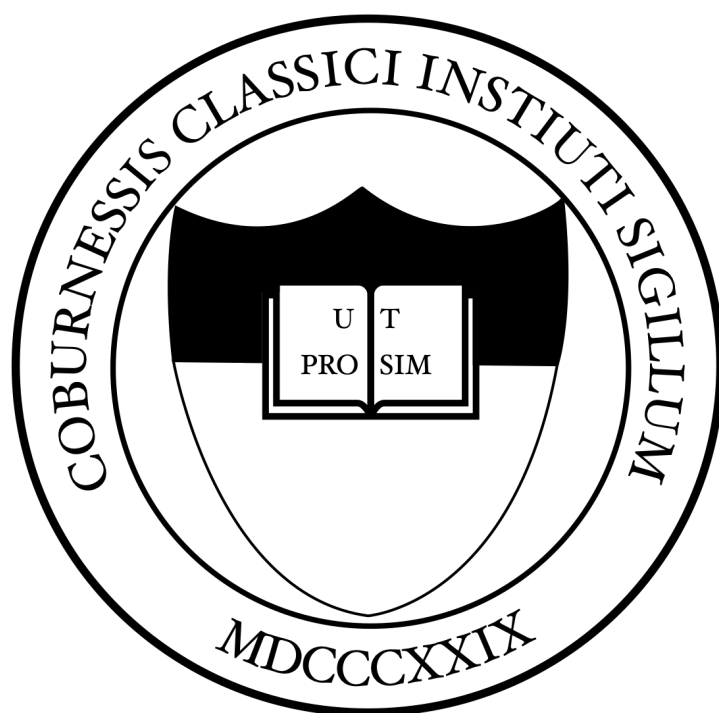


Margaret B. Kellenberger

HISTORY OF COBURN CLASSICAL INSTITUTE 1820–1970



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1820-1970

UT PROSIM: "That I might serve"
Coburn's motto, first proposed in 1905-06

Margaret B. Kellenberger
Waterville, Maine
1966-1970

HISTORY OF COBURN CLASSICAL INSTITUTE

1820–1970

"Memory's geese are always swans, because she hides the blemishes and exaggerates the excellence of 'lang syne' associates and friends..."

William Matthews, LL.D., class of 1831, Waterville Academy

"You can be argued out of a faith that you have been argued into, but not out of an experience."

Arthur Roberts, President of Colby College, - 1927

"The great end of education, it is believed, is development rather than acquisition. In short, the truly educated man is he who has learned to think and not he who has learned to store up the thoughts of others."

Dr. James Hobbs Hanson, Principal of Coburn, 1843-53 & 1865-94

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Chapter 1 – The Story of Coburn Classical Institute

In the beginning, there was no Coburn Classical Institute; there was no Colby College. There was the small community of Waterville, "a delightful village, situated at the head of steamboat navigation on the Kennebec River". The beginnings of Waterville go back to the late eighteenth century; in the 1780's it was still a part of the town of Winslow, situated on the opposite bank of the Kennebec River. Waterville was incorporated as a town June 23, 1802, and at this time the process of providing local schools was set in motion. In August of that same year, the town voted to raise \$300 "for purposes of schooling". Funds for schools were a sometime thing, in many communities; money was voted, perhaps, "for preaching" and "for schooling"; sometimes it was voted for the first of these, and not the second, for the next year. And one of the earliest names to appear in the records of Waterville in connection with the funding and inspection of schools was that of Timothy Boutelle. Records speak of him as early as 1806; we shall have occasion to speak of him again in this story of Coburn.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, what was the status of our state of Maine, how extensively was it settled and what education was provided for the young? It was not until 1820 that the District of Maine achieved statehood. Prior to that time, it had existed under the acknowledged government of the Massachusetts colony, under the charter of William and Mary, dated back to 1692. Provision was made

for the representation of the district [of Maine] in the upper house of the Colonial Legislature of Massachusetts.

Between 1692 and 1820 the region we are especially interested in, the Kennebec River Valley in south-central Maine, was to be akin to Longfellow's "forest primeval": the uncharted homeland of Indian tribes who hunted and trapped for their living. the area was opened gradually to settlement by white men coming chiefly from Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Early negotiations for land with the Indians were not always conclusive; individual title to land was a concept alien to the red- man's way of life. They did not regard a deed as conveying exclusive rights, they sometimes gave the same tract to more than one settler, several chiefs sold a common area to different buyers. This was not deliberate deception on their part: private property, individually owned and developed, was not in the Indian pattern.

By the middle of the 18th century, settlers were moving into the region in sufficient numbers to call for the consolidation of the various agencies or "companies" concerned with opening up their wilderness region. In September 1749 the General Court of Massachusetts incorporated "The Proprietors of the Kennebec Purchase from the late colony of New Plymouth". This body was commonly known as the Plymouth Company and its Proprietors "began to do business on a large scale", in the words of

Louise Helen Coburn in her *Skowhegan on the Kennebec*. They employed surveyors, promoted immigration and were liberal in their

negotiations with those wishing to come. Miss Coburn observes that the opening up of Kennebec County and its settlement by "the best class of Massachusetts and New Hampshire farmers and villagers" were due largely to the enterprise of the Plymouth Company.

It took both imagination and stamina to move into new, undeveloped territory and hew out a home in the wilderness.

Those who came brought with them the English heritage which had been transplanted to our shores by the Pilgrims and their followers. Transmuted into the American Puritan way of life, this was to mean a tradition first, of constitutional and religious freedom, and second, of independence, individually and self-reliance. Sturdy in mind and spirit and prepared for hard physical work, these men and women established families who have made lasting contributions to the life of the region. Two, in particular, will have a direct bearing on our story: the Coburns, and by marriage, the Westons.

In addition to their physical energy, the settlers brought skills and trades at which they could work to supplement their basis farm life. The earliest comers were concerned primarily with survival; they also nurtured ideals of education which must find expression. Again in the Puritan pattern, these were based on long-established English practice. These pioneers had a profound appreciation of the English tradition of scholarship and would take pain to foster it. In colonial times, the clergy was the educated class in the New World, with the emphasis very heavily on the classics. Education started at the top

and worked down. A college was first founded, then an academy to prepare students for admission, and finally the lower schools.

The first colleges established in America appeared in New England in the seventeenth century. The establishment of preparatory schools came next. These were called "grammar schools"; the first one established in 1635, was supported in the beginning by private subscription. Only in 1641, five years after the founding of Harvard College, did this grammar school first receive public assistance. In 1642, an act of the general court put a "reading requirement for all children and apprentices as duty upon families."

In 1647, an act of the general court specified that every township of at least fifty families "shall appoint a master to teach reading and writing", while every township of at least one hundred families was to "set up a grammar school wherein pupils should be fitted for the university." In the Province of Maine, the first such grammar school was established in York, with a curriculum to teach the children "the learned and to read, write and cipher."

The Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 included a specific reference to the encouragement of education. It urged "the cherishing o all seminaries of literature and science, and of

public schools and grammar schools in towns." The public school, as referred to here, came to be known to Maine as the "common school", or in the nineteenth century, the district school. Its

curriculum included the three R's, a little geography, less history and almost nothing else.

The grammar school was established to provide training on a more advanced level. It was in 1636 that the Massachusetts pioneers established Harvard College at Cambridge, on the model of the English universities. It soon became apparent that few boys finishing the common schools were prepared for university studies, which placed emphasis on Latin and Greek. To meet this need there were established in fairly quick succession several so-called Latin Grammar Schools. The first was the Boston Latin School; it was followed by the Roxbury Latin School, also in the Boston area. A few years later came the Collegiate School in New York and the Hopkins Grammar School in New Haven.

The grammar school, or more correctly the Latin Grammar School, as defined here, was to become the academy in Maine, as well as in other parts of New England. Preference for the term "academy" in Maine modified, in this state, the definition of the grammar school. The latter term came gradually to designate the upper years of the common school.

And so the newcomers moved into Maine, in ever-increasing numbers, settling first along the coast, and then along the banks of the Saco, Androscoggin, Kennebec and Penobscot Rivers. In 1802, the town of Waterville was incorporated. Within a decade it was to be designated as the site of a new institution of higher learning, under the auspices of the Baptists. Although the Baptists had been in Maine

for more than a hundred years, it was only in 1810 that one finds the first record of any concerted action towards the founding of a Baptist college in the state.

The Bowdoinham Association, which included all the Baptist churches in Maine outside of York County, prior to 1804, appointed five of their brethren to petition the General Court for incorporation of "an institution in the District of Maine for the purpose of promoting literary and theological knowledge." The school of higher learning chartered in 1813 was the Maine Literary and Theological Institution, the forerunner of Colby College.

The Trustees of this newly-established Institution were to see five years elapse before being able to implement their charter. It was in 1818, finally, that the decision was made to locate the school in Waterville. The Board of Trustees provided temporary housing for the first arrivals by the authorization to rent "for the term of two years the house on the Wood lot, so called, for the accommodation of students." The property of one James Wood, this house had stood vacant about one year, at that time, following his death. A large frame house just north of present-day Post Office Square in Waterville, it was out in the country; the stores of Maine Street did not extend beyond Temple Street. The property was referred to as "the Wood farm".

The name of the Reverend Jeremiah Chaplin of Danvers, Massachusetts, was proposed by the Massachusetts Baptist Education Society as professor of theology in the newly-organized

institution. Born January 2, 1776, in Rowley, Massachusetts, and a graduate of Brown University, he entered the field of theology. In 1802, he became pastor of the Baptist Church of Danvers; and in the spring of 1818, he had seven students studying theology with him. This was the accepted way of training for the ministry. The Reverend Mr. Chaplin accepted the invitation to move into Maine and establish a new school for literary and theological studies. And so it was that he, his wife, their five young children and seven students made the journey together. They reached Augusta traveling by sloop, then by longboat up the Kennebec to Waterville. They arrived June 25, 1818.

The Reverend Mr. Chaplin was a "devoted, energetic and persevering man". In addition to the challenge of founding a new school, he was a crusading Baptist. Within two months of his arrival in Waterville, he organized the First Baptist Church. He was also an innovator, for he encountered problems in establishing his school.

It will be noted, in the name of the new institution, that literary matters take precedence over the theological; from the beginning, the stress was on liberal arts. Since such a course of study was based primarily upon a strong classical foundation, the Reverend Mr. Chaplin saw very early the need for preparing prospective students. He set up what we may call the preparatory department of the college, under the name of the College Latin School, designed to prepare boys who were, especially in respect to Latin and Greek, not quite ready to take the college course.

In 1820, he designated Henry Paine, a student at his Institution, as teacher of some preparatory classes in Latin and Greek. He had two students; Henry Paine carried on his own studies even as he conducted these extra classes. The college would eventually become Colby College. Its preparatory department was the true predecessor of the school we now know as Coburn Classical Institute. In the intervening one hundred and fifty years, Coburn's Commencement Exercises have been held in the First Baptist Church, across Monument Park from the school.

Chapter 2 The Early Years

In 1819, the year following his arrival in Waterville, the Reverend Mr. Chaplin was to see the beginning of the construction of the campus of his Maine Literary and Theological Institution. The first building to go up was the President's House. From his correspondence we learn that by August 15 of that year "the frame of the dwelling house was raised on the college lot about ten days hence...if nothing remarkable should occur, it will be finished before winter." Even before it was completed, President Chaplin was looking to the future. "We are going ahead with our dwelling house," he wrote Thomas Baldwin in Boston in September, "and are making preparations for the larger college building to be erected next season."

The campus was located on a tract of land along the Kennebec River, to the north of the town, which is now remembered with nostalgia as "the old Colby campus." Until "South College" was erected in 1822 classes were held in the President's House. These included the College Latin School.

In 1824 the College catalog contained an announcement of this "Latin school", thus according the preparatory department official recognition. Dean Marriner, in his *History of Colby College* tells us that on August 20 of that year, the faculty named a new teacher who was "...appointed to take charge of the Latin School during ensuing year and have the same compensation that has been given heretofore." This was Elijah Parish Lovejoy, then a junior at the college. The son of an impecunious country preacher from Albion,

Maine, Elijah Parish Lovejoy early showed "...his father's drive for learning and a prodigious memory." He virtually taught himself to read, at a very early age, puzzling the words out from the large family Bible. Determination for a formal education led to financial help sufficient for him to enter college; he matriculated in the Waterville institution in 1823. His appointment the following year to direct the Latin School classes in the first official reference to him in the college records. His service to the little preparatory department was rendered "with ability and enthusiasm" until his graduation in 1826.

The young student-teacher was unaware of setting a precedent in this service to his college. Yet Elijah Parish Lovejoy was one of the first of a long line of men and women, who would lend their talents to this special educational undertaking. Their contributions were not limited to the local Waterville scene: state, and national, causes would be served as well. In the 1970's we call this "a sense of Commitment". Vocabulary is of no importance: more than one of these inspired and dedicated workers

spent their lives in service to the cause they espoused. Elijah Parish Lovejoy gave his in the defense of his principles. It was on November 7, 1837, that he was killed by a mob while defending his printing-press in Alton, Illinois.

The success of the College Grammar School was apparent from the start. By 1828, this preparatory department of such modest beginnings, had grown to the point where the Trustees of the College deems it both desirable and feasible to house it under its

own roof, and grant it recognition as an Academy. And so it was that on August 27, 1828, they voted "that the Prudential Committee be authorized to take measures and erect a building for an academy, connected with the college, and that they draw upon the Treasurer for a sum not exceeding three hundred dollars." The Treasurer was the Hon. Timothy Boutelle, prominent Waterville citizen. In addition to rendering this financial service on behalf of the new Academy, Mr. Boutelle made a personal gift in a tract of land which was to serve as the site of the new school.

Timothy Boutelle owned lot #105 in the heart of the town of Waterville, "40 rods on the [Kennebec] river, exactly one mile deep". When he bought it he acquired the entire lot with the exception of the area occupied by the town cemetery. In later years the cemetery would be moved, to be replaced by Monument Park. At the time of our story, Mr. Boutelle had land, and made two generous gifts from it in quick succession. In 1825 he gave the lot on Elm Street to the society which built the First Baptist Church; in 1828 he gave another piece, that is, the lot south of the cemetery, for the newly-authorized Academy. This is the land on which the school still stands, in early 1970, a little over 140 years and two school-buildings later. A stipulation of the Trustees of the College, under the date of July 28, 1829, provided that "the deed of land on which the building stands be giving without reserve to the College Corporation." Further, "the management of the concerns of the academy... are hereby committed to the President, professors and Treasurer of this college."

During the summer of 1829, the new school building was erected at a cost of \$1,750. To supplement the College appropriation of \$300, additional funds were raised by public subscription, chiefly through the efforts of President Chaplin. The *Waterville Watchman* of November 4, 1829, described the new Academy as "...a fine brick building of two stories in height, with a handsome cupola or steeple for a bell-42 feet (exclusive of the porch,) by 34, and is a beautiful ornament of our village, not surpassed by any other academy building on the Kennebec. It stands on an elevated ground beside the burying yard, fifteen or twenty rods south of new meeting house, sufficiently near for convenience, without being exposed to the noise and bustle of the village."

There follows in this same article in the *Watchman* as eloquent an apologia for the Academy and its offerings as one will find anywhere: "...the appearance is a matter of small interest compared with the facilities which such an institution presents to parents around who cannot well afford to send their children abroad, or who would prefer to have them educated under their more immediate observation, who cannot consent to avail themselves of our common schools, as they are at present managed, though valuable as far as they go. The age and century in which we live, require a higher standard of education than is usually taught in our common schools; and the need of a more efficient system of instruction than they afford is much felt and urgently demanded. The instruction given in the Institution will embrace all those branches of literature and science usually taught in academies and other public schools. There will be four terms usually at \$2.50 per term." The new school, to be

known as Waterville Academy, opened her doors to students on the first Monday of December, 1829.

The Academy, as a type of school, was purely New England, and was to reach its prime in the decade that witnessed the establishment of the fitting school for the young college in Waterville. As they won recognition as part of the state's educational system, the establishment of academies was encouraged in areas of sufficiently large population; undeveloped timber- land was often appropriated, in Maine, as part of a school's endowment. Located in "homey", well-kept towns, the academy was usually housed in plain, substantial buildings, with no frills. "Independent, forceful, helpful and inspiring. [the academy was] the fitting school for many a college boy, the college for many another." The teacher, as often as not, was a recent college graduate, untrained in the theory of education, but idealistic and full of enthusiasm. The students came largely from the country areas. The academy was the first of the secondary schools to admit girls; grammar schools had heretofore been open to boys alone.

Waterville Academy was to fulfill its role admirably: to prepare students for college, and more especially, one particular college. The courses of the Classical Department of the Academy as stated in a later issue of the catalog were "arranged with special reference to the course pursued in Waterville College; yet students may fit here for any college which they may choose...Instruction in this department is given entirely by the Principal."

In the Colby Catalog for 1853-57 one finds a list of students who had completed the college preparatory course since 1845, i.e. for the previous eight years. Sixty-seven names are given; one was deceased, three had gone to Bowdoin College, the rest, sixty-three in all, had gone on to Colby College. The Fitting School was functioning in the capacity for which it was conceived. It would continue to do so through much of the second half of the century.

The catalog for "the academical year ending May 10, 1851" states the philosophy for education by which the Academy functioned. "The prominent objects embraced within its plan are the following: to provide, at moderate expense, facilities for a

thorough and systematic course of preparation for college, to provide a course of instruction adapted to meet the wants of

teachers of Common Schools, and to excite a deeper interest in the subject of education generally." Its function, then, was that of "Fitting School", and as such it was to be known for a long time to come. The Academy fitted students for the parent college so well and so faithfully that before the century was out, it would prove its worth in providing an indispensable, nay, life-saving stream of young men for Colby.

If the dedicated President of a new college was alert to the need of adequately preparing students for his school, the climate for learning was favorable for stimulating them to come. In those early days, there was no "screening" of students, there were no formal entrance

requirements, nor age limitations. Students came from a radius of many miles, intense and eager in those post-Revolutionary decades. There was but one entrance requirement: their own true worth coupled with an appreciation

of school and desire to take advantage of all it could offer. Going beyond the "common school" was uncommon; tuition, small as it was, made further schooling valued even more highly. These have been described as truly democratic schools: pupils ranged in age from ten to twenty years, rich and poor were enrolled together, no one was held back, no one worked for a "required average". Books and resources were scanty; moral fiber, self-reliance and a sense of industry constituted the equipment the student brought to the Academy with him. Debating held high interest, and through the early years of Waterville Academy, slavery and states rights became burning questions. In the academy of this era "school activities' were few, but school activity was intense."

