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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Carol Guthrie entitled "Martha Berry and the Berry Schools: The Philosophy and Growth of Industrial Education in the South, 1902-1942." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

Susan D. Becker
Susan Becker, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Charles O. Jackson
Paul H. Bergeron
Clinton Wilson

Accepted for the Council

C. W. Mink
The Graduate School

MARTHA BERRY AND THE BERRY SCHOOLS: THE PHILOSOPHY AND GROWTH
OF INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH, 1902-1942

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ABSTRACT

During the early twentieth century one of the goals of Southern educational leaders was the establishment of industrial education which would train the poor and unskilled to make a contribution to the growth of the New South. Martha Berry, although not directly involved with the Southern Education Movement, established such a school. Believing that education was the opportunity that poor Appalachian youths lacked, Martha Berry opened, in 1902, the Boys' Industrial School at Rome, Georgia. Its goal would be to provide a low-cost practical education that would prepare its students to make a useful contribution to society.

Specifically, the boys received training in mechanical areas, such as carpentry and masonry, and agricultural areas, such as horticulture and animal husbandry. Furthermore, to supplement the student's education and provide for the school's self-sufficiency, each student was required to work in all phases of the school's operation. Women were accepted in 1910, and their training was also practical. Being prepared to become homemakers, female students were taught domestic skills such as cooking, sewing and interior decorating. Since most of the girls were from farms, they also were trained to garden and care for farm animals. They, like the men, were required to work.

During Martha Berry's life, the school prospered and her fame grew as a result of many public speaking engagements to raise money. The school's success was directly linked to Martha Berry's leadership.

Her values and ideas shaped its direction and her hard work and perseverance made it successful. Even challenges to her philosophy, such as the 1933 student strike, failed because of the forceful nature of her personality and will. Therefore, when she died in 1942, the school was unable to maintain her vision.

This, however, should not reduce the significance of her work. Her school served as a model for those who advocated industrial education. Furthermore, Martha Berry was a reformer whose beliefs and works were very much a part of the Progressive movement. For these reasons alone her work should not be forgotten.

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INTRODUCTION

The Progressive Movement was an amalgam of wide ranging, often contradictory reform programs, and among them was the advancement of education as a solution to the problems facing the New South.¹

One of the many individual reformers who advocated this cause was Martha Berry. Born in 1866 into a wealthy Georgia family, Berry believed education was a way of uplifting poor, backward children in Southern Appalachia out of their impoverished state. Acting on her ideals, Berry opened a school in 1902 which prospered greatly during her lifetime.² Despite her success, Martha Berry has become a lost figure of history, whose contributions to Southern Education have been forgotten.

Today her school is known as Berry College, a four year liberal arts school not unlike a variety of other small, private educational institutions throughout the country. Situated on over 25,000 acres of forest and farm land,³ Berry is located in Floyd County about 55 miles northwest of Atlanta. Rome, the county seat of Floyd, is the closest city to Berry and serves as an industrial

¹Mary Beth Norton et al., A People and A Nation (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), p. 604.

²Tracy Byers, Martha Berry (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1932), pp. 17-22; Martha Berry, Uplifting Backwood Boys in the South (Mt. Berry, Ga.: The Berry Press, 1904), a pamphlet, pp. 3-14.

³Berry College Catalog, 1983.

center for Northwest Georgia, particularly in the industries of cotton, textiles and lumber.⁴

The school, founded in 1902 as the Boys' Industrial School, was originally a private, boarding high school that offered agricultural and industrial training for the rural mountain people of Southern Appalachia who lacked sufficient public school facilities. It offered a low-cost education and was subsidized by student work and private donations.⁵ The school prospered and expanded to include a Girls' High School in 1909, an elementary school in 1914, a junior college in 1926, and finally a four year college in 1932.⁶

As the school grew in size, so did the fame of Martha Berry. She travelled throughout the Eastern seaboard, speaking at fund-raising gatherings about her schools; her success and influence was secured with her selection in 1930 as one of Good Housekeeping Magazine's twelve most influential women in America.⁷ Yet her fame has diminished greatly since then, as she has been forgotten by time. Much of this anonymity can be attributed to the failure of school historians and Berry biographers to examine objectively the school

⁴Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia, 1973 ed., s.v. "Rome."

⁵Evelyn Hoge Pendley, Sixty Years of Education for Service (Mt. Berry, Ga.: The Berry Press, 1963), pp. 3-15.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Alice Booth, "Martha Berry," Good Housekeeping, August, 1931, pp. 50-51.

and Martha Berry in light of the values, events, and educational practices of the time.

What is known of Martha Berry can be found in such biographies as the following: Martha Berry, by Tracy Byers; Miracle in the Mountains, by Harnett Kane and Inez Henry; A Lady I Loved, by Evelyn Pendley; Martha Berry: Little Woman with a Big Dream, by Joyce Blackburn; Angel of Appalachia, by Elisabeth Myers; and Martha Berry, by Mary Kay Phelan.

In particular, each of these books depicted Martha Berry's life in a mythical fashion, relying on similar stories and anecdotes to sketch her life and concomitantly the history of the Berry Schools. The first of these biographies was Tracy Byers', published in 1932. Byers, then a press secretary at Berry, wrote the book for two stated reasons: to explain how important Martha Berry's ongoing work was, and to show how desperately the school needed money.⁸ Because Martha Berry was still alive at the time of the book's publication, it lacked any historical perspective. In fact, Byers' close proximity to Martha Berry hindered his objectivity, and he often exaggerated her life and work.

Martha Berry alone stepped out of her environment. She found herself in the grip of an idea; something must be done on, since no one else was making it his business, she must make it hers. It is amazing enough that this idea should obsess her to the extent of making her sacrifice her entire life for it, but even more amazing is the fact that with no preparation she should be able to carry the idea to a successful conclusion.⁹

⁸Byers, pp. 5-9.

⁹Ibid., p. 8.

The Byers' book did provide the blueprint for future Berry biographers, laying a foundation of highlighting similar people, incidents and events as influential in shaping Martha Berry's life.

The next book was Miracle in the Mountains, by Harnett Kane, a much published author of his day, in collaboration with Inez Henry, one of Martha Berry's personal assistants and secretaries.¹⁰

Published in 1956, the book was a moderately successful bestseller which offered a highly romanticized vision of Martha Berry as a woman who could turn any disaster into a blessing. This book as well as the others gave Martha Berry virtually sole credit for initiating an interest in education in the South. In particular, Kane and Henry maintained that Martha Berry alone planned and organized the concept of industrial and agricultural schools, and was largely responsible for their introduction in Georgia and throughout the South.

