State of Texas granted a charter to the "College of the Guadalupe Baptist Association" under the state laws of incorporation. The purpose of this corporation, as stated in the charter, was to "promote education;" the period of

⁹Guadalupe County, Deed Records, vol. V, pp. 332-34, Courthouse, Seguin, Texas. Ball, Bradford, and Mays were ministers; Sheffield and Bradford both taught in community schools; McKnight was a blacksmith; the others were farmers.

¹⁰Guadalupe County, Deed Records, vol. V, pp. 332-34; Lane, History of Education in Texas, p. 118.

¹¹"Brief Historical Note," Clipping from the Personal Files of Mrs. Eugenia McKnight, Seguin, Texas; David Abner, Jr., to the Seguin Enterprise, 22 May 1903; Abner to Enterprise, 3 February 1893.

incorporation was fifty years. The charter stipulated that the school property could not be converted into stock and empowered the trustees to "make all necessary by-laws, elect and employ officers, provide for filling vacancies, appoint and remove professors, teachers, agents and employees, and fix their compensation, confer degrees and do and perform any necessary acts to carry into effect the object of this corporation." The nine men who had initially purchased the school property were named as trustees for the first year.¹² They, in turn, chose J. H. Garnett as the first president.¹³ Because the debt against the school property had not been fully repaid, the trustees secured a loan in the amount of \$5,760, paid their debt to Morandi, and proceeded with the business of operating a college.¹⁴

Little is known about Guadalupe College during the presidency of Garnett, but the scanty evidence available suggests that the school prospered. Garnett's successor described him as having done "noble and lasting work among this people."¹⁵ The local newspaper complimented Garnett on the exhibition presented by his students at the Armory of the Seguin Guards, commenting that "those who attended

¹²Texas, Department of State, Charter of the College of the Guadalupe Baptist Association.

¹³Lane, History of Education in Texas, p. 118.

¹⁴Guadalupe County, Deeds of Trust, vol. E, p. 501; Deed Records, vol. Z, p. 152.

¹⁵Abner to Seguin Enterprise, 3 February 1893.

speak in praise of the manner in which the elaborate program was carried out."¹⁶ In October, 1891, Garnett was succeeded by David Abner, Jr., and Guadalupe College entered a period of expansion and growth.

The Reverend David Abner, Jr., Ph.D., possessed exceptional leadership qualities. The son of a former slave who himself became an outstanding citizen of Harrison County, Abner received an extensive education for his day and time. At age twenty-four he was elected to the faculty of Bishop College where he taught until called to the presidency of Guadalupe College.¹⁷ Abner's educational background and forceful personality served him well in his new position of responsibility. Under his direction Guadalupe College enjoyed its greatest measure of success. A spell-binding orator, he conducted state-wide fund-raising campaigns, reducing the school's debt to "within two thousand

¹⁶ Seguin Enterprise, 18 June 1891.

¹⁷ Born November 25, 1860, in Upshur County, Texas, Abner first attended Wiley College, then Straight University and Fisk University, majoring in Latin and Greek. He returned to Marshall to teach at Centennial Academy, the forerunner of Bishop College, and then entered Bishop in 1881, the year that it opened. He was the first graduate of Bishop College, finishing the classical course in 1884, and the first Negro to earn a degree from a Texas college. While teaching at Bishop, Abner also served as corresponding secretary of the Baptist State Convention of Texas and edited a paper for that body. He travelled extensively, lecturing on behalf of the State Convention and the American Baptist Home Mission Society. His father, David Abner, Sr., was a member of the Fourteenth Texas Legislature and a delegate to the 1875 Constitutional Convention. The senior Abner was elected treasurer of Harrison County and was one of the two original black trustees

dollars" by February, 1893.¹⁸ Abner was particularly skillful at cultivating community support for Guadalupe College, directing a series of informative letters and announcements to the local newspaper and calling attention to the activities of the institution. His letters frequently included an appeal for financial aid. His shrewd play on words and emotions can be seen in his correspondence of February 3, 1893:

From 1887 to 1893 nine hundred and eighty-seven different young men and women have attended the school. . . . The attendance last session was great, but this session finds us with about double our number last year and yet they come. Every part of Texas is represented in the school besides a fair representation from Arizona and Oklahoma territories. Necessity demands that we build. Though crowded to overflowing students come in every week from near and distant parts of the State. We can't say to them, you must go back, so we squeeze them in, from three to seven in a room. . . .

While the school is a lasting benefit to this people, in giving intellectual training, in establishing moral principles and polishing habits and manners--endeavoring to make good citizens of all who attend. Yet we hope to make it a blessing to all the people--a creditable enterprise to our grand little city and excellent community ban which, and I speak it as I feel and experience it, there is none more generous in the state. Hundreds of dollars were spent in this community last session. We appeal to our friends, white and black, to help us in our undertaking. We are encouraged at the spirit and financial aid already given and we pray a continuation. Next session it is our aim to accomodate 150 boarders on the premises. We hope none¹⁹ will refuse us as we stir among them for help.

of Bishop College. Melvin J. Banks, "The Year of the Bell," Bishop College Herald, 95(Spring 1977):8-9; William J. Simons, Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive and Rising (n.p., 1887; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968), pp. 1119-1121.

¹⁸Abner to Enterprise, 3 February 1893.

¹⁹Ibid.

Nine months later Abner again appealed to the citizens of Seguin to support a particular endeavor of Guadalupe College. In line with the trend toward vocational training, the Board of Trustees had decided to include sewing and carpentry in the curriculum, employing "able and experienced teachers" for the new courses. Declaring that "training the brain in itself is good but training the head and hand is better," Abner lavished praise on the local citizens and asked for contributions:

. . . The proclamation has gone out that Seguin is one of the most healthy places in the South, and its citizens very hospitable. We have sincerely given this out as the truth. Better treatment, and greater wishes of prosperity have been given no school in the South than have been given this school by its citizens, white and black. . . . We shall not soon forget the very hearty endorsement that has been given us by all the people, and truly thank them for every favor shown us in assisting us to make the school what it should be. . . . We wish to make an appeal to friends to help us in our carpentry department. We need lumber, tools, and money. We will heartily accept either.²⁰

Abner promoted recognition for his institution in other ways. The college published its own newspaper; the Seguin Enterprise described the publication as a credit to the school, observing that "in this new enterprise we detect the skill and energy of Professor Abner."²¹ Elaborate programs and concerts marked the end of each session, with the public cordially invited to attend. The closing exercises in 1903

²⁰David Abner, Jr., to the Seguin Enterprise, 10 November 1893.

²¹Seguin Enterprise, 2 March 1894.

lasted for the better part of a week and "attracted a large delegation of colored visitors from every part of the state," as well as crowds of local citizens, "both white and colored." Mayor Joe Zorn addressed a morning session; that evening the music department presented "The Prodigal Son" in Klein's Opera House. The next day's activities featured groundbreaking ceremonies for a new building.²²

Recognizing that the success of Guadalupe College depended on white approval as well as money, Abner strove to maintain proper relations between the institution and the community. Invitations to college functions noted that "proper seating arrangements will be made."²³ When a group of blacks included the college campus as part of a Sunday tour, Abner quickly informed the Enterprise that he had been out of town on the day of the tour and that neither he nor any other officer of the school had been responsible for the excursion. He assured the public that no beer had been sold on the grounds and that no inappropriate exercises had been

²²Seguin Enterprise, 2 June 1893, 24 March 1893, 22 May 1903, 29 May 1903, 27 May 1904, 26 May 1905. According to Dr. Melvin J. Banks, Abner was also active in Republican Party politics during this time period, acting as a delegate to Republican National Conventions from the time of Garfield to Taft. Abner was highly involved in Texas politics as well, as evidenced by a letter to Governor James S. Hogg in which Abner promised to deliver nine hundred Negro votes from Guadalupe County and "thousands without," claiming control of "three good negro journals of the state." David Abner, Jr., to James S. Hogg, 19 September 1892, James Stephen Hogg Papers, University of Texas Archives, Austin, Texas.