In the first year of its existence as Waterville Academy, the school had sixty-three students enrolled, including girls as well as boys. The major part of the curriculum was in "the ordinary English branches" with seventeen students on record as studying Greek or Latin. The Academy was off to a good start. Preserved in the archives of Colby College is a catalog of the Academy for the year ending July 21, 1834. The faculty consisted of the Principal Henry Paine, a graduate of Waterville College in the class of 1823, two assistants and a teacher in elocution. Enrollment for the year was 205, with 131 young men. For the first term 25 of them were "attending to the Ancient

Language"; the number increased to 37 for the second term; mine were "attending to the French language."

At its opening, the school year consisted of four terms, 12 weeks each, annually at \$2.50 per term. This left 4 weeks of the year free. In the catalog of 1834 the expenses of attendance were indicated as follows: "The price of tuition in the common

English studies is \$3.25 per quarter. In Latin, Greek and French languages, in Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, the Natural Sciences and the higher branches of Mathematics, \$4.25 per quarter. The expense of full and other incidental expenses is proportionated on the students. Board, including lodging and washing, can be obtained in respectable families for \$1.50 a week."

With modest fees, and its primary function as a "fitting school" for a college located in the same community, the new Academy attracted pupils from the very beginning. It became, in the words of Judge Leslie Cornish reminiscing many years later, "the home of the country boy or girl", drawn by the vision of higher education. Something of the dreams dreamt, and the realities encountered in those early days of "plain living and high thinking" is evoked in this sketch of over a century ago.

"...many an obscure boy or girl in an obscure corner of Maine heard of Waterville Academy and began to build air castles and to earn and save money enough to pay the twenty-five cents a week for tuition so as to be enrolled in the catalogue as a member of a school that was

so near a college. When the town was reached and the plain brick building with its symmetrical belfry appeared, long cherished hopes seemed about to be realized. A timid knock at the heavy front door, the only one on the building, had to be repeated before the principal appeared. A cordial welcome from him was never lacking but when the door opened and you were ushered within some of your rose-colored anticipations vanished. There were no gilded towers without nor marble halls within, but a front entry with a place on the right that opened from the principal's room for storing wood for the big box stove, brooms, shovel, tongs and other needed articles. The long poker was kept under the stove. There was a suspicion of fear when the poking was done for there was a crack in the bottom of the stove and burning cinders could always be seen on the zinc under the stove. To the left as you entered was an unattractive staircase which led to the room of the preceptress above...As you entered the principal's room...and stepped upon the cold, brick floor and saw the rows of ugly looking seats with their heavy wooden forms, whittled and marked with the names of former pupils, you had a chance to revel in the ruins of your air-castles and felt that the district schoolhouse at home was more attractive than the academy. But when the school work began and the principal, who was wood-sawyer, janitor, and endower of the school, appeared, surroundings were forgotten and the eager, enthusiastic class, guided by the masterful hand of the teacher, felt that no mistake was made when they first came to Waterville Academy."

From the records, the men who served as instructors in the young school afforded abundant inspiration to the students of these early

days. They also came and went too frequently for any of them to leave his own stamp on the school. Henry Paine served as Principal for four years; after he left, the school was to encounter serious problems both in administration and finances. The principal was, most often, a student or recent graduate of the College. None stayed more than a few months. Financially, the Academy operated on a shoestring. Its major source of income was the very low tuition fees, supplemented by what little the College could contribute. This proved to be very little attention to the new school. There was no budget; the school could not afford a full-time principal or teacher.

These early problems of money and management were not to

be resolved for the Academy, perhaps ever, in the history of the school. Sponsored by the College, yet really never supported by it, the Academy was hampered in its development. The College held title to the land, directed the affairs of the school by faculty committee, could afford to contribute little financial aid. As time passed, the Academy inevitably showed the effects of dependency of a parent institution; concerned with its own program, the College was vacillating in its management of the fitting school. Furthermore, in the last quarter of the century, three more Academics in Maine would be designated as Fitting Schools for the College: Hebron Academy, Houlton, later Ricker

Classical Institute and Higgins Classical Institute. This meant that help from the College was spread to go farther, and Water-ville Academy felt the pinch even more. Only when it could operate with a free

hand, would the school be able to administer its own affairs. This could come about only under an independent charter, Twice in its history, Coburn Classical Institute has been granted one; at this point in our story, conditions at the school were leading, as we shall see, in this direction.

Henry Paine left Waterville Academy in 1835. In the next five years the school was to meet competition from an unexpected source. As yet without roots of its own, it was to be eclipsed by a rival institution sponsored by the Universalists. They established the Waterville Liberal Institute which drew enough students for a few seasons that enrollment at the older school all but disappeared. In the spring of 1841, Waterville Academy was forced to close its doors.

Waterville residents were not willing to see the Academy closed for good. A citizen's committee took up the cause, proposing that the College relinquish its control of the school and give it into the hands of an independent board of trustees. It was on February 12, 1842, that the Maine Legislature granted, to the Academy, an act of incorporation, naming the ten men who were to serve as its Boards of Trustees. This Board assumed the complete management of the school; the College Trustees retained title to the real estate.

The corporation thus created was instructed that it "...may sue, and may have a common seal, and make any by-laws for the management of their concerns, not repugnant to the laws of this State; and may take and hold by gifts, grant or otherwise, any real or personal estate, the annual income of which shall not exceed fifteen

hundred dollars, and may give, grant, convey, or lease, the same, and may choose all officers necessary for the management of their concerns, for the purposes of prompting piety and morality, and for the instruction of youth in such languages, arts and sciences as the said Trustees may direct..."

In 1842, then, Waterville Academy was to make a fresh start, re-opening its doors with Nathaniel Butler as principal. Newly graduated from Colby, he would one day have a son, the Rev. Nathaniel Butler, Jr. who became president of the college.

Butler served one year at the Academy. In the fall of 1843 came the man whose association with the school would span the rest of the century. His name as James Hobbs Hanson.

Chapter 3 "Hanson's School"

James Hobbs Hanson was a classmate of his immediate predecessor, graduating from Waterville College in 1842. After one year's teaching at Hampden, he was sought out, in the summer of 1843, by ten of the Trustees of Waterville Academy. Their offer held no more promise for him than those made to earlier principals: There was no money beyond tuition fees, they could

not guarantee the enrollment of a single student, but they agreed to make needed repairs on the building. The challenge of the post lay in its prospects for the future, certainly not in the concrete assets of the present. This was in 1843; when Hanson's life ended in April of 1894, he had placed his indelible stamp on the school. Born in China, Maine, June 26 1816, he early displayed the talents for dedication, hard work and the capacity to turn his hand to whatever task would further his purpose that were to mold the little fitting school in Waterville into one "with an enviable reputation among the preparatory schools in New England".

Waterville Academy offered him but six students when he first came as principal. The post itself called upon the incumbent to execute all the functions of administration. In those far-away times of over a century ago, admission to the school was on the basis of an oral examination of the applicant by the principal. Age made no difference and requirements, as we know them, did not exist; the judgment of the examiner was the criterion.

The new principal undertook his assignment with vigor and dedication. It was he who admitted students, engaged faculty, collected fees, paid salaries, oversaw maintenance and upkeep of the property. His salary, if any, was what left at the end of the season after all bills had been paid. There were times, indeed, when instead of collecting a salary, the principal found himself running at a deficit. At the end of James Hanson's first term, student enrollment had more than quadrupled; the ledger showed a \$40 deficit.

The Academy, then, did not hold much promise when James Hanson came. His hard work met with success, for the school grew rapidly. By 1852, enrollment reached 308, the highest in the school's entire history. As the numbers grew, so also the need for more teachers, more room and more equipment. There was still no endowment, the Trustees were of no help in trying to ease the financial situation, and collecting student bills was, in itself, no small task. Hanson's arduous task for so many years wore him out: he resigned in 1854.

He was to be gone for eleven years, teaching first in Eastport, then Portland. He continued his scholarly pursuits, meanwhile, in Latin, a field he knew and loved well. In 1861 he published his Preparatory Latin Prose Book, "which soon found a

place in the leading fitting schools in the land. Four years later came his Handbook of Latin Poetry, which added to his reputation as a classical scholar." The testimonial from the Colby College Alumni following his death praised his textbooks in Latin prose and poetry as

evincing scholarship "of the highest order and [making] him an authority in the best fitting schools of the land."

When James Hanson resigned as principal of Waterville Academy, the earlier pattern of its administration returned. The ills which plagued it during the next decade were compounded of old, familiar elements and new, unexpected ones. In a word, with Dr. Hanson as principal, the school flourished: without him, it declined. In the next eleven years, the school was to have a succession of principals, none did not even last out a full academic year. Without funds, the Board of Trustees paid little attention to the affairs of the school. And then the Civil War added to the troubles of schools such as this one. Many Academies in Maine were forced to close permanently, or merge into local high schools. Not only Waterville Academy, but its parent college as well, were both to suffer set-backs because of the war. Survive they did, and the credit for their being saved goes to different benefactors for different reasons; the cause of education in Maine was furthered by the survival, however precarious, of these two institutions. In the case of the Academy, we see more than once in its history that its fortunes prospered under the leadership of a principal in office for a sustained period of time; things went badly whenever there was a rapid change at the top. It is to the credit of its leaders, and of its sound educational program, that the school has weathered so many difficult times in its 150 years of existence.

The attempt to give the Academy an existence independent of the College, through its own Board of Trustees, proved unsuccessful. For twenty years the Board was neither very active in behalf of the

school, nor did it even replace vacancies among its members as they occurred. When President Champlin suggested in 1865 that they give back their charge to Colby, the remaining Trustees were quite willing to do so. The affairs of the Academy were placed once again in the hands of the College faculty.

The year 1865 marked a fresh beginning for Waterville Academy. Dr. Hansen was induced to return as principal; the Trustees of the College agreed to support the school, which also received a new name: Waterville Classical Institute. This time

Dr. Hansen stayed, and he was to devote the rest of his life to it and to the students who passed through its doors. Dr. Hansen also introduced a new course of study; the Ladies Collegiate Department. Planned originally as a three-year course for girls, it was soon expanded to four. It received official sanction not only from the College, but also from the State Legislature. In 1869 the following action was taken:

**Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in
Legislature assembled.**

Section 1. The managers of Waterville Classical Institute may prescribe a course of study for young ladies, equivalent to that of any female college, and may, with the concurrence of the board of instructors, confer upon all who shall satisfactorily complete such courses the collegiate honors and degrees that are generally granted by female colleges.

The Ladies Collegiate Department was to attract students for the next thirty years. When it was discontinued in 1896, the school could count 185 graduates of this division.

Now began the work of building up Waterville Classical Institute which was to be the great achievement of James Hanson's life. For the next thirty years he was to demonstrate that he "stood for what is best in education, for sound scholarship, for spiritual integrity, for manliness". Endowed with energy and drive, he had a passion for thoroughness and exactness and devotion to duty. He desired that his pupils be not only good students but also upright and noble in character. An earnest man, who could set pleasures aside "because there was always so much work to be done", he put his stamp upon the school. For many years, even after his death, the Institute was popularly known as "Hanson's School".

His wide reputation drew ever more students. His career was a witness to his belief in a strong central institution resting upon a foundation of its own fitting schools. He built better, perhaps, than ever he knew, for there would come a period in the history of the Institute's parent college when Colby "became largely dependent upon him for its supply of students and found in the school of which he had charge its most important feeder; indeed for some years it might be truthfully said that he was the College. He gave men, when men were the only gifts that the college could number". This was particularly true, during the critical years following the Civil War, when Colby College faced a real threat of having to close its doors.

As a teacher. Dr. Hanson was a taskmaster, both serious and thorough. Anecdotes concerning a personality as forceful as his abound. In his biography of Charles Hovey Pepper, published by Joseph Coburn Smith In 1945, the author quotes the impressions of Dr. Hansen by the son of Colby's President, George Dana Boardman Pepper, as follows:

"Jack Hanson was a uncompromising old time pedagogue, and any student who graduated had his Greek and Latin well hammered into him. It is recalled how during a winter recitation the doctor would shove a four-foot log into the old Bangor stove, slam the door with his boot, continue his teaching without losing a sentence, and woe betide the pupil who did not know how to use the supine in u!"

A reminiscence concerning Dr. Hanson written 75 years after his death is revealing in its vividness. Doris Hardy Haweeli, a 1921 graduate of Coburn and the daughter of a Coburn graduate, wrote in October, 1969: "My father did graduate from Coburn in '91 and Dr. Hanson was very active at that time. Like most of his Coburn contemporaries my father always spoke of Dr. Hanson with awe and admiration. He was a classicist of the old and stern school."

In a letter dated January 5, 1955, Josephine Prince Drummond, a graduate of the Ladies Collegiate Course in 1887, recalled Principal Hanson as he was in the last ten years of his life. "Dr. Hanson failed gradually in health in those years, "she wrote, "and lost much of his harshness and sternness but never his thoroughness as a teacher. Any boy or girl who was going on to college or as a teacher never

left his class room without a full knowledge of the lesson of the day if he had given strict attention...In our last year we sat many mornings with him around his dining-room table and every scholar was most considerate and attentive...He was for several years too ill to be teaching, but I do not remember a single case when a student took advantage of it. He had the respect and almost reverence for his learning and for himself as a person. His students and friends have always spoken of him with tolerance and love.

"Everyone knew that he was very ill at the last," Mrs. Drummond continued, "and his death was expected at any time. One incident occurred that amused him very much. One morning old Mr. Crooker (Crocker?) met a friend on the street and asked how Dr. Hanson was. The friend replied "He passed a good night." Being very deaf Mr. C. reported it on the street "Dr. Hanson passed away in the night." The news was immediately sent in to the Lewiston Evening Journal—this obituary being all ready written was in the evening paper which was given to the Dr., the family not knowing what it contained. Chuckling the Dr. said "I think I am the only man to have read his own obituary." He lived several weeks after this and when he went Maine and the country lost a teacher of the old school where (when) a student should become as perfect as possible in the subjects he was studying. "Letter perfect" we used to call it, but he should get the three R's first."

If Dr. Hanson did not spare his students, neither did he spare himself. Willing to see them any time, he often helped students at home in the evening. Although his physical strength began to flag in his final

years, his mental capacities never did. Even in his last week of life, supporting himself with crutches, Dr. Hanson continued with his work at the school. It was only a few days before his death that, at 11 o'clock at night, he saw the last student he had been helping close the door and go out.

Dr. Hanson served Coburn Classical Institute for 45 years. At his death he was spoken of as the man who saved the school. In so doing, he also saved the college the school was founded to serve.

While Dr. Hanson was the earnest principal of a school of earnest students, life was not exclusively academic throughout his administration. In December 1886 the students published Volume 1, Number 1 of the Coburn Clarion, a journal of their own comprising, conceived "...to bring out and strengthen the undeveloped and latent mental power of the students..." It was described in an "Amateur Journal, published monthly by, and devoted to the interests of the students of Coburn Classical Institute." The opening issue contained articles relating to the history of the school, jokes, articles, accounts of campus events. Hannah Jewett Powell, of the class of 1887, organized the first Clarion editorial board. Hannah Powell was to become a Universalist minister and Missionary. She worked particularly in the mountain areas of Appalachia.

The Coburn Clarion has continued to this day, changing from a monthly magazine to a quarterly to, in recent years, the school year-book, featuring the graduating class. It has always reflected clearly the spirit of the school, the changing times, the mood of the era, with

notations of faculty changes, curriculum changes, school news, short stories, jokes and obviously hilarious campus comment. Coburn students took themselves, and their studies seriously; through the years they have been soberly exhorted through editorials to live up to the standards of the school. With the introduction of athletics under Franklin Johnson, all games were reported with meticulous care. The pages of the slim publication reveal both the earnestness and the whimsy of youth in refreshing fashion.

As early as January, 1887, there appeared in the Clarion a plea for some kind of physical education program, "even in the basement", arguing "a sound mind in a sound body". The editors also gravely announced, in this same issue that they "...assume the *whole responsibility* for what appears in it. And no teacher is *in any degree responsible* for the taste used."

The Scrap Basket of the January, 1887, issue offers this observation: "Speak of a man's marble brow and he will glow with

conscious pride; but allude to his wooden head, and he is made in a minute.

In the April, 1887, issue, the column the Scrap Basket offered the following:

"The hair and the whiskers which our boys try to grow is like a field in the country after the first fall of snow. To people at

large, old men would they seem, Oh, there's nothing like whiskers to cover the green!" The issue for May of the same year presented the following tid-bit in the Scrap Basket:

A Question of Grammar

"They tell me Miss Grace that of grammar you know Much more than the average Miss. Pray answer this question, 'tis lighter than tow: What sort of a noun is a kiss?" And after a moment, the lady replied. Some bashfulness seeming to stop her, While her blushes to hide to no purpose she tried, "I should call it both common and proper."

In a more serious vein, the issue for July, 1887, quoted from the Journal of Education of June 23 of that year a former pupil of Dr. Hanson who comments on the latter's skill as a teacher at nearly seventy years of age. "What a pity it is that a teacher so skilled should not live a hundred years, after he has fully learned how!"

Student comment was usually in a serious and dignified vein when it touched upon topics of current interest. When it came to original verse, however, enthusiasm and high spirits sometimes carried the day over the formal niceties of poetic composition. The Clarion carried its share of doggerel, of which quote one example, appeared in the issue for December, 1922, when Miss Clara Morrill taught English at the school.

The period was over and with a joyous shout,...
The classes down the stairway were making their way out.
When hark, the fire whistle blew; so loud its strident call "Twas
heard in every corner, thru class room and thru hall. Forgotten
were the classes, French, Latin, English, Math, As to the scene
of action each student took his path.

