

## New Home for Furman University<sup>1</sup> Courtney Tollison\*

Since the 1960s, Furman University has resided on an idyllic campus about six miles north of the city of Greenville. Yet, for the vast majority of its tenure as an institution - over 100 years- Furman was located in downtown Greenville, and during this time, town and gown enjoyed a highly synergistic relationship.

As close as Greenville and Furman are and have been in the past, however, Furman did not originate in Greenville or even in the upcountry. In 1826, a group of Baptists attempting to establish an educational institution received a charter from the South Carolina Legislature. Through this institution, they hoped to honor Dr. Richard Furman, a converted "Yankee" who passionately supported the development of educational institutions for Baptists and was arguably the most influential Baptist minister in the nation during his day.<sup>2</sup> The granting of the charter was preceded by conversations between South Carolina and Georgia Baptists throughout the early 1820s regarding the possibility of jointly supporting an institution; thus, South Carolina Baptists located their nascent institution in Edgefield, on the border of South Carolina and Georgia. The new institution was named the "Furman Academy and Theological Institution."<sup>3</sup>

The institution did not thrive in Edgefield, however, and subsequently moved to the High Hills of the Santee, and then to Winnsboro in

<sup>1</sup> A version of this article was presented at a meeting of the Greenville County Historical Society in 2008, when Furman celebrated the 50th anniversary of its move to a new campus. The author would like to thank Donny Santacaterina (Furman, '15) and Ken Johnson for their editorial support and contributions to this article.

<sup>2</sup> In his leadership roles nationally and in South Carolina, Richard Furman prioritized the education of ministers and laymen, and was involved in and/or inspired the founding of South Carolina College (now University of South Carolina), Columbian College (now George Washington University), Furman University, and Mercer University. James A. Rogers, *Richard Furman: Life and Legacy* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2001) 117-130; Courtney Tollison, *Furman University: The Campus History Series* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2004) 7, 10; Courtney L. Tollison, "Richard Furman: Minister, Educator, Patriot." Unpublished paper given to the SC Historical Society, February 4, 2014.

Fairfield County, SC.<sup>4</sup> For several practical and financial reasons, the college became attracted to a location in Greenville in the late 1840s. The climate of Greenville was milder than the midlands and lowcountry and thus had fewer mosquitos. Baptists had already established boys' and girls' academies in the small city, and the promise of a railroad through the town encouraged future prosperity and easier access. During an age when the threat of slave insurrections prompted fears among many whites, perhaps the fact that the upcountry population included fewer slaves and free African Americans than did the midlands and lowcountry was an appealing factor. Furman was also attracted to Greenville because the local economy was more diversified than the lowcountry's heavy reliance upon cotton and agriculture, promising a more balanced economy for the future. This decision proved beneficial during the era of strong sectionalism between states in the North and the South in the years leading up to the Civil War. As a Southern city that was focused more, comparatively, on textile production, and was thus not as reliant on slave labor, Greenville was less vulnerable to any changes brought about by the termination of the South's "peculiar institution" and could therefore provide a more stable environment for an academic institution to grow and thrive.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, Vardry McBee, widely considered the "Father of Greenville" due to his development of the city in the early-to-mid-1800s, began recruiting the university to the city in 1849. While he had recently refused to sell 50 acres of his land on the south side of the Reedy River to the railroad company for over \$300 per acre, he enticed the university months later with his offer to sell the same parcel of land for a campus at a greatly reduced cost, less than one-half of what he could have received from the railroad. He also offered the use of McBee Hall at Christ Church Episcopal for classes until campus structures could be built, and generously paid faculty salaries for one year. His munificent

3 Robert Norman Daniel, *Furman University: A History* (Greenville, SC: Hiott Press Publishing, 1951). 14.

4 W.J. McGlothlin, *Baptist Beginnings in Education* (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention Press, 1926). 64, 80.