²³Seguin Enterprise, 22 May 1903.

conducted on the Sabbath.²⁴

On the whole, Abner's promotional efforts proved successful; community opinion of the school, while reflecting the white bias of the time, was quite favorable. Seguin's mayor complimented the institution on its "exceptional discipline," noting that "not in one single instance had there been a complaint made to him of any disorder, regardless of the fact that more than 2,000 pupils from every part of the United States attended." The Reverend T. J. Dodson, pastor of the white Baptist church, attested to the "discipline and moral training of the college," adding that "in not one single instance had there been a graduate of the Guadalupe or any other college charged with that nameless crime."²⁵ In order to promote financial support for the college, an unidentified white friend published a pamphlet featuring favorable editorial comments from newspapers in Galveston and Dallas and endorsements from state officials and prominent local businessmen. Unanimous in their praise of the school's administration and student body, these men concluded that harmonious race relations in Seguin were greatly facilitated by the presence and influence of Guadalupe College. The pamphlet quoted Mayor Zorn:

The people of Seguin feel a pride in the fact that the school has, since its incipency, boasted and

²⁴Seguin Enterprise, 25 September 1903.

²⁵Ibid., 29 May 1903.

built up from comparatively nothing as a Southern institution of learning. We are proud of your conduct in Seguin, proud of your advancement, and proud that the influence of this college is spreading its wings from one end of the South to the other. You have proven to the people of this section that the education of the negro is the only method of solving the race problem and you by your continued and persistent efforts will prove it to the world. . . .²⁶

In this climate of community support and approval, Guadalupe College flourished. Annual attendance was approximately three to five hundred pupils, of which 150 to 200 were boarding students. Expenses were reasonable; tuition and room rent were one dollar per month, board was eight dollars, and music lessons were \$2.50 per month extra.²⁷ Increasing enrollment made necessary the construction of two new buildings. The first, completed in 1893 and named in honor of the Reverend Ilsley, housed sixty-five young men and two teachers.²⁸ The second, a four-story structure erected in 1903-04 at a cost of fifteen thousand dollars, provided quarters for the girls and a chapel-auditorium. It was named in honor of Colonel George W. Brackenridge of San Antonio, the largest individual donor, who gave three thousand dollars toward its construction.²⁹

²⁶Prospects and General Outlook: The Guadalupe College As Others See It (n.p., [1903]).

²⁷Guadalupe College, Fifteenth Annual Catalog, Session of 1901-1902 (n.p., n.d.), p. 10.

²⁸Seguin Enterprise, 2 June 1893; Guadalupe College, Sixth Annual Catalog, 1892-1893 (Seguin, Texas: Enterprise Job Print, 1893), p. 2.

²⁹Seguin Enterprise, 29 May 1903, 27 May 1904; Fennell Interview. Brackenridge, a prominent San Antonio banker,

As the enrollment increased, the curriculum expanded accordingly. Emphasizing classical, normal, and theological training, the college offered courses in Latin, Greek Prose Composition, Mental and Moral Philosophy, Roman History, and New Testament Greek, as well as English, mathematics, history, geography, and science. By 1901 the administration had added industrial and mechanical departments, which taught sewing and millinery to the girls and carpentry, printing, and shoemaking to the boys. These divisions created revenue for the school and provided jobs for those students who needed financial assistance.³⁰ The acquisition in 1905 of a 216-acre tract of farm land located west of Seguin, a gift from Colonel Brackenridge, enabled the administration to increase its emphasis on "scientific farming." Abner was particularly pleased with this addition, since he was of the opinion that "there were too many young men of his race entering the learned professions and the ministry."³¹

Although professing to favor vocational education, which he recognized as the program that whites advocated for

was Guadalupe College's principal benefactor. Believing that "the only practical solution to the race question was to educate the negro up to the highest citizenship he was capacitated to reach," he made education for blacks one of his major philanthropies. He was attracted to Guadalupe College through W. B. Ball, although it is not known where or when they first met. Marilyn McAdams Sibley, George W. Brackenridge: Maverick Philanthropist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973), p. 168.

³⁰ Guadalupe College, Catalog, 1892-1893, pp. 1-6; Guadalupe College, Catalog, 1901-1902, pp. 10-15.

³¹ Seguin Enterprise, 9 June 1905.

blacks, Abner fought against the intellectual subjugation of his people and rebelled against an attempt by the New York-based American Baptist Home Mission Society to regulate the black Baptist schools in Texas. At the 1891 meeting of the Negro Baptist State Convention, a representative of the Home Mission Society submitted a proposed charter of incorporation creating the "Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention of the State of Texas." This corporation was to cooperate "financially and otherwise" with the Home Mission Society in the maintenance and direction of "such institutions of learning at such places and under such conditions as may to said Missionary and Educational Convention seem desirable." Institutions affiliated with this corporation could give instruction "only in subjects below collegiate and university grade."³² Thus, the Texas Baptists would be prohibited by the terms of the charter from owning or controlling a college for fifty years, the period of incorporation. Their schools would function as mere academies, feeding students to Bishop College, which was owned and controlled by the Home Mission Society. In addition, all money collected from Texas Baptists to support black education would be sent to the Home Mission Society office in New York, to be reapportioned to the various academies. The entire proposition was unacceptable to a large number

³²District Association, Centennial, p. 78.

of Negro Baptists.³³

This so-called "Unification Scheme" raised a storm of protest; controversy raged for two years, with Abner among those leading the opposition. Taking the position that "we are in the South white and colored to live and die, and know more about ourselves than anybody away from us," Abner stirred his followers by demanding, "How long will we let the white man keep locks and keys on our sons and daughters?"³⁴ While acknowledging that a period of white guardianship was needed after emancipation, a number of black Baptists felt that the time had come for them to prove that they could direct their own affairs. Upon learning that the controversial charter had already been filed and could not be rescinded, a large contingent walked out of the 1893 meeting of the State Convention and formed a second state association, the Missionary Baptist General Convention, which would "permit no outside interference to check its cause."³⁵ Some forty-four district associations aligned themselves with the General Convention and pledged allegiance to Guadalupe College; unrestricted by outside regulation, the institution continued to offer a traditional

³³ Ibid.; Annual Address of President L. L. Campbell to the General Convention in Session at San Antonio, Texas, October 24, 1923, in Minutes of the Missionary Baptist General Convention, pp. 1-4, Personal Files of the Rev. Marvin C. Griffin, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Austin, Texas.

³⁴ Seguin Enterprise, 10 November 1893; Jackson, Sure Foundation, p. 430.

³⁵ District Association, Centennial, p. 78; Minutes of Missionary Baptist General Convention, pp. 2-3.

collegiate curriculum and to award advanced degrees.³⁶

The controversy of 1891-93 created an opportunity for greater Negro independence, but the exercise of this freedom proved to be more difficult than expected. Personal rivalries and factional maneuvering were common within the ranks of the General Convention; cliques developed, consisting of strong leaders and loyal followers. Competition for positions of authority and for individual recognition hampered effective overall planning in the field of education. Instead of promoting Guadalupe College, thus insuring its continued success, rival groups within the Missionary Baptist General Convention founded competing institutions in Waco, Austin, Houston, and Oakwood. While it can be argued that the dearth of Negro high schools made necessary the establishment of numerous private facilities, nevertheless, these schools vied with Guadalupe College for pupils and money and divided the meager resources of the black Baptists.³⁷

Recognizing that lack of cooperation was hindering its cause, the Missionary Baptist General Convention in 1905 formed an Educational Board to supervise and support institutions under its jurisdiction. A "Correlation Plan"

³⁶ Minutes of the Missionary Baptist General Convention, p. 4. In the hierarchy of the Negro Baptist Church, local congregations voluntarily unite into district associations, which in turn affiliate with one of the statewide organizations known as conventions. There are presently four Negro Baptist State Conventions in Texas.

³⁷ Interview with the Rev. J. A. Kemple, West End Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas, 21 March 1979; U.S. Bur. of Education Bulletin, 1916, 1:153.

was developed which gave the convention more direct control of educational efforts. Under this "correlated system" a board of trustees for each school would be elected annually by the General Convention; five of these trustees were to be selected from the community where the school was located, to serve as a local board of management. Schools in the "correlated system" would be allowed to do academy- or college-level work "in proportion to their ability" and would receive financial aid "in proportion to their needs and condition."³⁸

Whatever the intentions of the Educational Board in proposing this "Correlation Plan," the Abner faction interpreted it as an attempt by rival factions to gain control of Guadalupe College. Abner had previously warned that "Austin wants the school moved up there. The citizens have guaranteed \$5,000 and all the land we want."³⁹ Leader of the pro-correlation group was the Reverend L. L. Campbell of Austin, moderator of St. John's District Association and president of the Missionary Baptist General Convention. Bitter accusations were made by both sides, including charges of financial misconduct against David Abner. The Campbell faction prevailed, and the "Correlation Plan" was

³⁸District Association, Centennial, p. 77; Jackson, Sure Foundation, p. 547.