On the front steps Guy Whitten stood watching with amaze
The leaping flame, the curling smoke, the ravage of the blaze.
Down the street was good Drew T., hatless, panting, out of
breath,
Eager for a closer view, running as from grisly death. Drew T.
was passed, and soon we saw Miss Pearce's streaming
raiment.
As in the van she pressed along, believe me, this is vraiment.

At last the fire was over, and we turned back to school, To
meet Miss Mosher hastening to see the ashes cool. When we
arrived at Coburn Mrs. Whitten alone was there, Deep buried
in a French book, she's heard naught of the affair,
And so it seems, as this I write, our teachers are but mortal.
Whene'er they hear the fire bell ring they seek the nearest
portal.

"ALOYSIUS"

There is a footnote to explain the asterisk: "When I took this poem to Miss Morrill and asked her to suggest a title she told me I had better call it Off."

Dr. Hanson's career was a witness to his belief in a strong central institution resting upon a foundation of its own fitting school. In this he was an exponent of a movement in education to which Colby College itself subscribed. It was, indeed, the college which had created this particular little preparatory school. Within a few years of Dr. Hanson's return in 1865, the college acted to expand its affiliations with other academies. In 1873 a committee named by the Colby Trustees recommended that \$100,000 be raised to endow three preparatory schools. The college was to hold the principal, the affiliated schools would receive the interest annually.

A generous contribution towards his goal came from a public-spirited man, who had served his state as Governor in 1862 and had been a Trustee of Colby College since 1845. This was Abner Coburn of Skowhegan, who was generous with his wealth in the cause of education. In April, 1874 he offered to President Champlin the sum of \$50,000 for the endowment of Waterville Classical Institute, on condition that a like amount be raised "to endow two other institutions of similar character, one east and one west." The two schools selected were Houlton Academy and Hebron Academy.

Houlton Academy, located in Aroostook County's most flourishing town, was founded in 1847. The Rev. Joseph Ricker, Secretary of the Maine Baptist Missionary Convention was a trustee of the school.

Also a member of Colby's Board of Trustees, he pledged \$5,000 to the needed endowment provided the college would name the Academy as its eastern preparatory school.

Hebron Academy was selected as the "one west". There was rivalry between Hebron and Gorham Academy for this favored position; under the sponsorship of Hannibal Hamlin, it was Hebron which won the vote of the Colby Trustees. It was only in 1877 that final arrangements with Hebron were perfected.

The drive to raise the matching funds specified by Abner Coburn in his gift proved to be an arduous, prolonged process. Within two years' time after his offer, the task of collecting unpaid subscriptions fell to Dr. Hanson. In addition to his duties as principal of his Institute, he was to work for seven more years on the fund drive. Only in 1883 was the entire pledged amount paid in.

In 1891 a fourth school was added: Charleston Academy.

The Rev. John W. Higgins of Charleston offered to Colby College \$25,000 as endowment of the Academy provided the college would raise an equal amount in ten years for the construction of buildings. In appreciation of his efforts of behalf of the school, its name was changed to Higgins Classical Institute.

The growth and development of these four fitting schools had been different, each from the other, but they now shared a common purpose in their orientation towards Colby. The funds the college

held for them were not identical. From the beginning Colby had held title to the real estate of Coburn Classical Institute; it secured title to the buildings at Ricker in 1887, and at Higgins in 1892. The buildings of Hebron Academy remained always in the hands of the Academy's trustees.

For many years Colby was to enjoy a productive relationship with her academies. At the same time, they cost the College money which was needed for the maintenance of the College itself. The capital funds of some of the academies suffered inroads, to repay the College for money which has been advanced. By the turn of the century, President Charles L. White realized that fewer students were coming to Colby from its fitting schools, in proportion, than in earlier years. Women's colleges drew more "coeds"; other men's colleges were attracting more boys.

As for Coburn Classical Institute, it was plagued by financial difficulties despite help from the College and generous support from the Coburn family itself. Through the first decades of the twentieth century, expansion of school offerings, coupled with annual deficits, led to a serious situation. When, in the 1930's the Depression came, Coburn was struggling for survival.

By the time Franklin Johnson returned to Colby College as its President in 1929, the four fitting schools had evolved, each in its own way, in a manner to affect their relationship with the college. Of the four, Coburn Classical Institute alone could be considered to have any particular relationship to Colby. Hebron had become a

boys' school, Ricker had become a junior college and was soon to become a four-year college; Higgins graduates headed for college went in increasing numbers to the University of Maine. Coburn along retained close ties with the College, but less than half of the college entrants of each graduating class now enrolled there.

One cannot feel that anyone, or anything, was at fault that after 1900 the academies became less important to the College. The times were changing; public high schools were by now well-established and offering college preparatory courses of a caliber to equip their students well. The private schools faced the challenge of attracting students without increasing their fees, nor lowering their standards. It is not surprising that some should change their essential character, as in the case of three of Colby's four academies. That Coburn persevered, despite set-backs, and financial difficulties in a lasting tribute to the basic strength of the school.

Colby's financial relations with its academies ended officially in 1956.

James Hanson as Principal of Coburn Classical Institute, was a man of his times in building a strong preparatory school whose graduates went in an unended stream to the college with which it was affiliated. Colby also recognized Hanson in naming him to its Board of Trustees in 1862. Ten years later, in 1872, the College awarded him the honorary degree of L.L.D. When he died April 21, 1894, two months before his seventy-eighth birthday, the Trustees of the College published a moving Memorial.

The funeral addresses evoke a man of character, strong will and dedication. "In addition to his own power of work," said the Rev. Asa L. Lane, "he had the faculty of arousing a like spirit in his students. They caught from him something of his earnestness... As one of the students who had taken a part of his course elsewhere said: "We have learned that a year in any other school is a very poor substitute for a year in the Institute.'"

President Beniah L. Whitman of Colby paid this tribute. "For twenty-five years the Institute under Dr. Hanson furnished the college with half its students. At the present time [1894] it furnishes from a quarter to a third. But it was with something better than numbers that Dr. Hanson served the college. His pupils came well-fitted...He stood close to the college faculty and was a constant inspiration to them."

The home of Dr. and Mrs. Hanson was a comfortable, tree- shaded house on Elm Street to the north of the Baptist Church, a very short walk across Monument Park to the Institute. Seven years after his death, the school bought the building.

The Clarion for December, 1907, carries an article announcing the purchase of the house by the Board of the Trustees, to be used as a dormitory for boys. The Principal at this time was George Stanley Stevenson.

"It is very fitting," says the Clarion article, "that this place should be secured by Coburn and used for such a purpose, and in honor of the man who gave the greater part of his life to the up-building of

Coburn, the Trustees have named the house "Hanson Hall." As a dormitory, the house could accommodate fifteen students. Principal and Mrs. Stevenson occupied the first floor rooms on the left of the house. The care of the Hall was under the supervision of a Matron. The Clarion article speaks with enthusiasm of this addition to the school as "another step...taken to keep Coburn in the front rank of preparatory schools."

Hanson House, as it came to be known, was to undergo another transformation as a Coburn Building in later years.

Under Drew T. Harthorn, Principal from 1912-1929, it became the center of Household Arts, a department established to train girls in the domestic arts and sciences. As early as 1901, we see the beginning of this department. Franklin Johnson was Principal at that time; his program of expanded offerings included classes in domestic science. The Coburn Clarion for May, 1901, announces: "a new branch of work has been introduced into the school."

Classes in cooking and other household requirements have been established. Miss Gilpatrick is the general superintendent. The class in cooking has for its teacher the long experienced Miss Fullerton. The work which has already been done among the girls at Hanson Cottage is marvelous. It is thought that this will be a great attraction to prospective students. Prices low."

A little over fifteen years later, Drew T. Harthorn, developed this area extensively. In his ambition to make of Coburn a competitor of the

local high school, he prompted a strong home economics course for the girls. This, in turn, required additional space. It was decided to remodel Hanson House once again, to serve as the center of the Domestic Science Department. The Clarion for November, 1918, describes the renovations. On the lower floor "...there are four rooms devoted purpose: an office, living room, dining room and kitchen. Of these rooms, the kitchen is a particular interest. Everything is arranged in a convenient and sanitary manner according to the most approved design obtainable. There is a working table equipped with gas stove, portable oven, and other necessary cooking utensils for every two girls in the cooking classes. The curriculum of the Domestic Science Department consists of cooking, sewing, textiles, home-nursing and sanitation. For practical experience, the girls take care of the rooms used for their work."

The Clarion for the previous January had also carried an announcement of this expanded course in Household Arts. The description of the course in sewing sounds a quaint note, as we read it again after more than fifty years of technology and miracle fabrics. "The course in sewing tends to familiarize the student with simply stitches, methods of mending, darning and repairing garments, simple embroidery stitches, use and care of the sewing machines, fashioning of underwear, remodeling, and use of commercial patterns in the making of waists, skirts and whole dresses of both animal and vegetable fibers."

Even in the 1920's, the Coburn's financial problems were serious. The home economics course would have to be curtailed, before too

many years passed, and eventually given up entirely. Hanson House itself ceased to be Coburn property when it was ultimately sold to a private purchaser.

In looking back upon these years of expansion of the school's physical plant and academic offerings, we can see a basis error in planning: it was an expensive mistake to try to compete with the public high schools "on their own territory". The public schools, in their turn, were improving their programs, providing training in many areas which were not within the province of the private college preparatory institution. In its ambitions for the school, Coburn's administration introduced programs and course that were not, in truth, relevant to its particular function. A small private institution, Coburn was straining beyond its resources: it was unrealistic to expect it to be a rival.

Chapter 4 Abner Coburn

Under Dr. Hanson, Waterville Classical Institute was to prosper and was to serve its parent college in such manner and to such a degree that the college could not have survived without it. In the post-civil War years, the Academy was "the most valuable asset the College possess". Of the four fitting schools for Colby University, as it was known in those years, Waterville Classical Institute supplied the largest number of students.

The decade of the 1870's was to be one of increasing prosperity for the Institute. Enrollment increased, commencement exercises became occasions of great public interest. Growth and expansion also brought their problems, which became more and more pressing. The school had outgrown its facilities, was in desperate need of more room and was without endowment. A benefactor was to appear, whose name was already linked to Colby University. In helping Colby's major fitting school, Abner Coburn was to entwine his family's name and contributions forever in the fortunes of the two schools.

The story of the Coburn family takes us back to colonial Massachusetts. They were among the early settlers to journey from the region north of Boston up into the Kennebec Valley. Eleazer Coburn, born 1735 in that part of Dracut which is now Lowell, Massachusetts, served in the Revolutionary War. In 1792, he was induced by his son-in-law, John Emery, Jr., to come to Old Canaan, an area in the general region of "the Great Falls of Squahegon". From

his son-in-law he received 50 acres of land. He and wife Bridget Hildreth built a small house in which she was to live to the age of "three months short of hundred years." This is of interest to use as her little home was annexed to the rear of the larger two-story house built by their son Eleazer 2nd in 1820. By this time he himself had a family of fourteen children. The elder Eleazer had died in 1800; Bridget lived until 1826.

Young Eleazer had been a lad of 15 when the family emigrated to Old Canaan in 1792. He worked on his father's farm, learned surveying of Samuel Weston, a settler who had preceded the Coburns by 20 years . Typically, young Eleazer Coburn was very capable in several lines of endeavor; farmer, surveyor, lumberman, as well an active citizen in the communities of Canaan and Bloomfield. Surveying timberland was a major factor in opening up the state of Maine to immigration. Eleazer Coburn was to become familiar with vast stretches of this natural wealth and to make large purchases of such timberlands as they came into the market or were put up for sale by the State. This was the basis of a considerable family fortune which would in later years , be shared generously with may philanthropic and educational enterprises in Maine.

While he lived a life of out-door activity, Eleazer Coburn was also involved in community affairs. He served as Justice of the Peace for many years, was repeatedly selectman of Canaan and Bloomfield and represented his district in the General Court of Massachusetts three successive years. A member of the Constitutional Convention of Maine in 1819, he served in the Maine House 5 years between

1820 and 1831. His interests extended beyond his own town, for he served on the Board of Trustees of Waterville College (later Colby College) from 1836 until his death in 1845, at the age of 68.

Eleazer Coburn's wife was the daughter of Samuel Weston, from whom he had learned surveying in his 'teens. Joseph Weston and Peter Heywood, related by marriage, acquired as early as 1770 or 1771 a "tract of land sufficient for a township" from the Plymouth Company. Front Lancaster and Concord, Massachusetts, respectively, they came in 1771 to see the plantation called Canaan in the vicinity of "The Great Falls of Squahegon". Joseph Weston built a log cabin, and in April of the following year, 1772, he returned to it bringing his family with him. His was the first, then, to settle in Skowhegan. The Puritan traditions they brought with them were the foundations of "a civilization of orderly freedom," with the attendant attributes of resoluteness, industry and integrity.

Joseph Weston's two oldest sons were twins, born in 1757. The second twin, Samuel, married Mary White. Their daughter Mary, born 1782, married Eleazer Coburn in 1801. The oldest of twelve children, Mary was to raise an even larger brood. She died in 1860, at the age of 78, at the home of two bachelor sons, one of whom was destined to have the most direct bearing on our story: Abner and Philander.

Abner was the second child and second son of Eleazer and Mary ("Polly"), born March 22, 1803; Philander, the fourth child and third son, was born in 1807. Another son, Stephen, born in 1817, was also to affect the fortunes of Coburn Classical Institute sixty-five years

later, in a way that he, himself, would never know. As the older boys grew up, in the out-of-doors and accustomed to physical work, they could not have guessed the lives they would touch close at hand and throughout the state. All this was long time in the future.

What manner of man was Abner Coburn, and what brought him from farm boy of limited schooling to positions of honor and authority in the academic world? A look at his portrait shows us a grave demeanor, thoughtful, perhaps a trifle withdrawn, of simple tastes, to judge by his dress: all in all, a "solid citizen."

Abner was to know just plain hard work and little formal schooling in his early years. The area in which his family lived still presented, in his boyhood, a "battle for existence with the resisting forces of nature". The clearing of woodlands, the building of roads, the rigors of outdoor life were the hard conditions to which men were born; Abner was acquainted with hard work before he was ten years old. The Colby Oracle for 1885 pays him this tribute: "He early revealed that quiet purpose which characterized his whole life. The realism of his early days gave to his later life its practical turn."

His formal education was limited, his practical education equipped him for a rich life. A few terms in local district schools, a very short period at Bloomfield Academy, that was all of schools-benches and textbooks for Abner. From his father, one of the best-known land surveyors in the area, the son learned well and was himself an expert at 21. Eleazer was a most unusual father-teacher. Louise Coburn describes him in *Skowhegan on the Kennebec*. "As a father he did

not practice the stern discipline usual in his generation, but was gentle with his younger children, and like an older brother with his grown-up sons, advising them on terms of equality as they came into manhood." So mutually trusting and trustworthy were they all, that the father formed a partnership with Abner and his next younger son Philander.

Their combined knowledge of the best tracts of timberland on the upper Kennebec was to serve as the basis of the operations which made them "the largest and most successful landowners in Maine."

After their father's death, the two brothers continued the firm under the name of A. & P. Coburn. They shared a common bank account; Abner took care of the office and "desk work" part of the business. So accustomed was he to signing checks "A. & P. Coburn" to a legislative bill that habit revealed itself where least expected. Years later, when Abner Coburn served as Governor of his State during the Civil War, it is related that upon occasion he would affix the signature of "A & P Coburn". Given the sterling character of the Governor, the validity of such bills was never challenged.

While his earliest training was in surveying and the related field of timberland appraisal, Abner Coburn early showed an active interest in business, in banking, in politics and in education. It is this last field that concerns us the most in this story of Coburn Classical Institute. He himself was never to have the chance for secondary schooling, but he would open the doors to it for uncounted young people who came after him.

President of the first bank of Skowhegan and of the Savings Bank director and president of the Maine Central Railroad, president of the Board of Trustees of what is now the University of Maine, member of the Maine House of Representatives three years, on the governor's council two, Abner Coburn was elected Governor in 1862, serving through the year 1863, "the most trying period of the late war," says the Colby Oracle for 1885. Two years of war had brought more defeat than victory to the union forces, opposition to the Lincoln administration was growing. Abner Coburn governed well, coolly, "with high moral courage, a ripe business experience, and fearless impartiality."

Well before Abner Coburn became actively interested in Waterville Classical Institute, its parent college was to receive both services and gifts from him. A landmark of his life was to be his interest in education and the thread of his contributions was woven into its fabric in many areas of the State. In this field he once again followed in the footsteps of his father. Eleazer Coburn had served as a Trustee of Colby College, Waterville College at that time, from 1836 to 1845. Chosen to take his father's place upon the latter's death, Abner was to serve for forty years, until his life's end January 4, 1885. The last eleven years he served as president of the Board. He left the college a bequest of \$200,000; in the amounts of gifts to the college he was the most generous benefactor Colby had ever had up to that time. In addition, he had contributed substantially to two buildings: Memorial Hall, which honored Colby's men who served in the Civil War and Coburn Hall, the Biology and Geology building on the "old" campus.

It is not surprising then, that Ex-Governor Coburn should know both Waterville Classical Institute, Colby's "most valuable asset", and its Principal, Dr. Hanson. Hanson had been named a Colby Trustee in 1862; the two men were to be colleagues and close friends for many years.

The Academy had never been free from financial worries: its status in this regard was precarious, although the value of its program was uncontested. The school had demonstrated what it could do, and was doing for the college, and the state. Colby's President James T. Champlin brought the plight of the Institute to the attention of the Maine Baptist Education Society at Bath in June of 1872. The following year, 1873, the Colby Trustee named a committee, with Dr. W.H. Shailer of Portland as Chairman, to consider the situation. Their recommendations, and the subsequent benefits to Waterville Classical Institute and Colby's other fitting schools, have been related in an earlier chapter. With regard to the generous contributions of Abner Coburn, it was the personal friendship between Dr. Hanson and his associate of many years that led Governor Coburn to give the \$50,000 which saved Ricker and Hebron and established Coburn, still known at that time as Waterville Classical Institute.

