

*Anonymous pencil manuscript
typed 1959*

RG 73.

MANUSCRIPT OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF OTTAWA UNIVERSITY

The first meeting of the Kansas Baptist State Convention, June 9, 1860, Committees of the Kansas River and East Kansas Associations, appointed to name trustees and secure a charter for a university, stated to the Convention that they had obtained a charter under the name and title of "Roger Williams University" whose corporate body consists of leading Baptists in Kansas, with power to locate in one year from the date of the charter. At the suggestion of the Board, a committee of five to take into consideration the location of a university with instruction to report the information to the Convention was set up.

There was present at this meeting Rev. John Tecumseh Jones, delegate from the Ottawa Indian church. Mr. Jones was born in Michigan, was a member of the Objibway tribe, and had spent several years as a student at Madison University, Hamilton, New York. Failing health having compelled him to leave school, he accepted the invitation of the Ottawa Indians living in Franklin County, Kansas to dwell among them and to be their trader and interpreter and the desire which he had for the education of the Ottawa children he easily communicated to their parents. His own education and his contact with civilization caused him to place a high value upon education as a means of benefiting /life/. Their wealth consisted of land and a certain portion of this they were willing to set apart for the foundation of an Indian school.

Upon the report of the educational committee at the Atchison meeting for the location of a Baptist University, Mr. Jones said that his people had been contemplating for some time the founding of a school of higher grade for the benefit of their children and as they were all Baptists they thought they would like to unite with their white brothers in other educational interests.

After a full and free conference an agreement was effected, the substance of which was that the Ottawa's would give 20,000 acres of their land, then worth from \$20,000 to \$25,000, to endow the school, the trustees agreeing on their part to board, clothe, and educate all the children of the Nation between the ages of four and fourteen years. The main portions of the agreement were laid before the Secretary of the Interior and received his approval. The Ottawa's were empowered by act of Congress to devote 20,640 acres of land to found an institution of learning which should be under the self-perpetuating board composed of five Indians and three white men. No mention is made of any denominational affiliation nor was the school under Baptist management or control save that the trustees were all Baptists and hence would be likely to look to Baptists for patronage and guidance.

The first meeting of the Board of the new university was held Aug. 20, 1862, in Ottawa in the house of James Wind. On the part of the Indian trustees, there were present John T. Jones, James Wind, William Hurr and Joseph King. The white trustees present were John G. Pratt, C. C. Hutchenson, and John W. Young. In the election at the organization of the Board, Indians only were chosen to fill the offices. The one additional item of business transacted at this meeting was the sale of 5,000 acres of land for the erection of a college building.

In April of 1865 a new charter was granted and a new organization effected under the title of Ottawa University. An agent was appointed to canvass the Baptists of the East for money to aid in the erection of the college building.

Shortly after, the Institution recommended a charter to grant degrees, /this was/ three years before the opening of the academic department and twenty on years before a student had graduated from this college course. The trustees, by virtue of their authority, conferred the degree of D. D. upon

a local clergyman, the first and only honorary degree that the Institution had so far granted.

The Indian department of the University began its work, Sept, 7, 1868, Mrs. R. S. Mayhew was the matron in charge. A dwelling house was rebuilt for school purposes. About thirty Indian children were in attendance. Instruction was given in the common branches and the domestic and industrial arts were taught.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was rented two weeks later for the white department of the academy. There was little variation in number as long as the old school continued. Professor Phileius Falls was chosen principal of the academy at a salary of \$3,000 per year.

Before the end of two years the financial foundations of the University inadvertantly gave way and the school was disbanded and the first chapter in the history of the school was finished.

But the American Baptist Wonom's Mission Society whose missionaries had Christianized the Ottawans and which was interested in proclaiming educational advantages for both Indian and Whites sent an agent to invetigate the condition of the affairs preparatory to rendering Ottawa University the assistance for which its trustees had applied. Their agent was Rev. Robert Atkinson. He was first chosen a trustee and soon afterward secretary and treasurer of the Institution for over fourteen years through sunshine and storm. He first settled the various items of indebtedness. Then aided by the cardinal endorsement of the society that had commissioned him solicited the principle cities of the East and solicited funds with such great success that as the result of his effort he was able to report \$3,000 obtained. The building which had been begun in former years was soon finished at a total cost of \$4,000. It was thrown open for use in the fall of 1869.

Professor M.L. Ward entered the elegant new stone building Sept. 1869 as principal of the academic department. He was assisted by able teachers. The enrollment of students varied from 50 to 70 during each of the four years of his stay. At the end of which time he resigned his position to accept a professorship in the agricultural college at Manhattan.

In the mean time the Ottawa's decided to remove to the Indian Territory. Moreover the Indians were persuaded by certain lawyers that they had not received all the advantages they should have received from the University. Litigation ensued. Finally adjustment was effected by which the section of land upon which the college building stood was granted to the University by the United States government. An additional grant of land was made sufficient as was thought to relieve the institution of indebtedness. The rest of the property went to the Indians and their attorneys.

