

TOWARD A HISTORY OF CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE
AMERICAN SOUTH: ESSAYS ON SOURCES AND CONTEXT

by

KATHERINE MARY WRIGHTSON

(Under the direction of Thomas G. Dyer)

ABSTRACT

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, members of Christian denominations established a large number of colleges in the American South. Most of these colleges failed, but collegiate charters were part of a larger competition between denominations. This phenomenon is considered to be Protestant in nature. Roman Catholics, however, opened colleges at roughly the same rate as the most active Protestant denominations, though little research exists on these institutions. Seventy-nine Catholic colleges were founded between 1830 and 1930 in nine Southern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas. Nine of these colleges remain in operation.

Southern Roman Catholic colleges resembled Catholic institutions elsewhere in the United States. These schools served multiple purposes, including basic education for laymen and the training of priests. The overarching goal was to provide a separate enclave of Catholic ritual and knowledge, giving Catholic students a refuge from the surrounding Protestant culture. Curricula included the traditional 19th century classical curriculum, commercial studies, and preparatory work. Though there were some similarities, the governance, financial, and faculty issues of these institutions often differed from that of non-Catholic colleges of the time.

This collection of essays builds a framework for further study on Southern Roman Catholic colleges. The religious culture of the American South is described, with Catholic culture set into context. The individual colleges are introduced, including what is known of each institution's history. The structure and intellectual life of American Catholic colleges is explained, as context for Southern institutions. Finally, possible reasons for collegiate closures are presented.

INDEX WORDS: Higher education; American South; Roman Catholic; Spring Hill College; Southern colleges; Catholic colleges; Southern religious culture; College charters

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DEDICATION

In memory of
Virginia and Thomas Wrightson, who believed,
and in gratitude to
Joseph Merlino, who was patient.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES	vii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 RELIGION IN THE 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN SOUTH.....	15
3 CATHOLIC COLLEGES ESTABLISHED IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH, 1830 - 1930	47
4 THE STRUCTURE OF THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC COLLEGE.....	99
5 THE SOUL OF THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC COLLEGE.....	135
6 THE FATE OF SOUTHERN CATHOLIC COLLEGES	166
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	184

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 2.1: Catholic Population in Southern States: 1900	26
Table 3.1: Catholic Colleges Established in Alabama.....	51
Table 3.2: Catholic Colleges Established in Arkansas.....	53
Table 3.3: Catholic Colleges Established in Florida	56
Table 3.4: Catholic Colleges Established in Georgia	58
Table 3.5: Catholic Colleges Established in Louisiana	62
Table 3.6: Catholic Colleges Established in Mississippi.....	77
Table 3.7: Catholic Colleges Established in North Carolina	81
Table 3.8: Catholic Colleges Established in South Carolina.....	83
Table 3.9: Catholic Colleges Established in Texas	87
Table 4.1: Ratio of Denominational Colleges to Congregations.....	102
Table 4.2: Teaching Orders Operating Southern Men's Colleges	107
Table 4.3: Teaching Orders Operating Southern Women's Colleges	108
Table 6.1: Southern Catholic Colleges Sorted by Year of Closure.....	167
Table 6.2: Southern Catholic Colleges Sorted by Decade of Closure ...	169
Table 6.3: Southern Catholic Colleges Sorted and Ranked by Lifespan.....	171
Table 6.4: Lifespans of Closed Southern Catholic Colleges	173

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

American higher education is, in large part, a testament to the various religious denominations which built colleges and universities. Reasons for these charters vary, but include the desire to mold young minds in doctrinally-acceptable directions, the wish to encourage research and discovery that corroborate existing dogma, and the hope that colleges and universities will enhance the denomination's reputation in the public mind. In several periods of American higher education's history, this denominational aspect of collegiate growth has been apparent – especially in the 19th and early 20th century.

Though it is commonly accepted that Protestant denominations took the lead in collegiate activity, it would be foolhardy to believe that Protestants were the only ones who saw colleges as a useful tool. Catholics also saw higher education as a key component of religious life. From the founding of Georgetown College in 1789 to the present century, Catholic dioceses and orders have opened hundreds of colleges in the United States in the hopes of success. Unfortunately, as with the Protestant institutions, many of those colleges have closed: some quickly,

some after lingering near death for many years. Others have merged or have changed their curriculum in order to attract new students.

Catholic universities and colleges in the United States were established for three major reasons: to prepare young men for seminary education, to foster missionary activity in remote areas, and to create a haven of Catholic faith which would create strong devout Catholic adults. From these simple beginnings, Catholic universities grew to symbolize a separate Catholic intellectual tradition, even long after these needs became much less crucial. Even today, Catholic institutions struggle to balance integration with the non-Catholic world and separation from it.¹

A study of the entire scope of American Catholic higher education is beyond the range of this essay. It has also already been done, in two comprehensive works by Edward Power². Power's books, though written nearly fifty and thirty years ago, remain the major works on the subject. However, the concentration of American Catholic colleges in the upper Midwest and the eastern states naturally caused his work to focus on those geographical regions. No one has done substantial work on Southern American Catholic higher education, a subject which is remarkably broad given the common opinion that the South had no

¹ Edward J. Power, *Catholic Higher Education in America: A History* (New York, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1972), 48.

² Edward J. Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Bruce Publishing Company, 1958); Power, *Catholic Higher Education in America: A History*.

Catholics, let alone Catholic colleges, until the late decades of the 20th century.

These essays attempt to fill that gap, though the vast geographic area and the span of years covered here require an overview rather than a detailed study of more limited eras or locations. Here, the reader will find the various Catholic colleges founded in the South between 1830 and 1930, with as much information as could be gathered about those schools. For the purposes of this document, the South is defined as Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas. These states were generally considered hardship missionary territory during this period, unlike the border states of the Confederacy which had larger Catholic populations.

The recorded history of Catholic Southern higher education begins in 1830 with the founding of Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama. Southern Catholic colleges founded after 1930 were either mergers of existing colleges or were colleges that only faintly resembled the “Catholic college” of the preceding 100 years. The colleges included in this document share a certain sense of Catholicism, of a simultaneous separation from and involvement with the world, and of a common goal in educating Catholic youth to remain citizens of their country and practitioners of their faith.

It must be emphasized that studies of American Catholic higher education are necessarily incomplete. Catholic historians have bemoaned

the lack of primary sources since the field of American Catholic history was established. In 1915, the *Catholic Historical Review's* "Notes and Comment" column quoted the unnamed author of *The Enemies of Books* and asked:

How many books on our national Catholic history
have been destroyed by one or the other of these
"Enemies" he mentions – Fire, Water, Gas and
Heat, Dust and Neglect, Ignorance and Bigotry,
Bookworms, Other Vermin, Bookbinders,
Collectors, Servants and Children? ³

Papers related to Catholic colleges, especially those which closed, are particularly rare. In most cases, the papers of the closed institution were destroyed or stored in an unknown location. In only a few cases, usually in dioceses with an activist bishop, closed colleges' papers were sent to diocesan archives. Even in those rare instances, the papers may no longer be kept in the archives, may have deteriorated beyond use, or have been lost. The diocese of New Orleans, for example, suffered a great loss during the Civil War:

When the Federal troops threatened to destroy [New Orleans]
most of the papers of Bishop Penalver, Bishop Dubourg, and
other important diocesan papers were concealed in a
fireplace and bricked up. After General Butler had been in

³ Anonymous, "It is a Great Pity," *Catholic Historical Review* 2, no. 1 (April 1916): 109.

possession of New Orleans for some time the wall was removed, and then it was found that no one had thought to close the chimney at the top; the rain had poured down and the papers were a mass of pulp.⁴

While we do not know the precise contents of this lost cache, it is not implausible that some of the now-missing documents relating to early Louisiana colleges may have been included, or that those documents met a similar fate elsewhere. The archival sentiment did not strike most dioceses until the American bicentennial, too late for the seminal records of Catholicism in this country.⁵

The American Catholic church has started to address this problem. Most American dioceses now have at least a part-time archivist, whose job it is to sort the vast stockpiles of information, artifacts, images, and other data stored in the diocese's closets and cabinets. The task is daunting and often done in a vacuum. The archivist is not, after all, a historian of American Catholicism, but a librarian with particular training; her goal is not research, but organization. Access to these archives has, unfortunately, been difficult for the non-ecclesiastical researcher. Though diocesan attitudes have shifted over the past century and materials previously private have been made public, most archives

⁴ Rev. Dr. Foik, "Catholic Archives of America," *Catholic Historical Review* 1, no. 1 (April 1915): 63-64.

⁵ James M. O'Toole, "Archives Revival and the Future of Catholic History," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 3, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 1983): 87-102.

have not been thoroughly cataloged and the archivist may not know whether or not he has material the researcher seeks.

Researchers and archivists have decades of tandem work ahead of them, locating and using documents which will illuminate even the most prosaic elements of American Catholic life. Where higher education is concerned, there is still much basic research to be done:

We need first of all studies of Catholic higher education itself, taking a broad view. As with religious orders, we have a great many studies of particular institutions, but few with a comparative approach. Of greater usefulness in the future would be studies that attempted to describe and assess common themes among institutions. What, if any, were the typical approaches to the curriculum in Catholic colleges? How did those institutions define themselves in relation to public and other private colleges in their immediate surroundings? What were the forces that led to their expansion from secondary schools to undergraduate colleges to full-fledged universities? . . . [W]e also need to understand why so many Catholic colleges . . . have closed their doors for good, some of them after very brief lives.⁶

⁶ O'Toole, "Archives Revival and the Future of Catholic History," 100.

I have attempted to provide some answers to these questions in this set of essays, especially as those answers relate to Southern Catholic higher education.

Unfortunately, there are few primary sources for material about Southern Catholic colleges during the hundred years covered here. Thus, I have used the few primary records available but have relied for the most part on secondary documents. In all cases but two, these primary records are journal or newspaper articles, not scholarly studies of original documents or the original documents themselves. The exceptions are two yearly catalogues from Spring Hill College, dated 1860 and 1864, preserved as part of the Confederate Imprints Collection.

Secondary sources are the base material for most American Catholic history. Even the detailed histories of individual parishes or dioceses have resorted to second-hand description. Most historians interested in American Catholicism have placed disproportionate emphasis on the four-volume work of John Gilmary Shea, written in the 1880s. Shea saw many documents which no longer exist, and which contemporary historians know only through his descriptions.

The waning years of the 19th century were clearly a time when northeastern Irish Catholics wanted histories which emphasized the various Catholic contributions to America, as a number of books similar to Shea's were published at the same time. Unfortunately for the modern researcher, these histories were written for a popular audience and

provide little of the detail so desperately needed. These romantic histories form the underlying structure of the few studies on American Catholic higher education which have been published. Interest in the field has been cyclical, and can be divided into three distinct periods, each with their own purpose.⁷

In the ten years bracketing the dawn of the 20th century, immigration caused a Catholic population explosion. At the same time, college had become a reasonable expectation for a much wider swath of the general population than it had been in previous decades. Documents from this period display interest in the definition of a “Catholic college,” with particular emphasis on the religious nature of both the curriculum and the student’s daily life. In fact, the concept of “college” was under discussion as Catholic institutions, traditionally six-year programs, wondered whether to split into academies and colleges. There is a strong separatist flavor to these documents.

During the late 1910s and 1920s, Catholic higher education again became a topic of research and publication. Documents from this era focus more on the external pressures of accreditation and standardization, movements which affected non-Catholic colleges as well.

⁷ John Gilmary Shea, *A History of the Catholic Church Within the Limits of the United States, from the First Attempted Colonization to the Present Time* (New York City: John Gilmary Shea, 1886). See also John O’Kane Murray, *A Popular History of the Catholic Church in the United States* (New York City, New York: Edward O. Jenkins, 1876) and Henry de Courcy and John Gilmary Shea, *History of the Catholic Church in the United States: From the Earliest Settlement of the Country to the Present Time* (New York City, New York: P.J. Kenedy, 1879).

Catholics were concerned about the secular nature of these new requirements, and again debated whether it was more important to assimilate or to stand against the tide in order to preserve the unique Catholic nature of their schools. In contrast to the earlier period, documents from this era acknowledge the necessity of changing to fit modern needs.

The last era of significant interest in Catholic higher education was the 1960s. Two forces combined to produce this revival: Vatican II and the rise in federal scientific funding available during the Cold War and space race. While the Catholic church was redefining itself in the wake of Vatican II reforms, Catholic higher education in America was struggling to do the same amid social upheaval and financial straits. These documents emphasize the future. Many writers shared the common opinion that Catholic higher education in the U.S. had never been particularly good and it was pointless to look back for answers to current questions.

The second and third periods of research in American Catholic higher education were particularly fruitful. The doctoral dissertations of Francis Cassidy and Sebastian Erbacher, who graduated from the Catholic University of America in 1924 and 1931 respectively, are the seminal documents in this field. Powers drew heavily on Cassidy and Erbacher for his own books, and I have done so as well. Powers is the major voice of the 1960s revival of interest, along with Philip Gleason,

whose *Contending With Modernity* deals with Catholic colleges in the 20th century. Most research into Catholic history that touches upon higher education cites at least one of these men, if not all four of them. This document is no exception.

Institutional histories are a critical source of material for higher education researchers. They provide access to documents and correspondence that may not be available in any other way. They also illustrate the institution's saga, its internal story of birth, development, and fruition.⁸ Several Catholic colleges and universities have produced institutional histories and, where available, I have used them here. However, these histories are generally the product of larger universities. Smaller Southern Catholic colleges have not produced many institutional histories, though perhaps that trend is changing. North Carolina's Belmont Abbey College, for example, recently published a limited edition pictorial history of its campus, though it has not yet published a full narrative history.

Because of the limited number of sources and the over-reliance on secondary material, work in this field is speculative. Conclusions must be based on what is known about colleges that did survive or materials that had been retained, and parallels to non-Catholic colleges are drawn in a partial vacuum. In studying Southern American Catholic colleges,

⁸ The concept of the institutional saga is presented by Burton Clark in *The Distinctive College* (Chicago, Illinois: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970).

the danger lies in attributing the experience of one college for which we have some data, such as Spring Hill College, to all Southern Catholic colleges. No doubt there are similarities, but the Gulf Coast or Texan culture is not the culture of the piedmont or of upstate Arkansas, and the Jesuits are not diocesan priests or Benedictines or Eudists.

Of the ten oldest American Catholic colleges still in operation, only one is Southern: Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama. Were there other Catholic colleges in Southern states? Yes. Were they successful? For the most part, no. Were Catholic colleges in the South more likely to fail than colleges elsewhere? Probably not, since most denominational colleges failed regardless of location. However, Catholic colleges in the South during the period covered here had the unique position of being separatist institutions designed for the education of a minority group in a relatively impoverished region. The lessons of Catholic higher education, regardless of region, can be applied to Southern Catholic colleges, but the uniquely Southern aspects of these colleges and the culture in which they existed also played a major role in their success or failure.⁹

In this dissertation, I describe these Southern aspects and place Southern Catholic higher education into the context of general American Catholic higher education, as well as into the broader context of

⁹ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 34. The other nine institutions, all founded before 1850, are Georgetown University, St. Louis University, Xavier University of Ohio, Fordham University, University of Notre Dame, College of the Holy Cross, Villanova University, and St. Vincent College; Mount St. Mary's College is still in operation, but as a diocesan seminary.

American higher education in general. I have drawn information from historians of education, religion, politics, and the various Southern cultures to make my conclusions. The dissertation is divided into five essays:

- Chapter Two, “Religion in the 19th Century American South,” provides a general introduction to the religious culture of the Southern United States. While discussion of Protestant belief and practice may seem out of place in a review of Catholic history, it is a critical component of understanding the way in which Southern Catholics lived and structured their communities in a culture where they were a significant minority. It is hard to understand the Catholic experience in the South without comprehending the belief structures of the dominant culture.
- Chapter Three, “Catholic Colleges Established in the American South, 1830 – 1930,” contains the core data about Southern Catholic colleges in the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Sketches of each state in the region, as defined above, include what is known about the colleges founded in that state. Any information about reasons for establishment or closure is contained in the review of each college.

- Chapter Four, “The Structure of the American Catholic College,” explains the unique issues of funding and governance in Catholic colleges. Southern Catholic colleges were not particularly unique in their organizational and financial structures, but the information provided in this chapter is certainly applicable to Southern colleges, and examples are drawn from Southern schools. This essay also contains a discussion of the Catholic church hierarchy and how it affects higher education.
- Chapter Five, “The Soul of the American Catholic College,” describes the purpose of the Catholic college, including Southern colleges. The ongoing worry about Catholic students in non-Catholic colleges is profiled here, with data supporting the argument that Catholic colleges in Southern states were especially endangered by enrollment elsewhere. This chapter also addresses curricular issues. The courses taught in Catholic colleges had to serve dual purposes: intellectual growth as well as religious instruction. The three curricula most likely to be found in a Southern Catholic college are described here.
- Chapter Six, “The Fate of Southern Catholic Colleges,” offers some theories about why particular colleges stood or fell. Particular attention is paid to anti-Catholic sentiment, which

waxed and waned throughout the country during the period covered here, and which may have played a significant role in the success or failure of individual colleges. This chapter also contains suggestions for future study in this field.

Despite the lack of primary sources, there is still research to be done at the individual college level where documents can be found. In other cases, collegiate histories may be possible to reconstruct using extant sources about other diocesan institutions, or through exhaustive study of diocesan or parish correspondence.

I have attempted to collate that which is known about Catholic colleges in the South during the hundred years covered here. It is my hope that future research will drill down through this general overview and discover new detailed information about these schools and about their place in the larger realm of American higher education. Similar research into the 19th century colleges of other denominations is needed; studies of both Catholic and Protestant institutions will create a much richer understanding of Southern higher education than we currently possess.

CHAPTER 2

RELIGION IN THE 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN SOUTH

The American South has always been a region permeated by religion: in the words of Flannery O'Connor, it is a "Christ-soaked" landscape.¹⁰ Religious beliefs and practices helped to shape the South's political, educational, social, and intellectual habits. The region has become identified, both nationally and internationally, as a culture uniquely defined by its religious habits. Throughout the 19th century, the southern states built and maintained societies which wove religious patterns together with social behaviors, thus building a regional consciousness and identity different from any other region in the adolescent nation.

This new Southern identity was chiefly Protestant in nature. However, it is imprecise to refer to the region simply as "Protestant," since the term covers a wide range of denominations, each with an individual theology and set of behavioral tenets. In the region covered by this essay, the primary denominations of the 19th century were Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist. Other denominations, such as the

¹⁰ Flannery O'Connor, *The Habit of Being: Letters of Flannery O'Connor*, edited by Sally Fitzgerald (New York City, New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1979).

Disciples of Christ (Campbellites), were popular in localized areas.

Toward the end of the century, a Pentecostal movement caught fire and swept over all Protestant denominations, changing individual and denominational behavior in a manner which is still recognizable in today's Southern Protestants.

While a range of Protestant denominations were present in each Southern state during the 19th century, they varied in local strength. Each state's balance of denominational power was affected by the local population's ethnicity, the availability of preachers, and the political power held by each denomination. As the century progressed, the rise of denominationalism affected both secular and sacred habits as denominations competed to build churches and colleges, to swell their ranks, and to woo each other's adherents to their own pews.

In the earliest years, the religious atmosphere of the Southern states was shaped by the Anglican church, which had been the official religion of many of the original colonies. In the colonies, the Anglican church filled several specific roles. First, the church brought geographically-scattered settlers into an emotional community, and thus kept the colonists together in a coherent body. Second, the church consecrated the various watersheds of life, from weddings to funerals, and tied parishioners close to liturgical ritual in their daily lives. Third, the church helped to construct a formal colonial society through the

establishment of smaller units, or parishes, which led to a uniformity of values and behavior among Anglicans.¹¹

However, the stirrings of political freedom and revolutionary rhetoric growing throughout the country were joined by a movement for the same changes in the spiritual life of the new land. In 1738, George Whitefield arrived in Savannah as an Anglican missionary from England. Whitefield, an evangelical, preached of a personal conversion experience and a far more intimate relationship with God than that taught by the Anglican church. Whitefield's sermons were widely published in the colonies, bringing these new ideas to a larger audience than he would have reached alone.

Evangelical theology was Calvinist in essence, involving predestination and a call to faithful action through grace. Evangelicals believed in an intense personal relationship with God, accepted the Bible as final authority, and sought salvation through grace rather than works. Most importantly, evangelicals claimed that the only true Christians were those who had had a conversion experience, a deeply emotional moment when the believer gave himself wholly to God and felt the grace of true faith. Emotions were central to evangelical practice:

First, convict the people of sin – make them so aware of their own guilt that they feel utterly helpless. This despair

¹¹ O. C. Edwards, Jr., "Anglicanism," in *Encyclopedia of Southern Religion*, ed. Samuel Hill (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1984), 33-36; Donald Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 4-5.

becomes repentance, which makes the subject susceptible to the act of faith. Faith, said [Samuel] Davies, presupposes a “deep sense of our undone helpless condition”, the sense of which was preliminary to the essential act of conversion which set each person on a new way of life. After conversion, the thrust of evangelical preaching was to encourage and instruct the Christian in a new life of discipline and prayer.¹²

The evangelical message appealed to a wide variety of Americans. Obviously, this caused great turmoil in the American religious landscape. The Presbyterian church, for example, had been one of the most influential churches in the new nation both because of its scholarly clergy and because of its growing membership, strengthened by new Scotch-Irish and English immigrants. By the turn of the 19th century, however, the Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches had both split along evangelical lines and the Anglican church was in decline. This state of affairs lasted until the 1830s when enrollment in Anglican and Episcopalian churches began to grow again.¹³

The schism was over more than theology; as Donald Mathews points out, “[a]t issue were the legitimacy of traditional leadership, the

¹² Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, 19, quoting New Light evangelist Samuel Davies.

¹³ Milton J. Coalter, John M. Mulder, and Louis B. Weeks, *The Re-Forming Tradition: Presbyterians and Mainstream Protestantism* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992); John Boles, *The Great Revival, 1787-1905: The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1972); Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*.

appropriate psychological posture of Christian faith, the nature of Christian commitment, and the relative importance of reason and faith in the Christian life”.¹⁴ Throughout the South, where the population was far more scattered than in the northeastern states, many people read evangelical sermons in their homes. These sermons helped citizens to phrase unvoiced discontent with the social structures handed down by the original colonists and the Anglican clergy who came with them. Frontier life was not conducive to strict social hierarchies, and a desire for true community and a more egalitarian society soon found an outlet in evangelical theology.¹⁵

The arrival of Shubal Stearns and his New Light Baptists was one of the first indications of that evangelical landscape in the Southern states. As they moved south from New England in the last part of the 18th century, the Baptists brought a fervent theology more contrary to Anglican tradition than the evangelical Presbyterian practices which had developed in the South. Under Stearns, a preacher from North Carolina, Baptists believed in a church experience even more emotional than that preached by Whitefield, and took their name from an insistence on adult baptism by full immersion.

The Baptist faith was experimental and new. In Baptist congregations, individuals were responsible to the church for their own

¹⁴ Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, 14.

¹⁵ Edward R. Crowther, “Holy Honor: Sacred and Secular in the Old South,” *Journal of Southern History* 58, no. 4 (November 1992): 619-636.

actions, and the congregation could shun or eject members who did not comply with the church's rigid rules of behavior.¹⁶ However, within the church, class was irrelevant and members were encouraged to express Christian love through physical contact, to respond emotionally to the Gospel, and to participate in a highly intense church experience. The new denomination met the needs of many frontier citizens in ways that neither the official religion, nor the denominations which sought tempered approval from the official religion, could provide.¹⁷

While the Baptists were horrifying the Anglicans with their emotional church experiences, another evangelical group arrived on the Southern religious scene. At first, the Methodists seemed acceptable to the Anglicans, since these followers of John Wesley spoke of their devotion to the Church of England. Soon, however, they too began to act in ways contrary to Anglican practice. Methodist preachers were often unschooled, encouraged emotional responses to the gospel, and began to celebrate the sacraments without having been ordained to the priesthood. Methodism disdained the Calvinist theory of predestination in favor of a constant search for grace, thus answering a major concern of those who could not accept the Baptist teaching of "once saved, always saved". Methodism offered Americans a middle ground between the cold

¹⁶ Winthrop Hudson, "Baptist Denomination," in *Encyclopedia of Southern Religion*, 85-88.

¹⁷ Elder John Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity: The Life and Times of Elder Shubal Stearns* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 2001).

formality of the Anglican church and the emotional Calvinism of the Baptists.¹⁸

The rise of these three evangelical denominations set the stage for the next period of ferment in the religious life of the new nation. No matter the finer points of denominational theologies, evangelicals preached the same general themes: from personal experience of God and the critical conversion experience to the equality of all believers in God's eyes regardless of race or sex. More than anything, evangelicalism represented a wave of dissatisfaction with a traditional class hierarchy, and found its home in a community of equality where the only admission requirement was an emotional acceptance of Christ, as opposed to a complex formula of family history, social status, money, and influence. It is no surprise that evangelical beliefs took such hold in the young country which was seeking new ways to live, new land to live on, and new ways of expressing belief in the God which, they believed, had led America to freedom.

These new forms of belief were assisted by the religious and social phenomenon of revival, a movement which swept across the South and affected every Protestant denomination. The original revival movement in the United States started in the 1740s, when George Whitefield's sermons sparked the Great Awakening in the northeast. However, the

¹⁸ Richard Pyke, *The Dawn of American Methodism* (London, England: A. Brown and Sons, 1933); A. V. Huff, Jr., "The Methodist Church," in *Encyclopedia of Southern Religion*, 467-470.

Southern states were relatively unaffected by the Great Awakening, and churches across the region had experienced a decline in membership despite the attractiveness of evangelical theology. This “declension” of membership was of great concern, and many pastors preached that God was disciplining believers for their secular enthusiasms and moral lapses but that repentance and prayer would bring a renewal and absolution to believers in the form of a revival.

In June 1800, a Kentucky Presbyterian congregation invited two Methodist preachers to speak. The sermons were emotional and dramatic, and a frenzy broke out among the congregation, as members cried and shouted in response. Almost immediately, it was agreed that the Great Revival had come to pass in Kentucky. Enthusiasm for revival spread throughout the state, and soon throughout the South. The revival camp meeting became a common form of worship for black and white Protestants, and functioned both as a social experience and a deeply emotional spiritual event. The hallmark of camp meeting was an intense physical response to the sermons, including spasmodic “jerks,” barking and laughing, and even fainting spells. These manifestations were known as “exercises” and were felt to prove the Holy Spirit’s presence and, by extension, the validity of revival as a godly experience and “second Pentecost.”¹⁹

¹⁹ Boles, *The Great Revival*. Revival experiences were often published as pamphlets; a number of these, including a few Southern experiences, are collected in Joshua

Throughout the Great Revival, church membership in all three major evangelical denominations soared. Eventually, the emotional overload and excess of the camp meetings caused a withdrawal from the form, first by the Presbyterians and then by the Baptists. The camp meeting became an event associated with Methodism, and has continued to the present day as an expected part of church life in many Methodist congregations. The greater tenets of revival Christianity, though, had ingrained themselves into the Southern religious experience, whether or not believers attended camp meetings.²⁰

In the decades to come, the dominant Southern attitudes toward religion would be colored by the revival experience: “Revivalist religion – emotionally intense, focused on individual conversion, with little awareness of broader social concerns – remained characteristic of the reinvigorated Protestantism of the south”.²¹ Through the social aspects of the camp meeting, thousands of frontier citizens had joined formal religious communities, drawing closer together and building a Southern societal culture based on Protestant religious experience. Even after the camp meeting itself had faded into a social event, its lessons were the underpinning of Southern evangelical Protestant culture. Edward R.

Bradley, *Accounts of Religious Revivals in Many Parts of the United States from 1815 to 1818* (Albany, New York: G.J. Loomis and Company, 1819).

²⁰ Anne Loveland, *Southern Evangelicals and the Social Order, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 81-90. Though camp meetings continued throughout the 19th century, their form shifted as the experience became more familiar and somewhat ritualized.

²¹ John Boles, “The Great Revival,” in *Encyclopedia of Southern Religion*, 312.