5 The phrase "peculiar institution" was a polite euphemism for slavery throughout the early 19th century and connotes a defense of and belief in an economic system based on slavery.

support thus made the move to Greenville economically feasible.<sup>6</sup> In December 1850, the state legislature chartered "The Furman University" and granted it the authority to "hold property not to exceed \$300,000... at or near Greenville courthouse." Classes began in the fall of 1851 with 68 students.<sup>7</sup> From 1852-54, the institution functioned in two identical schoolhouses, until Old Main, with its majestic Florentine Bell Tower, was finished in 1854.<sup>8</sup> The next year, the university boasted 228 students. Until his death in 1864, McBee, the "Father of Greenville," maintained a lively interest in ensuring the success of Furman in Greenville.<sup>9</sup> Soon after Furman's move to the upcountry, the South Carolina Baptist Convention deemed religious education of Baptist women worthy of support, and McBee became involved in efforts to establish a women's college in Greenville. Decades before, in 1820, McBee had given 30 acres for the establishment of the Greenville Male and Female Academies. In 1854, he facilitated the transfer of 22.5 of those 30 acres to the Baptist Convention for the establishment of a college for women; thus the Greenville Baptist Female College was founded that year.<sup>10</sup> From that point onward the Greenville Baptist Female College (precursor to the Greenville Woman's College) offered "all those branches of liberal education that are pursued in our colleges by young men." It also shared literary societies and clubs with the men's college at Furman. Slowly but consistently over the next several decades, the two institutions developed a close relationship and eventually became enmeshed with one another as academic institutions nationally evolved towards co-educational practices.<sup>11</sup> The institutions did not formally unite until

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6 McGlothlin, *Baptist Beginnings in Education*. 104; Roy McBee Smith, *Vardry McBee: Man of Reason in an Age of Extremes*. (Columbia, SC: The R. L. Bryan Company, 1997). 225-227.

7 With few exceptions, Furman was open only to male students until coordination with the Greenville Woman's College in the 1930s.

8 One of these schoolhouses has been preserved and was moved to the new campus in the late 1950s after the members of Quaternion, a male honor society, vowed to maintain it. Courtney Tollison, *Furman University: The Campus History Series*. 42.

9 Smith, *Vardry McBee*. 225-227.

10 Smith, *Vardry McBee*. 227-229.

11 Archie Vernon Huff Jr., "The Three Ages of Furman University," *The Proceedings and Papers of the Greenville County Historical Society 1998-2005*. (2005). 106.

1938, but the fact that both institutions' parent organization was the South Carolina Baptist Convention (SCBC) aligned their interests.

Since the move to Greenville in 1850 and establishment of "Old Main" in 1854, Furman University and the city of Greenville have shared an interwoven history. City residents and students shared the mundane and the extraordinary: together, they experienced the hardships of the Civil War, Reconstruction, World War I the Great Depression, and World War II.

Only ten years after its move to the upcountry, Furman and Greenville confronted the upheaval and turmoil of the Civil War. In fact, Furman's first president, James C. Furman, a son of Richard Furman, was a delegate to the Secession Convention in December 1860 and thus a signatory of the Ordinance of Secession that declared that the state of South Carolina had dissolved all ties with the United States.<sup>12</sup> Soon thereafter, and months before Confederates fired on Fort Sumter, Furman students formed a military regiment comprised of 65 members who named themselves the "University Riflemen."<sup>13</sup> During the war, when nearly all of Furman's student body volunteered for service, Furman closed while the students of the Greenville Baptist Female College worked with the Greenville Ladies Association in Aid of Confederate Volunteers to operate a Soldier's Rest in a building on their campus.<sup>14</sup> To announce Confederate victories during the war, President Furman rang the bells in the carillon in Old Main's Bell Tower to remind Greenville "of those Furman men at war."<sup>15</sup>

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12 James A. Rogers, *Richard Furman*. 229-230.

13 Daniel, *Furman University*. 78.

14 A historic marker in front of the Greenville Little Theatre on Heritage Green marks the location of the Soldier's Rest. Courtney Tollison, *Furman University: The Campus History Series*. 44; Archie Vernon Huff, Jr. *Greenville: The History of the City and County in the South Carolina Piedmont* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1995). 138-39; Minutes of the Proceedings of the Greenville Ladies Association in Aid of Volunteers of the Confederate Army, 1937, Series 21. Historical papers of the Trinity College Historical Society, Durham NC.

15 Albert N. Flanders, "Furman University and the War for Southern Independence," Address Delivered at the Commemoration Convocation of the Centennial of the University Rifles. April 20, 1961. Furman University Jam B. Duke Library Special Collections Archives. 4.