The University now for the first time came under distinct and definite denominational control. The land was entrusted to the American Baptist Home Mission Society jointly with the University trustees. The Society surrendered its control of the property on condition that it should never be mortgaged and that it should be under the auspices of the Kansas Baptist State Convention and that the trustees be enlarged. In pursuance of that action the Board was increased from seven to twenty-four. Since that time the University makes an annual report to the State Convention and the Convention nominates one-half of the trustees of the school.

Shortly after the new regime had been inaugurated and a President in the person of Rev. E. C. Anderson D. D. had been secured, another misfortune occurred, Jan. 9, 1875, the college building was destroyed by fire. But before the fire had finished its work of destruction, plans were suggested for repairing the damage. The citizens of the town afforded generous aid; churches and individuals throughout the state gave largely in many cases.

In about a year from the date of the conflagration the building had been substantially rebuilt. Before this disaster Ottawa University was regarded as a rich institution not needing assistance. But now misfortune for the school awoke sympathy for it; sympathy stimulated giving and giving awakened interest.

Until the college building was finished, school was conducted in the city hall. Faculties were meager and the attendance was slight. After teaching for about two years, Dr. Anderson resigned the presidency. In taking leave of him the Board recorded a resolution describing him as a "true man, a dignified Christian gentleman, an accurate scholar and an experienced teacher."

In the Fall of 1877 Prof. P.J. Williams D.D. entered the duties of the presidency. At the time of his election he was Superintendent of the Leavenworth city schools. The trustees gave him a fixed sum each year together with all the tuition which should be received from the students aggregate. From this sum it was agreed that the president should pay the teachers. Dr. Williams was an elequent speaker and even before his election was well known throughout the state. Previous to his coming to Kansas he had been one of the most popular professors in the state normal school at * *, N. Y. When he entered Ottawa University he introduced the curriculum and the methods of a normal school of high grade. A general education was given; students were prepared for college but the work chiefly emphasized was normal work. The school repidly increased in popularity. The first year the number of students was 34, the second year 72, the third year 77, the fourth year 93. In 1879, the second year of his presidency six graduates from the normal department received diplomas; during his presidency (of four years) the number of graduates was eleven.

Mrs. M. J. Short, the president's efficient assistant began the collection of scientific apparatus by soliciting from the business men of Ottawa, \$500 was collected for the purchase of such material.

At the end of four years of successful labor, Dr. Williams, to the regret of all friends of the school, resigned the presidency of Ottawa University to accept the headship of a department of didactics in the State University.

In Sept. 1881 Prof. T.M. Stewart, a graduate of Shurtleff College and a teacher of some experience became acting President of the University. He retained that position for two years. Continuing "normal" work he organized the academic department with courses of study and a standard for graduation identical with the best academies of the East. The few teachers who assisted him were able instructors. The pupils during his administration could enter the corresponding classes of eastern colleges and rate high. The enrollment in all departments did not exceed 54. But he laid the foundations upon which all subsequent efforts have rested.

At this time an effort was made to raise an endowment of \$5,000. Rev. G. C. Marrle was chosen to lead the undertaking. He was the soul of the movement. His appeals met with an enthusiastic response so long as he remained in the field. But death took him from the ranks of the workers before one fifth of the amount had been subscribed and the movement fell to the ground.

In June 1880 Prof. M.L. Ward D.D. of the State Agricultural College was chosen President. Professor Ward had been connected / 1809-1873/ with the school and was well acquainted with its need, its resources and its possibilities.

He had the confidence of this denomination throughout the state and was well acquainted with churches and individuals and was able to gauge the measure of their financial ability. He seems to have aimed at the attainment of these things: first, to complete the endowment begun by Rev. G. C. Manley; second, to increase the endowment by the sale of the college land; third, to increase the attendance of the school; and fourth, to secure permanency in the teaching force.

In the first purpose he completely failed. The second object was attained. The "college section" was patented, platted, thrown upon the market and one hundred acres of it was sold for \$45,000 which constitutes the first productive endowment of the school. To increase the number of students two methods were employed. First, business, normal, music, and art courses of study were added to the curriculum, but with the exception of music these courses did not seem to take root in the school and were after several years discontinued.

The music department under Professor and Mrs. C. A. Boyle grew rapidly and quickly and an enviable reputation has continued to attract from far and near.

The second distinctive method of enlargement was an addition to ordinary means of advertisement. A college agent was to go to the churches and Sunday Schools and homes of the denominational constituency of the university to meet the young people in person, to present the work and the claims of the school, to secure by these means their presence in Ottawa University. In these efforts he was effectually assisted by Professors Sutherland, Wambler, and Charlton. They devoted every summer vacation to a canvass. The attendance constantly increased. The enrollment the first year was fifty-four (54), the second year one hundred-five (105), the third year one hundred fifty-five (155), and the fourth year one hundred-eighty-five (185).

After Professor Ward's resignation, Professor George Sutherland became President of the Faculty for one year and President of the University for two succeeding years. The number of students enrolled during the last of his administration was two hundred sixty-five (265).