Crowther asserts that “the common struggle to maintain white supremacy, shared concepts of honor, and similar visions of society tightened the ideological tie that transcended material differences among southerners; and evangelical religion was the lashing for their shared ideas and values.”²²

With this framework of Protestant belief and Southern religious culture established, we can now turn to the question of Catholicism in the region. What did it mean to be a Catholic in a culture so imbued with evangelical spirituality and so proud of its Protestant heritage? What was it like to practice a religion discounted by the majority, perhaps even to the level of being outlawed? The fact that Catholicism in America was and is a religion of recent immigrants, one which was disavowed by the first settlers across the nation, indicates that the Catholic experience in the South was that of a significant minority:

Catholics in the South learned to subscribe to regional social values while maintaining their allegiance to universal

Catholic faith and values . . . In the South, Catholics have remained both a numerical and a social minority. Unlike the Episcopalians and Presbyterians who were also numerical minorities in the region, Southern Catholics have never fully assimilated into Southern religious culture and styles.

Catholicism includes too many non-English people, is

²² Crowther, “Holy Honor: Sacred and Secular in the Old South,” 619.

subject to a foreign power, and its religious services differ from the Protestant norm. This is accentuated . . . by the fact that Catholic religious functionaries dress differently, do not marry, and are not hired by their congregation.²³

In many parts of the South, the question of what it meant to be a Southern Catholic was simply not asked. Catholic population throughout the region was small for most of the 19th century, except for the states which had been claimed by French or Spanish settlers before joining the United States. Even in those states, the sheer lack of priests and the scattered population made it difficult to maintain vibrant faith communities. Table 2.1 shows the population of Catholics in Southern states, as determined by the 1900 Census.²⁴

²³ Randall M. Miller, "Roman Catholic Church in the South," in *Encyclopedia of Southern Religion*, ed. Samuel Hill (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1984), 648. Although the issue of dress is far less important since the changes of Vatican II, which permitted nuns and priests to wear street clothing at most times, nuns, monks, and priests would have worn highly distinctive garb during the period covered here.

²⁴ I have combined black and white population data. Catholics did missionary work in African-American communities, though the numbers of black Catholics remained small except for New Orleans, which had a thriving black Catholic community.

Table 2.1

Catholic Population in Southern States: 1900

State	Total Population	Catholic Population	Percentage
Alabama	1,828,697	28,937	1.5%
Arkansas	1,311,564	17,000	1.3%
Florida	528,542	30,000	5.7%
Georgia	2,216,331	23,000	1.0%
Louisiana	1,381,625	477,774	34.6%
Mississippi	1,551,270	25,701	1.65%
North Carolina	2,206,287	3,981	0.18%
South Carolina	1,340,316	9,650	0.72%
Texas	3,896,542	308,556	7.2%

The percentages are comparable for other censuses taken during the period covered by this essay; though the absolute number of Catholics fluctuated, so did the population of the states in which they lived.

The cultural atmosphere surrounding Catholics in the nineteenth century differed from state to state. Some states, such as North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, had been openly and legally hostile to Catholics in the years leading up to the Revolution, behavior which influenced religious culture and tolerance in the new states. Other states, especially those with Catholic heritages like Louisiana or Texas, were more welcoming, though there were Catholic regions and Protestant regions within those states. No matter how welcoming the culture or climate, however, Catholic populations remained smaller and less distinct than their fellow congregations in the north. Contemporary historians argued that several factors influenced this paucity:

The marvelous impulse which the tide of immigration gave to Catholicity in the North and West was wanting at the South. Slavery existed. Labor was cheap. The immigrants found but few inducements in this state of things; and comparatively speaking, the number was small that bent its step towards this portion of our country. Hence, we must not expect that rapid advance of faith which we have witnessed in higher latitudes.²⁵

Because of the small numbers of Catholics in each Southern state until the modern era, it is easy to summarize hundreds of years of religious history in short order.

Alabama contains one of the oldest Catholic communities in the Americas due to early French settlement along the Gulf Coast. Catholics have lived in Mobile for three centuries, and have had their own bishop since 1825.²⁶ However, the Catholic population was sparse. At the time the Diocese of Alabama & Florida was created in 1825, there was only one Catholic church in the state, the newly-designated cathedral in Mobile, and the new bishop, Michael Portier, was its only priest. The other two churches in his diocese were in Pensacola and St. Augustine, a

²⁵ John O'Kane Murray, *A Popular History of the Catholic Church in the United States*, 252.

²⁶ Prior to 1722, Alabama and Mississippi were part of the Diocese of Québec. During Spanish occupation, Alabama was part of the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba; later, the northern half of the state was in the Diocese of Baltimore and the southern half in the Diocese of Louisiana and Florida. In 1825, the see of Alabama and Florida was created, and in 1829, the Diocese of Mobile, which encompassed Alabama and the Florida panhandle.

lengthy trip. Portier was a young Frenchman whose appointment was delayed because “it was discovered in Rome that no one there knew Portier’s first name”.²⁷

Bishop Portier’s woes were not over once he arrived in Mobile, as his new church burned down within a year of his arrival and the priests of both Pensacola and St. Augustine transferred to New Orleans. However, he had great intentions for his diocese, and managed to bring six missionary priests from France. In celebration, he founded the school which would become Spring Hill College, built a Catholic cemetery, and invited European nuns to take up residence in his diocese.²⁸ Portier remained bishop of Mobile until his death in 1859. The number of Catholics in Alabama doubled during his tenure.

By the dawn of the 20th century, there were 28,000 Catholics in Alabama. Most were concentrated around Mobile and along the Gulf Coast. Northern Alabama had a small Catholic community in the Birmingham area which included churches in nine counties. In 1891, a community of Benedictine monks assumed the Sacred Heart parish in Cullman, and established a seminary and school there.²⁹

²⁷ Mrs. Sidney van Antwerp, “Michael Portier: First Bishop of Mobile, 1795-1859,” *Alabama Review* 24, no. 3 (July 1971), 205.

²⁸ van Antwerp, “Michael Portier: First Bishop of Mobile, 1795-1859”; Oscar Hugh Lipscomb, “Catholic Missionaries in Early Alabama,” *Alabama Review* 18, no. 2 (April 1965): 124-131; John Sledge, “A Circular Necropolis on the Gulf Coast: Mobile’s Old Catholic Cemetery,” *Southern Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (Winter 1993): 75-81.

²⁹ Rose Gibbons Lovett, *The Catholic Church in the Deep South: The Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama, 1540-1976* (Birmingham, Alabama: Diocese of Birmingham, 1980), 43-45; Rev. Aloysius Plaisance, “Benedictine Monks in Alabama, 1876-1956,” *Alabama Review* 11, no. 1 (January 1958): 56-63.

Despite its early settlement by the French and Spanish, Arkansas had few Catholics and even fewer priests until the Diocese of Little Rock was established in 1844.³⁰ Records of missionary activity and reports to the Dioceses of Louisiana and St. Louis showed that the scattered Catholics of Arkansas were practicing their faith without the church's assistance:

In [1824], missionaries found at Little Rock Catholics who had never seen a priest, and on the Arkansas River there were found sixteen Catholic families who reported that Mass had twice been offered there. "Arkansas Post was the only place after leaving New Madrid [Missouri] where there were enough Catholics to maintain a priest." The missionaries were perhaps not surprised to find great religious ignorance among the Arkansas Catholics....³¹

Missionaries moved between French settlements, but bishops were frustrated. Life in the Arkansas territory was so difficult, and the Catholic settlers so disinclined to fall into line after years of neglect, that no priest would stay for more than a year, though several of these priests

³⁰ Arkansas was included in the Diocese of Louisiana and Florida until 1801. At the conclusion of the Louisiana Purchase, Arkansas was transferred to the Diocese of Baltimore. In 1826, that diocese was divided, and Arkansas was assigned to the new Diocese of St. Louis. In 1850, it was assigned to the new Diocese of New Orleans.

³¹, Charles W. Sloane, "Arkansas," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York City, New York: Robert Appleton Publishers, 1907), quoting John Gilmary Shea, *A History of the Catholic Church Within the Limits of the United States*.

collected handsome sums to build churches which never broke ground.³²

In the years to follow, the situation barely improved; at the founding of the Diocese of Little Rock, there was one priest in the diocese who ministered to 700 Catholics throughout the state. By 1867, a newly-arrived bishop found only five priests and three small convents of nuns in the diocese.

In 1879, Little Rock-based executives of the Fulton Railroad Company granted 740 acres of Arkansas land to the abbot of St. Meinrad, a Benedictine abbey in Indiana. The company hoped that, if a monastery and convent were present, German immigrants would be attracted to the Little Rock area and settle there, providing cheap and plentiful labor. This proved to be the case, and Benedictines provided much of the pastoral and social care needed by Arkansas Catholics well into the 20th century. In 1907, there were 26 diocesan priests and 34 priests of religious orders (most living, it is likely, at the New Subiaco Benedictine abbey) to serve a Catholic population of 17,000.³³

Although Florida was initially settled by Spanish forces, its Catholic heritage is spottier than one might assume. Spanish missionaries went throughout the peninsula and established churches which flourished until the late 1600s, when increasing dissatisfaction

³² James M. Woods, "To the Suburb of Hell': Catholic Missionaries in Arkansas, 1803-1843," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (Autumn 1989): 217-42.

³³ Sloane, "Arkansas"; Scott C. Jones, "The Benedictine Sisters of St. Scholastica: The Formative Years, 1878-1926," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 80-94; Woods, "To the Suburb of Hell'."

among Catholic Indians and various border skirmishes led to significant raids throughout the missions. By the time Florida became English soil in 1763, there were only 136 Catholics in the territory. Florida did not receive a diocese of its own until 1870, when the Diocese of St. Augustine was created.³⁴ By 1907, Florida had about 35,000 Catholics in both the dioceses of Mobile and St. Augustine, with 55 priests.³⁵

Florida, like California and Texas, was mission territory for its Spanish overlords. Franciscan friars converted thousands of Native Americans in the century before 1763. The few parishes that were established, such as that at St. Augustine, served Spanish settlers, converted Native Americans, and Spanish soldiers. The St. Augustine parish was larger than any other in the colonies. However, Catholicism diminished rapidly after Florida was ceded to the United States, an event which, in the words of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, “resulted, not merely in the final extinction of the missions, but in the complete obliteration of Florida’s ancient Catholicity.”³⁶ It would take many decades before the Catholic population of Florida was strong enough to support its own

³⁴ Florida was initially part of the diocese of Santiago de Cuba; in 1787, it was transferred to the Diocese of Havana. In 1793, the Diocese of Louisiana and Florida was established, but was soon disbanded as Louisiana became part of the United States and Florida was returned to the Havana diocese. In 1825, Florida was brought into the Diocese of Mobile, where the panhandle remains. The lands east of the Apalachicola River were brought into the Diocese of Savannah in 1850 and remained there until the creation of the Diocese of St. Augustine in 1870. In 1968, the Diocese of St. Petersburg was created and now has responsibility for South Florida.

³⁵ James Veale, “Florida,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*.

³⁶ Veale, “Florida.”

diocese, let alone a flourishing infrastructure of educational and social services.³⁷

Georgia Catholics established themselves slowly, with no record of Catholics even settling in Georgia until 1793 and only eleven priests reported in the state in 1839. Still, by 1850, Catholics were considered a significant enough population to warrant their own bishop, and the Diocese of Savannah was created in that year. Most of the energies of the young diocese were put toward conversion of slaves – and, after the war, of free blacks – but by the turn of the century there were still no more than 500 black Catholics in the entire state.³⁸

Georgia Catholicism was sparse throughout the 19th century, though some prominent Georgians were either Catholics from birth or converted. Joel Chandler Harris, the author of the “Uncle Remus” stories, converted on his deathbed in 1908, though he was married to a Catholic and had sent his daughter to the nuns at St. Joseph’s Academy in Washington. Patrick Walsh of Savannah was a printer who had attended Georgetown University, and who was popular enough to serve in the

³⁷ Theodore G. Corbett, “Population Structure in Hispanic St. Augustine, 1629-1763,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (January 1976): 263-84; Jack D. L. Holmes, “Educational Opportunities in Spanish West Florida, 1781-1821,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (July 1981): 77-87; Robert Allen Matter, “Economic Basis of the Seventeenth-Century Florida Missions,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (July 1973): 18-38. Although South Florida did not establish colleges until after the period covered here, parish history of that region is covered in Michael J. McNally, *Catholicism in South Florida, 1868-1968* (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1982). and. Michael J. McNally, *Catholic Parish Life on Florida's West Coast, 1860-1968* (Catholic Media Ministries, Inc., 1996).

³⁸ Jarvis Keiley, “Georgia,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*.

United States Senate (appointed 1894, re-elected 1895). Despite these individual stories, however, Catholicism remained a small minority religion until the years after the Civil War, when northern immigration brought new Catholics to the state.³⁹

Of all states covered here, Louisiana has had the strongest and most cohesive Catholic heritage. Catholics were governors, judges, and senators, and were fully integrated into prominent society unlike their co-believers in other Southern states. As the census data given earlier in this chapter shows, Catholics represented nearly 35% of the population, making them the largest denominational bloc in the state.

Generalizations about the Southern Catholic experience often do not hold true when applied to Louisiana, as any assumptions about minority status or marginalization do not hold true in the face of the vast numbers of Louisiana Catholics. However, the large Catholic population did face unusual pressures during periods of nativist fervor, and the Ku Klux Klan was active in anti-Catholic harassment during its original incarnation and during the first 20th century revival.⁴⁰

³⁹ Walter V. Gavigan, "Two Gentlemen from Georgia," *The Catholic World* 157 (August 1937): 584-89.

⁴⁰ Alcea Fortier, "Louisiana," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*; George E. Cunningham, "The Italian, a Hindrance to White Solidarity in Louisiana, 1890-1898," *Journal of Negro History* 50, no. 1 (January 1965): 22-36; Jo Ann Carrigan, "Privilege, Prejudice, and the Stranger's Disease in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans," *Journal of Southern History* 36, no. 4 (November 1970): 568-78. As described in Note 34, Louisiana was part of the Diocese of Louisiana and Florida that was separated from the Diocese of Havana in 1793. In 1850, the Diocese of New Orleans was established, which included Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Arkansas until they received their own bishops. In 1853, northern Louisiana was given its own see, the Diocese of Natchitoches. See Roger Baudier, *The Catholic Church in Louisiana* (New Orleans, Louisiana: A. W. Hyatt, 1939).

Because of Louisiana's French and Spanish heritage, there was a wide variety of Catholic institutions in the territory and state. Various orders arrived to establish monasteries and convents, especially in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast, and many of these orders took education as a main goal. Diocesan priests and members of religious orders pursued school- and orphanage-building, missionary work, and service to the Creole and mixed-blood communities.⁴¹

Mississippi had a strong Catholic community during French and Spanish rule. Once the United States took control of the land which would become the state of Mississippi, however, Catholic activity declined precipitously. Mississippi was contained within the Diocese of Louisiana (later the Diocese of New Orleans), from which little help came in the form of priests or missions.⁴² Appeals to Baltimore or New Orleans, the closest cities with significant Catholic populations, did little to help the Catholics of Mississippi:

. . .many of the original Catholic settlers left Mississippi.

Many others who had remained behind became indifferent or lukewarm in the practice of their faith. Children grew up without any religious instruction. Marriages went unblessed.

⁴¹ Gervais P. Gaiennie, "Ursuline Convent Students, 1812-1815," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (Winter 1971): 58-61; Priscilla Ferguson Clement, "Children and Charity: Orphanages in New Orleans, 1817-1914," *Louisiana History* 28, no. 4 (Fall 1986): 337-51; Ernest R. Liljegren, "Frontier Education in Spanish Louisiana," *Missouri Historical Review* 35, no. 3 (April 1941): 345-72.

⁴² Frank Johnston, "Mississippi," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*.

People died without the consoling Last Rites of the Church. In 1823, the Catholic congregation at Natchez numbered only about thirty families, while Bay St. Louis, one of the typical settlements along the Gulf Coast, had only about twenty Catholic families. The wonder of it all is that there were Catholics, worthy of the name, left in the State when the Diocese of Natchez was finally established [in 1837].⁴³

In the new diocese, there were no churches, no priests, and fewer than a thousand Catholics. These humble beginnings foreshadowed the problems that bishops would have in the diocese throughout the 19th century. Bishops Chanche and van der Velde tried to bring European priests to the territory, to establish schools, and to raise money for churches, missionary work, and other critical elements of daily Catholic life.⁴⁴ There was little success. In the years immediately before the Civil War, Mississippi Catholic life began to stabilize, and by 1888 there were 15,000 Catholics and 30 diocesan priests in the state.⁴⁵

During the period covered by this essay (and in most of the years that followed), North Carolina had no significant Catholic population. In

⁴³ James J. Pillar, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi, 1837-65* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Hauser Press, 1964), xviii.

⁴⁴ James J. Pillar, "A Special Breed: Mississippi's Catholic Priests in the 1880s," *Journal of Mississippi History* 55 (November 1993): 263-79.

⁴⁵ Pillar, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi, 1837-65*; Michael V. Namorato, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi, 1911-1984: A History* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998); Richard Oliver Gerow, *Catholicity in Mississippi* (Natchez, Mississippi: Diocese of Natchez, 1939).

1860, North Carolina remained the only state in the south that did not have its own diocese or a permanent vicariate apostolic (a delegate of the bishop who was responsible for that state's portion of the diocese). In the census of 1900, North Carolina had the lowest Catholic population of any Southern state, with fewer than 4000 believers making up only 0.18% of the state's population.⁴⁶

North Carolina's lack of Catholics, however, was impetus for change. In the 1870s, the Benedictine order selected North Carolina as a likely spot for missionary efforts. On land granted by the bishop of Charleston, Benedictine monks established a home and built a school in Gaston County. The young congregation fought hardship: "the farm was a failure, the school was a tenuous operation, and there was a chorus of complaints from the brothers and visiting missionaries concerning the superior."⁴⁷ After some changes and rededication to their cause, Belmont Abbey developed into an oasis of Catholic faith which served the majority of Catholics in the state until the mid-20th century.

As with North Carolina, the Catholic population of South Carolina constituted less than one percent of the total population in the 1900 census, with that ratio remaining constant throughout the period

⁴⁶ Robert M. Douglas, "North Carolina," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*; Raymond H. Schmandt, "An Overview of Institutional Establishments in the Antebellum Southern Church," in *Catholics in the Old South*, ed. Randall Miller and Jon L. Wakelyn (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1983), 53-76.

⁴⁷ Joel Ripinger, *The Benedictine Order in the United States: An Interpretive History* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 39.

covered here. South Carolina restricted church formation to Protestant groups until after the Revolution and disestablishment.⁴⁸ The first church in South Carolina was built in 1789 in Charleston, and served as the spiritual home of both South Carolina and Georgia. In 1820, the diocese of Charleston was established to minister to the “bands of Catholics scattered throughout Georgia and the Carolinas who were already becoming indifferent and malcontent, if not actually heretical”.⁴⁹

The Charleston diocese, along with the rest of South Carolina, suffered great destruction during Sherman’s march. However, the incumbent bishop was able to rebuild his diocese even though the Catholic population was still microscopic compared to the Protestant majority.⁵⁰ By 1907, South Carolina was home to 30 Catholic churches with 19 resident priests, serving less than 10,000 parishioners.⁵¹

As with Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi, it is surprising that Texas has less of a Catholic heritage than it might be reasonably expected to have. Texas was missionary territory throughout the Spanish

⁴⁸ Richard N. Cote, “South Carolina Religious Records: Other Denominations,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 59.

⁴⁹ Jarvis Keiley, “South Carolina,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. The Diocese of Charleston ministered to Georgia Catholics until 1850, when the diocese of Savannah was established.

⁵⁰ Keiley, “South Carolina”; R. Frank Jr. Saunders and George A. Rogers, “Bishop John England of Charleston: Catholic Spokesman and Southern Intellectual, 1820-1842,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 13 (Fall 1993): 301-22; B. Anthony Gannon, “A Consistent Deist: Sherman and Religion,” *Civil War History* 42, no. 4 (1996): 307-21. Although Sherman was not himself a Catholic, his wife and children were all devout members of the faith. Ellen Sherman relentlessly sought her husband’s conversion, and expected that he would treat Catholics with courtesy even as he was fighting in the War.

⁵¹ Richard C. Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1985).

years, and both Spanish and Irish missionaries and settlers lived there. However, by the time of the Republic, there were only a handful of priests living in Texas. The diocese of Texas was established in 1840, with the diocese of Galveston following in 1850. In 1874, the state was divided into the diocese of San Antonio, the diocese of Galveston, the diocese of Corpus Christi, and the vicariate apostolic of Brownsville. In 1890, the diocese of Dallas was added.⁵²

One of the reasons for the small number of Catholics in the South stems from the earliest colonial days. Anti-Catholic laws in several colonies, especially those of the piedmont, may have kept Catholics from settling there. Georgia, for example, barred Catholics from settlement due to the threat from Catholic Florida; even after Catholics had obtained a priest and begun to settle in the state, there were not enough Catholics to justify a diocese until 1850. In North Carolina, a constitutional clause (not repealed until 1835) barred from office anyone who denied the truth of the Protestant religion.

Pre-revolutionary laws were only the first wave of anti-Catholicism in the South. During the 19th century, two distinct waves of nativism spread throughout the country. Antebellum nativism was anti-immigrant, but its anti-Catholicism went beyond fear of immigrants and affected Catholics and churches which had been on American soil for

⁵² John F. O'Shea, "Texas," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*; Linda K. Pritchard, "A Comparative Approach to Western Religious History: Texas as a Case Study, 1845-1890," *The Western Historical Quarterly* November 1988: 413-30.

generations (possibly even before the ancestors of the nativists had arrived in America).⁵³

Early 19th century nativism was as much a religious movement as it was a political force. As the young country moved west, “the religious welfare of the West was a thing of intimate concern to every easterner. To the East, the newer regions of the country seemed crude, uncivilized, and peopled with men and women fast drifting toward religious and cultural degeneracy.”⁵⁴ Easterners responded by establishing missionary societies which were intended to Christianize the west and, as a closely tied result, “save the West from Catholicism”. Many people feared that immigrant settlement in western states and territories took place upon direct command of the Pope, who, it was argued, sent cadres of Catholic Germans, Irish, and Italians into the frontier. These dutiful Catholic foot-soldiers would then build schools, educate (and convert) young Protestant children, vote for Catholic representatives and senators, and eventually hand over the nation to the Pope for his own purposes.⁵⁵

Vast numbers of published sermons, pamphlets, and tracts thundered with these anti-Roman statements and stories. One of the

⁵³ John Higham cautions against taking nativism and anti-Catholicism as synonymous ideas. While I agree, the scope of this paper does not allow room to draw the fine distinctions between the two. For the purposes of this discussion, the focus is anti-Catholicism, and “nativism” or “nativist” are used to describe the general political philosophy and its adherents.

⁵⁴ Ray A. Billington, “Anti-Catholic Propaganda and the Home Missionary Movement, 1800-1860,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 361.

⁵⁵ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Billington, “Anti-Catholic Propaganda and the Home Missionary Movement, 1800-1860.”

most famous publications of the period was Lyman Beecher's *A Plea for the West* (1835), a series of sermons which contained such threats as these:

A tenth part of the suffrage of the nation, thus condensed and wielded by the Catholic powers of Europe, might decide our elections, perplex our policy, inflame and divide the nation, break the bond of our union, and throw down our free institutions. The voice of history also warns us, that no sinister influence has ever intruded itself into politics, so virulent and disastrous as that of an ambitious ecclesiastical influence.⁵⁶

While these fears seem almost ludicrous to the 21st century reader, they were real to the antebellum Protestant.⁵⁷ Many Southerners regarded the mission movement with disdain, but their dislike was motivated by the Yankee preachers and their "foreign and decadent" ways. The anti-Catholicism of the home missionary movement appeared to cause no concern to rural Southern Christians.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Lyman Beecher, *A Plea for the West* (Cincinnati, OH: Truman and Smith, 1835), 59. See also Isaac J. Lansing, *Romanism and the Republic* (Boston, MA: W. Kellaway, 1889).

⁵⁷ In fact, such fears were not truly put to rest in the United States until John F. Kennedy's election to the presidency. The same nativist and anti-Catholic themes were trotted out during the 1960 campaign.

⁵⁸ David Edwin Jr. Harrell, "Religious Pluralism: Catholics, Jews, and Sectarians," in *Religion in the South*, ed. Charles Reagan Wilson (Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 1985), 66; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "The Antimission Movement in the Jacksonian South: A Study in Regional Folk Culture," *Journal of Southern History* 36, no. 4 (November 1970): 501-29.

As anti-Catholic teachings and philosophy spread throughout the new western states, politicians began to adopt these themes in their own campaigns and platforms. Anti-foreign (by extension anti-Catholic) parties began to grow in Eastern cities and spread across the nation. These parties claimed to represent “Americanism,” a concept which implied that the true American was Protestant, native-born, and educated. The Whig party (forerunners of today’s Republican Party) also made anti-Catholic statements and supported anti-Catholic measures. In 1854, Whigs in Mobile supported a movement to remove the Sisters of Charity from the city’s public hospital, based on unproved charges that the nuns were promulgating Roman Catholicism to their patients as well as providing nursing care.⁵⁹

One way in which nativists attempted to interfere with the Catholic hierarchy was through the trusteeism movement. Some parishioners, encouraged by apostate priests or Protestant agitators, attempted to emulate some of the practices followed by their Protestant neighbors. Parish trustees, who were laymen, began to demand much the same rights as trustees of Protestant churches, especially the right to appoint priests to the parish. Catholic trustees had been emboldened by their increasing participation in the parish’s pastoral care as catechism

⁵⁹ Higham, *Strangers in the Land*; Alan S. Thompson, “Southern Rights and Nativism as Issues in Mobile Politics, 1850-1861,” *Alabama Review* 35, no. 2 (April 1982): 127-41; Marius M. Carriere, “Anti-Catholicism, Nativism, and Louisiana Politics in the 1850s,” *Louisiana History* 35, no. 4 (Fall 1994): 455-74.

teachers and readers at Mass, due to the crippling shortage of priests throughout the West and South.⁶⁰

The trustees felt that, having moved so much into the realm of what had been reserved to the priest, and having control over the actual parochial real property, they should be permitted to determine what happened in the parish. However, in the Roman Catholic Church, such ecclesiastical decisions are reserved to the bishop alone. In regions where the bishop had little enough to control (and few priests available to be assigned), he guarded these rights closely. The angry trustees were able to cause a great deal of disruption throughout the region. This turmoil was especially evident in the older dioceses: Charleston, St. Augustine, and New Orleans. Splinter groups of laymen formed, bishops retaliated with excommunications, and both sides published lengthy and closely-reasoned arguments. By about 1850, though, the bishops were able to quell the rebellion among the trustees and return the Southern church to its traditional state of obedience and uniform practice.⁶¹

This internal schism was apparent to the external world, and helped to support nativist movements; if even the Catholics themselves wanted to wrest control from the Roman-appointed bishops, didn't that prove Rome's fiendish plans? The trustee movement appealed to these activists: "Nativists wanted legislation to take the administration of

⁶⁰ M. Evangeline Thomas, "Nativism in the Old Northwest, 1850-1860," Ph. D. Diss., Catholic University of America, 1936.

⁶¹ Saunders and Rogers, "Bishop John England of Charleston."

property out of the hands of bishops and place it in the hands of the laity; enemies of the Church boasted that by this means they would convert Catholics into true Presbyterians”.⁶²

Another nativist fear centered on parochial schools. Catholic communities placed a high priority on education, and one of the first structures built in most immigrant communities was a school. These schools were often of better quality than the public schools and welcomed Protestant students, a situation which frightened many of an anti-Catholic bent:

It is with grief and mortification we have witnessed the facility with which Papists persuade Protestant parents to place their children at Catholic schools and colleges. It is a well-known fact that these schools are nothing but proselytizing schemes on the part of the Roman hierarchy.⁶³

The Civil War, and the slow work of Reconstruction, took some attention away from Southern Catholics – at least the sort of attention that fueled the formation of nativist political parties – but by the first intimations of World War I, nativist and anti-Catholic politics reared up again throughout the region. Although the Ku Klux Klan first appeared during Reconstruction as a romantic way to celebrate and restore white

⁶² Thomas, “Nativism in the Old Northwest,” 88.