"Georgia's county superintendents met on the campus in 1906 to study her methods. Within a few months a bill came before the state legislature to provide for a system of 'agricultural and mechanical schools' Soon school after school went up in Georgia."¹¹

While Martha Berry's school was becoming well known at that time, she could not claim to be the inspiration for what was a general movement throughout the South towards industrial education.

¹⁰Harnett Kane and Inez Henry, Miracle in the Mountains (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956), p. 97.

¹¹Ibid., p. 83.

In 1966, A Lady I Loved, by Evelyn Hoge Pendley, daughter of Herman Hoge, longtime comptroller at Berry, was published. This book offered a more personalized picture of Martha Berry, filtered through the eyes of one who had grown up on the Berry campus in the twenties and thirties.¹² In 1968, two separate biographies were published, one by Joyce Blackburn and the other by Elisabeth Myers.¹³ Both relied heavily on the three previous books, presenting the same overall factual account of Martha Berry's life from her early life at the family home, Oak Hill, under the spiritual guidance of her father, to her interest in helping mountain children via education and her subsequent opening of the Berry schools. Neither Myers nor Blackburn strayed from the traditional manner in which the Berry story was told, only highlighting or diminishing similar anecdotes. The final book published about Martha Berry was Mary Kay Phelan's juvenile biography for the Crowell Easy-to-Read Social Studies Series in 1972.¹⁴ Drawing heavily from previous works on Martha Berry, Phelan broke no new ground in the scholarship about Berry.

While it would be easy to criticize each of the foregoing authors for their lack of objective scholarly research, it must be

¹²Evelyn Hoge Pendley, A Lady I Loved (Mt. Berry, Ga.: The Berry Press, 1966).

¹³Joyce Blackburn, Martha Berry, Little Woman with a Big Dream (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, Co., 1968); Elisabeth P. Myers, Angel of Appalachia (New York: Julian Messner, 1968).

¹⁴Mary Kay Phelan, Martha Berry (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Corporation, 1972).

remembered that historical analysis was not their intent. However, the end result of these books was that what Martha Berry and the Berry Schools were and what is remembered are two distinctly different things. The result is that this literature has obscured Martha Berry and the Berry Schools.

Although this literature has accounted for the loss of Martha Berry as an historically important figure and the school as an important educational institution, the significance of both should not be neglected, for Martha Berry and her schools were not only closely linked to the current of their society, reflecting the educational and reform impulses of the South at the turn of the century, but they also mirrored the philosophy and values of that era. In order to better understand the role Martha Berry and her schools played in Southern educational history, it is essential to trace their origins through an examination of both the individual and the institution she founded, with the purpose of showing what Martha Berry's philosophy of education was, how she developed it, how her beliefs were translated into reality via her schools, and how successful the school was in its first forty years at carrying out those ideals.

One of the primary reasons that Martha Berry's school was needed and therefore successful was because of the poor educational system that existed in Georgia. As provided in the 1870 School Law, Georgia was required to provide a skeletal means of support for the organization of a public school system based on county boards of

education.¹⁵ Hampered by racial prejudice and the return of Bourbon Democrats who devalued the importance of public education,¹⁶ Georgia struggled to establish an adequate school system. Funding was a primary problem and the system Georgia devised created an unfair advantage for some areas. Because no provisions were made for the structuring of county school systems, most cities and towns in Georgia broke away from the county board and established their own school systems. They were then entitled to share part of the small state educational fund.¹⁷ Because this fund was insufficient to support statewide education, each county was required to provide further funds via property taxes. But because cities and towns had formed their own systems, their richer taxable base was inaccessible to the county systems, thus leaving them with a much smaller revenue to support a more widespread rural population.¹⁸ Inevitably this created a wide disparity in educational facilities between city and county.

In rural North Georgia this happened in several of the counties adjacent to and including Floyd County, the location of Berry. In Floyd, the city of Rome established its own Board of Education and school system, leaving the Floyd County Board of Education without an economically strong tax base. Of the four counties adjacent to

¹⁵Dorothy Orr, A History of Education in Georgia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1950), p. 169.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 223.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 249.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 262.

Floyd, Bartow, Chattooga, Polk and Gordon, each had at least one city school system by 1906.¹⁹ This division left an insufficient number of county-maintained schools (particularly high schools) for the rural population. For example, in Floyd County the first county-run consolidated high school for secondary education was not opened until 1922. Before that, Floyd County students who wanted a high school degree had to attend either the Rome city high school, or a private school such as Berry.²⁰ Of the counties adjacent to Floyd, Bartow had only one county-operated high school as of 1916, Chattooga had none, Polk had eight and Gordon had fourteen, some of which were city maintained.²¹

Private schools existed in many of the smaller communities, usually supported by local funds, but they were generally operated by one teacher or a circuit teacher for only a few months a year and merely offered a few primary grades. Also, the school buildings were often small, one-room and very dilapidated.²² The lack of educational facilities in North Georgia opened the way for Martha Berry to begin her schools, for without a need they would not have been successful.

¹⁹Report of the Georgia State Board of Education, 1894 and 1906, Index of Tables.

²⁰Gene Toulouza, "An Analysis of the Adequate Program of Education in Georgia with Particular Emphasis on Floyd County" (Master's Thesis, The University of Tennessee, 1956), p. 7.

²¹Report of the Georgia State Board of Education, 1916, Index of Tables.

²²Orr, pp. 218, 250.

Aside from the practical concern for the establishment of the Berry schools, there were philosophical forces working in Southern educational circles that indirectly helped shape Berry's ideology and success. The Southern Educational Movement was born out of the larger national reform impulse to foster education as a means to uplift society economically and socially.²³ Based on a liberal, progressive belief that altering one's environment would alter society, the leaders of this movement felt that education provided the necessary opportunity for the individual to better not only himself or herself, but the country as a whole. Furthermore, education would provide economic dividends by supplying the properly skilled and trained workers essential to the industrial expansion and growth of the South.²⁴

In the South, the specific roots of interest in education as a panacea began in 1898 when an educational conference was organized at Capon Springs, West Virginia. Among those the conference attracted were Northern philanthropists such as George F. Peabody and Robert C. Ogden and Southerners like J. L. M. Curry, Walter Hines Page and Charles Dabney.²⁵ This conference met yearly to discuss various methods of fostering interest in a Southern public school movement, to rationalize and justify the necessity of education,

²³Hugh C. Bailey, Liberalism in the New South (Coral Gables, Fla.: The University of Miami Press, 1969), pp. 131-132.

²⁴Clinton Allison, "The Conference for Education in the South: An Exercise in Noblesse Oblige," Journal of Thought 16 (Spring 1981): p. 43.

²⁵Bailey, pp. 137-138.

and to spell out the focus and values that education should have.