After the war, Furman confronted a new set of hardships. The Reconstruction period that followed the war, in which the nation literally had to be put back together, was rife with challenges, particularly for southern institutions of higher education.<sup>16</sup> Furman's reputation and future were in jeopardy. The university floundered in the wake of the Civil War as it failed to re-establish enrollment rates and secure financial support. Greenville, on the other hand, was embracing industrial development, particularly through its booming textile industry. This industrialization and modernization greatly outpaced other Southern cities, making Greenville a forerunner among the cities of the "New South" that developed in the wake of Reconstruction. Even so, the trauma of war and Reconstruction devastated Furman. In contrast to Greenville's progress in this post-Civil War era, Furman teetered on the brink of closure.

However, Furman did not fail during these trying times, likely due to the efforts of James C. Furman, who fought to resuscitate the university named for his father. Furman lore informs us that when a friend admonished Furman to abandon his efforts, he replied, "I have nailed my colors to the mast, and if the ship goes down I shall go down with her."<sup>17</sup> The struggles continued into the early years of the twentieth century: during the 1906-7 academic year, Furman's senior class consisted of only six, signifying the substantial "lull" that the institution battled between the Civil War and World War I.<sup>18</sup>

During World War I, Greenville and Furman coordinated efforts to support the war effort. Furman students, staff, and faculty

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16 Joseph M. Stetar, "In Search of Direction: Southern Higher Education After the Civil War," *History of Higher Education Quarterly*, vol. 25 no. 3, (Urbana-Champaign: History of Education Society Publishing: 1985). 357-358.

17 John Byars and Jane Sampey, ed. *Bonhomie '51*, (Furman University: 1951). 3. This quote is also featured on a plaque outside of James C. Furman Hall on the university's campus.

18 James M. Richardson, "Scion of the Flatwoods." Furman University, James B. Duke Library Special Collections Archives.

contributed to the "South Carolina Preparedness Campaign" during the period of 1916-1918 by hosting compulsory military training sessions for young men on Furman's campus and forming a voluntary unit of 50 Furman students into the "Montague Hall Company."<sup>19</sup> The Greenville and Furman communities recognized the major industrial and financial importance of securing a cantonment site in their hometown, and made great efforts to appear as patriotic as possible before government officials. They held patriotic rallies monthly (which often conveniently coincided with federal cantonment site inspector visits) and printed articles in newspapers urging the people of Greenville to fly American flags and grow backyard "victory" gardens.<sup>20</sup> Eventually, their efforts paid off: in return for the patriotic endeavors and to the delight of both the Furman community and Greenville residents, Camp Sevier was named an infantry training site on May 21, 1917.<sup>21</sup> Its location near Taylors and Greenville economically revitalized the area, as the influx of the military brought significant economic growth from around the country into the Greenville and surrounding communities. Three years after the war's end, on June 7, 1921, a doughboy statue produced from E.M. Viquesny's *Spirit of the American Doughboy* was erected on the Furman campus to honor the 540 Furman men who served in World War I and the six who died. The statue was a source of great pride for Furman and Greenville, as it is believed to be the first among nearly 160 doughboys across the United States to be cast and dedicated throughout the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>22</sup>

One decade after the end of the war, an international financial crisis reverberated through Furman and Greenville. After the U.S. stock market crashed on Black Tuesday, the so-called "Textile Capital of the

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19 "Compulsory Military Training at Furman" *Greenville Daily News*, April 18<sup>th</sup> 1917; "South Carolina Preparedness Campaign Begins" *Greenville Daily News*, April 11<sup>th</sup> 1917; "Military Company Formed at Furman" *Greenville Daily News*, Apr 4<sup>th</sup> 1917.

20 "Backyard Garden For Every Home" *Greenville Daily News*, April 30<sup>th</sup> 1917.

21 "Greenville Chosen for Camp Site Announces Washington Officials" *Greenville Daily News*, May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1917.

