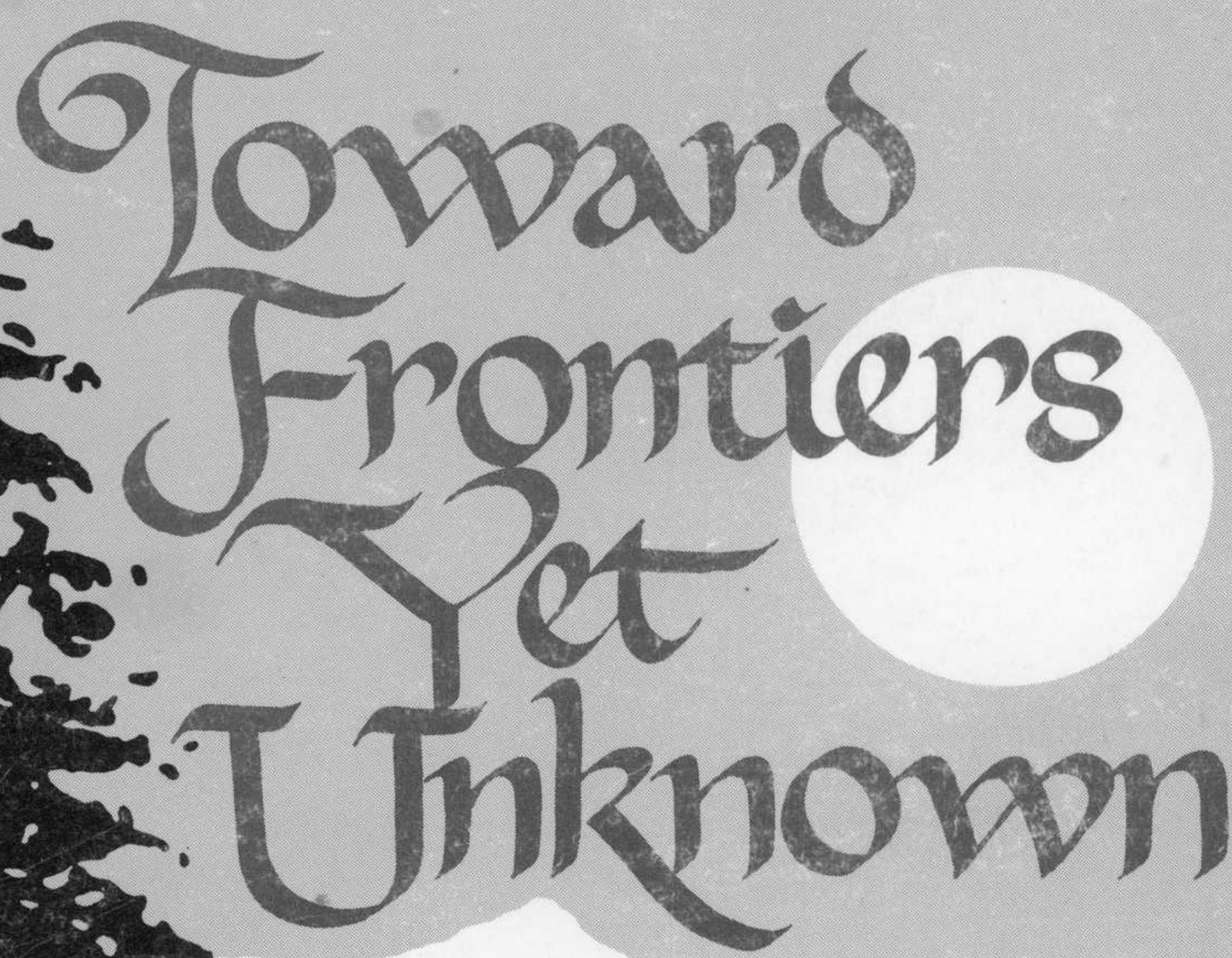

A 90th Anniversary History of
WARREN WILSON COLLEGE
1884-1984

by Mark T. Banker

TOWARD FRONTIERS YET UNKNOWN

A Ninetieth Anniversary
History of
Warren Wilson College

By
Mark T. Banker '73

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Published by Warren Wilson College
in Swannanoa, North Carolina 28778
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Designed by Jimmy Ning '55

...Still our college presses near
frontiers yet unknown.

Warren Wilson College
Alma Mater
Henry W. Jensen, 1942

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PREFACE

In the ninety years since Presbyterian missionaries established Asheville Farm School to serve young men of the Southern Appalachian mountains, vast technological, demographic, and social changes have transformed that region and the world. In response the people of Farm School and its present day heir, Warren Wilson College, have time and again reconsidered their mission and adjusted their program accordingly. The result is a school today that is outwardly very different from the one envisioned in 1894. It is the thesis of this book, however, that much that distinguishes Warren Wilson College today is deeply rooted in its past. The college's creative responses to an ever-changing world have been tempered by a recognition that the most basic human needs are timeless and unchanging. How this process fostered the distinctive Warren Wilson College program of today is the focus of this book.

The task of "doing history" is never an individual pursuit. Without assistance, support, and encouragement from many people, this book would never have been completed. At Warren Wilson, Dr. Reuben A. Holden, President of the College, and former Academic Dean, Mrs. Joan Beebe, were constant in their support. They and many others made my research visits of the past three summers fruitful and enjoyable. Head librarian, Mrs. Barbara Hempleman, and College Archivists, Misses Martha Ellison and Mary Dille, ably and patiently assisted my research. Many members of the college community shared recollections of the school's past and insights into its present situation. In particular, I must express appreciation to Mrs. Lucile Bannerman and Mrs. Thekla Jensen. Their observations about the college's development were enlightening, and their interest and support were a source of inspiration. One of the pleasures of this effort was the opportunity to discuss the school's history with many of the persons who made my education at Warren Wilson so valuable and meaningful. Though I cannot possibly mention all of these people, I would be remiss if I did not express special thanks to Mr. Ronald Wilson of the Department of History and Political Science. His penetrating insight into human history, reflections on developments at Warren Wilson, and friendship greatly strengthened this study.

The distance between Albuquerque and Swannanoa—"just 1500 miles down I-40"—was the single greatest obstacle to this project.

Assistance and cooperation from many people at this end of the line helped minimize this problem. The collection of Presbyterian Missionary periodicals in the Menaul Historical Library of the Southwest enabled me to complete much of the research for the early chapters without leaving Albuquerque. For the use of this collection, I offer thanks to the Library's Director, Mrs. Dorothy Stevenson. Dr. Ferenc Szasz of the History Department of the University of New Mexico has constantly supported my work on this project. His enthusiasm and knowledge of American social and religious history spurred and enhanced my own. Finally, his editorial review of this manuscript made it more coherent and readable. Jimmy Ning, 1956 graduate of Warren Wilson College and currently a graphic artist for Albuquerque Public Schools, contributed his considerable talent to the cover design and layout of this book. Mrs. Shirley Crain meticulously typed the final draft of this manuscript and assisted in the indexing of it.

Finally, I must express sincerest gratitude to my wife Kathy and our daughter, Tollie. They have been patient well beyond the call of duty with a project that required far more time than I originally imagined. They uncomplainingly endured summer vacations interrupted by my research forays, my late night banging on the typewriter, and life with an occasionally disgruntled writer. Kathy's careful reading of each draft and her insights from her own experience at Warren Wilson greatly improved this book. Most importantly, Kathy and Tollie saved me from a fate common to those who aspire to write. Their presence has been a pleasant reminder that there is more to life than books; nothing enhanced this effort more than that.

I dedicate this book to Kathy and Tollie and to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Banker.

Mark T. Banker
Albuquerque, New Mexico
October 1984

PROLOGUE

A PEOPLE AND A MISSION

Two hundred years ago, a steady stream of Scotch-Irish and English pioneers flowed into the highland valleys of the Southern Appalachian mountains. Their migration from the Atlantic seaboard spanned several generations; many traveled through Pennsylvania and down the great valley of Virginia, while others trekked up from the Carolina tidewater and Piedmont. These were the celebrated frontiersmen of American legend. Hardy, self-reliant and fiercely independent, they were often ruthless with Indians and careless with that which nature had so bountifully provided. In the rugged, isolated mountains, they built their cabins, cleared their farms, and established their own governments and churches. To distant authority, they were indifferent and sometimes defiant. In 1780, many of these backwoodsmen marched off to King's Mountain, where their courage and marksmanship contributed to the victory over the British regulars. In the waning years of the eighteenth century, the proud, practical Appalachian pioneer became one of the American republic's most fitting symbols.

A century later, the United States had grown into a prosperous, powerful nation, and the descendants of these early settlers were all but forgotten. Isolated by the mountains and their own stubborn adherence to tradition, they were mired in poverty. Their

ancestors had settled the rich, fertile river valleys, but as population growth strained the region's resources, second and third generation mountaineers "scrambled for a living" up mountain creeks and steep hollows. As the frontier pressed steadily to the Pacific Coast, some left the mountains for greener pastures. But most mountain inhabitants remained loyal to family and home and stayed where they were. For the children of those who remained, schools were few and generally inadequate. As immigration into the region slowed to a virtual halt, the situation grew increasingly stagnant. The Civil War changed matters, but only for the worse. By siding with the Union, the non-slaveholding mountaineers earned the lasting antipathy of the powerful planters and politicians from the lowland sections of their states. In addition, local hostilities did not end with Appomattox, but left a legacy of feuds that plagued the mountain communities for years.[1]

Yet all was not negative. There was a virtue in the simplicity of the mountain folk. They maintained pride, self-reliance, and sensitivity. But late nineteenth century Americans rarely recognized or appreciated these attributes. In an age that revered industrial progress, the mountain people were considered an anomaly. For their own good, they had to be brought into the American mainstream.

The nation's mainline Protestant churches became the primary agent in this process. This was the "golden age of Protestant missions," and churches were eager to meet such challenges. Had not British and American Protestants taken up the "white man's burden"? Were they not at this very time spreading the gospel and Christian civilization to benighted people around the globe? How then could they overlook the plight of their own people in the isolated Appalachians?

Of the denominations that turned their eyes to the Southern mountains, none showed greater interest than the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Themselves the ethnic and spiritual descendants of Scotch-Irish immigrants, these "northern Presbyterians" considered the mountaineers "less fortunate kindred," who, if only rescued from their isolation, could quickly find a place in the modern world. Moreover, the Presbyterians were confident that they knew the means to accomplish this. Since the Civil War, Presbyterian home missionaries, supported almost entirely by the

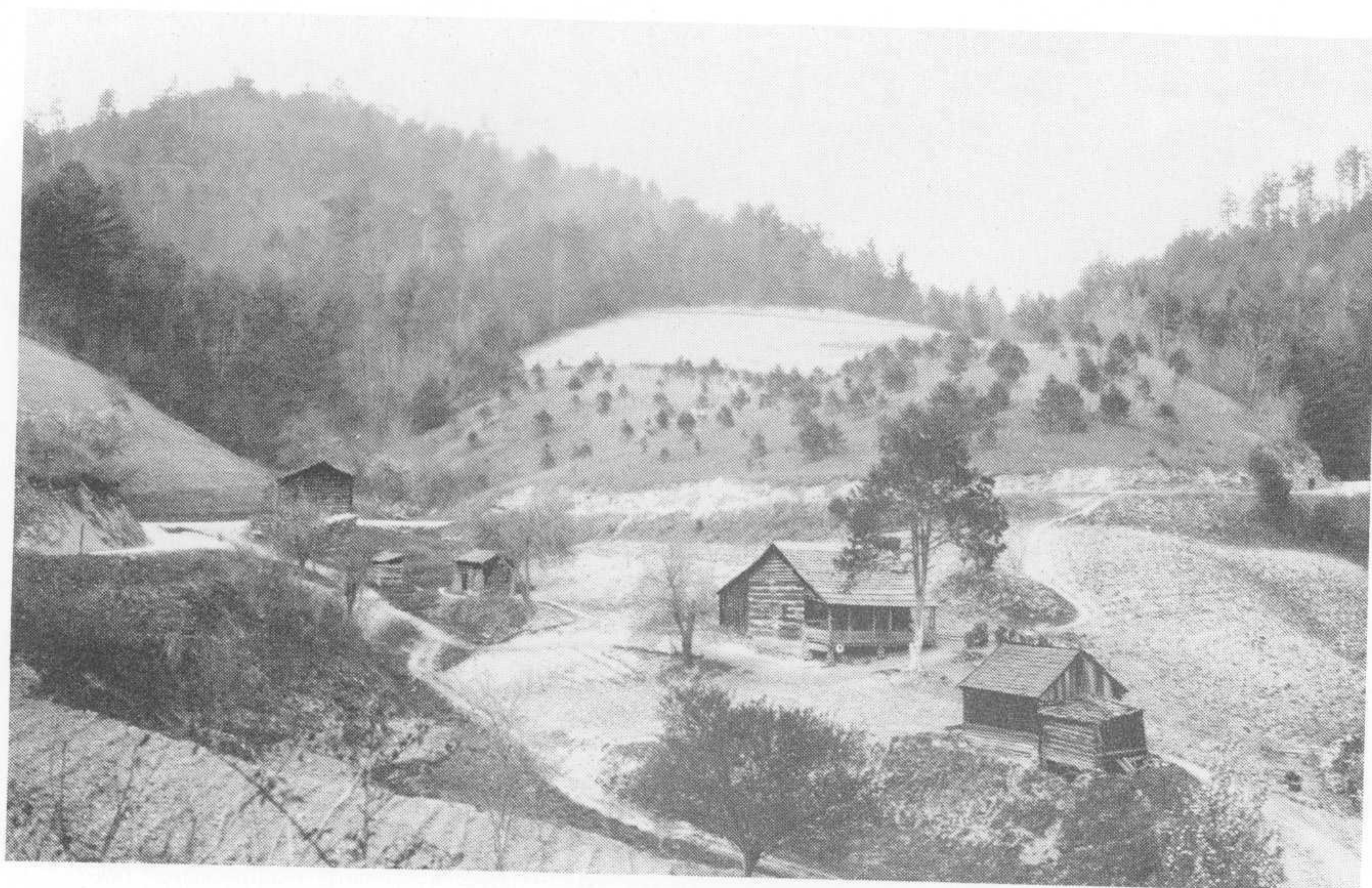
Church's dedicated women, had established churches and schools among Southern freedmen and the Native Americans, Hispanics, and Mormons in the West.

Schools formed the most important item in the Presbyterian strategy to aid these "exceptional populations." These private schools were not intended to supplant the public schools. Instead they were to serve as a means of incorporating these "benighted peoples" into a more homogeneous American society. In an age of "scientific racism," Presbyterians reasoned if they could uplift the "savage Indians and Mexican papists," they could surely benefit people of such solid ethnic stock as the Southern mountaineers.[2]

Early Presbyterian visitors to the Southern Appalachians gave glowing appraisals of the region's beauty and potential. Shortly after retiring to Asheville, North Carolina, from the Five Points Mission in New York City, the Rev. L. M. Pease wrote in 1889: "If there is any location capable of being God's garden, it is here in these mountains." The key word in Pease's observation was "capable." After he extolled the region's beauty and climate, he proceeded to paint a dismal picture of the "poverty, suffering, and ignorance" of the mountain people. Rev. Pease and numerous other Presbyterians who visited the area offered a variety of explanations for the region's lack of progress. All observers pointed to the absence of trained ministers and public schools. Several also suggested that the people's disregard for hard work, lack of ambition, and neglect of public responsibility were partially responsible. Some of the explanations also noted the distance of the mountain farmer from nearby markets, the poor methods of cultivation, and the deficient diet of the people. Others reflected more on the ethnocentrism of those who offered them. For example, one missionary's list of the "causes of mountain poverty" included the "disgusting snuff-dipping practices of the mountain women"!

Whatever its cause, the Presbyterian observers felt that the plight of the mountain people was neither hopeless nor permanent. Report after report concluded on an upbeat note. These were people of "good Scotch-Irish stock," who contributed so much to the nation in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars; consequently they deserved a helping hand. The appeal did not go unheeded. By the early 20th Century, Presbyterians had established nearly sixty schools, serving more than 3500 young people, in the Southern

Scenes like these appeared frequently in the late 19th century Presbyterian missionary magazines. They were considered graphic evidence of the need for Presbyterian missions in the mountain region.



Appalachian mountains. The roots of Warren Wilson College may be traced to several of these.[3]

Within a short time of their "retirement," the Peases became concerned about the plight of girls in the area, for the male-dominated culture of the mountains generally relegated them to decidedly secondary status. Thus, in October 1887, they established the Asheville Home and Industrial School with an enrollment of forty girls. By year's end this had doubled. After a summer of expanding facilities, the Peases started a second year with 124 girls and a long waiting list. Those critics who had suggested that the traditionally clannish mountain people would not respond to the Presbyterian overtures had been proved wrong.[4]

Fifty miles further west another older missionary couple found retirement plans postponed by their concern over conditions of the mountain people. Following a career in the Freedmen's Missions, the Rev. and Mrs. Luke Dorland retired to Hot Springs, North Carolina in 1887. There they were struck by the same problem that concerned the Peases in Asheville. Consequently, they opened their home as a school for the girls of the area. Support was initially limited to their own funds and the donations of guests at the town's resort hotel. Soon, however, the project outgrew their residence; the Dorlands appealed to the Presbyterian Boards of Home Missions.* When financial support arrived, they obtained larger facilities and the program expanded. The Hot Springs school eventually took the name "Dorland-Bell Institute."

Meanwhile back in Asheville, the success of the Home School, plus a recognized need for native teachers, lead to the establishment of Asheville Normal and Collegiate Institute in 1892. As the Presbyterians' first endeavor in "higher education" in the mountains, Asheville Normal became an immediate success. Graduates were soon sought out by county school superintendents throughout the region. In 1902, for example, all twenty-four graduates quickly found positions, and the Normal's superintendent proudly reported that he could have secured work for many more. That same year both a state superior court judge and a prominent mountain physician credited the increased tranquility in much of the region to the

*There were then two: *the* Board of Home Missions and the Women's Board; they were consolidated in 1923.

Dorland-Bell Campus, Hot Springs, North Carolina—The school established in 1887 by Rev. Dorland consolidated with nearby Bell Institute in 1918. In 1942 the Dorland-Bell program was transferred to the Asheville Farm School campus to become part of the consolidated Warren Wilson program.

Asheville Normal School Girls, circa 1905—Along with standard academic preparation, the Presbyterian schools emphasized cultural training. These mountain girls were dressed for a formal event on the Normal School campus.

contributions of teachers trained at the Normal. The great success of these early Presbyterian endeavors in the mountains convinced the missionaries, their supervisors at Home Missions headquarters, and many of the mountain people that the mission in the Southern Appalachians should be broadened.

PROLOGUE FOOTNOTES

[1]For general information about the historical background of the mountain people and their situation in the late 19th century see John C. Campbell, *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (Russell Sage Foundation, 1921 -reprinted 1969, University of Kentucky Press). A brief and interesting account by a mountain native and former Farm School Superintendent is Henry S. Randolph's *How the Mountaineer Got into the Mountains, Why He Did Not Leave Them, and His Problems* (Farm School Press, no date, *circa* 1930).

[2]A good overview of the 19th century Protestant outlook is provided in Colin B. Goodycoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1939). For a general picture of Presbyterian Home Missions, see Clifford Drury, *Presbyterian Panorama: 150 Years of National Missions History* (Philadelphia, 1952). Henry D. Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Counsciousness, 1870-1920* Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1978) provides an insightful analysis of late 19th century Protestant perceptions of Southern Appalachia, its people,and their needs.

[3]The account of Presbyterian perceptions of the mountain people in this and the preceding paragraphs is drawn from articles in *Home Mission Monthly* (hereafter cited as *HMM*). This was the official magazine of the Women's Board of Home Missions, published from 1886 to 1924. The quote from Pease is from an article in the June 1889 issue, pp. 173-75. Other articles that were drawn from in these paragraphs are in the following issues: December 1893, 29-30; December 1894, 31-32; December 1896, 26-27; December 1900, 27-28; December 1905, 26-27. Each monthly issue of *HMM* was devoted to a specific mission area; December was the month for the "Southern Mountain Issue."

[4]See Pease's own account of the establishment and early days of Asheville Home and Industrial School in *HMM,* June 1889, 174.

Henry W. Jensen, *A History of Warren Wilson College* (Swannanoa, North Carolina, 1974), 21-25.

[6]*Ibid.,* 25. *HMM,* December 1900, 30-32; December 1893, 35.

CHAPTER ONE

NOT ONLY LEARNING FROM BOOKS

The girls who attended the two prospering Presbyterian schools soon began to plead for a similar program for their brothers. Thus, in the spring of 1893 representatives of the Home Mission Boards and the two girls schools purchased a 420 acre farm in the Swannanoa Valley, ten miles east of Asheville. This became the future site for the Asheville Farm School for Boys. Mr. Samuel Jeffrey, a Pennsylvanian and recent agricultural graduate from Cornell University, was selected Superintendent, and ground was broken in July of that year. Despite slowed construction due to nationwide economic woes, Jeffrey reported in December that the local community had made many inquiries about admission. Moreover, six months in the area convinced Jeffrey that such an agricultural program was sorely needed. He was especially concerned over the primitive methods of the mountain farmers and the general ignorance of the people. He also lamented that "the mountain women did not bake light, wholesome bread."