³⁹Guadalupe College Recorder quoted in the Seguin Enterprise, 20 July 1894.

adopted.⁴⁰ A report of the General Convention explained that body's position:

It is our observation and experience that no one or two associations can or will successfully operate a school. It is possible, but improbable, for the simple reason that it takes more money than they are willing to give.

Since the practice of indiscriminately starting Baptist schools is wasteful and hurtful, making us less able to meet competition in education work, we raise the question whether it would not be better to have one, two, or three schools wisely located, properly equipped and supported, than to have a dozen or more so poorly equipped that they cannot render a high grade of service.⁴¹

This reasonable explanation was rejected by die-hard supporters of Guadalupe College, who accused Campbell of diverting funds to his personal project, St. John's Institute, and faulted the General Convention for promising aid that did not materialize.⁴²

Shortly after the adoption of the "Correlation Plan," Abner was discharged as president of Guadalupe College. In June, 1906, the Board of Trustees relieved him of his duties and appointed W. B. Ball as executive officer of the college. They issued a circular defending their actions, a portion of which was reprinted in the Enterprise:

We acted in good faith, without bias and free from malice, having no consideration before us but the highest good of Guadalupe College; how best we

⁴⁰District Association, Centennial, p. 76.

⁴¹U.S. Bur. of Ed. Bulletin, 1916, 1:153.

⁴²District Association, Centennial, p. 76; Kemple Interview; Interview with Mr. William C. Johnston, Seguin, Texas, 19 February 1979.

could conserve her interests and most faithfully carry out the important trust reposed in us by you. We thought these conditions inexcusably bad. When Prof. Abner took charge fifteen years ago there were two buildings and \$4,000 indebtedness against the school; now there are six buildings, all six mortgaged for only \$4,800, yet an indebtedness against the school of \$15,000.00 (Prof. Abner assisted in making this mortgage; it must have been the best he could make on the property.)

Taking this mortgage as an index of the real value of these improvements it is small indeed. On the other hand the debt is as disappointingly large--\$15,000 against \$4,000. Where is the progress? A local sentiment altogether favorable had been changed to one almost entirely antagonistic; a condition for collecting, the best in ten years, had not been taken advantage of, and, as a result, the school was \$2,412.21 behind in its running expenses, the worst financial condition in its history; the accounts of the school, instead of showing that accuracy expected, showed inaccuracies and discrepancies grave and questionable; instead of perfect liberty in allowing a perusal and auditing the books of the school, a studied and persistent refusal to allow such perusal and auditing; contrary to the helpful openness in letting the Board know its indebtedness to him, a constant and successful effort to keep them from knowing how much they owed him; where care should have been exercised to keep in repair the premises and buildings, careless neglect ran riot.

We thought these conditions demanded a change. We made it, and present you, reluctantly, but truthfully, some of the reasons why.⁴³

The dismissal of Abner was the first in a series of events that seriously damaged the reputation of Guadalupe College. In September, 1906, the College of the Guadalupe Baptist Association, Plaintiff, brought suit in District Court against Abner, alleging that he had misappropriated and embezzled \$32,408.18 in college funds. The plaintiff further charged that Abner, upon learning of his dismissal,

⁴³Seguin Enterprise, 17 August 1906.

had removed "blankets, quilts, bathtubs, and other equipment of the reasonable value of \$1,000.00" from the college premises and had "studiously and with malicious design injured the college buildings and other property."⁴⁴ The suit avowed that the local Board of Managers, resident trustees charged with responsibility for monthly audits, had never been supplied with itemized statements of receipts and disbursements, but rather with reports of a general nature, "which were not by them thoroughly understood, and which were deceptive." Two of the original trustees, W. B. Ball and Peter Mays, still serving in that capacity, were among those who swore that the allegations were true and correct.⁴⁵

Abner responded to the charges against him by filing a cross action alleging that the college owed him \$4,835 in back pay. He asserted that his monthly and annual financial reports had been approved without exception by the proper officers of the corporation and that the stockholders in annual meeting had then ratified the actions of the officers. Fourteen prominent stockholders, including seven members of the Board of Trustees, supported Abner, attesting to his "earnest, sincere, efficient and capable management of plaintiff corporation," and joined him in a plea for abatement of the original suit. These parties maintained that

⁴⁴Guadalupe County, 25th Judicial District Court Records, No. 8035: College of the Baptist Association v. David Abner, Jr., Courthouse, Seguin, Texas.

⁴⁵Ibid.

the trustees of Guadalupe College had never authorized the institution of a suit against Abner; rather, "one or two of the Trustees, personal enemies of defendant," had instigated the action.⁴⁶

The truth or falsity of the charges against Abner was never ascertained. The Missionary Baptist General Convention, meeting in October, 1906, adopted a resolution urging both sides to "compromise their differences outside of the courts," pointing out that "the course and final termination of said suit would prove damaging to one, the other, or both of the parties concerned."⁴⁷ After several delays and legal maneuvers, both parties agreed to settle out of court. On March 14, 1907, a judgment was entered which directed "that the plaintiff take nothing by its suit, and that defendant take nothing by his cross action, and that this judgment be final settlement of all matters in controversy between the plaintiff and defendant herein."⁴⁸ Thus, the issues remained unresolved, creating deep divisions among black Baptists and seriously impeding the progress of Guadalupe College.

The controversy between Abner and the Board of Trustees illustrates several basic flaws in the practices of Guadalupe College. In the first place, an excessive amount of authority and responsibility was placed in the hands of the president. As general manager, he had complete control of the

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

affairs of the institution, financial and otherwise. On the one hand, this concentration of power created the opportunity for misconduct; on the other, the delegation of so many duties to one person led to inefficiency and laxness. Secondly, inexperience in administrative affairs and ignorance of proper financial procedures were apparent in the conduct of the Board of Trustees. The entire Board met only once a year to review the progress of the college and routinely approved the actions of the president. The Board admitted that its approval of Abner's financial reports "was done unadvisably and through a misunderstanding of such reports."⁴⁹ People of limited education and experience were wrestling with problems that called for more expertise. Finally, the power and prestige attached to the office of the President of Guadalupe College engendered envy and fed the factionalism that was prevalent among black Baptists. The presidency became a symbol of ultimate achievement, a prize to be won, at the expense of others if necessary.

With the passing of the Abner era, Guadalupe College would enter a period of financial distress and decline. Whatever his mistakes and shortcomings, Abner had enhanced the institution's reputation, had increased enrollment dramatically, and had expanded the facilities and curriculum. Never again would the college achieve the prominence that it

⁴⁹Ibid.

enjoyed during the presidency of David Abner, Jr.⁵⁰

⁵⁰Upon leaving Guadalupe College, Abner became president of Conroe College, a private institution owned by a stock company. Abner owned over fifty percent of the stock. In 1917 he left Conroe College to become president of the Baptist Seminary in Nashville, although he soon resigned due to failing health. He died in 1928. U.S. Bur. of Ed. Bulletin, 1916. 2:602; Banks, "Year of the Bell," p. 9; Jackson, Sure Foundation, p. 431.

CHAPTER III

HARD TIMES, 1906-1921

The financial problems that originated during the presidency of David Abner presented a formidable challenge to W. B. Ball, who directed the affairs of Guadalupe College from 1906 until 1913. The trustees had incurred a debt of over fifteen thousand dollars, including a \$4,800 mortgage (plus interest) due in 1908, a balance of \$1160.16 owed on opera chairs ordered for the new auditorium, a \$2,412.12 deficit in running expenses, and various other unpaid bills.¹ To make matters worse, a fire severely damaged Ilsley Hall in late 1906.² Ball appealed to the black Baptists of Texas for assistance, and his troubles appeared to be resolved when, at a meeting of the Missionary Baptist General Convention, "enough was raised and pledged to pay off the present debt amounting to \$16,404.00 in one year or a little more."³

¹Seguin Enterprise, 2 November 1906, 17 August 1906; Guadalupe County, District Court Records, No. 9893: C. H. Myers & Co. v. Guadalupe College Baptist Association; Guadalupe County, Deeds of Trust, vol. K, p. 575.

²"Brief Historical Note." The fire was also mentioned by eyewitnesses Inman, Toliver, and Fennell.

³Seguin Enterprise, 2 November 1906; District Association, Centennial, p. 76.