22 The E.M. Viquesny Doughboy Database <http://doughboysearcher.weebly.com>

World" began to feel the economic strain, and many mills resorted to three-day work weeks or operated only on alternate weeks.<sup>23</sup>

Local efforts to ameliorate the economic crisis helped, but the Greenville area was forced to rely heavily on President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) created a state park at Paris Mountain, and local farmers complied with federal orders to reduce their crop acreage in an attempt to stabilize prices.<sup>24</sup> Both Sirmine Stadium (the home of Furman football for 50 years) and a downtown post office (which later evolved into a federal building named for Furman graduate and Supreme Court-nominee Clement Haynsworth) were constructed through New Deal programs.<sup>25</sup> In 1934, construction manager Charlie Daniel recognized opportunity in the midst of turmoil, and when the firm he was working with in Anderson did not support his desire to pursue large-scale government building contracts offered during the New Deal, he founded Daniel Construction Company.

The Depression lingered and caused economic stagnation within the university: student enrollment dropped, the Law School closed, and Furman was forced to reduce faculty salaries by ten percent, sell adjacent lands and rely heavily on Duke Endowment funds in order to stay afloat.<sup>26</sup> Furman administrators struggled to collect payments from students and pay faculty at even average rates for an institution of its stature, leading to the loss of several professors to other institutions like Wake Forest and Washington and Lee universities.<sup>27</sup> Even before the stock

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23 "The Greenville Textile Heritage Society-History," 2009. <http://scmillhills.com/mills/monaghan/history/>

24 Huff, *Greenville*. 344-347.

25 *Ibid.* 348.

26 Under President Ben Geer, Furman was named a beneficiary of James Buchanan Duke Endowment. Other institutions of higher education named were Davidson College, Trinity (now Duke) University, and Johnson C. Smith College. Alfred Sandlin Reid, *Furman University, Toward a New Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1976). 49-52; Rounds, F.W. Interview of Bennette Geer on Cassette Tape – Misc. #250, 1963, 47. Special Collections and University Archives, James B. Duke Library, Furman University; Robert Franklin Durden, *Lasting Legacy to the Carolinas: the Duke Endowment, 1924-1994* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).

27 Reid, *Furman University*. 49-51.

market crashed, Furman President William McGlothlin had said that the Duke Endowment was the only thing preventing Furman from total and complete "collapse" and that the University was "absolutely dependent" on the Duke Endowment funds; support from the endowment became a lifeline during the Depression years.<sup>28</sup> One significant result of these financial and administrative challenges was a much closer relationship with the Greenville Woman's College, whose parallel financial woes made a closer relationship with the relatively more firmly established Furman University absolutely necessary for its own sake of survival.<sup>29</sup> Through the early 1900s, the Greenville Woman's College (GWC),<sup>30</sup> worked fervently to meet requirements for accreditation. Towards this objective, they had established an endowment, but hopes for a bequest anticipated from a prominent Greenville whose estate would have constituted a major endowment corpus were dashed when his death revealed the recent loss of the bulk of his wealth. Despite the self-described "blood curdling earnestness" with which GWC President David Ramsay worked to raise funding for the college, the college was forced to rely much more heavily on Furman's Board of Trustees to pay its debts.<sup>31</sup> The South Carolina Baptist Convention, which remained Furman's parent institution until 1992, appointed a committee to "solve the problem in Greenville," and from 1933-1938, the Greenville Woman's College slowly was subsumed within Furman University.<sup>32</sup> In 1934, trustees agreed that Furman University would take over academic responsibilities at the Greenville Woman's College, but a formal transfer of property would not be completed until all of the Woman's College's debts had been resolved.<sup>33</sup> Sadly, in January 1938, with all property transferred, the Greenville Woman's College ceased to exist, and Furman University became a co-educational university operating

28 Reid, *Furman University*. 49.

29 Reid, *Furman University*. 53-54.

30 The name of the college changed from Greenville Baptist Female College to Greenville Female College in 1878, and from Greenville Female College to Greenville Woman's College in 1912. The college became known as the Woman's College of Furman University in the 1930s. Bainbridge, *Academy and College: The History of the Woman's College of Furman University*.

31 Bainbridge, *Academy and College*. 184.

32 Ibid. 175-176.

33 Daniel, *Furman University*. 158.



on two campuses in downtown Greenville. Even though this merger was not entirely popular and arose mostly out of financial necessity, co-education led to further growth, as the inclusion of women created a need for consolidation, hastening the decision to begin anew.