⁶³ Cincinnati Journal, May 27 1831, quoted in Thomas, “Nativism in the Old Northwest,” 42. Though this particular sentiment is from Ohio, similar fears were expressed throughout the country during the mid-19th century.

male supremacy in a conflicted and destroyed society, it faded as Civil War veterans aged. The Klan returned in 1915 with a much more political and organized attitude, which was both anti-black and anti-Catholic. In fact, Glenn Feldman argues that “recent work has confirmed the [revisionist Klan historians]’ notion that Catholics were more often the victims of the second KKK than African Americans.” It is reasonable to view the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s as the logical heirs of antebellum nativism.⁶⁴

Throughout the period covered here, Catholics in the South have generally assimilated as much as possible on the business and social fronts, while maintaining a separate enclave of religious worship and education. As Randall Miller argues, southern Catholics had two reactions to their situation: adaptation and exclusion. Catholics shared, or at least accepted, the dominant cultural values of the Protestant majority, except for Protestantism itself. They were thus able to participate in the regional culture. At the same time, Catholics “developed a ghetto mentality of sorts” by creating a parallel culture of schools, churches, and devotional behavior, which allowed them to sustain and pass along their religious (and in many cases, ethnic)

⁶⁴ Glenn Feldman, *Politics, Society, and the Klan in Alabama, 1915-1949* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 5. Feldman relies on modern Klan historians who have described significant Klan activity outside the South, where its targets were primarily Catholics. See David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan* (New York City, New York: F. Watts, 1965).

heritage.⁶⁵ Although assimilation was important for success in business and smooth relationships with their Protestant neighbors, Southern Catholics were concerned with the survival of their culture and faith in the region and did what was necessary to ensure that survival:

Church leaders fixed their gaze on the institutional concerns of building churches and an ecclesiastical framework to support them, or recruiting and training priests and nuns, and of invigorating Catholic faith. The Church made no effort to evangelize among Protestants, and, indeed, it discouraged a few impressionable young men, like Jefferson Davis, who sought admittance into the faith. Unlike the Church in the North, the Southern Church . . . did not push for Catholic access to public money for education. The Church looked inward. It had to do so. Internal problems aplenty demanded attention and kept the Southern Church from developing the self-confidence, strength, and militancy of the Church in the North.⁶⁶

Even at the turn of the 21st century, Southern Catholicism is distinct from the Northern version. The elements of Protestant culture, small

⁶⁵ Randall Miller, "Catholics in a Protestant World: The Old South Example," in *Varieties of Southern Religious Experience*, ed. Samuel Hill (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 115-34.

⁶⁶ Randall M. Miller, "A Church in Cultural Captivity: Some Speculations on Catholic Identity in the Old South," in *Catholics of the Old South*, ed. Randall M. Miller and Jon L. Wakelyn (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1983), 20.

population, insular immigrant communities, and monetary limitations continue to shape the Southern church.

In the century preceding the Civil War, the Southern United States went through a period of social and religious upheaval that disrupted lives and social structures in much the same way that the war would disrupt civic structures. The rapid and complete acceptance of evangelical theology took less than fifty years from the first sermons of George Whitefield to the Great Revival. The subtle differences between Protestant denominations were minor compared to the overwhelming approval of the patterns of evangelist Christianity and their incorporation into the social fabric of the South. Meanwhile, the Catholics scattered throughout the South had to define their religious beliefs and their personal culture within the framework of the larger Protestant upheaval surrounding them.

CHAPTER 3
CATHOLIC COLLEGES ESTABLISHED
IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH, 1830-1930

Even though the Roman Catholic experience in the South was a distinctly minority one, Catholics shared many of the denominationalist urges felt by the various Protestant churches. One of those desires was the wish for sectarian collegiate education. College-building was a constant and ongoing pursuit for religious groups in the 19th century, and Catholics were no exception. During the period covered here, Catholic dioceses and teaching orders opened more than fifty colleges in the lower South, Texas, and Florida.

The vast majority of colleges established for Catholics in the South were colleges for men. Most of these schools served dual, triple, or quadruple purposes: preparatory or academy work for boys, a commercial course for those intending a business career, a classical course for those intending to teach or pursue further study, and a seminary for those studying for the priesthood. As schools shifted their focus in an attempt to stay open, the different elements of the curriculum would also shift as unprofitable courses were closed.

As with the study of any 19th century higher education, Catholic education historians have been confused by the use of the term “college” in institutional names. While many of the schools using “college” in their names did offer a collegiate course for at least a portion of their existence, others did not. In most cases, the line can be drawn between academies and true colleges by searching for a state charter which grants the ability to confer academic degrees, but even with a charter some schools never truly reached collegiate status. Researchers who rely on the names of colleges to determine their status have been misled.⁶⁷

However, misinterpreting the purpose of an institution from its name is an understandable mistake. Secular, Protestant, and Catholic schools were extremely fluid in defining the boundary between secondary and collegiate education until almost World War I:

...there is no reliable evidence that any student was ever refused admission to a college because he could not pass the entrance examination which tested his knowledge of the fundamental principles of arithmetic and grammar. Because there was no clear distinction between high school and college studies, and because most Catholic colleges were, for at least the first three quarters of the 19th century, both high

⁶⁷ Edward Power, the last person to do significant work in this field, made several errors in his work by taking the ‘college’ component literally. I have tried to err on the side of caution and have included some schools (called colleges) which offered collegiate courses for a very brief period of time or not at all, in the name of completeness.

schools and colleges, neither entrance examinations nor entrance requirements played an important role.⁶⁸

Certainly, the various teaching orders and dioceses which established colleges sought to provide their students with the widest range of courses possible. In many cases, there were simply not enough students to sustain a true and exclusive college as we understand the term today. As the definition of “college” became more focused in the early to mid-twentieth century, many of these colleges made a successful transition to secondary schools.

Although Catholic education for men had been an ongoing project throughout the Southern states from the early 19th century, higher education for women and African-Americans was not an issue until the 20th century. The number of Catholic colleges established for women – let alone for blacks – is small when compared to the number of colleges established for white men. However, colleges for women stemmed from different motives and resources than colleges for men, so it is not entirely fair to judge one set of schools by the other. In any event, collegiate education for Catholic women was simply not a priority for the church until the end of the period covered here, both in the South and elsewhere in the United States.

⁶⁸ Edward J. Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 115.

Catholic education for African-Americans was mostly limited to primary education or to literacy training. Even in Louisiana, where the largest population of black Catholics lived during the period covered here, there were few opportunities. In 1892, a gathering of black lay Catholics (the third such gathering in as many years) focused on education. Young black men had little chance of being admitted to a trade school or to a white college, let alone to a high school if there were no publicly funded black school available. A delegate from Texas called for more black Catholic schools in the South, pointing out that black parents had no college to which to send their children, and asking for “a Catholic academy or college which will comprehend in its course of study the education of the head, hand, and heart of the youth of the race.”⁶⁹ It was not until 1915 that this plea was answered with the only college that is both historically black and historically Catholic: Xavier University of New Orleans.⁷⁰

The remainder of this chapter provides brief sketches of the Catholic colleges established in the South between 1830 and 1930. Some sketches are longer than others, reflecting the amount of available information about each school. The structure of Catholic colleges in this

⁶⁹ William Edgar Easton, quoted in Cyprian Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (New York City, New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1990), 179.

⁷⁰ Xavier University of New Orleans, or XULA, is not to be confused with Xavier University in Ohio. The Cincinnati Xavier is far better known, but it is a traditionally white Catholic college. XULA is the only Catholic HBCU.

period, including finance and governance, is covered in Chapter Four.

Chapter Five covers curriculum issues, religion, and student life.

Despite small numbers, the Catholics of Alabama were supportive of educational efforts. Several Catholic academies flourished in Mobile and Montgomery, though only two colleges were established in the state. Table 3.1 shows the colleges established in Alabama.⁷¹

Table 3.1

Catholic Colleges Established in Alabama

Name	Location	Established	Closed	Order
Spring Hill	Mobile	1830	--	Diocesan -> Jesuit
St. Bernard's	Cullman	1892	1933	Benedictine

Spring Hill College in Mobile is the oldest Catholic college in the South and was either the first or second Catholic college established in the region (Louisiana College in New Orleans, which was likely an academy, was founded earlier). In 1829, the newly-named bishop of Mobile opened a seminary for his diocese. In the next year, Bishop Portier added Spring Hill College for nonseminarians. The school was chartered by Alabama in 1836, and in 1840 received a charter from Pope Gregory which allowed the school to grant theological degrees. By 1831,

⁷¹ Edward Power cites two other schools as Alabama Catholic colleges: McGill Institute and the Academy of the Visitation. McGill, in Mobile, was an academy for boys. Visitation, also in Mobile, was an academy for girls. Neither offered a collegiate course. See Harriet E. Amos, *Cotton City: Urban Development in Antebellum Mobile* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1985), 191; Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (Chicago, Illinois: S. J. Clarke, 1921),

the college and seminary had merged. Spring Hill continued as a diocesan institution for another decade until it was transferred briefly to the Fathers of Mercy and then to the Eudist Fathers for one year.⁷² In 1847, Spring Hill was transferred to the Jesuits, who have retained control of the college to the present day.⁷³

The other Catholic college of Alabama was established in Cullman, near Huntsville, in 1892. Benedictine monks came to northern Alabama in 1877 and served as missionaries throughout the upper state. In 1887, the parish of Sacred Heart in Cullman was turned over to the monks and became the site of St. Bernard's Abbey and the center of Benedictine work in Alabama. In 1892, the abbey opened St. Bernard's College. The monks offered a seminary course as well as a collegiate course. The collegiate course continued until 1933, when the monks dropped the full college curriculum and offered only a junior-college course to non-seminarians. Twenty years later, St. Bernard's re-established the four-year degree, admitting women to the college, and closed the preparatory program. In 1976, St. Bernard merged with Cullman College, a Catholic

1208-10; and *Mobile: The New History of Alabama's First City*, edited by Michael V. R. Thomas (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2001).

⁷² The Eudists were the same order that Bishop Chanche of Natchez brought from France to staff his dream college. The Eudists failed in both Mississippi and Alabama. Their lack of fluency in English and a simple inability to administer an institution were their downfall at Spring Hill, as they were in Mississippi.

⁷³ Michael Kenny, *Catholic Culture in Alabama: Centenary Story of Spring Hill College, 1830-1930* (New York City, New York: America Press, 1931); Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*; Edward J. Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*; Lucille Griffith, *Alabama: A Documentary History to 1900* (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1972). Spring Hill is covered in more detail in the following chapters.

women's college, to become the Southern Benedictine College. That institution closed in 1979, reverting to a preparatory academy.⁷⁴

Because Arkansas lacked both Catholic laymen and priests, it is unusual that Arkansas was able to sustain three colleges with an average lifespan of 31.3 years, as shown in Table 3.2. It is particularly remarkable that two of those schools were diocesan, given the usual financial and staffing pressures in a small rural diocese. Of all the states covered here, Arkansas's diocesan schools were among the longest-lasting.

Table 3.2

Catholic Colleges Established in Arkansas

Name	Location	Established	Closed	Order
St. Andrew's	Fort Smith	1848	1858	Diocesan
New Subiaco	Subiaco	1878	1930	Benedictine
Little Rock	Little Rock	1908	1940	Diocesan

The first Catholic college in Arkansas was St. Andrew's, founded by the Diocese of Little Rock soon after its formation and chartered by the

⁷⁴ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 312; Lovett, *The Catholic Church in the Deep South*, 43; Ripinger, *The Benedictine Order in the United States*, 42; Jerome Oetgen, *An American Abbot: Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B. 1809-1887* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1997). Oetgen cites a privately published biography of Abbot Boniface Wimmer which mentions a college established by Benedictines at Tusculumbia in 1887. However, in 1878, the *North Alabamian* newspaper wrote that the town had "seven churches, five white and two colored, two white female and one white male school and one colored" (cited in Vivian Gunn Morris and Curtis L. Morris, *The Price They Paid: Desegregation in an African American Community* (New York City, New York: Teachers College Press, 2002), 9.). It makes little sense for a college to be established at a distance from the abbey, especially in a rural area with few Catholics, and it is likely that Oetgen's source was mistakenly describing the establishment of St. Bernard's five years later.

state in 1849 after “lively discussion”.⁷⁵ St. Andrew’s was beset by problems from the very beginning. The school admitted no students until 1851 when the diocese purchased an old frontier army barracks and converted it to student housing. A number of local boys enrolled, and a few boarders arrived from places too distant for daily travel. The diocesan seminary also occupied the barracks and seminarians assisted in teaching.

Bishop Andrew Byrne began to collect money for lumber and other materials to construct college buildings, but lost the lumber to a fire in 1853. New buildings were never constructed, and classes continued in the barracks until 1858. In that year, responsibility for St. Andrew’s was transferred from the bishop to the local parish priest, who handed control over to two seminarians. The school’s finances had never been stable, but giving the reins to seminarians was the final blow. The diocese finally admitted defeat and closed St. Andrew’s in 1858.⁷⁶

In 1878, Benedictines from the Swiss-American Federation of the Order of St. Benedict arrived to establish an abbey in Arkansas. New Subiaco Abbey, named for the Federation’s parent abbey in Italy, was established in the new town of Subiaco and the monks opened a college in the same year. New Subiaco College offered both a collegiate course and seminary education, as well as preparatory courses which could lead

⁷⁵ Sebastian Erbacher, “Catholic Higher Education for Men in the United States, 1850-1866,” Ph. D. Diss., Catholic University of America, 1931, 30-31.

⁷⁶ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 274; Erbacher.

boys into either advanced track. New Subiaco accepted black students until 1896, when the Arkansas legislature passed laws making it illegal to teach an integrated student body. The college closed in 1930, and the monks concentrated on a preparatory school. The New Subiaco Academy was one of the first schools in Arkansas to re-integrate, having done so ahead of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling.⁷⁷

In 1908, the diocese tried again to establish a college and opened Little Rock College in the home city of the diocese. Little Rock's faculty were all diocesan priests, which seems odd given that there were only 24 diocesan priests in the entire see at the time. However, the college managed to operate for nearly forty years, finally closing in 1940. The college offered both a collegiate and seminary course, and functioned as the seminary for the diocese.⁷⁸

Although settled by Catholics, Florida's Catholic population was sparse or non-practicing during the period covered here. That lack of Catholic practice is reflected in the lack of Catholic colleges established in the state, as shown in Table 3.3. More opportunities for Catholic higher education in Florida arose in the modern era, reflecting a growing Catholic population.

⁷⁷ Ripinger, *The Benedictine Order in the United States*, 143. American Benedictines are divided into two groups based on their European roots. The Swiss American Federation started colleges in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, while the American Cassinese Federation founded colleges in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina.

⁷⁸ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 322.

Table 3.3

Catholic Colleges Established in Florida

Name	Location	Established	Closed	Order
St. Leo's	St. Leo	1890	--	Benedictine

In 1889, the Benedictines of Maryhelp (Belmont Abbey) established a satellite house at St. Leo. A local landowner hoped to build a Catholic town, and offered 40 acres to the monks free of charge as long as they built a college upon it. On June 4 of that year, Florida granted a charter for St. Leo's College. The college offered both a preparatory and a commercial course, as well as the first portion of a classical course. Because the classical course was intended for seminarians and the faculty at St. Leo's was so small, students had to travel to Belmont Abbey to complete their studies.

In the first year of operation, the college changed its name to St. Leo's Military College. Students wore military uniforms and practiced drills three times a week, but were not trained for the army. Rather, the college president felt that military structure complemented religious belief and created "habits of promptitude and order, fosters self-reliance, and inculcates in the student, as part of his nature, manly ideals of obedience, loyalty, discipline, and courtesy."⁷⁹ In 1903, the military

⁷⁹ Abbot Charles Mohr, quoted in James J. Horgan, *Pioneer College: The Centennial History of Saint Leo College, Saint Leo Abbey, and Holy Name Priory* (Saint Leo, Florida: Saint Leo College Press, 1989), 114.

element was removed from college life and the school resumed its original name.

In 1920, the Benedictines closed the college side of the school to focus on the academy. Academic standards were tightening throughout the country, and St. Leo's "decided to yield its role as an increasingly dubious college and instead "become a 'serious English-style prep school'."⁸⁰ St. Leo's remained a preparatory school until 1959, when the college department reopened as a junior college. Florida's Catholic population had boomed, and there was only one other Catholic college in the state (Barry College in Miami, founded in 1940). The two-year program was offered until 1965, when the school switched to a full four-year program and conferred its first Bachelor of Arts degree in 1967. The Benedictines transferred control of the college to an independent board, still composed primarily of Benedictines, in 1969. The college now operates both the main campus in St. Leo and campuses on military bases throughout Florida and other southern states.⁸¹

Jesuit College in Tampa was founded in 1899, but was solely an academy. The first high school class graduated in 1912, when the school was renamed Sacred Heart College as it sat in the Sacred Heart Parish. In 1931, the school was renamed Tampa College, and renamed again in

⁸⁰ Horgan, *Pioneer College*, 414-15.

⁸¹ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 320; James J. Horgan, *Pioneer College*; Ripinger, *The Benedictine Order in the United States*, 41.

1939 as Jesuit High School. Despite the names, this school never offered collegiate coursework nor was it chartered to do so.⁸²

Catholic higher education in Georgia was a post-bellum phenomenon, and none of the attempts were particularly successful. Table 3.4 shows the colleges established in Georgia. The average lifespan of a Georgia Catholic college was less than twelve years.

Table 3.4

Catholic Colleges Established in Georgia

Name	Location	Established	Closed	Order
Pio Nono	Macon	1874	1888	Diocesan
Sacred Heart	Augusta	1900	1917	Jesuit
College of the Marist Fathers	Atlanta	1901	1904?	Society of Mary
Benedictine	Savannah	1905	1916	Benedictine

The first Catholic college in Georgia was Pio Nono College in Macon, founded by the diocese of Savannah. Nothing remains of the college except the major street named for it.⁸³ Pio Nono offered a joint collegiate and seminary course, and boasted a hundred students and twelve seminarians in 1877. In 1878, Macon was described as “the centre of Catholicity in the diocese of Savannah, from which education and religion are diffused over the entire State, and where the Church will

⁸² McNally, *Catholic Parish Life on Florida's West Coast, 1860-1968*, 109, 256. Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 321.

⁸³ A random poll of eight Macon residents, taken over several years, showed that none of them knew why Pio Nono Boulevard was so named.

flourish and prosper while civilization lasts in the Empire State.”⁸⁴ Much of this influence was due to the college and its learned faculty.

By 1882, however, enrollment at Pio Nono had dropped below twenty. The bishop of Savannah held the presidency, but it was admittedly difficult to preside over a college from hundreds of miles away. The college closed in 1886, transferring the building to a Jesuit novitiate called St. Stanislaus Seminary. Although a seminary in name, St. Stanislaus may have offered courses to non-seminarians at some point; an attendee at a Catholic Educational Association meeting in the mid-1930s represented a Macon school named St. Stanislaus Commercial College, though he offered a paper on seminary education.⁸⁵

The next Catholic colleges to open in Georgia did so after the turn of the 20th century. The Jesuits established a college in Augusta in 1900, naming it Sacred Heart College after the local parish. Few records of Sacred Heart’s existence remain. The college was never chartered by the state, and it may simply have been an academy for young boys, much like Sacred Heart College in Tampa.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ J. J. O’Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia: Leaves of Its History* (New York City, New York: D. & J. Sadlier & Co., 1878), 610.

⁸⁵ Works Progress Administration, *Colleges of Georgia*, 1939, Atlanta, Georgia; Charles Edgeworth Jones, *Education in Georgia* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1889), 105-06.

⁸⁶ Edward Power claims that the school closed in 1917 due to a lack of students. This may be the case, but by 1917, Georgia was well into a period of anti-Catholicism and nativism fomented by U.S. Senator Tom Watson. See Chapter Six for more about Watson and his populist movement, which may have contributed to the closure of some Catholic schools during the early 20th century.

In 1901, the Society of Mary established the College of the Marist Fathers in Atlanta. The college was chartered and offered both a preparatory and a collegiate course, but granted only one collegiate diploma. The school then discontinued the collegiate course in order to focus on the preparatory wing of the school. Marist Academy still operates in Atlanta.⁸⁷

Edward Power cites the College of the Benedictines in Savannah as a Georgia Catholic college. Benedictines had been in Savannah since 1877, teaching African-American boys in both academic and professional subjects. They established the College of the Benedictines in 1905 to serve white boys in the city, but the school never offered a collegiate course. The school changed its name in 1920 to “correct the mistaken idea many visitors to our fair city formed that Benedictine was a college and not a high school”⁸⁸. Benedictine Military Academy still operates in Savannah.⁸⁹

Louisiana was the state which attempted the most Catholic colleges during the period covered here. The state’s Catholic heritage and the plethora of French missionary orders which settled in Louisiana provided fertile ground. The diocese of New Orleans was also led by a

⁸⁷ C.M. Dubray, “The Society of Mary and Education,” *Catholic Educational Review* 3 (April 1911): 317, 309-20.

⁸⁸ Haygood S. Bowden, *Two Hundred Years of Education, Bicentennial 1733-933: Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia* (Richmond, Virginia: Dietz Printing Company, 1932), 365-66. The need for change certainly reflected a common misconception, as Power and others state that this was a college.

succession of bishops who had education as a top priority, so that the number of diocesan institutions founded in Louisiana is greater than that of any other state. Some of the attempted colleges were more successful than others, but Louisiana's colleges have no consistent length of operation. To take an average is to downplay the wide range of institutional lifespans. Table 3.5 shows the Catholic colleges established in Louisiana.

⁸⁹ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*; Haygood S. Bowden, *Two Hundred Years of Education, Bicentennial 1733-1933: Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia* (Richmond, Virginia: Dietz Printing Company, 1932).

Table 3.5

Catholic Colleges Established in Louisiana

Name	Location	Opened	Closed	Order
Jefferson	Convent	1831	1842	Diocesan
St. Charles	Grand Coteau	1837	1921	Jesuit -> Diocesan
Immaculate Conception	New Orleans	1847	1904	Jesuit
Sts. Peter & Paul	Baton Rouge	1849	1855	Jesuit
Poydras	Pointe Coupee	1854	Civil War	Parish
Louisiana	Convent	1855	1855	Diocesan
Immaculate Conception	Iberville	1855	1857	Diocesan
St. Joseph's	Natchitoches	1856	1863	Diocesan
St. Mary's	New Orleans	1856	1866	Brothers of the Christian Schools
St. Mary's Jefferson	Convent	1864	1927	Marist
Thibodaux	Thibodaux	1872	1896	Parish
St. Mary's Commercial	New Orleans	1883	1900	Brothers of the Christian Schools
Holy Cross	New Orleans	1890	1915	Holy Cross
St. Francis Xavier's	Alexandria	1894	1900	Sacred Heart
St. Aloysius	New Orleans	1902	1912	Sacred Heart
Loyola	New Orleans	1904	--	Jesuit
St. Joseph's	Covington	1904	1910	Benedictine
St. John Berchman's	Shreveport	1904	1914	Jesuit
St. John's	Mansura	1906	1908	Sacred Heart
St. Mary's Dominican	New Orleans	1911	1985	Dominican
Xavier	New Orleans	1915	--	Blessed Sacrament
St. Paul's College	Covington	1916	1923	Benedictine
College of the Sacred Heart	Grand Coteau	1921	1956	Sacred Heart

Although it is a matter of some debate, the first college in Louisiana was founded by the diocese of New Orleans in 1831.⁹⁰ Jefferson College, in the town of Convent, was staffed by Francophone priests who also served the surrounding French parish.⁹¹ The college was “directed along purely secular, not to say anti-religious lines”⁹² according to a later Marist historian, but that may simply have meant that Catholicism was neither required nor overly emphasized by the college, perhaps in an attempt to draw non-Catholic students.

Jefferson College was destroyed by fire in 1842. Although the college was rebuilt, it effectively closed by 1855 due to financial difficulties and other troubles among the trustees. The school reopened later that year as Louisiana College, but again failed to flourish. The campus was sold in 1861, a new college corporation was formed, and a new charter was obtained under the Jefferson College name. However, the start of the war closed the college a third time, and battle damaged many of the campus buildings.

In 1864, the trustees of Jefferson College met with the Archbishop and asked that he help revive the college. He suggested that the college

⁹⁰ Others claim that Louisiana College in New Orleans was the first college in Louisiana. See note 91.

⁹¹ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 263. Power notes that Jefferson is often claimed to be the first institution of higher education in Louisiana, rather than the barely-known Louisiana College. This supports the theory that Louisiana College was actually an academy with a pretentious name and not a college; this would also go a long way toward explaining the school’s operation by Ursuline nuns, who are not known for collegiate education, let alone collegiate education for men.

⁹² Dubray, “The Society of Mary and Education,” 316.

be transferred to the Society of Mary. This was done, and the college was reopened in that year as St. Mary's Jefferson. Marists felt particularly comfortable accepting St. Mary's Jefferson, as many of the students were French-speaking as were the Marist priests. St. Mary's Jefferson continued with a moderate number of students until 1927, when the Mississippi overflowed its banks and forced evacuation. The school did not reopen.⁹³

In 1837, Jesuit missionaries and Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus arrived in Grand Coteau to establish schools. The Jesuit school, St. Charles College, offered a typical curriculum, teaching drawing and music along with English and the classical languages. However, the remote location of the campus led some lay faculty to bemoan the local populace and the quality of the students:

...and how the miserable rabble which make up this country, without sentiment, without education, without manners have come to be blessed with a colony of Fathers S.J., each one of them a very distinguished man, is just as much a mystery of providence. They meet, too, with a most diabolical opposition, chiefly set up by the vagabond schoolmasters, a

⁹³ Dubray, "The Society of Mary and Education"; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*; Erbacher, 58-59.

sort of literary pedlars of which thousands swarm each year
from the hives of Young France and New England.⁹⁴

Within a year of its founding, St. Charles had sixty boarding students and expanded the curriculum to offer both classical and commercial courses. In 1852, the school was chartered as a university. In 1853, the college suspended business for three years due to financial problems and issues with student retention. In 1856, when it reopened, St. Charles had a hundred collegians in attendance.

However, the governance of the college was troubled throughout the school's existence. Though Jesuits of the French province of Lyons had started the college in their missionary work, they asked that the school be transferred to the Jesuit province of Missouri less than a year after St. Charles was founded. The Missouri Jesuits kept control of the college for about ten years, when it was transferred to the care of the Archbishop of New Orleans. St. Charles College had much financial and student retention trouble during the antebellum years, and suffered during the Civil War. The college limped along until 1921, open only sporadically. In that year, the diocese admitted to failure in Grand Coteau and closed St. Charles.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ A letter of Pierce Connelly to the 16th Earl of Shrewsbury, October 31 1868. Quoted in Emilie Dietrich Griffin, "The Louisiana Years of Cornelia Connelly: A Paradigm of Conversion," in *Cross, Crozier & Crucible*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (New Orleans, Louisiana: Archdiocese of New Orleans, 1993), 407.

⁹⁵ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 264; Griffin, "The Louisiana Years of Cornelia Connelly: A Paradigm of Conversion"; Erbacher, 29-30; Gilbert J. Garraghan, *The Jesuits of the Middle United States*, In Three Volumes (New York City, New York: America Press, 1938), 117-56.

The Jesuits next went to New Orleans, where they founded Immaculate Conception College in 1847. The school received a charter in 1856. Immaculate Conception was a day school which offered a preparatory and a collegiate course. The collegiate course was never popular, with less than fifteen college students enrolled in any given year though 300 students attended the institution. In 1904, the Jesuits closed the collegiate department, merging it into the newly founded Loyola College. The academy still operates in New Orleans as Jesuit High School.⁹⁶

The Jesuits then went to Baton Rouge, where Sts. Peter and Paul College was established in 1849. The school opened in 1850 with an enrollment of twenty-five, despite a fire which burned part of the building just before the first day. Sts. Peter and Paul offered both an academy and a collegiate course, and was chartered as a university in 1853. However, after a yellow fever epidemic in 1855 had killed numerous religious and students in the city, the Jesuits determined that the school would draw too many boarders from their existing schools at Grand Coteau and Spring Hill. The college closed its doors in 1856. The Jesuits would not attempt another college in Louisiana until 1904.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 272; Charles E. Nolan, "The 1938 Eucharistic Congress: Altar, Emblem, and Ostensorium," in *Cross, Crozier & Crucible*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (New Orleans, Louisiana: Archdiocese of New Orleans, 1993), 563; Erbacher, 30.

⁹⁷ Erbacher, 54; Frank M. Uter, *A History of the Catholic Church in Baton Rouge, 1792-1992* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: St. Joseph Cathedral, 1992), 26,31.

While the Jesuits were establishing their institutions, the dioceses of New Orleans and Natchitoches tried repeatedly to establish diocesan colleges of their own. In 1854, the diocese of New Orleans opened Poydras College in Pointe Coupee. Seventy students, many who were planters' sons, enrolled in the first two years of the school's existence. A drastic drop in enrollment (perhaps due to bad harvests in 1855 and 1856) led the school to close before the Civil War began. No record of a state charter exists for Poydras, and it may well have been an academy using the collegiate name.⁹⁸ In 1855, the diocese of New Orleans tried to reopen Jefferson College as Louisiana College in Convent, but the attempt failed within a year. Jefferson later went on to reopen, as described earlier in this chapter.