For these leaders and teachers, education would solve problems such as child labor and the convict lease system, while producing "economically fruitful citizens with a vital critical attitude toward themselves."²⁶ Pragmatically speaking, education was to be the key to providing each individual with the opportunity to attain his or her highest level of achievement and worth to society. Furthermore, rural education would be the vehicle through which the backward South could be brought into the mainstream with the rest of the country, while still maintaining the integrity of the basically conservative, fundamental values and qualities of rural life. In a rather contradictory way, they believed that education at the rural level would serve to prepare rural people and areas to adapt better to modern needs, while maintaining the integrity of the superior yeoman farmer.²⁷

Nontraditional areas of education such as mechanical training were stressed among this group. One of their publications, Southern Education Notes, reflected this attitude of a practical approach to education. "The boy or girl who has received a brain education alone is but half-prepared for life. But the boy or girl with the fitting which a modern manual training high school can and does give

²⁶Ibid., p. 131.

²⁷William Link, "Making the Inarticulate Speak," Journal of Thought 18 (Fall 1983): pp. 66-67.

has two chances in this world."²⁸ Equally as important as manual training was the strong belief in the value of agricultural training, for Southern leaders, while advocating the Henry Grady model of an industrialized New South, knew that most of the people and regions lacking education facilities were rural and agrarian, and, as such, would need the proper training to make them more productive.²⁹

Equally important was the manner in which education was to be administered. Segregation was a fact, and it was made clear by the Southern members of the Board that mixing the races was not an option to be considered. This created a conflict among Board members, for many of the Northern members had joined with hopes of assisting blacks.³⁰ Ultimately the Southern members who gained control of the Board deemphasized black education by stressing the fear that mixing the races would promote social equality, and that white children of good (or at least the right) stock were being overlooked. "The neglected white children of our Southern States--particularly in the rural communities--are of the best English and

²⁸Houston Chronicle, quoted in Southern Education Notes, August 25, 1902, p. 5.

²⁹Progressive Farmer, quoted in Southern Education Notes, September 22, 1902, p. 1.

³⁰Louis Harlan, Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in Southern Seaboard States, 1901-1915 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), pp. 75-101.

Scotch stock and they are capable as the children of our race in any part of the world."³¹

The movement flourished from 1901 to 1914, particularly with the establishment of the Southern Education Board in 1902. Funded at Robert Ogden's expense, the Board served as an important link between the Northern philanthropists and Southern leaders and educators, but primarily its purpose was to promote education by increasing public awareness.³²

These leaders, an amalgam of Northern and Southern men and a few women, saw education as an elixir for the impoverished South. Among the many movement spokesmen there were some notable figures not only in educational circles, but in reform in general. Walter Hines Page, editor of World's Work, used his magazine to spread the gospel of education. Edgar Gardner Murphy was an articulate spokesman who advocated federal aid for Southern education. J. L. M. Curry, the conference's first president and one of the movement's initiators, died in 1903, unable to see the results of his labor. Charles Dabney served not only as a Board member, but through his historical research and writing, elevated the cause of Southern Education. These men, by and large, were the heart of the movement in the South, for despite the presence of such men as George Peabody

³¹Walter Hines Page, Southern Education Notes, May 5, 1902, p. 1.

³²Bailey, p. 138; Charles Dabney, University Education in the South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936), p. v.

and Robert Ogden, the movement's direction and focus came primarily from Southerners.³³

These leaders, along with the many other members of the Board, were fundamentally a conservative, upper-middle class group who embraced traditional values of thrift, cleanliness, and hard work. Because of these cultural biases, they sought to infuse the education they promoted with their beliefs.³⁴ Some historians such as Karier and Anderson have criticized these leaders for wanting to promote industrial education in order to gain economically from what would become a skilled, educated labor force. Given their learned prejudices about race and class, it seems more likely that they operated with no concealed motives. Instead, their desire for practical education stemmed from their own sense of values. According to Clinton Allison, "they were upper class paternalists with a variety of motives including Christian idealism and the wealthy's sense of noblesse oblige; born and nurtured in the Nineteenth century they accepted the conventional wisdom of their class and time,"³⁵ as it related to blacks and poor, rural whites. Despite their racist and paternalistic beliefs, these men and their movement were nonetheless a major catalyst in creating a new age in the South. With their yearly conferences, published literature, fundraising, and countless other activities they managed to effect a fundamental change in the

³³Bailey, pp. 132-133, 137.

³⁴Allison, pp. 41-42.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 52-53.

educational attitudes and policies in every Southern state.³⁶

Clearly the primary focus of the leaders of the Southern Educational Movement was a general philosophical call for more and better schools in the South and the pragmatic collection of political support and funds to carry out these aims. The movement was not, however, restricted to a small elite, for its ideals were carried out by hundreds of local progressive educators and reformers. While men like Page, Dabney and Curry were instrumental in shaping and directing the focus of the movement at the national level, it was equally important for the success of educational growth in the South that specific problem areas be tackled by committed local leaders. Women were especially prominent among the progressive leadership at the local level. Women's clubs, made up of white, upper-middle class females, took up the mantle of educational reform and by the early Twentieth century the rank-and-file at the local level who championed educational reform were women.³⁷

It is at this level that Martha Berry became an important figure in the Southern Educational Movement, for by attempting to educate rural Appalachian North Georgians, she not only indirectly carried out the aims of the movement, but she epitomized its assumptions and values. It should be noted that she was an irregular

³⁶Bailey, p. 151.

³⁷Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1870-1930 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 151-162; Link, p. 66.

member of the Southern Education Conference and only spoke once to them, at the Ninth Conference for Education in 1906.³⁸ However, her ideas about education and the Board members' views were very closely linked.

Like them, Martha Berry felt that the importance of education was as a means to provide rural, mountain people with opportunity, or at least provide them with access to opportunity via a practical education. Through agricultural and industrial training, students could not only uplift themselves, but return to their homes and pass on their knowledge.³⁹ Although the rural South was economically backward, its people were valuable. "The mountain boy--robust, rugged, lineal descendant of Scotch-Irish, English and Huguenot ancestor--our very 'kith and kin'," she wrote, "are wild for an opportunity to learn to Read and Write."⁴⁰

Unlike most members of the Southern Education Movement, Martha Berry did not seek local, state, or national government help. Instead, she and the school she founded in 1902 maintained that education was not a right to be extended like charity, but rather a privilege that would only be appreciated if the recipient had to work and earn it.⁴¹ Therefore, it became the policy of the Berry

³⁸Sixth Conference for Education in the South, 1903; Ninth Conference for Education in the South, 1906.

³⁹Martha Berry, Uplifting, p. 8.

⁴⁰Letter from Martha Berry to Potential Donors, September 29, 1909.