In less than ten years' time Ex-Governor Coburn was to show once again his generosity to Waterville Classical Institute. The school's facility was now over fifty years old. A double bereavement in the Coburn family was to lead to a special gift to the school. It was on July 4, 1882, that a younger brother of Abner, Stephen, and his son Charles Miller Coburn, lost their lives by drowning. Fourteen years

younger than his brother, Stephen Coburn had educational opportunities Abner never knew.

He prepared at Waterville and China Academies, then went to Waterville College graduating second in his class in 1839. His son, Charles Miller Coburn, following in his footsteps , was a member of the class of 1881.

As a memorial to them both, Abner Coburn gave the Institute a new building. Of brick with red sandstone trimming, built at a cost of more than \$50,000, it was a three-story Victorian structure surmounted by a tower, and containing twenty rooms for schools purposes. A memorial plague on the front of the building bore the following inscription:

Erected A.D. 1883
by Abner Coburn
in memory of Stephen Coburn
and
Chas. M. Coburn
Who died July 4, 1882

The building was dedicated during the Colby College Commencement of 1884.

In addition to the new building for the Institute, Abner Coburn generously gave fifty thousand dollars as permanent endowment.

The Colby Trustees did not wait for the dedication of the new facility to give tangible expression of their appreciation.

In 1883, they voted to change the name of the school to Coburn Classical Institute.

The Commencement Exercises of 1884 included dedicatory services of the new building. A long oration by the Rev. Dr. Caldwell, President of Vassar College, a Colby graduate of the class of 1839, was followed by the presentation of the keys of Coburn Classical Institute to President Pepper, by the Hon. E.F. Webb, in behalf of Governor Coburn. The Mail of July 4, 1884, gives an account of the proceedings. The Hon. Mr. Webb spoke for the ex-Governor, "...who, by reason of the infirmities incident to more than four score years of active and honorable life, is not present at this time." With the keys went also the title to the Institute, and fund, "...thus placing within (Colby's) control a powerful and sustaining ally of the University, completely equipped and ready for immediate service; equipped not only a palatial edifice and generous endowment, but with an instructor at its head who embraces within himself almost the elements of a Faculty." Mr. Webb then continued with a graceful recognition of Dr. Hanson and his contribution to the Institute. Dr. Hanson "...became connected with the Institute, when it was known as Waterville Academy, when its condition was enfeebled, and its existence evidently yielding to apathy, and want of encouragement; and brought to its rescue, his individual learning, labor and reputation, and through whose efforts the present high attainment of Coburn Classical Institute has been achieved...Gov. Coburn, seeing

the development of the Institute menaced for want for a suitable edifice and endowment, and moved by the impulses of a noble heart, has made these comprehensive donations, that the poor boy of the future may find the avenues to a liberal education easy of access and divested of the hardships endured by the generations that have gone before."

Coburn Memorial-Hall was to stand, a landmark in Waterville, for over seventy years, before it fell a victim of fire, in the winter of 1955.

Following Abner Coburn's death January 4, 1885, the Colby Oracle paid tribute to him as a man of public spirit, of broad views and sympathies, a liberal donor to educational institutions. He gave generously of his fortune not only to Colby but also the State College which at that time was "...an experiment designed to help children of the poor to a practical education." This would, of course, later become the University of Maine.

As a person, Abner Coburn was the simplest of men, of few and inexpensive tastes. Frugal, he was unspoiled by wealth. He gave "to those institutions of learning, which, in his judgment, could do most for the young men and women in the humbler walks of life...To transmit his own name and achievements to posterity, he made no provision. He probably never thought of it; but years hence hundreds, who have been made the recipients of his benefactions, will cherish his name...Of mere fame, he has none; but of noble and enduring works he has raised a monument." (*Colby Oracle 1885*)

Chapter 5 Coburn's Women

While the very earliest records of the College Grammar School do not indicate when girls were first enrolled, they were there when Waterville Academy opened its doors in December of 1829. "The number of students in attendance during the first year was sixty-three, of whom forty-seven were young men" wrote Franklin W. Johnson in Dr. E.C. Whittemore's Centennial History of Waterville. Always a part of the school, then, by mid-century female students were to receive special consideration in the establishment of a "Three Year Collegiate Course of Ladies".

This was in 1865, the year that Dr. Hanson returned to the school. Shortly thereafter, it was extended to four years.

From the beginning, this course was an important feature of the school. While few girls of the early nineteenth century had little opportunity for higher education, they had been welcomed as students of Waterville Academy from its beginning. Now, thirty-five years later, this new course reflected a change in the educational picture for young women. There were, by 1865, two "female colleges" in New England; Mt. Holyoke, founded in 1837 and Vassar College in 1861. The Academy was offering a program of study deemed the equivalent of their offerings; witness the act of the State Legislature in 1869 in creating the degree of Baccalaureate of Letters. The Catalogue of the Waterville Classical Institute "for the academical year" 1873-74, carries on page 2, even before the listing of the members of the Board of Trustees the full text of this:

STATE OF MAINE

In the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine.

An Act in relation to Waterville Classical Institute.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and House of Representatives in Legislature assembled as follows:

SEC. 1 The managers of Waterville Classical Institute may prescribe a course of study for young ladies, equivalent to that of any female college in New England, and may, with the concurrence of the board of instructors, confer upon all who shall satisfactorily complete such course, the collegiate honors and degrees that are generously granted by female colleges.

Feb. 19, 1869.—Approved.

JOSHUA L. CHAMBERLAIN, Governor

Governor Chamberlain was a man of note, in his own right. He served not only his State as governor, but also the Union during the Civil War. Described many years later by William

Matthews as "that Bayard sans peur et sans reproche", Joshua Chamberlain was the heroic commander of the 20th Maine Regiment

at the Battle of Gettysburg. Later he became the President of Bowdoin College.

Students who were enrolled in the Ladies Collegiate Course had, in truth, an option. It served a dual purpose: it could be considered a terminal course in itself or a preparatory course for college. Only when it began to meet competition through educational channels did enrollment begin to drop. This was of the most desirable kind: more and more colleges were opening their doors to women, as the second half of the century progressed. More and more young women elected to go on to college, and the particular appeal of the Ladies Collegiate Course began to diminish. Finally discontinued in 1896, its demise was due not a lack of interest but to the wider horizon which had been opened up to potential students on the college level. A total of 185 students were graduated from this course.

One of the earliest issues of the Coburn Clarion indicates, through its editorial column, the blowing of the winds of change. In the issue for March, 1887, we read, "Our second half year has opened with two new members in the senior class. This class numbering thirty in the College Preparatory course, twelve in the Ladies Collegiate, and two in the Scientific, is one the largest which the school has ever graduated, and shows that thorough instruction is appreciated even in these days when there is a strong tendency among students to enter college with a meager preparation."

From the beginning, also, Principal Hanson accorded recognition to the Ladies Collegiate Department in tangible ways. It was no mere "sub-division" of the school, with second class status. School records provide us with the names of the Principals of the Department for its duration: without exception, they are women. The first three served one year each; the remaining four served a total of twenty-seven years.

It is the second principal of the Department who catches our attention. She had been Preceptress at the Academy the last two years of James Hanson's first period there. Miss Mary Ellen Field by name, she served from 1852-54; her departure from the school coincided with her Principal's, for they were married September 16, 1854. She was the second Mrs. Hanson. His first wife, Sarah Boardman, had died the year before. After their return to the Academy in 1865, Mrs. Hanson served as Principal of the Ladies Collegiate Department for one year, 1866-67. As long as her husband lived, Mrs. Hanson devoted herself to the school. She kept a loving eye on him and a solicitous concern for their students. After his death, she continued to make her home in Waterville, and upon occasion, in later years, she would reminisce for the students about Coburn as it had been in earlier days.

The school offered a sound academic program to its girls, and they took advantage of it. "You can't keep a good man down" applies to women, as well, and these well-schooled girls began more and more to look forward to a college course. Colby College, small and remote as it was in those closing decades of the last century, also had its

share of flexibility. The authorities acceded to the growing pressures of the age and voted to admit women students, for the first time, in 1871. Specifically, the College yielded to urging, even importunities, on behalf of the brilliant girl who was the first one to enroll, Mary Low.

Pioneers, or those tolerated but not welcomed in any established group have to be "better than good" to maintain their standing. Colby College was no different : the boys were not cordial to the newly–admitted girls, and when the latter proved to be superior students, this did not contribute to their popularity. Add to this the fact that in their vanguard were to be two of Coburn's ablest students who would leave an indelible mark on their chosen college. Of such stuff are proud traditions made and incalculable service rendered to generations of students coming after them.

Coburn's first girl graduate to enroll in Colby College was Mary Caffrey Low, from Waterville, of the class of 1871. It was in August of that year that the Trustees of the college voted to admit women. When classes began that fall, she was the one young woman to appear in the freshman division in chapel. "Intellectually," says Dr. Whittemore, in his History of Colby College, "she had a right to be there. She had been a star pupil of Dr. Hanson at the Classical Institute and the way in which she could recite Latin and Greek was to some of her less favored classmates bewildering. Her position in the class was never in doubt." It should come as no surprise that she graduated Phi Beta Kappa, in 1875.

Mary Low met stiff competition; among her classmates were Leslie C. Cornish, also a Coburn graduate, and Henry Hudson.

Both men would one day become justices of the Maine Supreme Court. Mary Low and Leslie Cornish vied for top honors all through their college course and at their Commencement in 1875 it was the young woman who delivered the valedictory. This rivalry had its measure of affection and mutual regard, for these two would appear together again in 1921 upon the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of her admission as the first Colby "Co-ed." Judge Cornish, by then Chairman of Colby's Board of Trustees, presented her thus; "Fifty years ago a boy and a girl presented themselves for prize entrance examinations at Colby. The girl won first and the boy won second prize-. Today the boy who took second prize takes pleasure in presenting the girl who won first prize."

Mary Low achieved prominence in her chosen field after graduation. Married to Leonard D. Carver, State Librarian, she became an expert in library science and made a career of her work in the Maine State Library. It was she who made the first systematic catalogue of that library, as well as contributing frequently to library journals. Colby honored her in 1916 with the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters, and one of the earliest residence halls was named Mary Low Hall. When the Mayflower Hill campus was developed in later years under Franklin W. Johnson, the name of Mary Low Hall was given to one of the first two women's dormitories to be built.

For two years Mary Low faced her male classmates alone.

In her junior year, the fall of 1873, four girls entered Colby as freshman. Among them was Louise Helen Coburn, niece of Abner Coburn, newly graduated from the Classical Institute in Waterville in which her uncle already showed great interest.

The Coburns, from Skowhegan, were Somerset County's most prominent family. Their wealth built on timber and lumbering operations was in generous measure used in the pursuit of cultural interests. In the words of Dean Marriner: "The Coburns were a family devoted to good books, good music, good art, and especially to education." Their association with Colby College had dated from the 1830's when Eleager Coburn had been named a trustee. He served from 1836 until his death in 1845. His son Abner was immediately named to succeed him in this post, and was to serve until the end of his life in 1885. While Abner had only the most meager of schooling, younger brothers would know the advantages of a college education. One of them, Stephen, was to graduate from Colby in 1839. By the time his daughter Louise Helen, was ready, four of her uncles had also graduated from the Waterville College.

Born in 1856, Louise Helen early showed a love of books, learning Latin "at the knees of her father." After graduating from Bloomfield Academy, in Skowhegan, she had a desire to continue her studies. The Coburns and the Hansons, leading Baptists in the area, were lifelong friends. This led to the Coburn family conclaves finally deciding to give young Louise a year at "Mr. Hanson's school." She went to live with the Hansons, in their white frame house next to the First Baptist Church on Elm Street.

The joy that the Principal took in some of his responsive students is illustrated in her experience with him: this was to be one of her favorite recollections in later years. After a month or two with the Hansons, the Principal took her aside one day and said: "Louise, would you like to go to college?" Overwhelmed, she replied: "Oh, do you really think I could?" "Yes" came his answer, "if you will read with me some advanced Latin texts." And so it was that, for the remainder of the school year, the old Latin master and his protegee spent a daily hour, under the kerosene lamp on the dining table, perusing classical authors seldom found today even in college-level courses. This was the year 1872-1873.

When it came to her being admitted to Colby College. Miss Coburn often "related the story of how Professor Foster examined her from nine in the morning to five that afternoon, principally on Latin and Greek, in order to ascertain whether or not she was capable of doing college work." In those days college faculty did not intend to admit any student, much less a girl, who could not master Greek, Latin and mathematics.

Like her predecessor, Louise Coburn made a brilliant record, graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 1877. Three other girls had entered Colby in her class; with Mary Low joining their ranks, the five young ladies organized a sorority in November 1874, as a counterpart to the fraternities already in existence on campus. This was Sigma Kappa, which grew in time to become a national sorority. The first Grand President was a member of the Colby chapter, Miss Florence

E. Dunn, Coburn 1892 and Colby, 1896. Until 1912 successive grand presidents were all members of this original chapter.

Louise Coburn's life was to be spent in literary, educational and historical pursuits. She studied botany both at the Harvard Summer School of Botany and Chicago University. From this developed a permanent interest in the field. Her love of nature is revealed in much of her writing, particularly in her volume *Kennebec and Other Poems*, published in 1916. The title poem of the book shows not only her responsiveness to the world around her but also her deep love of "home and country." The Kennebec River she knew and loved always, and on its bank she helped to develop and perfect a woodland area which still bears the family name. The land for Coburn Park, in Skowhegan, was a bequest to the town by her uncle Abner; as park commissioner from 1904 to 1940 Louise worked to create a park, known for its trees and shrubs from all over the world. It became "...a beauty spot, a retreat for residents and a joy to visitors." Her booklet on "*The Trees of Coburn Park*" lists over one hundred varieties of trees. Of the Kennebec River itself she wrote:

"Under the sun or star or moon,
Dusk of eve or glow of noon;
When the swallow dips his wing In the glassy wave that
renders Tint for tint the hues of spring;
When the summer-time its splendors Views repeated in the
river, Field and hillside, crag and tree,
Blended, brightened, yet the same;
Or when autumn colors mellow.

Maple's red and poplar's yellow,
Touch its liquid depths with flame;- Beautiful, my brother/
ever Is our shining, winding river,
Onward flowing to the sea."

Louise Coburn was to know Europe at first hand, through travels and leisurely sojourns abroad. Her love of learning led her to savor both the natural beauty of the Alps and the history and lore of ancient Greece. Her poem to Sappho reveals her appreciation of the "the grandeur that was Greece"; her closing

lines of this in praise of the Greek poets have sometimes been quoted as applying equally to their author.

"When Sappho touched her Grecian lyre
And sang an ode to Lesbos' daughters,
There ran a spark of quickening fire
Across the wheeling azure waters.

Never again shall poesy
Link with such flame divine and human
Until again the singer be
A Greek, a poet, and a woman."

Perhaps her family's long-established place in Skowhegan, and her own lively interest in history, explain, in themselves, Louise Coburn's contributions in this field. Her major work was to be a history of her birthplace: *Skowhegan on the Kennebec*, published in 1941. This was

her major literary work. Dean Marriner, in his address at the time of her funeral, said "Miss Coburn's understanding of the art of history was so thorough that her two volume history of Skowhegan is a model for all local histories in New England." Local history held especial interest for her through other channels as well. In 1898 she organized, and was first Regent of the Eunice Farnsworth Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. She maintained an active interest in this for many years, becoming a national officer for one period.

With all her many talents and interests, it is Louise Coburn's concern, and affection for, Coburn Classical Institute that enshrines her particularly in the annals of the school. Of this Dean Marriner said, "...her most valiant leadership was shown in her championship of Coburn Classical Institute through its darkest days. She led the ranks of the small loyal group that kept Coburn alive, not merely because it bore the family name, but also because she believed in the service of a church related school whose business it has always been to instill Christian character as well as to impart secular knowledge." She graduated from the "fitting school" in 1873. As early as the 1890's, Miss Coburn was already contributing money to it; forty years later during the bleak years of the Depression, she was still generous in her financial aid to the school. But for her the Institute might have had to close its doors for good.

Louise Coburn was to be honored as was her predecessor Mary Low Carver, with an honorary Doctor of Letters from Colby College. This was a 1914; in 1919 she was elected the first woman trustee of the

College. On the Mayflower Hill campus, Colby named one of its first women's dormitories in her honor: Louise Coburn Hall. And in 1946, she was one of the first recipients of a "Colby brick", an award for service to the College.

When she died on February 7, 1949, at the age of 92, Louise Coburn left a rich legacy of contributions to the lives of others; through her verse, her love of history, and of nature, her support of education, her use of her family fortune, both wise and generous, and through her abiding faith.

"He who would paint life's picture true
Must through his windows look and view
The mystic hills that touch the sky—
The shining hills, where hand in hand,
Beauty and truth and goodness stand Crowned with the glory
of eternity;—
For he shall read his values right Whose eyes are lifted to that
light."

Twenty years after Louise Coburn graduated, Coburn Classical Institute was to welcome a young teacher of talent and zest, who would, in her turn, leave her own special mark on all whose lives she touched. Her name was Rose Adelle Gilpatrick.

The Miracle of Faith

All hail! Thou wondrous Power divine.
That shaped the universe so vast
And keeps each shining star in line;
We thank Thee for the faith Thou hast
That sent thy Son that men might see
The truth and turn from sin and strife.
And open their self-sealed hearts to
Thee To reveal that love is the law of life.
Renew, O Lord, our faith in Thee For faith alone can make us
free.

Christmas 1952

This Christmas poem by Rose Adelle Gilpatrick was written half a century after she first became associated with Coburn Classical Institute. Its simple and sincere statement of faith is a testimony to her life and work. A native of Farmingdale, Maine, she was a born teacher and administrator. Her twenty-one years of service to Coburn were to leave their mark not only on the school, but on the students whose lives she touched.

Born March 14, 1869, Rose Adelle Gilpatrick was taught to read by her mother before she entered school at the age of seven. By that time her family had moved to Hallowell, her home thereafter. In her own reminiscences of many years later, Miss Gilpatrick recalls the truly outstanding teachers she had from almost the beginning of her

formal schooling. One of the earliest was Miss Annie Lakeman, who conducted a two-year school at approximately junior high school level. An excellent teacher, maintaining discipline with no effort, able "to get their best possible work" out of her students. Miss Lakeman was the first to give Adelle Gilpatrick a passionate desire to learn. She laid a foundation that one could build upon.