This period of economic strain ended in 1939 when World War II erupted in Europe. Government contracts funneled into the upcountry and the price of cotton rose accordingly. Greenville's textile and apparel mills assumed the responsibility of producing textiles for export to European countries: local mills began operating two to three shifts around the clock to meet demand.<sup>34</sup> In December of 1941, Japan's Imperial Navy attacked Pearl Harbor, and thus, America was thrust into the war. Abruptly, those upcountry farmers who had previously been required to reduce their crop yield during the Depression (on Agricultural Adjustment Act policies that included burning excess crops and slaughtering livestock to drive down prices) suddenly faced a new demand for food: agricultural production escalated 400% from 1942-1943.<sup>35</sup> Greenville's employment rate climbed, and Charlie Daniel's construction company secured a contract to build the Greenville Army Air Base.<sup>36</sup> The local economy returned to solid footing, with both Greenville and Furman benefitting from the wartime economic upswing.

Although the economy profited, U.S. military engagement in WWII precipitated a drastic reduction in male enrollment at colleges and universities across the nation. Furman experienced an exodus of male students and nearly one dozen faculty. For most of the war, Furman suspended varsity football, basketball, tennis, and track.<sup>37</sup> By the end of the 1943-44 academic year, enrollment fell to 124 men and 438 women.<sup>38</sup> As Beth Evans Jones '48 recalled, "the only men left at Furman [during

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34 Courtney L. Tollison. *World War II and Upcountry South Carolina: 'We Just Did Everything We Could'* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009) 33.

35 Huff, *Greenville*. 344, 381.

36 Ibid. 379.

37 Tollison, *Furman University: The Campus History Series*. 109.

38 Reid, *Furman University*. 117. Judith T. Bainbridge, *Academy and College: The History of the Woman's College of Furman University* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2001). 195.

the war] were 4-Fs and preachers!"<sup>39</sup> Furman may have lost student enrollment, but President John Plyler saw an opportunity for revenue by arranging for pilots in the 19th Army Air Force Glider Pilot Training Detachment and the Army Air Corps Pre-Flight program to reside in Furman dormitories and take courses on campus.<sup>40</sup> Furman's remaining student body (which was almost entirely female and still residing on the woman's campus) contributed to Greenville's home front efforts by entertaining at the United Service Organization for troops stationed at the Greenville Army Air Base, selling war bonds, collecting clothing to send to Europe, making bandages, and knitting clothing for soldiers.<sup>41</sup> However, as Greenville's textile industry thrived under WWII with the production of parachutes, bandages, and uniforms, Furman's desperate maintenance needs were further deferred because of the need to ration raw materials and furnish all resources towards the war effort.

The end of WWII was a watershed moment for Furman. The G.I. Bill provided veterans the opportunity to attend college at drastically reduced costs, and thus boosted enrollment at Furman (and universities throughout the nation) to higher levels than it had ever seen in its history. Indeed, Furman's student body in 1946 was the largest in the institution's 120-year history. Many of these veterans also married, and soon created the Baby Boom; in response, the university obtained pre-fabricated war housing from the military and used it as married student housing for this rapidly growing demographic. In the two years after war's end, Furman acquired 25 trailers, 50 temporary housing units, a barracks, and three army surplus buildings from the municipal airport to make room for the growing student population.<sup>42</sup> Furman equipped these buildings with beds, mattresses, and classroom desks from war surplus goods. The increase in student enrollment greatly taxed faculty, most of whom were carrying teaching loads that exceeded the recommended standards

39 4-F was a military classification indicating that the registrant was not acceptable for military service. Tollison, *World War II and Upcountry South Carolina*. 115.

40 Reid, *Furman University*. 116.

41 Huff, *Greenville*. 374-375; Tollison, *World War II and Upcountry South Carolina*. 16, 21, 43, 50, 70.

42 As Women's College Dean Elizabeth Lake Jones remarked during this trying period, "facilities are taxed to capacity." Reid, *Furman University*. 124-125; Tollison, *World War II and Upcountry South Carolina* 199.

established by the Southern Association of College and Schools.<sup>43</sup> Both the faculty and facilities of the university felt the strain of this enlarged enrollment, and those in charge of both the men's and women's campus' downtown saw that renovation, and possibly even relocation may be necessary. Trustees were faced with the urgent need to raise funds while the student body became increasingly dissatisfied with facilities that could not accommodate their escalating numbers. Furthermore, after over one decade of operating on two campuses downtown, with students riding buses between campuses, Furman was eager to consolidate.