In 1856, the bishop of Natchitoches received a charter for St. Joseph's College. He founded the school with 35 students in response to Know-Nothing and other anti-Catholic agitation, and had over 100 students by the second year of the school. The college continued until 1863, when it was closed permanently. Union troops in Natchitoches encouraged some freed slaves to take control of some outbuildings belonging to the college, while other buildings were commandeered by the troops. The bishop appealed to the Provost Marshal, but succeeded only in regaining control of the buildings taken by the ex-slaves. The

⁹⁸ Erbacher, 57; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*.

school appears to have continued a preparatory course after the war, but it no longer granted collegiate degrees.⁹⁹

In 1855, the diocese of New Orleans opened another Immaculate Conception College, this one in Iberville. It was also known as the Parochial College and appears to have been an opportunity for seminarians to practice their teaching skills, as they constituted the faculty. Given the level of education of the seminarians, it is probable that the Parochial College was a secondary school. It may or may not have offered a collegiate course, although it was chartered with the right to grant degrees in 1856. Though there were enough students to warrant a second building in early 1857, no mention of the school can be found after that year.¹⁰⁰

College foundation in Louisiana then ceased until the end of the Civil War. The Christian Brothers twice attempted to open a college in New Orleans, the first called St. Mary's College (1856-1866) and the second called St. Mary's Commercial College (1883-1900). St. Mary's College offered both an academy and a college education, and was quite successful. Though it had started as an academy, it received a collegiate charter in 1856. Ten years later, the college students and faculty were sent to Mississippi to open Pass Christian College in 1866, though the

⁹⁹ Erbacher, 58; *They Came to Louisiana: Letters of a Catholic Mission, 1854-1882*, edited and translated by Dorothea Olga McCants (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 48-49, 128, 171n.

¹⁰⁰ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 276-83; Erbacher, 58.

collegiate experience there was short-lived (see the Mississippi section of this chapter). The academy continued to operate without collegiate courses.¹⁰¹

In 1883, the Christian Brothers returned to New Orleans from Pass Christian to reopen St. Mary's College. However, the attempt failed within three years due to neighborhood deterioration and general financial difficulty. Later that year, they were invited by the pastor of St. Joseph's parish to take over his parish school, and the brothers operated St. Joseph's (later St. Mary's) Commercial College until 1900 "with glowing success...then a new pastor refused to continue paying them the salary required by their contract, and they left the school and the city."¹⁰²

In 1861, a diocesan priest living in Thibodaux was given control of Thibodaux College, a boys' school established in 1859. The college enrolled 21 students in its first year under Father Menard, but promptly closed in 1862 when New Orleans was captured by Federal forces and the lay teachers all left to join the Confederate Army. After the war, Father Menard opened another academy in 1869, called St. Aloysius Academy. This school was incorporated as Thibodaux College in 1872, and the school continued until its closing in 1965. For most of its life,

¹⁰¹ Angelus Gabriel, *The Christian Brothers in the United States, 1848-1948: A Century of Catholic Education* (New York City, New York: Declan McMullen Company, 1948), 212-14.

¹⁰² James N. Grahmann, "Christian Brothers in Louisiana," in *Cross, Crozier & Crucible*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (New Orleans, Louisiana: Archdiocese of New Orleans, 1993), 281-82; Gabriel, *The Christian Brothers in the United States*, 214-15.

Thibodaux was a secondary school and did not offer a collegiate curriculum. It was never chartered.¹⁰³

In 1890, the Brothers of the Holy Cross founded Holy Cross College, also known as St. Isidore's College, in New Orleans. Enrollment was never high at this college, with seventy students enrolled in both an academy and a collegiate course in its first year of operation. The school closed in 1915 when the cost of operation exceeded the income from tuition. The Holy Cross priests had better luck in Texas, where they founded St. Edward's in Austin at about the same time.¹⁰⁴

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart started two colleges in Louisiana in the years bracketing the turn of the century: St. Francis Xavier's in Alexandria (1894-1900) and St. Aloysius in New Orleans (1902-1912). St. Francis Xavier's was primarily a secondary school that offered a small collegiate course in the first years of its existence. In 1898, it changed its name to St. Joseph's Academy for Boys, then in 1900 changed it back to St. Francis Xavier's College. In 1925, the school merged into Menard Memorial High School, still in operation as Holy Savior Menard Central in Alexandria.¹⁰⁵ St. Aloysius College was also primarily a secondary school; while it may have offered a collegiate course briefly, it never

¹⁰³ Philip D. Uzee, "Father Charles M. Menard: The Apostle of Bayou Lafourche," in *Cross, Crozier & Crucible*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (New Orleans, Louisiana: Archdiocese of New Orleans, 1993), 382-83.

¹⁰⁴ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 311; Nolan, "The 1938 Eucharistic Congress: Altar, Emblem, and Ostensorium," 613.

¹⁰⁵ James G. Dauphine, "Catholic Education in Louisiana: The Pre-World War I Foundations of Catholic Life in a Southern Diocese," in *Cross, Crozier, & Crucible*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (New Orleans, Louisiana: Archdiocese of New Orleans, 1993), 304.

graduated anyone with a college degree. It closed in 1912, merging into a diocesan high school in New Orleans that soon closed.¹⁰⁶

There are two versions of the history of St. Paul's College in Covington. According to Edward Power, Benedictine monks of St. Meinrad's opened a college in Louisiana in 1904 at their recently-settled abbey in Covington. St. Joseph's College was a dual seminary and college, and probably offered a preparatory course as well. Sixty students enrolled in 1906, and enrollment stayed about the same until the monks decided to make St. Joseph's a seminary only in 1910.

However, according to the Christian Brothers, the building had originally been the site of a school preparing boys for Tulane but was sold to the Benedictines in 1911. In 1916, the school received a collegiate charter and granted degrees for the next seven years. In 1923, the Benedictines found maintaining the college to be too burdensome with a shortage of monks, and sold the college to the Christian Brothers. The Brothers discontinued the collegiate course, but continued the high school.¹⁰⁷

In 1904, the Jesuits returned to Louisiana to found two more colleges. One, St. John Berchman's College in Shreveport, lasted only ten years. The other, Loyola University of New Orleans, is still operating. St.

¹⁰⁶ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 317.

¹⁰⁷ Michael Ott, "Benedictine Education in the United States," *Catholic Educational Review* 2 (June 1911): 499-507; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 319; Gabriel, *The Christian Brothers in the United States*, 380-82.

John Berchman's was primarily an academy but did offer a collegiate course in its early years. It is likely that the school became wholly secondary in about 1914. In 1938, the school became St. John Berchman High School and is now Loyola College of New Orleans Preparatory School, still operated by the Jesuits.¹⁰⁸

Loyola College of New Orleans was founded and chartered in 1904. It merged with the College of the Immaculate Conception at its opening, hiring Immaculate Conception's college faculty. The college became Loyola University in 1912, and was chartered by the state of Louisiana to grant graduate degrees in that same year. In the following years, Loyola of New Orleans opened schools of law, dentistry, pharmacy, music, and business. It also has one of the few full-time faculties devoted to an evening college for non-traditional students in its City College. Loyola is now the largest Catholic university in the southern tier of the United States, from Florida to California.¹⁰⁹

The final Catholic men's college to be established in Louisiana was Sacred Heart College in Mansura, established in 1906 by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. The college was renamed St. John's College the year after it was opened. Like many other colleges founded in Louisiana after the Civil War, St. John's was primarily a secondary school. It offered a collegiate course in the first two years of its operation, but closed the

¹⁰⁸ Dauphine, "Catholic Education in North Louisiana," 304.

¹⁰⁹ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 318; Dauphine, "Catholic Education in North Louisiana," 302.

college department for lack of enrollment in 1908. The school closed permanently in 1914.¹¹⁰

Louisiana's first college for women was St. Mary's Dominican College in New Orleans. The Dominican congregation of St. Mary had operated St. Mary's Academy since 1861, which is still open. In 1910, the sisters began offering a collegiate course and opened a separate college, St. Mary's Dominican, for the students. St. Mary's prided itself on offering a solid liberal arts education, and encouraged students to pursue careers after graduation rather than expecting marriage. The college also had a significant number of students who were from wealthy Latin American families, who came to New Orleans to be educated and then return home to their native countries. For many years, St. Mary's Dominican also served as the archdiocesan normal school, supplying the many parochial schools with trained teachers, both lay and religious.¹¹¹

The college flourished throughout the middle of the 20th century, but by the beginning of the 1980s, it became clear to the sisters that the college could no longer operate as it had. The average age of the nuns in the congregation was nearing 65, and it was simply no longer possible to run St. Mary's Dominican as the college it had been. Thus, the St. Mary's

¹¹⁰ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 322; Dauphine, "Catholic Education in North Louisiana," 304.

¹¹¹ Jose Lavastida and Beatrice Rodriguez Owsley, "Hispanic Presence in Louisiana and the Catholic Church," in *Cross, Crozier, & Crucible*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (New Orleans, Louisiana: Archdiocese of New Orleans, 1993), 80; Eleanor Tong Dehey, *Religious Orders of Women in the United States: Accounts of Their Origin, Works, and Most Important Institutions* (Hammond, Indiana: W. B. Conkey Company, 1930), 142-43.

congregation closed the college in 1985, selling the 4.1 acre campus to Loyola University of New Orleans.¹¹²

In 1915, the archbishop of New Orleans invited Mother Katherine Drexel to establish a school for blacks in his city. Drexel and her Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament decided to open a high school, since education at that level was not available to black Catholic students in New Orleans at the time. The high school also offered seventh and eighth grade courses, and Drexel fully intended to offer a collegiate course as soon as she could. To further that end, she opened the school as Xavier College, echoing the academy names of the past but intending a modern use of the term. Drexel also managed a neat end-run around the racist chartering practices of the state of Louisiana. Since it would have been impossible to charter a college with the intention of granting college degrees to African Americans, she managed to get degree authority granted directly to the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and not to Xavier College.¹¹³

Xavier had a large student body from the beginning. By 1917, the Sisters were operating a normal school to train teachers for black schools

¹¹² J. Edgar Bruns, "One Step at a Time: The Growing Pains of the Church in Louisiana," in *Cross, Crozier, & Crucible*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (New Orleans, Louisiana: Archdiocese of New Orleans, 1993), 90; Dorothy Dawes, Archivist, *The Story of St. Mary's Dominican Sisters, New Orleans* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Dominican Sisters Congregation of St. Mary, 1998).

¹¹³ Edward P. St. John, *A Study of Selected Developing Colleges and Universities. Case Study III: Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana*, Office of Education, United States Government no. ERIC ED149707 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 1977), 15-16.

in New Orleans. In 1925, Xavier opened a full four-year teaching college and a liberal arts college, and formally declared itself a black Catholic institution of higher education. Two years later, a pharmacy school was added, and in 1931 several new buildings gave Xavier a true physical plant. In 1933, the college added a graduate school and changed its name to Xavier University.¹¹⁴

Xavier was the only opportunity for African Americans to receive college-level education within a Catholic setting for many years. The Catholic University of America had a formal policy against admitting blacks. According to an unnamed administrator in 1917, “It was tried once with exceeding unhappy results and the policy had to be adopted otherwise.”¹¹⁵ The administrator suggested that applicants attend one of the non-Catholic universities that accepted blacks. It is little surprise that the black Catholic community in the United States embraced Xavier and has kept it well supplied with students for more than 75 years.

The second Louisiana Catholic college for women, the College of the Sacred Heart in Grand Coteau, was initially a convent and academy founded at the request of a wealthy planter’s widow. Founded in 1821, the school is the second oldest institution of learning west of the Mississippi. It is also the oldest continuously operated Sacred Heart educational institution in the world. The Academy of the Sacred Heart

¹¹⁴ St. John, *A Study of Selected Developing Colleges and Universities. Case Study III: Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana.*

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States*, 219.

offered a typical academy curriculum to the girls who studied there: music, drawing, light literature, and other subjects commonly found in girls' academies of the era.¹¹⁶

A collegiate course was instituted in 1921, and the school changed its name from Academy of the Sacred Heart to College of the Sacred Heart. By 1930, it was called the Normal College of the Sacred Heart, implying that the primary purpose of the school was to educate teachers. The college offered a regular four-year curriculum to young women, but closed the college in 1956 and reverted to offering only an academy education, due to lack of students and a financial restructuring. The academy still operates in Grand Coteau.¹¹⁷

College-building in Mississippi was confined to a fifty-year period, which included the Civil War. During this time, Mississippi's Catholics never reached the population density necessary to sustain colleges for more than a few years. The colleges established during that time are shown in Table 3.6.

¹¹⁶ Louise Callan, *The Society of the Sacred Heart in North America* (New York City, New York: Longmans, Green & Company, 1937), 112-53.

¹¹⁷ Griffin, "The Louisiana Years of Cornelia Connelly: A Paradigm of Conversion," 404-05; M. Williams, *The Society of the Sacred Heart: History of a Spirit, 1800-1975* (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1978); Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 351; Dehey, *Religious Orders of Women in the United States*, 126.

Table 3.6

Catholic Colleges Established in Mississippi

Name	Location	Established	Closed	Order
St. Mary's	Natchez	1852	1852	Parish
Natchez	Natchez	1866	1869	Brothers of the Christian Schools
Pass Christian (St. Mary's)	Pass Christian	1866	1875	Brothers of the Christian Schools
St. Stanislaus Commercial	Bay St. Louis	1870	1922	Sacred Heart
St. Aloysius Commercial	Vicksburg	1900	1905	Sacred Heart

In the mid-nineteenth century, the diocese of Natchez welcomed a new bishop, John Joseph Chanche. Chanche was the president of Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Pennsylvania until he was elevated to his new seat. Chanche had a strong and wholehearted commitment to Catholic collegiate education. He felt that a college in the young diocese would be both heartening to the Catholics of Mississippi and a staunch declaration of faith to non-Catholics. Four years after his arrival in Natchez, Bishop Chanche tried to purchase a local academy which was about to fail. The lay trustees of the academy placed so many restrictions on the future college that Chanche declined to complete the purchase. Two years later, the bishop wrote to the Jesuits in St. Louis and asked for priests to open a college in Natchez, but the order was trying to stop

the imminent closure of a college near Lebanon, Kentucky and did not have the resources to come to Mississippi.¹¹⁸

In 1848, Chanche convinced the Eudists, a French order, to send three priests to Natchez as faculty for his college.¹¹⁹ The Eudist priests arrived in 1849, and Chanche immediately found a building for the new St. Mary's College of Natchez. Both boarding students and day students were accepted, though the school was so poor that students had to supply their own desk and chair and boarders had to bring a bed. Unfortunately, the Eudists spoke no English and the students spoke little or no French. In addition, the Eudists were unaccustomed to managing money, leading to severe problems with the school's books. Neither parents nor Mississippi Catholics were happy with the situation at St. Mary's. Chanche thus closed the college at the end of the year and sent the Eudists back to France.

Chanche's successor, James Van de Velde, attempted to open a college two years after the failure of St. Mary's of Natchez. Van de Velde purchased land from Chanche's nieces, then wrote directly to the Jesuit Superior General in Rome. Van de Velde offered to donate his new land to the Jesuits if they would establish a college upon it. Just as the St. Louis Jesuit province had declined Chanche's request, the Superior

¹¹⁸ Pillar, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi, 1837-65*, 27-29.

¹¹⁹ Though the Eudists maintained their affiliation with the order, the college was wholly funded by the diocese and the priests worked under Chanche's direction. Thus, it is reasonable to call St. Mary's of Natchez a diocesan college.

General rejected Van de Velde's offer both because the order lacked sufficient priests for its other duties and because the available priests that were trained to teach did not speak English.¹²⁰

In 1854, Brothers of the Sacred Heart arrived in Bay St. Louis and started a school for boys. The academy prospered, especially since two other teaching orders had also settled in Bay St. Louis and the town became known for its schools. Students came to St. Stanislaus Academy from all corners of Mississippi. Louisiana sugar planters also sent their sons to Bay St. Louis. To retain students who had completed the academy course, the brothers obtained a collegiate charter in 1870 and offered a commercial course. St. Stanislaus Commercial College opened in 1870 and remained successful despite a significant yellow fever epidemic in 1897 and a devastating fire in 1903. It converted to a high school in 1922 and remains open today.¹²¹

The bishops of Natchez had not forgotten their dreams of a diocesan college. After the Civil War ended, Bishop William Henry Elder asked the Brothers of the Christian Schools (Christian Brothers) to come to Natchez and open the school. Natchez College opened in 1866, but was reduced to a diocesan secondary school within three years. The ravages of war and the lack of students were forces too difficult to

¹²⁰ Pillar, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi, 1837-65*, 65, quoting correspondence of Bishop Van de Velde.

¹²¹ Pillar, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi, 1837-65*, 67-69; Namorato, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi, 1911-1984*, 177; Erbacher, 57.

overcome. Though the diocese spent sixteen years supporting the college, Natchez College (later St. Mary's Collegiate Institute) was never chartered as a college.¹²²

At the same time as they opened Natchez College, Christian Brothers opened St. Mary's College in the Gulf town of Pass Christian. Although the school bore the name of "College" and obtained a collegiate charter in 1866, it offered a separate collegiate course in only one year of its existence (1873). While the school reported 60 collegiate students in that year, the course was not contained in the next year's report, and the college went bankrupt in 1875 after "plagues of yellow fever, the poverty of the South, and the resultant small enrollment meant that the community was soon engulfed with debts." The college buildings were auctioned and the Brothers left Pass Christian.¹²³

Flush with the success of St. Stanislaus Commercial College in Bay St. Louis, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart opened St. Aloysius Commercial College in Vicksburg in 1900. Unfortunately, there was not a great demand for the college. The Brothers changed the curriculum and renamed the school St. Aloysius Commercial High School in 1905. St. Aloysius is still in operation as a Vicksburg high school, though it no longer has Commercial as part of its name.¹²⁴

¹²² Namorato, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi, 1911-1984*, 176-77; Erbacher, 56-57.

¹²³ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 292; Grahmann, "Christian Brothers in Louisiana," 281-82; Erbacher, 57; Gabriel, *The Christian Brothers in the United States*, 472.

¹²⁴ Namorato, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi, 1911-1984: A History*, 132; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 316; Richard Aubrey

As shown in Chapter Two, North Carolina did not have a significant Catholic population during the period covered here. With so few members, it is no surprise that North Carolina has had only one Catholic college established within its borders. Table 3.7 shows the pertinent data.

Table 3.7

Catholic Colleges Established in North Carolina

Name	Location	Established	Closed	Order
Belmont Abbey	Belmont	1878	--	Benedictine

Soon after North Carolina became an independent vicariate of the Diocese of Charleston, the American Cassinese Congregation of the Order of St. Benedict sent monks to the state. The Benedictines came to North Carolina in 1878 to open a college, since “no Catholic school of this kind existed between Washington and Mobile ‘except in Georgia’”.¹²⁵ However, the Maryhelp mission was a difficult assignment as there were so few Catholics and such hostility from the mission’s Protestant neighbors. The monks also had to overcome parents’ concern and worry about sending Catholic boys into rural North Carolina, far from most students’ homes.

McLemore, *A History of Mississippi* (Hattiesburg, Mississippi: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1976), 625. volume 1. McLemore gives the date for St. Aloysius as 1879, but this date is cited nowhere else.

¹²⁵ Oetgen, *An American Abbot*, 333. The college in Georgia was Pio Nono College in Macon, apparently a flourishing concern four years after its establishment.

In 1883, the fourteen monks of Maryhelp had fewer than forty boys in the college and “the community continued to experience serious problems that included low enrollment in the school, little income from the missions, poor productivity on the farm, and living conditions that disheartened most of the monks assigned there.”¹²⁶ The college and monastery were strong enough by 1884, however, that Belmont was designated an abbey, or self-governing congregation. The Belmont abbey became the base for missions throughout the eastern part of the South, including missions to Georgia and Florida.

Belmont Abbey College offered a collegiate course for those not intended for the priesthood, and also managed a seminary for those wishing to be ordained. Despite the small number of Catholics in North Carolina, the school was never in danger of closing due to a lack of students. Academies maintained by the Belmont Benedictines in Virginia and Georgia probably supplied a significant portion of each year’s enrollment. Belmont Abbey College remains open, and is now co-educational. For a time in the mid-twentieth century, the monks operated a junior college for women on the Abbey grounds, allowing girls to transfer to the college and complete their bachelor’s degrees if they so desired.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Oetgen, *An American Abbot*.

¹²⁷ Robert M. Douglas, “North Carolina,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York City, New York: Robert Appleton Publishers, 1907); Oetgen, *An American Abbot*; Vincent S. Waters, Bishop of Raleigh, *Catholic Education in North Carolina* (Raleigh, North Carolina: Diocese of Raleigh, 1958), 142-46.

Catholic higher education in South Carolina, as shown in Table 3.8, was exclusively diocesan and antebellum. No teaching orders ever came to the state to open a college. Catholic colleges in South Carolina had short lifespans, and it is likely that Catholic youth either left the state to attend Catholic college or attended a non-Catholic college instead.

Table 3.8

Catholic Colleges Established in South Carolina

Name	Location	Established	Closed	Order
Philosophical & Classical Seminary	Charleston	1822	1842	Diocesan
St. Mary's Collegiate	Charleston	1849	1855	Diocesan
St. Mary's	Columbia	1851	1865	Diocesan

The first bishop of Charleston, John England, was a noted intellectual. He opened the Philosophical and Classical Seminary of Charleston in 1822 as an academy, but the school also offered a collegiate course to students who had finished the preparatory course. The seminary was open to Catholics and non-Catholics alike, and drew its students from the middle class as well as the top of Charleston society. Despite its name, the seminary did not train priests. The school closed after the death of Bishop England.

Charleston's new bishop, Ignatius Reynolds, noticed the gap left by the closure of the Philosophical Seminary. Under his direction, the school

was re-opened as St. Mary's Collegiate Institute. The institute offered a preparatory course as well as a classical and a commercial course. St. Mary's was both a day and a boarding school, and enjoyed some success during the six years it was open. By 1850, it served 140 students in the three courses. In 1853, the school was chartered to grant college degrees, though it closed for unknown reasons in 1855 and its faculty transferred to Columbia. The school was reopened again, solely as an academy, at some point after the war, and an 1878 report mentions that the school "is now re-established on a firmer basis, and the Brothers of the Sacred Heart . . . count three hundred of the youth of Charleston in their schools, a larger patronage than it ever enjoyed at any time from the beginning."¹²⁸

In 1852, the diocese of Charleston established another St. Mary's Collegiate Institute in Columbia. In 1853, the school was chartered as St. Mary's College, having changed its focus from preparatory to collegiate study. St. Mary's boasted of its library and collection of archaeological finds, and served students from across the South. Since the Charleston diocese had some responsibility for Cuba at the time, a number of the college's students were Cuban. The faculty were primarily laymen, who taught preparatory, commercial, and classical courses.

¹²⁸ O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia*, 82-83; Erbacher, 28. Dates for St. Mary's Collegiate Institute are unusually unreliable. O'Connell, writing in 1878, says that the school closed in 1850; Erbacher (and thus Power) place the actual closure between 1855 and 1857. O'Connell was not overly concerned with accuracy, however, and it is reasonable to think that the school dwindled in the early years of the decade, forcing official closure in the years cited by Erbacher.

The school was quite successful in its early years. As nativist political parties swelled in the years before the Civil War, though, anti-Catholic attacks focused on the college and enrollment dropped precipitously as day students chose to drop out rather than travel to and from the school regularly. Dormitories were guarded at night to protect boarding students. By the start of the war, the school struggled with a much-reduced enrollment. Through the war, St. Mary's held on, but the final days of the conflict were also the final days for the college.

On February 17, 1865, General Sherman's army reached Columbia. Although he offered protection to a convent of nuns and their pupils, his soldiers ran roughshod over the St. Mary's College campus. Contemporary writers reported soldiers desecrating the school's chapel by drinking whiskey from the chalice, stealing or breaking sacred items, and abusing the priests. The school buildings were burnt, and the school did not rebuild after the end of the War.¹²⁹

After the abrupt end of St. Mary's of Columbia, South Carolina Catholics made no further attempts at Catholic higher education. Students probably traveled north to Belmont Abbey College, or perhaps to one of the Georgia colleges during their brief existence. The Catholic population of South Carolina remained too small to support a college of its own during the period covered here.

¹²⁹ Richard C. Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1985), 94-99; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 261, 275, 278; Erbacher, 54-55.

Texan dioceses and various religious orders have focused on collegiate education in Texas since the middle of the 19th century, but the colleges they established often found it hard to survive. More than in any other state, Texan Catholic colleges were transferred between various teaching orders in an attempt to keep the schools open. In a similar vein, the various dioceses have tried many solutions to bolster a small and anemic seminary population which was often educated alongside secular collegians.

Despite the difficulties, Catholic communities in Texas embraced higher education. More Catholic colleges were founded in Texas than in any other state in the South except Louisiana. Whether it is the fact that Catholic colleges were the first institutions of higher education in the state or that the Catholic culture of the gulf led parishioners to support colleges of their faith, Texas and Louisiana shared an emphasis on collegiate education stronger than that of the other Southern states combined. This fervor was not unique to Catholics. By 1859, “there were forty academies, thirty-seven colleges, twenty-seven institutes, seven universities, two seminaries, and one medical college” in the state, most of denominational origin and all private.¹³⁰

Table 3.9 shows the colleges established in Texas by various teaching orders and dioceses. Several of the colleges changed hands

¹³⁰ T. R. Fehrenbach, *Lone Star: A History of Texas and the Texans* (Da Capo Press, 2000), 304.

multiple times. As one teaching order recognized failure at a given school or were reassigned to different towns or duties by their superiors, the school would be sold to another order.

Table 3.9

Catholic Colleges Established in Texas

Name	Location	Established	Closed	Order
St. Mary's	San Antonio	1852	merged 1894	Marist
St. Mary's	Galveston	1855	1922	Oblates of Mary (8 different orders ending w. Jesuits)
St. Joseph's	Brownsville	1869	1874	Christian Brothers; Oblates of Mary; Holy Cross
Guadalupe	Seguin	1878	1890	Jesuit
St. Joseph's	Victoria	1880	1902	Diocesan
St. Edward's	Austin	1885	--	Holy Cross
St. Louis	San Antonio	1891	merged 1923	Marist
St. Basil's	Waco	1899	1915	St. Basil
St. Thomas	Houston	1902	1921	St. Basil
University of Dallas	Dallas	1906 1955	1928 --	Vincentian; Diocesan
Incarnate Word	San Antonio	1909	--	Incarnate Word
Our Lady of Victory	Fort Worth	1910	merged 1958	Sisters of St. Mary of Namur
Our Lady of the Lake	San Antonio	1911	--	Sisters of Divine Providence
Corpus Christi	Corpus Christi	1926	1939	Benedictine

The first Catholic college in Texas began as St. Mary's Institute, a primary and secondary school founded by the Society of Mary in 1852 and intended to serve only Mexican students. However, French settlers and local non-Catholics began to send their sons to the school as well, since Texas had no public education at the time and the state would pay tuition at private colleges and academies.

As students worked through the curriculum and more teachers were assigned, the institute added a collegiate course. Enrollment remained steady, if small, and St. Mary's became a point of pride for the community. The Institute was the most prominent educational institution in San Antonio, both as an intellectual and a social center:

When dignitaries visited San Antonio, the natural place for [Bishop] Pellicer to take them was St. Mary's. When the bishop of Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, visited the city in March 1878, a courtly public reception with an address in Spanish and orchestral and vocal music was arranged at the school. Such events at St. Mary's were in stark contrast to much of what went on in a city whose economy was based on cattle, with streets lined with saloons and often clogged with herds starting out on the long drive northward to railheads in Kansas or pastures in Wyoming.¹³¹

¹³¹ James Talmadge Moore, *Through Fire and Flood: The Catholic Church in Frontier Texas, 1836-1900* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1992), 173.