Her father told Adelle that after Miss Lakeland's school, her studies at the Hallowell Classical Academy would be the extent of her schooling, "...she would never go further, so she would better take all she could get." This was not to be, however, for among her teachers was a German professor, by the name of Hochdorfer, who taught Latin. A scholar, an "enthusiast for learning", he took an interest in Adelle and was, in fact, the first who ever mentioned the word "college" to her. This seed was to bear fruit, if not immediately. She graduated from the Academy in 1887, as valedictorian, and returned to it to teach the following year at a salary of \$100. Feeling after that one year that she wanted to be a teacher, she sought the means to go on to college. Her preparation was good in Latin, German, French and mathematics, -but no Greek. Upon inquiry of President Pepper of Colby, Adelle learned that she could not qualify for admission without at least two years of Greek! She was allowed, however, to enroll as a special student. In the one year she had at Colby, 1888-89, she was to study under some of its best professors and was to know Franklin Johnson of the class of 1891.

It was while she was teaching once again in Hallowell that Adelle Gilpatrick heard of the Chicago World's Fair and was persuaded to

go out there with a friend. Only the midway of the World's Fair held less attraction for her than "some fine-looking buildings" across the way which proved to be the new University of Chicago. Instead of going into the Fair, she "...went across, picked the biggest building and walked in. Things just happen in my life, you know. In the hall I just happened to meet Dean Miller..." Colby was known at the University of Chicago, as the latter had called three prominent Colby faculty, including President Small and Shailer Mathews, with whom Adelle had studied English at Colby. Greek was not a requirement for entrance, the University of Chicago would give Adelle full credit for all her Colby classes and she could choose all her remaining courses to get the necessary points for a degree. "that, of course, was something! I never went to the Fair at all that day. I merely went back, packed my suitcases, told Miss Shepherd (her friend) I was going home, and I went."

Adelle Gilpatrick was at Chicago for three years; in 1896 she came to teach at Coburn. Judge Bonney, on the Coburn Board of Trustees, knew of her career and sought her out for the post of dean of women at the school. She came in January of that year, immediately upon completing her course of work at Chicago. "I came home from Chicago directly to Waterville, and started on a 21-year stretch. " It was Franklin Johnson who had suggested Miss Gilpatrick's name to Judge Bonney, "because he had been in class with me at Colby." Adelle and her principal were to enjoy a mutual respect for their talents and leadership; Miss Gilpatrick was to stay at Coburn more than a decade longer than he. Some of their earliest joint ventures were to be stamped by her personality long after he had left.

The most immediate need upon Miss Gilpatrick's arrival in 1896 was a dormitory for girls. A good many students were day pupils who commuted to school. However, at the turn of the century, the academy was "still the home of the country boy and girl" who lived where there was no available secondary schooling. These young people had to find board and room in families in town or board themselves as best they could. In 1898-90, for example, of Coburn's 154 students only 25 lived in Waterville; of the remaining 129 six came from outside the State of Maine [Waterville]¹. Proper housing for girls was imperative.

The Principal and his Preceptress worked together on this. And so it was that the school acquired Hanson Cottage, a large frame house, on the corner of Elm and Spring Streets, across the street from the campus. The house is described in an issue of the Coburn Clarion of the period as "a new building for the young ladies, newly furnished, steam heated, well lighted and provided with all the conveniences of the modern home. The comforts of home are combined with careful school discipline; at small expense." Miss Gilpatrick was to make a splendid thing of her girls' residence hall. Attractively appointed and marked with Miss Gilpatrick's own very special charm, Hanson Cottage was to be home away from home for many a Coburn girl. In later years, the house was to be known as Coburn Cottage, as we see from the following announcement.

¹ This would appear to be an error in the original manuscript. It seems likely the author meant to write that the students came from outside of Waterville and not the State of Maine.

In the catalogue for 1909, Coburn Cottage is described as "...heated throughout by steam, is lighted by electricity, and is provided with all the conveniences of a well-appointed modern house. The cottage is under the charge of the Dean of Girls, who resides here and exercises careful supervision over their welfare. Excellent table-board is provided at a moderate cost.

"The rooms are furnished with beds, mattresses, bedding and other necessary articles of furniture. Students provide their own sheets, pillowcases, and towels. Students care for their own rooms. A small extra charge is made to defray the cost of lighting."

The catalog of 1922-23 adds a solicitous note: "Every girl must bring with her an umbrella and a pair of rubbers. A heavy sweater is desirable. All articles must be marked with the owner's name with indelible ink or Cash's Woven Names. A laundry bag with owner's name must be provided. "

A catalog of the school just prior to 1920 explains in detail the expenses for students living in Coburn Cottage. "The expense for room at Coburn Cottage, the home for girls, varies, according to location of room, from \$1.25 to \$1.50 per week.

There will be no reduction for absence except in case of prolonged sickness. All girls are required to live in Coburn Cottage unless they are working their board in private families.

This arrangement may only be made with the consent of the Principal
."

Miss Gilpatrick served as housemother in Hanson Cottage, as well as preceptress and later Dean of the girls, head of the English and History department, teacher of Latin and home economics. Her involvement with the school was complete; her love of learning and ability as a teacher were to put their very special stamp on the school for over two decades, an indication of her commitment to Coburn, and her willingness to serve can be seen from this statement in the Coburn Classical Bulletin for August, 1906. Faculty Committees are listed. Miss Gilpatrick, now in her tenth year at the school is listed as serving on:

1. Admissions Requirements
2. Reception & Housing of Students
3. Regulation of the School-room, and on Schedule: of Recitations and Examinations.
4. Instruction, Discipline Deficiency-Examinations, College Entrance Examinations and Church Attendance; (This included a whole faculty, with Principal Stevenson as Chairman, Miss G. Vice Chairman)
5. Commencement

6. Library Committee

7. Hanson Cottage

8. Regulation of Athletics and Athletic Eligibility. Also, head of English and History Department.

Anecdotes and quips concerning Miss Gilpatrick in class are sprinkled all through the issue of the Coburn Clarion which appeared during her years at the school. There are also poems by her, seasonal for the New Year, for Autumn. The Scholar's Quest, patriotic, prompted by the War of 1914-18, as well as articles covering Coburn history and a tribute to a young Coburn graduate who served with distinction in the war. She must have had a delightful sense of humor. Under LOCALS, which as the "campus gossip corner" of the Clarion, she is quoted as saying, "in his book on the Origin of Species, Darwin goes into DETAIL. Or,

"Miss Gilpatrick forgot that much use corrupts the best English, when she asked Mr. Frye why he didn't put an r in HOSSES. Again,

"Miss Gilpatrick to K.H. - 'compare facilis'. 'I can't. 'Why, yes you can' it is easy.'". And, Mr. Cl- in senior English, reading from 1 'Allegro- 'If Jonson's learned sock be on' - What does that mean?" Miss Gil- 'Why Mr. Johnson's half hose to be sure.'

Miss G. was to spend herself untiringly, assuming in the course of time the supervision of the home economics course, the role of

advisory officer for the campus YWCA, and the organization of The Camp Fire Girls. It is not surprising that she wore herself out. The year 1913-14 she was granted a year's leave of absence for her health.

Miss Gilpatrick's love of learning, and love of people found expression in many ways. A young girl who had been her student was to say, many years later, "Yes, Miss Gilpatrick taught English and Latin, Roman and Greek history. She could take a very uninteresting book and bring it alive for you."

She made her own "Profession of faith" with this statement:

"To seek knowledge wherever it may be found; to sacrifice time and pleasure in the zeal for learning, to observe with joy the birds, the stars and the flowers; to care for the body as the temple of the spirit; to regard all men as fellow seekers with equal rights though with different attainments; to study hard and not grudge the pain; to work not for rank or honors, but for the joy of knowing; to be honest in thought and deed; to love truth, beauty, and goodness in all their varied forms; to see the best in everything and know that in the end that best must triumph over the worst; to use all knowledge, strength, and talent in the service of others; finally to know God and that love which is the fulfillment of life; this is the scholar's symphony."

This is preserved in the archives of Coburn, the quotation for the month of September of the Coburn Calendar for 1915.

Her greatest genius was not as a teacher, nor administrator, nor scholar, but lay in her capacity for friendship. Testimonials from colleagues who taught with her, and from people who still remember her fifty years after she left Coburn all center on this quality. "She had a very brilliant mind and an angelic disposition," with a keen sense of humor. "She was my lifelong friend." "None of her pupils ever forgot her." "Her friends were many and from all walks of life." People have spoken warmly of her as a teacher, lecturer and public-spirited women. "She did not teach her pupils merely the subjects assigned to her in the curriculum. By precept and by example, by kindly direction and wise counsel, she taught them the art of living, of meeting life and all its problems." She was "...and ideal person or preceptress, a position she held so long with grace and dignity. Association with her could not fail to impart to others some of her own dignity, sweetness and charity... But is as a friend that she excels. She has a veritable genius for friendship. Never have I known a more ready sympathy, a quicker understanding, or sweeter tact than hers...Knowing her has made a our own lives richer." So wrote Mary Phyllis St. Clair, a student, then colleague of Miss Gilpatrick at Coburn, in the Coburn Clarion of November, 1918. Miss Gilpatrick did not return to the school that fall. Obligations to her family had called her home to Hallowell. Half a century later this writer had heard similar praise from men and women who were young when Adelle Gilpatrick was young.

In 1917, upon her retirement from Coburn, Miss Gilpatrick was awarded an honorary Master of Arts degree by Colby College. The citation read:

"No one can correctly estimate the value of Miss Gilpatrick's services to Coburn. She has so grown into its life for so many years that one cannot think of Coburn without thinking of her rare personality. A woman of excellent judgment, exceptional training, with remarkable aptitude for teaching young men and women, and her whole life governed by the highest of ideals, Miss Gilpatrick has been among the foremost leaders of her profession.

Colby but carried out the wishes of all her former students who hold for her an affectionate regard when it conferred upon her an honorary degree for meritorious service."

Miss Gilpatrick spent the last years of her life in Hallowell. For the final decade and a half, her annual Christmas greeting to friends was an original poem, composed for the occasion. She died in 1962, at the age of 93. Her poem for Christmas, 1960, is a portrait of Rose Adelle Gilpatrick herself.

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

I thank Thee, Heavenly Father, for blessings Thou hast given:
Health I have enjoyed All these many years;
Home where happiness dwelt,
For love reigned there supreme;
Teachers that inspired me With the desire to learn;
Opportunities I have had To serve the youth;
Friends I've met along the way Who brought the joy to my
heart;
Above all, the gift of Thy Son Who revealed the way of life.

Adelle Gilpatrick was in the vanguard of the women who brought warmth, humor and compassion to their teaching at Coburn. One of her most devoted pupils and devotees is Sarah Belle Young, who makes her home in Skowhegan at the time of this writing. "I was older than the other students," she recalls. "Miss Gilpatrick was good to me; she was my life-long friend." A graduate of Coburn in 1906, Miss Young went on to Colby College, taking her degree in 1910. For many years she was Registrar at Wheaton College, where she was to see a building named in her honor.

Colby also recognized her distinguished service, awarding her an honorary L.H.D., in 1930, and electing her a Trustee of the College. She served in this capacity from 1934-1940. It was Coburn which brought these two women together. The story of first teacher and student, then devoted friends, would be repeated on other occasions

with other persons; but for all who knew them, there is a special warmth in the friendship of Miss Gilpatrick and Miss Young.

In 1914, Clara Prescott Morrill joined the English faculty. An experienced teacher, she was to be a valuable member of the Coburn family for many years. She succeeded Miss Gilpatrick as Preceptress and Dean of the girls, served as advisor of the YWCA, and of girls' athletics. Through the 1920's she was Faculty Advisor of the Coburn Clarion. She had a generous sense of humor, to judge from its pages: (to her English III Class) "If you don't study more I'll put you back into the Sophomore Class; to yea, verily, into the Freshman Class." Her advice to Aloysius, in the Clarion for December, 1922, to 'call it off' brings a chuckle still a half-century later.

Mrs. Mary Manter was long associated with the school in the department of music. Mrs. Doris Hardy Haweeli, of Worcester, Massachusetts, Coburn 1921 returned in 1925 as a teacher of French. She was to serve on the faculty over twenty-five years. She recalls with humor the "heatless Mondays" of her student days, during the closing months of the war, "...to save fuel - all public buildings were closed and we young fry kept our blood circulating by attending heatless Monday afternoon dances at Elks Hall." The Depression years brought "payless pay days" but always the morale of the teachers was excellent.

Doris Hardy Haweeli was a graduate returning very soon to her school to teach, thus finding herself colleague of her former instructors and serving under her former principal. Her reminiscence

of this situation catches the spirit which has always characterized Coburn. "Many of my former teachers were still there and remained for many years after I started teaching," she recalled a long time after. "I speak of this especially, because I think it holds the secret of Coburn's success—a real dedicated group of teachers who felt the Coburn was a family - we all worked together to give the students the best possible training."

In the ranks of "Coburn's Women" are to be found graduates, teachers, and graduates - returned-as-teachers who have added their special dimension to the school.

Chapter 6 A New Century

"Life for you is not a thing of the future, but you are already in the midst of it. You will not find it much different ten or twenty years hence, but what you are doing then will depend largely upon what you are making out of life now." Franklin W. Johnson, Principal 1894-1905.

The death of Dr. Hanson in 1894 ended both a personal career and an era. His life had been Coburn and the school was to be his monument. Now a successor was faced with both a challenge and the reputation of his predecessor. The Committee of Colby College which then managed the affairs of Coburn chose a young man, just beginning his career of teaching and administration. Their faith in him must have been strong, to call so young a man who experience consisted of three years as principal of Calais Academy, in that remote town on the Bay of Fundy.

Franklin Winslow Johnson, a native of Wilton, had graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Colby College in 1891. Now, after three years' experience in the field of education, he was called as principal to Coburn Classical Institute. At this time, a boarding school of 140 students, including 69 girls, enjoyed an enviable reputation. In the Waterville Maine for December 16, 1896, an article on "Progressive Coburn" states: "The reputation of this school rests mainly upon its work as a preparatory school. More students have prepared for college here than at any other school in Maine.

"Coburn is undoubtedly the coming school of Maine. In location and natural advantages the school is unsurpassed. As a fitting school it has been without a peer in the number of students fitted, and in the thoroughness of instruction. The teachers of the school are active and progressive, the friends of the school are alert to its interests. Coburn is soon to be to Maine what Exeter and Andover have been to New Hampshire and Massachusetts - the fitting school of Maine."

The administrations of Colby and Coburn were proud of the latter's prestige. In its annual brochure "Colby College and Academies" for 1900, the college praises the performance of Coburn graduates, they "have maintained good standing in Bates, Bowdoin, Brown, Colby, Dartmouth, Harvard, Wellesley, Yale and other colleges. Students are admitted without examination, on the principal's certificate, to Bates, Brown, Colgate, Colby, Dartmouth, University of Maine, Wellesley and other colleges." Similar announcements appeared in the Coburn Clarion of the same period.

The brochure continues with a description of the offerings of its local Academy" Besides the College Preparatory Course there are two others. The English Scientific Course prepares students for any scientific school. The Latin Scientific Course offers instruction in English, Latin, French, German, Mathematics, History, and the Sciences. Both these courses are admirably adapted to the needs of those who do not intend to enter higher schools, but desire a good general training as a preparation for life. They also furnish an excellent foundation and valuable training for those who intend to become teachers in the public schools.

"There is also a musical department in which instruction in both vocal and instrumental music and harmony is given by excellent teachers. Students who complete the musical course are given diplomas certifying to this fact." The music department was to be active, even prominent, for over half a century. Drew T. Harthorn, Principal from 1912-1929, greatly expanded it. About 1920, the West House on the corner of Elm and Winter Streets, adjoining the school, was acquired for a Music Hall. It provided studios and practice rooms, with four grand pianos plus several upright pianos. Through the 1920's Coburn's participation in musical events was extensive including Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. The Music Hall itself would have to be sacrificed in the Great Depression of the 1930's; but twenty years after that, in the 1950's, there was still an annual Minstrel Show. Directed by Mrs. Mary Berry Manter, long-time vocal teacher at Coburn, the show was always a highlight of the school year.

Not content to keep things as they were, Franklin Johnson was to devote the next eleven years to strengthening Coburn's standing, broadening its offerings and giving it a secure financial basis. The curriculum still leaned heavily on the classical languages, although French and German were beginning to replace Greek. Science also appeared, but the field of social studies was still far in the future. One of Dr. Johnson's first administrative acts was to extend the three year course to four. Requirements of college boards were becoming more stringent, as more and more students of both sexes were applying for college admission. Realizing that the time had come that a preparatory school must be more than the traditional Latin School, Principal Johnson worked to raise scholastic standards and to

expand departments. In addition, he introduced an entirely new one: athletics. His belief was that competitive sports would foster school spirit and boost moral without lowering scholarship, and he was right.

Under Dr. Hanson athletics had received little official attention; there was no mention of sports in his annual catalogues. But Franklin Johnson, even in his college years, had been an enthusiast of organized sports. As editor of the Colby Echo in his senior year he wrote frequent editorials, particularly advocating football. During his first year as Principal of Coburn, Dr. Johnson agreed to sponsor both the baseball and football association; the following year all the school's athletic activities merged into a single Athletic Association. The catalogue for 1895-96 discusses the athletic program of the school. "There are two athletic organizations, The Baseball Association and the Football Association. Athletic sports have their rightful place in the school. They receive all proper encouragement, but are kept in a subordinate position. Their purpose is to give the students needed exercise and healthful recreation. Beyond this they are not allowed to go. All athletic games are under the oversight of some teacher of the school."

In the Coburn Clarion, which appeared, at that time, about four times a year, one finds athletic schedules for those early years of Principal Johnson's tenure. The Clarion for May, 1900, for example, carries the baseball schedule for April 28- June 16 of that year. That season the team played ten games, including the University of Maine, Lewiston High School, Edward Little High School, Waterville High School,

Colby Junior League, the Good Will Farm (Hinckley) and the Oakland Cadets. Three games had already been played, at the time of publication; Coburn had lost all three: the University of Maine, Edward Little High School and Lewiston High School.