Unfortunately, the promised relief did not materialize; the debt remained unpaid. The original note was renewed in 1908 and a second loan of twelve thousand dollars was secured in 1909 from H. P. Drought & Co. of San Antonio.⁴ The trustees incurred additional indebtedness when they purchased a home, located directly across Court Street from the college campus, to be used as the official residence of the president.⁵ In 1912 the Missionary Baptist General Convention assumed responsibility for the debt due H. P. Drought & Co.; in return, the trustees conveyed to the General Convention the deeds to the town property.⁶ In one of the few positive actions of this turbulent period, the trustees entered into an agreement with the Guadalupe Water Power Company whereby that company deeded to the college a 15.9-acre tract of land adjacent to the school's farm property. In exchange, the trustees granted permission to the Water Power Company to back water over a portion of their land in connection with the construction of a dam across the Guadalupe River. The Water Power Company also agreed to furnish electric current to the farm once its hydroelectric plants were

⁴Guadalupe County, Deeds of Trust, vol. M, p. 491, vol. N, p. 10.

⁵Guadalupe County, Deed Records, vol. 30, p. 20.

⁶Guadalupe County, Deed Records, vol. 37, pp. 289-291. The General Convention never paid the debt to H. P. Drought & Co. The notes were purchased from the latter by George W. Brackenridge, who then released Guadalupe College from all responsibility as part of the settlement of a subsequent lawsuit.

in operation.⁷

Failure by Guadalupe College to meet its financial obligations resulted in a series of lawsuits that threatened the continued existence of the school. A small judgment was paid off in cash by Ball, and a suit for payment of the debt owed on the opera chairs was settled out of court for three hundred dollars.⁸ Of more serious consequence were two lawsuits that resulted in the public auction of valuable college property. In 1913 two Guadalupe College teachers, P. H. Ransome and C. A. Wyman, sued their employers for non-payment of salaries. The County Court found in favor of the teachers, and when the judgments were not paid in full, the county judge ordered the sheriff to sell the school's property at public vendue.⁹ Sheriff W. F. Neubauer seized and offered for sale the lots on Court Street that comprised the main campus, as well as the lot occupied by the president's home. Only the timely intervention of George W. Brackenridge prevented a disaster. He purchased the college premises for \$317.21 and the residence for \$239.65, thus saving Guadalupe College from financial ruin and allowing classes

⁷Guadalupe County, Deed Records, vol. 42, pp. 576-78. By the terms of the agreement, the college retained ownership of the flooded property, which was to be used by the Water Power Company for a reservoir only and not for residential or other purposes.

⁸Guadalupe County, Deed Records, vol. 3, p. 214; District Court Records, No. 9893.

⁹Guadalupe County, County Court, Civil and Criminal Minutes, vol. D, pp. 132-33.

to continue uninterrupted.¹⁰

It was during this period of extreme distress that the United States Bureau of Education Survey Committee, conducting its comprehensive study of Negro higher education, visited the campus of Guadalupe College. The report of that committee, dated March 1914, revealed the extent to which the school had declined in the eight years of Ball's administration. Attendance, which had been listed in 1907 as 450 non-resident boarders, was recorded as eighty-six in 1914.¹¹ A facility that had been approved by the State Department of Education as a senior college from 1902 through 1906 was described in the report as "a school of elementary grade with a few pupils in secondary subjects."¹² The committee made several observations about the conduct and conditions of the college. Of the eighty-six pupils in attendance, fifty-seven were elementary and twenty-nine were secondary; thirty-eight were male and forty-eight were female. There were eight teachers; D. J. Hull was acting principal. Elementary work was being done in three "preparatory" years and in

¹⁰Guadalupe County, Deed Records, vol. 41, pp. 337-38.

¹¹Seguin Enterprise, 22 November 1907; U.S. Bur. of Ed. Bulletin, 1916, 2:576.

¹²U.S. Bur. of Ed. Bulletin, 1916, 2:576; Interview with Dr. Edward Vodicka, Division of Teacher Education, Texas Education Agency, Austin, Texas, 7 March 1979. According to research done by the Texas Education Agency, Guadalupe College received state approval as a senior college on 17 November 1902 and operated as such until 26 December 1906, when it was rejected. Standards applied in granting approval are unknown.

the first of the "academic" years. Optional industrial work was limited to "brief time in cooking, sewing, laundering, tailoring, and iron-work." Although the rooms were fairly well kept, the buildings were in bad repair. Since complete financial records were not being kept at the school and no details could be obtained from the treasurer, the committee estimated the value of the land at fifteen thousand dollars, the buildings at thirty-two thousand, and moveable equipment at three thousand.¹³ In light of its findings, the survey group suggested that Guadalupe College be reorganized, eliminating the elementary division, centering its work on secondary and teacher training courses, and including the "theory and practice of gardening" as a required subject. It further recommended that the administration be strengthened and that a simple system of accounts be installed, to be audited annually by an accredited accountant.¹⁴

The dismal conditions at Guadalupe College were not unique to that institution. Most of the schools surveyed in 1914-1915 were deficient in maintenance, in administration, and in organization of courses. Of the 3,757 Negro pupils attending twenty-nine private schools in Texas, only 872 were enrolled in secondary courses and 129 in college classes.¹⁵ The most pressing need, in the opinion of the

¹³U. S. Bur. of Ed. Bulletin, 1916, 2:576-77.

¹⁴Ibid., 2:569-71.

¹⁵Ibid., 2:22-23, 571-72.

committee, was to establish secondary schools with teacher training courses. Such training should be introduced "in every educational institution able to offer any or all of the subjects or activities usually given in such courses." A second general suggestion called for "more provision for instruction in agriculture and the problems of rural life."¹⁶

Thus, when the status of Guadalupe College is measured against the survey findings as a whole, it is apparent that the Seguin institution was suffering from problems common generally to Negro schools of that era. The missionary spirit that had prompted white support of black education had declined, giving way to an attitude of indifference. Most Negro institutions, Guadalupe College included, were left to struggle along on their own and to maintain their previous standards as best they could. They needed outside help, so the Bureau of Education logically recommended that the county, state, and federal governments provide increased support.¹⁷

For Guadalupe College, this crucial help came not from the government but from George W. Brackenridge. Even as the Bureau of Education was conducting its survey, supporters of the school were making plans for a new and better Guadalupe College, to be located on the farm west of Seguin. This tract of land, 216 acres on the northeast bank of the Guadalupe River, had been purchased by the trustees from T. H. Baker

¹⁶Ibid., 1:7-8.

¹⁷Ibid.

on April 29, 1905, for \$7550.¹⁸ Two days later, the promissory note executed by the trustees was purchased from Baker by Brackenridge, who then made a gift of the property to Guadalupe College. The deed stipulated that the college and its successors were to have full use of the property, perpetually free of charge, provided that the trustees never convey or encumber the land in any way.¹⁹ Prior to 1914 the farm property was largely cultivated; the rent derived from the acreage netted about six hundred dollars per year for the college.²⁰ But as conditions at the town campus worsened, with attendance declining and the buildings deteriorating, Brackenridge determined that a move was in order. Concerned that Negro youths had no skills or trades, he intended to convert Guadalupe College into a vocational institution. A campus located on the farm property would provide ample room for the teaching of agriculture, as well as carpentry, tailoring, and other trades.²¹

¹⁸Guadalupe County, Deed Records, vol. 28, p. 551.

¹⁹Guadalupe County, Deed Records, vol. 38, pp. 516-17.

²⁰U.S. Bur. of Ed. Bulletin, 1916, 2:576.

²¹Interview with Mr. John Inman, San Antonio, Texas, 21 March 1979. Inman attended Guadalupe College for six years, beginning in 1912 when the school was in town and then attended classes at the new site after 1914. He knew Brackenridge personally, often accompanying the old gentleman down to the river whenever he visited the campus. According to Inman, Brackenridge "was not a church man" and was concerned with vocational rather than religious education. Brackenridge told Inman that his contribution was for "the Negro youth of Texas" and not specifically for Baptists. Brackenridge's biographer confirms that "he pondered constantly over theological problems and often contributed

With this goal in mind, Brackenridge's attorneys drew up a contract with Windham Brothers Construction Company of Birmingham, Alabama, for the erection of two modern brick buildings on the farm property; W. A. Rayfield & Co., Architects, supplied drawings and specifications. The larger of the two buildings, a four-story structure, was to house administrative offices, classrooms, a library, and a cafeteria-chapel; the top two floors would serve as a girls' dormitory. A three-story building was designed to house the boys. Construction began on April 10, 1914, and was to be completed on or before October 14, 1914. When the regular spring session of Guadalupe College closed in May, the contractors were allowed to dismantle the buildings on the town property and to use salvageable materials in the erection of the new facilities. Total cost of the two buildings was \$49,600, "all heating, piping, and radiators omitted."²² As the "party who is furnishing the larger part of the money to pay for the work," Brackenridge could "appeal to the professor of architecture of the University of Texas for advice." He exercised this privilege, selecting professor F. E. Gieseche to supervise the project.²³

money to denominational causes, but he never joined a church." Sibley, George W. Brackenridge, p. 11.