The following autumn Jeffrey selected 25 boys from more than 140 applicants and on November 21, 1894, with the assistance of his wife and one other teacher, opened the doors of Asheville

Farm School. With increased funding for scholarships, the next year opened with 90 boys, and, following expansion of facilities in 1902, enrollment increased to 140. But even that was inadequate, because by that time the school received over 200 applications annually. Initially these requests came from the Asheville area, but as the school's reputation spread, so did its circle of applicants. By the early 1900's, boys from South Carolina and Tennessee were also seeking admission to the school. The applications came from boys in their teens and twenties, many of whom had no prior education. Several were from large families with no parents, and few had money for an education. The applications were a painful indicator of the need for such a school.[1]

One early graduate wrote about his education at Farm School that he had been taught "...not only book larnin' but habits of industry and...righteousness in its proper relationship to life." Dr. J. P. Roger, who became Superintendent in 1906, commented on these same aspects of the Farm School program when he described it "an important three-sided work" that emphasized academics, work, and Christian development.

This commitment was best reflected by the rigorous daily routine. The boys awoke each day at 5:45 a.m. After breakfast at 6:15, they divided into three groups: one went to classes, a second to chores, and the third remained for worship. By supper time at 5:30, each boy had worked three hours and attended classes for six, including one hour of Bible study.[2]

Though the "boys" were all in their teens or older, Farm School initially offered only the first three grades of elementary instruction. Gradually additional levels were added. By the early twentieth century students were able to complete the equivalent of eight years in the public schools. With the benefit of the "push class"—a program that allowed motivated boys to progress at their own pace—most students completed the program in five years. While the formal course of instruction differed little from other elementary programs of the era, the rural environment, advanced age of the pupils, and its religious orientation made Farm School unique.[3]

Long denied an education, many Farm School boys were eager learners. Some became voracious readers. In 1896 a copy

of *Ben Hur* was presented to the boy with the best reading record (determined by "the number of books read, their quality, and the thoroughness of the boy's comprehension of them.") In 1886 the top reader reportedly completed thirty-eight books. This was no small feat when one considers the heavy daily routine and the fact that the only lighting came from oil lamps and candles (which were used sparingly to reduce fire risks and to save money). Literary societies were another endeavor to "reduce the monotony of regular school work for both boys and teachers." The boys were divided into groups by grade level and each student was expected to make at least one presentation before the community each month. This generally meant a recitation or participation in a debate or play. But Farm School did not restrict its talent to the campus. One boy took first prize in a speech contest involving more than sixty students from Virginia and North Carolina schools, and the debating team several times placed high in various state contests.[4]

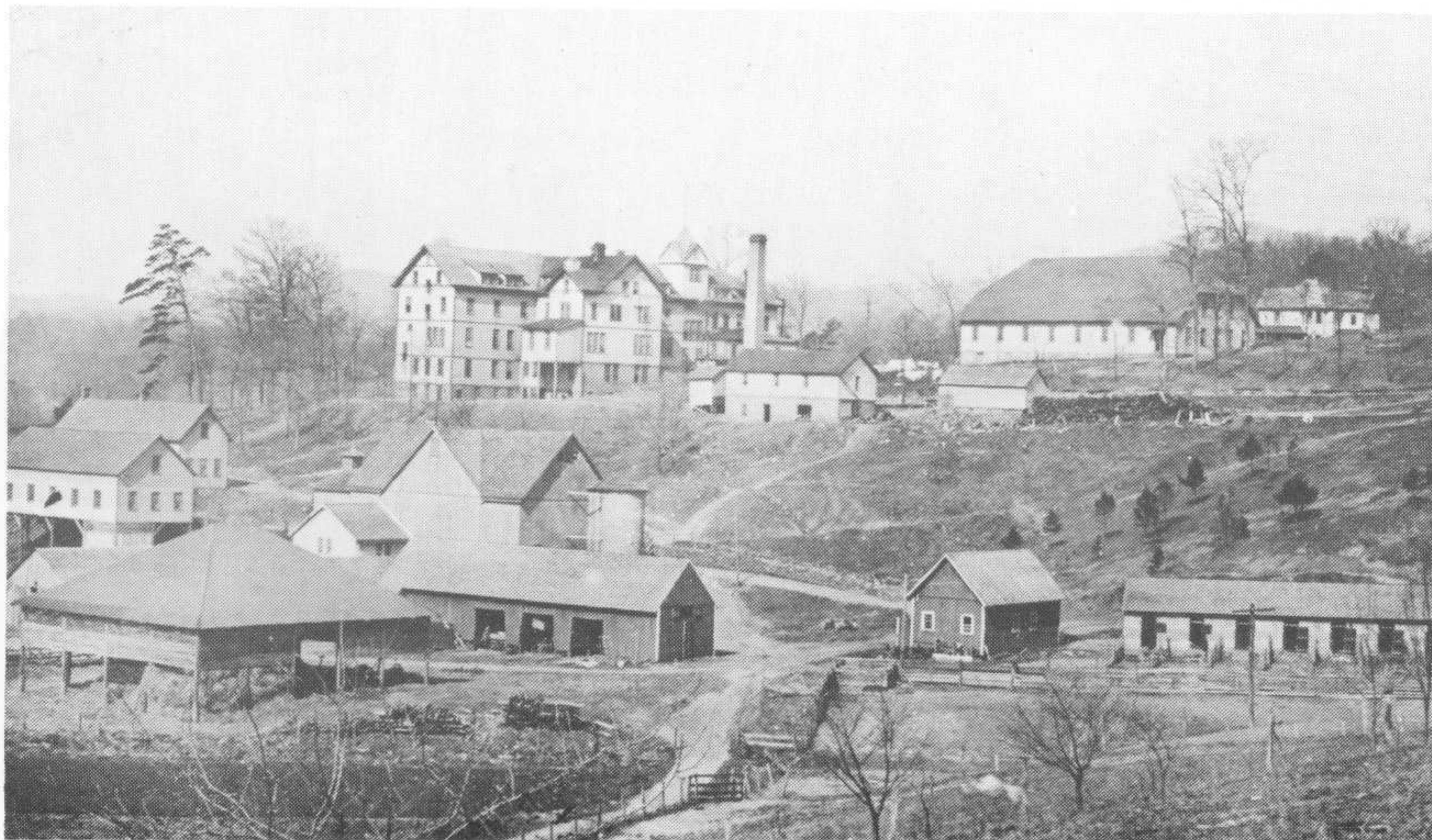
From its inception, Farm School emphasized student work, both as a means of education as well as a way to keep down costs. The combination of the rich Swannanoa Valley bottom lands and the agricultural knowledge of men like Samuel Jeffrey made the school's farm one of the finest in western North Carolina. By introducing crop rotation, contour plowing, fertilizers, improved livestock and farm machinery, the school both improved its yield and also taught the boys valuable lessons in modern farming. In addition to hay and oats, Farm School fields yielded a great variety of vegetables and fruits. A typical harvest would include corn, tomatoes, potatoes, beans, cabbage, peaches, apples, strawberries, huckleberries, and raspberries. Students frequently displayed these crops and often won ribbons at the Buncombe County and Western North Carolina fairs. Some of the produce was sold, but much of it was canned at the campus cannery. This was later utilized by the school and its sister institutions in Asheville. In 1907 alone over 10,000 cans of fruits and vegetables were preserved, and more than 140 tons of fodder and grain were "laid by" in the silos as feed for livestock. Even when beset by drought, late frosts, and flooding, Farm School's fields taught many valuable lessons. From such setbacks, Dr. Roger wrote in 1909, the boys learned the importance of perseverance and that "discouragement does not necessarily mean defeat."[5]

The third vital component of a Farm School education was Christian instruction. Most of the boys had been raised with some religious influence, but the emotional brand of Christianity of their isolated, often independent churches, was very different from the Presbyterianism of Farm School. While there were never denominational restrictions for admission—nor requirements that students become Presbyterian—the boys could not mistake what their mentors believed to be the preferred approach to spiritual development. Prayers and singing preceded and followed every meal; daily Bible study was required, and Wednesday evenings were reserved for prayer meetings. The Sunday routine was intended to nurture spiritual growth in even the most wayward boy. Following breakfast everyone participated in prayers and singing. At 9:30 there was voluntary prayer meeting, and at 11:00 all attended Sabbath school. Following dinner, the Junior Christian Endeavor group met at 2:30 while the Senior group "kept silent time." The following hour, the two reversed roles. After supper, all boys attended the Sabbath service. In the early years, the latter was held at the nearby Riceville Presbyterian Church. Later, the minister of the Oakland Heights Presbyterian Church in Asheville (which served the Normal School) traveled each Sunday to Farm School and led evening services in the chapel room in Old Main.

Even more effective than the formal religious instruction was the example set by the faculty. Long time teacher, Miss Elizabeth Williams, commented in an address to new faculty in 1925 that "pietism and religious formalism would never win the boys to Christianity." "Example," she suggested, was "the potent factor," and she concluded "the school would surely be a failure if the boys did not learn to make Christ's teaching part of their daily lives." Not surprisingly, in such an environment and with encouragement from those they deeply respected, many Farm School boys became committed Christians. Several early graduates pursued further studies and entered the ministry; others went on to work for the Home Missions Board, the Y.M.C.A., and other Christian agencies. Perhaps most importantly, many Farm School boys returned home to contribute to the physical and spiritual welfare of their mountain communities.[6]

Daily life at Farm School revolved around Old Main, a sprawling, four story, frame structure that provided dormitory

space for all 140 boys and also housed apartments for teachers, classrooms, the chapel, kitchen, dining room, laundry, bathing facilities and storerooms. Samuel Jeffrey oversaw its construction in 1893-94, reportedly paying $1.00 per day for the lumber cut for it. Two of the favorite places for the boys were the kitchen and dining room. In the former, the boys learned the art of baking bread. The process began each evening around nine o'clock, when three of the larger boys donned aprons and mixed and kneaded dough for 150 loaves. Early the next morning a second crew formed the loaves and placed them in the large ovens; each day began not only with fresh bread but also with the aroma of its baking. Samuel Jeffrey would have been proud that many a boy returned to his mountain cabin and taught this new secret to the women folk. Farm School cooks also prepared many of the boys' favorites, including chicken and dumplings, grits, and flapjacks. But the most preferred dish of all was "hicks," a thick, creamy gravy made from pork fatback and served with biscuits at breakfast. One morning in the early 1900's a rather small boy, who rarely seemed to get enough to eat, made sure the steaming bowl of gravy was placed nearest him. As soon as the "Amen" was sounded, he picked up the bowl and spit in it. At least on this day, he "got his fill."[7]



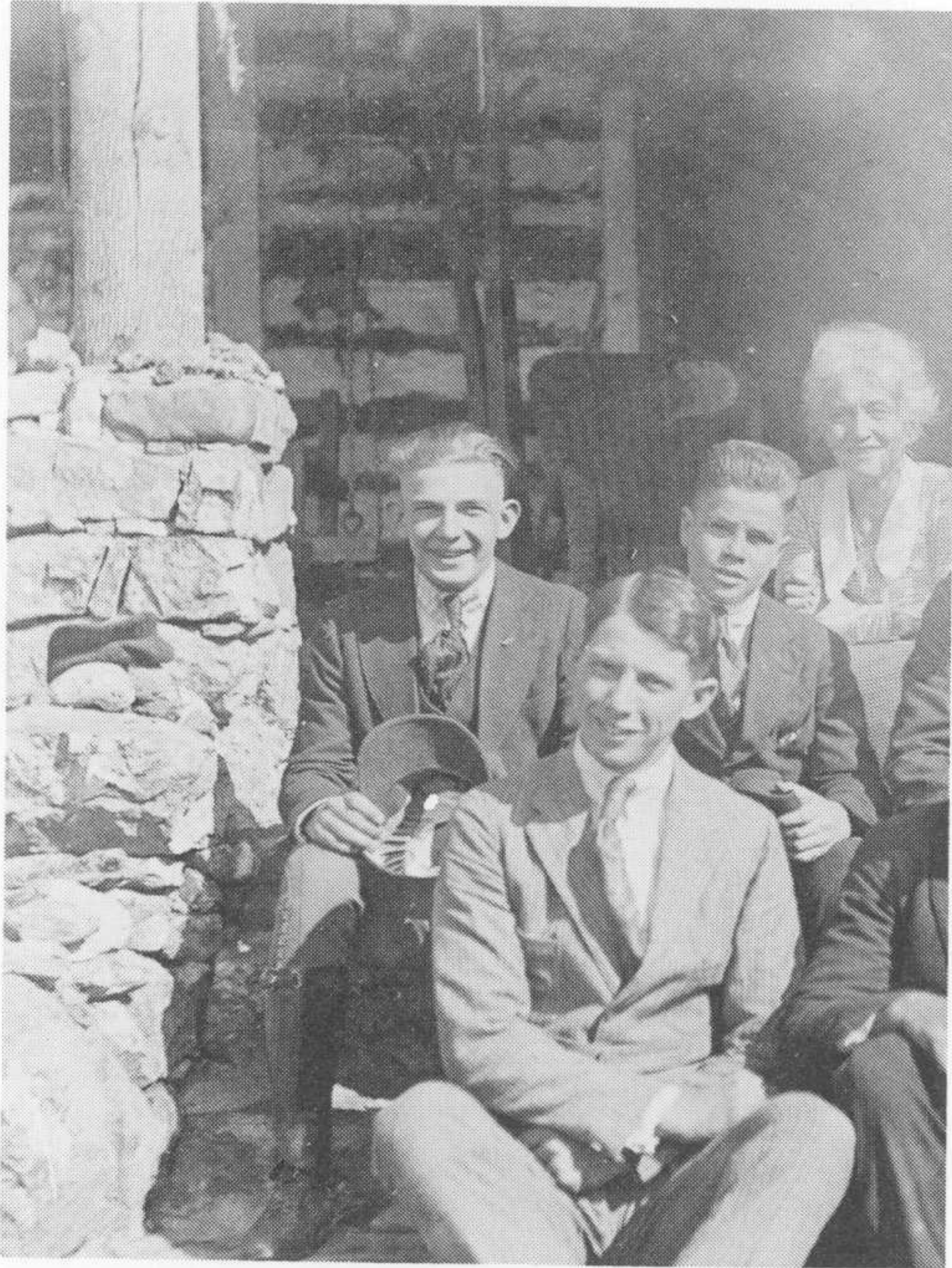
Asheville Farm School Campus, early 1900's—This photograph was taken from the hill behind the present day farm buildings. "Old Main," in the center-left, sat where today's Morse Building now stands.

On the ground floor of Old Main were "shower baths," where each boy was expected to bathe at least once a week, usually on Saturday afternoons. Indoor toilets were only for faculty use, so "outdoor conveniences" were built about 100 feet from the building for the boys. These the boys dubbed "Egypt," and as one grad later recalled, "...when you had to go to Egypt, there was no mistake as to where you were going or your purpose."[8]

Until the school constructed its own dam and generating plant on nearby Bull Creek in 1910, the only lighting in Old Main was provided by oil lamps and candles. Evening study hall and special programs were held in the chapel, after which the boys retired to their rooms, where their wax candles were expected to last at least four nights. With long rigorous days and rationing of candles, "lights out" came early in Old Main.

In the midst of their busy schedule, Farm School boys also found time for fun and relaxation. Almost from the beginning, the school had a baseball team, and in 1902 a log gymnasium was constructed for basketball, gymnastics, and a variety of indoor activities. The boys frequently swam in the Swannanoa and hiked and camped in the surrounding mountains. Reciprocal visits were occasionally made with the girls of Asheville Normal, and on Sundays Farm School boys often walked local girls home from church. This often angered the local boys, but, as one of the fortunate belles later recalled, "Farm School boys were better mannered and better looking." One Saturday each month, boys could go into Asheville. Most had little or no spending money, so they had to hitch rides on the wagons of valley residents. If all went well, the trip took an hour and a half each way. As typical boys, the young men of Farm School often created their own entertainment. When life slowed down too much, there were always pranks to pull or mischief to get into. An annual, unauthorized event was stealing watermelons from Uncle Charlie Alexander's farm, just on the other side of the river.[9]

Like any other school, Farm School occasionally experienced trying moments, both for faculty and students. The beginning of each year always saw an influx of new students, many of whom had difficulty adjusting to the routine of academics, work, and discipline. Frequently boys became homesick, and every year



Miss Elizabeth Williams and Farm School boys on her cabin porch—Miss Williams came to Farm School in 1895. She was one of the most popular staff members of those early days. Her "missionary letters" are the most descriptive sources of life at Farm School to survive the 1914 fire.

Farm School boys "up a tree" over Swannanoa River, early 20th century—Hiking, camping, and swimming were popular student activities in the early days of Asheville Farm School.

several decided to return home. The discipline problem that most perplexed school authorities came from the use of tobacco. In 1903 Miss Williams recounted a conversation with two boys who were "forlorn and homesick." Finally they told her that they simply could not live without tobacco." Admitting that "they looked really sick," she gave each of them a root to chew, hoping that would relieve their craving for tobacco. Other occasional problems came from the use of profanity, fighting and petty thievery. The most common form of punishment was assigning wrongdoers stumps to dig, the size of which was determined by the severity of their offence. Sometimes the task required more than a full day's labor.[10]

Faculty life was in some ways even busier that that of the boys. In addition to their regular classes, teachers supervised student workers, monitored evening study hall, chaperoned outings and activities, led Bible study groups, and oversaw group recreation. In this pre-automobile era, they rarely went into Asheville and, except for Christmas and summer vacations, most faculty members remained on campus. Even at holiday times, a reduced staff stayed to oversee the boys who worked during vacations. Daily life at Farm School truly demanded a missionary commitment.[11]

Despite an ever-present strain on its finances, Farm School survived its first two decades with a minimum of difficulties. This changed, however, with a disastrous fire that burned Old Main to the ground two days before Christmas of 1914. This was followed by a series of setbacks that, combined with changing circumstances in the broader regional, national, and even global communities, caused many to question if the school should continue. In Miss Williams' words, these were Asheville Farm School's "lean years." A phoenix ultimately emerged from the ashes of the Old Main fire, but only after a trying and difficult decade.

Ironically the introduction of electricity in 1910 had been hailed as a major means of reducing the risk of fire. However, the new system that brought so many advantages could do nothing about the faulty chimney and dry attic that were the major causes of the 1914 conflagration. Despite valiant efforts by the faculty and seventeen boys remaining on campus over Christmas

Early Farm School Baseball Team—Baseball was one of many team sports popular at Farm School. In the early days the playing field was the pasture at the present-day junction of Warren Wilson College and Riceville roads.

vacation, the building burned to the ground in less than three hours. No lives were lost, but the school's central facility, much of its property, and all of its records were destroyed. In response to numerous local appeals, the Board instructed Dr. Roger to make provisions for finishing the school year, but to make no long range commitments for the school's future beyond that time. The most advanced students were sent their certificates and told not to return. After modifications were made on the remaining buildings, boys from the lower grades returned to finish out the semester.[12]

Some members of the Presbyterian Home Missions Boards expressed strong reservations about reopening Farm School in the fall of 1915. As always, funds were short, and the Boards had many worthy and equally needy projects. Some members pointed to improvements in public education in the mountain area and suggested that perhaps Farm School was expendable. Moreover, numerous people had recommended for several years that the mountain work be consolidated; many who held this view did not consider reopening Farm School a priority. Ultimately, the

school's friends on the Boards prevailed to save it, but they were unable to secure a clear commitment of unqualified Board support.[13] In the spring of 1915, plans were announced for the construction of four new buildings and the reopening of the school with a modified program and reduced budget and enrollment. Reflecting ideas then in vogue about both boarding education and proper health measures, two new cottage style dorms, St. Clair and Carolina Lodge, were constructed. On the ends of each were screened-in sleeping porches for the boys, while the centers were enclosed and heated with accommodations for male faculty and bathing facilities. "For their health," the boys slept on the porches throughout the year. While winters necessitated extra quilts and an occasional shaking of snow from the covers, apparently few boys complained. After delays in completing construction of the new facilities, Farm School reopened on October 11, 1915, with a new student body of 100 mountain boys.[14]

Less than a year later, disaster struck again. Following heavy summer rains, the Swannanoa swelled its banks to form a huge lake that rose to fifteen feet over the valley floor. Crops, livestock, and valuable topsoil were swept away, along with both the dam and generating station. Damage estimates exceeded $10,000, and once again there was murmuring at headquarters about Farm School's future.[15]

Meanwhile the ever-worsening war in Europe and the American decision to join the Allies in the spring of 1917 created strains of yet a different nature for Farm School. Inflation, shortages, and other priorities reduced Church revenues, tightened the Board's budget, and further strained Farm School's already tight finances. With many graduates in the service, the school family was eager for news from the front. The older boys often withdrew from school to join the cause, and for the first time it its history Farm School's classrooms and dorms were not filled to capacity. In the spring of 1918, Dr. Roger resigned as Superintendent to go to London to be near his son, who had been injured in combat. Those who remained at the school patriotically supported the war effort by observing meatless days, flour rationing, and increasing farm productivity. However, some members of the Board only saw a leaderless school with insufficient students and again raised

doubts about the school's continued existence. But wartime conditions were temporary, and with the armistice many at Farm School expected a return to normal.[16]

That this did not happen was the result of far more fundamental forces that were changing and challenging the mountain region and all within it. Even before the war, the introduction of the automobile and telephone, the development of better roads, and the growth of mining and lumber industries had begun to radically affect the long-stagnant mountain communities. Moreover, young men returned from Europe with a grander view of the world and their own role in it. After "making the world safe for democracy," they would not be content with the poverty and deprivation of their childhoods. As prosperity increased, so did the pace of change, and the states of the area responded by showing an active interest in public education. The isolation that a generation before attracted Presbyterians to establish their mountain missions was on the wane and with it seemingly the reasons for institutions like Asheville Farm School.[17]

At the same time, many astute observers of mountain life, including John C. Campbell of the Southern Highland Division of the Russell Sage Foundation and Dr. Warren H. Wilson of the Presbyterian Department of Church and Country Life, began questioning many traditional assumptions about the mountain people and their needs. When Protestants first directed missionary efforts to the mountains, the work was perceived in simple terms of bringing the "benighted" mountaineers as quickly as possible into the "superior" culture of the broader society. This new generation of specialists found serious faults in the latter view and pointed to the long-overlooked virtues in the mountain culture.[18] For dedicated workers at Farm School and other missions throughout the region, these new conditions and insights were perplexing. A rapidly changing world required adaptation not only from the mountain folk but also from those who sought to serve them.