In the February of 1901, issue of the Clarion, it is reported that Coburn had enjoyed an undefeated season in football, playing a schedule of eight games.

The athletic program as a whole expanded under Dr. Johnson, as we note in the Clarion for February, 1902.

"On January 11, 1902, occurred the first game of basket ball ever played on the Coburn court. This was also the first game of basket ball ever played by a Coburn team. Our new Gymnasium was on that night opened to the public. Considering that the game was a new one, the people of this city, Principal F.W. Johnson explained some of the essential points of the game." The final score was Colby 37, Coburn 21.

In the issue for May, 1902, there appears in its entirety the Constitution of the Coburn Athletic Association. It was a lengthy statement of 29 articles.

Among the schools whose teams clashed regularly with Coburn's was Oak Grove School² in Vassalboro. We must recall, in 1970, the

² Oak Grove Seminary

history of this Quaker institution. While not as old as Coburn Classical Institute, it has a long record and an enviable standing. Founded in 1849 by a group of five influential and scholarly Quakers, it was designed to offer "superior educational advantages amid guarded surroundings where character building would go hand in hand with Latin and science." Originally Oak Grove was a co-educational day school; with the construction of a dormitory in 1857, it became a boarding school for boys and girls. Its athletic teams were friendly rivals of Coburn's from the time Franklin Johnson introduced interscholastic sports. The Coburn Clarion featured a sports section in every issue: the scores of the games with Oak Grove show the long association of the two schools. Oak Grove became a girls' school only, in 1925³.

By the turn of the century, trends in education had appeared which would inevitably have their bearing on the Academic Course offers instruction in English, Latin, French, German, Mathematics, History, and the Sciences. Both these courses are admirably adapted to the needs of those who do not intend to enter higher schools, but desire a good general training as a preparation for life. They also furnish an excellent foundation and valuable training for those who intend to become teachers in the public schools.

The Civil War marked the decline, and even the demise of many Academies, and the entire movement was now going to be

³ 1921 is often given as the year Oak Grove Seminary converted to an all girls school.

confronted with competition from another source. The demand for free higher schooling grew to the point where tax-supported high schools came into being. It was in 1873 that the free high school system was established in the State of Maine. Authorized taxation for free instruction in the classics and higher branches, including a college preparatory course, was to deal a deathblow to many of the State's academies. There were some however, which merged with normal schools, others with the free high school and there were still a few which continued to function independently. The establishment of Waterville High School in 1876 inevitably drew students from Coburn Classical High School, although many chose to remain. A kind of competition was forced upon Coburn, then, which the school has had to recognize and accept, even as the two schools could never seriously "compete" on an equal footing.

Franklin Johnson recognized very early that Coburn needed a greater measure of independence in running its own affairs than the current practice allowed. After one unsuccessful attempt to operate under its own Board of Trustees in the 1840's, the school had come back under the wing of its parent college. By the turn of the century, however, Colby was concerned with its own growth and development, college funds were scarce, and the fitting school received little attention. Coburn Classical Institute had for many years provided a large percentage of Colby's enrollment. Even before the Civil War the figure was impressive; in the years following the war, Principal Hanson had provided a generous stream of well-prepared students who, in truth, kept the college alive at this very critical time. Within the first four years of Johnson's principalship, eighty of his

graduates had entered Colby; the "Coburn delegation" was at least one-fourth of every entering class.

The college, however, found itself unable to help the Institute without using funds needed for its own program. With neither counsel nor money being offered, Johnson felt that Coburn was operating under a serious handicap. His strong statement favoring a separate corporation for his school was accepted "without revolution;," as Dean Marriner says in *The Man of Mayflower Hill*. The Act of Incorporation bore the date of March 8, 1901.

This act of Incorporation clearly indicates the continuing relationship between the College and its fitting school, even as the latter was being granted greater autonomy. Section 2 reads in part: "Said corporation shall be governed and its powers exercised by a board of not exceeding seventeen trustees, of which the president of Colby College and the principal of Coburn Classical Institute for the time being shall, ex-officio, be members..."

Section 3 continues "Said corporation may use the real estate held in trust for it, and the income of all funds held in trust for it, by the president and trustees of Colby College, in accordance with the trust by which they are held and with such arrangements as shall from time to time be made, with said president and trustees, and may take and hold, for the purpose of its creation, property in its own right to the amount of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars."

An amendment to this Act, approved February 27, 1903, sets the maximum number of Trustees at twenty.

With the death of President Arthur J. Roberts of Colby in 1927 and the return of Franklin Johnson to his Alma Mater as President in 1929, there was a lessening of the ties between the college and its fitting school. The college released Coburn's funds, while retaining ownership of its land. Colby still held title to the latter at the time of the fire of 1955.

Finances: that was the crying need for the expanding school, and Principal Johnson set about doing something about that, too. Then, as always, costs and prices were higher than in earlier times. While fund-raising was urgent, the well-organized technique for a Capital Funds Drive was not to evolve until many years later. The plea for financial support in the "Colby College and Academies" brochure for 1900 is a gentle invitation to contribute, typical of the dulcet approach of the era to financial matters, but scarcely what one would call high-powered.

"The most pressing need of the college is the enlargement of the general fund, but subscriptions may be made for any department of college work, or for either of the four academies. There will be opportunity for large gifts and for small gifts, for bequests in wills, and for the giving of any amount in any way as shall seem best for the donors. The full success of the work depends as much upon the large number of small gifts as upon the few great ones. If all who should be relatively interested in the college will simply do according

to their several ability, a result will accrue of the greatest advantage..."

Need for maintenance, for more teachers with higher salaries, for new equipment and expanded services all served in Johnson's efforts to increase the school's endowment and to put it on a stable and adequate financial foundation. For the first time in the school's history, fixed salaries for the teachers and principal were established. If they were modest, they were at least definite.

In 1904, at the time of the school's 75th anniversary, the family of Stephen Coburn, already so generous in the past, announced a gift of \$25,000, with the requirement that the school match this amount. In his final report to the Coburn trustees, Johnson observed, "I believe the entire sum can be secured within a year." It was, and the Institute's endowment was richer by \$50,000.

As Franklin Johnson's renown led to his moving from Calais Academy to Coburn Classical Institute, so it was to lead to his being called as principal of Morgan Park Academy in Chicago. It was through Colby connections that this offer came. When he left Waterville in 1905, his Colby ties were not severed, only quiescent; for in another 24 years he was to return to the Elm City as the President of his Alma Mater.

If anecdotes and yarns begin to cluster, in time, around the head of a schoolmaster grown old in service to his institution, the new young successor comes in for his share of them, too. Mrs. Ethel Louise

Turner, an 1896 graduate of Coburn recalled many years later the last days of Dr. Hanson and the coming of Franklin Johnson. Dr. Hanson "didn't believe in holidays," she wrote from California to a Waterville friend, "so kept school on Thanksgiving and all the others.

"We had a Principal Franklin Johnson, who later became President of Colby and who was largely responsible for the move to Mayflower Hill and raising money for the new buildings. Mr. Johnson was freshly out of Harvard (sic) and had a rather bad time with my class. Our average age was twenty-seven (I think older than he was). One man was thirty-seven. Many had taught school in rural districts to get funds for Coburn. We had a number of arguments with Mr. Johnson and threatened more than once to leave in a body if our wishes were not carried out.

"In the process of changing schedules we were held to many of the old programs. We had more Latin and Greek than was later required. We had a very good course in Mythology..."

Graduates of Coburn under Franklin Johnson were to carry warm memories of their time at the school. Whether this was short or long, impressions remained vivid long after. Miss Helen Cochrane, of the class of 1904, recalls over 65 years later a hilarious class "stunt". Mr. Johnson's Latin class, of perhaps twelve students, staged a funeral procession for Virgil. One boy "borrowed" a baptismal gown from his Methodist preacher father, from somewhere college gowns also appeared. "A very solemn procession" marched around the school, down the hall to the back stairs, up, then down the front stairs again.

The teacher, watching this performance over the stair railing laughed until he cried. "That was the only time," says Miss Cochrane, "that Mr. Johnson was ever known to shed a tear over anything."

In the class of 1906 was young Merle Crowell. He was to make a name for himself in journalism as the editor of *American Magazine* and later Senior Editor of the *Reader's Digest*. In 1925 he wrote for a pamphlet, "*The Spirit of Coburn*", his thoughts on "what Coburn did for me."

"I came to Coburn with a basket of dreams. They had been born on a Maine farm—in winter nights, when the house shook before the march of the north wind; in the soft rush of Spring, when violets mantled the meadows; in the long summer days, when the drone of bees punctuated the steady murmur of the mowing -machine; and in the glory of Autumn, when the leaves lit their flaming pyres, I thought that all life was made up of dreams, too.

"In Coburn I came up against reality. It did not banish my dreams, but it oriented them. Boys and girls from every part of the State, and from other States, were there—and I got a taste of life as I was later to find it lived by men and women. Work and play, earnestness and levity, love and dislike, ambition and comradeship; I saw all these and many more impulses moving in young folk of many kinds and many minds. I found that life was not all gossamer..The process of adjustment was, to me, slow and hard. But it went on steadily. I did not know, however, until long after I had left Coburn, how big a lesson I learned there...

"Before entering the institute at Waterville, I had attended, and been graduated from, a small country academy.

There, my schoolmates were largely my neighbors. I had known most of them for years. Their traditions and background were the same as mine. Not for a great deal would I miss the memory of my associations with them, but I know now that the shake-up, the mental realignment that Coburn gave me, was just what I needed at the time it came..."

The Coburn Clarion for December, 1901, carried a one-line announcement: "Mr. Henry Hoxie, Union St., is our new janitor."

A gracious note, to speak of a new employee of the school, in the student magazine. Mr. Hoxie was to prove to be no ordinary janitor: his long years of association with Coburn won for him a

very special place in the school. In August, 1906, the Bulletin of Coburn Classical Institute mentions Mr. Hoxie, now in his fifth year.

"Mr. Hoxie's title has been changed from "Janitor" to "Superintendent of Buildings", with a view to dignifying his position among the students and to increasing his feelings of responsibility for the general welfare of the material equipment of the school.

Three years later, the Clarion noted in its issue for January, 1909, that "this year the students and teachers wished to show by a little gift there appreciation and love for Mr. Hoxie who has for so many years won the good will and affection of all students. So we banded together and presented to him a fur cap and fur gauntlets, feeling

that he would appreciate them upon these cold, winter mornings." And the May, 1922, issue of Coburn Clarion was dedicated to him, complete with his photograph .

A student, teacher and long-time friend of Coburn, Doris Hardy Haweeli, wrote many years later: "No history of Coburn should be written without mentioning Mr. Henry Hoxie who for years was the janitor of the school. No person was more kind to Coburn students nor more dearly loved by them. He was a devout Baptist and could utter some of the most eloquent prayers I have ever heard. At all important Coburn events, Mr. Hoxie was called upon to offer prayer.."

A little less than years after the 1922 issue of the Coburn Clarion, dedicated to Mr. Hoxie, the last vestige of the physical plant of the school was to fall under the wrecker's ball. Following the fire of February 1955, which destroyed Coburn Memorial Hall, Thayer Hall was the one remaining building of the school. After the merger Oak Grove School and CCI over the summer of 1970, the Elm Street site stood empty, unused and deteriorating. The land was finally acquired for a low income housing project; not many weeks after the ground was first broken for the new apartment building, the cornerstone of Thayer Hall was removed, the contents of its lead box examined. Included was a listing of both faculty and students in attendance as of June 9, 1919. The next to the last name, on page one of this five page listing, in careful, neat script, appears the name of Henry Hoxie.

In 1905, the world seemed a stable enough planet and those engaged in enterprises that were flourishing saw no menacing cloud

on their horizon. Despite the never ending struggle for sufficient funds, Coburn's fortunes looked promising, too, when George Stanley Stevenson succeeded Franklin Johnson as Principal. Remembered as "a very able, very fine man", he is warmly evoked in this reminiscence of one of his students: "Just

to hear the door open and watch Mr. Stevenson walk down the aisle to the platform is your inspiration for the day."

A native of Clinton, Maine, George Stevenson graduated, with highest honors, from Coburn Classical Institute in 1898. After two years at Colby College, he went on to Harvard University, for both his A.B. degree in 1903, and his A.M. the following year. After teaching Latin at Milton Academy for two years, he came to be Coburn's principal in 1905. He was to prove a worthy successor of Franklin Johnson, working to find new friends for the school, strengthen its financial situation and maintaining scholastic excellence.

It was Principal Stevenson who conceived and designed the Coburn seal "which so fitly represents the character of the school." The motto UT PROSIM, "that I might serve" inscribed on a shield forms the main part of the seal. It was he also who procured Hanson Hall as a dormitory for boys. In earlier years the house had been the home of Dr. and Mrs. James Hanson; with remodeling it was now "made into a comfortable home for boys who came from other places."

In his seven years at Coburn, the school acquired a generous gift of land from W. Scott Libbey of Lewiston, ex-'71, an interested alumnus.

This was located across Messalonske stream, to the west of Coburn Campus, and was to be known as Libbey Field. It served as Coburn's athletic field in its days of football glory. The annual school catalog carried a description of it. "This is a field of twelve acres situated just out of the city, about six minutes walk from the Institute building. There is a quarter mile cinder track with a 220-yard straightaway. Within the track is a perfectly level space for football and baseball grounds. The grounds are splendidly laid out, graded and furnished with bleachers, players' benches, etc. Altogether the Libbey Athletic Field is as good as may be found among secondary schools in New England."

For many years the footbridge at the end of Winter Street which was the direct route from school to field was well-traveled. It finally fell apart from age and neglect; perhaps this was symbolic of the fading fortunes of the school, when first over-expansion, and then depression all but drained the school of the resources it once commanded.

Mr. Libbey also offered to replace Coburn Memorial Hall with a new school building. While Governor Coburn's gift was an imposing memorial, it was not functional as a 'schoolhouse'. Because it was scarcely twenty years old, however, the offer was not accepted. Memorial Hall was to stand for another 50 years.

In addition to gifts, and offers of gifts of real estate, Scott Libbey instituted two prizes at Coburn which were considered the most significant in the history of the school. In his letter to the principal

dated December 4, 1905, Mr. Libbey stated his desire to offer two annual prizes of \$25 each, to be awarded to a boy and a girl of the Senior Class. He stipulated the basis of the award:

"The Faculty of the school shall decide during the last month of each school-year what boy and what girl of the Senior Class has throughout the whole course performed the best allround work, i.e., has, in the judgment of the teachers of Coburn Classical Institute, made the most of his or her opportunities. Remembering that it is the duty of every individual to take the qualities with which he is gifted and, working with these, to develop himself to the uttermost, I desire that these awards shall never be made on the sole basis of sheer superficial achievement, but rather in recognition of the high purpose and strong persistency with which each person shall have worked to make in all ways, the best himself or herself. Scholarship shall not necessarily be the first consideration."

The names of the Libbey Prize Winners were listed in the annual Catalogue of the school for many years. It was a coveted award. The 1906 winner of the girls' award was Jennie Hatch. Many years later, recalling her Coburn days, Jennie Hatch Gagnon spoke especially of the Libbey prizes. They were not always awarded to local students, nor to students from large towns.

Although Waterville had a public high school for thirty years, many of the surrounding towns had none. Coburn drew students from these sources and also many came from one-room country schools. Many

times the Libbey Prizes went to students from these small rural schools.

Mrs. Gagnon also recalled some of the living and the transportation arrangements for Coburn students. In addition to Hanson Hall for boys and Coburn Cottage under Miss Gilpatrick for girls, girls would sometimes "go in together" in renting and sharing a room in town. They would commute to home on the weekends, bringing back sufficient food to see them through the week.

Day students were persevering in their pursuit of education: on foot and on horseback they came, as well as by public carriers. Mrs. Gagnon also recalled in later years that students from Clinton came to school by the morning train, returning home by an afternoon one; Oakland, Fairfield and Benton pupils came by electric car, a class mate from Sydney came "by team", while Jennie Hatch Gagnon herself rode the old family horse from their home out beyond Benton as far as Sand Hill in Winslow. Leaving her mount there for the day, she walked the rest of the way to the Elm Street campus. "And," she observed with a twinkle, "there was no windbreak on the Winslow-Waterville bridge in those days.

Concern with keeping in step with the times, and its educational offerings, however, remained clearly the keystone of the school's administration. In the first issue of the Bulletin of Coburn Classical Institute, August, 1906, The Principal states in his Report that growth of interest in Science is rapid. The percent of students in the Scientific Course has risen and in the previous graduation class, the five who

went on to the University of Maine all were planning on specialized scientific work in Engineering and Forestry.

The Report continues: "In such a degree as it is necessary to conform to popular demand, Coburn is likely to depend more and more upon strong work in Science. She must, however, guard carefully the efficiency and reputation of her classical work, upon which her greatest power of influencing the ideals of the community has always rested and must rest in the future. A certain resistance to the less enlightened phases of public demand seems often times to be the duty of a higher institution of learning..."

George Stevenson served as principal of Coburn for seven years. When he left in 1912, the May issue of the Coburn Clarion for that year was affectionately dedicated to him. President Roberts of Colby paid his high tribute in its pages.

"Mr. Stevenson is an accomplished scholar, a skillful teacher and a wise administrator. He has been especially happy in his relations with his pupils. They have at all times found

in him a sympathetic and helpful friend, and have repaid his interest in them by according to him their admiring respect and affectionate loyalty. Mr. Stevenson's teachers have been glad to follow so capable and inspiring a leader, and all the members of the staff of instruction have worked together harmoniously and successfully under his direction.

"The Trustees of Coburn and of Colby are gratefully appreciative of the faithful and efficient service Mr. Stevenson has rendered the Institute and the college – for he has been equally loyal to both – and regret exceedingly that he has decided to sever his connection with these institutions."

The editorial staff of the Clarion itself paid tribute to Mr. Stevenson in this issue. "The school is about to lose its principal.. One of the departments which will feel his absence keenly is the Coburn Clarion, for his interest in the work has been very helpful, and it is largely through his efforts the Clarion has attained its present standard. We owe to Mr. Stevenson the attractive quarters in which we are now established, – The sanctum... He has always stood behind the paper..."