By 1894, St. Mary's had outgrown all its buildings. The Marists transferred their boarding students to the campus of St. Louis College, a college built by the Marists in 1891 on the other side of San Antonio. Removing the boarders allowed St. Mary's faculty to expand the existing high school and small collegiate division at the initial site. Later that year, St. Mary's received a collegiate charter and began granting degrees. However, the collegiate division outgrew the St. Marys physical plant once again. In 1923, the college was moved to the St. Louis College campus and the two colleges merged, operating under the single name St. Mary's University. St. Mary's initially offered the baccalaureate in liberal arts, natural sciences, and business. A law school was opened in 1927 and a graduate school in 1936.¹³²

Although St. Mary's of San Antonio grew from a preparatory school established in 1852, the first true Catholic college in Texas was St. Mary's of Galveston, opened by the diocese of Galveston in 1855. St. Mary's of Galveston served as the diocesan seminary, but also offered a college for non-seminarians to provide funds for the seminary and build support for the institution in Galveston's Catholic community. The faculty was composed of Brothers of the Oblates of Mary, and the school

¹³² "St. Mary's University -- Our History," in St. Mary's University, <<http://www.stmarytx.edu/info/about/history.html>>; Robert D. Wood, "St. Mary's University, San Antonio," in *Handbook of Texas*, ed. Texas State Historical Association (Austin, Texas: Texas State Historical Association, 1997); Moore, *Through Fire and Flood: The Catholic Church in Frontier Texas, 1836-1900*; Erbacher, 55-56.

was housed in a new three-story building in downtown Galveston. At the end of the first year, there were 83 lay students and five seminarians.

The number of seminarians never grew much past a handful, though the lay side of the school continued to grow and flourish. In 1857, the Oblates handed the university back to the diocese. Over the next decade, St. Mary's of Galveston was operated by the diocese, Franciscans, Christian Brothers, Holy Cross priests, lay faculty, and the Sisters of Divine Providence. None of them could sustain the early growth of the college. The Franciscans, to take one example, were completely unprepared to handle the task of managing a college:

The Franciscans sent here two priests of the Order, three young scholastics, and nine aspirants of various nationalities who had scarcely begun their studies. I made all possible sacrifices to encourage them in their enterprise, and having need of study themselves they ... [were not able] ... to begin this good work. It was impossible for me to keep them.¹³³

The Christian Brothers suffered a different fate at St. Mary's when they arrived in January, 1861:

The Brothers experienced considerable difficulty at first in establishing order and in maintaining academic discipline in

¹³³ Correspondence of Jean-Marie Odin, Bishop of Galveston, to the Society for Propagation of the Faith, Lyons France, July 20 1859: quoted in Moore, *Through Fire and Flood: The Catholic Church in Frontier Texas, 1836-1900*, 107.

the school. The boys and young men enrolled were mettlesome, spirited and husky. Wholly unaccustomed to restraint, they balked and chafed at any semblance of discipline. The Brothers, however, were skilled and experienced masters in securing the 'whip hand' over turbulent youth so that in short order, the student body was curbed and tractable.¹³⁴

Without a consistent faculty to enforce basic standards of discipline and study among the students, the college suffered. By the time Union forces destroyed the college's building by shelling in 1863, the college was on its last legs. A yellow fever epidemic in 1867 caused even more problems when the entire faculty left to attend a Christian Brother retreat at Pass Christian, but were not allowed to return to Galveston due to quarantine. The Christian Brothers thereby wrote to the bishop and relinquished control of the college as they could not resume their duties.

The seminary side of the university was completely abandoned in 1870, though the lay college continued for several more decades. In 1884, the Jesuits came to Galveston and were given direction of St. Mary's College. The school stabilized under their governance, but when the order left Galveston in 1922, the college closed. The original charter

¹³⁴ Gabriel, *The Christian Brothers in the United States*, 217.

passed to a seminary in La Porte, which did not offer collegiate degrees.¹³⁵

In 1869, the Christian Brothers opened St. Joseph's College in Brownsville. Within two years, they passed the college to the Brothers of the Oblates of Mary, who maintained it for two more years. In 1873, Bishop Dubuis of Galveston offered the college to the Brothers of the Holy Cross, newly arrived from Notre Dame, Indiana. Holy Cross brothers ran St. Joseph's for a year, then left for Austin and St. Edward's College. In 1874, the Oblates of Mary returned to St. Joseph's and turned it into a preparatory school while still retaining the collegiate name.¹³⁶

In 1878, Jesuits established Guadalupe College in Seguin. Bishop Pellicer of San Antonio had invited the order to his diocese and gave them the building of a closed girls' school to establish a seminary and college. Though both the bishop and the Jesuits had great hopes for Guadalupe, enrollment in both the college and the seminary was never high. Even after increasing the faculty and buying a piece of land to raise the college's own vegetables in hopes of cutting costs, the college closed in 1890. Political conditions in Mexico had changed sufficiently for the

¹³⁵ Moore, *Through Fire and Flood: The Catholic Church in Frontier Texas, 1836-1900*; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 282; Anibal Gonzalez, "St. Mary's University, Galveston," in *Handbook of Texas*, ed. Texas State Historical Association (Austin, Texas: Texas State Historical Association, 1997); Erbacher, 56; Gabriel, *The Christian Brothers in the United States*.

¹³⁶ Moore, *Through Fire and Flood: The Catholic Church in Frontier Texas, 1836-1900*, 163, 185; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 294.

Jesuits of Seguin to return to their established college and seminary in Saltillo, Mexico.¹³⁷

After the Jesuits left Seguin in 1880, the diocese of San Antonio opened another college and seminary in Victoria. St. Joseph's was only a college for a few years, and soon closed the collegiate department to focus on seminary education. St. Joseph's educated over forty priests for the Diocese of San Antonio until it closed in 1902 after its charismatic president died unexpectedly.¹³⁸

In 1878, St. Edward's College began operation in Austin. Holy Cross priests had come to Galveston in 1870 to open a school, but were offered 400 acres outside Austin if they would establish a school there. In 1885, the state of Texas chartered the school as St. Edward's College. The faculty was primarily Holy Cross fathers, many of whom came from the faculty or were educated at Notre Dame in Indiana. St. Edward's focused on a commercial course, but also offered a classical course to some students. The college became co-educational in 1966, and the college's governance was transferred to an independent board in 1969. While Holy Cross brothers still teach there, the faculty and administration are now primarily laypersons.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Moore, *Through Fire and Flood*, 173-74; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 301.

¹³⁸ Moore, *Through Fire and Flood*, 177.

¹³⁹ William H. Dunn, *St. Edward's University: A Centennial History* (Austin, Texas: St. Edward's University Press, 1986); William H. Dunn and Rose V. Batson, "St. Edward's University," in *Handbook of Texas*, ed. Texas State Historical Association (Austin, Texas: Texas State Historical Association, 1997); Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 307.

In 1899, the Basilian Fathers came to Waco and opened an academy called St. Basil's College. The college was primarily a preparatory school. Though a small collegiate course was offered briefly, no college degrees were ever granted by the school and it received no charter. St. Basil's did play intercollegiate baseball with other Texas colleges, though the concept of intercollegiate athletics was far looser at the time.¹⁴⁰ One faculty member at St. Basil's, transferred from a school of theology in Ontario, was seminarian Charles Coughlin. Coughlin taught philosophy and played (illegally) on the baseball team. Coughlin later gained notoriety as the "Radio Priest", whose broadcasts from Wisconsin during the 1930s and 1940s supported the anti-Communist movement spearheaded by Sen. Joseph McCarthy.¹⁴¹

In 1900, the Basilians founded St. Thomas College in Houston. St. Thomas was primarily a preparatory school but also offered a commercial course to college students. The commercial course was discontinued in 1940 due to lack of interest, and the Basilians focused on the high school, changing the school's name to St. Thomas High School. The school still operates in Houston.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 316; R.E. Lamb, "Basilian Fathers," in *Handbook of Texas*, ed. Texas State Historical Association (Austin, Texas: Texas State Historical Association, 1997).

¹⁴¹ Sheldon Marcus, *Father Coughlin: The Tumultuous Life of the Priest of the Little Flower* (New York City, New York: Little, Brown & Company, 1973), 18-19. See also Donald Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio* (New York City, New York: Free Press, 1996).

¹⁴² Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 318; R. E. Lamb, "St. Thomas High School," in *Handbook of Texas*, ed. Texas State Historical Association (Austin, Texas: Texas State Historical Association, 1997).

The final Texas Catholic college established for men in this period was Corpus Christi College, founded in 1926 by Benedictine monks from New Subiaco, Arkansas. The college offered a joint preparatory and collegiate course, as well as a commercial course. The college and commercial courses were closed in 1939 in order for the Benedictines to focus on the high school, which remained open until 1972 when the school buildings were destroyed by a hurricane.¹⁴³

The first Catholic college for women in Texas – and in the South – was Incarnate Word College in San Antonio. As with other schools opened for women in this period, Incarnate Word was initially an academy providing a secondary-level education to girls of the city. In 1881, when the academy was opened, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word received a charter from the state of Texas which permitted them to open schools on all levels, including collegiate. However, it was not until 1909 that college courses were offered. In that year the school changed its name to the College and Academy of the Incarnate Word.

By 1930, the college included schools of arts & sciences, home economics, art, and music. The music school also offered a preparatory program, and the department of education ran a model grade school on the campus. A graduate program at the master's level was added to the

¹⁴³ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 326; Wood, “St. Mary's University, San Antonio.”

college's offerings in 1950; part of this program was a nursing school which was co-educational from its founding. The rest of the college began to admit men in 1971, and the college became a university in 1996.¹⁴⁴

The second women's Catholic college in Texas was Our Lady of Victory College in Fort Worth. It was initially a primary and secondary school, opened by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur in 1885 and called St. Ignatius Academy. After twenty-five years of operation, the school was so successful that the sisters purchased a 26-acre site for a new school. This new school was opened as Our Lady of Victory College and Academy in 1910; the college was chartered by the state of Texas in 1911.

The first collegiate students at Our Lady of Victory were novices in the St. Mary of Namur order. The campus was the motherhouse for the teaching order's western province, so all who wanted to join the order had to move to Fort Worth for their novitiate and teacher training. Laywomen were not admitted to Our Lady of Victory until 1930, when a regular junior-college curriculum was established. Thus, it is arguably the case that Our Lady of Victory was essentially a seminary until 1930 and did not become a "college for Catholic women" until that time.¹⁴⁵

Over the next 25 years, Our Lady of Victory College added a nursing school, many new buildings, and a strong science curriculum. In

¹⁴⁴ Moore, *Through Fire and Flood: The Catholic Church in Frontier Texas*, 171; *University of the Incarnate Word, Undergraduate Bulletin* 19-20 (1999); Dehey, *Religious Orders of Women in the United States*, 598.

¹⁴⁵ Dehey, *Religious Orders of Women in the United States*, 586-89.

1954, the superior of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur requested permission from the bishop to build a new, larger, campus in Dallas, and permission was granted. However, within months of the decision, it was reversed as the diocese decided to reopen the University of Dallas as a co-educational school, using St. Mary of Namur sisters on the faculty. Our Lady of Victory College was open for one last academic year in 1957, and then was merged into the University of Dallas.¹⁴⁶

The history of the University of Dallas is sporadic. The name was originally used in 1910 by the Vincentian Fathers, when they renamed a college (most likely an academy) they had begun five years earlier, Holy Trinity College. However, the Vincentians closed the university in 1928 for financial reasons and the charter was dormant until 1954, when the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur requested it and the bishop of Dallas instead re-opened the university with the extant charter in 1956.¹⁴⁷

Our Lady of the Lake College was the third Catholic institution for women founded in Texas. The school's roots were in a San Antonio academy established in 1895 by the Sisters of Divine Providence. In 1911, the sisters began to offer a two-year junior college curriculum. By 1919, the curriculum had expanded to a regular four-year collegiate

¹⁴⁶ Thomas W. Jodziewicz, "Our Lady of Victory College," in *Handbook of Texas*, ed. Texas State Historical Association (Austin, Texas: Texas State Historical Association, 1997); Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 352.

¹⁴⁷ Lois Bannon, "University of Dallas," in *Handbook of Texas*, ed. Texas State Historical Association (Austin, Texas: Texas State Historical Association, 1997).

course, and the college was chartered by the state of Texas in that year.¹⁴⁸

Our Lady of the Lake grew over the subsequent decades, adding a graduate school in 1942 and colleges of business, education, and social service in later years. Graduate study at Our Lady of the Lake was coeducational from the start. The undergraduate programs at the college did not admit men until 1969. The college became a university in 1975 and now offers 40 majors, with five types of bachelor's degrees, five types of master's degrees, and two doctoral degrees available to students.¹⁴⁹

As these descriptions show, Catholic higher education in the South during this period ranged from elemental to advanced. Schools offered courses which would attract the largest number of students, shedding or adopting new curricula as the situation demanded. In many cases, the curriculum shifted yearly. Whether an institution survived or perished depended on an intricate calculation of money, students, faculty, the weather, and the local culture. Many institutions, started with the highest of hopes to bring Catholic culture to the missionary frontier, closed amid the wreckage of those dreams.

¹⁴⁸ Dehey, *Religious Orders of Women in the United States*, 599-601.

¹⁴⁹ Mary Generosa Callahan, *Mother Angelique Ayres: Dreamer and Builder of Our Lady of the Lake University* (Austin, Texas: Jenkins Press, 1981); Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 352.

CHAPTER 4

THE STRUCTURE OF THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC COLLEGE

To students or faculty of a 19th century religious college, the modern university would seem a strange and wondrous place. Such visitors would be overwhelmed by the size of even the smallest modern college, by the many choices given to students, and by the luxurious physical plants. Some elements of higher education remain the same, however. Colleges must collect sufficient funds to pay the bills, hire faculty, and contend with external forces that wish to dictate how business is done on the campus. The Catholic colleges described in Chapter Three were no different. Like other denominational colleges founded in the 19th century, those which paid attention to structural and administrative matters had a better chance of success than those which did not.

The 19th century was a unique period in American religious history, as it was in American higher education. As Protestant denominations multiplied and grew, they competed for new members and for prestige in the public eye. One of the most popular tools in this

competition was the sectarian college, though higher education was not always the point of this exercise.

A new college was an external indicator of the quality and fervor of the founding faith community, and by extension of the denomination to which that community belonged. This religious fervor was tied directly to the principles which motivated much of antebellum America. Manifest destiny, irrepressible optimism in the face of uncertainty or difficulty, relative ease in overcoming aboriginal cultures to expand the country's boundaries, and an adolescent spirit of invincibility infused the American mind and soul. Higher education was a natural beneficiary of this "can-do" attitude:

College-founding in the nineteenth century was undertaken in the same spirit as canal-building, cotton-ginning, farming, and gold-mining. In none of these activities did completely rational procedures prevail. All were touched by the American faith in tomorrow, in the unquestionable capacity of Americans to achieve a better world. In the founding of colleges, reason could not combat the romantic belief in endless progress.¹⁵⁰

American Catholics were no different from their Protestant neighbors. Catholic communities were not particularly rich, yet college-

¹⁵⁰ Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 48-49.

building was as much a part of antebellum Catholic life as it was for other denominations. A Catholic population of approximately 1.3 million (1860 census) opened 27 colleges between 1787 and 1850 and another 52 between 1850 and 1866.

Catholics thus rank favorably with Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Episcopalians, the major antebellum college-building denominations. Table 4.1 shows the ratio of colleges to congregations for each denomination. Although Frederick Rudolph argues that “Roman Catholics . . . would make their great contributions in another era,” it is clear that Catholics were as involved in antebellum denominationalist college-building as any other Christian sect.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Rudolph, *The American College and University*, 55; Donald G. Tewksbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War* (New York City, New York: Arno Press, 1969). Tewksbury uses “permanent institutions” in his counts, defined as institutions which remained open at the time of his work in 1932. I have included institutions which closed before 1865, which accounts for the variance between his fourteen and my 79.

Table 4.1

Ratio of Denominational Colleges to Congregations¹⁵²

Denomination	“Permanent” Colleges	Congregations	Ratio
Congregationalist	21	2,230	1:106
Presbyterian	49	6,379	1:130
Catholic	14	2,442	1:174
Episcopalian	11	2,129	1:193
Baptist	25	12,139	1:486
Methodist	34	19,816	1:583

Just as in the Protestant denominations, many of the Catholic colleges opened in this period were destined to fail. In many situations, the college’s creation was more important than its continued operation; in others, institutions founded with the best of intentions struggled under the weight of isolation, poverty, natural disaster, and lack of support. Despite the slim chance of survival, a new college brought occasion to rejoice:

. . . though there may have been no great or overwhelming desire on the part of the small and generally economically poor or impoverished Catholic population to support or attend the colleges that came into existence, there were

¹⁵² Tewksbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War*, 69. The congregation data is from the 1860 census, while the college numbers are Tewksbury’s “permanent institutions.” The ratios are my own. Were failed denominational institutions to be included, the ratios would differ. Using failed institutions, the Catholic ratio becomes 1:31, a significant change. I do not know if similar data exists about failed Protestant foundations.

certainly no dicta in Catholic teaching leading them to distrust, abuse, or downgrade a cultivated mind.¹⁵³

Catholics founded colleges for the same reasons that Protestants founded colleges. A college symbolized hope for the future, a future which was populated by upstanding young men who led Christian lives (that Christian life tailored, of course, to the particular tenets of his denomination). Sectarian colleges were religious havens for boys who would otherwise be polluted by modern and worldly society. Colleges were often established in rural areas to add physical isolation to the emotional and intellectual isolation from the world.¹⁵⁴

Catholic colleges took this rationale to a deeper level. 19th century American Catholics, especially those outside the teeming urban centers of the northeast and upper midwest, were isolated. Their dioceses suffered from a lack of priests, which often led to sporadic and infrequent contact with the church and its teachings. To send one's son to a Catholic college meant that he would be surrounded by fellow believers and instructed in the ways of his faith. Intellectual development was less important than the creation of a good and faithful believer who would

¹⁵³ Edward J. Power, "Highlights in the Progress of Catholic Higher Education," in *Report of proceedings and addresses at the 60th annual convention*, ed. Mary Irwin, National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin, vol. 60 (St. Louis, Missouri: National Catholic Education Association, 1963), 128.

¹⁵⁴ Thomas G. Dyer, *The University of Georgia: A Bicentennial History, 1785-1985* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 11-12; Christopher J. Lucas, *American Higher Education* (New York City, New York: St. Martins Press, 1994), 119-21.

establish a Catholic home, raise Catholic children, and serve as a good example of his religion in a Protestant country.¹⁵⁵

There were practical reasons for Catholic colleges as well. As described in Chapter Two, antebellum America was rife with anti-Catholic and nativist sentiment. Catholics were unlikely to be accepted in a Protestant college, and any Catholic studying in such a school would be taught that his own religion was inferior or dangerous. There is safety in numbers, and Catholics “were almost compelled to open schools of their own in which their denominational doctrines and devotions would receive fair treatment because of the antagonism, hostility, and scandalmongering directed at them and their Church.” At their roots, 19th century Catholic colleges were separatist institutions which aimed to preserve minority religious belief in a society which, while increasingly diverse, liked its diversity to stay within a narrow band of language, ethnic identity, and theology.¹⁵⁶

In keeping with their religious roots and separatist intent, American Catholic colleges employed administration and governance methods which were both traditional and unusual for an American institution. Although Catholic colleges adopted many of the traditional elements of college governance, they integrated these models with the rules and culture of the Roman Catholic church. The result was a

¹⁵⁵ See Chapter Five for more about the purpose of Catholic colleges.

¹⁵⁶ Power, “Highlights in the Progress of Catholic Higher Education,” 131.

distinctly religious approach to education, and one which increasingly diverged from non-sectarian American collegiate education as the modern era drew closer.

To understand Catholic college governance, one must first understand the church's organizational structure. This structure is wholly hierarchical. Power devolves from the Pope to the bishops, and from the bishops to local priests. In the case of religious orders, power devolves from the Pope to the order's head, and from the head to the leaders of individual houses, abbeys, monasteries, convents, or other units. These unit leaders may also take direction from their local bishops, depending on the rule of their order.¹⁵⁷

Orders play an important role in Catholic higher education. Each religious order has a unique purpose, and many orders take education as their mission. Most of the successful Catholic colleges and universities extant today are those run by individual orders and not those managed by dioceses. A diocese has too many other responsibilities to run a college effectively, while a teaching order's primary purpose is education.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ This is a vast oversimplification, but is sufficient for the purpose. There are a number of other layers in the organizational chart, as well as several layers of promotion within each layer. All religious orders are governed by a Rule, usually written by the order's founder, which sets out the daily routine, expected behavior, and preferred work for each member. The Rule also defines the hierarchy of responsibility and obedience for that order.

¹⁵⁸ The prime exception is the Catholic University of America, which is diocesan in the sense that all U.S. bishops serve on its board. It is not, however, the responsibility of any one diocese.

During the period covered here, bishops and orders worked together. Most of the South was considered missionary territory until the late 19th and even early 20th century. Since the average Southern bishop had few priests to serve core functions in the diocese, he often solicited an order to establish a school or college in his see. However, the bishop could not always keep the teachers if their order called them home or reassigned them to other areas. He could send them back if necessary, though need was so great that this was rarely the case.¹⁵⁹

Teaching orders founded or took over the majority of Southern Catholic colleges for men. Table 4.2 shows the orders which provided higher education in the region, and the number of colleges which each order ran. In comparison, Southern dioceses and parishes opened fourteen colleges in the same time period. Even though no individual order had as many colleges as the total number of diocesan or parish colleges, a group of schools under the umbrella of a single order had advantages in governance, finance, and faculty that the diocesan schools could not match.

¹⁵⁹ Pillar, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi, 1837-65*; Kenny, *Catholic Culture in Alabama*. The Eudists, a French teaching order which specialized in seminary education, were sent away twice: once from Natchez and once from Spring Hill. Most other orders departed a failing school before they were asked to leave.

Table 4.2

Teaching Orders Operating Southern Men's Colleges¹⁶⁰

Order	States	Total
Society of Jesus (Jesuits)	Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas	10
Benedictine Order	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, Texas	7
Brothers of the Christian Schools (Christian Brothers)	Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas	5
Society of Mary (Marists)	Georgia, Louisiana, Texas	5
Brothers of the Sacred Heart	Louisiana, Mississippi	5
Community of St. Basil	Texas	2
Congregation of the Holy Cross	Louisiana, Texas	2
Congregation of Priests of the Mission (Vincentians)	Texas	1
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate	Texas	1
Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament ¹⁶¹	Louisiana	1

All Southern Catholic colleges for women were opened by orders whose focus was education for girls and women. Table 4.3 shows the teaching orders which offered collegiate education to Southern women. Teaching orders of women were more likely to open a single women's college than orders of men were likely to open a single men's college. One reason for this difference may be that women's colleges were primarily a 20th century phenomenon, when Catholic education was deep in self-

¹⁶⁰ The numbers in this table do not equal the number of colleges presented in Chapter Three. Several of these schools were shifted from order to order, or from diocese or parish to order, in attempts to keep the schools open.

¹⁶¹ The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament operated Xavier College, a coeducational college in Louisiana for black students.

assessment and turmoil. Other reasons were the relative poverty of women's orders and the lesser likelihood that families of modest means would choose to send their girls to college in an era before women's independence was valued as highly as it is today.

Table 4.3

Teaching Orders Operating Southern Women's Colleges

Order	State	Total
Dominican Sisters	Louisiana	1
Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word	Texas	1
Sisters of the Congregation of Divine Providence	Texas	1
Sisters of St. Mary of Namur	Texas	1
Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	Louisiana	1

Whether a college was founded by a diocese or a religious order had implications for the institution's financial basis, the faculty's origin, and the officials to whom the college was responsible. However, once the school was established, diocesan colleges and those run by teaching orders fell into similar administrative patterns.

In the earliest American Catholic colleges, the bishop and his priests (or the order's head and his religious) composed the faculty. In Charleston, Bishop John England was both president and primary teacher at the Philosophical and Classical Seminary. Under such an arrangement, the president's authority was both ecclesiastical and

bureaucratic. Unfortunately, his attentions were also divided between academic and order or diocesan matters, and this mode of governance did not remain popular.¹⁶²

Toward the mid-19th century, bishops and leaders of teaching orders began to appoint presidents for their colleges rather than assume the reins themselves. The bishop or leader often retained control of the school's board of trustees, as defined in the institutional charter, but left daily administration to his subordinates. Depending on size, a typical diocesan Catholic college in the 19th century might have had as many as six administrators: president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, director of studies, and director of discipline. In most cases, these offices were combined.¹⁶³

In a college managed by a religious order, the administrative positions were often defined in the order's Rule. For example, Jesuit colleges were directed by a rector, who was assisted by a prefect of studies. The prefect of discipline oversaw the boarding students, the minister was both spiritual leader and household administrator, and the procurator managed the money. At Spring Hill College in 1860, the administration included a president, a vice-president, a secretary who was also professor of ethics, a chaplain who was also treasurer and

¹⁶² Francis P. Cassidy, "Catholic College Foundations and Development in the United States (1677-1850)," Ph. D. Diss., Catholic University of America, 1924; Edward V. Stanford, *A Guide to Catholic College Administration* (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1965), 44.

¹⁶³ Erbacher, "Catholic Higher Education for Men in the United States," 73-74; Cassidy, "Catholic College Foundations and Development in the United States."

professor of mental philosophy, and an attending physician. By 1864, the faculty and administration had shrunk as many had left to serve in the Confederate Army. The college was led by a president who was also treasurer and professor of mental philosophy; a vice-president who was also the secretary; a chaplain who was also professor of divinity and ethics; and the same attending physician.¹⁶⁴

Catholic college presidents in this period, no matter how they were selected, held dual responsibilities. They were the spiritual leaders of the college community as well as the academic and bureaucratic leaders. Such men were expected to be unusually talented and catholic in their abilities, though few lived up to the expectation. Edward Power describes the ideal candidate as a religious superman:

It was mandatory that he be a priest. In addition to some reputation in the Church and in the community, he was supposed to be a powerful preacher and a man of determination with the force to exact minute observance to his orders. Besides being a capable administrator and a successful fund-raiser, he was to be a builder. These were the primary qualities . . . besides having the primary

¹⁶⁴ Erbacher, "Catholic Higher Education for Men in the United States," 73-74; Cassidy, "Catholic College Foundations and Development in the United States"; Confederate Imprints Collection, 1860, File: 4016-1, Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Spring Hill College (St. Joseph's) Near Mobile, Alabama, for the Academic Year 1860-'61, Mobile, Alabama, Spring Hill College; Confederate Imprints Collection, 1864, File: 4016-3, Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Spring Hill College (St. Joseph's) Near Mobile, Alabama, for the Academic Year 1864-65, Mobile, Alabama, Spring Hill College; Kenny, *Catholic Culture in Alabama*.

qualities, it was hoped that the man selected as president would give some evidence of scholarship and also, since most presidents taught, be an effective teacher.¹⁶⁵

Power also quotes Simon Bruté, an early president of Mt. St. Mary's in Maryland. Bruté offered a list of qualifications for a college president which included the following:

To be a *good president* the qualifications are:

1. An exterior decent – manner sufficiently agreeable and dignified, good health.
2. Principles of piety – justice – pure life – humility – not ambitious.
3. To be for the College, a good scholar, particularly for literature and the languages.
4. A good divine for the Seminary, and the general order of the Church.
5. To speak well – for public occasions and in general with visitors and parents.
6. To know the temper of boys and their management.
7. To be self-possessed – calm – not irritable, not disposed to speak and act from feelings – admitting proper observations.
8. To have diligence – foresee – order in time – watch – renew.

¹⁶⁵ Power, *Catholic Higher Education in America: A History*, 146.

9. To be firm, support the authority of his co-operators – the duties of the procurator, etc., each of whom “must do his own” as Hippocrates has it.

10. To correct in time the faults and abuses, and do it with purpose and system, not with caprice.

11. To be diligent – assiduous – at his own all-sufficient duties – shun all extra calls.

12. To have an equable, sane, well-supported conduct and character.

No president can excel at once in all the parts required; if he has good support and is not proud and sensitive, he may remedy his defects and matters still go on well.¹⁶⁶

Because Catholic colleges were religious institutions which emphasized Catholic faith and practice, the president assumed a level of authority and power equivalent to that of a bishop over his diocese. Even as college administration became more complex in the 20th century, Catholic college priest-presidents often continued to treat their faculty and staff with the same paternal attitude that a parish priest might have toward his flock. While this was acceptable and even sought after by religious and devout lay faculty, non-Catholic lay faculty often found such an environment stifling and suppressive.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Simon Bruté, quoted in Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 47.

¹⁶⁷ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 148; Andrew M.