As Farm School entered the 1920's, it faced its greatest challenge. Replacing burned down buildings and replanting flooded out fields were small matters compared to reshaping human attitudes and perceptions. The transition would be painful, and many doubted Farm School could make it.

CHAPTER ONE FOOTNOTES

[1]*HMM,* December 1893, 37, 39; December 1894, 16-17, 40; September 1896, 242; December 1902, 27; December 1905, 40.

[2]*HMM,* June 1916, 197; December 1906, 2; December 1904, 36-37.

[3]*HMM,* December 1896, 38.

[4]*HMM,* October 1896, 12; December 1903, 35. Elizabeth B. WIlliams, Unpublished Manuscript in the College Archives. Miss Williams was a longtime Farm School employee. One of her responsibilities was writing a regular "circular letter" and other correspondence to school supporters and supervisors at the Home Missions Boards. This manuscript is largely derived from these. It is divided into four chapters, and pagination is according to chapter. The information here came from Chapter 2, page 1. Because all of the school's official records were destroyed in the 1914 fire, Miss Williams' letters and this unpublished history provide much of what is known about the early days of A.F.S.

[5]*HMM,* December 1897, 38; December 1907, 46; December 1909, 42; December 1912, 42.

[6]Williams, Ch. 2, 3-7.

[7]Clark Brothers, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., October 5, 1973. Mr. and Mrs. James Bair, Interview, Swannanoa, no date. (Tapes and transcripts in Warren Wilson College Archives)

[8]Mr. James Lee Gourley, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., Spring 1978. (Tape and transcript in Warren Wilson College Archives)

[9]*HMM,* December 1902, 42. Mr. Corbett Alexander, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., Spring 1978. Mr. Hardy Davidson, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., May 25, 1971. Mrs. J.R. Williford, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., Winter 1977-78. (Tapes and transcripts in Warren Wilson College Archives)

[10]Mr. Corbett Alexander, Interview. Williams, Ch. 3, 4.

[11]*Ibid.,* Ch. 2, 2.

[12]*Ibid.,* Ch. 4, 1-3.

[13]*Ibid.*

[14]*HMM,* May 1915, 7; July 1915, 31-32. Mr. Hardy Davidson, Interview. Mr. Fred Embler, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., October 7, 1978. (Tapes and transcripts in Warren Wilson College Archives)

[15]*HMM,* September 1916, 261; December 1916, 43.

[16]*HMM,* September 1917, 269; December 1917, 35, 42-43; November 1918, 4-5. Report by L.P. Guigou in "Wireless Messages from Home Missions Stations," March 1919.

[17]*HMM,* December 1911, 33-34; December 1914, 31-32; December 1917, 27-29; November 1922, 1-2.

[18]Shapiro, 150-152.

CHAPTER TWO

DEPRESSION AND REBIRTH

A decade before the stock market crash plunged the nation into the Great Depression, Asheville Farm School suffered through a depression of its own. While this resulted in part from the protracted economic woes that beset much of rural America in the 1920's, Farm School's problems were more than economic. Far more serious was its lack of direction in the midst of the social and economic forces that were changing the undeveloped Southern Mountain Region. While no one questioned that the school should serve "deserving mountain boys," few agreed how this could best be done. Nearly every facet of the program was affected: leadership was erratic, staff morale was low and turnover high, and support from the Board of National Missions proved tentative. Each of these factors worsened the original problem. But by the time the Great Depression had settled in, Farm School was well on its way to overcoming its own woes. By the middle of the 1930's it had achieved an educational renaissance. This transformation is the focus of this chapter.

As Farm School entered the 1920's, its program differed only slightly from previous years. Its educational offerings expanded gradually and in 1924 the first high school class was graduated.

Otherwise, however, life on the mountain campus continued to follow the daily routine of academics, work, and worship. And why not? Despite the many difficulties of the previous decade, Farm School still received far more applicants than it had space, thanks, in part, to the continued absence of educational alternatives in much of the region. A frequent staff meeting topic was "whom should the school serve?" Once a superintendent suggested that one of the school's most promising students not be allowed to return "because his folks have money." On other occasions, the staff debated their responsibilities to "boys who perform poorly but need what Farm School offers." The staff also discussed new ideas in education and how they might be applied to Farm School. But far more attention was given to mundane matters: student absences, love affairs, disorderly study halls, Sunday horseshoe pitching, Sunday ballplaying, and such old bugaboos as smoking and stealing from the kitchen.[1]

The Farm School staff contemplated all these issues, during the 1920's, without the benefit of strong leadership. In the decade following Dr. Roger's resignation, six different men headed the school. Among them was Dr. John E. Calfee, Superintendent of Asheville Normal, who for several years had charge of both schools. Fond of advising students with his own paraphrased version of *Thessalonians* 4:11—"Study, be quiet, and do your own business"—Calfee was a capable, respected administrator and articulate proponent of the educational ideals of John Dewey. But Calfee's first concern was the Normal, and Farm School suffered from this neglect. Another promising leader was John Charles Walker, who, following his 1925 appointment as Superintendent, perceptively assessed the school's needs and began to upgrade its program. But again fate was unkind. Walker's health suffered in the humid southern climate, and after one year, he transferred to a mission station in the Southwest. The Board next looked to the Farm School staff to fill its seemingly perpetual vacancy, and Louis "Pop" Burch was promoted to the top position. That Burch was uncomfortable with his new duties is evident in his comment to the faculty in the fall of 1926 that they "*not* seek higher authority" in resolving problems and his advice that they "beware of idealism."[2] By the following spring, it was apparent that Farm School was adrift. With the Board beginning to envision and expect more dynamic, innovative work from its mission schools,

few in Swannanoa or New York were optimistic about the fate of Farm School. But just as Farm School's future seemed most bleak, "two forces saved it: Sherfey Randolph and the Great Depression."[3]

In Henry S. Randolph, Farm School found a leader with great energy, wisdom, and practicality. Raised in the hills of East Tennessee, Randolph was a product of the mountains and of a mission school. When Sherfey was nine, a teacher from the Presbyterian school in nearby Erwin had visited the isolated Randolph cabin in search of students. By Randolph's own account, she found him "dirty, barefooted, clothed with rags, decked with freckles and a large mouth and crowned with a tangled mass of red hair." Despite his unpromising appearance and initial hesitance, the youth enrolled in the Presbyterian school. He met his expenses by working and thus began an educational career that culminated with a doctorate from Teacher's College of Columbia University and also ordination as a minister in the Church of the Brethren. When Edna Voss, Secretary of Educational and Medical Work of the Board of National Missions, persuaded him to take the reins of the struggling Farm School in 1927, Randolph brought a unique backround and a new outlook to the job. Supremely self-confident, he was equally at home in a mountain cabin and behind Columbia's ivy walls. He could "spin yarns" with the best of mountain folk and philosophize with Columbia's educational elite about the latest educational theories. A self-proclaimed "hillbilly," Randolph knew intimately the difficulties of mountain life, and he became widely recognized for his enthusiastic devotion to the controversial educational ideals of John Dewey. At Farm School, Randolph's seemingly disparate worlds merged for he was able to apply formulas learned at Columbia to problems he had known as a youth. Jovial, gregarious, and infectiously enthusiastic, Randolph lived his Christian convictions and won respect from those who were skeptical of his unorthodox views. Randolph's spirit and innovations breathed new life into a school that had been groping for direction and purpose.[4]

Of course the transformation of Asheville Farm School was more than the work of a single man. Throughout his term, Randolph was assisted by an able and dedicated staff. For this, the

Henry S. Randolph—Raised on Coffee Ridge in East Tennessee, Randolph attended the Presbyterian mission school in nearby Erwin. Following completion of the Ed.D. at Columbia University, he came to Farm School as Superintendent in 1927. During his eleven years in that position Farm School underwent an educational renaissance.

school could thank the Great Depression. Like the broader society, Farm School suffered from the protracted economic crisis: prices of farm products plummeted, few boys could pay even a fraction of their fees, Board funding shrank, and salaries were cut. Yet, for all of these discomforts, Farm School gained much from the Depression. Like their mountain neighbors, the staff were accustomed to living with less, and, since the farm produced foodstuffs, and the people knew how to share and cooperate, no one went hungry. Adversity produced comraderie and commitment. Moreover, the dark days of the Depression brought to Farm School individuals, who in more prosperous times would never have come; or, if they had, they would probably not have stayed. Among these were: Dwight Vining who soon after his 1926 arrival was appointed Business Manager; Arthur Bannerman who "visited for a few months" in 1928 while he reconsidered plans to study law; Bernhard and Kathrine Laursen, Danish immigrants, who in 1931 arrived from Boston and eventually became Farm Manager and Dietician; Henry Jensen, who was unable to secure a university position following completion of the Ph.D. in Botany at Harvard in 1933 and thus came to Farm School "for one year" to teach agriculture and chemistry, at one-third the normal salary (of $1,000!); and Sam DeVries, a Nebraskan, who came in 1934 and established an auto mechanics shop, coached a variety of sports, and performed many practical and essential duties. That Farm School was not the

"first choice" for most of these individuals in no way lessened their commitment. They were talented, hardworking, and dedicated; they fit well into the new Farm School of Henry Randolph. Bernhard Laursen's droll comment that he was surprised to find a job opening in 1931 "...until he was informed of the salary" was undoubtedly true for most of these individuals and many others who joined them. That many of them stayed long after Randolph's departure was the Depression's greatest legacy to Asheville Farm School.[5]

Farm School Tractors and Teams—Farm School was noted for its use of modern farming techniques and equipment and for teaching mountain boys a more scientific and productive approach to farming.

The Depression's impact on the mindset of the broader American society also contributed to Farm School's evolution. As the economic crisis worsened and many lost jobs, homes, and farms, old ideas were questioned and sometimes rejected. Depression-racked Americans turned to "new deals" not only in politics and government. Randolph's awareness of the opportunities created by this new milieu was evident in his 1932 comment that "pioneering in the field of ideas is not difficult when ancient good becomes uncouth." His concern about the shortcomings of traditional educational approaches was shared

by many in the broader society, including his two immediate superiors at the Board of National Missions, Miss Edna Voss, and her assistant, Miss Katherine Gladfelter. Their support gave credibility to Randolph's often controversial innovations. While this imaginative mindset was pervasive, many others responded to the depressed conditions with caution and opted for retrenchment. This was the attitude of many public school administrators throughout the region, and thus by the early 30's teaching positions were cut, salaries reduced, bus services to remote areas discontinued, and recent advancements in vocational education curtailed. In this environment, the opportunity for an innovative, practical educational venture for disadvantaged but deserving mountain boys was golden.[6]

Henry Randolph was no wild-eyed idealist. Coupled with his fascination with Dewey and his vision for a new and better Farm School was the realization that people often resist those changes they do not understand. His motto might well have been "let us make haste slowly." He studied Farm School's existing program and assembled a staff that became noted for commitment to the school, if not always to his Progressive Education ideals. In freewheeling discussions, they analyzed mountain conditions and the latest in educational theory, psychology, and sociology. To criticism that some of his views were impractical, Randolph was gracious but undaunted, and he constantly reminded his staff that "the student was their primary concern." In time these deliberations produced the following conclusions (Randolph called them "facts"): that Farm School's boys were "educational delinquents," often exceeding 18 years of age with the barest minimum of education; that the boys' mental abilities varied greatly; and that due to economic and other factors, few of them would ever be able to stay in school long enough to complete a conventional high school program. Armed with these findings, and urged on by Randolph's enthusiasm for John Dewey, the Farm School staff announced a bold blueprint for its future. Their boys should "learn those things which would enable them to earn an immediate living;" thus a vocational emphasis was called for. Secondly the program would not be oriented to the student seeking high school graduation and college admission. Finally, instruction would be individualized, and no standard curriculum

would be followed. By the fall of 1931, Randolph and company were ready to embark on their educational adventure. If not everyone was as enthusiastic as he, few doubted that Farm School had finally wakened from its depression.[7]

For all the talk of change, some things remained unchanged at Farm School. The 1934-35 Bulletin makes clear that Farm School's purpose was still to serve ambitious, hardworking mountain boys with limited educational opportunities in their home communities. Applicants had to be at least 14, but they could be much older, as many were. A rigid code of behavior was maintained, and all students signed a pledge, promising to be cooperative, respectful, and honest and to abstain from tobacco, alcohol, profanity, and gambling. Work remained at the center of Farm School life and was at one and the same time an essential element in the boy's learning experience and his means of paying for it. Farm School continued to emphasize its religious commitment, and attendance at church and chapel services was still required.[8]

What made the new Farm School different from the old was a conscious attempt to integrate these various aspects of its program into a wholistic, realistic educational experience. Arthur Bannerman, who had foregone a legal career and remained at Farm School to teach social studies and serve as Randolph's assistant, captured this spirit when he commented: "it (Farm School) no longer looks like a school...(but) rather a place where people live." Characteristically, the 1934-35 Bulletin has no section entitled "Academic Program." The motto "learning to do by doing" stated the school's educational philosophy. The Bulletin provided a sketchy description of the new educational system and how it worked. Students were not classified by age, class, or rank but were allowed to progress at their own rate. Rather than classes, they enrolled in "projects," the nature and subject of which were determined by individual interest and need. Ideally each project focused on "real life situations" that could be replicated in one of the school's eighteen "departments of work and study." With guidance from the Advisory Committee, a boy selected those instructors best suited to helping him define and resolve the "problems" inherent in his project. The time devoted to a project varied greatly, depending on its nature and student

interest. Upon completion of a project, the student and his advisor(s) submitted a report to the registrar. These took the place of grades and were summarized in semester reports to parents. There were no set requirements for graduation. But when a boy believed "his achievements in health, social, moral, religious, cultural and vocational values" were sufficient to make him "worthy" of graduation, he petitioned the faculty. If they agreed (and sometimes they did not!), a high school diploma was granted. Students could also pursue two additional years in a vocational field, for which they would receive an advanced certificate.[9]

To a rather surprising extent, Farm School boys lived up to the school's stated expectations. While smoking, profanity, and other offenses were often staff concerns, and boys were occasionally "shipped" for these and other violations, the vast majority were conscientious about their study and work obligations and strove to better their characters according to the school's ideals. This was the middle of the Great Depression, and opportunities like those provided by Farm School were rare. Applications generally exceeded available space three to one, and every boy who enrolled knew that if he did not make it, someone else would take his place.[10] As to work obligations, these were farm boys, and most were unafraid of hard work. Indeed some would volunteer for extra chores in order to escape less desirable academic work. At busy times, like planting and harvesting seasons, this received official sanction, as book work was suspended until all the necessary tasks were completed.

Of course, Farm School's work program was not without problems. The most constant and trying of these revolved around the question of remuneration. While cash never changed hands, making this only a bookkeeping matter, the school was caught between desires to encourage incentive and to be fair. As a "scientific" solution to the problem, the school, beginning in 1928, fed the age and weight of each boy into an algebraic formula that supposedly determined the tuition each should pay and a suitable hourly wage. This system soon became a joke, and the responsibility for determining wages was turned over to the work supervisors. This system, too, had its flaws as supervisors complained of endless bookkeeping. The boys, too, were

unhappy because they never knew where they stood in meeting their obligations, and everyone was painfully aware that the supervisors were not consistent in their expectations. Recognizing the need for change, Randolph placed Henry Jensen, who had stayed beyond his "one year," in charge of the program. Though Jensen was often among the loyal opposition to progressive education, Randolph recognized his talent for envisioning a course of action and carrying it out. The result was a plan for a "Cooperative Work Program," based upon the tenets that work is a privilege and that all work performed at Farm School was of equal importance. The plan called for equal hours (then one-half time) and equal pay for all boys regardless of age, academic standing, or amount of tuition paid. Summer and vacation work scholarships were also made available for those who needed further assistance in meeting their expenses.[11]

How well did Randolph's "school without classes, courses, curriculum, examinations, or credits" work? It had both strong supporters and detractors, and the transition was often difficult for both staff and students. From the beginning, some wondered if Farm School's boys had sufficient motivation and self-discipline for such a loosely structured program, for, despite Randolph's protestations to the contrary, there were always some boys who required much encouragement in initiating their projects. Such a boy was usually sent to the library, where the teachers hoped that the perusal of a few books would motivate him. If this did not work, "he was sent to Mrs. Burch," who suggested a variety of topics. Boys who at that point remained indecisive rarely stayed much longer at Farm School. Ironically, the staff also occasionally faced a problem of too much (or at least misdirected) motivation. For example, one boy became so deeply interested in aviation that he neglected his other duties. When he decided to construct an airplane for his next project and wrote home for $50 for materials (though he was having trouble meeting his bills), some staff members thought the system had gotten out of hand.[12]

Staff members themselves occasionally had problems of their own with the new system. Some simply resisted the change and the increased work it implied. Initially Randolph was patient and hoped these people would adjust. But by the spring of 1936, when the program was well established and widely acclaimed, he

warned his faculty that "those who can't contribute should not stay."[13] Of course not everyone uncomfortable with the system was a shirker. Years later a teacher, who was a close friend of Randolph's, conceded that "she spent three years trying to figure out how to teach French under this system."[14]

Despite such difficulties, the new system of progressive education often worked well and won enthusiastic praise from students, faculty, and campus visitors. Not surprisingly, many of the best projects grew out of the boys' work experiences. For example, many boys completed projects in architectural drawing, carpentry, mechanics, interior decorating, and landscaping that were closely related to their work in constructing campus buildings, including the log library and Elizabeth Williams Chapel. They learned to draw blueprints, select materials, determine costs, construct in wood and stonemasonry, and properly install plumbing, electrical wiring, and heating systems. Many projects originated on the farm. When one boy who worked in the dairy raised questions about its profitability, he embarked upon a project that lasted almost the entire school year. He kept daily records of the hay, silage, and feed consumed and the amount of milk and butterfat produced by each of the herd's twenty-two cows. His interest spurred by the initial query, he studied a variety of dairy-related concerns, like sanitation, marketing, breeding, and the relative merits of the various dairy breeds. Frequently boys took farm-related matters into the school's laboratories. They tested seed corn, chemically analyzed soils, and examined bacteria in milk. Such projects involved a practical application of the "three R's" and were intimately tied up with and dependent upon the actual living situations in the school. This was progressive education at its finest, and these were the types of stories Dr. Randolph loved to tell as he traveled across the country to spread the Farm School story.[15]

For all the emphasis on practical, vocational training, however, Farm School was also committed to providing a broad, well-balanced education. To assure this in its network of schools, the Board of National Missions issued guidelines, which required each school to provide the following (in addition to vocational education): elemental instruction ("the basics"—for those who needed such), cultural enrichment (literature, science, social

science, and the arts), religious and health education, and training for home and family life and leisure time activities. Naturally, some of these areas were better suited to the project approach than others. In the field of science, several boys constructed a 15 by 18 foot terrarium in the basement of the classroom building. This housed numerous snakes, lizards, and turtles and a variety of plants and mosses, and it served as a laboratory for later projects in zoology, botany, and animal behavior. For projects in the social sciences, boys surveyed social and economic conditions in the Asheville area and their home communities. One group studied the candidates and issues in the 1936 presidential election and reported their findings in eight presentations before the school community. Early in the campaign they conducted a "straw poll" on campus and followed up with an "official election" on election day, using facsimiles of real ballots, courtesy of the print shop. They analyzed shifts in voting behavior, honed public speaking skills, and gained new insights into politics and government. (Alf Landon fared no better against Franklin D. Roosevelt at A.F.S. than elsewhere.) Projects in religious education often involved teaching Sunday school or presenting special programs in the area churches. One boy combined interests in rural church work and landscaping and helped several churches of his home community beautify their grounds with native plants.[16]