⁴¹Letter from Martha Berry to Alice Wingo, Dean of Girls, September 18, 1924.

schools that each student would work in some capacity regardless of his or her ability to pay tuition. This way Berry graduates would assist their school while learning the true value of education.

CHAPTER I

MARTHA BERRY: HER LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY

Martha Berry was born October 7, 1866, the daughter of Captain Thomas Berry and his wife, the former Frances Rhea. Her father had come to Floyd County from Chattanooga, Tennessee where his father had been the first mayor. After living in Rome five years, he enlisted in the army and fought in the Mexican War, where he received his captain's commission.¹ After the war, Berry returned to Rome, where he expanded his cotton growing business to include both selling and shipping. The proximity of Rome to three major rivers, the Coosa, Oostanaula and the Eufaula, helped his shipping business to become quite successful.²

In 1860, the forty-year-old Berry married eighteen-year-old Francis Rhea and purchased Oak Hill plantation just outside Rome. Soon after Fort Sumter was fired on and Georgia seceded from the United States. Berry raised three companies of infantry from Floyd County (one called the Thomas Berry division) and left to fight the war.³ Before leaving, however, he was careful to pay all his Northern

¹Tracy Byers, For the Glory of Young Manhood and Womanhood--Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow (Mt. Berry, Ga.: The Berry Press, 1963), pp. 47-48; Byers, Martha Berry, pp. 17-18; Blackburn, p. 14; Myers, pp. 6, 23.

²Byers, For the Glory, p. 49; Blackburn, p. 13.

³Byers, For the Glory, p. 49; Byers, Martha Berry, pp. 19-20; Blackburn, pp. 14-15.

creditors in full, and deposit his pregnant wife at her parents' plantation in Gadsden, Alabama.⁴

Oak Hill was looted by East Tennessee renegades during the war, and when Berry returned, it was to a ravaged and depressed region. He immediately went North, where he was advanced about \$50,000 by associates in Philadelphia, and returned to start his business anew.⁵

All of Martha Berry's biographers agreed that Captain Berry was quite solicitous about the welfare of "his men,"⁶ whether they were employed by him or had served under him during the war. It is likely that his concern was passed on to his children. Martha was the first child born after his return and there would be six more after her, for a family of six daughters and two sons.⁷

Along with her siblings, Martha was educated largely at home by a governess, Ida McCullough, until 1882 when she, as was typical of upper class Southern women, was sent to finishing school. She attended the Edgeworth Finishing School in Baltimore, Maryland.⁸ A year later, however, Thomas Berry suffered a stroke and Martha returned home to care for him and act as his aide. In 1882, Martha

⁴Byers, Martha Berry, p. 19; Myers, pp. 6-7.

⁵Byers, Martha Berry, pp. 20-22; Blackburn, pp. 11-13; Myers, pp. 7-8.

⁶Byers, For the Glory, p. 49; Blackburn, pp. 16-20; Myers, pp. 6-18.

⁷Oak Hill, Museum and Plantation Pamphlet; Byers, Martha Berry, p. 22.

⁸Byers, For the Glory, p. 50; Byers, Martha Berry, pp. 22-24; Blackburn, pp. 21-23; Myers, pp. 23-25.

was to meet the man her sister Frances called the "one love of Martha's life."⁹ He was five years older and a wealthy Virginian, but she refused to marry him during her father's illness.¹⁰ On January 6, 1886, Thomas Berry died at Oak Hill. In his will he awarded Martha 125 acres across the road from Oak Hill in addition to her share of the estate.¹¹ Martha left for Europe, where her older sister Jenny had met and married an Italian prince. Thus her romance ended with the suitor's return to Virginia where he later married.¹²

Of the next eleven years there is no clear record. Biographers have made it sound as if Berry founded the school shortly after her father's death, but that was not so. She apparently helped rear the younger children, Thomas, Jenny and Frances, as well as attempting a writing career.¹³ She also travelled to Europe a great deal and, she joked later, was pressured by her family to marry. One suitor at the time was Berry's neighbor Judge Moses Wright. She refused him and he later married her sister Bessie, and became the family attorney.¹⁴

⁹Frances Berry in Byers, For the Glory, p. 49; Blackburn, p. 30.

¹⁰Blackburn, pp. 31-32.

¹¹Thomas Berry Will as recorded in Floyd County Superior Court, July 18, 1883.

¹²Byers, For the Glory, p. 49.

¹³Ibid.; Byers, Martha Berry, p. 21.

¹⁴Evelyn Hoge Pendley, "Some Facts About Martha Berry," unpublished manuscript, no date.

In 1897, Martha had an encounter with three young mountain boys at her private cabin. Surprised by the fact that they had never been to Sunday school, she told them stories and asked them to return the following week. Shortly thereafter she had large groups of people coming to the small log cabin she used as a work place. She decided to begin holding meetings in a larger area and concluded that an abandoned church would be the best place to do that. She went to Possum Trot, a mountain community about six miles from Oak Hill, and persuaded the families she had been meeting with to help rebuild it.¹⁵

In 1898, she decided to build a day school and selected a site about one-half mile from Oak Hill. She hired some workmen and built a one-room schoolhouse, where she and her sister Frances attempted to teach.¹⁶ But, as Frances would later state, "we Berry girls simply were not educated to be teachers."¹⁷ Because of that, in 1900 Martha Berry hired Elizabeth Brewster, a recent graduate of Leland Stanford University, to assist with the teaching.¹⁸ Having Brewster present apparently gave her the impetus to expand her day school. She opened one at Possum Trot, to operate with the

¹⁵ Berry, Uplifting, p. 3; Martha Berry, "The Story of the Berry School," Part 1, Southern Highlander, March 1916, p. 176.

¹⁶ Martha Berry, Uplifting, p. 6; Martha Berry, "Story of Berry," p. 181.

¹⁷ Byers, For the Glory, p. 46.

¹⁸ Speech by Martha Berry about Elizabeth Brewster, 1914; Gertrude Paine, "Elizabeth Brewster," Faculty News Letter, 15 February 1951, p. 1.

Sunday school, and later started a school at Mt. Alto, about ten miles south, where she sent Brewster to teach. Finally, she opened one at Foster's Bend about twenty miles from Rome.¹⁹

By 1901, Berry realized that there were problems with the day schools. Attendance was very irregular and although she travelled to each frequently, she could not keep as close an eye on them as she would have liked.²⁰ She decided then to deed eighty-three of her acres to start an industrial school for boys. A ten-room dormitory was constructed because she planned to take in boarding students only. Berry believed that because parents prevented their children from regularly attending the day schools, the only way they could have a consistent quality education would be to live and work on campus.²¹ Soon after she made this decision, the schools at Possum Trot, Mt. Alto and Foster's Bend were closed, and she discontinued her Sunday schools. Elizabeth Brewster returned from vacation, and although skeptical about the idea, she joined Martha and Frances Berry as the school's first faculty.²²

Called the Boys' Industrial School, it opened in January 1902, and was not very successful in its first six months. In fact, the first five pupils never graduated. Realizing she needed quick

¹⁹Berry, Uplifting, p. 7.