In 1946 the university hired J. E. Sirrine and Company and charged them with the responsibility of designing a layout of future buildings so that the women could move to the men's campus.<sup>44</sup> As part of this plan the university's Board of Trustees purchased three pieces of property north of University Ridge in Greenville, but the idea of moving the women to the men's campus did not strike many as feasible or desirable. As several years passed while Furman attempted to raise the funds necessary to begin construction on new buildings, academic offerings were stifled, consolidation between the men's and women's campuses did not improve significantly, and student dissatisfaction increased.<sup>45</sup> Furman trustees faced a major predicament. With the highest enrollments in university history, they were confronted with the challenging legacy of depression and war: an overcrowded, poorly maintained campus that had not seen significant construction since the 1920s. Moreover, the dual campus system, judged to cost the university \$30,000.00 annually, mandated that students ride school buses, sometimes several times daily, up and down Main Street between the "zoo," or the women's campus, named after a wildly popular animal themed party of the era, and the men's campus on "the hill" overlooking the Reedy River.<sup>46</sup>

They soon realized that such expansion was not feasible on the current downtown campus, as the city had grown around the campus for well over 70 years, and urban development had cut off almost all

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43 Reid, *Furman University*. 125.

44 Ibid. 122.

45 Ibid. 129.

46 The equivalent of \$30,000.00 US dollars in 2014 is approximately \$325,000. Reid, *Furman University*. 53-54.

room for growth at the men's campus. Expansion was also not possible at the woman's college. While Greenville and Furman had long held a mutually beneficial relationship, when it came to space, Greenville's development had become a roadblock to the growth of the University. In 1947, trustee John Dean Crain proposed an innovative, bold solution to move to a new campus site. It was an audacious proposal, but Bob Jones University had just recently constructed a new campus outside of Greenville, giving credibility to the idea that such a financially daring move could succeed. Two years later in 1949, Furman President John L. Plyler addressed the South Carolina Baptist Convention, challenging the convention, "Furman's past is secure. What about her future?"<sup>47</sup> He left the annual convention having secured approval for \$3.5 million towards a new campus. Encouraged, trustees soon thereafter considered five possible sites: land off Grove Road, land near Laurens Road, one site east of Duncan Chapel Road, one site west of Duncan Chapel Road, and property near Fountain Inn, SC.<sup>48</sup> The trustees' first glimpse of the property west of Duncan Chapel Road was the view from atop the hill near the current location of the Cherrydale Alumni House, a particularly beautiful location to observe the property's rolling hills under the backdrop of Paris Mountain. In a trustees' meeting on August 22, 1950 at the Poinsett Hotel on Main Street, President Plyler presented his analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of a potential move.<sup>49</sup> Trustees had previously narrowed the selection to two sites, and at this meeting Plyler informed them that the landscape architect's strong preference was for the 973-acre site west of Duncan Chapel Road near Buncombe Highway.<sup>50</sup> While administrators, trustees, and others spent much of 1950 concentrating on the Furman of the future, they also celebrated the centennial of the University's move to Greenville by unveiling markers and plaques at High Hills and Winnsboro, the downtown Greenville campus at University Ridge, and the grave of Richard Furman at Charleston's First Baptist Church.

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47 Ibid. 138.

48 Reid, *Furman University*. 138-139.

49 Ibid. 138-139.

50 Ibid.

Trustees purchased the 973-acre plot West of Duncan Chapel Road for \$542,531, and three years later on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1953 they broke ground on the new site.<sup>51</sup> President Plyler's speech that day centered on the theme for the new campus' campaign slogan: "a greater Furman University for a greater tomorrow."<sup>52</sup> He spoke of the benefits this campus would bring to "the youth of the present and future generations." President Plyler and his wife, Bea, were intimately involved with the design, drawing upon the English gardens and fountains at Versailles they had visited on their travels for inspiration.<sup>53</sup> A prominent architectural firm from Boston that had rebuilt Colonial Williamsburg, Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn, Kehoe and Dean, proposed red brick buildings in a "modified colonial style." In addition, R.K. Webel of the noted New York-based landscape architectural firm Innocenti and Webel was hired to design the landscape, while Ronald Hebblethwaite, a landscape gardener from Hertfordshire, England, was hired to implement and maintain the impressive and award winning landscape that would attract students, faculty, and visitors alike to the new breathtaking campus.<sup>54</sup> The university secured the services of Daniel Construction for the first structures built on the new campus, a nursery and a greenhouse.<sup>55</sup> Plans were made to create an entrance road off Poinsett Highway, which would become the crucial connector between the campus and downtown Greenville. By 1958, four dormitories, one classroom building, the library, a dining hall, administration building, 14 tennis courts, a baseball

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51 Ibid.