Even in those areas where the project approach seemed least suitable, creative teachers found new ways to present their traditional materials. The 1936 Senior play provided opportunities for boys to do projects in creative writing and dramatics. Literature projects were usually completed individually or in small groups with boys concentrating on favorite authors (in 1936 these included Dickens, Shakespeare, and Eugene O'Neill) or particular literary genres. Some boys wrote their own poetry, plays, essays and fiction. For the few boys each year who wanted to pursue post-secondary education, a special curriculum, based upon college entrance requirements, was devised. At the end of each year, boys in this program took standardized tests, satisfactory completion of which assured college admission.[17]

The infectious spirit of "learning to do by doing and learning to live by living" affected every facet of life in the Farm School

community. To the school's longtime commitment to prepare responsible church leaders and Christian servants, it provided new direction and enthusiasm. Attendance at Sunday services, daily chapels, and an array of other church-related activities was still required, but now, more than ever before, the emphasis was on *active* participation. While the required nature of these activities dampened the enthusiasm of some boys, many others joined in planning and carrying them out. Boys were invited (but never required) to become members of the Farm School Presbyterian Church,* and they served as deacons, lay participants in services, and as members of the chorus, band, and orchestra. Christian service was a pervading theme of many sermons and chapels and was applied to real life in the activities of the Young People's Societies and the projects of many boys. Particularly dedicated boys joined the Gospel Team which roamed the mountains over a radius of 125 miles to "render programs of gospel messages and music" to isolated churches and community centers. Of course, active involvement by the boys occasionally produced unexpected results. For example, sour notes and unrecognizable tunes by Pop Burch's "Farm School Sympathy Orchestra" (and his antics in correcting them) sometimes brought grins and chuckles to what were otherwise rather solemn services. Sometimes the boys actively disagreed with their mentors over religious matters and the nature of worship. Accustomed to a more emotional, evangelical brand of Christianity, some were uncomfortable with the relatively passive, social gospel-oriented faith they encountered. From time to time, such boys complained to Randolph that the "chapels were not devotional enough." While this may have been "active participation" in the religious life of the community, not everyone was happy with it.[18]

Randolph's wholistic educational philosophy was so broad that it encompassed (at least in theory) the boys' leisure time activities. Convinced that its goal of developing well-rounded young men implied training for the wise and advantageous use of free time, Farm School offered its boys a wide array of activities. These

*The Farm School church had been organized in 1925. Sunday services were held in the recreation room of Sunderland Hall until 1937, when the Elizabeth Williams Chapel was completed.

included Boy Scouts, football, basketball, baseball, soccer, boxing, tennis, golf, quoits, gymnastics and tumbling. All boys were expected to participate in at least one of these activities. Not surprisingly, this created a scheduling nightmare, and the staff seemed in constant disagreement about how best to arrange the daily routine to include work, study, and leisure time activities. This, along with concerns about expenses, and the desire to involve all students, led to a hotly contested decision to deemphasize interscholastic sports. Many believed a beefed-up intramural program was more suitable for Farm School and would allow greater opportunity for student leadership and responsibility. But many boys disagreed, and several were so unhappy they withdrew from school.[19]

Not all student activities were of an athletic nature. With guidance from Mrs. Burch, boys wrote articles, edited, published and printed *The Owl and Spade,* the school's monthly paper which they fondly called "The Bird and Shovel." Many others sang in the chorus or played an instrument in Pop Burch's famous orchestra. When Susan Schock joined the faculty in 1935 to teach English, she found little emphasis on drama. Thanks to Coach DeVries and his crew, a stage was constructed in the gymnasium, and soon the valley echoed with lines from "Twelfth Night," "Barber of Seville," "The Importance of Being Earnest," and many other plays. Undaunted by the absence of student actresses, Miss Schock drafted Randolph's daughters and faculty wives, including Thekla Jensen and Evelyn DeVries, to serve as Farm School's leading ladies. Randolph himself most enjoyed "singing games," a name he deviously gave to community wide folk dances, since Board policy proscribed dancing in any form. He believed that these were an excellent remedy for the petty quarrels and personal differences that occasionally plagued the community and a means of temporarily turning people's attention from more pressing concerns.[20]

Of course the boys never restricted themselves to prearranged, formal activities. Many looked forward to Saturdays, when they spruced up not only themselves but also the school's two-ton, flatbed truck. During the week, it hauled garbage, coal, and dirt, but on Saturday nights, with Coach DeVries as chauffeur and a load of boys piled on the back, it became a fine carriage

destined for the campus and girls of Asheville Normal. In obvious support of their Superintendent's oft-contested contention that a boy's mind was always at work, Farm School boys never tired of pranks. They continued the tradition of stealing Uncle Charlie Alexander's watermelons, engaged naive, new arrivals in snipe hunts, and loved to "relocate" each other's shoes and socks just before the arrival of a group of girls from the Normal or some other equally gala event. The boys enjoyed festivities of all kinds, particularly the weddings of staff members. More than one newlywed couple enjoyed a honeymoon ride in a Farm School wheelbarrow or dairy wagon, powered by a team of raucous but admiring mountain boys.[21]

More than an enthusiastic educator, Sherfey Randolph was also a consummate promoter. His travels around the country, public addresses, and published articles brought national attention to Asheville Farm School. Because his vision for the school sometimes superseded what it actually was, his staff joked that one of them should "trail the boss" on one of his promotional tours "so they might know what they were doing." But students, staff, Board officials, and the many visitors to the mountain campus did not doubt that Henry Randolph had brought new life and hope to the school. Randolph's reputaton spread along with the school's, and following the death of Dr. Warren H. Wilson in 1938 he was appointed Secretary of Rural Church Work of the Board of National Missions. This was unquestionably a promotion, but Randolph's hesitance to accept the offer (he first turned it down) revealed his commitment to Farm School and his confidence in its future. When he finally decided to accept the new post, he left Farm School in the hands of young, energetic, and farsighted leaders. Most importantly, Randolph left Farm School confident that it could adjust and adapt its mission to constantly changing circumstances and conditions.

For all his pride and confidence in the experiment in progressive education, Henry Randolph was much too wise ever to be content. In September 1936, he issued a challenge to a committee of key staff members. "A mission school," he told them, "must keep moving into new things." Farm School's innovations had won much praise, but now they were being widely copied, and thus he concluded: "we are eliminating our usefulness."

Either the school should close so the Board might transfer funds to another area of greater need, or it could enter a new phase that would be worthy of their efforts and Board support. Of course, Randolph's brain trust opted for the latter; thus began an exciting and arduous process. First, they critiqued the existing program and found it inadequate. Graduates left Farm School with a broad smattering of educational experiences but still largely unprepared to earn a living. Next, they studied conditions throughout the region and concluded that economic underdevelopment was at the root af all its problems. Unless individual and regional incomes could be raised, the social, cultural and health problems that had for so long preoccupied Farm School would never be alleviated. If Farm School's future existence were to be justified, it had to address these concerns.[22]

Two key figures emerged in these deliberations. More than anyone else, Henry Jensen stressed that the region's economic problems had to be addressed and dismissed the need for a "purely, academic mission high school" in the region. His blueprint for Farm School's future called for a three-year agricultural training course for a select few, all mature young men. To objections that such a program would be too narrow, would require major staff cuts, and might not serve sufficient numbers to justify Board support, Jensen brusquely responded that the school should "do one job well, rather than fifty poorly." While Randolph gave tentative approval to the general direction of Jensen's plan, Arthur Bannerman came to subsequent meetings with proposals to strengthen it. He agreed that Farm School should not spread itself too thin but suggested "we might try to do three jobs well." But he, too, believed Farm School should concentrate on agriculture and primarily serve "boys who come from a farm and plan to go back to one." A man of practical vision, he suggested that four model farms be established (one entirely of bottomland, another with some woodlands, a third with some hilly acreage, and the last entirely of sloping lands), so that future farmers might be prepared for a variety of experiences. Boys would work and learn on the farms during the day. Then, in fulfillment of the school's and church's continued commitment to providing a well rounded education, they would attend evening classes in religion, English, health and recreational activities. The

new program, he suggested, should take the name "School of the Southern Highlands," to distinguish it from Farm School. Randolph was again generally satisfied; his only major addition to the Bannerman plan was that the program be made coeducational. The Board in 1935 had rejected an earlier suggestion that Farm School admit girls, and in response Randolph had written a six-page letter citing reasons why coeducation was desirable. But by February 1936 when the issue of coeducation seemed to threaten prospects for what then was being called a "vocational junior college program," Randolph and his committee temporarily withdrew that part of their proposal.[23]

Randolph unofficially presented the Bannerman plan to Board headquarters, where it was enthusiastically received, and arrangements were made for an official study of the proposal and the broader question of continued Presbyterian educational work in the region. The "Committee for the Study of Educational Needs in Western North Carolina" completed its work in late 1937, and its report echoed many of the findings of the Farm School committee. It recognized the improvements in public education in the area but added that the public schools were still "narrowly academic," and thus justified the continuation of church-supported schools that provided vocational training. The report concluded with a "Comprehensive Plan" that called for a coeducational program that would continue the work of Farm School and Dorland-Bell. It would also initiate a post-secondary program that would "fit young people to earn a living in the mountains" and provide them with an "understanding of the essentials of right social and civic living."[24]

While details for these major changes were being worked out, two other Board decisions had great impact on Farm School. One was the decision to promote Randolph to the position at Board headquarters and to place the school under the direction of an Executive Committee, headed by Arthur Bannerman. The second was a controversial decision to gradually withdraw Board support from Asheville Normal and use those funds in developing the program called for in the comprehensive plan.[25] While the significance of these decisions for Farm School's future was readily apparent, several other equally important developments were occurring. By the mid-1930's, many at Farm School had begun to

question the Jim Crow segregation, that was then a generally uncontested fact of Southern life. Black educators were invited to visit campus and reciprocal visits were made to a Methodist-supported school for Blacks in Asheville. Moreover, in the early 30's, arrangements had also been made with the Board-supported *La Progresiva* School of Cardenas, Cuba, to bring several Cuban boys each year to Farm School. By 1940, Bannerman commented in his Annual Report that staff and students were accustomed to visitors from various races, cultures, and religions and gave cordial welcomes to all. By broadening its sense of mission, Farm School also broadened the education it offered its mountain boys. Unknowingly, it sowed the seeds for developments of greater consequence.[26]

Under the direction of the Executive Committee, composed of Bannerman, Jensen, and Dwight Vining, Farm School endured four years of uncertainty as Board politics and the increasingly troubled world situation slowed implementation of the comprehensive plan. For their part, however, the Farm School staff sought to correct shortcomings in their own program and bring it closer into line with the direction implied by Board action. Recognizing that the old system of progressive education had often been too loose and left many boys inadequately prepared vocationally, they changed the curriculum to require all students (high school and post-secondary) to specialize in one vocational area. In the spring of 1941, the issue of coeducation came to the forefront when applications were received from several girls, who apparently were aware of the new direction in Board policy. With approval from Board headquarters, the girls were admitted, but Bannerman advised the staff that no major change towards coeducation would occur until the Board's review of the Farm School issue gave official approval.[27]

The Board was edging toward a climactic decision. Following Miss Voss's April 1942 visit to Farm School, the official announcement was finally made. Dorland Bell School of Hot Springs was to be transferred to the Farm School campus and continued there as a high school unit for girls; Farm School was to continue as a boys' high school unit; and the long-anticipated coeducational, post-secondary program was placed at Farm School under the name of Warren H. Wilson Vocational Junior College. The three

units would be administered as a single institution, with Arthur Bannerman as President and Henry Jensen as Dean. With only a few months before its first classes, the fledgling institution faced numerous unanswered questions; these were complicated by the chaotic global situation. For nearly half a century, Presbyterian educators had pioneered in the Southern Appalachians, and now they faced new frontiers. In the excitement that followed the April 1942 announcement, no one could possibly imagine how much the years to come would further broaden horizons on the mountain campus.

Chapter Two Footnotes

[1]Staff Meeting Minutes, April 4, 1922; September 15, 1922; September 21, 1922; January 20, 1925.

[2]Jensen, 7-8. Staff Meeting Minutes, October 30, 1922; September 1, 1926.

[3]quoted from Jensen, 20.

[4]*Ibid., 27. Miss Susan Schock, Interview, Swnannanoa, N.C., July 1971.* Bernhard and Kathrine Laursen, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., March 13, 1971. Arthur and Lucile Bannerman, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., no date. (Tapes and transcripts in Warren Wilson College Archives.) Randolph's own account of his personal background is found in Henry S. Randolph, "The New Day in Missions Among the Southern Highlanders," an address delivered at the Biennial Meeting of Presbyterian Women's Missionary Organization, May 22, 1931. Reprinted in pamphlet form by A.F.S. Press.

[5]Jensen, 27-31. Bernhard and Kathrine Laursen, Interview. Mr. Lee Roberts, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., Spring 1978. (Tapes and transcripts in Warren Wilson College Archives.) Staff Meeting Minutes, November 23, 1930. Annual Report, 1931.

[6]Henry S. Randolph, "The Asheville Farm School: Pioneers in Educational Method", *Mountain Life and Work,* October 1932, 16. Staff Meeting Minutes, November 23, 1930; May 15, 1932. Annual Reports, 1934, 1935.

[7]Jensen, 28. Randolph, "A.F.S.: Pioneers...Method," 17.

[8]*1934-35 Asheville Farm School Bulletin.*

[9]*Ibid.,* 27-44.

[10]Annual Reports, 1934, 1935. Doan Ogden, Interview, Asheville, N.C., Spring 1984 (courtesy of Sam Dempsey).

[11]Henry W. Jensen, "The Cooperative Work Program," *Mountain Life and Work,* October 1938.

[12]*Owl and Spade,* May and June 1932. Staff Meeting Minutes, January 18, 1932.

[13]Staff Meeting Minutes, May 11, 1936.

[14]Mrs. Mary McNutt Gillespie, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., no date. (Tape and transcript in Warren Wilson College Archives.)

[15]Annual Reports, 1934, 1935, 1936. Henry S. Randolph, "A New Educational Program in Mountain Living," *Mountain Life and Work,* April 1934.

[16]Annual Reports, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937.

[17]Annual Report, 1936. Doan Ogden, Interview.

[18]Jensen, 70. Staff Meeting Minutes, February 5, 1932.

[19]*Owl and Spade,* September 1936, February 1938. Staff Meeting Minutes, October 7, 1935. Executive Council Meeting Minutes, September 25, 1936.

[20]*1934-35 A.F.S. Bulletin.* Mrs. Mary McNutt Gillespie, Interview. Miss Susan Schock, Interview. Jensen, 27.

[21]Sam and Evelyn DeVries, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., May 1971. Mr. Lee Roberts, Interview. Dwight and Allie B. Vining, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., February 27, 1971. Arthur and Lucile Bannerman, Interview.

[22]Executive Council Meeting Minutes, September 25, 1936; October 5, 1936. Staff Meeting Minutes, December 9, 1936,

[23]Executive Council Meeting Minutes, October 5, 1936; October 21, 1936, November 14, 1936; February 1, 1937. Annual Reports, 1935, 1936, 1937. H.S. Randolph to Edna Voss, February 8, 1936. Apparently the question of what to do with the existing girls school in the region was a major stumbling block for coeducation at Farm School.

[24]"New Plans for Changing Needs," *Women and Missions,* January 1938.

[25]Staff Meeting Minutes, May 2, 1938. Edna Voss to Arthur Bannerman, November 6, 1939.

[26]*Owl and Spade,* September 1928, March 1936. Annual Report, 1940. Jensen, 66.

[27]Annual Report, 1939. *Owl and Spade,* September 1938. Staff Meeting Minutes, January 24, 1938; April 24, 1939; March 18, 1940; January 27, 1941; February 3, 1941.

CHAPTER THREE

BROADENED HORIZONS

The Summer of 1942 passed quickly on the mountain campus of the Asheville Farm School. Although the Board's action that April was not unanticipated, it did catch many unprepared. Girls at Dorland-Bell and Mossop School (a smaller Presbyterian girls' school in Harriman, Tennessee, also closed by the Board) were saddened, and many of them were hesitant to enroll at the new consolidated school. In addition, the Farm School staff was just as uncertain about dealing with the influx of girls. Housing them was the most immediate concern. The Bannerman family unselfishly gave up their residence in the three-story Randolph House, and it became the dorm for younger girls. St. Clair, the old open air dorm built after the 1914 fire, and later remodeled as a guest house in 1938, was converted into a dorm for older girls. A few girls even were housed with the Vinings.

The fall term opened with many unanswered questions about curriculum. The assumption that "most of what had previously been taught to the boys would also be worth teaching the girls" stemmed less from belief in equality of the sexes than from the immediacy of the situation. For all the anticipation, the arrival of the

girls, and the boys' discovery of them, raised new and unexpected situations, which required adjustment by both staff and students. When two boys, who were old hands in the campus laundry, first encountered female undergarments in the wash, they were thoroughly embarrassed. School administrators quickly caucused to make other arrangements for the girls' laundry. A new day had dawned, and never again would life on the mountain campus be quite like it was before.[1]

For all the excitement and uncertainty, the establishment of the junior college and coeducation were only the first of many changes that outwardly transformed the Presbyterian school in the Carolina mountains. These initial changes were practical responses to new conditions in the mountain region. In this same spirit, some at the school recognized that their once static mission field was no longer isolated from the national community and that changes in the broader world were making new, unprecedented demands on all who were aware of them. To provide a viable education for its mid-twentieth century Appalachian young people, the fledgling school would have to be flexible. It would have to adjust its program and concept of mission. At the same time, the school could not risk being tossed and turned by every new situation. From its mission heritage, it clung to the spirit of the old fundamentals of practical academic training, work, and a Christian approach to living. The challenge for the second half century of Presbyterian work in the Southern Mountains was to find ways to keep viable this firm foundation in a world of perplexing change. Thus it was that the program for mountain boys and girls with the awkward name "Warren H. Wilson Vocational Junior College and Associated Schools" evolved into a four year liberal arts college serving young people from every corner of the globe. That the school successfully traversed this unknown frontier was largely due to the vision and leadership of Arthur Bannerman and Henry Jensen.