²⁰Ibid.; Berry, "Story of Berry," Part 2, April 1916, p. 4.

²¹Berry, Uplifting, p. 8; Berry, "Story of Berry," p. 3.

²²Berry, "Story of Berry," p. 3.

results to spread the word about her school, Martha Berry found several men in the North Georgia area who lacked only a year or two in achieving a high school degree and promised them that she would help. Interestingly, a couple of these recruits themselves had been teaching elementary school.²³ By fall 1902, Berry had recruited fourteen students. One of them, Clayton Henson, who had been teaching school in North Georgia, became the school's first graduate in 1904.²⁴

During those first two years, Berry had to establish the school's stability by supplying the students with food and lodging as well as an education. Friends and family members contributed various items like sewing machines, a stove, linen, etc.²⁵ Martha, Frances and Elizabeth Brewster all lived in the dormitory where they did most of the cooking and cleaning. Because one of Martha Berry's major beliefs was in the importance of cleanliness and hard work, she taught the students to clean dishes, care for their rooms and wash their clothes.²⁶ It was over washing clothes that one of Martha Berry's favorite stories was told. The male students would not wash

²³Kane and Henry, pp. 63, 81.

²⁴"Clayton Henson," The Berry Alumni Quarterly, Spring 1966, p. 12.

²⁵Elizabeth Brewster, "Chronicles of a Flatwood School," The Southern Highlander, no date, pp. 20-21.

²⁶Berry, Uplifting, pp. 7-8; Martha Berry, "The Planting and Care of an Industrial School," Ninth Conference for Education in the South, 1906, p. 83.

their clothes, considering it women's work. Martha began to do it herself until the boys stopped her, declaring, as she had hoped they would, that it was not right for a "lady like her to wash."²⁷

Despite the humorous nature of this story, often used by Berry in her speaking engagements, it nevertheless reflected her philosophy of the importance of personal habits.

It is also significant that Berry and the faculty lived with the students in the early days of the school. Martha Berry believed that through close contact with them she would train and discipline them in the social graces and values essential for the right kind of living.²⁸ For Martha Berry an education included the ability to maintain certain standards of dress, behavior, speech and hygiene. As she wrote in 1904:

The home life of the school is also a discipline in social intercourse and in the training of gentlemen. . . . The teacher and the pupil are brought into daily contact in various ways. They eat at the same table and they share the same fare. . . . In this way, an error or lapse of speech in conversation or in manner may at once be corrected without offense to the pupil, who almost invariably appreciates our efforts in this direction. They rise when I enter the room, they ask the blessing at the table, they conduct the evening prayers and singing and they have been taught to be uniformly courteous and polite. One of the chief principles that we inculcate from the very first entrance of a pupil into the school is that whatever is worth having is worth working for.²⁹

²⁷Berry, "Story of Berry," p. 6.

²⁸Berry, Uplifting, p. 8.

²⁹Ibid, p. 11.

For Martha Berry her school was more than a mere educational and training facility, it was a molder and shaper of men (and later women), who could be stripped of the values, customs, manners, and habits she considered backward and inferior, and shaped into right thinking and proper acting citizens.

Values were an important part of Martha Berry's educational process and inculcating them was a difficult task. Students were required to purchase clothes that had been donated to the school, for handouts meant charity and charity did not instill the proper work ethic in students.³⁰ Two hours of work a day were mandatory in addition to the work required of those students working their way through school in lieu of paying tuition.³¹

Martha Berry herself never actually taught the students in the classroom beyond an occasional Bible study session or etiquette class.³² Yet her influence on the educational growth of her students was paramount, for she was the central figure in the early years of the school in establishing the direction of the curriculum, particularly the balance between work and study. Furthermore, her emphasis on social amenities meant she saw herself as an example for the students and sought to shape their values to her own.³³

³⁰Ibid.; Berry, "Planting and Care," p. 87.

³¹Berry, Uplifting, p. 8.

³²Evelyn Hoge Pendley, "Some Facts About Martha Berry," undated unpublished manuscript.

³³Berry, Uplifting, p. 13.

Every aspect of the school reflected this goal, from the school motto, "Not to be ministered unto but to minister," to an early school song, "Be a lifter not a leaner."³⁴ All aspects of school life exemplified this total commitment to transform her students into "useful and respectful citizens."³⁵

Concerned with keeping the school financially viable, Martha Berry turned her attention to fundraising and building up the reputation of the school. Thus began a long transitional period of turning the reins of the school's day-to-day operations over to trusted administrators. The actual incident that prompted her first fundraising trip north was in connection with the lack of water at the school. It became necessary to connect the school with the Rome city water supply, at Martha Berry's expense, since the school charter prohibited indebtedness.³⁶ Thus she planned the first of many trips to New York to raise money for the school in the fall of 1903. Lodging in a boarding house, she had letters of introduction to organizations such as Episcopalian ministers, the New York chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and some financiers such as R. Fulton Cutting, later a member of Berry's Board of Trustees.³⁷

³⁴Kane and Henry, p. 314.

³⁵Berry, Uplifting, p. 13.

³⁶Brewster, p. 23.

³⁷Taped speech by Martha Berry at the Roosevelt Hotel, New York City, New York, 1935.

Although she failed to raise any substantial amount of money on that first trip, she did succeed in acquiring valuable and profitable friends for the school.³⁸ She also established the groundwork for what became her trademark in raising funds, storytelling. Coming out of a Southern tradition of talented male orators, Martha Berry was marvelously equipped with a gift for storytelling. Her voice was full and rich, cultured, yet with the charm of Southern gentry.³⁹ Her speaking skills were often documented as the following report from the Providence [Rhode Island] Journal:

The quiet little woman, dressed most simple, who stepped quickly to the front of the platform and started right off with a quick incisive, clear enunciation, had not talked a minute before her hearers in the audience began to sit up and take notice . . . three minutes found her in absolute possession of the entire auditorium.⁴⁰

It was this ability that was perhaps her greatest asset as she began to increase her fundraising trips, which consisted of speaking engagements on behalf of the school. Her stories were generally the same, relating particular incidents about the early days of the school, such as the laundry episode, always with the school and its goals clearly in evidence.⁴¹ Martha Berry focused her fundraising efforts

³⁸Berry, "Story of Berry," pp. 8-10.

³⁹Berry, 1935 Speech; Dabney, p. 284.