52 Ibid. 138, 147.

53 Beatrice D. Plyler, interview by Courtney Tollison. Video recording. Summer 2004. Greenville, SC.

54 Reid, *Furman University*. 146-147; Tollison, *Furman University*. 41; Gary Hiderbrand, *Making a Landscape of Continuity: The Practice of Innocenti & Webel*. (Princeton Architectural Press/Harvard Graduate School of Design, 1997). Innocenti and Webel served as the landscape architects for the American Cemetery in Ardennes, France; Lincoln Center in New York City; the grounds of The Greenbrier Hotel and Resort in West Virginia; the redevelopment of the National Mall and Lincoln Memorial; and Keeneland Race Course in Kentucky.

55 Winston Chandler Babb, "Furman University Moves Its Campus," *The Proceedings and Papers of the Greenville County Historical Society: 1965-1968* (Greenville, 1968). 18.

stadium, and a track field had been built.<sup>56</sup> The iconic 25-acre lake was created at this time, along with the first nine holes of a golf course.<sup>57</sup> Furman's campus and landscape began to take form under the shadow of Paris Mountain, nestled at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Residents of Greenville donated trees and shrubs for the landscape,<sup>58</sup> demonstrating their dedication to a university that remained connected to the city even as it moved away geographically.

The move evoked a small degree of controversy throughout the Southern Baptist Convention, Furman's parent institution. For some SCBC members, the luxurious new campus was cause for alarm: members derided Furman's "Country Club Board" for their plans to build a new and extremely costly campus.<sup>59</sup> It is likely that this criticism of lavish spending to create a visually striking campus gave rise to Furman's moniker as the "Country Club of the South."

In addition to the land for the campus, Furman purchased several hundred additional acres for the development of a residential neighborhood close to campus. Through the 1950s, Daniel Construction had built most of the new campus structures, and Charlie Daniel grew to love the area. In an attempt to encourage residential development, Charles Daniel and his wife hired noted architect Phillip Shutze of Atlanta to design a replica of the Governor's Mansion in Williamsburg, Virginia, along with two additional wings.<sup>60</sup> Daniel Construction built White Oaks, a 9,750 square foot home, less than one mile from campus and the next year, Green Valley Country Club was established in close proximity as well.<sup>61</sup> After Daniel died, his wife, Homozel Mickel Daniel, lived in the home until her death in 1992. At that time, the home was deeded to Furman to serve as the President's Home.<sup>62</sup>

56 Reid, *Furman University*. 154.

57 Ibid. 153. The golf course was designed by Richard K. Webel of Innocenti and Webel and Walter Cosby of The Greenbrier Hotel and Resort.

58 Babb, "Furman University Moves Its Campus." 19.

59 Tollison, *Furman University: The Campus History Series*. 41.

60 "Furman University: President's Home," Furman University Website. <http://www2.furman.edu/About/About/UniversityLeadership/Pages/PresidentsHome.aspx>

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid. Lowry Ware, *The Daniel Legacy: The Transforming Power of Philanthropy*, ed. By Marguerite Hays (Greenville, SC: University Press, 2000).

In the fall of 1958, all male students and senior women began residing on the new campus. The senior women resided temporarily in Manly Hall and became known affectionately as the "Manly women,"<sup>63</sup> their transition to the new campus marked the first steps of creating a truly co-educational university. By 1961, all Furman students resided on the new campus, and, in the spirit of unity, the student body took a vote to determine one mascot for all the university's athletic teams. Previously, the football team that played at Surrin Stadium was known as the "Purple Hurricane," the basketball team that played at Textile Hall on East Washington Street was known as the "Paladins," and the baseball team was known as the "Hornets."<sup>64</sup> The "Paladins" secured the most votes, likely due to the recent success of Furman basketball teams during the days of Frank Selvy and Darrell Floyd; on February 13th, 1954, in the first televised basketball game in the state, Selvy scored 100 points against Newberry college, an NCAA record that stands 60 years later.<sup>65</sup> During Selvy's era, his sensational performances created a strong fan base that consisted of both Furman alumni and Greenvillians alike who supported the university's thriving athletic programs. The home of Furman football remained Surrin Stadium until the 1981 season, when Paladin Stadium was completed on campus; Furman basketball remained a vibrant aspect of the fabric of downtown Greenville until 1997, when Greenville Memorial Auditorium was demolished. Furman basketball began playing in Timmons Arena in 1999.