As institutions became more complex and external bodies such as boards of accreditation imposed demands on individual schools, a president's priestly vocation fell in importance behind his managerial and fundraising abilities. However, the modern concept of college governance came late to Catholic colleges. The first wave of self-study in the early 20th century was intended to preserve what was Catholic, and to reject that which was secular. It was not until the 1960s that Catholic colleges began to examine themselves critically, accepting the secular innovations which had replaced traditional Catholic college behavior.

Because Catholic colleges wished to receive federal funds, to have their graduates accepted into non-sectarian graduate programs, and to attract the best faculty and student body, they began to reject the traditional forms of governance which had served Catholic higher education for more than a century. Catholic colleges were traditionally governed by a board of trustees which was composed primarily – if not exclusively – of diocesan administrators or members of the sponsoring religious order. In the 1960s, board composition began to change. Lay members joined, and in some cases the board became predominantly lay.

Greeley, *From Backwater to Mainstream: A Profile of Catholic Higher Education*, Carnegie Commission on Higher Education Profiles, 1 (New York, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), 130-31; Manning M. Pattillo, "The Danforth Report and Catholic Higher Education," in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the 63rd annual convention*, ed. Dorothy Kestel, National Catholic Educational Association, vol. 63 (Chicago, Illinois: National Catholic Education Association, 1966), 158-63; Paul C. Reinert, "Toward Renewal: The Development of Catholic Higher Education," in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the 64th annual convention*, ed. Russell Shaw and Angela M. Schreiber, National Catholic Educational Association, vol. 64 (Atlantic City, New Jersey: National Catholic Education Association, 1967), 74-78.

Some lay board members were not even Catholic. At the same time, universities began to hire or promote lay and non-Catholic administrators and faculty. While the head of many Catholic schools is still a priest or nun, others are led by laymen and laywomen.¹⁶⁸

These shifting allegiances make it difficult to study Catholic college governance in detail. Because collegiate governance often happened in consort with the governance of an order or diocese, records may not have been kept as distinct as those of a non-sectarian or purely secular institution. Issues of finance in American Catholic higher education are even more difficult to study in detail than those of governance. Because so little research has been done on pre-modern American Catholic colleges and universities in general, let alone specifically into their finances, resources are limited. The problem is made more complex by the various legal and technical issues which revolve around the funding of religious education, and by the traditional practices of religious institutions and their financial documents.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ M. Clara Jordan, "A Study of Presidents of Catholic Universities and Four-Year Colleges," *NCEA Bulletin* 64, no. 4 (May 1968): 20-24; Andrew M. Greeley, *The Changing Catholic College*, National Opinion Research Center Monographs in Social Research, 16 (Chicago, Illinois: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967); Greeley, *From Backwater to Mainstream*; Alice Gallin, *Independence and a New Partnership in Catholic Higher Education* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), xi-xv, 1-12. The president of the Catholic University of America was traditionally a bishop. When the university modernized in the late 1960s, two lay presidents led the difficult transition. In 1982, after the restructure was complete, a priest was named as the new president.

¹⁶⁹ In this section, I present information drawn from historical and modern sources, as well as information relating to primary and secondary education in addition to collegiate sources. Barring the discovery of a great number of detailed account books from a number of pre-modern Catholic colleges, general conclusions are the best that can be drawn on the topic of finance.

In fact, modern researchers have been astonished at the lack of organization and documentation in Catholic college finances. In the mid-1960s, just as Catholic colleges were beginning to modernize and to join the more secular academic world in seeking accreditation, a study funded by the National Opinion Research Center sought to define the “changing Catholic college.” In the section on finances, the authors provided a scathing description:

. . .we must observe that nowhere was the amateurism of Catholic higher education more evident than in their fiscal affairs. We could not escape the impression that in all but a few exceptions, the approach of the religious order to matters financial was colored by an abiding fear and distrust of the outside world.¹⁷⁰

When combined with the disregard for archival preservation described in Chapter One, this attitude toward financial documentation has created a vacuum for the scholar. It has also caused difficulty for the institutions themselves, as modern funding sources expect accurate records which follow standard accounting practices.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Greeley, *The Changing Catholic College*, 150-53.

¹⁷¹ Kenneth Whitehead, *Catholic Colleges and Federal Funding* (San Francisco, California: Ignatius Press, 1988), 30-31; Daniel Callahan, *Federal Aid and Catholic Schools* (Baltimore, Maryland: Helicon, 1964); James A. Magner, “Budget and Business Management in a Catholic College,” in *College Organization and Administration*, ed. Roy J. Deferrari (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 320-33; Theodore E. Rupp, “Accounting for Colleges and Universities,” in *College Organization and Administration*, ed. Roy J. Deferrari (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 334-47.

Despite the lack of detailed records, it is clear that money has always been a problem for Catholic colleges and universities in the United States. If Catholic communities were large, they were not wealthy; if they were wealthy, they were neither large nor common. Although American Catholics and their clergy supported Catholic higher education, little money flowed to institutional coffers. A college might have received funds from a diocese or religious order to acquire a building or begin operation, but ongoing funds from diocesan or chapter treasuries were rare.¹⁷²

Catholic colleges in this period acquired their funding through various means. Like other American colleges founded in the 18th and 19th centuries, at least one Catholic college was funded by lottery.¹⁷³ Some colleges benefited from the collection plate passed during Mass, especially the diocesan institutions. Others received funds distributed by missionary societies which took up collections in European churches and disbursed them in America. Such efforts were enhanced if the college president or a member of the faculty sailed to Europe and solicited gifts, but few colleges had the financial stability to permit such a lengthy trip. Most colleges relied on tuition, in-kind donation of supplies and food,

¹⁷² Power, *Catholic Higher Education in America: A History*, 82-83.

¹⁷³ Cassidy, "Catholic College Foundations and Development in the United States," 85; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 160. As payment for the right to run a lottery, the president of St. Mary's College of Baltimore agreed to run the college for 30 years or pay \$30,000 to the legislature.

and the ability of their faculty to live in poverty until funds became available or the enterprise failed.¹⁷⁴

During the period covered here, tuition was not the guaranteed cash flow that it is today. Colleges in the 19th century had little luck getting their tuition payments, if they charged tuition at all. In more populated areas, the oversupply of colleges meant that students could choose between schools, an imbalance which led to low or no tuition. Catholics, especially in the South, had fewer collegiate choices, and many colleges in the region charged tuition. However, Catholic colleges usually had lower operating costs because their faculties were composed of priests or religious, who were not paid the salaries that lay teachers received.¹⁷⁵

American Catholic schools have long had an uneasy relationship with tuition. In the earliest years of American Catholic education, Jesuit schools could not charge tuition as it violated the order's vows of poverty. Specific fees for firewood, lodging, and food were permitted, but instructional charges were forbidden. The European Jesuit hierarchy was surprised to find that this caused enrollment in American Jesuit schools to shrink. Many American parents would not send their sons to tuitionless schools, because "free schools" were perceived as pauper

¹⁷⁴ Power, *Catholic Higher Education in America: A History*, 82-83; *They Came to Louisiana: Letters of a Catholic Mission, 1854-1882*; Griffin, "The Louisiana Years of Cornelia Connelly: A Paradigm of Conversion," 404-16.

¹⁷⁵ Rudolph, *The American College and University*, 197-99.

schools and therefore of lesser quality. In areas where this feeling was particularly strong, parents often made voluntary contributions to the schools in an amount uncannily similar to the tuition charged by other area schools. In 1833, the Pope ruled that Jesuit schools could accept tuition to meet financial need without violating their vows of poverty, and could do so simply in order to overrule public perceptions about quality. Tuition gradually became the norm for Catholic institutions as the 19th century progressed, though payment was not always enforced.¹⁷⁶

Catholic schools and colleges in the South usually charged tuition, though seminarians at some schools attended free of charge since they would become assets for the diocese or order as soon as they were ordained.¹⁷⁷ In the Louisiana schools run by Katherine Drexel and her Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, tuition for day students was five cents a month. This amount covered both instruction and general upkeep. Students and their families could pay one penny at a time, but there was no exemption from the fee.¹⁷⁸

In the Sacred Heart girls' academies of Missouri and Louisiana, nuns recorded tuition payments anonymously so that individual students would not be identified as poor or unpaid. Poor students were

¹⁷⁶ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 161-65.

¹⁷⁷ Charles E. Ford and Edgar L. Jr. Roy, *The Renewal of Catholic Higher Education* (Washington, D. C.: National Catholic Educational Association, 1968), 83.

¹⁷⁸ Patricia Lynch, "Mother Katherine Drexel's Rural Schools: Education and Evangelization Through Lay Leadership," in *Cross, Crozier, & Crucible*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (New Orleans, Louisiana: Archdiocese of New Orleans, 1993), 269; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 160.

not turned away, and tuition was accepted in coin, wood, food, furniture, animals and fowl, labor, or general furnishings such as plates and knives. No more than 20% of the students in any given year paid their total obligation.¹⁷⁹

In the face of such difficulty, some schools claimed that tuition was unimportant. Catholic colleges had greater purposes than the pursuit of financial happiness, and institutions which pursued money risked danger to students' eternal souls. This argument was well-rehearsed and indefensible, as spiritual concerns trumped worldly obsessions:

The education of youth forms part of the daily work of the Benedictine monk, and is no more conditioned on financial success than the daily recital of his office. Our utilitarian men of affairs may shake their heads at such unbusinesslike methods, but they cannot grasp that the sole purpose of a monastery is to be of service to God and his holy Church. . . . Since the existence of Benedictine colleges does not depend on their financial success, Benedictine educators do not care merely to have a large number of well-paying students; they are on their guard to admit no student whose bad habits may exert an evil influence on his fellows.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Callan, *The Society of the Sacred Heart in North America*, 232-34.

¹⁸⁰ Ott, "Benedictine Education in the United States," 499-507.

At the more successful colleges, tuition was a less flexible affair. In 1860, Spring Hill charged \$200 per ten-month year, which covered food, lodging, tuition, laundry, paper, and medical costs. New students paid a \$10 entrance fee, and any student who needed to stay at college over the Christmas vacation paid \$40. Students in the classical course who used the philosophical and astronomical instruments paid an additional \$10 during the years in which that apparatus was needed. Parents could pay extra fees, usually in the range of \$6 to \$8 per month, for music, drawing, or fencing lessons. Parents were also expected to leave a sum on deposit for their son's pocket money, which was disbursed weekly by the faculty. Tuition was charged in two payments, each due in the final fifteen days of the half-term (semester). Late payments were charged interest. By the 1864-65 school year, tuition had risen to \$300 due to the high cost of provisions during the War, and payments could only be made in gold rather than in almost worthless Confederate dollars.¹⁸¹

By 1898, Catholic college tuitions averaged \$100 per year for day students, and \$300-\$600 for boarders. The popular Catholic press and general Catholic population considered these costs to be somewhat extravagant, since students at comparable non-Catholic schools paid less and the quality of Catholic college education was mediocre. However, the non-Catholic students practiced strict economies to get the cheaper

¹⁸¹ "Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Spring Hill College, 1860-'61"; "Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Spring Hill College, 1864-65".

rates: “they get a comfortable room for 75 cents a week, they cook their own food on oil-stoves, they wear ‘sweaters’ to avoid laundry-bills, and they are treated as well as the wealthiest students.”¹⁸² Students at Catholic colleges, by implication, received their meals and laundry as part of the boarding charge. The cost was still too steep for many students from poor circumstances, and the Catholic press called for reform:

. . . we should find means whereby poor boys could live cheaply at our colleges. Poverty is a principal cause of defection. There are forty boys educated at Notre Dame who nominally pay their expense by waiting at table, and no distinction is made between these boys and the others. Let other colleges do at least as much as this.¹⁸³

Institutions which relied on the regular stream of income generated by students were uneasy about raising tuition rates, as they are today. Rising tuition is of particular concern to denominational institutions. At Catholic colleges, tuition was traditionally kept low so that the maximum number of students could attend with the minimum expenditure possible. Affordability was an implied, if not explicit, part of the mission.

As costs of education rose throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, this core tenet rested on shakier ground. Many Catholic

¹⁸² Austin O'Malley, “Catholic Collegiate Education in the United States,” *The Catholic World* June 1898, 293: 289-304.

¹⁸³ O'Malley, “Catholic Collegiate Education in the United States,” 304.

collegians came from large families, and many were first- or second-generation Americans. Such students were encouraged by low tuition. High tuition – even with high aid – could give the impression that religious collegiate education was for the wealthy, even when ample assistance was available. The challenge was not new, but the external pressures of accreditation, decrepit physical plants, and lay faculty who expected salaries caused additional costs that could not be written off by the unpaid labor of religious. Colleges were caught in a quandary: mission, or solvency? The decision often meant a choice between change and closure.¹⁸⁴

Although many colleges in the United States eased their financial tensions with state or federal funding, Catholic colleges did not begin to receive an appropriate share of government monies until the 1960s when accreditation and modernization brought significant change to Catholic campuses. During the years covered here, federal support for Catholic schools was nearly non-existent. The only recorded federal actions which specifically targeted a Catholic college were those concerning Georgetown, which was chartered by the U. S. Congress in 1815 in the absence of a state legislature. In 1833, Congress granted a plot of city land valued at \$25,000 to the college, an appropriation which faced

¹⁸⁴ Stanford, *A Guide to Catholic College Administration*, 162; William J. Byron, *Quadrangle Considerations* (Chicago, Illinois: Loyola University Press, 1989), 203; Ford and Roy, *The Renewal of Catholic Higher Education*, 2-3, 92-94; Roy J. Deferrari, *College Organization and Administration* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 321, 331-33; Greeley, *The Changing Catholic College*, 216-17.

heavy opposition but eventually passed. Other congressmen tried to win federal funding for schools in their districts in ensuing years, but were stymied by the committee process.

Most notably, Senator Thomas Hart Benton tried to obtain a land grant for St. Louis University in 1835, when the federal government was handing out frontier townships. Benton's bill was not called for a hearing until 1838, and was promptly sent back to committee where it languished and died. Nativist preachers like Lyman Beecher seized upon Benton's bill to illustrate their fears about Roman control of American government:

The simple fact that the clergy of the Catholic denomination could wield in mass the suffrage of their confiding people, could not fail, in the competition of ambition and party spirit, to occasion immediately an eager competition for their votes, placing them at once in the attitude of the most favored sect; securing the remission of duties on imported church property, and copious appropriations of land for the endowment of their institutions*. . . [*Senator Benton, of Missouri, we understand, has introduced a bill to give two thousand acres of land to a Catholic college.]¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ Lyman Beecher, *A Plea for the West* (Cincinnati, OH: Truman and Smith, 1835), 56-57. Beecher published his original sermons with heavy annotation, as with the comment shown here.

State legislatures in the North were marginally more friendly to Catholic colleges. In 1849, the New York legislature granted \$2500 to St. John's College, and may have also granted state monies to St. Bonaventure's in Albany. These are the only known instances of direct government funding to Catholic colleges in the period covered here.¹⁸⁶

As with any educational institution, philanthropy is a key to financial health at Catholic colleges. At most early institutions, donated monies were spent immediately: "[t]he possibility of raising funds for long-term purposes, investing these funds, and using only the income seemed to be impracticable . . . Catholic colleges now lament the fact that they lack the endowment funds for general and special purposes which are possessed by most non-Catholic colleges".¹⁸⁷ Bequests were the primary mode of donation, when donations were made, as most American Catholics had too many calls on their modest means to give up much during their lifetimes. Gifts were usually small.¹⁸⁸

In the late 18th century, Bishop Carroll of Maryland left 400 pounds sterling invested in 5% stock to the young Georgetown College. This gift, the first endowment funds received at an American Catholic college, was restricted for augmentation of the library. The president of

¹⁸⁶ Garraghan, *The Jesuits of the Middle United States*, vol. 3, 206-07; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 159-60.

¹⁸⁷ Stanford, *A Guide to Catholic College Administration*, 128.

¹⁸⁸ Greeley, *The Changing Catholic College*; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*; Ford and Roy, *The Renewal of Catholic Higher Education*, 117-28.

Georgetown could either sell the stock and reinvest at a higher return, or use the principal directly.¹⁸⁹

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, gifts to colleges were often small amounts in the form of medals or other prizes for competitions. College administrators were jealous of the amounts given to parish churches, orphanages, hospitals, and other religious entities. The Catholic public assumed that colleges were self-sustaining from tuition, and needed no external assistance or contributions. This was not the case, but the impression was pervasive:

Colleges, like poor bears in winter, are supposed to live on their own fat. No one asks them whether they are in debt, in need of money, would not accept of a collection of books, minerals, philosophical apparatus, or anything of that kind. No one says: Wouldn't you allow me to build you a good gymnasium, an exhibition hall, give you an organ for your chapel, or transfer to you some of my shares in this or that lucrative business? No, dear colleges, be comforted. Live on as best you can. The result is that these institutions can never fully shake off their debt, they can make but little material improvement, or, if they attempt improvements, it must be at a snail's pace.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 167-68.

¹⁹⁰ Anonymous, "A Letter from the President of a College," *The Catholic World* May 1871, 282: 281-85.

As Catholic colleges began to seek accreditation from newly-formed bodies, endowments became a greater issue. In 1931, Spring Hill College found that the Southern Association required “besides expensive increment in physical apparatus and professorial and clerical personnel, a minimum endowment fund of \$500,000” to make up the shortfall between tuition and the cost of running a modern college. Spring Hill did not have this money on hand.¹⁹¹

What Spring Hill did have was an “endowment of souls.” This term describes the investment made by religious faculty who taught without accepting salaries. Priests and religious take vows of poverty, which precluded them from accepting money. When Edward Power calculated the amount that would have been spent on lay faculty salaries from 1789 to 1950, he found that Catholic colleges in America had saved over \$1.5 billion (1955 dollars) by using religious faculty. Had Catholic colleges paid that money in salaries in their early years, it is doubtful that more than one or two schools would have survived in the entire country. As Xavier University of New Orleans explained in 1977, “[our] greatest endowment is the contributed services of the Sisters, which services, estimated at the rate of a 4% income, represent a living endowment approximated at four million dollars or more”.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Kenny, *Catholic Culture in Alabama*, 382-83.

¹⁹² Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 168; St. John, *A Study of Selected Developing Colleges and Universities. Case Study III: Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana*, 17.

Nevertheless, this “living endowment” was not sufficient for modern bookkeeping. In Spring Hill’s case, the unpaid work of Jesuits for eighty years was judged a “tolerated substitute” and the Southern Association allowed the college a grace period of two years to build an appropriate endowment. As college and university financial rules became ever stricter, religious faculty began to receive salaries. The salary could either be offset with an equal amount recorded as a contribution of service, or the salary was paid to the faculty member who then turned it over to his or her diocese or order. Catholic colleges and universities now follow standard accounting practices, as is required by accrediting agencies and the National Association of College and University Business Officers.¹⁹³

Most Catholic college faculty during the period described here were members of the diocese or religious order which sponsored the school where they taught. Those who were members of teaching orders had been trained as educators, while those who were diocesan priests had attended a seminary program which was the equivalent of a classical course, though more focused on theology and biblical study than on philosophy and literature.

¹⁹³ Roy J. Deferrari, *Some Problems of Catholic Higher Education in the United States* (Boston, Massachusetts: Daughters of St. Paul, 1963); Stanford, *A Guide to Catholic College Administration*, 136-50; Richard W. Waring, *How to Save Our Catholic Colleges: A Guide for Trustees, Administrators, Alumni, and Religious Orders* (Perrysburg, Ohio: Waring & Associates, 1986).

Throughout most of the 19th century, Catholic colleges used a “class system” which assigned faculty members to a particular grade. The faculty member taught the majority of subjects studied by boys in that year. This system required faculty to have a broad, though often superficial, acquaintance with the subjects being taught. Though this method allowed teachers to develop close bonds with students, it did not encourage scholarly development. As the elective system became more popular on non-Catholic campuses and as Catholic colleges began to offer a wider array of courses to attract students, faculty began to specialize and the class system fell by the wayside.¹⁹⁴

Some Southern Catholic colleges used seminarians as faculty. This was less than successful, and often indicated a college in trouble. Seminarians were often the same age as the classical lay students, and had received little – if any – teacher training. Their focus, reasonably, was more on their pre-ordination studies than on teaching lay students effectively. Still, a seminarian faculty member had his uses: “he was doctrinally orthodox, morally sound, willing to follow directions, and his services cost very little.”¹⁹⁵ Although most colleges administered by dioceses used seminarians as faculty at some point, the college which

¹⁹⁴ Henry Spalding, “Differentiation of College Professors,” in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the 14th annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 14 (Buffalo, New York: Catholic Educational Association, 1917), 94-104; Power, “Highlights in the Progress of Catholic Higher Education.”

¹⁹⁵ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 92.

relied primarily or exclusively on seminarian faculty was a college in dire straits.¹⁹⁶

If the existing faculty could not teach a particular subject adequately, lay faculty were hired. For example, dancing masters and drawing teachers were usually laymen.¹⁹⁷ Lay faculty were particularly needed at colleges which offered a commercial course. The classical curriculum was within the ability of most clerical and religious faculty, but commercial courses required experience in the world. Southern Jesuits were, for a time in the late 19th century, forbidden to teach in the commercial course as it was considered inferior to philosophy and other elevated subjects. Commercial courses attracted students who would not have enrolled in the classical course, but they also required actual salary payments for the lay faculty and, some felt, diluted the overall tone of the institution. As seen in Chapter Three, many colleges offered commercial courses sporadically, perhaps in response to this predicament.¹⁹⁸

Many of the factors described in this chapter contributed to an increasing secularization of American Catholic colleges. Schools gave

¹⁹⁶ Erbacher, "Catholic Higher Education for Men in the United States"; *They Came to Louisiana*; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*. St. Andrew's in Arkansas and Immaculate Conception (Parochial) College in Louisiana both had seminarian faculties, and both failed quickly. See Chapter Three.

¹⁹⁷ "Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Spring Hill College 1860-'61"; "Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Spring Hill College, 1864-65".

¹⁹⁸ Garraghan, *The Jesuits of the Middle United States*, 248; Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 98; Philip Gleason, *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 202-04.

some control to lay trustees, sought external funding and donations, added new courses, employed lay faculty, and admitted non-Catholic students. In the early 20th century, Catholic educators began to work together to standardize their schools and institutions, and began to participate in the larger American educational community. For Catholic colleges, this participation brought new rules and expectations to campuses which had little experience with secular practices.

The major secular practice which affected Catholic campuses during the first half of the 20th century was accreditation. Catholic universities were part of the accreditation movement from the start, as the Catholic University of America was a founding member of the Association of American Universities in 1899. Still, most Catholic colleges struggled with accrediting bodies and procedures. Many requirements for accreditation presupposed habits and practices foreign to the small Catholic campus, such as the living endowments described above. Catholic college faculty did not always have the education required by accrediting bodies, and libraries or scientific laboratories were often undersupplied.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ Roy J. Deferrari, "Education and Accrediting Today," in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the 38th annual meeting*, National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin, vol. 38 (New Orleans, Louisiana: National Catholic Education Association, 1941), 272-87; William K. Selden, "Background of Accrediting and the National Commission on Accrediting," in *Self-Evaluation and Accreditation in Higher Education*, ed. Roy J. Deferrari (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1958), 256-69; Roy J. Deferrari, *Self-Evaluation and Accreditation in Higher Education* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1959), 199-204. Chapter Five covers the standardization controversy in more detail.

Physical and faculty shortfalls paled next to curricular issues, however. Most Catholic colleges in the United States at this time were effectively six-year academies in which students completed a secondary curriculum and a weak collegiate curriculum. As non-Catholic institutions began to define entrance and graduation standards, Catholic colleges had to do so as well if they wanted to be recognized as effective and acceptable places of higher learning. While college administrators knew that their campuses needed to standardize and improve their curricula, there was an immediate and long-lasting reaction to the idea. This reaction centered on a fear of external control and influence, which had the potential to remove all that was Catholic from the Catholic college. Ironically, the language used during the standardization arguments was similar to the language used by anti-Catholic agitators sixty years earlier.²⁰⁰

America as a whole was debating collegiate education during these years. Catholic colleges saw external forces threatening their way of life on all sides. State legislatures began to place conditions upon collegiate charters, as in New York where an institution needed resources of \$500,000 to grant degrees, and even non-degree-granting colleges needed at least \$100,000 to operate legally.²⁰¹ Catholic administrators

²⁰⁰ Gleason, *Contending with Modernity*, 46-51.

²⁰¹ Francis Heiermann, "How to Deal with Public Legislation Affecting Our Colleges," in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the ninth annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 9 (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Catholic Educational Association, 1912), 136-37.

saw this as a dangerous encroachment of state powers into religious affairs, and argued that religious colleges should be able to set their own rules and regulations.²⁰²

Catholic colleges were particularly suspicious of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Established in 1905, the Carnegie Foundation was initially intended to create pensions for college and university faculty. To identify these faculty, the Foundation decided to define the “college” as an institution which accepted students who had earned a particular number of units in high school study. Units were a new concept, which shifted the goal of secondary education from subject mastery to a defined period of time spent studying the given subject. Colleges which did not meet the Carnegie Foundation’s standards could not apply for funds, nor could any sectarian or denominational institutions. These facts alone did not upset Catholics:

We are not challenging any man’s right – whether he be Jew or Gentile or non-sectarian – to dispose of his hard earned and honestly acquired riches in whatever way may best suit him. If he imagines that the ideals in which he believes will be more approximately realized by giving the youth of this country a non-sectarian education, then the investment of

²⁰² Heiermann, “How to Deal with Public Legislation Affecting Our Colleges”; Walter George Smith, “Educational Legislation as It Affects Catholic Interests,” in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the ninth annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 9 (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Catholic Educational Association, 1912), 119-33; Gleason, *Contending with Modernity*.

his money in the prosecution of those ideals must be a matter of gratitude to those whose ideals are equally perverse.²⁰³

On its face, the Carnegie Foundation was nothing about which Catholic colleges needed to concern themselves. However, administrators saw a deeper and darker goal behind the simple pension plan. Not only did the foundation intend to support secularism by funding only non-sectarian colleges, but it hoped to infect religious schools with the same pernicious element by promoting curricular standards and centralized governance and accreditation. Catholic college curricula were classical in nature, and integrated study of similar subjects over several years. Students did not take individual classes which could be defined as units.

Despite criticism from religious colleges, the foundation's aims were generally accepted in society and government. Elements of the Carnegie definition were passed into law, such as the New York endowment requirement cited above. The newly-developed accrediting bodies adopted the Carnegie unit since quantitative educational measurements were easier to compare across institutions than a qualitative assessment of learning. Amid these changes, Catholic administrators and faculty feared that this organizational change would

²⁰³ Timothy Brosnahan, "The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: Its Aims and Tendency," in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the eighth annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 8 (Chicago, Illinois: Catholic Educational Association, 1911), 127.

lead to more ephemeral changes in future years as accreditation became a necessity. Keeping Catholic colleges “Catholic” became a constant pursuit, and defining “the Catholic college” was a regular topic of discussion at meetings and on campuses.²⁰⁴

In many ways, the American Catholic college seems to resemble other denominational colleges founded in the pre-modern era. Catholic colleges, however, took much of their structure from religious models, which affected almost all elements of governance. College finances were affected by the relative poverty of the Catholic community and by the anti-Catholic sentiments of elected officials, who made funds available to other sectarian colleges. Catholic schools struggled, but maintained their separate identity until the early decades of the 20th century when external accrediting and governmental agencies began to require colleges to adhere to strict standards if they wished to remain “colleges”. Though some of the external attempts failed, Catholic colleges had to alter elements of their administrative structure so that they could move into the modern era.

²⁰⁴ Brosnahan, “The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching”; James F. Green, “Catholic Education Above the Grammar Grades,” in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the eighth annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 8 (Chicago, Illinois: Catholic Educational Association, 1911), 169-87; Gleason, *Contending with Modernity*, 32-38; Deferrari, *Some Problems of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 186-202.

CHAPTER 5

THE SOUL OF THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC COLLEGE

As described in Chapter Four, American Catholic colleges had a unique blend of administrative and financial structures. In some ways, Catholic colleges during the period covered here strongly resembled colleges operated by other Christian denominations. In other ways, the Catholics' colleges were a clear reflection of the religion which sponsored them. These simultaneous differences and similarities are as remarkable in the daily life of these institutions as they were in the rules by which the colleges were organized. In matters of purpose, curriculum, and campus spiritual life, the 19th and early 20th century American Catholic college tried to maintain their unique identity while dealing with pressures from the outside – non-Catholic – world.