⁴⁰Providence [Rhode Island] Journal, 1906, no month or day given, article taken from school press clipping book, p. 12.

⁴¹Various documented speeches include: 1906 speech at the Ninth Conference; Founder's Day Talk, January 1930; Gold Medal Award Dinner, May 10, 1939; and the 1935 speech at the Roosevelt Hotel.

in the North where philanthropists, such as Andrew Carnegie, were known for their gifts to education. She knew the money necessary to fund her school was not available in the impoverished South.⁴² So successful were her journeys that Berry circles were formed in northern cities such as Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore, all of which devoted themselves to raising money for the school.⁴³

Berry was not only an apt speechmaker, but a gifted organizer as well. She never lost touch with a contact, always making written appeals for money and responding to donations with thank-you letters regardless of the size of the gift.⁴⁴ Letters such as this one from 1906 are not only appeals for money, but also reflect her philosophy of education.

Dear Friends, I was very glad to have an opportunity to tell of my school for the poor white boys from the mountain in your church last February, and I feel that you will be glad to learn of the progress of our work. We have opened school with 125 bright and deserving boys, having had to turn away over 100 for lack of room.

The Bible training and the Christian influence thrown around the students here will be the means of making them practical Christian men and leaders in their community. This is purely missionary work, and it is meeting a long felt need in this part of the country.⁴⁵

In her fundraising campaigns, whether letter writing or personal

⁴²Berry, "Story of Berry," p. 8.

⁴³Atlanta Constitution, 10 April 1910, p. 16.

⁴⁴Many of the letters on file at the Berry Museum dealt with fundraising. There was also an extensive file of donors.

⁴⁵Letter from Martha Berry to Unnamed Donors, 1906.

speaking engagements, Martha Berry always expressed similar ideas about the school, its purposes and goals, and the students, their backgrounds and futures. Much of her philosophy reflected that of the larger Southern Education Movement: practical education, industrial and agricultural, should and would equip poor mountain people to make useful contributions to society.⁴⁶ Inherent in both Martha Berry's ideology and the larger beliefs of the Southern Education Movement was a certain noblesse oblige. Berry believed her lifestyle and values were the ideal basis for training and teaching her students, and nowhere was this better reflected than in the story dealing with washing clothes. In a 1935 speech referring to this incident, Berry explained that "I've never had to do my washing because my father and grandfather worked hard and it wasn't necessary."⁴⁷ Despite her frequent absences because of her fund-raising trips and the resulting separation from the students and operations of the school, Berry nevertheless continued to stress the enforcement of her values. In a letter to Alice Wingo, in 1925, she reported having visited the new dormitory, Clara Hall, which was built by a donation from Henry Ford.

I noticed on the bureaus were a number of cheap photos and pictures of boys. There must be no pictures of boys on the bureaus and walls of the girls room--and all the cheap gee gaws must be discarded. . . . The doors should be left

⁴⁶Berry, Uplifting, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁷Berry Speech, 1935.

open so the rooms can be inspected every morning. I trust you will instruct the girls to stand and say "Good morning, Miss Berry" when they meet me on campus. I feel that is a common courtesy due me as the director of the three schools. The dining room must be kept cleaner and in better order, and I think the food could be simpler. Please instruct the girls not to talk to the boys as they come into chapel.⁴⁸

In this brief inspection and report it is abundantly clear what Martha Berry considered to be an appropriate lifestyle for her students. By forbidding pictures and "gee gaws" she would reinforce the simplicity of daily living and the integrity of one's home whether it be a farmhouse or a dormitory room. This is also reflected in her request to make the food simple; one must eat to live, not live to eat. Male-female relationships were not to be entered into lightly or frivolously, for she had seen too many fifteen- and sixteen-year-old girls married and burdened with a family in the harsh environment of the mountains.⁴⁹

As evidenced by her desire to be formally addressed, Martha Berry believed she had a certain status that had to be maintained and that her students owed her something. "I want to feel sure that you really are loyal and that I can count upon you every time . . . some people can never be loyal to anything," she explained. "They lack that fine quality. . . . We at Berry know the joy of service and of giving one's best. . . ."⁵⁰ This desire for loyalty

⁴⁸Letter from Martha Berry to Alice Wingo, September 18, 1925.

⁴⁹Martha Berry, "The Dark Corner," unpublished story, no date; letter from Martha Berry to Elsie Ford, staff member, May 11, 1932.

⁵⁰Martha Berry, "A Message From Miss Berry," Open Letter to

was not merely self-aggrandizement but rather was a reflection of her belief that one should be able to commit oneself to some goal or purpose, whether it be a job, a family or the Berry Schools. An important part of this commitment, one which Martha Berry, her faculty and staff constantly stressed, was the necessity of work. To carry out a goal one had to pursue it faithfully and doggedly no matter how much effort it required.⁵¹

Because this credo was so central to Martha Berry's philosophy it was not surprising that she believed education was not a gift or right, but a goal attained only through perseverance. All her students were required to work regardless of their ability to pay their tuition, for without work they would not fully appreciate the education they were receiving.⁵² But Martha Berry's philosophy would have been unimportant had it not translated so successfully into reality. The fact that she did succeed in building the school along the lines she did showed a deep commitment to carrying out her philosophy, no matter what obstacles she might have to overcome.

Such an obstacle faced her in 1909, when the Rome and Northern Railroad requested the right-of-way passage through her land. Berry fought very vigorously against it, feeling that it was an invasion of her domain and that it would be detrimental to the school's welfare

The Berry School News, 9 October 1916, p. 1.

⁵¹Letter from Martha Berry to Alice Wingo, December 7, 1925.

⁵²Letter from Martha Berry to Alice Wingo, November 12, 1930.

because it would interfere with the school's operation. She did manage to persuade the company to run the railroad through the acres of land toward the back of the school's property, yet the incident shaped her further relationships with outside authority figures.⁵³ "Isn't it a shame that a lone woman has had to fight a rich northern corporation to keep them from ruining property that is set aside for such a cause?" Berry wrote. "The railroad laws in Georgia are so lenient, they can go wherever they choose, but in this case they ought not to choose to come through our property."⁵⁴ When the opportunity arose sixteen years later to purchase the very same connecting line, Martha Berry immediately decided to buy it and protect her school from further outside influences. By buying the existing rail line and negotiating with Southern Railroad, she was able to build a spur line onto the Berry campus, thereby continuing a process of building up the acreage of the Berry Schools. In her desire to expand the school it is clear that Martha Berry wanted to do two things: to keep people connected with her and the school away from external pressures and also to keep the local citizens of Rome away from her school.⁵⁵

⁵³Letter from Martha Berry to Nellie Peters Black, September 15, 1909.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Letters from Martha Berry to Frank Campbell, Assistant to Henry Ford, March 9, March 27, May 12, May 27, 1925; Samuel H. Cook, Half Century at Berry (Mt. Berry, Ga.: The Berry Press, 1961), p. 3.