If ever a man seemed predestined for a career in the Presbyterian mission field, it was Arthur Bannerman. Born to Presbyterian missionary parents in Juneau, Alaska, in 1900, he was named for a missionary his parents had worked with in the Congo and baptized by the renowned Presbyterian pioneer, The Rev. Sheldon Jackson. When Art was five, his father became

minister of the Presbyterian church in the small, New Jersey town of Titusville. There the five Bannerman sons (Art was next to eldest) were raised in the best Calvinist tradition. They were encouraged to excel in school, work hard, and live lives worthy of their Christian faith. After graduating from Presbyterian-related Lafayette College in 1922 with a degree in English, Art contemplated a legal career and went to work as a clerk in a law office. In time he came to question this earlier ambition and in February 1928 joined boyhood friend, Sam Cooley, at Asheville Farm School. Farm School needed a part-time math teacher to finish out the year, and Art saw this as an opportunity to visit a part of the country he had never seen and rethink his future plans. What was intended to be a few months' stay ended up setting the course for the rest of his life.[2]

Bannerman was immediately enchanted by the Appalacians and their people. He enjoyed Farm School's boys and was impressed that they were willing to work for an education. In Henry Randolph, he found a man with whom he could heartily disagree, but whom he genuinely liked and respected. When summer arrived, Randolph persuaded Bannerman and Cooley not to return to New Jersey but to work at the Sunset Gap Community Center, across the mountains near Cosby, Tennesee. There Bannerman had his first real contact with mountain people away from the Farm School campus. He was impressed by their simplicity and pride and concluded that their Scotch-Irish ancestry was very much like his own. By summer's end, he decided that the mountain folk "are really my people" and agreed to return for another year at Asheville Farm School. Then, of course, there was also Lucile Patton. She was a senior at Asheville Normal in 1929, when she and Arthur Bannerman first met (on opposite ends of a double date). Following graduation from the Normal, she taught elementary school in Swannanoa and was courted by the young Farm School teacher. On Thanksgiving Day 1930, they were married at Swannanoa's First Presbyterian Church and upon returning to Farm School given a bouncing honeymoon ride in a dairy wagon. If Bannerman's own heritage melded his missionary outlook, his marriage to Lucile Patton assured that it would be applied in the Southern Mountains. Her ancestors pioneered the region in the 1790's, and Bannerman often fondly said that with

Lucile "he was married to the valley." In later years, when he held positions of leadership, this assured him recognition and acceptance from the occasionally suspicious local people.[3]

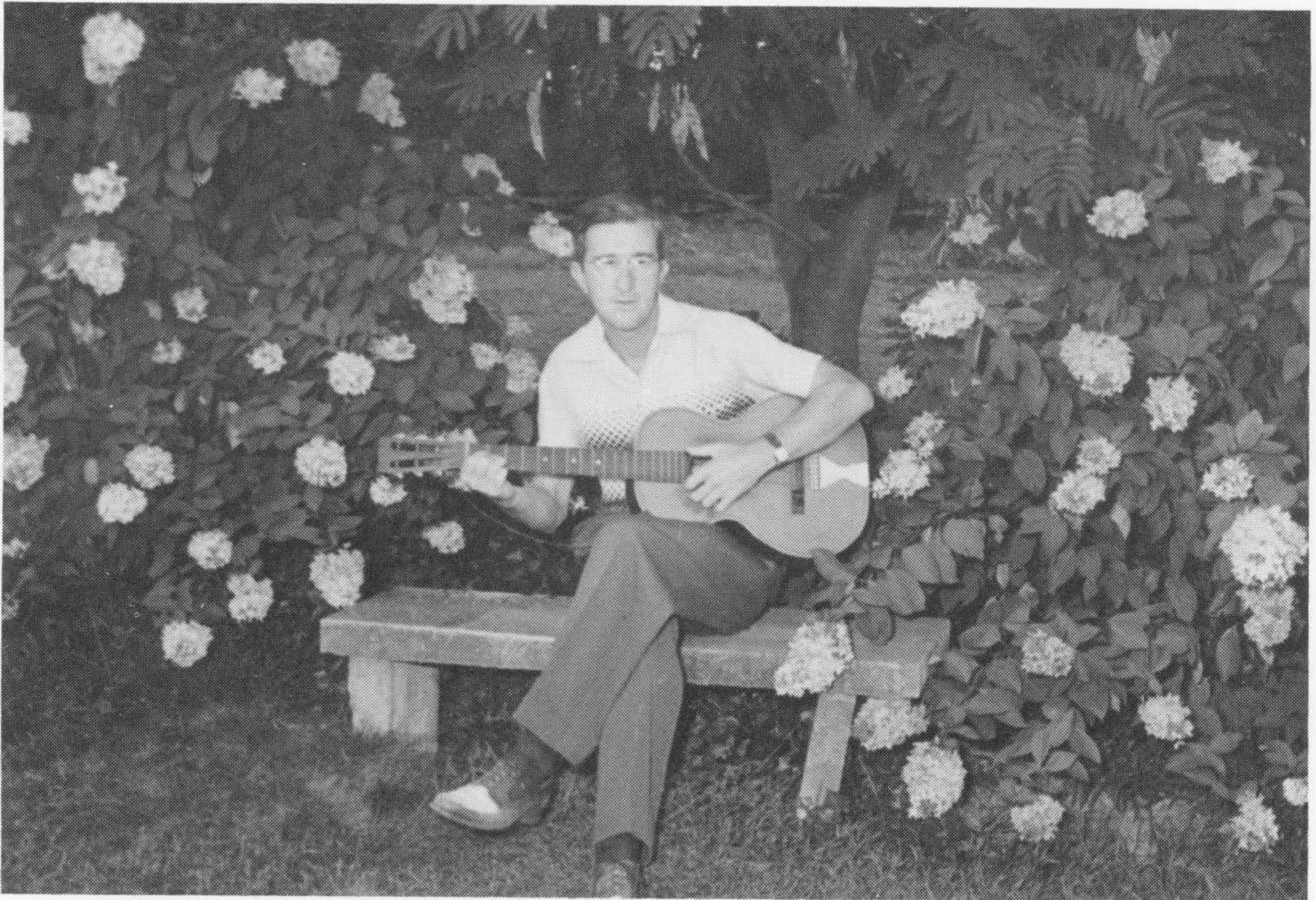
Arthur Bannerman—Bannerman's "brief visit" to Farm School in 1928 ended up extending for the remainder of his life. In 1942 he was named President of the newly consolidated Presbyterian educational program that eventually became known as Warren Wilson College. He retired from this position in 1971.

During the 1930's Farm School became Arthur Bannerman's life. He taught math and social studies, coached, served as Randolph's assistant, and participated in the discussions about the school's program and future. His creative, practical outlook made him a trusted and stabilizing influence. Most importantly, Arthur Bannerman was dedicated to the boys of Asheville Farm School and supremely well-suited to serving them. He was devout but not pious; self-assured, yet tolerant; aware of human frailty but by no means cynical about human potential. But, as one of "the boys" so aptly commented only a few years ago, Arthur Bannerman's greatest attribute was that "he was a man who never forgot he was a boy."[4]

If Bannerman's long career at Asheville Farm School and Warren Wilson seemed foreordained, the same could not have

been said about Henry Jensen. The son of a Danish immigrant who supervised a large estate and a farm in suburban Boston, he specialized in vocational agriculture in high school and would likely have followed in his father's steps had it not been for a teacher who insisted to the elder Jensen that his son was college material. After completing a B.S. in Botany and English from Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1930, Henry enrolled at Harvard, where he completed the Ph.D. in Biology in 1933. His dissertation examined "the effects of hybridization on meiosis and analysis of sex chromosome phenomena in the genus RUMEX." Needless to say, he anticipated a career in research and university level teaching. But, with the nation in the depths of the Depression, no positions were available.

Upon the suggestion of friend and fellow Dane, Bernhard Laursen, Jensen applied to teach agriculture and chemistry at Asheville Farm School in 1933. Because the school only had money for one salary, and also needed to hire a minister, Jensen agreed to take the position for one-third the normal salary. With the $33.35 per month "plus maintenance" (a "drafty apartment" with "large furniture" and meals in the school dining room), Jensen was able to marry Thekla Rasmussen, whom he had met in Boston in 1926 and to whom he had been engaged for several years. Thekla was born in Denmark and orphaned at age five. She was shy and loved to read, particularly about the United States, where she immigrated when she was eighteen. Both she and Henry had been raised in "strict, European homes" and, by the time they met, they both chafed under the watchful eyes of relatives and provincialism of their Danish Lutheran ministers. When Henry was at Harvard, they alarmed family and friends by leaving their home church and joining the University Lutheran congregation on the Harvard campus. As dismal as prospects at Farm School in 1933 must have seemed, they did offer the young couple the opportunity to be on their own. They found the people, customs and food of the Southern Mountains strange, but the region was a "botanist's delight." Together they roamed the hills to collect specimens and enjoy the mountain beauty. In anticipation of an eventual university position, Henry wrote and published a number of articles and remained active in several professional associations.[5]



Henry Jensen—Unable to secure a university level position following completion of the Ph.D. from Harvard in the midst of the Great Depression, Jensen came to Farm School in 1933 to teach agriculture and chemistry. He became Dean of the new consolidated program in 1942 and served in that position until 1973.

Prolonged doldrums in the academic market and increased responsibilities at Farm School kept Henry Jensen from ever leaving the Southern Mountains. Loyal to his Harvard traditions, he often opposed many of the ideas Randolph put forth. Nevertheless, Randolph recognized Jensen's dedication and gift for organization, and gave him increasingly greater responsibilities. In 1936, Jensen devised and became director of the Cooperative Work Program and soon thereafter was appointed Director of Citizenship. Like Bannerman, he was committed to the students and to providing them the best possible program. He was a demanding but popular teacher and always remained an active, articulate participant in the debates about Farm School's future. His endorsement of new ideas and directions agitated some, but they also challenged many into broadening their views and expectations. After his 1942 appointment as Dean, no facet of community life escaped his attention. He oversaw admissions, financial aid, student records, and disciplinary matters. He supervised the faculty, urged them to be creative but demanding, and once

even chided them for their unenthusiastic singing in chapels. As consumed as he was in the life of the school, Jensen also found time to write poetry and short stories, to learn and sing ballads, and to share his love of nature with others. He was truly a Renaissance Man, and his presence added an important dimension to life on the mountain campus.[6]

For all their individual attributes, Arthur Bannerman and Henry Jensen made their greatest contribution to Farm School and Warren Wilson as a team. That two men who differed so much worked together so well was truly a gift. Bannerman was people-oriented, sensitive to others, and, when a decision had to be made, was generally cautious. He preferred consensus and compromise and was a master of attaining such. Jensen, on the other hand, was a maverick. His vision always challenged and sometimes threatened those around him. He was often impatient and sometimes impulsive. If he were convinced he was right, he did not hesitate to make a decision, without much regard for the opinions of others. Far more important than these differences, however, were the two men's shared trust and commitment to what was best for the school. Each man was sufficiently self-assured and unselfish to know his own strengths and shortcomings, and to recognize that by working in concert with the other many of the latter could be overcome. This spirit characterized their contributions to the discussions about Farm School's future in the late 1930's. It was a reason for optimism about the new Presbyterian educational program they were appointed to lead in 1942.[7]

The program and daily routine at the consolidated school were a mixture of old and new. From its mission past it retained the commitment to serve deserving mountain young people. The curriculum combined elements from the earlier schools, and, in particular, reflected the legacy of Randolph and influence of the committee that contemplated Farm School's future in the late 1930's. The high school program (which initially was numerically larger) was divided into upper and lower divisions. Students in the latter enrolled in general courses not much different from those they would have taken elsewhere. Remedial classes were offered for those who needed them. Upper division and junior college students took classes in cultural, religious, and practical

education in the mornings, and enrolled in three hour-long vocational courses in the afternoon. Each student majored in one vocational department, from the following offerings: Agriculture, Auto Mechanics, Business, Child Training, Dietetics, Weaving, and Woodworking. The only major difference was that the junior college work was more advanced and intense. While the junior college curriculum was designed to be terminal, some students eventually transferred to four year colleges. As at Farm School, graduation was not merely a matter of accumulating credits. In the spring of the year, students who believed their academic *and* social records warranted a diploma wrote a letter to that effect to the faculty. If the Head of the student's vocational department endorsed the request, the matter was opened for staff discussion. In the spring of 1943, forty-nine students petitioned for diplomas. The faculty spent five meetings reviewing the requests and approved all but six of them. About this unusual system, Jensen wrote: "As to standards, we do not have any...but think we have rather high ones." "Maturity," he added, was the key characteristic the faculty looked for.[8]

Work and religion remained the other key aspects of life on the mountain campus. Regardless of grade level, all students worked half-time. As always, this kept costs down and (ideally) the work was related to the student's vocational major. Those who were unable to meet the cash tuition of $75 (for the 1942-43 school year) were allowed to work during summers and vacations. Attendance at Sunday School, regular church services, and Sunday evening vespers was required of all, but soon after consolidation, daily chapels were dropped. Student activities were similar to earlier years, except that coeducation added a new dimension. For staff members long accustomed to sexually segregated schools, "boy-girl relations" was something new. Needless to say, it required some adjusting. A great deal of staff meeting time was devoted to the subject, and a complicated code of dating and visitation regulations seemed constantly in revision for several years.[9]

Even as students and staff were settling into a new routine, forces beyond the school's control made new demands on it. With the United States involved in World War II, mountain boys rushed to the Allied ranks. With this, male enrollment and the

overall quality of the male student body declined. Like the broader society, the school was affected by wartime shortages and restrictions, and students and staff became involved in Red Cross and other war relief activities. Also, like everyone else, the school tried to make the best of the situation. When a blackout was announced for one fall 1942 evening between seven and nine o'clock, Jensen suggested the students be shown a movie "since study hall would be blacked out anyway." But alas for the students: a film could not be secured, the blackout was delayed until 9:30, study hall went on as scheduled, and "lights out" came early.[10]

Even more important for Warren Wilson's long-term development were the war's repercussions on the mountain region. Economic growth was stimulated and long-standing isolation lessened. Long-depressed prices for farm products rose, and the factories, sawmills, and mines that had been closed since the Depression reopened. Over two million people left the region to contribute to the war effort on the battle fronts and in defense plants. They often sent needed cash to the "folks back home." More importantly, they returned after the war aware of a much bigger world. Even those who settled elsewhere contributed to the opening up of their homeland by making friends and relatives aware of new places and opportunities. Despite a postwar economic slowdown, Southern Appalachia emerged from World War II as a more prosperous and integral part of the nation than ever before. New public funds were expended for road construction, education, and social services. The G.I.'s returned with the promise of federal assistance if they chose to pursue post-secondary education.

For a mission school long committed to providing education for young people whose financial situation and geographical isolation afforded no other educational alternatives, these otherwise happy developments were ominous. No longer could the school's traditional mission be its sole justification for continued Presbyterian support. But, thanks in part to the same forces that reduced the need for its traditional mission, the college also found new opportunities for service. With enlightened leadership and hard work, the school converted these opportunities into some of the most important and dynamic developments in its history.

The advent of widespread public education in the mountain region presented the most immediate challenge and, not surprisingly, affected the high school division most seriously. As new public high schools were built and buses on new highways carried students to them, applications to the Presbyterian high school dwindled. By 1951, Dr. Bannerman reported that "almost no boys" had applied for the ninth grade and that they had "only six likely girl applicants." Moreover, two disconcerting trends characterized many of the applications that did come in. Many were from young people with severe educational, social, and personal problems. While these needs were obviously real, the school felt increasingly ill-prepared to meet them. On the other hand, an increasing number of applicants came from relatively well to do families, who were seeking "a little bit more" than was offered by the public schools. Bannerman and Jensen had reservations about allowing their high school to become either a reserve for society's misfits or a school for the better off. These concerns plus the steady growth of the junior college led them by the early 1950's to advocate gradual discontinuation of the high school program.[11]

The junior college program was more fortunate, because widespread public educational efforts at that level were not made until later. As late as 1953, North Carolina had only two public junior colleges. Moreover, in that same year Warren Wilson's cost per student of $360 and half-time work (plus additional work opportunities for those needing financial aid) made it the most affordable post-secondary school in the entire region. But, the college's leadership was quick to recognize that what had happened to the high school might also happen to the junior college.[12]

While the changes in the mountain region wrought by World War II undermined the school's traditional reason for being, other changes in the national and global communities brought new opportunities. Wartime upheavals far from Southern Appalachia brought students to the mountain campus who were needy and deserving, but hardly in the sense that the school traditionally expected. In 1939, Farm School admitted a boy whose family had fled Nazi Germany. Three years later, when the U.S. government uprooted Japanese Americans on the west coast, two California girls, who had been relocated to an Arizona camp, enrolled at

Warren Wilson. When the war ended, the American Field Service arranged to bring European high school students to the mountain campus for one year stays. Soon students arrived from Finland, Greece, Belgium, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. They were joined by Cuban students, who informed friends in Mexico and several South American countries of Warren Wilson. Moreover, former Farm School and Warren Wilson boys who had served overseas in the war shared their school's story. Soon inquiries came to the college from around the globe. As the United Nations convened for its first inaugural sessions in New York City, the tiny Presbyterian school in the Carolina mountains was beginning to appear like a miniature united nations itself.[13]

Not all faculty members were happy with these developments, and some called for a return to the school's traditional mission. In the postwar years, much staff meeting time was devoted to discussions of problems created by the language and cultural barriers, the resistance of some of the newcomers to the work program, and the problems that resulted when contingents from any one country grew too large. Bannerman and Jensen conceded that there was some validity in these complaints, but they did not feel the problems were insurmountable. More importantly, they believed the advantages gained from having foreign students far outweighed the disadvantages. Such criticisms spurred them to justify and plan for a program that had begun almost unconsciously. When Jensen responded to a staff member's query about the value of having foreign students in 1949, he articulated what became the program's official rationale. First, he pointed out the benefits of the program for the individual student and his or her home country. Since the majority of the students came from areas recently ravaged by war, or from lesser developed nations with generally inadequate educational systems, this was simply an extension of the school's traditional mission to the deserving but less advantaged. But, he quickly added, it was also a part of the school's traditional commitment to the mountain student. While the latter might never be able to travel the world, the world could now come to him. Studying, working, and living alongside students from around the globe would broaden horizons for the mountain youth, enhance his or her awareness of global concerns, and challenge many provincial

prejudices. Moreover, Jensen added, generally well-prepared overseas students would provide mountain youths from relatively weak public school backgrounds with "the best competition they ever had."[14] By the early 1950's most faculty members were convinced of the advantages foreign students brought to the Warren Wilson program, but not all agreed with the Dean that a significant percentage (perhaps as high as 15-30%) of the school's enrollment should come from this group.

The post-World War II years saw two other major advances in the "opening up" of Warren Wilson College. Probably because of the decline in male enrollment during the war, the traditional admission policy that excluded all but Appalachian young people was altered in 1944 to allow students from "adjacent areas and the Ozark mountain region" to apply. ("Adjacent areas" was defined as the area encompassed by the Presbyterian Synod of the Mid-South: middle and western Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi.) In 1950, the policy was further broadened to state that though Warren Wilson primarily served young people from the mountain region, it would annually admit a few overseas students, plus a "specified number from other parts of the United States, providing there is special reason for consideration." By this time, Presbyterians from outside the region were expressing interest in enrolling their young people at Warren Wilson. The college's emphasis on practical academic and religious training, the opportunity for students to work their way through school, and now the exciting overseas student program made Warren Wilson attractive to those who were seeking an alternative to standard post-secondary education. Moreover, the construction of major highways and the advent of commercial aviation for the general public combined with the unparalleled prosperity of the 1950's to make it feasible for students from traditional Presbyterian strongholds in the middle Atlantic states and midwest to enroll in a North Carolina college. Not all staff members agreed about the desirability of admitting non-Appalachian students, and again it was Henry Jensen who countered the opposition. To protests that "this is a school for mountain kids," he retorted that other deserving young people "also had rights" and that the school should not discriminate against them solely because of their place of birth.[15]

While not everyone agreed with opening the college's doors to overseas and non-Appalachian students, the question of admitting a Black American student was far more controversial. The college had long been recognized for its relatively positive racial stance and was acclaimed in the 1940's as a haven in a sea of racial prejudice and discrimination. But, when it came to integrating its own program, the college was hesitant and cautious. In the forties the issue came up several times in staff meetings. Each time it was dismissed with the comment that "the time is not right." While Bannerman and Jensen both openly endorsed the nascent movement for Black rights, they were cautious about integrating their own school. Bannerman, who personally escorted the first Black to attend the Asheville Civic Auditorium, felt the school's responsibility was "to provide positive community leadership on racial matters." While that would someday imply integration at Warren Wilson, Bannerman felt that rushing the matter would antagonize the school's neighbors and possibly set back the advances that had been achieved. For his part, Jensen believed the experiment could only succeed if the first Black to enroll was an outstanding individual and student, who could win peer approval and respect and have sufficient fortitude to endure the inevitable unpleasant situations.[16]

While Warren Wilson's adults waited for the "right time" and for their own Jackie Robinson, its students blazed the path to integration. In the spring of 1952, a group of students were teaching Sunday School at a Negro church in Swannanoa, where they befriended Alma Lee Shippy, then a senior at the local public high school for Blacks. When they found he wanted to go to college but had no money, they suggested he consider Warren Wilson. When these students returned from summer vacation, they brought the matter to Dr. Jensen. After examining Shippy's record, he consulted with Dr. Bannerman. Together they gave tentative approval but decided a final decision should not be made without consulting those whose cooperation would be most essential for the experiment to succeed, the residents of Sunderland Hall (then the only male dormitory). After a long evening meeting during which they and Jensen discussed the matter and the problems it might raise, the boys voted by a margin of fifty-four to one to welcome Shippy to their dorm. This heartening

response convinced Jensen and Bannerman that finally "the time *was* right" and that sentiment on campus was sufficiently strong to weather whatever adverse reactions might come from the outside. Thus in September 1952, two years before the celebrated Brown decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, Warren Wilson College became one of the first post-secondary schools in the South to admit a Black student.[17]

The same social and economic forces that contributed to the "opening up" of Warren Wilson College also challenged and changed its academic program. In the decade after the new consolidated school put its vocation-oriented, terminal junior college program into effect, it faced new needs and demands from an increasingly diverse student body and constantly changing world. Warren Wilson responded with significant curriculum changes and the first critical steps toward becoming a four-year college.