²²Guadalupe County, Mechanics Lien Records, vol. 2, pp.40-41; Interview with Mr. Walter Toliver, Seguin, Texas, 14 February 1979.

²³Bexar County, 73rd Judicial District Court Records, No. B-10207: T. C. and B. L. Windham V. College of Guadalupe Baptist Association, et al., Courthouse, San Antonio, Texas; Guadalupe County, Mechanics Lien Records, vol. 2, p. 41.

At the time that the contract was drawn up, the trustees had thirty-one thousand dollars in cash. Brackenridge had told them that if they raised ten thousand dollars toward the building project, he would supply the remainder. To achieve this goal, they placed W. M. Fuller of Austin in charge of their fund-raising drive; several farmers mortgaged their land in order to further the cause.²⁴ The black Baptists met their quota of ten thousand dollars, and Brackenridge added an additional twenty-one thousand. The town property, bought by Brackenridge at a sheriff's sale earlier that year, was to be deeded to Windham Brothers in payment of the \$18,600 balance due on the contract.²⁵

The buildings were completed, and the twenty-eighth session of Guadalupe College opened in November, 1914. A new president, Dr. William Henry Moses of Tennessee, was chosen to direct the affairs of the institution. Dr. Ball, who retained the respect of both black Baptists and the white community in spite of his somewhat unsuccessful record as head of the school, retired to the position of President Emeritus, with a salary of sixty dollars per month.²⁶ On

²⁴Kemple Interview.

²⁵Guadalupe County, Mechanics Lien Records, vol. 2, p. 41. According to John Inman, Brackenridge gave additional money to furnish the buildings and to equip the main building with a furnace.

²⁶Ball to Brackenridge, 18 September 1919. At Ball's request, the Board of Trustees reduced his salary to ten dollars per month; by 1919 they owed him \$2,997.14 in back pay. He continued as pastor of the Second Baptist Church

the first day of classes, Brackenridge toured the facility, "walking all around and inspecting everything." He then addressed the students assembled in the chapel, saying, "This is your school. . . . We tried to put everything here that was available. . . . You all make good of it."²⁷

Approximately fifty-four students attended Guadalupe College during the 1914-1915 session. Room and board was fifteen dollars per month; most students paid at least half by working the land. Cotton, corn, grain, and produce from a large garden provided both money for expenses and food for the cafeteria. Boys and girls alike performed regular chores that kept the school operating on a daily basis. By participating in these activities, the students learned "habits of industry" and "the industrial art of cultivating the soil."²⁸ In short, the so-called "industrial feature" of the education offered was achieved through "learning by doing" rather than through structured courses in the various trades.

Despite Brackenridge's vision of Guadalupe College as a

until shortly before his death in 1923. His obituary in the Sequin Enterprise of 2 February 1923 described him as a "good, law-abiding citizen, respected and revered by his own race, and with many friends among the white people." He is buried in Riverside Cemetery beneath a marker that reads "Dr. W. B. Ball: Minister, Soldier, and Educator."

²⁷Toliver Interview. Mr. Toliver had just entered Guadalupe College as a sixteen-year-old student and was present on that memorable occasion.

²⁸Guadalupe County, District Court Records, No. 10016: College of the Guadalupe Baptist Association v. Y. A. Maddox, et al.; Inman Interview; Toliver Interview.

vocational school, the curriculum continued to emphasize traditional courses including Latin, Greek, mathematics, English, instrumental music, vocal music, science, Bible, and stenography.²⁹ A majority of the teachers held bachelor's degrees from out-of-state institutions. Unable to find employment in northern schools, they came by necessity to the small private schools in the South. The teachers were quite competent; instruction was of better quality than that offered blacks in the public schools.³⁰ Students' ages and previous level of education varied considerably; some had completed through the tenth grade before coming to Guadalupe College, while others were still working on a lower level. Both high school and college students were taught in the same classroom; work was organized whereby the better-prepared students helped bring the others up to standard.³¹ The class of 1916 listed two graduates on the College Class Roll and twenty graduates on the Normal Class Roll.³²

²⁹Guadalupe College, Graduation Invitation (n.p.. 1916), located in the Personal Files of Mrs. Marian Fennell, Seguin, Texas. A roster of the faculty and the courses taught is printed in the invitation.

³⁰Kemple Interview; Toliver Interview; Johnston Interview.

³¹Interview with the Reverend J. D. Fears, San Antonio, Texas, 21 March 1979.

³²Guadalupe College, Graduation Invitation, 1916.

Unfortunately, success in academic affairs was not matched by success in resolving financial difficulties. From October, 1914, through April, 1915, the income for Guadalupe College was \$3,091.40 derived from tuition, board, rent of the land, and donations from various individuals and church groups. Expenditures for the same period were \$4,478.15, not including salaries owed the teachers.³³ Local merchants pressed for payment of accounts past due; in May, 1915, the trustees successfully blocked an attempt by the sheriff to auction the farm property to satisfy three small judgments procured against the college.³⁴ Brackenridge came to their relief on several occasions, paying outstanding bills and making special donations for food.³⁵

Financial pressure increased when in 1915 the Windham Brothers Construction Company sued Guadalupe College and Colonel Brackenridge for payment of the final installment on the new buildings. The Windhams had discovered that when Brackenridge deeded the town property to them, as agreed in the original contract, he did not hold clear title to the property. The lots had been conveyed by the trustees of

³³Guadalupe County, District Court Records, No. 10016.

³⁴Ibid. Since the three judgments totaled only \$266.31 and the farm property was valued at \$23,000, the inequity of the proceedings is obvious. The judge agreed; he ruled that the college could pay the judgments out of future income and issued an injunction restraining the sheriff from selling the land.

³⁵Inman Interview.

the college to the Missionary Baptist General Convention in 1912, and that organization still held a superior outstanding title to the land. Although the San Antonio banker was unaware of these circumstances at the time the contract was drawn, he nonetheless was liable for the final payment of \$18,600, according to the petition filed by Windham Brothers. Therefore, Brackenridge was made party to the suit, along with Guadalupe College.³⁶ After several months of legal bargaining, the case was settled out of court. Brackenridge paid Windham Brothers \$9,045.60, but retained the town property; the Missionary Baptist General Convention and the trustees of Guadalupe College provided him with a proper deed.³⁷

Within a year Brackenridge again intervened on behalf of the Seguin institution. The administration had been unable to pay a bill of \$309.20, and a portion of the farm property had been advertized for sale to satisfy the debt. At the sheriff's sale, which took place on September 5, 1916, Brackenridge bid two hundred dollars and acquired the 15.9 acres in question.³⁸ Seventeen months later he returned

³⁶ Bexar County, District Court Records, No. B-10207.

³⁷ Bexar County, District Court Records, No. B-10207; Guadalupe County, Deed Records, vol. 49, pp. 398-400, 417. The property was sold by the Brackenridge estate to the Seguin Independent School District in 1927; it then became the site of Seguin High School. The facility is now known as Joe F. Saegert Middle School.

³⁸ Guadalupe County, Deed Records, vol. 48, pp. 198-99. The land involved was the 15.9 acres acquired from the Guadalupe Water Power Company in 1914.

the land to the college, subject to the same restrictions that had been attached to his original gift of 216 acres.³⁹ This was the last recorded transaction between Brackenridge and the institution that he had supported for more than eighteen years. The respect and affection of the blacks for their benefactor was clearly expressed in a letter from W. B. Ball to Brackenridge, written when both men were quite elderly:

Honored And Respected Sir:

I am looking over your letter dated Jan.30th, 1900. In said letter you sent me a check for \$100.00 for the Guadalupe College.

Your very generous gifts to the school has been to numerous for me to name. in fact, there would have been no Guadalupe College to day, if, it had not been for you.

I am an honored Trustee of the school for life, and have kept a very good record of the school, with the beneficence, or benefactors of the school, and I do know you are the only one that have saved the school, and we owe it to you for its existance.