This railroad incident provides some evidence of Martha Berry's dislike and distrust of the citizens of Rome.⁵⁶ Her distrust was probably rooted in her belief that the local citizenry had failed to assist the mountain people through educational facilities. Berry's general attitude toward the school and its operation was very insular. While she enjoyed visitors and encouraged them to visit (particularly her Northern philanthropic acquaintances), she rarely wanted any outside help in terms of policy or decision making.⁵⁷ Furthermore, because she had started a boarding school to eliminate what she believed to be the detrimental influences of homelife on her students, she may well have perceived Rome as a kind of Sodom and Gomorrah from which she must protect her students. Trips to Rome by students were either forbidden or severely limited during her lifetime.⁵⁸

Another danger to her students was the threat of disease. Students going home for the summer were cautioned about polio, measles, scarlet fever and the like. During World War I, when students in the Army wished to return for a visit, Martha Berry decided it best not to entertain them on campus. "I am convinced that we will run great risks of disease by entertaining young men

⁵⁶Letter from Martha Berry to Alice Wingo, March 11, 1930; interview with Tracy Byers, part of a series done for the School's Fiftieth Anniversary, 1963.

⁵⁷Letter from Martha Berry to Nellie Peters Black, September 15, 1909.

⁵⁸List of Student Regulations for the Girls, no date.

overnight," she insisted. "Measles, mumps, and pneumonia are raging in all the camps. . . . We must protect our school."⁵⁹

Also, Martha Berry disliked having Romans on the campus for fear they might come in contact with the visitors she was trying to impress and solicit for money. In a 1925 letter to Alice Wingo, head of the Girls' School, Martha Berry wrote: "I do not wish any Rome people entertained at meals. I never want any Rome people--doctors, ministers, or speakers entertained at the school. I often have an impromptu guest and I do not wish them to come in contact with local people."⁶⁰ So concerned was she with guests who might provide funds for the schools that she often would limit or stop altogether student parties, particularly at the Girls' School, because the young women would be needed to entertain guests.⁶¹ Friends of Berry, she felt, must be kept happy and amused, for "they were like flowers . . . [which] have to be fed and watered and cultivated."⁶²

Her dislike of Romans also stemmed from the conflict between city and county boards of education, which translated into hostility between city and county residents. The animosity between Martha Berry and the local residents of Rome can also be attributed at least

⁵⁹Letter from Martha Berry to the Executive Committee of the Berry School, October 18, 1917.

⁶⁰Letter from Martha Berry to Alice Wingo, March 20, 1926.

⁶¹Letter from Marth Berry to Alice Wingo, September 9, 1925.

⁶²Letter from Martha Berry to Alice Wingo, May 19, 1927.

in part, to ignorance, for neither side knew much about the other and Martha Berry was unwilling to open her doors to Romans in order for them to learn of her work on a first hand basis. As for Romans, their animosity was not only fueled by this, but also because the Berry Schools sold agricultural goods, and competed with Romans in the same market.⁶³ Finally, the misunderstanding between Rome and Berry was increased by the fact that Berry was constantly purchasing land and expanding toward the Rome city limit. By Georgia law, this land could not be considered part of Rome's tax base if the city expanded.⁶⁴

Martha Berry's interest was limited to the underprivileged Anglo-Saxon youth of rural areas and her interests did not carry over to young people who lived in the cities. It also did not carry over to support of the education of blacks in the South. Like many other Southern leaders and educators, she felt that Northern philanthropists were devoting too much time and money to the cause of black education.⁶⁵ While she perhaps did not see the broader implications of the issue in the same way as the leaders of the Southern Educational Movement, she nonetheless saw schools such as Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute as a direct threat to her

⁶³Protest Injustice to Berry Students: To Farmers and Workers of Floyd and Bartow Counties, Flyer, 1933.

⁶⁴R. A. Denny, Correspondence, Rome News Tribune, 2 November 1921.

⁶⁵Letter from Berry to Black.

school. In a letter to Nellie Peters Black in 1909, Martha Berry complained:

I had an engagement at Bar Harbor and Newport, places I have always wanted to have an opportunity to tell the story of my work. I had to cancel them and come home [to settle the railroad difficulty]. . . . It almost broke my heart to learn that Booker Washington had a large meeting at Bar Harbor [with] the largest single check being for \$10,000.⁶⁶

Although Martha Berry recognized the propensity of philanthropists to help black schools, she did not make an enemy of Washington and there was some correspondence between the two. Both of their respective institutions operated with the same basic goal, to train formerly unproductive and economically and socially inferior young people to be productive. Furthermore, the two educators travelled in the same circles when on fundraising trips. Washington even sent Martha Berry names of donors. "I am sending you the names of all the visitors with their addresses with the hope that you interest them in your work. . . ." he wrote her in 1915. "Please do not use my name in any use you may make of the list."⁶⁷ For both, then, Northern philanthropists were means to an end, that being the respective financial security of their schools. Yet the racial barrier between them was evident and did not disappear, nor

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Letter from Booker T. Washington to Martha Berry, May 8, 1915.

did Berry stop reminding her donors that her charges were white boys and girls of good Anglo-Saxon stock.⁶⁸

Martha Berry and Washington were, however, similar leaders, both out of place in their times. Although he was a black man and she a white woman, both were Southern progressives operating large institutions, addressing large bodies of people, and carrying out the necessary functions of important administrative leadership. With that came certain advantages, but also drawbacks.

Martha Berry's activities as a leader and director of the school had a direct effect on her. She never married and this was an aberration for women of her class and status.⁶⁹ This along with the "masculine" behavior of leadership took a toll on her health. This sort of reaction, however, was not unusual for women like Martha Berry, who took on unusual lifestyles outside the "cult of true womanhood."⁷⁰ Often women operating in nontraditional roles became ill, usually suffering from nervous afflictions which required rest and escape from the pressure of their work.⁷¹ Martha Berry seemed to exhibit some of these problems, for several of her trips North were a combination of fundraising and recuperation activities. She often

⁶⁸Letter from Martha Berry to Unnamed Donors, June 1918.