George Stevenson was succeeded as Principal by Drew Thompson Harthorn, a distant relative of the Coburn Family. A graduate of Colby College, 1894, he was principal of Wilton Academy for several years before coming to Coburn. With a faculty of five, including his very able preceptress, Miss Gilpatrick, he undertook an ambitious expansion of the school. As early as 1906 a four years' course in music and harmony had been introduced. At that time it was possible for students to take this course without being enrolled in any other department at the school. Under Mr. Harthorn, the music department became noted throughout the state. For many years its concerts and programs were outstanding.

Athletics were to be encouraged, and even subsidized, under Mr. Harthorn. The school developed winning teams in football and baseball whose prowess, in the words of those who still remember, "was legendary."

As the Civil War had touched the lives and thoughts of the people of Maine, even to nearly forcing Colby College to close its doors, so the First World War of 1914-18 was to do so, once again. The Coburn Clarion for May, 1915, carried an anguished editorial on the subject. If one omits the references to proper names and places, these words could have been written in the 1860's, or the 1940's during the Second World War or the 1960's, with the Vietnam War. The cry of youth is for justice, peace and humanity in the face of war in whatever generation.

"Never has there been a time in recent years", begins the editorial, "when the current events of the world were of so much interest to students. Geography and history have become real and vital subjects...All these things have made us realize that we are living in an epoch-making period.

"This war, however, should have a deeper meaning for every thoughtful student. In this age of reason, justice, and consideration for the interests of humanity, what possible justification can there be for such ruthless destruction of property and life? War is based upon the principle of might, not right.

It can never be depended upon to settle affairs according to the eternal laws of justice. Furthermore, the waste of money, property, and human life is criminal. There is only one logical conclusion to be reached, and that is that some peaceful settlement of difficulties by international agreement should be substituted for war. This is possible, and merely depends upon the will of the people. The students who are now in school will be the people of the coming generation. It is for them, realizing the unreasonableness and the horror of war, to desire peace, to demand it, and to create a new spirit of internationalism."

Fortunately, youthful good spirits do not remain permanently quenched, it is indeed their resiliency that brings the world sunshine as well as shadows, laughter as well as tears. In the LOCALS Column of the Clarion for April, 1915, we find this adaptation of the First World War favorite, It's a Long Way to Tipperary:

"It's a long, long way to dear old Coburn
It's a long way to go.
It's a long, long way to dear old Coburn
To the best prep, school I know.
Goodbye, dear old high school,
Farewell to the pupils there.
It's a long, long way to dear old Coburn,
But my heart's right there."

In 1919, a new dormitory for boys was opened. Known as Thayer Hall, it was described in the Catalogue of 1918-1919 as "...the latest

addition to the equipment,...a red brick building in the rear of the Institute Building facing Monument Park. It makes a most attractive home for boys. The building is heated throughout by steam, is lighted by electricity, and is thoroughly up-to-date in every way. The rooms are large, well lighted and well ventilated. Each room accommodates two boys. On each floor is a well appointed bathroom equipped with shower baths, etc. The Hall is under the supervision of members of the faculty who live with the boys. A house mother is in charge.

"The expense for room at Thayer Hall varies according to location. Corner rooms are \$5.00 a week, \$2.50 a week for each boy. Other rooms are \$4.00 a week being \$2.00 a week for each boy. All boys not living at home are required to live at Thayer Hall.

"The dining room at Thayer Hall will accommodate all boys and girls of the school. Table board for all will be \$4.50 per week."

A good thing it was, too that Thayer Hall was so well built. When Coburn Memorial Hall was gutted by fire in February of 1955, the school had no place to go but into Thayer Hall. Overnight it was transformed from dormitory into a classroom, administration and activity building; at this writing, 15 years later, it still constitutes the physical plant of Coburn Classical Institute. And then, in the summer of 1970. Thayer Hall was to be abandoned and left standing empty. Outgrown. Outworn.

CCI merged with Oak Grove School, the two consolidating their forces on the Vassalboro campus. When Thayer Hall was finally slated for destruction, to make room for a low-income housing development, the cornerstone was carefully removed and opened. In September, 1971, the lead box it contained yielded up

1. A CCI Catalogue for 1917-1918
2. The Coburn Clarion for May, 1919
3. The Waterville Morning Sentinel for June 9, 1919
4. The Daily Kennebec Journal for June 9, 1919
5. The program of the Class Day Exercises of the Class of 1919 on June 9, 1919 at the Baptist Church
6. Two copies of the Program of the Commencement Exercises which extended from Saturday June 7 through Tuesday June 10.

One of the four events listed for Monday, June 9 was: "4:00 pm - Laying the corner-stone of new Boys Dormitory."

On the back of one of the Programs is written, in Principal Harthorn's hand: "This building was constructed by the Horace Purington Co. of Waterville, Maine, May to September, 1919."

The catalogue for 1922-1923 gives us a picture of Coburn after a century in which, despite ups and downs, its growth and development had been steady. "The spirit of the school is of the kind which stimulates every student to do his best. The atmosphere is that of self-improvement. Every opportunity is offered the individual to develop himself along lines aside from the regular course of study and additional to it, as for instance in vocal and instrumental music, debate, oratory, literary effort, athletics. It is a distinct part of the duty of each teacher to observe the special need or capabilities of the individual student, and to make careful effort to assist in such lines of development as are necessary and characteristically suited to him. The school takes pains as much to develop a student's character as to establish his scholarship."

Three years later, the school catalogue shows us, once again, the flourishing state of affairs. Six courses of study were offered: The College Preparatory, which included the Classical and the Scientific, English, Household Arts, Religious Education, newly established in 1925, and Music. "'The Classical and Scientific courses are designed," reads the catalogue for 1925- 1926, to give a complete and thorough preparation for college or scientific school with highly trained and competent teachers.

The English course provides an excellent training for those students who do not plan to go to college. The Household Arts course under a specially trained director is arranged to meet the needs of the girls and to give the young women training in the science of home-making and right living. The Religious Education Department aims to

give all students the opportunity to learn about the great religious principles which are the basis of all right living, to know the Bible intimately as the chief guide to successful character building, and to give the proper emphasis in the spiritual side of life. "The Music Course is broad in it's scope and aims to include every branch of a musical education under the direction of a master."

To the outside world, Coburn was a school with dynamic leadership, a rich and diversified program, a successful athletic schedule and a music department of note, not only in Waterville but also in state-wide music festivals. What was not so widely known beyond the walls of the school was it's increasing financial "crunch". Chronically, over a period of years, current operating income had not met current operating expenditures. Student fees were by no means adequate for the budget. Enrollment fluctuated, and this in itself could only contribute to an imbalance in financial affairs. For example, the Treasurer's report of June 14, 1929 indicates the urgent need of an increase in students: with a nucleus of 39 for the coming year, a campaign to increase enrollment to 150 was imperative. Also, annual solicitation of funds from friends of the school not only proved unproductive, but also was "viewed with alarm" by contributors.

Teacher's salaries were in arrears as early as 1928. That year also saw the beginnings of retrenchment in operating expenses. The school closed Coburn Cottage, residence hall for girls. In February of 1929, the Trustees requested the Treasurer of Colby College to sell the property at a suggested price of \$12,000. This was a fair price at the time. When it was finally sold, in the spring of 1930, the Depression

had set in: Coburn Cottage went for \$7,000 cash, provided (the purchaser) pay the commission."

Further proposed adjustments and repairs on school property were going to prove to be too little and too late. Obligated to continue dipping into its financial reserves, the administration saw its endowment funds depleted. Despite generous support annually from Miss Louise Coburn, the school's financial situation had become critical. The year of Mr. Harthorne's resignation, 1929, was to witness the stock market crash and the onset of the Depression. Coburn Classical Institute, overexpanded and with insufficient financial reserves, was to find itself suddenly impoverished. This did not take place overnight, but the nightmare of no money was to last long after the Depression was over.

Chapter 7 Depression, War and Fire

For a brief interlude after the resignation of Mr. Harthorn, Guy T. Whitten, long a teacher of mathematics at Coburn, served as Principal. Although his term of office was brief, he introduced a basic reform. A trained accountant, he set up, for the first time in the history of the school, a system of keeping the books by approved accounting methods.

Guy Whitten was followed in 1932 by a new Principal, Hugh Smith, who was to bear the full brunt of the Depression years. A science teacher at Ricker Junior College, which had once served as one of Colby's four fitting schools, Hugh Smith undertook to wrestle with Coburn's problems. The kindly, soft-spoken, Mr. Smith had a firm sense of commitment coupled with a skill in business management. For almost twenty years he labored to prune away the unessentials, free the school of debt, and raise academic standards still higher.

It was not easy. He sold off property which was not producing income. Coburn owned at this time five houses in Thayer Court which had been converted into apartments. Beset by the Depression, the tenants often could not pay their rent. The school would gain nothing by turning them out, - everyone was in the same financial boat -, and was in turn unable to pay its teachers. "We had a very lean time during the depression," writes Doris Hardy Haweeli who recalls the 1930's, "...week after week of payless pay days - but the morale of the teachers was excellent. In all fairness I report immediately that eventually the school paid us every cent which was owed us."

When Hugh Smith came to Coburn, he found it to have a reputation of being an "athletic school". This contributed to the low public esteem in which it was held. He worked to establish discipline, to instill again in the students a seriousness of study habits. "I tried to put discipline on a positive basis," he said in later years, "by giving a reward for good behavior, not punishment for bad". In the nineteen years which Mr. Smith devoted to Coburn, he gave much more of himself than the outside world knew. The magnitude of the problems of saving the school from going under completely were enough to fill a man's waking hours. Hugh Smith worked quietly and with persistence to meet bills, improve standards and encourage students.

More than once he helped Coburn graduates continue their work at Colby, not by supervision of their courses alone, but by financial aid to them out of his own personal funds. His tenure at Coburn was a testimony to his genuine interest in young people, and he offered them help in very tangible ways.

When Hugh Smith agreed to become Principal, he did not wish to be responsible for the bookkeeping. President Johnson, then Chairman of the Board, drafted Joseph Coburn Smith, a newly elected trustee, and public relations director for the College, to serve as Treasurer. While without any bookkeeping experience, "Joe" felt obliged to accept.

Joseph Coburn Smith was no stranger to the school he was to serve for many years. His mother was Grace Maud Coburn, niece of Abner

Coburn, and a Colby graduate of 1893. His father was George Otis Smith, also Colby 1893, long a trustee of Colby as well as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Coburn. The son, Joseph Coburn, a graduate of Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C., from Colby College in 1924. He has served both institutions well. Named a trustee of Coburn when Hugh Smith came to the school, he served on its Board concurrently with his father. At the time of this writing, "Joe" continues as a member of the Board.

As Treasurer of Coburn from 1932 to 1948, and as a director of public relations for the College for many years, Joseph Coburn Smith has represented the tradition of the Coburn family in service to both schools. In recalling his work long afterwards, he wrote to a friend in March of 1969, "I was treasurer from about 1932 to 1948, but my memories are mostly of how to meet the payroll and pay out bills. Hugh Smith and I started with \$100,00 or more in debts and ended up in the clear, but then the deficits began again."

Since the new principal was a bachelor and did not want to occupy the Principal's house which touched to Coburn property on the west edge of Memorial Park, this dwelling was offered to the Joseph Smith family in lieu of remuneration and with the dubious privilege of making all repairs and renovations at his own expense. Its close proximity to the school allowed it to serve as the business office and many were the conferences held there with students, faculty and bill collectors. The "Smith Brothers" as the two school officers came to be nicknamed, although not in any way related, spent many long

evening hours there figuring how to keep the School precariously away from bankruptcy.

The depression years were hard on all tuition-charging schools. Students were scarce and virtually all had to be given remission of part of the stated tuition charges. In spite of all recruiting efforts, however, it became clear at the outset of the "Smith Brothers'" first year that it was going to be impossible to make ends meet. The teachers, of course, were utterly dismayed; job opportunities were few and far between. Thus, a drastic scheme was worked out which allowed the School to carry on. The teachers were offered free room and board and \$60.00 a month cash, with a "Gentlemen's agreement" that these arrears would be made up "if and when feasible."

Fantastic as it sounds today, as memories of the Great Depression have been supplanted by nearly four decades of general prosperity, it must be remembered that even able and well- educated teachers then faced the bleak alternative of raking

leaves for a public dole or some other marginal subsistence. IT is no wonder that every one of the Coburn faculty preferred the assurance of food and shelter, a small amount of spending money, and a job that utilized their professional skills. After two or three years under such an arrangement, the Treasurer was able to add periodic payments on back salaries, until eventually, all arrears were paid.

The financial situation in which the two Smiths found themselves involved proved to be worse than anyone had suspected. The small endowment had long ago been used up. Tens of thousands of dollars had been borrowed on notes endorsed by the historical supporters of the School. Coal bills, wholesale grocery bills and textbook bills were several years in arrears. The plant was suffering from deferred maintenance. When the Treasurer finally decoded the double-entry bookkeeping, the stark fact emerged that liabilities exceeded assets by about one hundred thousand dollars. It took World War II and the "G. I. Bill" to finally bring operating surpluses and when the Treasurer resigned in 1948, the debts had been cleared away and the School seemed to be a solvent institution.

The lean years of the depression were followed by World War II and in its wake Coburn received an influx of veterans. Enrollment rose higher than it had been in decades. Mr. Smith was impressed with the high caliber of these boys. Coburn adapted itself to this temporary wave of students who wanted, after all, to come back to school.

In addition, Mr. Smith offered the services of Coburn still further. Under the Veterans Administration, funds were made available for summer schools for returning men. First begun at Coburn in 1946, an eight weeks' summer course was offered through 1950. There were courses in French, English, science and mathematics; the teachers were usually from Coburn's staff or Colby's. As each course offered a year's work, the schedule was demanding: "five one-hour periods five times a week will constitute a full-time program", reads the

bulletin for the 1950 session. It was often hard for the boys to get back to using books again. There were no formal outside activities during the summer program, as it was primarily a work session. The afternoons afforded time for tennis, softball, and swimming. There were many who took advantage of this opportunity: sixty students enrolled the first summer, the number gradually declining in the following years. Mr. Smith was the very able administrator of this program, quick to meet a current educational need as he saw it, just as the Reverend Jeremiah Chaplin had, a century and a quarter earlier.

Always Coburn had followed the policy of adapting its offerings to prospective students. In the 19th century, before public high schools were established, the Academy was the one source of college preparatory work. Even after the public high school came into being, in the last quarter of the century, many students found that the Academy could accommodate them and their needs with more flexibility. Many a student required only a partial course, or was older than the average schoolboy or girl and felt he would not fit in a high school class. In the time of Franklin Johnson there were students older than their principal. Doris Hardy Haweeli, coming out of college to teach in the mid - 1920's recalls having students older than herself. The adaptation of the Coburn program to returning veterans in the late 1940's was therefore nothing new in the philosophy of education of the school. Age per se was of no account; the student's academic needs dictated his course and his length of stay.

A glance at the graduating classes of the late 1940's and early 1950's reveals both this flexibility of Coburn's program and the precarious state of student enrollment. For example, in the class of 1949, there were 67 graduates, only one girl. Of these, 33 were one-year-at Coburn students, 20 were one-year veterans, only one four-year senior, 7 were six-months seniors, with one five-month senior. Only 6 of the graduates indicated no plans for college; 23 planned to go to Colby, 16 to the University of Maine. In the class of 1950, there were 61 graduates, with 36 one-year seniors, 7 one-year veterans, 4 six-month veterans, only one girl who was a 3-year senior. Fourteen were planning to go to Colby. Two, only, indicated no college plans. In 1951, there were 33 graduating seniors, 20 one-year students, 3 one-year veterans, one six-month student, 3 girls. All 33 graduates planned to go to college, 12 of them to Colby. In 1952, there were 17 graduates, 14 one-year students, 3 of them girls, no veterans. Three indicated no college plans, not one planned to go on to Colby College. The class of 1953 had 21 graduates, 15 of them one-year students, 3 girls. Only one indicated no college plans; 9 specified Colby College as their choice. In the classes of 1950, 1951 and 1953 there were students who had taken summer session courses at Coburn as well.

When the influx of veterans tapered off, Coburn was to find itself at a very low ebb, indeed. Girl enrollment had dropped markedly; when the veterans departed, it became evident that these older returning students had diverted younger ones from the school. The enrollment of local students was virtually nil. While the veterans had helped the school with a measure of "temporary prosperity", the basic financial

situation remained critical. Furthermore, Coburn's problems were not exclusively of its own making. Waterville High School had offered competition certainly since the turn of the century, and as time went on this became more, not less. It will be recalled that by the early 1900's Colby College officials were beginning to question the validity of their situation, namely helping to support four preparatory schools as their "feeders". The public high school curriculum was becoming stronger, included college preparatory work, produced graduates able to continue without difficulty.

The private schools had to meet this competition academically, and avoid operating at a loss financially.

During the Depression, the government set up many programs to help ease the crisis. The public high schools were aided by the addition of sharp work, the junior high school program was developed further. Pupils in the public junior and senior high schools could prepare either for college or trade.

The competition for Coburn was strong; by the 1950's it became stronger through the steady improvement of the local high school.

In addition, Coburn Hall had once been a handsome new building. Now, close to seventy years old, it was out-of-date and no longer adapted to the functions of a school. Newer school building designs eliminated waste space, high ceilings, arranged library space. Coburn Hall had become inefficient, and through lack of funds, run-down in both maintenance and furnishings.

For all of the problems attendant upon a transition period, such as this post-war era, Coburn was an active, busy place. Sports were always featured in the year-book edition of the Clarion; Class wills and student comments on the graduation class were good-humored and full of wit. An annual event of great entertainment was the Minstrel Show, under the direction of Mrs. Mary Manter. The review of it in the Clarion was always enthusiastic. In his efforts to stress the essentials and at least keep the school going. Principal Smith felt obliged, early in his term of office to discontinue the music department. Mrs. Manter retained a studio on the third floor of Coburn Hall for vocal lessons. Thus unofficially music was still available for interested students.