What made a Catholic college “Catholic”? Many elements contributed to the designation: control by a diocese or teaching order, the predominant faith of the students, the dogma taught to students. However, all Catholic colleges shared three central motives:

To offer a preparatory or preliminary education for boys aspiring to the seminary; to create a center for missionary activities from which the good offices of religion might diffuse

the message of the Church to unconverted people or to supply the benefits of religion to Catholics in sparsely-settled and far-flung dioceses of a wilderness America; to conduct a Catholic house of study and discipline where boys and young men might live in a controlled environment and thus cultivate moral and religious virtue.²⁰⁵

Certainly in the Catholic colleges of the South, all three of these motives were present, though their proportion varied from school to school.

The first motive, that of seminary preparation, was the least important for Southern Catholic colleges. While many of the Southern colleges offered both seminary and collegiate courses, the emphasis on both was rarely balanced. Schools were either primarily seminaries or primarily colleges. Seminaries in the South tended to be diocesan concerns; since the majority of Catholic colleges in the South were operated or founded by teaching orders, seminary education was clearly less of an emphasis.²⁰⁶

The second motive, that of missionary outreach, was critical in the sparsely-populated South. However, the priest shortage and the vast distances over unimproved roads that separated Catholic settlements meant that Catholic colleges were often refuges to which students

²⁰⁵ Power, *Catholic Higher Education in America: A History*, 48.

²⁰⁶ Since seminary studies were done in lieu of a collegiate course, it is likely that this motive was far more important at the academy or preparatory level. By the time 19th century boys had committed to a classical course, they had probably already decided against a priestly vocation.

traveled, not sources for diligent missionary work. Priests and religious affiliated with a college were often also responsible for local parishes, for missionary circuits, and for regular diocesan duties. Men who had colleges to run could not place missionary work ahead of their duties at the school. Missionary activity in the Southern diocese was usually the work of priests designated for the task, not for college faculty.

The third motive which Powers describes is the most important in understanding the purpose and soul of the Catholic college. The Catholic college was intended to be an environment which trained young Catholics in an atmosphere of faith and belief. Collegiate life gave students a framework for their future devotional lives, as well as a strong and rigorous intellectual defense for their beliefs and values. In a region like the South, where there were relatively few Catholics and not much in the way of Catholic culture, the collegiate experience might be the only significant period of Catholicity in the student's life. Faculty had a few short years to mold students into ideal Catholics:

If we are to prepare him for his immortal and glorious destiny, we must teach him what life is, what he must do with it. Intellect and will grandly applied to life; intellect trained under the unflickering beacon-lights of our Catholic faith; character moulded to Christ-like perfection under the purifying influences of Catholic morality – both bearing with unmistakable pressure and measurable impact on every

layer of society, such must be the output of our Catholic colleges if they would be faithful to the lofty aims and standards they have ever upheld. They must give us the trained Catholic intellect, the sturdily-moulded Catholic character, the chivalrous, fearless Catholic leader.²⁰⁷

In the pursuit of the ideal Catholic graduate, colleges partnered religious observance with classroom study of Christian (Catholic) faith and philosophy. Students studied centuries of scholastic argument in support of church dogma. These texts gave college graduates the tools to defend their faith rationally and intellectually if challenged in their worldly lives, the intent at the heart of the college's purpose. College graduates were expected to have a better understanding of the intellectual underpinnings of their faith than were laymen who had not attended college:

. . . in our colleges, above all, must there be a complete religious training: the doctrines of the church fully exposed, the errors of the day pointed out and separated from the truth on which they are based, the beauty and significance of ritual and ceremonial shown forth. Every Catholic student

²⁰⁷ John C. Reville, "The Catholic College -- What Must It Do?" in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the tenth annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 10 (New Orleans, Louisiana: Catholic Educational Association, 1913), 84.

finishing his collegiate course should perceive the plan and purpose of the church in the world's history.²⁰⁸

Apart from religious training, students received an education quite similar to those offered in non-Catholic colleges. Several different curricula were offered on Catholic college campuses during the period covered here. All colleges introduced in Chapter Three offered at least the collegiate, or classical, course, and most also offered a separate preparatory course. Others offered a commercial course, and some taught seminarians as well. Many students first entered the school as academy students, then moved on to either the classical or commercial curriculum as their circumstances warranted.²⁰⁹

In most 19th century colleges, the concept of a "college education" included what we would now consider secondary education as well as advanced study. Frederick Rudolph notes that, in 1870, almost every college in the United States offered a preparatory course. Preparatory study served several purposes: it increased the tuition coming into the institution, it guaranteed students for the collegiate and commercial courses, and it provided basic education for students who would not go

²⁰⁸ Azarius F. Hewit, "The Lessons of a Century of Catholic Education," *The Catholic World* November 1889, 152: 143-54.

²⁰⁹ The curricula discussed here are those of colleges for men. Women's colleges in the South were established on the cusp of the modern era, and offered programs of a more practical nature, such as nursing and teaching, rather than the classical course common to men's colleges of the 19th century. For an interesting study of 19th century academy curricula and how they differed by gender, see Kim Tolley, "Science for Ladies, Classics for Gentlemen: A Comparative Analysis of Scientific Subjects in the Curricula of Boys' and Girls' Secondary Schools in the United States, 1794-1850," *History of Education Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 129-54.

further. In Catholic schools, the preparatory program also helped faculty to notice and encourage students who might have religious vocations.²¹⁰

Preparatory courses were basic. Although colleges required that students know how to read and write before being admitted (usually between the ages of nine and fifteen), these skills were often rudimentary. For Catholic students, who usually came from poorer households and whose parents may not have been literate in English or at all, the preparatory course was often the first formal education they received. Spring Hill College's preparatory course was typical of Catholic academy instruction in the 19th century:

1st: The Preparatory Course, which usually lasts two years, and embraces besides Reading and Writing, the elements of Arithmetic and of those languages which the pupil is afterward to learn.

At the annual commencement exercises, Spring Hill preparatory students earned honors in the same areas as the more advanced students: English, arithmetic, history and geography, excellence, Christian doctrine, diligence, and penmanship.²¹¹

Catholic colleges kept preparatory courses longer than most non-Catholic schools. Where secular and non-sectarian schools started to

²¹⁰ Frederick Rudolph, *Curriculum: A History of the American Undergraduate Course of Study Since 1636*, The Carnegie Council Series (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1977), 160.

²¹¹ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 54-55; "Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Spring Hill College 1860-'61"

drop the academies in the years after the Civil War as public high schools began to appear, Catholic colleges would not give up the integrated academy course until the early decades of the 20th century. The rising forces of accreditation and standardization caused a final split between preparatory and collegiate study.²¹²

In many ways, the collegiate or classical course at a 19th century Catholic college mirrored that at a non-Catholic denominational college. The traditional classical curriculum was composed of five elements: mathematics, ancient languages, moral and natural philosophy, and science (usually chemistry).²¹³ Richard Hofstadter argues that “the provincial colleges, as they proliferated through the West and South, attempted to perpetuate in the communities of the hinterland a pattern of education which their presidents and teachers had brought from the established Eastern schools at which they had been trained”.²¹⁴

However, in Catholic schools, the curriculum was derived from European seminary and classical education. It focused more on theology and Christian doctrine than the more literary American curriculum, but the basic elements were much the same. These core subjects were united by religion, which “formed the principal subject of instruction and

²¹² Many Catholic (and other private) colleges still sponsor high schools, but they are operated independently and often at a distance from the college campus. Graduates are not generally guaranteed admission to the affiliated college.

²¹³ Rudolph, *The American College and University*, 126.

²¹⁴ Richard Hofstadter and C. DeWitt Hardy, *The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States* (New York City, New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 13.

permeated the entire college training”.²¹⁵ Students used catechisms as texts in the preparatory courses, and lectures on Catholic theology and dogma were the basic material for collegiate lectures. Latin and Greek texts included both the ancients and church writings. Students who completed the classical course received the Bachelor of Arts degree.²¹⁶

Regardless of the order or diocese operating a particular Catholic college, much of the classical curriculum on a Catholic campus was informed and shaped by the Jesuit colleges. Jesuit schools followed the *Ratio studiorum*, a code of education first issued in 1586. The *Ratio* defined appropriate studies for students at all levels, set out pedagogical methods most useful for the subject matter, and emphasized the importance of discussion and active engagement with the material rather than rote learning. Though non-Jesuit orders were not required to teach to the *Ratio*, the elements of the curriculum are quite familiar as those of the classical curriculum taught in other Catholic colleges and even in non-Catholic schools.²¹⁷

The *Ratio studiorum* of 1832 outlined a tripartite curriculum: theology, arts, and humanities. The theological arm included dogma,

²¹⁵ Erbacher, “Catholic Higher Education for Men in the United States,” 88.

²¹⁶ Power, *A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States*, 49-87.

²¹⁷ Allan P. Farrell, *The Jesuit Code of Liberal Education: Development and Scope of the Ratio Studiorum* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Bruce Publishing Company, 1938). The *Ratio studiorum* was revised in 1591, 1599, and 1832. It is the 1832 *Ratio* that determined curricula at Jesuit colleges during the period covered here. Because of the strong Jesuit influence on European intellectual life during the 17th and 18th centuries, it is logical to assume that the *Ratio studiorum* had an effect on collegiate curricula in the United States regardless of denominational affiliation.

scripture, moral theology, ecclesiastical history, canon law, and the Hebrew language. The arts curriculum included philosophy, mathematics, physics, chemistry, and astronomy. The humanities curriculum included study in the local vernacular, Latin, Greek, history, and geography. Language studies began with basic grammar and continued through fluency and rhetorical constructs appropriate to each tongue.²¹⁸

Wherever a Jesuit community established a college, the *Ratio studiorum* dictated the curriculum, and the Southern colleges operated by the Jesuits are no exception. The Spring Hill classical course of 1860 is clearly recognizable as a Jesuit curriculum dictated by the *Ratio studiorum*:

The Classical Course, which is intended for those who wish to receive a complete education, and lasts six years. The first three years are devoted to the study of Latin and Greek; the last three, to the study of Literature, Poetry, and Rhetoric; to a more enlarged study of History and Geography, and to the higher branches of Mathematics. Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Chemistry, Natural History, Logic, Metaphysics, and Moral Philosophy, also belong to this course.²¹⁹

All Spring Hill students, regardless of course, were required to study

²¹⁸ Farrell, *The Jesuit Code of Liberal Education*, 390-92.

²¹⁹ "Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Spring Hill College 1860-'61".

French, which was a *de facto* vernacular for parts of the Gulf region. Students could also study Spanish and German if their parents wished, but these were considered extra subjects much like dancing and drawing (though without an additional charge).

Though all schools introduced in Chapter Three offered the classical course, some of them also offered a commercial course. Commercial classes were an excellent way to swell the student ranks, and brought in students who would not have been sent to college for a purely classical curriculum. The commercial course was intended to prepare young men for daily life in the world, though commercial subjects were also taught in the same religious atmosphere that pervaded the preparatory and classical courses and commercial students participated in courses on Christian doctrine.

Typical commercial courses included law and bookkeeping. Commercial students at Spring Hill received a comprehensive practical education:

2ndly: The Commercial Course, which lasts three years, and comprises the study of the Living Languages, Arithmetic, the elements of Algebra and Geometry, History, Geography, and Book-keeping.²²⁰

Spring Hill's commercial students were also expected to know how to read and write, and would be required to enter the preparatory course if

²²⁰ "Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Spring Hill College 1864-65."

they were not sufficiently capable to begin commercial studies immediately. Commercial students competed each year for prizes in Christian doctrine, excellence, diligence, English, and history and geography.²²¹

Along with a curriculum infused with religious dogma and fervor, one of the best ways to create the ideal young Catholic was to surround him with the habits and sacraments of the faith. At Catholic colleges, just as at most denominational colleges of the 19th century, religious services were held regularly and students were expected to attend. Catholics, however, had an additional set of obligations beyond merely attending service. Devout Catholics must participate in certain regular practices, or sacraments, including the taking of communion and the confession of sins.²²² Since confession must be made before taking communion, which is the focus of every Mass, there is social pressure in Catholic communities to participate in both sacraments regularly. Such pressure was seen as beneficial to students:

As to the frequentation of the sacraments of penance and the eucharist, no experienced educator need be told of their efficacy in the formation of character. A college in which all the students approach these sacraments once or twice a

²²¹ "Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Spring Hill College 1860-'61"; "Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Spring Hill College 1864-65".

²²² The seven Catholic sacraments are baptism, communion, confirmation, penance, marriage, holy orders (entering the religious life), and last rites. Obviously, most of these are intended as one-time rituals.

month must certainly be a nursery of virtue, for in them the faults of youth will necessarily be corrected, and the weaknesses of human nature be strengthened by efficient help from heaven.²²³

Religious peer pressure was enhanced by the various devotional organizations and opportunities which marked the Catholic college social calendar. Catholic devotional culture in the period covered here was rich in affinities with particular saints, in fraternal organizations (called sodalities) which offered social opportunities as well as religious expression, and in an abundant, if ritualized, public and private prayer life. Catholic colleges offered a range of “sodalities, Holy Name Societies, or other organizations of a similar nature”²²⁴ to their students. Sodalities were seen as an opportunity for students to band together against vice and in support of a holy and pious life, much like the regular revivals on Protestant campuses were an effective way to burn campuses clean of sinful behavior.²²⁵

In many Catholic colleges, students were required to attend daily Mass. Since priests and religious had to offer or attend daily Mass to

²²³ Francis Cassilly, “Catholic College Discipline in the Formation of Character,” in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the second annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 2 (New York City, New York: Catholic Educational Association, 1905), 113.

²²⁴ W.F. Cunningham, “Religious Instruction in Catholic Schools & Colleges,” *Catholic Educational Review* 14 (June 1917): 7, 3-7.

²²⁵ F. X. Schouppe, *Sodality Director's Manual: Or, a Collection of Instructions for Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin*, translated by Ella McMahon (Boston, Massachusetts: Thomas B. Noonan & Co., 1882).

fulfill their own vows, boarding students were expected to attend as well. Day students, especially those who had to travel great distances, were excused in some circumstances, while at other schools Mass was the first class of the day and attendance was as expected as it would be in a lecture.²²⁶ Those few students who were not Catholic were also expected to attend Mass and study Catholic thought, though were not required to participate in optional activities like the sodalities and were not permitted to take communion. In 1860, Spring Hill's catalogue noted that "[t]he public worship of the Institution is that of the Catholic religion; however, the pupils of every religious denomination are received, provided, that for the sake of order and uniformity, they are willing to conform to the exterior exercises of worship."²²⁷

Despite the welcome, non-Catholics appear to have been rare in Catholic colleges during the period covered here. In 1898, only 12 non-Catholics attended the University of Notre Dame as collegiate students. Non-Catholics were more likely to enroll in preparatory or academy courses, then leave the Catholic school for a non-Catholic college or a first job. Those who stayed or enrolled directly in the college course often converted to Catholicism before graduation, as did Carl Heusner, Spring Hill class of 1891. Heusner, of Honduras, enrolled at Spring Hill as an

²²⁶ Cassilly, "Catholic College Discipline in the Formation of Character," 119-26. At the conclusion of Cassilly's paper, a discussion was held about daily Mass requirements. Yale, which still required daily chapel in 1905, was held up as an excellent non-Catholic example of compulsory religious practice.

²²⁷ "Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Spring Hill College 1860-'61".

academy student and continued on to receive the bachelor's degree. He converted during his years there, and "won the medals for Philosophy and English and the *more coveted distinction* of the . . . presidency of the B. V. M. Sodality".²²⁸

Although the conversion of a non-Catholic student was a happy occasion, non-Catholics in Catholic institutions were not a particular topic of interest or target of proselytization. By 1917, it was accepted that "the parents of most [non-Catholic students] would be opposed to anything like making instruction in the Catholic religion obligatory." Schools could use more subtle methods to provide information about Catholicism, but without overt attempts at conversion. Such methods could include weekly lectures about the tenets of Catholic dogma, a regular Bible study, and even a credit-bearing "inquiry class" which would introduce the catechism. However, these suggestions were presented at a meeting of the Catholic Educational Association as a novel solution to the perceived spiritual needs of non-Catholic students on Catholic campuses. It is therefore apparent that no organized evangelism was targeted at these students as a matter of routine.²²⁹

Catholic students attending non-Catholic colleges and universities were of far greater concern, especially to administrators of Catholic

²²⁸ O'Malley, "Catholic Collegiate Education in the United States," 289-304; Kenny, *Catholic Culture in Alabama*, 301. Italics mine: B. V. M. is an acronym for the Blessed Virgin Mary, patroness of sodalities.

²²⁹ Cunningham, "Religious Instruction in Catholic Schools & Colleges," 6.

colleges. The topic was a recurring agenda item at the yearly meetings of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities of the United States. In 1898, the *Catholic World* newspaper reported that, in 37 colleges surveyed, there were 1,452 Catholic students enrolled. These schools included Harvard, Chicago, Princeton, Cornell, Tulane, Brown, MIT, and the state universities of Idaho, Nebraska, North Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin, as well as the military academies (among others).²³⁰

Much of the discussion at ACCU meetings was statistically questionable. At the first meeting in 1904, it was argued that “non-Catholic colleges, according to the statistics from 1890 to 1900, had increased 60 per cent in attendance. Catholic colleges had not done this. The 60 per cent was out of all proportion to the increase of population, and this abnormal increase at non-Catholic institutions represented a decrease at Catholic institutions.”²³¹ This conclusion is clearly unsupported. A growing economy after the depredation of war, enthusiasm in the new century and its implications, and an increasingly mobile middle class are only a few of the factors which might have affected non-Catholic college enrollment. Still, the members of the ACCU

²³⁰ O'Malley, “Catholic Collegiate Education in the United States,” 291-92. Enrollment data, especially on religious belief, was approximate, and even O'Malley did not think some of his data was accurate. It is still the best contemporary count available, though.

²³¹ Discussion of a Non-Printed Paper of “Statistics of attendance of Catholic college students at non-Catholic colleges and universities, and the cause thereof,” in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the first annual meeting*, vol. I (St. Louis, Missouri: Catholic Educational Association, 1904), 78.

saw an increase in non-Catholic enrollment as a direct debit to Catholic college enrollment whether it was or not.

By 1906, a slightly more scientific study had been done regarding Catholic student enrollment at state universities. About 2,000 Catholics were enrolled in the 42 state schools open in 1905, plus about 1700 in elite private colleges. While this does not seem like a particularly significant result, it shocked and dismayed the attendants: “it was evident that college students were exposed to great dangers at all these universities, and it is certainly a matter of great concern to all of us how we can safeguard their faith.”²³²

Unfortunately, it was the Catholic colleges themselves which caused a number of these students to seek higher education outside the church. Many of the students enrolled in non-Catholic institutions were there for professional, practical, or technical study, courses which were not offered at Catholic colleges. Others were attracted by the low (or free) tuition at state-sponsored institutions, especially colleges operating under the Land Grant Act. Still others were encouraged to attend non-Catholic institutions by their high school teachers or even parish priests, on the grounds that such a school would offer acquaintances useful in the student’s later life. Despite the warnings of priests and Catholic

²³² Francis Cassilly, “Catholic Students at State Universities,” in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the third annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 3 (Cleveland, Ohio: Catholic Educational Association, 1906), 125.

college administrators, many non-Catholic colleges had a Catholic club which sponsored regular Masses and other devotional activity.²³³

By 1907, the attitude of the ACCU seems to have shifted. Rather than papers and discussions about these Catholic students at non-Catholic colleges and what could be done to bring them to Catholic institutions, the Catholic chaplain at Harvard gave a paper on “The Catholic Chaplain at the Secular University.” Father Farrell felt that Catholic students were at most risk from their philosophy and history courses, which were usually taught by Protestants and often included anti-Catholic statements and theories, whether intentionally or not. Farrell recommended that chaplains at non-Catholic institutions maintain a library of Catholic theological and dogmatic texts, which they could use to bolster what students learned in the classrooms. However, Farrell did not suggest extra devotional opportunities, such as sodalities or Holy Name Societies, and barely mentioned religious observance at all. Whether this was due to the particular nature of Harvard, to Farrell’s personal preferences, or to a sense that devotional culture was more appropriate to the Catholic campus is hard to say. Other changes taking place in American higher education may have already eclipsed the “Catholic student problem”.²³⁴

²³³ John H. Conway, Chairman of session, “Statistics of Attendance of Catholic College Students at Non-Catholic Colleges and Universities, and the Cause Thereof,” in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the first annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 1 (St. Louis, Missouri: Catholic Educational Association, 1904), 78-82; Cassilly, “Catholic Students at State Universities.”

²³⁴ John J. Farrell, “The Catholic Chaplain at the Secular University,” in *Report of the*

Though Catholic colleges had a firm grasp of their purpose and goals, they were affected by changes in the popular and political cultures that surrounded them. As the 19th century progressed, American higher education found itself confronting many new ideas. An admiration for the German universities, first celebrated in America by George Ticknor at Harvard in the 1820s, brought the elective system and a greater emphasis on student responsibility to American campuses. The Morrill Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890 brought respectability and funding to scientific and agricultural studies. Religious practice, even on denominationally-operated campuses, fell by the wayside as chapel services became optional and students were no longer required to take specifically religious courses. Women, African-Americans, and Native Americans began to seek college educations. Higher education was as caught up in the rush to modernity as the rest of American society.

The Catholic college was set firmly against this tide. In its role as preserver of the faith and molder of the young, the Catholic college viewed modern trends with suspicion. Students were too young to direct their own schoolwork, modern subjects were ephemeral and untried, and practical studies were best left to another arena. The Catholic college had its own purpose:

What is the very reason for existence of a Catholic college? If it is only to sharpen a boy's wits, then in the name of common sense why do we not turn the matter over to the State universities and keep our two million dollars of yearly expenditure in our pockets? The Catholic college is intended for the teaching of history that can talk for at least a page without lying, of literature that has the foulness cut out of it; we want "narrow-minded," expurgated literature, because we prefer to teach a boy the beauty in literature – he can learn the lechery thereof from the devil without the help of a professor. The Catholic college is also intended to teach the elements of metaphysics and ethics, to replace histories of erroneous systems of philosophy and sneers at scholasticism made by men who, through ignorance of technical terminology, could not understand Catholic philosophy if they honestly tried to study it. It also teaches Christian doctrine; but almost half its work should be devoted to that moral education that is effected by discipline. The end of education is not so much learning as living, and intellectual education alone does not conduce to good living.²³⁵

Though non-Catholic colleges had begun to embrace the dual concepts of learning for learning's sake and of practical training for a particular

²³⁵ O'Malley, "Catholic Collegiate Education in the United States," 295.

career, Catholic colleges stood resolute, using moral arguments to persuade students and parents of the benefits of a Catholic education. Catholic colleges believed that what was taught in the classroom, and what students did after graduation, was less important than creating a solid framework for a Catholic life, strengthened and bolstered by philosophical argument and theological proof.

Despite their protestations, however, Catholic colleges had already begun to change their curricula before the Civil War. The German influence, both in scientific study and in the elective method, led to several changes on Catholic campuses. By the turn of the 20th century, colleges had begun to segregate their faculty into departments, to offer specialized courses of study, and to let students choose at least some of their courses from a varied selection. Practical and scientific topics were no longer rare, and the emphases of the old classical curriculum were no longer central to every Catholic student's academic life.²³⁶

Even Jesuit colleges began to turn away from the strict interpretation of the *Ratio studiorum*. The *Ratio* dictated a catholic and fluid six years of study, with student achievement determining pace and completion rather than an arbitrary time element. The trappings of modern American higher education were antithetical to a traditional Jesuit education, and some observers warned that the unique character

²³⁶ Rudolph, *Curriculum*, 151-202.

of Catholic education would be lost unless the Jesuits returned to their roots:

To retrieve what was thus lost [by contemporary practices] the Jesuit schools should as soon as possible eliminate (1) the elective system; (2) the credit system; (3) the departmental system, which is a concomitant of electivism; (4) the multiplicity of free elective courses in various branches of knowledge; (5) the thesis requirement for the bachelor's degree.²³⁷

However, no Jesuit schools made these changes. Assimilating into the American educational system was more important than maintaining the European and Enlightenment ideals of the *Ratio*.

Catholic colleges continued to wrestle with a definition of the ephemeral qualities that made them “Catholic” in the years that followed. During the first two decades of the 20th century, Catholic colleges faced pressures from both ecclesiastical and secular sources. As the college experience in America became codified and standardized, secular forces were able to require particular standards and define outcomes for religious institutions. Catholic colleges tried to counter these requirements by asserting their unique position and purpose. An uneasy truce was held through the next forty years, as Catholic colleges divided into two camps: those schools which sought success and a position on

²³⁷ Farrell, *The Jesuit Code of Liberal Education*, 423.

the national radar, and those which turned inward, participating in America's higher education culture only as much as was necessary to remain in operation.²³⁸

As the Carnegie Foundation and its strict definitions of a college began to exert more influence on American higher education, Catholic colleges faced new realities. Even though they were ineligible for Carnegie funds because they were religious institutions, the colleges knew that they had to adapt to new standards and protocols in order to receive accreditation and so that their graduates could be accepted into other schools for graduate study. Standardization was a constant topic among Catholic college administrators during the first decades of the 20th century.

The standardization debate actually had three faces. First, entrance qualifications became stricter. If students had to learn a set amount during their time in college, no longer could Catholic colleges afford to accept students who did not have the necessary knowledge

²³⁸ Charles Carroll, "Extracts from the Carroll Papers," *Maryland Historical Magazine* X (June 1915): 143-59; William F. Kelley, "The Whither-Whether Question of Catholic Higher Education," in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the 62nd annual convention*, ed. Mary Irwin, National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin, vol. 62 (New York City, New York: National Catholic Education Association, 1965), 155-58; Abdon Lewis, "The Traditional Four-Year Catholic College: Problems and Prospects," in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the 62nd annual convention*, ed. Mary Irwin, National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin, vol. 60 (New York City, New York: National Catholic Education Association, 1965), 177-84; Charles Donovan, "Implications for the Future of Catholic Higher Education," in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the 60th annual convention*, ed. Mary Irwin, National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin, vol. 60 (St. Louis, Missouri: National Catholic Education Association, 1963), 137-45. Colleges in the first camp included Notre Dame and the Catholic University of America.

base. High schools and academies were thus affected by the standardization debate as well. Second, colleges confronted their curricula and adjusted it to meet the new concept of the credit hour. Catholic colleges grudgingly allowed electives and student choice to be incorporated into the curriculum, though this was not a popular decision. Finally, standardization changed the face of graduate education. Students from colleges not sufficiently standardized were rejected by non-sectarian and public schools. If one purpose of Catholic higher education was to create an educated Catholic society, graduate and professional study was part of that goal, and colleges would have to adapt so that their graduates were desirable to other institutions.

The early debate over standardization focused on the high schools and academies that supplied Catholic college undergraduates. Since most Catholic colleges in the 19th century operated their own preparatory programs, the distinction between high school and college study was somewhat blurred. As schools began to specialize during the early part of the 20th century, more students began to study at a school which was specifically secondary, then apply to an institution which was specifically collegiate. However, Catholic colleges did not have a uniform admission standard. The curricula at independent high schools or academies was often stronger than those of a college's preparatory department, which in turn affected the material studied in the first two years of college. A high school diploma was no guarantor of an education

sufficient for college study, nor was a preparatory education necessarily indicative that the graduate was, in fact, prepared for college.

By 1909, the Catholic Educational Association saw the need to impose some sort of standardization upon Catholic high schools and colleges. Both accreditation and affiliation were discussed as possibilities. Accreditation, whether by examination or diploma, supplied certification that the student was capable of collegiate work. Affiliation, on the other hand, implied that “the school with which other schools are connected has a certain direction or control of the work done in these schools to such an extent that it may be regarded as the moving power in these schools”.²³⁹ While such a relationship might be practical for a college and its preparatory department, it was impractical for a college to affiliate with every high school which might send its students to that campus. The CEA thus moved toward accreditation, and encouraged the high school department of the CEA to work toward a more standard curriculum.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Matthew Schumacher, “The Affiliation and Accrediting of Catholic High Schools and Academies to Colleges,” in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the sixth annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 6 (Boston, Massachusetts: Catholic Educational Association, 1909), 132.