The decision to leave those old campuses and the downtown environs that had so significantly characterized the Furman experience since 1850 was bittersweet and prompted great nostalgia. Downtown Greenville had long comprised as much of the Furman experience as had the dormitories, library, and classroom buildings: homecoming parades traveled down Main Street every Fall, the Ramsay Fine Arts Center on the woman's campus was the primary arts venue in town, and students moved and lived seamlessly between campus and city. The 1951 Furman *Bonhomie* yearbook reflects this sentiment in its introduction, one year

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63 Wayne Ham ed., *Bonhomie '59* (Greenville: Furman University). Furman University James B. Duke Special Collections Archive. 123.

64 Reid, *Furman University*. 128.

65 Tollison, *Furman University: The Campus History Series*. 115.

after the purchase of land for the new campus: "presenting to you, with pleasure and a little pain..."<sup>66</sup>

With the move, many traditions were lost, but others such as "laking" a lucky birthday honoree by throwing him or her in the lake, soon developed. Although it was unclear if the treasured Furman Bell Tower would have a home on the new campus, the efforts of several key people throughout the early 1960s ensured that it would.<sup>67</sup> As the campus transferred to its new site north of Greenville, the campus became the Bell Tower Shopping Center, and later, the demolition of the campus opened space to create County Square, Falls Park, and the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities. In 1820, when Vardry McBee deeded the land for the academies, he stipulated that it must always be used for educational and/or cultural pursuits, and thus Heritage Green, home to Greenville's Hughes Library, Greenville Little Theatre, Upcountry History Museum, Bob Jones Museum and Gallery, and The Children's Museum of the Upstate, developed on the site of the former woman's campus.<sup>68</sup> So although the Furman community approached the move with a sense of nostalgia, it simultaneously recognized that the decision to move marked the threshold of a new era for Furman and for Greenville; thus enthusiasm developed for the great potential and possibilities that Furman would soon discover on this new campus. In 1958, Furman's new campus was celebrated with several advertisements in which many regional businesses and other colleges and universities expressed their congratulations and well wishes to the University and their new campus.<sup>69</sup>

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66 John Byars and Jane Sampey, ed. *Bonhomie '51*, (Greenville: Furman University, 1951). 3.

67 The original Bell Tower was too fragile to be moved, so resident engineer and Director of Physical Planning and Construction, Carl Clawson, scaled it to create blueprints that would guide the construction of a new one. Originally, a smaller, 55-foot replica was to be placed in the middle of the Rose Garden. However, Clawson suggested moving it to a small peninsula on the lake, where the full height of it could be appreciated, and where the carillon would reverberate over the water. The new Bell Tower was dedicated in May 1965, boasting dimensions that are within one-sixteenth of one inch of the original. Reid, *Furman University*. 168. Carl Clawson, interview by Courtney Tollison. Summer 2004. Greenville, SC; Tollison, *Furman University*, 2, 56.

68 Huff, *Greenville*. 395, 412-413. Tollison, *Furman University*. 44.



As former Furman President David Shi has noted, "The bold decision to build a majestic new campus and move from downtown was one of the most decisive turning points in university history. It enabled for the first time the consolidation of the men's and women's campuses. More important, the decision symbolized the commitment of Furman's leaders to create a liberal arts college of truly national distinction, and the stunning beauty and symmetry of the new campus continues to serve as one of the university's most compelling strengths."<sup>70</sup> The decision to move to a new campus has also allowed downtown Greenville and Furman to evolve into the vibrant communities that they are today. Gone are those quaint campuses, but now on those sites are new entities that continue to enhance the national reputation of both Furman and Greenville alike.

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<sup>70</sup> David Shi, email communication with author, November 2008.