Hugh Smith was obliged to resign as Principal in 1951 because of ill health. For one year Russell E. Houghton, teacher of English at Coburn, served as interim Headmaster. The use of this title appears for the first time in the 1952 Clarion yearbook in speaking of Mr. Houghton. In July of 1952, Richard Wooster came to direct the fortunes of the hard-pressed school.

A native of Old Town, graduate of the University of Maine, Mr. Wooster was a teacher in the Horace Mann School, the Demonstration School of Teachers College, Columbia University. He came to a school operating at a deficit, with no money left, no endowment, a very small library, a makeshift gymnasium and a building badly in need of both paint and repairs.

The school plant which Richard Wooster was called to oversee and direct was showing its age in the spring of 1951.

When first he set foot in Coburn Hall, there was, of course, the "characteristic schoolhouse odor". His attention was caught, however, by what he saw, rather than by what he smelled. The big study hall into which he stepped, with the Trustee who was his guide and host, had warped floor-boards and rows of old-fashioned desks, each bolted to the floor. Their tops were scarred, and worn smooth between the scars, by the hundreds of hands and arms and books that had rested upon them. The walls were a cheerless tan, hung with browned portraits of benefactors and former principals of the school. The ceiling was high, very high; this is where the heat would go in the cold winter months.

"The first thing I would do is take out those old desks", the Trustee said to his visitor. "That's just what I would want to do," he replied.

Drab. All the rooms needed painting. Some still showed their original plaster walls, now turned a dirty gray. The library housed books that were decades out of date. Richard Wooster was handed the challenge. "Well, that's it," said the Trustee at the close of their tour of the building. "If you think you can do anything with it, here it is. If you take it, do what you like, but do something." What Richard Wooster did became history in very short order. He approached the Trustee for \$3000 for minimum improvements, saying in conclusion, "I'll chance it."

When Richard Wooster arrived in Waterville to stay, he did not come empty-handed. In his baggage were bolts of drapery material, and his own personal library plus books which the Horace Mann School librarian had been able to contribute. This additional gift totaled 1500 books in all. He tackled the Herculean task of refurbishing a building that had gone untended, through necessity, for too long. He personally painted walls and hung draperies, he had help from fraternity boys at Colby, as well as Coburn students who "caught the spirit." Even his mother, at the age of 70, helped in papering the office. His wife made the drapes. With it all, Coburn Hall was not functionally designed as a school: high ceilings dissipated heat, there was

much space that could not be used. In addition, through age its wooden interior had become old and dry, a very real fire hazard in a building erected long before fire-proof construction was developed.

While Richard Wooster entered whole-heartedly into the project of refurbishing a sadly dingy school building, he was also headmaster, teacher and administrator. He taught, according to the Clarion of 1953, "English, Physics, and Plain [sic] Geometry." In his first year, 1952, he introduced the seventh grade. It was taught by his mother, Mrs. Sarah Wooster, "a sweet, understanding, whitehaired woman." There were four boys and one girl in the class. From that time, Coburn classes have always encompassed the six years of junior and senior high school.

In addition, Headmaster Wooster proposed the first Student Council at Coburn in September, 1952. This, too, has continued ever since. Student enrollment increased noticeably: in September, 1953, records show 85 students enrolled. From 1953 t 1954, enrollment of girls jumped to 20. So many additional girls allowed for expanded activities: the first cheerleader squad was organized, also a modern dance group, and there was girls' basketball. At the time of the fire, in 1955, there were 96 students enrolled at Coburn.

The students were alert to the efforts and energy being poured out for the benefit of the school. The Clarion for 1953 comments: "The Coburn Clarion has summarized each year's progress for a great many decades now. We believe that we can report that this year, too, has been one of real advancement. There has been a steady gain of students through the year, and we close with fifty per cent more pupils than last year. The boys and girls we have are good citizens and are a credit to our proud tradition.

"The building has been handsomely redecorated. The walls are bright, clean colors. There is a new tan and green tile floor in the main room, new chairs, drapes, pictures and a magnificent mural map. Every one of the old screw-down desks is gone. We have added over 1100 books to our library.

"Coburn has a future as well as a glorious past. It is part of this year's record, to be reported in the Clarion, that we are on our way."

For two years things were humming at Coburn. The building had a bright interior, the library had been increased, student enrollment climbed quickly. At the end of this time, Headmaster Wooster felt cautiously optimistic that "this year we may break even."

And then disaster struck. In the night of February 22, 1955, in bitter cold weather, fire broke out on the top floor of Coburn Hall. It roared through the heart of the building, lighting the night sky, and drawing fire fighting equipment from Fairfield and Winslow, as well as local citizens in the thousands. By the time the fire was out. Memorial Hall was virtually gutted, its gables roofless against the sky and with some of the walls so weakened that wreckers were obliged to knock them down as soon as possible.

The school had but one building left: Thayer Hall, dormitory for boys directly behind Coburn Hall. The morning after the fire, Wooster and his students salvaged what they could from the water-soaked ruins, and "set up shop" in Thayer Hall. School continued while the Board of Trustees considered the next step for their ill-starred school. They had already been considering the replacement of Coburn Memorial Hall, of converting Thayer Hall into a classroom building, or of building anew. Now, the day after the fire, the Trustees found themselves meeting in emergency session: a decision not of their own choosing had been thrust upon them.

By the time they met in the afternoon, the students had already done a full day's work. The blaze that destroyed their school also fired the young people with spirit. Almost one hundred percent they turned

out to help pick up the pieces as best they could. Headmaster Wooster commented later in the day that "a good many boys and girls at Coburn never put in a harder day at school that they did Wednesday."

"Gee, when I was a kid I used to dream of the schoolhouse burning down. Now here it has to really happen just when I'm trying to get an education," said Richard Nelson of Waterville.

Decisions came quickly on that Wednesday. The whole third floor of Thayer Hall was cleared of its furniture. This was all carried over and stored in the barn of the Headmaster's house. The furniture and personal effects of the boarding students were moved up to the third floor as fast as crews finished cleaning. Bucket-brigade fashion, desks, chairs, and equipment were passed from Memorial Hall to the porch of Thayer Hall, and from there up to the second floor rooms as soon as they were available. Over 3000 books were salvaged from the school library. Textbooks were fished out of water deep enough to float them. Although damaged beyond permanent reclamation, these were spread out to dry on the dining-room floor, to be used until replacement could be procured.

Coburn had a basketball game with Kents Hill scheduled for that afternoon. This was an important date to keep for Coburn had been soundly beaten by them in an earlier match that season. Nothing daunted, in uniforms borrowed from Colby College, the Coburn team went to Readfield, played their game, and brought home a

66-54 victory. This, after a rigorous day of helping to salvage the school.

Richard Wooster did his best to bring Coburn back after the fire. He worked with vigor and enthusiasm to "pick up the pieces. But the odds were against him. A generous portion of the precious insurance money that was paid to the school after the fire went for the conversion of Thayer Hall into a classroom building. Saul Mandell, a Trustee, oversaw this remodeling project that summer, and the school began again bravely in September. But the continued lack of funds and slumping enrollment were too much. Unable to make headway in either direction, Mr. Wooster stayed only one more year. In 1956 he returned to the Horace Mann School in New York.

The 1956 Clarion paid Mr. and Mrs. Wooster a warm tribute. In the headmaster the students found "courage, perseverance and unfailing good humor", coupled with a genuine interest in each of them. There was always time for guidance and counsel for those who sought his advise. Mrs. Wooster added her special charm in her concern for the students. Always willing to help them in school projects, she "made great successes of many otherwise mediocre undertakings." The dormitory students in particular found in her a sympathetic "foster mother". The testimonial of appreciation concludes, "Should a history of Coburn ever be written the Woosters will be recorded as two of the most remembered and best loved friends. We are honored to have know them."

Chapter 8 Phoenix

After the fire, the building that once "for beauty of outline and amplitude of accommodations (had) few if any parallels in the State" ceased to exist. The institute which had been considered for half a century as "the coming school of Maine" had been a mass of sodden wreckage between walls which could only be demolished for safety's sake. Richard Wooster had salvaged what he could from the ashes.

With the roof of Thayer Hall over it's head, at least for the time being, Coburn was going to continue. The trustees called upon former Coburn teacher to take up the challenge, and so it was that Charles, "Chuck", O'Reilly of Norwook, Massachusetts, undertook to rebuild the school. In the process, he not only saved it, but also re-established Coburn in it's original intent. He molded it into a college preparatory school whose graduates performed well in schools of higher learning. He reestablished a recognition of Coburn in College Admissions Offices across the country. The hallmark of his tenure in office was the enviable record begun with the class of 1962, of 100 per cent college admission for his graduates. Far fewer went from Coburn to Colby than in former years; they fanned out among leading colleges for both men and women. Even after Chuck O'Reilly left Coburn, this record was to continue and be a chief source of pride to the school. Coburn had, through the decades, adapted to the changes of the times; now, in the 1950's the school was to return to the goal for which it was concieved. Its fortunes had come full cycle.

Chuck O'Reilly, like so many of his generation, was to see military action in the Second World War before completing his education. Service in the Air Force postponed his college work by four years. He graduated from Colby in 1949, with a major in psychology and English, and earned a Master of Arts degree from the Putney (Vermont) Graduate School of Teacher Education. His teaching career took him from Maine to Tennessee and back again. From 1953-55 he taught at Coburn: English, American history, general mathematics, science and biology. After a year in Ellsworth, Chuck was to return to Coburn as it's Headmaster. The challenge was great, in the fall of 1956; faith was the biggest asset the school could offer.

In his new post as Headmaster', O'Reilly lost no time in soliciting the support of both alumni and friends of the school. In a letter addressed to Alumni and Friends in October, 1956, he wrote: "In my first letter to you, I wrote of my plans; I wrote of COBURN as a school which should continue; and I wrote of a philosophy of education that is needed for these times. These things are intangibles and dreams – but now I think of the story of the Indian who, when asked how he could find his way through the dark mountains to his goal, and not fall along the way, answered, 'I have the near look and the far vision.'"

Thus did Headmaster O'Reilly set the tone of his administration; he addressed the following remarks to the seniors in the Clarion for 1957, his first graduation class:

"...My concern here at Coburn Classical Institute is that our school be known as a community of serious, hard working young people who

will be trained to take an active and important part in the work which must be done to make our world a better place in which to live. This is a competitive world, and the high places in it are awarded to those who have served an honest apprenticeship. This apprenticeship must begin during the years of school when tasks set out are done with all you can give.

Good luck to you in your subsequent careers. In his ten years at Coburn, O'Reilly was to build the enrollment up, little by little, working from the very beginning on the principle of "plain living and high thinking." For the first of these, there was no alternative: with the most meager of equipment and financial resources, he had no choice. "High thinking" called for a positive line of action, for the policies of the school during the previous decade had earned for it an unenviable reputation. G.I. courses, a fifth year at Coburn for students seeking college admission, a drop in enrollment of local day students had marked it as a school of little standing.

Chuck O'Reilly began by eliminating the boarding department entirely; Coburn became, and was to remain, a Day School.

The timing was right for this move. It saved money to close the dining-room, and with day students only, the Headmaster could concentrate on the academic program. By setting his sights for Coburn as a college preparatory day school, he was in a position to eliminate weaker students, be selective in his admissions and introduce flexibility in the curriculum to be able to accommodate individual needs. O'Reilly was an educator who grasped opportunity

where he saw it. It was he who developed with Colby the current arrangement whereby qualified Coburn students may enroll in classes at the college. Many a Coburn upperclassman has been able to pursue colleg-level work on "The Hill" because he was ready for it and the two schools were in agreement. If Jeremiah Chaplin could have known the vigor of his educational ideals and could have witnessed this welcoming of the fitting school's students by the parent college! What better statement of the value and purpose of a college preparatory school could be made?

For a decade O'Reilly worked at establishing Coburn once again. It was slow going, but the magic spirit of the school persisted even in its darkest times. Teachers remained enthusiastic; school spirit was strong. "...The quality adn trainng of a majority of the staff is well above the norm. This faculty will match the best for dedication, creative teaching and an awareness of the needs of a student in a school entirely devoted to college preparation." So reads, in part, a report of the Evaluation of Coburn Classical Institue, prepared in May, 1962,

by Wilson Parkhill, Consultant. The school was first granted accreditation by the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools in 1936; under Chuck O'Reilly, it ws reaccredited in 1963. This cachet demonstrated beyond queston the vigor of his program. In the first issue of COBURN TODAY, January, 1964 appears the following:

"Program and Accomplishments"

1. College acceptance 100% last 2 years
2. Steady enrollment increase.
3. Four years French and Latin.
4. German and Greek in curriculum.
5. An evening course in Creative Writing.
6. Orchestra - local students invited.
7. Art, glee club, drama.
8. A debating society.
9. Literary magazine published regularly.
10. Visiting series of poets, novelists, and dramatists - a valuable opportunity for students to meet these people and to discuss literature with them.
11. Sports include soccer, basketball, baseball, swimming, skating, tennis for girls and girls field hockey next spring.
12. Accreditation as an independent college preparatory school.

"At C.C.I. a student does not belong to a class; he belongs to the school," says a parent-trustee after many years' association with the school. When O'Reilly resigned in 1966 to return to teaching, there was no lack of applicants for post of Headmaster. Coburn had risen from its ashes, more committed to its reason for being than ever.

His successor is Peter B. Gustafson, son of a teacher, and teacher and educator in his own right. Born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, he took his A.B. at Harvard in 1959. After teaching mathematics for a year at Robert College, Istanbul, "Gus" was for three years Assistant Headmaster of The American School of Madrid, Spain. In their search for a new man for a new era, Coburn's trustees found in this mathematician youth and vigor in addition to academic achievement. He has brought to his post an abundance of energy and zest for his work.

Peter Gustafson has continued many of his predecessor's policies. The program has been broadened, extra-curricular opportunities have increased. Enrollment has reached the point where it exceeds the accommodation afforded by Thayer Hall. The school enjoys an active Drama Club, a vigorous athletic program covering three sports: soccer, basketball and baseball, an expanding music department, with both Glee Club and instrumental ensembles.

The need to move has now become critical. Under O'Reilly, the Trustees purchased a tract of land off the Ridge Road, to the north of the city for a new site for the school. Talks concerning building had been initiated prior to 1966. A \$7,000 grant from the Educational

Facilities Laboratory of the Ford Foundation made possible the projection of plans for a new school building on the new site. The proposed structure is experimental in design, affording maximum use of the interior with a minimum of fixed structural features.

At the time of this writing, Coburn Classical Institute ranks as the dominant Day School in Maine. Since the dark days of 1955, it has known a period of resurgence and expansion first through the dedication of Chuck O'Reilly and then of his successor. The squeeze to "move or else", while fraught with problems and headaches, is nevertheless a tribute to the spirit of the little fitting school which reaches its 150th birthday this year⁴.

⁴ 1970

Postlude

CLASS ODE, By Annie Drummond Hooper, Class of 1925

The end of one pathway is reached,
We have come where the roads divide.
Each roadway leads over a hill;
No two travel side by side.
Some travel alone and afar,
Mayhap two will merge into one,
But they all turn back to Coburn Before the journey's done.

Coburn, the pathway you've shown us,
The way that the others have gone;
You've taught us "Ut Prosim" your motto;
And now you are sending us on.
We'll honor your name and we'll love you,
Till the end of the journey is won,
But—we'll all come back to Coburn Before the journey's done.

Coburn Clarion, Commencement Issue, June, 1925

List of Principals and Teachers

1820 The College Latin School

1820-23 Henry Paine

1824-26 Elijah Parish Lovejoy

1827-28 J. O'Brien Chaplin

1829 Waterville Academy

1829-30, Henry W. Paine

1830 R. W. Wood

1830-31 George I. Chace

1831-35 Henry Paine

1835-37 [?] Freeman; Moses Burbank, Lorenzo B. Allen

1838 Charles R. Train

1839 Nathaniel G. Rogers

1841 Charles H. Wheeler

1842 Nathaniel Butler

1843-53, James H. Hanson

1853-55, George B. Gow

1855-57, James T. Bradbury

1857-61, Isaac S. Hamblen

1861-62, Ransom E. Norton; Randall E. Jones

1862-65, John W. Lamb

1865 Augustus D. Small

1865 Waterville Classical Institute

1865-94, James H. Hanson

1883 Coburn Classical Institute

1894 Asa L. Lane (acting principal)

1894-05 Franklin W. Johnson

1902 J.D. Howlett, acting principal (Johnson on L.O.A.)

1905-12 George Stanley Stevenson

1912-29 Drew Thompson Harthorn

1929-32 Guy Raymond Whitten

1932-51 Hugh Smith

1951-52, Russell Houghton

1952-55, Richard Wooster

1955-66, Charles O'Reilly

1966-70, Peter B. Gustafson

ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

1853-54, Hobart W. Richardson

PRECEPTRESSES

1848 Miss Roxana F. Hanson

1850-51 Miss Roxana F. Hanson

1852-54, Miss Mary E. Field

PRINCIPALS LADIES' COLLEGIATE DEPARTMENT

1865-66 Miss Harriet C. Woodman. Summer Term. Mrs. M. E.
Hansom

1866-67 Mrs. J. H. Hanson

1867-68 Mrs. Samantha Wilson

1868-85 Miss Sarah R. Ricker.

1885-91 Miss Harriet L. Estey

1891-92 Miss Mattie E. Harris

1892-95 Miss Mary A. Sawtelle

PRECEPTRESS

1896-1918, Miss Rose Adelle Gilpatrick

The list is long of the "many and able teachers (who) have given their best to the school; to a remarkable degree, however, the principal has determined the character and quality of its work."

Coburn Classical Institute Catalogue for 1918-1919

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Colophon

The resetting of this book was taken from the original typeset manuscript. I have retained all of the original spelling with the exception of correcting clear typographic errors in the original. Occasional footnotes have been added for clarity or possible corrections in the original text.

I have modernized typographic usage for publication names. This title was typeset in Avenir Next font. The artwork on the cover was created by myself and is based on the original Coburn Classical Institute seal.

Special thanks should go to Dr. Charles R. and Mrs. Alice Cushing of Fairfield, Maine for loaning me the original manuscript to scan.

It is my hope that by reproducing this work the alumni of Coburn Classical Institute and Oak Grove-Coburn School will come to better understand the history of the school that educated them.

Greg Kearney OGC 1976