The college classes numbered sixty-seven (67). The first graduates who had taken their college work at the University, received diplomas during his administration. During his Presidency activity was extended chiefly in three directions: to the construction of a new college building, raise an endowment, and build a ~~college~~ cottage for young lady students. The increased and increasing attendance made the demand for more room imperative. The money for the erection of the north wing of the building was raised by subscription in the city of Ottawa. From first to last the executive of the school was the chairman of the committee on subscriptions. He was most effectively assisted by Messrs L. R. Crawford and H. G. Sheldon.

After an agent had been secured to raise an endowment and was already in the field, the American Baptist Education Society made to the University an offer of \$1,000 provided that by the close of 1891 \$40,500 be raised for endowment and building purposes in money. The agent was Rev. A. T. Niemfied. He worked heroically. His appeals met with a liberal response, even among the weaker churches and conservative neighborhoods, so that at the time stipulated by the Education Society the trustees were able to report that \$40,000 required and nearly \$8,000 in addition.

Five of the ladies, feeling the need of better accommodations for the young women attending school, met together and devised plans for building the required structure. Mrs. (Professor) Charlton became the incarnation of the endeavor without remuneration. She spent many months among the women of Kansas and among the Baptists of the East collecting funds for the building. In this way she raised \$5,000, more than two-thirds of the cost of the Cottage, and the building was subsequently completed by an appropriation from the general funds of the institution.

During the last year in which these efforts were reaching a successful termination, Rev. Franklin Johnson, D. D. was President. He began his executive duties September 2, 1889. As a speaker and as an author he had a wide reputation. He was a man of lovely spirit. Whenever he spoke and wherever he went, he made an excellent impression for himself and for the University he was chosen to represent.

He did not remain at the head of the school long enough to develop new plans for its enlargement, for at the close of two years of service, he resigned the presidency to accept a position in the new University of Chicago.

Professor F. W. Colegrove Ph.D. was now the President. He graduated at Colgate University and for two years had been Professor of Latin in that institution. He entered upon his presidential duty, September, 1892. He was young and a good scholar and a good speaker and was no doubt a commendable success.

Beside the President of the Faculty is as follows:

George Sutherland A. M. B. D.
Chair History and Economics

M. L. Ward D. D.
Chair of Mathematics

Adelaide L. Dicklow A. B.
Chair of English Literature and Modern Language.

James R. Ewing A. B.
Chair of Greek

F. H. Potter A. B.
Chair of Latin

C. J. Henich B. S.
Chair of Science

Mrs. W. O. Mellin
Chair of Stenography

Prof. H. A. Boyle and wife
Chair of Music

Five additional teachers.

The courses of study were classical, literary and scientific, both preparatory and collegiate. The classical course is identical with the same classical course in other colleges. In the literary course there is one ancient language, which may be either Latin or Greek. In the scientific course there is but one year of Latin required. A noticeable change in the curriculum has been the enlargement of the place given to history and English literature. Electives are not yet offered but any student is at liberty to make a choice of the course he shall pursue.

Besides these courses there is a music course of high grade. Courses in Business and stenography have been lately added.

There are also post-graduate courses leading to the degrees of A. M. and M. S. The work necessary for attaining the Masters degree is equivalent to one year's work in college but those who spend three years in a professional school are, upon application, granted the degree of A. M. without examination.

The utmost harmony has always prevailed among the different college classes and between the students and the members of the faculty. Trouble in the matter of conduct has for a decade been practically unknown. The students are intensely loyal to their Alma Mater. The YMCA and the YWCA have always been active and influential. During certain years the most effective religious work in the city had been done under the presidency of the college. The whole surrounding atmosphere of Ottawa with its strong temperance sentiment and with its strong religious sentiment, and with the numerous lecturers and concerts of every variety which cluster about the interstate Ottawa character make Ottawa a most excellent educational and literary center.

The weakness of Ottawa University has been the frequent changes which have taken place in its presidency. During the twenty-seven years of its existency it has had ten different executives. Continuity of plan and accumulation of strength became well nigh impossible. These frequent changes were more pernicious in the early years of the schools than during later years when the policy and work of the Institution was more thoroughly settled and even though presidents may come and go the professors and trustees continue according to well-understood precedents.

It is the expressed policy of the Baptist denomination to maintain but one college in Kansas, but to establish from time to time academies which shall be feeders to the one recognized college. However, in a denomination whose churches and associations are buried by no central authority it is not strange that new colleges spring up here and there. In 1886, a new university was organized at Wichita based upon what seemed to the projectors as a magnificent endowment, but the "boom" upon which the undertaking was founded collapsed and the great university suddenly vanished. Another college was opened at Morrill but this was short lived, on account of a lack of endowment and patronage. Another Baptist college has been

started recently, at Pratt with somewhat better prospects of permanency than the former undertakings but none of these schools ever received denominational endorsement.

The prospects for Ottawa University becoming a school which will render every important service to education are flattering. Its constituency is the denomination which is second in point of numbers in Kansas.