The ability to adjust was the key to the growth of the junior college division in the post World War II years. When it became apparent that graduates were increasingly transferring into four-year programs, some staff members raised doubts about the suitability of the program that was established in 1942. Following the report of a committee that studied that matter, the staff in the spring of 1946 reaffirmed the traditional commitment to terminal, vocational education "for most students." But it also called for a new "university preparatory" department for those who were capable and wished to continue their education. Only students who completed one year at Warren Wilson would be admitted to the program, and applicants would be screened by a committee made up of the English Department Chair, the faculty member responsible for testing, and Dean Jensen. In place of the afternoon vocational course, students in this program would enroll in two accelerated academic courses. By the end of the decade, more than a third of the junior college students enrolled in this program. In 1951 the North Carolina Department of Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools authorized Warren Wilson to grant Associate of Arts degrees (rather than simply junior college diplomas). The next year the Southern Association accredited the junior college. These actions enhanced opportunities for Warren Wilson graduates who wanted to continue their education and reflected a growing recognition of the college's program.[18]

The rapidity of the changes at Warren Wilson in the years after World War II made some staff members, representatives of the Board of National Missions, and friends of the college anxious. Some believed the high school and vocational programs were being deemphasized too quickly; others feared the college was overlooking its traditional commitments to the mountain region. To those who were already uneasy, word that the college might expand into a four-year program was even more disconcerting. While exaggerated, these fears were not completely unfounded. By the early fifties, students were approaching school officials about this possibility, and Jensen and Bannerman openly commented on the inherent disadvantages of a two-year program. Always the visionary, Jensen spearheaded these discussions, and his creative mind formulated bold and imaginative blueprints for the future. But, as exciting as these dreams were, both men knew expansion would be a long range rather than immediate venture and that there was much truth in the charge that the school at the time was ill-prepared for such a course. Enrollment and academic standards needed to be beefed up, facilities expanded, the staff increased and strengthened, and a long-range development strategy devised. But Jensen and Bannerman also knew that a good, vibrant school and mission always has its eye on the future, and, to them, this meant at least talking about the eventuality of a four-year program.[19]

With so many major changes in the works and not everyone happy with them, the Board officials in the spring of 1952 called Bannerman and Jensen to New York to discuss the college's future. As they prepared for the meeting, the two men knew that members of the Board were generally supportive of many of the recent developments, particularly the opening of the program to non-Appalachian and overseas students. On the other hand, Board members were less excited about the talk of a four-year program and Jensen and Bannerman knew it. A fascinating exchange of memos reveals how each man felt about these matters and how they should be approached. Jensen lamented that a junior college program "only took students half way" and suggested that "We ask assent *NOW* for eventual expansion to a four-year program." He then outlined his vision for a future "Presbyterian International College" that would serve 250-300

deserving young people from around the world "who would have the ambition and ability to work their way through four years of college." Bannerman's response generally supported the substance of Jensen's proposal, but he raised questions about its approach and timing. He pointed out that a recent attempt by another Board school to expand its program had caused headaches for Board officials and would undoubtedly color their reaction to any similar proposal. More importantly, he expressed concern that such a venture would not succeed without unified staff and Board support for it. Commenting on the current division on the matter, he wrote: "I am not worried what the Lord may think, believing he will have to forgive us all in equal measure. But from the viewpoint of an institution surviving and remaining healthy in its life, there must be a firm foundation of common ground." With one leader who could envision where it should be going and another who could foresee the pitfalls in getting there, Warren Wilson's future was in good hands.[20]

Following the April 7 meeting where that future was considered, Bannerman issued a memo to his staff outlining the major principles that were endorsed. While stating that Warren Wilson students "will always come primarily from the mountain region," the statement affirmed recent developments in opening the college's doors to overseas and non-Appalachian students. The gradual discontinuation of the high school program and the modifications in the junior college curriculum were approved. But the statement emphasized that the school's "vocational and work traditions" had made it "unique and dynamic" and should be continued. As to the four-year college question, the statement did not deny that it might ultimately happen but reiterated the point that the school's "immediate task (was) to develop and strengthen the junior college division."[21] Later that spring, the Board created a special committee of its own staff, administrators and staff from the college, representatives of the Church, and several prominent educators to address these questions in greater detail. In a three-day meeting on the Warren Wilson campus the following November, the committee echoed the conclusions of the April meeting, and the sessions revealed that the four-year college idea was still very controversial.[22] When the Board of National Missions convened in the spring of 1953, they relied upon

these meetings to make several decisions regarding the college and the broader network of Presbyterian mission schools. In a dramatic reversal of its longstanding support for schools for "exceptional populations," the Board ruled that its institutions would no longer serve particular racial, cultural, or regional groups to the total exclusion of others. This was a clear endorsement of Warren Wilson's new "open door" admissions policy. At the same time, the Board recognized still unmet needs in the mountain region and reaffirmed its commitment to resolving them. Thus, it in essence undid part of its other decision by establishing quotas on Warren Wilson's enrollment; fifty percent of the students were to be from the South, with the remainder evenly divided between non-Southern and overseas students. The full Board also officially approved for the first time the gradual discontinuation of Warren Wilson's high school division and restricted admission to it to students from "mountain counties who could show valid reasons for attending a boarding school."[23]

Overall the round of 1952-53 meetings was positive for Warren Wilson College. Most of the major changes since World War II were officially endorsed, and the school could now further develop these sometimes controversial aspects of its program. Even the rejection of the four-year college idea was not a total defeat. The sessions gave Bannerman and Jensen an opportunity to articulate and share their dream, and the objections to their proposal helped them in later years as they further developed a four-year college strategy. In the meantime the college had plenty to do in carrying out the Board's directive to "develop and strengthen the junior college division."

While the Board's action assured that overseas students would hereafter be a significant part of the Warren Wilson program, the college still had to address some of the more serious concerns about that area. It was correctly recognized that many of the problems involving foreign students stemmed from misunderstandings and misinformation that preceded the students' arrival on campus. Thus the college sought a better means of recruiting students better suited to the Warren Wilson program and a way to accurately inform prospective students about the college'e unique demands. In the early 1950's, a network of "field agents" was established. Usually Presbyterian

Foreign Missions Executives, these agents met with prospective students, informed them about the college, examined their personal and academic backgrounds, and dicussed their future plans. Based upon the interview, the agent would make a recommendation to the college. By 1954, the college had agents in Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong, Lebanon, Jordan, Iran, Greece, Mexico, and Colombia. In that same year the Dean's office issued a policy statement to aid agents and inform prospective students of the expectations of the college's program. The purpose of the overseas student program, it emphasized, was to provide the student with two years of advanced education, give him or her an opportunity "to better understand the United States and the American democratic system," and to prepare the student for religious and social leadership in the home country. To remedy some of the most persistent problems in the program, more definitive expectations were outlined. To be admitted a student had to complete the equivalent of a high school education, be proficient in English, purchase a mandatory health insurance policy, place a deposit with the Dean's office in the amount of the return airfare to the home country and agree to remain at Warren Wilson for the full two years.[24]

The college's other major concern was fully integrating overseas students into the program and community. Jensen was openly critical of programs elsewhere that made special (he called them "superficial") arrangements for a few international students. He was adament that this should not happen at Warren Wilson. This was the reason he had advocated that overseas students should make up a significant part of the enrollment, and the Board's 1953 approval of a 25% quota was a victory for him. But more than anything else it was the college's small size (enrollment in the early fifties averaged 150 students) and the informal contacts in dorms, the work program, and ballfields that nurtured the spirit Jensen sought. In 1954 a Tennessee co-ed admitted that she had been a bit hesitant about the overseas students when she enrolled the year before. "But now, " she concluded, "they're just part of us."[25]

The college had less success in expanding its initial efforts toward racial integration, and throughout the 1950's Warren Wilson found that being an integrated college was nearly as dif-

ficult as becoming one. While Alma Shippy's enrollment at Warren Wilson did not bring the overt community reaction that had been feared, there were some threatening phone calls and occasional cases of verbal harassment. Applications and financial donations from some areas declined. Despite Shippy's pathbreaking course, the college received few applications from Blacks in the 1950's. Most of those who did enroll came from sister Presbyterian mission schools. Several Black students made outstanding records and were elected to positions of leadership. But, as one of them commented later, they "paid a price." Their social lives were limited, and they were always under pressure. While there were no reported acts against Black students on campus, Jensen and Bannerman openly admitted that their school was not completely free from racial prejudices and anxieties. Jensen's 1956 comment that "we should go about this matter quietly and not boast that we take negroes" may seem overly apologetic today, but it reflects the realities of pioneering racial frontiers in the 1950's.[26]

Like Randolph's experiment in progressive education, the opening up of Warren Wilson College in the 1950's brought widespread recogniton and acclaim. To a world awakening to the realities of the nuclear age and a society burdened by divisive racial and regional attitudes, Warren Wilson's efforts, even when they fell short of their own expectations, offered hope. While many talked about international and inter-racial understanding, the Warren Wilson community was learning that it required open minds, cooperative attitudes, and concern for one another, but that it could be achieved. Day-to-day life on the mountain campus was in itself an education in human relations.

The college's academic program continued in the directions set in the post-war years. In 1951 the ninth grade was dropped and the tenth and eleventh grades disappeared five years later. In the spring of 1957, Warren Wilson's high school division graduated its last class. Meanwhile, the move towards a more liberal arts-oriented junior college program continued. By 1953 the vocational track was reduced to four departments: Agriculture, Printing, Secretarial Training, and Technical Engineering. At the same time, the "university preparatory" curriculum broadened into three divisions: General Liberal Arts (with humanities and

scientific concentrations), Elementary Education and Music Education; a strengthened Academic Core was implemented for students in both tracks. This general upgrading of the program was not without occasional unpleasant consequences. Conflicts between the new higher standards and the school's traditional commitment to students from less fortunate backgrounds were not uncommon. Often from weak public school backgrounds and homes in which education had not been emphasized, these students were frequently ill-prepared for college level work. While Warren Wilson's small classes and generally dedicated teachers were well suited to helping diligent students surmount such obstacles, each year saw many students withdraw. However, these setbacks only temporarily slowed the growth of the college and its university track. By the late 1950's, enrollment reached 250 students, and well over 70% of the graduates transferred to four-year programs. Their accomplishments there often won acclaim for Warren Wilson.[27]

Even as the curriculum grew increasingly oriented toward the liberal arts, Warren Wilson's leadership and Board officials agreed that the college should not become "just another church-related liberal arts college." They recognized that any new college entering the market had to be distinctive. Warren Wilson strove for this through innovations like the overseas student program, but it also looked to its own past. The college's traditional emphases on academic training to "prepare young people for living," the "dignity of work," and Christian service nurtured a program and spirit refreshingly different from most American colleges and universities. Even as the college's means of striving for these objectives outwardly changed in response to ever-changing conditions within itself and from the outside, these fundamentals remained the core of the total Warren Wilson experience.

While Warren Wilson always strove to capture and incorporate these values in its academic offerings, it recognized that the classroom was not the only place to nurture them. The spirit of "learning to do by doing" lived, and it was the college's full daily routine that revealed to students and visitors the depth of the school's commitment to its ideals. Since all students worked half time, work constituted a big and significant part of this routine. As the college's program evolved away from its traditional vocational

emphasis and the student body came increasingly from non-rural backgrounds some feared the work program would be seriously undermined. To be sure, it was affected, particularly in its relationship with the academic program. In the early days, work had been an end in itself, and it was considered of equal importance to the formal course work. It was expected that it would serve as a laboratory for students enrolled in technical courses. But with the changes in the academic program, work became primarily a means of maintaining the campus, meeting the daily needs of the community, and (as always) reducing one's educational costs. But, while most students were no longer learning specific technical skills, they learned to be responsible and cooperative, to organize tasks and develop leadership qualities. Had it not been for the work program, the school might have lost its traditional emphasis on "preparing students for living." Even as they increasingly pursued white collar careers, Warren Wilson students on the farm, the plumbing crew, the painting crew, and the kitchen crew learned there was satisfaction and value in performing "blue collar tasks." They discovered that "getting your

Girl Weaving in 1950's—Students produced a variety of products, many that were distinctively Appalachian, for sale in the college craftshop.

hands dirty" could be fun. More importantly, they learned, in a way that they could not have learned in a classroom, that there is dignity in everyone doing his or her part for the good of the community.[28]

The Christian faith, and Presbyterianism in particular, also remained a vital part of the college's life and ideals. Even as its control gradually loosened in the latter 1950's, the Board of National Missions continued to provide the bulk of the school's budget and to exert influence on most facets of the school's operation. The majority of students, particularly the growing influx from overseas and outside the mountains, came from Presbyterian backgrounds. Many who contemplated careers in the ministry or other fields of church work, plus others who were simply looking for an educational alternative, were attracted by the school's "Christian atmosphere." All students attended Sunday services in the log chapel as well as Sunday School and Sunday evening vespers. The Academic Core included courses in Old and New Testament, and additional Christian Education electives were offered. Meals began with a blessing, and a relatively rigid behavior code was maintained. But the school's religious life was much more than pious requirements and expectations. The curriculum, Sunday sermons, and special assemblies addressed contemporary issues and encouraged students to consider Christian responses to them. Concerned that some of its students were being swept up in the fifties' surge of materialism, the college emphasized that education should prepare one "not only to get for yourself more abundantly but to learn humility, to learn devotion to that which is good, and to learn to give of what you get." That these were not merely hollow words was evident in a popular program in Christian Field Work. Groups of students worked with young people in rural churches, taught Sunday School at Alma Shippy's church, assisted local Scout groups, and presented services in local churches and over the loudspeaker system of nearby Western North Carolina Sanatorium. But the relatively peaceful transition to an intercultural, interracial community was perhaps the most telling evidence that the college was Christian in deed as well as in spirit. Warren Wilson was far too human to ever be a Christian utopia, but it was a community that was not content with just accepting the human experience as it is.[29]

Students leaving Elizabeth Williams Chapel—The log chapel was constructed by student workers in the late 1930's. It served as the College Chapel until 1967. Thereafter, it became the College Theatre; presently it houses the College Museum.

While academics, work, and worship remained the center of campus life, Warren Wilson students found time to participate in a variety of formal and informal activities. Even with adjustments made for co-education and the changes in the student body, the array of formal activities in the 1950's was similar to that of earlier years. Students participated in a variety of musical groups, performed in plays, were involved in an assortment of clubs, and wrote and published the weekly *Wilson Echo.* The earlier emphasis on intramural sports continued, but the college did field varsity teams in men's and women's basketball, baseball, and soccer. Thanks to the prowess of many overseas boys, the latter became "Warren Wilson's sport." Years before most American youth discovered soccer, Warren Wilson became a national power in that sport. As always, students were involved in a variety of informal and unorganized activities, and, as had been the case since 1942, many of these revolved around attraction to the opposite sex. Though few seemed to agree what it meant, most staff members believed that the school had a responsibility to foster "proper boy-girl relations," and a great deal of time and effort was expended to assure such. To the administration's credit, they often involved the Student Senate and other student groups in addressing these concerns.[30]

The question of boy-girl relations was only one of many areas in which the college acted *in loco parentis.* Smoking continued to be a problem, even as school policies were gradually liberalized. In 1948 the Board dropped its unequivocal prohibition on smoking, social dancing, and other "undesirable" activities, and placed these matters in the hands of its respective schools. Thereafter Warren Wilson implemented a policy that allowed males over seventeen years of age to smoke in a designated room in Sunderland Hall. Over the next several years, additional smoking areas for men were established, but the college entered the 1960's still explicitly prohibiting girls from smoking. As to social dancing, the staff in the 1940's could not agree on a policy, and the matter was tabled. When one of the more liberal dorm mothers allowed her girls to dance in her dorm's recreation room, the staff gave cautious assent, providing the girls danced with each other and not with boys. But by the early fifties opposition decreased, and social dances eventually became an approved

Soccer Team with Coach Bill Klein—With the arrival of large numbers of foreign students in the early 1950's, soccer became "Warren Wilson's sport." Dr. Klein, a professor of sociology and anthropology, was instrumental in the establishment of soccer as a varsity sport and served as the first coach.

and frequent student activity. Yet even as social regulations were beginning to loosen in some areas, the college remained relatively strict and committed to its *in loco parentis* responsibilities. Following the school's first panty raid in 1953, six boys were suspended and several years later, when a girl left campus after telling a friend that she and her boyfriend planned to elope, the Dean spent much of the evening in rugged Madison County in hopes of finding the girl and persuading her to reconsider her plans. At three a.m. he returned to campus but without the "misguided young lady."[31]

While smoking, dancing, boy-girl relationships and other day-to-day issues preoccupied the Warren Wilson community in the 1950's, the question of expansion to a senior college program remained the college's most significant concern. Following their 1952 meeting with the Board officials, Bannerman and Jensen addressed many of the reservations about expansion and sought to broaden staff support for it. These efforts culminated in a 1956 proposal that emphasized that a four-year program would better fulfill Board objectives and meet student and staff needs and concerns. The Board responded by establishing a committee of prominent southern educators to study the proposal and Warren Wilson's existing program and make recommendations accordingly. Following completion of a self-study by the college, the committee visited the campus in April 1957. While their report suggested a few modifications in the existing program and proposed course, the committee strongly endorsed Warren Wilson's four-year plan. In turn, a special committee of Board officials reviewed the report and presented its findings to the full Board of National Missions in 1957. Citing concern about financing the expansion of the Warren Wilson program, the Board tabled the proposal. But, it commended Warren Wilson for its growth and vision and authorized the college to seek outside sources of funding, and to expand its facilities to make them suitable for an enrollment of at least 450 students.

The next five years were characterized by excitement and uncertainty. In 1960 a new student center-dining hall complex was completed and named for Katherine Gladfelter, who had recently retired from her position with the Board of National Missions. Meanwhile, funds were being gathered and plans drawn for

Students working on construction of new chapel—Completed in 1967, the chapel houses the Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church.

a new library and new chapel. Yet even while all this was occurring, changes in personnel and policy at the Board of National Missions left the college uncertain about the fate of its four-year college plan. Finally, in 1962 the Board agreed to the incorporation of the college and the creation of a separate Board of Trustees. While the college was still legally "owned and operated by the Board of National Missions," this move increased the college's autonomy and was the first step towards a gradual dissolution of its formal relationship with the National Missions Board. Members of the new college Board were nominated by Dr. Bannerman and approved by the Board of National Missions. At the first meeting in April 1962, the new Board gave immediate attention to the four-year plan and four months later unanimously approved it. The following spring the Board of National Missions approved this action, thus simultaneously ending and beginning two of the most critical chapters in the history of Warren Wilson College.[32]

CHAPTER THREE FOOTNOTES

[1]"Salary Letter from Warren H. Wilson Vocational Junior College, Winter 1942-43." Ruth Culberson Higdon, Interview. Arthur and Lucile Bannerman, Interview. (Tapes and transcripts in Warren Wilson College Archives.)

[2]Lucile Bannerman, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., Spring 1983.

[3]Arthur and Lucile Bannerman, Interview.

[4]Conversation with Mr. Revis Frye, AFS Class of 1936, June 1983.

[5]Mrs. Thekla Jensen, Interview, Swannanoa, N.C., June 1983. Brief one-page outline of Jensen's life that he prepared in early 1970's. Copy given to M. Banker by Mrs. Jensen, June 1983.

[6]Mrs. Thekla Jensen, Interview. Staff Meeting Minutes, October 26, 1942.

[7]Mrs. Thekla Jensen, Interview. Mrs. Lucile Bannerman, Interview.

[8]Warren Wilson Vocational Junior College Catalog, 1943-44. Arthur M. Bannerman, "Warren Wilson Vocational Junior College," *Mountain Life and Work,* Autumn 1942. Arthur Bannerman to Miss Rena Avery, May 5, 1942. Staff Meeting Minutes, Spring 1943.

[9]College Catalog, 1942-43.

[10]"Salary Letter...Winter 1942-43," Dr. Gordon Mahy, Interview. Staff Meeting Minutes, September 28, 1942; September 27, 1943. Bannerman, "National Defense and the Mountain Communities," *Mountain Life and Work,* Winter 1942.

[11]Annual Reports, 1950, 1951, 1953. Staff Meeting Minutes, October 10, 1949; October 17, 1949; May 7, 1951. Jensen, 38-39.

[12]Annual Report, 1953.

[13]Untitled Essay by A.M. Bannerman on intercultural, interracial development at A.F.S. and W.W.C., January 29, 1944. Mark Banker, "The Overseas Student Program at Warren Wilson College" (paper completed under the direction of Dr. Sheldon Neuringer for the History Seminar course at W.W.C., Spring 1973.)

[14]Staff Meeting Minutes, April 19, 1946; May 2, 1949. Bannerman, Interview.

[15]Warren Wilson College Catalogs, 1943-44, 1949-50, 1950-51. Staff Meeting Minutes, May 2, 1949. Henry W. Jensen, "Regardless," *Outreach,* May 1953.

[16]Staff Meeting Minutes, December 7, 1942; December 14, 1942; October 2, 1944; August 29, 1947. Bannerman to Mrs. Henry Carr, February 3, 1947. Staff Meeting Minutes and Dean's Report, April 21, 1952.

[17]Staff Meeting Minutes, September 22, 1952. Jensen, "Regardless."

[18]"Things You Should Know" (mimeographed information sheet for students, Fall 1945). Staff Meeting Minutes, April 22, 1946, April 29, 1946. "For Your Information, 1946-47" (mimeographed information sheet for students). Annual Report, 1949.

[19]Dean's Report, October 10, 1949. Staff Meeting Minutes, October 17, 1949, October 24, 1949, May 7, 1951. Annual Report, 1951.

[20]Undated exchange of memos between Jensen and Bannerman that refer to their upcoming meeting with Board officials, written sometime in the Spring of 1952.

[21]Memo to Warren Wilson Staff from Bannerman, Reporting on April 7, 1952, meeting with Board officials.

[22]Minutes of Special Study Committee of Warren Wilson College's Program and Future, November 21-23, 1952.