Language is in adequate for our very great, and high appreciation to you. Your name will stand when others will crumble, and fade a way.

Some years ago, we offered to change the name of the school to Brackenridge College. I am still for it to go to your name. I hope you will not object to it.

I am in my 36 year working for the school, and I want the change made while I am living. . . .

They (I mean the Trustees) promised a house for me to live in. They have never got the house. I am in your house. I asked the Board about getting your house. I am in it since May 1906.

Has the Board said anything to you? You said to me some time ago, that I might remain here, that you would not bother me, that I

³⁹Guadalupe County, Deed Records, vol. 55, p. 37.

might pay \$1.50" So, I have been as quiet as a lamb,
and as harmless as a dove.

I hope you are enjoying the very best of health.

Very Respectfully,

W. B. Ball⁴⁰

The efforts of Brackenridge to keep Guadalupe College solvent were not enough to offset the effects of mismanagement. Financial problems multiplied during the presidency of Jesse Washington, who succeeded Dr. Moses in 1916. A teacher and businessman from Marlin, Texas, Washington was given authority "to control and manage all of the affairs of the college, collect and receive funds for its support, maintenance, and operation, manage the farms conducted and held in connection with said College, collect the rents and revenues therefrom, employ teachers, and out of the funds so collected and received, to pay the running expenses of the college, and, at the end of his term of employment to pay over to [the trustees] all unexpended funds in his hands." The term of his employment was five years.⁴¹ Thus, the trustees delegated to Washington sweeping authority in the management of college affairs and required no regular report of his actions. Irregularities in his bookkeeping procedures surfaced when his books were finally audited in 1921.

⁴⁰Ball to Brackenridge, 18 September 1919. This portion of the letter is reproduced as originally written, including misspelled words and typographical errors.

⁴¹Guadalupe County, District Court Records, No. 10777: College of the Guadalupe Baptist Association v. Jesse Washington; Interview with Mr. Leonard C. Merriwether, Seguin, Texas, 16 February 1980.

According to his records, cash receipts for the years 1916-1921 were \$51,477.16 and cash payments were \$49,548.08, leaving a balance on hand of \$1,899.08. The auditors, however, found numerous errors in the books, including receipts and donations incorrectly entered, items overcharged or misrepresented, and withdrawals not fully or accurately explained. The auditors determined that the college should have had a surplus of \$3,538.17, plus an additional five hundred dollars remaining from a fund contributed by Brackenridge for the installation of an electric light plant. The trustees unsuccessfully sued Washington for recovery of the funds.⁴²

In defense of Washington, it should be remembered that the United States was at war during the early years of his administration; shortages and deprivations existed throughout the country. Washington made every effort to keep Guadalupe College solvent, speaking at Baptist churches to raise money and purchasing supplies wholesale whenever possible. His efforts were more fruitful in the postwar years; the school's income rose considerably, from \$5,532.22 in 1916-1917 to \$13,074.19 in 1920-1921. Those who knew Washington personally speak favorably of his integrity and devotion to duty. In their opinion, he was a victim of the internal power

⁴²Guadalupe County, District Court Records, No. 10777. A five-year audit of the books is included in the file of this case.

struggles that plagued each successive administration.⁴³

Although hard-pressed financially, Washington nonetheless implemented an extensive educational program, organizing the curriculum into nine divisions: the College department, a four-year course leading to "the degree of Bachelor of Arts, Science, Literature, and Pedagogy;" the Academy, which offered four years' preparation for college work; the Normal department, a special four-year course for teachers preparing for Texas state certificates; the grammar school, which included grades five through eight; the Theological department, a three-year course leading to a Bachelor of Theology degree; the Music department, a six-year course using the "Matthews graded system;" a Sewing, Dressmaking and Millinery department; a Domestic Science department; and a Missionary Training department, which offered "systematic study of the Bible, missionary work, and a Sunday School teachers' training course."⁴⁴ To supplement these courses, the administration was "endeavoring to install the following trades: Agriculture, Flora Culture, Gardening, Blacksmith, Carpentry, Tailoring, and Laundrying."⁴⁵

Washington and his staff required that all students

⁴³Guadalupe County, District Court Records, No. 10777; Interview with Mrs. Lelia Friday, Seguin, Texas, 15 February 1980; Interview with Mrs. Eugenia McKnight, Seguin, Texas, 8 February 1980; Merriwether Interview.

⁴⁴Guadalupe College, Annual Announcement for the Session 1920-1921 (n.p., n.d.), p. 13.

⁴⁵Ibid.

abide by strict regulations, "administered with a view to the best training in manner and moral." They expected "honesty and uprightness" of each and every one. Both girls and boys worked one and a half hours each day "for the school;" they were paid for extra work. Students could not leave the premises without permission or stay off-campus overnight without a note from their parents. They could not use tobacco or firearms. The administration reserved the right to examine at any time the rooms, trunks, letters, and packages of students. The girls' dress code required them to dress conservatively, to be "masters of fashion and not slaves to it," and to "leave all finery and valuables at home, as there will be no occasion to use them in school."⁴⁶

Activities with a strong Christian emphasis were part of the weekly regimen. Sunday School was held each Sabbath in the chapel, followed by a meeting of the Young Women's Association. The Baptist Young People's Union met each Sunday afternoon; preaching services were conducted on Sunday night. Regular prayer meetings were held on Wednesday nights, and an annual revival was conducted "for the benefit of non-Christian students." Lyceum met each Friday night, managed by students under the supervision of faculty members. The object of this endeavor was "to give students tact in handling deliberative assemblies and advance them from a

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 10-11.

literary standpoint."⁴⁷

Following the lyceum, the students participated in a closely-supervised social hour held in the cafeteria-chapel. Dancing was forbidden, but the young people could "march," accompanied by a pianist. Girls marched in one direction in a circle, while boys marched in the opposite direction. When the music stopped, the students could talk to the partner of their choice. However, no student could stay with one partner for more than ten minutes; when the teacher in charge tapped a bell, the couples changed positions.⁴⁸ Additional social contact between the sexes was very limited. Boys could not loiter in the area of the girls' dormitory; the college matron regularly counseled girls on proper behavior and suitable dress.⁴⁹ This emphasis on propriety, self-control, and obedience reflects the long-standing attitude that the teaching of "good moral character" was an essential function of the black colleges. Guadalupe College was striving, to the best of its ability, to foster in its students qualities that would advance them in future years.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 12-13.

⁴⁸Interview with Mr. Henry F. Wilson, Seguin, Texas, 10 April 1979; McKnight Interview.

⁴⁹McKnight Interview.

CHAPTER IV

THE COLLEGE COMES OF AGE

1921-1936

Charles H. Griggs, a 1904 graduate of Guadalupe College and a former teacher at Prairie View Normal and Industrial College, succeeded Jesse Washington as president in 1921.¹ Combining administrative skill with practical knowledge, he raised the status of the school, both financially and academically. Assets in 1923 included 231 acres of land, two heating plants, one Delco light system, and other equipment, for a total value of \$119,375. Not included in that figure were pianos, sewing machines, adding machines, typewriters, furniture, or books. An inventory of farm equipment and produce listed five mules, two wagons, three cows, sixty hogs, thirty chickens, eighteen turkeys, 120 bushels of corn, ten tons of hay, and "beans, peas, beets, etc. in abundance." Income for 1922-23 was \$8,781.30, and expenditures were \$8,444.22.² Enrollment in the early twenties was

¹Guadalupe College, Annual Announcement, 1920-1921, p. 40; "Brief Historical Note."

²Report of the Trustee Board of Guadalupe College in Minutes of the Missionary Baptist General Convention, pp. 31-32.

approximately seventy; graduates in 1923 numbered thirty-five.³ Graduation certificates were granted in Theology, Domestic Science, Domestic Art, Missionary Training, and High Normal. Most of the students were completing their high school educations; only a few were taking college courses.⁴

Thus, by training young men and women to be ministers and lay leaders and by augmenting the education offered blacks in the common schools, Guadalupe College was serving a useful purpose. Nevertheless, its leaders, recognizing the great need for better-trained Negro teachers in the public school system, were determined to upgrade the curriculum and to meet requirements for accreditation as adopted in 1923 by the State Department of Education. They achieved their goal in 1926 when the State Board of Examiners, which had denied Guadalupe College recognition in 1915, classified the institution as a standard junior college, based on its 1925-26 catalog.⁵ This meant that work done at the school would be accepted in granting Texas teachers' certificates, so long as the institution maintained the necessary standards.