²⁴⁰ Schumacher, “The Affiliation and Accrediting of Catholic High Schools and Academies to Colleges”; James F. Green, “Catholic Education Above the Grammar Grades,” in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the eighth annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 8 (Chicago, Illinois: Catholic Educational Association, 1911), 169-87. Apparently, some Catholic high schools and academies sought affiliation with non-Catholic colleges and universities. There was a general impression outside the church that Catholic education was less than comprehensive, and the affiliation process was used to prove that the high school graduate was worthy of a place on those campuses. This angered some members of the CEA, since it was felt that the Catholic high school should be preparing students for Catholic colleges, not currying favor with non-Catholic institutions. The Green paper

The committee apparently did so, as proposed standards for higher education over the next ten years stated that the standard Catholic college should require sixteen units for admission. A unit was defined as 120 hours of study spread over at least 36 weeks. College representatives were satisfied with the amount of study, but not particularly with the subjects being studied, and secondary representatives were dissatisfied with vague entrance requirements.²⁴¹

The vagueness of these requirements stemmed from a vagueness of the collegiate curriculum. By 1913, Catholic colleges had clearly begun to adapt their curricula to the models prevalent in non-sectarian and public institutions. No longer was the classical curriculum the only way to study. As the president of St. Viator's College (Bourbonnais, Illinois) noted, "[t]o maintain a system absolutely as it was a hundred years ago without any intervening change is as unreasonable as to break from the past with all its traditions. Like every other human thing the college is subject to the law of growth. When it fails to assimilate, it has to yield to the inexorable law of decay. To restrict the college to an ironclad program of studies would be to deny to her a right which she has exercised from

from the 1911 CEA conference takes this stance.

²⁴¹ Brother Thomas, section secretary, "Report of Proceedings of the Department of Colleges and Secondary Schools," in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the 19th annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 19 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Catholic Educational Association, 1922), 92-103; James F. Green, President, presidential address, Catholic Educational Association 10th Annual Meeting (New Orleans, Louisiana: Catholic Educational Association, 1913).

the beginning.”²⁴² While not a rejection of the *Ratio studiorum*, O’Mahoney voiced the unspoken truth of the modern era: Catholic colleges would need to adapt to survive.

The classical curriculum remained part of the average Catholic campus’s life throughout the remainder of the period covered here. However, as the curriculum was standardized for accrediting bodies and easier communication with graduate institutions, the classical course’s importance was de-emphasized. No longer was a Catholic college diploma a guarantor of fluent Greek and Latin, or of thorough grounding in logic and rhetoric. Instead, Catholic colleges began to look more like non-sectarian schools, granting bachelor’s degrees in arts, letters, philosophy, and science. Minimum accrediting standards reflected this growing diversity:

- (1) The Standard College should require sixteen units for entrance.
- (2) The Standard College should require one hundred and twenty-eight semester hours as a minimum for graduation.
- (3) The Standard College should have at least seven departments with seven professors giving their entire time to college work. The departments of English, History, Language and Philosophy should be represented among these seven

²⁴² John P. O’Mahoney, “The Standard College,” in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the tenth annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 10 (New Orleans, Louisiana: Catholic Educational Association, 1913), 167.

departments.

(4) The professors of the Standard College should have a college degree or its equivalent; they should instruct in that department for which they have had special preparation.

(5) The library of the Standard College should contain at least 5,000 volumes.

(6) The laboratory equipment of the Standard College should be sufficient to carry on work in Physics, Chemistry and General Science. The equipment should represent at least \$5,000.00.

(7) The number of hours of work a student should be required to carry a week in the Standard College should be at least sixteen; ordinarily not more than twenty.

(8) The Standard College should require no professor to carry ordinarily more than sixteen hours of teaching a week.²⁴³

While reasonable goals, it was unclear how many colleges met this bar in 1916. These goals reflected the accreditation requirements of the North Central Association, and member institutions from other parts of the country felt it unfair that these regional standards be applied to areas where standards were decidedly lower. Though Schumacher suggested

²⁴³ Matthew Schumacher, section secretary, "Report of Proceedings of the College Department," in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the 11th annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 11 (Atlantic City, New Jersey: Catholic Educational Association, 1914), 93.

that a list of colleges meeting the requirements be compiled, there was heated debate and the question was tabled for at least another year.²⁴⁴

The question of an “approved college” list was a deeply political one rooted in the previous century’s history. For institutions which grew from poor starts or which were essentially academies, the thought of competing with a Notre Dame or Spring Hill was illogical as well as impossible. Opponents had a number of arguments: “that a number of educational institutions which have deserved well in the past would be materially injured if, within the Association or before the public, they could no longer figure as colleges; . . . that, moreover, the drawing up of the proposed list would necessarily cause ill feeling, dissensions and possibly some real injustice; finally, that before proposing this measure it should be shown that it lies within the limits of the Association’s authority”.²⁴⁵ One author claimed that it was the business of the Catholic University of America to set such standards, as it was chartered to be the “center of union and strength to the entire Catholic Educational system of the United States,” rather than the work of a professional organization without the authority to compel change from its member institutions.²⁴⁶

Regardless of the reasons against such a list, the opposition failed. In 1920, the CEA’s Committee on Standardization released its first list of

²⁴⁴ John P. O’Mahoney, section secretary, “Report of Proceedings of the College Section,” in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the 13th annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 13 (Baltimore, Maryland: Catholic Educational Association, 1916), 91-107.

²⁴⁵ Anonymous, “The Standardization of Catholic Colleges,” *Catholic Educational Review* 13 (March 1917): 196-97, 193-99.

approved colleges. The list included 43 men's and 24 women's colleges. The only Southern colleges on the list were Spring Hill and Jefferson (Louisiana) for men, and Incarnate Word and Our Lady of the Lake for women. In support of the list, the president of Campion College (Wisconsin) argued that "it were well to remember that the prevailing standards, albeit arbitrary in large measure and material only, will continue to prevail for the present, and that our well-being, if not our very hopes of continued existence, depend on our meeting these minimum standards if we hope ever to have a hand or a voice in re-shaping the college standards of the future."²⁴⁷ The CEA's member institutions had cast their lot with modern higher education, realizing that they could no longer enjoy both separation from the world and acceptance by it.

Though Catholic colleges continued to modernize throughout the mid-20th century, their modifications were slow and small. Catholic institutions ranged in quality from those schools which were comparable to good non-Catholic colleges to the majority of Catholic schools, small schools which served local populations and had little or no pretense of excellence. As the 1960s began, higher education began to experience a

²⁴⁶ Anonymous, "The Standardization of Catholic Colleges."

²⁴⁷ Brother Thomas, section secretary, "Report of Proceedings of the Department of Colleges and Secondary Schools," in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the 18th annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 18 (Cincinnati, Ohio: Catholic Educational Association, 1921), 99-114; Albert C. Fox, "The Trend of the Colleges," in *Report of the proceedings and addresses of the 18th annual meeting*, Catholic Educational Association Annual Meeting, vol. 18 (Cincinnati, Ohio: Catholic Educational Association, 1921), 128.

time of great ferment both because of external sociopolitical pressures and the rapid ascent of scientific study and federal funding, which caused many colleges to rethink their curricula and research agendas.

For Catholic institutions, the 1960s were also the time of Vatican II, the church conference which radically reshaped Catholic practice. Just as Catholic parishes and parishioners debated how to define themselves in this new era of faith, Catholic colleges revisited the question of their Catholic nature. Papers from National Catholic Educational Association meetings in the mid-60s echo CEA meetings in the mid-1910s: “The Whither-Whether Question of Catholic Higher Education,” “Implications for the Future of Catholic Higher Education,” “The Contribution of Catholic Higher Education Today and In the Future,” and “The Responsibility of Catholic Higher Education.”

No matter the era in which Catholic college identity was debated, the resulting definition was the same. Catholic colleges were those which housed departments of theology, and which planned their curricula to bring questions of faith and intellect into the daily life of the campus community. Catholic colleges expected mental and social discipline from their students. Catholic colleges had a “religious vision [that] still exists as the potential unifying element of Catholic college life, both of the academic and nonacademic elements.”²⁴⁸ While seminary education and

²⁴⁸ Patricia Feistritz, “Focus on the Catholic College,” *Momentum* 6, no. 2 (May 1975): 39.

missionary outreach were less important in the 20th century than they had been in the 19th, the third leg of Power's triad of motives remained at the core of a Catholic college's self-definition: the cultivation of moral and religious virtue, in the service of building a cadre of educated and faithful laypersons.

CHAPTER 6

THE FATE OF SOUTHERN CATHOLIC COLLEGES

Though 55 Catholic colleges opened in the South between 1830 and 1930, only ten remain open. It is difficult, if not nearly impossible, to determine the reasons why colleges closed if no records are available. There are many possible reasons why forty-five Catholic colleges failed in the region, ranging from overt religious or political pressure to a simple lack of students. Although exotic explanations are attractive, the colleges introduced in Chapter Three generally failed for the same reasons that non-Catholic colleges fail: they simply could not manage the complex equation of students, money, faculty, curriculum, and purpose.

To understand the reasons why Southern Catholic colleges failed, it is instructive to sort these colleges in several ways. Table 6.1 shows Southern Catholic colleges ordered by the year of their closure.

Table 6.1

Southern Catholic Colleges Sorted by Year of Closure

College	State	Year Opened	Year Closed
Philosophical & Classical Seminary	South Carolina	1822	1842
Jefferson	Louisiana	1831	1842
St. Mary's	Mississippi	1852	1852
Sts. Peter & Paul	Louisiana	1849	1855
St. Mary's Collegiate	South Carolina	1849	1855
Louisiana	Louisiana	1855	1855
Immaculate Conception	Louisiana	1855	1857
St. Andrew's	Arkansas	1848	1858
Poydras	Louisiana	1854	1861? (Civil War)
St. Joseph's	Louisiana	1856	1863
St. Mary's	South Carolina	1851	1865
St. Mary's	Louisiana	1856	1866
Natchez	Mississippi	1866	1869
St. Joseph's	Texas	1869	1874
Pass Christian	Mississippi	1866	1875
Pio Nono	Georgia	1874	1888
Guadalupe	Texas	1878	1890
St. Mary's	Texas	1852	1894
Thibodaux	Louisiana	1872	1896
St. Mary's Commercial	Louisiana	1883	1900
St. Francis Xavier's	Louisiana	1894	1900
St. Joseph's	Texas	1880	1902
Immaculate Conception	Louisiana	1847	1904
St. Aloysius Commercial	Mississippi	1900	1905
College of the Marist Fathers	Georgia	1901	1905?
St. John's	Louisiana	1906	1908
St. Joseph's	Louisiana	1904	1910
St. Aloysius	Louisiana	1902	1912
St. John Berchman's	Louisiana	1904	1914
Holy Cross	Louisiana	1890	1915
St. Basil's	Texas	1899	1915

College	State	Year Opened	Year Closed
Sacred Heart	Georgia	1900	1917
St. Charles	Louisiana	1837	1921
St. Thomas	Texas	1902	1921
St. Mary's	Texas	1855	1922
St. Stanislaus Commercial	Mississippi	1870	1922
St. Louis	Texas	1891	1923
St. Paul's College	Louisiana	1916	1923
St. Mary's Jefferson	Louisiana	1864	1927
New Subiaco	Arkansas	1878	1930
St. Bernard's	Alabama	1892	1933
Corpus Christi	Texas	1926	1939
Little Rock	Arkansas	1908	1940
College of the Sacred Heart	Louisiana	1921	1956
Our Lady of Victory	Texas	1910	1958
St. Mary's Dominican	Louisiana	1911	1985
Spring Hill	Alabama	1830	--
Belmont Abbey	North Carolina	1878	--
St. Edward's	Texas	1885	--
St. Leo's	Florida	1890	--
Loyola	Louisiana	1904	--
University of Dallas	Texas	1906	--
Incarnate Word	Texas	1909	--
Our Lady of the Lake	Texas	1911	--
Xavier	Louisiana	1915	--

Table 6.2 shows these closures sorted by decade.

Table 6.2

Southern Catholic Colleges Sorted by Decade of Closure

Decade	Number of Closures
1840-1849	2
1850-1859	6
1860-1869	5
1870-1879	2
1880-1889	1
1890-1899	3
1900-1909	7
1910-1919	6
1920-1929	7
1930-1939	3
1940-1949	1
1950-1959	2
1960-1969	0
1970-1979	0
1980-1989	1

As these tables show, Southern Catholic colleges closed regularly, with only a few decades of unusual activity.

The colleges which closed in the 1800s did so for many of the same reasons that non-Catholic colleges closed during the same time. The two closures of the 1840s were primarily academies; in the case of the Philosophical & Classical Seminary, the institution closed because its charismatic leader, Bishop John England, died. The six closures of the 1850s were schools which barely managed to open at all, due either to

their frontier locale and scant budgets or to the lack of students and faculty. The five closures of the 1860s were primarily due to the Civil War, whether because the campus was destroyed or because the resulting economic depression made higher education a luxury. The final thirty years of the 19th century saw only five closures, of which at least three were actually mergers or transition to a seminary.

Colleges which closed during the 20th century did so for some of the reasons given for 19th century colleges. However, Catholic college closures in these decades also stemmed from various external pressures. Between 1900 and 1930, twenty Southern Catholic colleges closed. Many of these schools reverted to a preparatory or academic curriculum, while others simply shut their doors. The national trend toward accreditation, standardization, and accountability led marginal colleges all over the country to change their focus or close, and Southern Catholic colleges were no different. After 1930, the rate of closure dropped dramatically. In the seventy years between 1930 and the end of the century, only seven Catholic colleges closed or merged with other schools.

Another way to look at Southern Catholic college closures is to sort the institutions by lifespan, or the number of years the institution remained open. Table 6.3 shows the colleges introduced in Chapter Three, sorted and ranked by lifespan.

Table 6.3

Southern Catholic Colleges Sorted and Ranked by Lifespan

College	State	Year Opened	Year Closed	Lifespan
St. Mary's	Mississippi	1852	1852	0
Louisiana	Louisiana	1855	1855	0
Immaculate Conception	Louisiana	1855	1857	2
St. John's	Louisiana	1906	1908	2
Natchez	Mississippi	1866	1869	3
College of the Marist Fathers	Georgia	1901	1905?	4
St. Aloysius Commercial	Mississippi	1900	1905	5
St. Joseph's	Texas	1869	1874	5
Sts. Peter & Paul	Louisiana	1849	1855	6
St. Mary's Collegiate	South Carolina	1849	1855	6
St. Francis Xavier's	Louisiana	1894	1900	6
St. Joseph's	Louisiana	1904	1910	6
Poydras	Louisiana	1854	1861?	7
St. Paul's College	Louisiana	1916	1923	7
St. Joseph's	Louisiana	1856	1863	7
Pass Christian	Mississippi	1866	1875	9
St. Andrew's	Arkansas	1848	1858	10
St. Aloysius	Louisiana	1902	1912	10
St. John Berchman's	Louisiana	1904	1914	10
St. Mary's	Louisiana	1856	1866	10
Jefferson	Louisiana	1831	1842	11
Guadalupe	Texas	1878	1890	12
Corpus Christi	Texas	1926	1939	13
St. Mary's	South Carolina	1851	1865	14
Pio Nono	Georgia	1874	1888	14
St. Basil's	Texas	1899	1915	16
St. Mary's Commercial	Louisiana	1883	1900	17
Sacred Heart	Georgia	1900	1917	17
St. Thomas	Texas	1902	1921	19
Philosophical & Classical Seminary	South Carolina	1822	1842	20
St. Joseph's	Texas	1880	1902	22
Thibodaux	Louisiana	1872	1896	24

College	State	Year Opened	Year Closed	Lifespan
Holy Cross	Louisiana	1890	1915	25
St. Louis	Texas	1891	1923 (merged)	32
Little Rock	Arkansas	1908	1940	32
College of the Sacred Heart	Louisiana	1921	1956	35
St. Bernard's	Alabama	1892	1933	41
St. Mary's	Texas	1852	1894 (merged)	42
Our Lady of Victory	Texas	1910	1958 (merged)	48
New Subiaco	Arkansas	1878	1930	52
St. Stanislaus Commercial	Mississippi	1870	1922	52
Immaculate Conception	Louisiana	1847	1904	57
St. Mary's Jefferson	Louisiana	1864	1927	63
St. Mary's	Texas	1855	1922	67
St. Mary's Dominican	Louisiana	1911	1985	74
St. Charles	Louisiana	1837	1921	84
Xavier	Louisiana	1915	--	88
Our Lady of the Lake	Texas	1911	--	92
Incarnate Word	Texas	1909	--	94
University of Dallas	Texas	1906	--	97
Loyola	Louisiana	1904	--	99
St. Leo's	Florida	1890	--	113
St. Edward's	Texas	1885	--	118
Belmont Abbey	North Carolina	1878	--	125
Spring Hill	Alabama	1830	--	173

Though Table 6.2 shows a reasonably even distribution of closures across nine decades, the lifespan data is much less uniform. Table 6.4 shows the lifespans of closed institutions, sorted in ten-year segments.

Table 6.4

Lifespans of Closed Southern Catholic Colleges

Lifespan	Number of Colleges
0-10 years	20
11-20 years	10
21-30 years	3
31-40 years	3
41-50 years	3
51-60 years	3
61-70 years	2
71-80 years	1
81-90 years	1 ²⁴⁹

Regardless of the decade in which a Southern Catholic college was opened or closed, it is clear that colleges which managed to reach their twentieth anniversary had an excellent chance of remaining open for many more years. Those colleges destined to fail rarely made it to that twentieth year.

Although most Southern Catholic colleges closed for ordinary reasons, such as lack of students or solvency, there are other factors which may have played a part in some closures. Since Catholics were a religious minority in the region and they established schools to maintain that separation from the dominant culture, it is reasonable to think that nativist and anti-Catholic political movements may have had some effect

on the colleges. This effect, however, was not the direct cause of any Southern collegiate closure.

The various nativist political movements of the 19th and 20th centuries were anti-Catholic and, in some regions of the country, quite violent. The excesses of nativist fervor common in New England and the upper Midwest did not spur similar riots and rallies in the Southern states. The only Southern Catholic college which is known to have been affected directly by nativist sentiment was St. Andrew's College in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Along with the other problems detailed in Chapter Three, St. Andrew's had difficulty obtaining a charter from the state legislature. The Arkansas legislature of 1849 had a significant number of nativist sympathizers, and the education committee recommended against granting a charter to the diocese for its college. The reasons given were familiar, echoing those used against Senator Benton in his attempt to obtain federal land grants for St. Louis University:

- 1) That the trustees were all clergymen of the same religious order;
- 2) that the first person named was bishop over all the rest, and that through his controlling influence the management would really be vested in one person;
- 3) that said bishop owed no allegiance to the institutions of

²⁴⁹ Nine Catholic colleges remain open in the South. Their current lifespans range from 88 to 173 years, but they are not included in this table.

our country, civil or religious;
 4) that a perpetuity was asked for beyond legislative
 regulation.²⁵⁰

Despite the committee's recommendation, the bill was amended sufficiently and it eventually passed, though the St. Andrew's charter was limited to 50 years rather than granted in perpetuity. St. Andrew's closed after ten years due to its own instability, rather than because of any external pressure from anti-Catholic Arkansans.

Southern nativism was more diffuse and generalized than that of the North. The Know-Nothing Party was not a significant player in regional politics, and the Ku Klux Klan's anti-Catholicism was muted in the South in favor of a focus on African-Americans. In fact, Louisiana Know-Nothings splintered from the national party because they refused to adopt the anti-Catholic planks of the party platform. The Louisiana delegate to the 1855 Know-Nothing convention argued that "[i]n relation to the Catholics of Louisiana, I have endeavored to demonstrate to you that they are free from those gross superstitions which you attribute to the Church of Rome . . . Louisianans are enlightened Catholics, who would not permit the most distant ecclesiastical interference with politics."²⁵¹ Though the Louisiana Know-Nothing Party was anti-Creole

²⁵⁰ Erbacher, "Catholic Higher Education for Men in the United States," 70-71.

²⁵¹ Leon Cyprian Soulé, *The Know-Nothing Party in New Orleans: A Reappraisal* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana Historical Association, 1962), 66, quoting Charles Gayarré.

and anti-immigrant, making it effectively anti-Catholic, the party took no official position that was anti-Catholic.

Where nativist or anti-Catholic sentiment affected Catholic colleges, it was generally the result of individual or small group attacks. At Spring Hill in the mid-1850s, a priest on the faculty left campus to go on a regular missionary route. An ambush had been set on his route:

A party of Know-Nothings, armed with bludgeons, lay in wait for Father Nachon in an uninhabited forest region on his way to the Dog River Mission, and beat him unmercifully leaving him for dead. . . . Though severely wounded and covered with blood, he made his way to his Mission Chapel and managed to offer Mass; and when sufficiently recovered, resumed his weekly journeys to Dog River, till relieved by Father Achard; and the Protestant neighbors saw to it that neither he nor any of the Fathers was again molested.²⁵²

During the Civil War and Reconstruction, anti-Catholicism faded through the region. In the early decades of the 20th century, however, nativist sentiments regained popularity. Georgia was particularly affected, since U.S. Senator Tom Watson had a particular dislike of Catholics. Watson, an agrarian populist and Populist candidate for president in 1904, was the spirit behind Georgia's Veazey Bill.

²⁵² Kenny, *Catholic Culture in Alabama*, 180.

This bill, introduced in the Georgia House of Representatives by Prior Gardner Veazey of Warren County, mandated county grand juries to appoint inspection committees which would search every institution in the state to see whether anyone was being held against their will. Though the bill included prisons, hospitals, schools, reformatories, and other group living situations, it was generally understood that the Veazey Bill targeted Catholic monasteries, convents, schools, and colleges. As Veazey admitted on the floor of the House, “The main purpose of the bill is to get at Roman Catholic institutions, to get into them and to see what is going on there; to investigate them. Of course to do that we had to put a lot of other things too.”²⁵³

By Watson’s time, the College of the Sacred Heart in Augusta was the only Catholic college in Georgia. In a 1999 letter to the Diocese of Savannah’s newspaper, *The Southern Cross*, Sister Rose Margaret Schweers offered her memories of Augusta during Watson’s tenure in office:

He and his followers spread false rumors about Catholics throughout the state, but especially in Augusta, as his home was nearby Thomson. Watson relied on the rural people to

²⁵³ Felicitas Powers, “Prejudice, Journalism, and the Catholic Laymen’s Association of Georgia,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 8, no. 3 (Fall 1989): 204, 201-14, quoting the *Macon Telegraph*, July 15 1915. The Veazey Bill remained on Georgia books until 1966. Florida also saw a spate of anti-Catholic bills in the 1910s; see David P. Page, “Bishop Michael Curley and Anti-Catholic Nativism in Florida,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (October 1966): 101-17; Robert B. Rackleff, “Anti-Catholicism and the Florida Legislature, 1911-1919,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (April 1972): 352-65.

carry out this persecution as they had no personal contact with Catholics and would believe the man who had given them “rural free delivery”. [...] In Augusta in the years 1900-1915, there was a college at Sacred Heart but run by the Jesuits. The school had a drill team and Watson attacked the school’s purpose in having that drill team. He charged that the drill team was actually being trained for militant Catholic action.²⁵⁴

Whether it was due to Watson’s attention or to other factors, the College of the Sacred Heart closed in 1917. Ironically, Watson’s own daughter and two nephews attended Georgia Catholic academies. It is unclear to modern scholars whether Watson’s vitriolic attacks on Catholics were personally felt or were merely convenient political positions.²⁵⁵

As World War I, the Depression, and then World War II captured the attention of most Americans, anti-Catholicism and nativism became less potent forces. The Klan continued to ride, but focused its efforts on blacks rather than whites of non-Protestant faiths. Catholics continued to live separate religious lives, and colleges that were still open in 1930 were far more likely to stay open than colleges of an earlier era. Nativist

²⁵⁴ Rose Margaret Schweers, “On Tom Watson and the Veazey Bill,” Letter to the editor, *The Southern Cross* [Savannah, Georgia] March 18 1999, 4.

²⁵⁵ Powers, “Prejudice, Journalism, and the Catholic Laymen's Association of Georgia”; C. Vann Woodward, *Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel* (New York City, New York: Oxford University Press, 1938). For some reasons why Watson may have picked anti-Catholicism as a central motive, see Fred D. Ragan, “Obscenity or Politics? Tom Watson, Anti-Catholicism, and the Department of Justice,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 17-45.

or anti-Catholic sentiments were not particularly dangerous to established institutions.

In the end, the story of Southern Catholic colleges is less remarkable than might have been expected. Though the story of Catholicism in the American South is certainly one of loneliness and rigor, there are many elements of the tale that echo the stories of other religious denominations in the region. Since the South was frontier country until the early decades of the 20th century, it was not easy to live outside cities in most Southern states. Belonging to the Catholic church was simply one more element in a panorama of solitude and, in some places, alienation from the larger culture.

Unfortunately, there is still much we do not know about Southern Catholics and about their educational institutions. American Catholic historical research tends to focus on the Northeast and upper Midwest, where the religion was deeply-rooted and the documents are easily obtained. Research into 19th century higher education tends to focus on schools for which there is ample documentation, and on Protestant or state-funded schools, due to a misapprehension that American Catholics did not begin to found colleges in earnest until the 20th century waves of immigration bulked the church's rolls with late-adolescent males. Little work has been done specifically on Southern higher education, except for the institutional histories of several Southern colleges which remain open.

There are a number of areas for future research and study on Southern Catholic colleges. Perhaps the most important involves diocesan and religious order archives. Any extant documents relating to the colleges described in Chapter Three must be identified and categorized. With luck, these documents may include yearly catalogues, financial records, and correspondence between bishop and president or between the president and his religious superiors. While lists of students are helpful in learning more about the size and geographical distribution of classes, they do not tell us a great deal about the daily academic and spiritual life of the college. Diocesan archivists are excellent partners for the historical researcher, and there is great potential for seminal research in this area. This work is critical, as study of Southern Catholic colleges can go no further until new primary sources are found.

Another interesting field of research lies in comparison of 19th century non-Catholic denominational colleges to what we know about Catholic colleges of the same era. Curricula, financial information, organization and governance, and reasons for closure are all areas which are understudied for denominational colleges of all types. Comparing Baptist or Methodist colleges in Louisiana to Catholic colleges in that state, for example, would add a new dimension to our understanding of the denominationalist movements in the antebellum South. Unfortunately, the same primary research which needs to be done for Catholic schools is lacking for most closed non-Catholic Southern

colleges as well; in many cases, the denomination had no central authority like the Catholic bishopric, and the papers may be lost forever.²⁵⁶

Those researchers more interested in curriculum or student life will find worthwhile topics in Southern Catholic colleges. Did Southern Catholic colleges address secession or slavery in their classrooms or debating societies? Did the positions taken on Catholic campuses mirror or contrast the positions taken at other Southern colleges? It would also be intriguing to study the Lost Cause and other romantic postwar concepts as they related to Southern Catholic colleges. In all facets, the intersection between Southern-ness and Catholicism is a fruitful area which has barely been touched by modern historians.

There is more to be learned about nativist and anti-Catholic movements in the South, ranging from the Know-Nothing Party to the Ku Klux Klan, and how they affected Catholic campuses. Again, diocesan and order archives may be the best source for correspondence and diaries which detail the political and social climate of the years which saw intense nativist activity. Newspapers, both local and Catholic, may offer some insight as well. I remain convinced that such philosophies

²⁵⁶ For example, the Georgia Records Project of the Works Progress Administration compiled a list of all colleges chartered in the state prior to 1861. Many of the documents consulted by Helen Bashinski, the list's compiler, were kept by individuals rather than by pastors or denominational leaders.

affected Southern Catholics and Catholic colleges more than the current research shows.

These are merely four areas which have the greatest potential for long-term research on Southern Catholic colleges. The field of American Catholic higher education itself is open. Where many historians in other fields find themselves sorting the smallest minutiae for publishable articles, American Catholic history offers myriad opportunities for satisfying primary research. So little has been done, and so much remains to do.²⁵⁷

The story of Southern Catholic higher education is a tantalizing one. From the little information available, the educational historian can build a skeleton of information, but cannot add much in the way of flesh or clothing. In this set of essays, I have attempted to build that framework. It provides a new perspective on Southern higher education, as well as a new facet of American Catholic higher education, which is usually considered to be a northeastern and midwest phenomenon.

Southern Catholic colleges were both unique and ordinary. They served a religious minority who sought to educate their sons and daughters in an environment of faith, but who hoped the same children would assimilate into the larger community as they built lives and

²⁵⁷ For an excellent description of the various topics left unstudied in American Catholic history and some reasons for the neglect, see Leslie Woodcock Tentler, "On the Margins: The State of American Catholic History," *American Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (March 1993): 104-27.

families of their own. Though Southern Catholic colleges usually failed for the same reasons that non-Catholic colleges closed their doors, Catholics did manage to open and maintain colleges which succeeded despite the small number of faithful in the region.

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