[23]College Catalog, 1953-54. "Warren Wilson Across the Land," *Outreach,* April 1953.

[24]Dean's Report, January 11, 1954. Jensen to Katherine Gladfelter, October 5, 1954. "Policy Statement for Overseas Student Program," October 18, 1954.

[25]Jensen, 63-64. Staff Meeting Minutes, February 9, 1954. Dean's Report, October 18, 1954. Barbara Hampe, "A School for the World," *Outreach,* November 1954.

[26]Annual Reports, 1955, 1958. Staff Meeting Minutes, May 21, 1956, November 19, 1956. Benjamin Ridgeway, "The Desegregation of Warren Wilson College" (paper completed under the direction of Dr. Sheldon Neuringer for the History Seminar course at W.W.C., Spring 1971.)

[27]Dean's Reports, January 21, 1951, September 14, 1956. College Catalogs, 1951-52, 1953-54, 1954-55. Annual Report, 1956. Bannerman, "What is Warren Wilson College?" *Outreach,* March 1957.

[28]David Lewis, "The Educational Philosophy of Warren Wilson College as it is Manifested in its Work Program." Joseph Lenz, "A Progressive Approach to the Work Program" (papers completed under the direction of Dr. Sheldon Neuringer for the History Seminar Course at W.W.C., Spring 1970 and Spring 1971.)

[29]College Catalog, 1949-50, 1950-51, 1953-54. Annual Report, 1958. Mary G. Lewis, "The Valley is our Field," *Outreach,* January 1954.

[30]College Catalog, 1950-51, 1953-54. Ruth Culbertson Higdon, interview. Steve Pendleton, "The Evolution of Student Mores at Warren Wilson College" (paper completed under the direction of Dr. Sheldon Neuringer for the History Seminar Course at W.W.C., Spring 1974.)

[31]Pendleton. Staff Meeting Minutes, January 18, 1954, November 26, 1956. Memo from Bannerman to Warren Wilson Staff, April 21, 1947. "Report of Committee on a Policy Concerning Use of Tobacco by Warren Wilson Students," May 9, 1947. "Report of the Committee Discussing Boy-Girl Relations," September 1, 1943.

[32]Jensen, 44-54. "Report of Four-Year College Committee," 1957. Godard, et al, "Special Study of Warren Wilson College," April 1, 1957.

CHAPTER FOUR

NEW FRONTIERS

The development of a four-year liberal arts program made many new demands on Warren Wilson College. The student body and staff needed to be expanded and strengthened. (The term "staff" began to be used generally to refer to both teaching and non-teaching personnel.) Facilities had to be improved and new buildings constructed. A new curriculum had to be devised and existing regulations and policies reconsidered. Finally, with Board of National Missions support gradually shrinking and its own budget growing, the college for the first time in its history had to look elsewhere for a large part of its funding.

As it faced these challenges, Warren Wilson was fortunate in many ways. In Arthur Bannerman and Henry Jensen it had proven and energetic leadership. The expansion itself was testimony to their two decades at the college's helm. The timing of the move also proved favorable. American post-secondary education shared in the economic boom and optimism of the early 1960's. Increasingly American young people sought admission to four-year colleges, and for a time their numbers exceeded available space. A prominent North Carolina educator cited his state's "dire need for additional private senior colleges" in a letter

strongly endorsing Warren Wilson's expansion plans.[1] Moreover, the pervasive idealism and humanitarianism of the early 1960's provided a fertile atmosphere for the fledgling four-year program. The college's traditional emphasis on service to others, regional and international concerns, and "educating the whole person" reflected attitudes and values in a nation caught up in President John F. Kennedy's "New Frontier."

But even as Warren Wilson began responding to the demands of change, it found itself confronted with a potentially serious but unavoidable dilemma. The college had justified its expansion by asserting that its unique educational approach and philosophy would make it a viable alternative to more conventional post-secondary fare. But the very changes required by expansion unleashed new forces that challenged much that had long existed on the mountain campus and, indeed, much that had made it unique. That some of these forces were beyond the college's control made the dilemma no less severe for Warren Wilson's development.

Although the college's perceived purpose had changed somewhat in the junior college era, it still entered the 1960's with a special commitment to impoverished young people from the Appalachian region. However, other forces in the region—broader economic prosperity, expanded public facilities, and increased federal programs—supplanted, or at least reduced, the need for the college to continue this traditional role. Simultaneously, increased budgets and shrinking Board support forced the college to recognize that it had to serve more students who could pay a larger part of their expenses. It was fortunate that during the 1960's an ever greater number of applications began to arrive from middle and upper middle income students from throughout the country. These students could have gone elsewhere, but they were attracted to Warren Wilson's unique program. To this regionally, socially, and economically diverse mix of American students, the college added overseas students. By the early 1960's, they composed around twenty percent of the enrollment and came from an increasingly broad array of nations and backgrounds. By the time the senior college expansion was completed, the school that had once served Appalachian students exclusively was most notable for the heterogeneity of its stu-

dent body. Emphasizing the benefits of living and learning in this microcosm, the college proudly presented itself as "an experiment in the reconciliation of man to man."[2]

For all the advantages this diversity brought, it also caused occasional problems. With upgraded admissions standards, the new student body was increasingly better prepared and often more ambitious; many contemplated teaching careers and some hoped to pursue post-graduate studies. These realities necessitated not only a strengthening of the college's academic offerings but also meeting standards set by outside agencies unfamiliar with the college's traditional emphases.

The more diverse student body also had a great impact on the two other traditional cornerstones of the Warren Wilson program. Originally designed for farm boys well acquainted with the skills and demands of hard work (and who often preferred it to academic pursuits), the work program now had to operate with a different, less prepared, and occasionally indifferent labor force. Furthermore, while many students still came from Presbyterian connections, the great diversity of students from non-Christian traditions (Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism in particular) raised new questions about the college's traditional Christian emphasis. Finally, more sophisticated senior college students were not long in challenging existing rules and regulations and the schools assertion of its *in loco parentis* prerogative.

The senior college transition also brought significant changes to the Warren Wilson staff. While the junior college faculty had always surpassed all standards for accreditation, it was not large enough to carry on the new program. Thus, Dean Jensen devoted considerable time in the sixties to assembling and maintaining a capable, qualified staff that would be suited to the college's spirit and program. A large number of the new professors were young; many were fresh out of graduate school. Their idealism and enthusiasm fit well at Warren Wilson, though occasionally their irreverence for tradition perturbed some of the old timers. Other newcomers were recent retirees from major universities and research centers. They chose Warren Wilson as an alternative to the "normal" retirement routine. As they were often accomplished in their fields, they brought experience, wisdom, and stability to the Warren Wilson program. The staff that assembled on

the mountain campus in the 1960's was more diverse, broad-minded, and assertive than had been the case earlier. Though the Christian faith was important to many of them, this group generally considered themselves academic professionals rather than missionaries. While they arrived from a variety of backgrounds and with different perceptions of their new school, most of the staff members who stayed more than a year or two accepted the college's traditional academic, work, and religious emphases. But when it came to devising a program and dividing time and energy between the specific areas, differences in background and outlook emerged to affect the resulting program. Even Doctors Jensen and Bannerman found that their new, more strong-minded staff would occasionally challenge their own perceptions of the school's mission and how it should be carried out.

When the college's Board of Trustees and the Board of National Missions approved the four-year plan in 1962, they set no definite time table. But the consensus was that the addition of the upper level program should not be rushed. Time was needed to prepare for the transition and to allow students enrolled in the junior college's terminal vocational programs to complete their work. Finally, in 1965, on the initiative of Dr. Jensen, the staff proposed that the junior year be added in the fall of 1967 to enable the freshmen enrolling that next August to become the college's first senior college graduates. The Board of Trustees approved the proposal in its May 1965 meeting, and the Education Division of the Board of National Missions gave its approval later that summer. When the staff gathered that fall, Dr. Bannerman informed them of these actions and warned of the "mistake" of trying to maintain a two-year program while making the transition to a four-year institution. "From now on," he concluded, "we will be thinking of a four-year college."[3]

For the next two years, the staff worked diligently formulating a concrete four-year program out of the preliminary proposal of the 1962 four-year college plan. While no one outwardly questioned the school's traditional tri-partite emphases, most recognized that a successful transition to senior college status would require greater attention to academic considerations. In designing a curriculum, the staff began with the two central emphases of the 1962 proposal: opportunity for thorough specializa-

tion in a chosen field and stress on the Christian heritage and its applicability to the human condition. To meet these goals the staff devised a Vertical Core and initially established six majors (English and Speech, Sociology, History, Education and Psychology, Biology, and Physical Sciences), plus a limited number of minors. Required for all students, the Core involved a variety of disciplines and faculty members and focused on what Dr. Jensen liked to refer to as "life in its totality...the true subject of a liberal education." Among the Core courses were relatively conventional offerings like Western Civilization, World Literature, Old and New Testament, and Introduction to Fine Arts. But it also included interdisciplinary courses designed to capture the spirit of Warren Wilson's unique emphasis. Among these were courses entitled, "What is Man?" "Man and His Social Issues," "Introduction to Non-Western Culture," and "Christ and Contemporary Culture." The relatively streamlined curriculum initially had few electives; this both helped to restrain instructional costs and helped keep students from overspecializing. By far the most popular major in the early years was Education. Over forty percent of the first graduating class prepared for careers in the teaching field.[4]

Of course Warren Wilson's new academic program was never static. From the beginning adjustments were made in the Core and general program. The senior level Core course "Christ and Contemporary Culture," which was originally envisioned as the capstone of the program, never really took shape and was soon dropped from the curriculum. In the spring of 1967, the faculty approved the creation of a General Studies major "for superior students whose horizon of interests extends beyond one major discipline." At the same time a committee was created to aid and advise students who wished to study abroad for their junior year. While relatively few students took advantage of these opportunities, those who did found they provided an extra dimension to their Warren Wilson educations. Several years earlier, preliminary investigation of a pre-Cherokee archaeological site on campus resulted in a cooperative arrangement between the college and the Anthropology Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This provided opportunities for actual "hands on" archaeological work for Warren Wilson students and

an on-campus laboratory for Anthropology and other social science courses.[5]

The senior college transition, with its emphasis on academics had an impact on the other two-thirds of the college's traditional three-fold emphasis. On the work program it made conflicting demands. As the student body increased, more jobs and supervisors were required, and the demands of maintaining the campus grew. At the same time, increasing academic responsibilities for students led to calls for a reduction of student work hours. Moreover, senior college students were generally less tolerant of such perennial problems as inconsistencies in effort, expectations, and work grades. For their own part, work supervisors suspected that some of the students and staff did not understand the philosophy and purpose of the work program and, indeed, that some simply did not care. Beneath the problems was a lack of consensus. Was the work program simply a means of maintaining the campus and providing financial support for students? Or did it still have an educational function?[6]

By deciding to maintain the work program as an integral part of the four-year program, Warren Wilson committed itself to addressing these concerns. Efforts were made to strengthen the Work Council, which had been created in 1959 to facilitate student discussion of ways to improve the program. In 1963 and 1970 steering committees thoroughly investigated and made proposals to improve the program. The creation of a full time position of Work Program Director reflected a desire to strengthen it. However, some saw the 1966 decision to reduce student work time to fifteen hours per week as evidence that the program was continuing to erode. In 1970, when a committee proposed that the equal pay concept be replaced by an incentive system, the community rallied around the program—in this case to protest what was seen as a violation of its spirit and philosophy.[7] Even with its obvious imperfections, the work program remained one of the most notable and acclaimed aspects of the Warren Wilson experience. In 1969 Henry Jensen, who thirty years earlier had devised the forerunner of the existing system, suggested that work was a more viable part of the college's existing program than it ever had been before. In the old days, farm boys simply learned to become better farmers. Now, however, young people of dif-

ferent races, social groups and nationalities, many of whom had been raised in relative prosperity, were learning responsibility and cooperation for the good of the greater whole.[8] Even with the new baccalaureate program, a Warren Wilson education involved more than learning from books.

Warren Wilson had long expressed its Christian emphasis by involving students in a variety of formal religious activities and encouraging them toward Christian service. As the college moved into the 1960's and toward senior college status, it placed even more emphasis on service. Reflecting the confluence of the college's inherited outlook with the idealism of the times, a description of the "ideal Warren Wilson graduate" drawn up by a 1959 task force stressed that "all men are creatures of God," they should have "a sensitivity to and compassion for the great physical, social, personal, and religious needs of men in this world," and should realize the importance of individual involvement in community concerns. Even as John Kennedy urged Americans to ask what they could do for their country, Warren Wilson was implementing a service project requirement for graduation. Initiated by each student under the supervision of a special committee, this was intended to involve students in a minimum of forty hours of community service, either on or off campus. When some staff members objected to requiring this, Dr. Jensen, the proposal's originator, argued persuasively that it was exactly those students who would only do a project if it were required who most needed to be involved in such an experience. Convinced by Jensen, the staff instituted the service project as a graduation requirement that was carried over to the senior college program. In the reformist atmosphere of the 1960's, members of the Warren Wilson community found many avenues for practical expression of their Christian principles. Sunday sermons, classroom discussions, and many informal conversations reflected a lively concern for social issues. Some members of the communtiy supported the civil rights and environmental movements; others opposed the Vietnam War. All were considered stances consistent with their religious views.[9]

Even as the Warren Wilson community gave greater attention to applying its religious convictions, it increasingly questioned the inherited policies that made attendance at formal worship services and other religious activities compulsory. By the mid-sixties,

few of the student Christian organizations that had long existed on the mountain campus remained. Only the Sunday morning worship service continued as a required religious function. Even that came increasingly under fire, however, and the issue became an object of much debate in student circles and in staff and trustee meetings. Finally in 1969, over the objections of a vocal minority, seniors were granted the privilege of optional church attendance; two years later the provision was extended to the rest of the student body. A new "Statement of Campus Religious Life" affirmed the Christian faith as "a continuing central emphasis of the college" and advised students that, while no longer required, worship was still an "integral part of community life." Thereafter, when many students chose not to attend worship services regularly, Dr. Jensen charged that "they had not kept their end of the bargain." In spite of this, however, no attempt was made to restore the old policy. Even without a chapel filled with a captive student audience every Sunday, Warren Wilson retained much of its traditional atmosphere. Religion classes and the service project remained important parts of the program, and many (including some who had long resisted liberalizing the church attendance policy) recognized advantages in the new voluntary approach to worship.[10]

Compulsory church attendance was only one of many long-accepted policies that came under fire during the iconoclastic sixties. While sometimes irritating to those in authority, student criticisms of policies that they felt inappropriate for a senior college were generally courteous and constructive. In many cases, campus adults often agreed with students, and the administration gradually, if sometimes begrudgingly, modified existing policies. Increasingly co-eds complained about double standards in dating, visitation, and smoking regulations. Gradually these rules for women were brought more into conformity with those for men, although the college entered the 1970's still professing "special responsibilities for female students." A long-objected-to policy prohibiting student ownership of automobiles was modified to allow non-scholarship students in good standing to have cars on campus. Regulations on dormitory hours and visitation were also liberalized. On some issues, however, most notably student consumption of alcohol on campus, the college would not budge

from its long-established position. In response, some students defiantly challenged this and other regulations which they considered unnecessary; others quietly ignored them. Either way these were problems that would not simply go away and the college community eventually had to come to terms with them.[11]

Only once did the Warren Wilson community experience an upheaval that in any way resembled disturbances that were rampant on many American campuses during the decade. This was not so much a student-establishment confrontation as a deepseated division within the broader campus community. Although Warren Wilson had long been noted for its progressive racial stance, the community divided in its response to the civil rights movement. While some students and many, particularly the younger staff members, openly sympathized with Black demands, others were disturbed by them. When a student-staff group organized on campus as the "Student Congress on Racial Equality" in the fall of 1963, these latent differences grew to hostility. To calm the situation and to find out more about the group for themselves, Bannerman and Jensen met with its members in early November. Bannerman expressed support for the group's goal of racial equality but asked them more specifically to outline their means of working toward this. He suggested that they adhere to the college's traditional cautious, but effective, approach to racial matters. Meanwhile tensions mounted, and in mid-November the Dean's handling of the relationship between a white co-ed and black male detonated the volatile atmosphere.

From the time that the college had integrated, some members of the campus community and neighbors in the surrounding area had voiced objection, ranging from discomfort to alarm, about the prospect of inter-racial dating. Unofficially the school's leadership discouraged "private relationships" between the two races. While rarely questioned in the fifties, this policy was immediately challenged when injected into the heated atmosphere of the fall of 1963. Concerned that the couple was "dating openly and getting serious," that many in the outside community were upset by their behavior—so much so that threats were made both against them and against the college—and that they had ignored his and others' advice on the matter, Jensen informed the couple to "either stop dating or leave Warren Wilson." This ultimatum

provoked intense and immediate reaction from all sides. While the majority of students apparently avoided the controversy, those who became involved were vocal, articulate, and hostile to the administration. Far more serious was division within the staff. At the end of a heated meeting, the staff voted fourteen to twelve against a motion that would have overturned the Dean's handling of the case. While this proved a victory for the administration, it was a far cry from the consensus Dr. Bannerman preferred. In fact it only assured continuation of the debate. As the issue quickly snowballed from a matter involving two students into a showdown between traditional authority and those audacious enough to challenge it, people on both sides were swept into extreme positions. For several days controversy raged. Many community members ranging from the embattled Dean to disgruntled and disillusioned staff members down to the students, threatened to leave the college. Only the tragic news of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22 calmed the situation. Thereafter, cooler minds prevailed. The matter that sparked the issue went the course of many college romances and soon was no longer an issue. More importantly, the staff several months later addressed the broader issue of inter-racial and cultural dating. While deciding that a broad proscription of such would violate the college's spirit and philosophy, the staff recognized the practical concerns that had influenced the administration's handling of the November incident. Safeguards designed to provide guidance and support for inter-racial couples and to minimize undesirable repercussions of such relationships were devised. In time these provisions, too, proved unnecessary, and they were gradually forgotten.[12]

For all the scars and disillusionment, the college grew and learned from the 1963 crisis. It frightened and sobered people on both sides and made them recognize how fragile the college's long tradition of all working together for the common good really was. Without renouncing their own stances in the crisis, individuals recognized that they had to accept each other, and that in a community of diverse, strongminded, conscientious individuals "being right" was not all that mattered. Perhaps most importantly for Warren Wilson's future as a senior college, the college learned that broad, inflexible ultimatums could be

counter-productive. Perhaps such means were not the best approach for preparing young people for adulthood. The college's relatively peaceful and successful handling of subsequent crises in the 1960's may in part be attributed to the lessons learned that November.

The graduation of the first senior college class in 1969 coincided with the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of Asheville Farm School. This gave the college an opportunity to pause and reflect on its accomplishments. But the respite was brief, for as the college approached a new decade and chapter in its history it again faced changes and challenges. After three decades at the college's helm both Arthur Bannerman and Henry Jensen neared retirement. The imminent loss of their leadership, coupled with the rapidity of the recent changes, left the school exhausted and groping for direction. The incessant questioning of the previous decade had challenged many long accepted facets of community life. Even otherwise positive developments, such as increasing staff professionalism and sophistication among students, seemed to some to be eroding the intangible but important community spirit that had long been a Warren Wilson hallmark. The retirement of several long time staff members and some who had come more recently to wind up long careers left voids that were not easily filled. Perhaps most seriously, the relationship with the Presbyterian Church, a constant since 1894, was also changing. Since 1962 Board of National Missions support had been shrinking. In 1970 Dr. Bannerman announced that by 1973 the college would be independent of the Board and financially on its own. Simultaneously changes in the broader society—economic doldrums, increasing pessimism and "me-ism," and a decreasing pool of potential college applicants—left Warren Wilson in a less favorable position. Like scores of other schools across the country, Warren Wilson faced retrenchment and adjustment.

Two important developments in the spring of 1971 revealed Warren Wilson's determination to meet these challenges and set the course for the new decade. Following months of staff meeting discussion, a committee of three composed a new formal statement of educational purpose. This was approved by the staff in March and by the Trustees two months later. "The principle purpose of Warren Wilson College," it began, "is to provide the

graduate with sufficiently wide experience in the fields of knowledge and an appreciation of mankind's heritage and potential so that he may continue to grow and learn all his life.'' The statement then emphasized the college's recognition of the need to prepare graduates for earning a living. In order to achieve these goals, the statement concluded, the college would involve students in: the development of their own religious lives while expanding their understanding of other religious traditions; the in-depth study of one academic discipline; the development of a ''lively concern for the dilemma of man in his total environment''; ''the organizational skills, techniques, and satisfactions'' of participating in the work program; and social and recreational experiences that would enhance their ''social, mental, emotional, and physical health for current and later needs.''[13] Except for recent changes that have made the wording less sexist, this statement continues today as the college's formal statement of purpose. According to a recent self-study, the college community still broadly supports these principles. As the torch has been passed to a new generation of administrators, staff, and students, this statement has been a reminder of the school's legacy and a beacon for not only what the school should be, but what it should always strive to become.