³Negro Year Book, 1925-26 (Tuskegee Institute, Alabama: Negro Year Book Publishing Co.) p. 325; Report of the Trustee Board of Guadalupe College, p. 31.

⁴Interview with Mrs. Ruth Harper, New Braunfels, Texas, 8 February 1979; Report of the Trustee Board of Guadalupe College, p. 31.

⁵Texas, Department of Education, Twenty-Fourth Biennial Report, Bulletin, December 1926, No. 220, p. 135; Board of Examiners Minute Book, p. 25.

Since certificates valid for as long as six years could be obtained by completing only two years of college work, a junior college ranking attracted many potential teachers to Guadalupe College.⁶ Enrollment in college-level courses increased dramatically, from three students in 1924 to seventy-five students in 1929. Thirty-two students were taking college courses in the spring of 1932, sixty-six in the fall semester of the 1932-33 school year, and sixty in the first semester of the 1933-34 session. In addition, the preparatory division, known as Guadalupe College Academy, was approved as a four-year high school and attracted an average of 125 students per year.⁷

Guadalupe College operated as a junior college until May 21, 1929, when it was designated "a Senior college with no conditions, based on the catalog of 1928-1929."⁸ The Reverend Dr. F. G. S. Everett, who assumed the presidency in 1927, had concentrated his efforts on upgrading the school. A native of Florida, Everett was a capable and intelligent

⁶ Texas, Department of Education, Public School Laws of the State of Texas, Bulletin, January 1924, No. 178, pp. 120-21.

⁷ Negro Year Book, 1925-26, p. 325; Negro Year Book, 1931-32, p. 234; McCuistion, Higher Education, p. 10; Texas, Department of Education, Negro Education in Texas, Bulletin, September 1931, No. 294, p. 22.

⁸ Board of Examiners Minute Book, p. 263; Texas, Department of Education, Laws, Rules and Regulations Governing State Teachers' Certificates, Bulletin, Nos. 222, 231, 252, 267, 283. Each of these yearly bulletins lists accredited junior and senior colleges in Texas, both black and white.

man. Aided by the general prosperity of the late twenties, he expanded the curriculum, made improvements on the buildings, and built a two-story presidential residence on the edge of the campus.⁹

The career of Guadalupe College as a senior college was short-lived. With the advent of the Great Depression, the Seguin institution, like other black schools throughout the South, suffered greatly from loss of income. The school could not maintain the separate classes for college and high school divisions required by the State, and the College Examiner found the laboratory and library facilities to be deficient.¹⁰ For these and other undisclosed reasons, the rating of Guadalupe College was reduced in 1931 to that of a junior college. The minutes of the State Board of Examiners recorded that

The rating of Guadalupe College as a Senior College, allowed for the years 1928-1929 and 1929-1930 ceased on September 1st, 1930. A tentative rating as a Junior College was allowed for the years 1930-31, this rating to include the summer session of 1931. The future rating of Guadalupe College depends entirely upon the action taken by the Official Board relative to the recommendations contained in the report of the College Examiner made on July 2nd 1931 to the State Superintendent and State Board of Examiners.¹¹

⁹"Brief Historical Note;" Friday Interview. Like his predecessors, Everett incurred the enmity of the Board of Trustees and was dismissed as president at the close of the spring session in 1930.

¹⁰Wilson Interview.

¹¹Board of Examiners Minute Book, p. 290.

A loss of accreditation would have been disastrous for Guadalupe College. Fortunately, the administration was able to make corrections to the satisfaction of the Board of Examiners, so the school continued to be ranked as a standard junior college until it closed its doors in 1936.¹²

The struggle to maintain accreditation was only one of the problems faced by Professor J. R. Lockett, elected president in 1930.¹³ The shortage of money became acute as the economic depression deepened; without the farm, the institution would have failed. Worked by the students, the land provided much of the food they consumed, primarily pork, molasses, buttermilk, pinto beans, collard greens, and cabbage.¹⁴ To raise additional money, a quartet of male students travelling throughout Texas presented programs in Baptist churches, sometimes collecting as much as five hundred dollars, a considerable sum in those days. At the end of each spring term, the college staged a "Gala Day" on the campus, combining commencement exercises with fund-raising efforts. Friends and patrons from all over the state gathered to hear speeches and singing at the morning commencement

¹²Texas, Department of Education, Laws, Rules, and Regulations Governing State Teachers' Certificates, Bulletin, Nos. 299, 317, 327, 346, 362.

¹³According to H. F. Wilson, Professor Lockett, a native of Beeville, Texas, was the first president to hold a master's degree. He was a graduate of the University of Colorado.

¹⁴Wilson Interview; Kemple Interview. Farmers in the area also sent meat and produce to help feed the pupils and teachers.

exercises and to share in a picnic lunch at noon. A baseball game was the feature event in the afternoon. Individuals and church groups brought with them whatever donations they had pledged to Guadalupe College, which occasionally amounted to several thousand dollars. The largest portion of monies collected always came from the Guadalupe Baptist District Association and the Mt. Zion District Association.¹⁵

Guadalupe College suffered a severe financial loss when the Texas Hydro-Electric Corporation acquired 41.5 acres of the farm property through condemnation proceedings conducted in 1932. The acreage was to be used as a reservoir in connection with a dam that was to be build downstream. The college was awarded \$4,150 for the valuable waterfront property; the administration, inexperienced in such matters, made no protest against the questionable proceedings.¹⁶

Despite the problems that plagued Guadalupe College, school activities in the thirties remained basically unchanged. The updated curriculum prepared students for teaching or for the ministry, two fields that offered blacks

¹⁵ Johnston Interview; Kemple Interview: Wilson Interview.

¹⁶ Guadalupe County, County Court, Civil and Criminal Minutes, vol. 1, p. 444. The property was never used for the purpose of a reservoir. Instead, the Hydro-Electric Corporation sold the 41.5 acres in 1940 to Albert W. Saegert of Seguin. Trustees of the educational corporation attempted to regain ownership in 1960, carrying their case to the Texas Court of Civil Appeals, but to no avail. Guadalupe County, District Court Records, No. A-4029: College of the Guadalupe Baptist Association v. A. W. Saegert and Texas Hydro-Electric Corporation.

opportunity for advancement. As in the past, students performed a variety of duties; their social life was still closely supervised. Christian education, always a primary concern, was furthered by the construction of a wooden chapel, located between the two original brick buildings.¹⁷

By the mid-thirties it appeared that Guadalupe College was at last achieving its goal of providing quality education for the black youth of central Texas. However, on February 9, 1936, the little institution sustained a blow from which it never recovered. Fire broke out in the basement of the main building, quickly destroying the entire structure, and with it the hopes and dreams of the black Baptists. The Seguin Enterprise carried the following front page story:

The \$100,000 main building and girls' dormitory of Guadalupe College west of Seguin was destroyed by fire early Sunday. No lives were lost, the eighty students and faculty escaping by the fire escapes and several jumping from the second story without injury.

The building, a 4-story brick and wood structure, was erected twenty years ago with funds contributed by Col. George W. Brackenridge of San Antonio, who also gave the college the land on which it is located. In this building were quartered the general offices of the school, the library, kitchen, dining room, music room and girls' dormitory. The building and its contents were a total loss, the inmates escaping with barely enough clothes to cover them and not enough to protect them from the cold. Barefoot students were furnished blankets and brought to Seguin where they were housed from the intense cold.

The college is several miles west of town and the Seguin fire department, which responded to the call, was unable to cope with the blaze due to lack of water. The college water system was frozen.

President Luckett [sic] of the college said classes will have to be temporarily discontinued

¹⁷Wilson Interview.

until arrangements can be made to continue the school. Guadalupe College is the largest college for Negroes in the state and has been located in Seguin for some fifty years.

President Lockett [sic] was in Austin Monday in conference with the State Department of Education regarding the affiliation and future of the college. Mr. Nelson of the Board gave every assurance of cooperation and assistance. Affiliation was granted on all work done last semester and allowances will be made for work done this semester, pending rehabilitation of the college. Friends of the college are urged to offer all assistance so that the splendid work may be continued.

The kitchen, dining room and general offices will be moved to the building now used as the boys' dormitory. The girls will also live in this building. The boys will live in the chapel building and temporary quarters erected on the campus.¹⁸

Citizens of Guadalupe County, both black and white, rallied to assist the stricken school. City and county officials sent telegrams to Senators Tom Connally and Morris Sheppard and to Congressman Richard M. Kleberg, requesting federal aid for Guadalupe College. As a result, the War Department contacted Army Headquarters in San Antonio, where arrangements were made to send tents, cots, mattresses, blankets, and other essentials to be used by the destitute students. The Seguin Chamber of Commerce appointed a Building Fund Committee, headed by prominent white citizens, to assist college officials in plans for rebuilding.¹⁹ President Lockett expressed his appreciation and his optimism about the future in a letter to the Seguin Enterprise:

We take this method to express our gratitude to our patrons and friends of Seguin, Guadalupe County

¹⁸Seguin Enterprise, 14 February 1936.

¹⁹Ibid., 21 February 1936.

and neighboring towns and cities. We appreciate the loyalty shown in their willing gifts of clothing, shelter, food and money for our immediate relief after the fire, Feb. 9, 1936, which completely destroyed the main building of our institution. Gifts have come in constantly since and some have made liberal donations.

Temporary facilities are being established and school will re-open Monday, Feb. 24, 8:00 a.m. Plans are being perfected for the erection of permanent buildings and the development of a bigger and better Guadalupe College. Any individual or group desiring to assist us in this great building program need not be hesitant, for it will be gladly accepted and greatly appreciated.²⁰

Lockett's optimism was misguided, however, for a bigger and better Guadalupe College was not to be. Differences of opinion between the Missionary Baptist General Convention and the Guadalupe Baptist District Association surfaced again, thwarting effective action to construct a new building. With the people still suffering from the effects of the depression, adequate funds were not forthcoming. In early 1937 the Seguin Enterprise noted that

The Guadalupe College Building Fund Committee. . . met Tuesday, January 12, 1937, and unanimously passed the following resolution "That due to the fact that this fund, known as the Guadalupe College Building Fund, which is on deposit in the First National Bank, Seguin, has not been used for the purpose for which it was subscribed (no progress having been made toward rebuilding the College) it is hereby ordered by this committee that the Secretary refund each firm or individual the full amount contributed with a letter attached to each check advising the reason for refund, at the same time giving President Lockett due credit for his interest in protecting the contributors and the honest manner in which he has handled the entire situation, which was not under his control and for which he is no way responsible."²¹

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 29 January 1937.

For a number of years thereafter the Missionary Baptist General Convention operated a religious school on the grounds of Guadalupe College. That body erected a concrete block structure on the foundation of the burned-out main building and conducted night classes, primarily for the training of ministers and lay leaders. No agreement could be reached on the rebuilding of Guadalupe College, even in more prosperous times, because the Guadalupe Baptist District Association could not and would not relinquish ownership of the farm property to the Missionary Baptist General Convention. Finally, in the 1960's, the classes were moved to Tried Stone Baptist Church in San Antonio, where a training school known as Guadalupe Seminary is still in operation today.²²

The true spirit of Guadalupe College, however, does not reside in the offspring seminary, but in the hearts of the many students who attended the original institution. The campus is deserted, except for a few head of cattle; the remains of the old buildings are in disrepair. In 1979 the Guadalupe Baptist District Association began a project to restore and refurbish the wooden chapel; it will be used for associational meetings and church gatherings. The first annual reunion of former students was held in the Seguin

²²Kemple Interview. Because of restrictions in the deed, the farm property could not be deeded to the Missionary Baptist General Convention. In any event, the Guadalupe Baptist District Association would have fought such a transfer, since the General Convention had owned and supported several other black schools and had lost every one because of mismanagement, according to the Reverend Kemple.

Coliseum on July 26, 1979, with some two hundred alumni in attendance. Some alumni still dream of reestablishing the institution as a full-fledged college, but changing needs of the Negro race, fully integrated higher education, and inflation make that event unlikely. Nevertheless, so long as there are former students still alive, Guadalupe College will be remembered with pride and affection, so well expressed in the alma mater:

Guadalupe College, Guadalupe College
 So noble and so free
 From these endless fields of victory
 Your sons and daughters live and die for you.
 And for dear Ole Guadalupe College
 We'll work and fight for you,
 And we'll sing thy praises loud in every land
 Guadalupe College, now and for you!

Dear Ole Guadalupe College
 You're the world to me
 Dear Ole Guadalupe College
 You will always be.
 For you give us sunshine everywhere we roam
 I'm always thinking of you when the shadows round me creep
 I'm always praying for you when I lay me down to sleep.
 Dear Ole Guadalupe College, I'm in love with you!²³

²³Wilson Interview.

CHAPTER V

GUADALUPE COLLEGE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The story of Guadalupe College, while unique in some respects, parallels closely the broader history of American higher education for blacks. The defects of Negro colleges as described by the United States Bureau of Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools--inadequate financial support, inept administration, elaborate and impractical curricula, personal and denominational rivalry--all were characteristic of the Seguin institution. That Guadalupe College failed to reach its full potential can be attributed to several factors, most of which were common to Negro schools of that era.

The major reason for the ultimate failure of the school was insufficient income, a constant problem throughout the history of the school. Government funds were not available, and Guadalupe College did not receive aid from any of the major philanthropic organizations. Only George W. Brackenridge made substantial contributions; for the most part, the institution depended on the meager resources of the black Baptists.

Also, the Bpatists themselves were never united in their support of Guadalupe College. Instead of devoting

their efforts to developing the Seguin facility, they divided their money among several struggling black schools, to the ultimate detriment of all. Although the need for schools was great, this duplication resulted primarily from personal and factional rivalries. Each group wanted to build up its own favored institution, without regard for the overall needs of the people. Guadalupe College, because of its geographic location and well-established reputation, deserved more support than it received from the Missionary Baptist General Convention.

Mismanagement, likewise, contributed to the downfall of Guadalupe College. Most of its presidents were trained as ministers and not as administrators. Having had little opportunity to acquire practical business experience, these men made many errors in judgment. Throughout the years, their inexperience in financial matters left them vulnerable to exploitation by groups and individuals who coveted their valuable property. Direction from qualified business and professional men, both black and white, would have strengthened the school, financially and otherwise.

Certain unsound administrative practices intensified the problem of mismanagement. Theoretically, Guadalupe College was under the control of an educational corporation chartered for the sole purpose of conducting the school; in practice, the Missionary Baptist General Convention named the Board of Trustees. Members of the Board were invariably ministers, heads of prominent black churches throughout the

state, who had little personal contact with the local administration. Total responsibility for daily operations lay with the president of the institution, who collected and dispensed funds, hired and fired teachers, and set school policy. These extensive duties strained the abilities of the executive officer and left him open to charges of misconduct. Each president acted as his own bookkeeper, a practice that inevitably led to dissention over handling of the money. Whenever the Board held its annual meeting, its members found fault with the president's conduct of school affairs. Conflict with the Board of Trustees led to the resignation or dismissal of every president in the history of Guadalupe College.

Finally, church politics hindered the progress of Guadalupe College. Competition for positions of authority divided the Baptists and clouded their vision; personal ambitions too often took precedence over sound policy. As noted in the U.S. Bureau of Education report, the problem was "not only finding men of adequate training and experience but also of educating church conventions to distinguish between church politicians and men known for their integrity and ability."¹

In spite of its shortcomings and eventual demise, Guadalupe College was not a failure. It filled a definite need during the years of its existence, providing quality

¹U.S. Bur. of Ed. Bulletin, 1916, 1:152.

education at a time when public facilities for blacks were woefully inadequate. It provided learning opportunities for area students, many of whom could not have afforded to attend distant colleges, turning none away for inability to pay. As a church-related school, it offered religious training for its preachers and laymen, an important function for a race that looked to the church for guidance and direction. In addition, it developed leadership qualities in the many young men and women who entered the field of education; the record of these teachers in the public schools is outstanding.² Most significantly, it fostered pride and self-respect in a people who had been denied the opportunity for advancement.

In the final analysis, the accomplishments of Guadalupe College far outweigh its failures. Its impact can be seen in the lives of many black Baptists today who are leaders in their churches, their communities, and their professions. For its contribution to the development of the Negro people of central Texas, Guadalupe College earned an honored place in the history of black education.

²While complete records are unavailable (many were destroyed in the fire, others were lost), the author knows of a number of Guadalupe College alumni who taught in area schools. Several, including William C. Johnston and Henry F. Wilson, obtained master's degrees from other institutions and served in administrative positions in the public school system. The biographical sketches in A. W. Jackson's A Sure Foundation include many Guadalupe College graduates who became either teachers or ministers.

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