The other important 1971 development was the appointment of a successor to Dr. Bannerman as President of the college. In Reuben A. Holden the Presidential Search Committee and the Trustees found a man with eminent qualifications. Following completion of the B.A. at Yale University in 1940, Holden enlisted in the Army and served in the China-Burma-India Theatre. There he rose from private to lieutenant colonel and won a Bronze Star for his leadership of an infantry batallion. Following the war, Holden returned to his *alma mater,* where he completed the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees and served the university in several administrative posts. In 1953, he was appointed Secretary of the University, and in 1967 assumed the additional duties of President of the Yale-in-China Association.[14] Not surprisingly the most frequently asked question when his appointment was announced was *why* a ranking official at one of the nation's most prestigious universities would resign to take over a small, ever-struggling liberal arts college in the Carolina mountains.

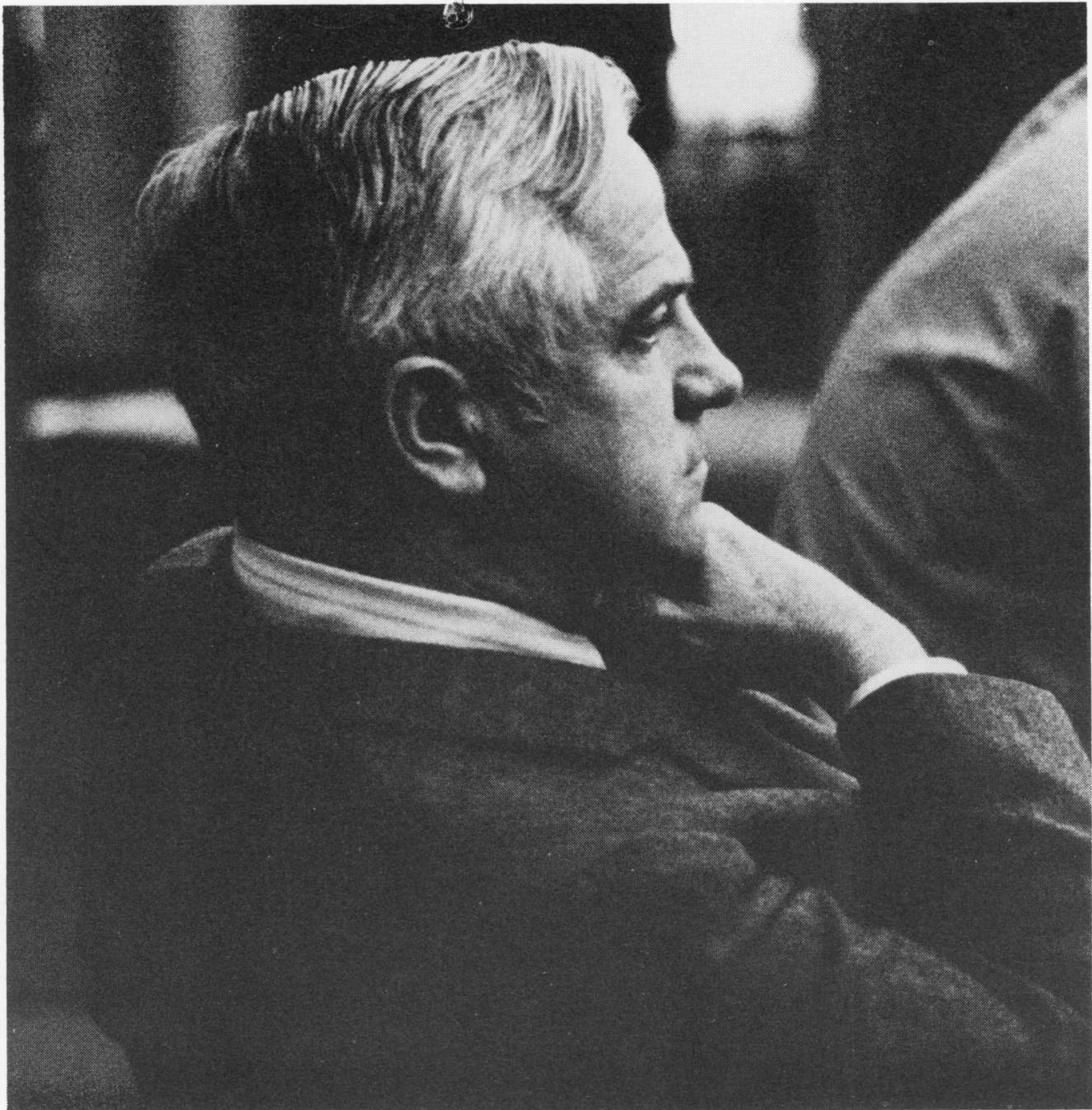
The answer to this question revealed much about Reuben Holden, Warren Wilson College, and the compatibility of the two. Holden was not unfamiliar with Warren Wilson. As a 1936 graduate of Asheville School, and a member of its Board of

Inauguration of Dr. Reuben A. Holden as President of Warren Wilson College, Fall 1971.

Trustees since 1948, he had kept in regular contact with the region and knew about Warren Wilson. Yearning to be more involved in the personal side of education, Holden found this in the college's small, close knit community. Moreover, Warren Wilson's innovative, wholistic philosophy of education closely approximated his own. After reading the college's statements of purpose and campus religious life during an April 1971 visit, Holden commented to Henry Jensen, "I can accept that." In his first formal address to the college community in the fall of 1971, he praised the college's academic, work, and religious emphases, and he promised not to forget "the traditions and basic truths that have given Warren Wilson a unique place in the sun."[15]

As well suited as Reuben Holden was to the college, however, he was even more ideally suited to the unique needs and demands it faced in 1971. His genuine warmth and commitment to the college dispelled fears that his Ivy League background made him ill-suited to Warren Wilson and won the friendship and confidence of the college community. His quiet leadership, optimism, and vision helped the college regain a sense of direction. More practically, in the face of the imminent break with the Board of National Missions, Holden's public relations experience and numerous acquaintances served the college well. Most importantly, while he came to Warren Wilson appreciative of its uniqueness, Dr. Holden was also aware that its most vital legacy was its ability to adjust and adapt its traditions to ever-changing realities within itself and the world around it. With Reuben Holden at its helm, Warren Wilson College continued its greatest tradition—challenging new frontiers.

In his 1971 convocation address, Dr. Holden affirmed his and the college's belief in the liberal arts. Asserting that "no curriculum can anticipate the knowledge which a changing world may require," he concluded, "the best guarantee for a full and constructive life is a mind which can function freely—to meet and analyze problems objectively, to get ideas across, and to understand the language of numbers."[16] Through Holden's leadership and diligent staff effort, Warren Wilson reexamined its approach to the liberal arts and made bold curriculum changes. In 1975, after long study by the staff under Dean Jerry Godard and his successor, Samuel Scoville, a new core was unveiled. Unlike the content orien-



Dr. Holden in a faculty meeting, mid-1970's—Dr. Holden came to Warren Wilson from Yale University where he had served as Secretary of the University since 1953. At Warren Wilson he has directed a number of developments that have broadened and strengthened the college.

tation of the original core and of most American post-secondary curricula, the new core emphasized "the process of discovery and the ways people have created knowledge." While this seemed radically different to many, it was in many respects simply a more sophisticated approach to Henry Randolph's emphasis on "learning to do by doing," which had never completely disappeared from the Warren Wilson approach to learning. More directly inspired by Columbia University philosopher and educator Philip Phenix and his book, *The Realms of Meaning,* the new core was organized around nine categories. These tried to capture a variety

of approaches humans have pursued in discovering and formulating knowledge. Within each category, the faculty developed a number of optional course offerings. While these were from traditional discipline areas, they all stressed the unique approaches to learning characteristic of the respective group. For example, in the category "Non-Verbal Symbols" students could choose from an array of courses that included computer science, symbolic logic, or calculus. Or for the category "Synoptic Knowledge" the student could take United States History, Medieval Life and Literature, or Global Issues. But in both cases, the emphasis went beyond the traditional content that might be taught in similar courses in a more conventional setting. It tried to stress, for example, how mathematicians and philosophers developed and use numbers and other symbols to broaden human knowledge or how historians, social scientists, and literati gather evidence from broad sources to draw conclusions about the human condition. Two of the categories, "Religious Knowledge" and "Inter-Cultural Knowledge," focus in particular on approaches to themes of traditional importance to Warren Wilson. During the four years at the college, each student must take at least one course from each of the nine core categories. Not surprisingly, there were problems in implementing this uniquely different program. The biggest hurdle has been breaking content-oriented students and staff from long ingrained educational habits and awakening them to the often unconscious processes that are the means, rather than the results of learning. More specific problems have related to developing suitable means of evaluating student performances in the process areas and evaluating the program's effect on the students. Even in the face of these difficulties, the college community has continued to express support for the general principles underlying the program. Moreover, outside observers have lauded the college's contribution to the advancement of new frontiers in post-secondary education.[17]

A number of other significant curricular developments occurred at Warren Wilson in the past ten years. To strong majors in the traditional disciplines a number of interdisciplinary majors have been added. Intercultural Studies emerged in the early seventies as a natural complement to the college's already cosmopolitan student body. Designed to prepare students with skills for

understanding and comparing the diversity of human cultures, cross-cultural experiences, and a concentrated study of one world area in particular, the program included coursework from a variety of disciplines. Since the inception of the program, students have increasingly traveled and studied abroad both as individuals and in groups. In recent years the program has been strengthened by the addition of an International Development concentration that teaches students "appropriate technology" concepts and provides opportunity for hands-on application of these in Third World communities. The Environmental Studies program combined course work from the natural and social sciences, work program experiences, and use of the campus' vast natural resources as a laboratory. Each major works closely with an advisor to design a program suitable to his or her interest. The program tries to provide a "balance of theory, first hand knowledge, and field experience" to prepare graduates for further study and careers in environmental fields. Although not a major in itself, Appalachian Studies has emerged as an important concentration within the Sociology and Music majors, as well as a popular elective area. Courses focus on the history, sociology, and existing conditions in the region as well as on traditional folklore and music. This emphasis has contributed to renewed interest in the

Warren Wilson students involved in International Development project in Mexico, 1983.

college's roots, and it has strengthened many relationships in the mountain region.[18]

While the Church's original vision for Warren Wilson in 1942 had a strong vocational emphasis, the college has largely grown away from this legacy. But with renewed interest in technical education in the early seventies, the college sought new and innovative ways to combine its strong liberal arts emphasis with programs of more practical appeal. In 1971, "3-2 Engineering" programs were established in conjunction with Duke and Tennessee Technological Universities, and in 1979 a "3-2 Forestry" program with Duke was added. Designed to provide students with three years of general liberal arts education and appropriate pre-requisites at Warren Wilson, plus two years of specialized training at the cooperating universities, these programs were introduced with much fanfare. After initial success, however, they have suffered from changes at the cooperating universities and an apparent reluctance of prospective students to spend five years on what otherwise are normally four-year degree programs. In the mid-seventies an anesthesia program was added in conjunction with Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville. More recently, the college introduced a cooperative arrangement (similar to the "3-2" programs) with Western Carolina University in nursing, environmental health, and medical technology. The success of these efforts has been mixed, but they clearly reveal the college's willingness to respond to new educational demands without sacrificing its traditional commitment to the liberal arts.[19]

A far different development came with the inauguration of the Master of Fine Arts Program for Writers in 1981. Oriented around two intense twelve-day residency periods each year, the program is taught by published and well known poets, authors, and playwrights. They work directly with students during the residencies and through correspondence in the intervening periods. The program has attracted wide attention and many applicants. While this is not an integral part of Warren Wilson's regular program, it complements the college's liberal arts emphasis. Moreover, it is further evidence of Warren Wilson's commitment to pursue new areas of educational endeavor.[20]

The 1970's also saw efforts to reaffirm and strengthen the other two traditional cornerstones of the college's program.

Following a year-long, campus-wide study of the work program in 1978-79, a number of measures were implemented. "To lend emphasis to the importance of work in the college's philosophy," the work program directorship was retitled "Dean of Work" and given broadened responsibilities and a more prominent role in the administrative structure. The full staff examined the sometimes counter-productive relationship of work and academics and explored ways to foster greater cooperation between the two areas. In some fields, such as the new Environmental Studies major, attempts to more fully integrate classroom and work experiences were successfully implemented. On the initiative of the new Dean of Work, representatives of the college met in a series of workshops with representatives of Berea and Blackburn Colleges, two other schools that shared student work traditions. While the exchange of ideas was helpful, perhaps the greatest value of the sessions for Warren Wilson participants was the recognition that their problems were not unique. Indeed, they realized that their program was one of the most innovative and effective programs of its kind in the country.[21]

Following the 1971 decision to drop compulsory church attendance, and the official separation from the Presbyterian Board of National Missions two years later, many worried that Warren Wilson might be straying from its religious traditions. While some observers may argue that this has occurred, much evidence points to the contrary. To be sure, Warren Wilson's religious emphasis has changed, but much of the old spirit remains. Ties with the Presbyterian Church are still important. A covenant relationship with the Synod of the South was established in 1972, and the college still receives many students, and significant financial contributions, from Presbyterian connections. The Core requires all students to take at least one course from the category "Religious Knowledge," and these offerings are "designed to lead students to the development of their own religious and ethical beliefs." An array of other religious studies electives are also offered. Students, the campus ministers, and other members of the college church have found the voluntary approach to worship both meaningful and satisfying. Students continue to play vital roles in the planning and carrying out of worship services, and in recent years a wide array of student-initiated religious groups have reappeared on the

Warren Wilson campus. Most importantly, the college's commitment to nurturing the spirit of Christian service continues. The service project, initiated in the idealistic Kennedy era, still remains a graduation requirement and vital part of the college's program in the 1980's. Perhaps the most telling evidence of the Christian spirit of the Warren Wilson educational experience, however, is the vast number of its senior college graduates in the service related fields of education, the ministry, social work, and environmental and health careers.[22]

Expansion to senior college also brought a greater student voice in campus decision making and the virtual disappearance of the old *in loco parentis* approach to social regulations. The former resulted largely from a peaceful, but effective, revolution in the early 1970's. Since the mid-sixties students increasingly sought a greater voice in campus affairs, but they found the old student Senate an ineffective vehicle for such. Growing student disillusionment, as reflected in increasing defiance of rules and hostility toward authority, worried administrators, staff members, and trustees. The crisis came to a head in the spring of 1971, when only one candidate sought the Senate presidency (then the highest elected student position). Ultimately the badly divided Senate dissolved itself. Then, following a community wide vote, a provisional government was established. A convention of students and staff then set to work to devise a new plan. This would not provide for a new student government, but instead was a constitution for a community government. The major innovation that evolved from eight month's deliberation was the "Community Assembly." Composed of the full staff, plus thirty student representatives, the Assembly supplanted the regular staff and student Senate meetings as the link between the community at large and the college administration and trustees. From the student point of view, the new system offered opportunity for a more meaningful voice in campus decision making than either the old Senate or student governments at similar colleges.[23] In recent years the number of student representatives to the Assembly has been further increased. Evaluations of this community approach to campus government reflect considerable disagreement. While in theory it is exceedingly democratic, the Assembly's large size limits its effectiveness and inhibits its direct action on all but the most important decisions.

A second result of the recognition that students should be given greater responsibilities has been the loosening of social regulations. Most of the old rules from the mission school-junior college era have disappeared. Today a large number of students have automobiles on campus, rules for men and women are the same, and residents of each dormitory determine the visitation rules for their respective halls. Most controversial of all was the decision following a two-to-one campus-wide vote in the fall of 1972, to sell beer and wine in the student center. For years the college had struggled to come to grips with the issue of students and alcohol. Ultimately the community recognized that controlled, legal drinking was preferable to uncontrolled, illegal drinking, particularly when the latter often occurred in automobiles and in Asheville or other areas distant from the campus. Not surprisingly, some alumni and longtime friends of the college voiced concern about the decision. For better or worse, the new approach, with its emphasis on individual choice, is in effect. Yet perhaps it is more in accord with the college's long-standing goal of preparing young people for responsible adulthood than the old *in loco parentis* philosophy.[24]

In an era when many small colleges closed or merged with other institutions, Warren Wilson College under the direction of Dr. Holden has done well. It has not only survived, it has grown stronger in many ways. Despite a lethargic national economy, new funds have been secured to replace Church support. The college has begun building an endowment, the physical plant has been expanded, and the staff has been strengthened. The new curriculum has received nation-wide attention and acclaim. From a shrinking market of potential applicants, Warren Wilson has attracted an increasingly superior student body. For example, the average S.A.T. score for the 1981 freshman class ranked sixth among North Carolina's thirty-eight private senior colleges, and these include some of the finest educational institutions in the land.[25] But Warren Wilson's most notable achievement of the past decade has been making these and the other changes that came in the wake of senior college expansion without losing the essential elements that offer its students a uniquely different educational experience. Today Warren Wilson College is still committed to the development of the whole person. It still retains

its unique academic emphasis, work program, and spirit of Christian service as the principal means to meet this end.[26]

Strong evidence of these principles is revealed in the striking fact that over the years, in addition to the salaried staff, the college has been greatly blessed by the assistance of volunteer staff members attracted to its program. In the twenty years 1962-82, the years in which the College made the transition from mission school to independent college, over 80 persons had contributed their services as volunteers. Most of these persons were retirees who found in the Warren Wilson program, not to mention the lovely setting of the college, a challenge to continued fruitful service in very much needed areas. It was not unusual to find in many of these years that as many as 25, or about 18% of the staff, came under this category. For example, the supervision of dormitories, the financial and development offices, and the library as well as the teaching staff profited immeasurably from such help. The missionary spirit with which the college began still permeates its structure.[26]

CHAPTER FOUR FOOTNOTES

[1]William Archie to William Faulds, October 4, 1962. (A copy of this letter is reprinted in the *Study for the Four-Year College,* 1962)

[2]"A Statement Concerning Policies at W.W.C. Governing the Admission of Students" (attached to 1962-63 Annual Report). Dean's Reports, September 6, 1963, December 5, 1966, December 13, 1967. "Warren Wilson College Statement of Purpose," May 1967.

[3]"The Four-Year College" (statement prepared by Henry W. Jensen, January 1965). Staff Meeting Minutes, September 10, 1965. Jensen, 54, 58.

[4]"Introductory Statement for Proposed Curriculum" (from *Study of the Four-Year College,* 1962). "Special Core Committee Report for the Teaching Staff," January 17, 1966. "Report of Education Development Committee (Board of Trustees)," April 13-14, 1962. Jensen, "The Philosophy of Warren Wilson College" (statement prepared for meeting of Warren Wilson Task Force, October 1969). Dean's Report, September 1, 1969.

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EPILOGUE

FRONTIERS YET UNKNOWN

The good Presbyterians who founded Asheville Farm School could not have forseen the changes that have occured on their Appalachian campus since 1894. They could not have anticipated the successive waves of demographic, social, and technological changes that transformed the Southern Mountain region and the people they originally sought to uplift. These changes repeatedly made new demands on the school.

The Warren Wilson College of today is the result of creative, realistic responses to these changes. The ideals and principles of that original mission have never been static. Rather, they have remained ever open to new approaches and areas of service. Had the people of Warren Wilson College chosen to ignore the changes around them and stubbornly held to their traditional program and mission, the school would long ago have disappeared. On the other hand, if they had responded to each wave of change by discarding their unique legacy and accepting every educational fad that came along, the school today would lack the distinctiveness that is its chief *raison d'etre.* Historians of the future may well determine that one of the greatest challenges of the twentieth century was adjusting—but not succumbing—to the incessant and often perplexing imperatives of change. The successive generations who brought Warren Wilson from Farm School to four-year college proved equal to this challenge.

As Warren Wilson College commences its tenth decade of service, new challenges press upon the school. Finances are strained, and both the staff salaries and the endowment need improvement. While all indicators suggest that the program is strong, the college must remain alert to both the changing demands of its students as well as its own traditional emphases. The increasingly competitive student market makes full enrollment of qualified students an issue of constant concern. Recruiters must now take the Warren Wilson story to an ever broader field of potential applicants. At the same time, the college must continue to reach out to its traditional clientele. Additional scholarship funds need to be secured so that young people of limited financial means, particularly from overseas and the Appalachian region, can continue to participate in the college's program.

Not surprisingly, the diverse Warren Wilson community does not always agree how to address these and the other issues that they face. But with commitment, vision, and patience from the school's various constituencies, the creative responses that will determine its future direction will surely emerge. The problems facing Warren Wilson today are not unique, but the college's legacy and distinctive tradition call for unique and practical responses to them.

As the college faces these challenges, and those that will inevitably come in the future, it can find reassurance and perspective from an examination of its own history. The successful and acclaimed Warren Wilson program of today emerged largely from creative responses to past challenges. Time and again Warren Wilson College has pressed near new frontiers with a realistic appreciation of its own legacy. It has repeatedly shown the wisdom to adjust to new realities. It has always had the faith to venture onward. The history now being celebrated beckons Warren Wilson College not back to an idyllic past; instead, it calls it forward, to apply its timeless principles to frontiers yet unknown.

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