⁶⁹Allen F. Davis, American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 24-25.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

travelled abroad, ostensibly to visit her sister, Princess Eugenia Ruspoli, but also to get well.⁷² In April 1914, Martha Berry went abroad to Europe and reported in a letter that "I was tired and broken down from overwork. After spending several weeks with relatives in Italy, I was advised to go to Carlsbad, Austria to try the cure."⁷³ In another letter later that year she reported that her doctor had ordered her abroad to "prevent an attack of nervous prostration."⁷⁴ While there, World War I broke out and she returned home. In October 1919, she was sick in a hospital convalescent ward recovering from nervous prostration.⁷⁵ On October 3, 1922, she collapsed from a very real physical illness, apparently a mild stroke, because in June of 1923 she was still having difficulty talking. After an extended stay in the hospital, she took another holiday abroad to recuperate.⁷⁶

Martha Berry's illnesses, then, meant that more and more the schools she founded had to function from day to day without her. By 1920, she had acquired a competent staff to operate the academic programs of the school, led primarily by G. Leland Green, principal

⁷²Letter from Martha Berry to The Berry School News, 5 October 1914.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Letter from Martha Berry to Madame Regent of the DAR, August 18, 1914.

⁷⁵"Miss Berry's Birthday," The Berry School News, 21 October 1919.

⁷⁶Letter from Martha Berry to Samuel Cook, June 26, 1923.

of the Boys' High School from 1920 until after Martha Berry's death, and alumnus M. Gordon Keown, purchasing agent for the school from 1921 until 1942 responsible for building up the school's property. After Martha Berry's death, Keown became the acting director of the schools for two years.⁷⁷ Until her death, however, Berry continued to act as final authority on matters such as hiring, construction, landscaping and setting school policy. A major goal of hers was accomplished in 1923 when the Berry Schools received accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Before that, Berry graduates could attend only colleges like the University of Georgia that were willing to recognize the Berry degree; now they could attend any college that they could afford.⁷⁸

A major blow to the schools and to Martha Berry occurred in 1924 when John J. Eagan, chairman of the Board of Trustees since 1902, died of cerebral meningitis. He was immediately replaced by his friend and legal counsel, Robert C. Alston, but Martha Berry did not have the close personal ties to him that she did with Eagan.⁷⁹ She nevertheless forged ahead with planning the next move for the school. With Green and Alston, Berry had noted that the trend in the South was toward opening more area public schools, but the demand for low-cost institutions of higher learning was increasing.

⁷⁷Pendley, Sixty Years, pp. 10-18.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

Even though Berry graduates could go to any college they wished to attend, most could not afford colleges. It was to this end that Berry Junior College was opened in 1926. It received accreditation as a two-year school in 1926 and had expanded to a four-year program by 1932.⁸⁰

This ended much of Martha Berry's day-to-day involvement with the schools' operation and planning. She did, however, continue to address the social and moral training of the students and handle the greater share of the fundraising.⁸¹ As she began to divest herself of direct control of the schools, awards began to be bestowed on her. In 1924, Georgia gave her the title of Distinguished Citizen. In 1925, Ida Tarbell chose her as one of America's fifty greatest women. In the same year, she was awarded the Theodore Roosevelt Medal of Distinguished Service.⁸² Over the next fifteen years, she was awarded many honorary degrees and she was most proud of her LL.D. from the University of Georgia.⁸³ In 1930, Good Housekeeping Magazine chose her as one of America's twelve greatest women.⁸⁴

With these honors came the creation of the myth of Martha Berry. In the article accompanying her Good Housekeeping award,

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Letter from Martha Berry to Elsie Ford, May 11, 1931; letter from Martha Berry, to G. Leland Green, April 30, 1938.

⁸²Kane and Henry, p. 296.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Booth, Good Housekeeping, 1931. The other women selected were: Grace Abbot, Jane Addams, Cecilia Beaux, Willa Cather, Carrie

Alice Booth maintained Georgia had no free school system. Further, Booth told of going to a poor community, Possum Trot, by then owned by the Berry Schools, and seeing "the poverty and ignorance on the sunshiny hilltops."⁸⁵ As Berry accepted these awards, she continued to portray the student body as poor mountain children, though many were coming from small towns and they were certainly not children like the ones who confronted her that day in 1897. But this was the image she liked to portray, and the image that people wanted to believe.⁸⁶

The culmination of these awards was the highest professional honor she would receive, the National Institute of Social Sciences gold medal in 1939. Since previous medals had gone to Marie Curie, Charles Evans Hughes, Andrew Carnegie, William Howard Taft, Herbert Hoover, and Calvin Coolidge, it was a substantial honor to be included with such luminaries.⁸⁷ As she accepted it she said, "it is wonderful to be allowed to work; it is one of God's greatest gifts."⁸⁸

By 1940, the Board of Trustees tried to hire someone to take on her traditional job as primary fundraiser. Two years before,

Chapman Catt, Grace Coolidge, Minnie Maddern Fiske, Helen Keller, Dr. Florence Sabin, Ernestine Schumann-Heink, and Mary E. Wooley.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 51

⁸⁶Berry Speech, November 26, 1935.

⁸⁷Speech made by Martha Berry in accepting the Award, May 10, 1939.

⁸⁸Ibid.

Martha Berry had seen her brother-in-law, A. Bulow Campbell, elected chairman of the Board of Trustees, but he died unexpectedly in June 1940. Realizing her death was imminent, Martha Berry petitioned the Board of Trustees in November of that year to form a committee to survey the field of prospective men (not women) and select one to assume her duties and totally relieve her of her responsibilities for the school.⁸⁹

In August 1941, Martha Berry was diagnosed as having liver disease and was confined to St. Joseph's Infirmary in Atlanta. By December she had lost almost complete contact with the outside world and the school. On February 26, 1942, her associates were told to go back to Berry and prepare for her funeral services, and the following day, she died of liver disease. Berry's body was returned to the Berry campus, where it lay in state at Barnwell Chapel.⁹⁰ She was buried beside the Mount Berry Chapel and an eternal light of knowledge was placed over her grave. Her epitaph was one of her favorite maxims, "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister."⁹¹

Although she was dead, she hoped that her beliefs would be carried out through the schools she had built. In a letter she wrote on June 1, 1925, attached to her will and opened only after her death, Martha Berry wrote:

⁸⁹Pendley, Sixty Years, pp. 12-16.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid.

To the Graduates of the Berry Schools: When I am gone, I want you to always think of me as alive--alive beyond your farthest thoughts, and near and loving you, and growing more like God wants me to become. I want you to love the Berry Schools and stand ready to help them in every emergency. Use all of your influence to hold the Schools to the original plan, simple living, work, prayer, the Bible being taught, Christian teachers; keeping the Schools a separate community, protecting and guarding the property and the good name of the Schools.

. . .
I would like to leave an especial message to the graduates of the Berry Schools who are giving back in service what you have gotten from the Schools. You who are putting your lives into the work are the real dependence of the Schools and I want to ask you especially to be faithful and guard and protect the Berry Schools. My prayer is that the School may stand through the ages, for the honor and glory of God and for the Christian training of poor boys and girls of the mountain and country districts.⁹²

⁹²Letter from Martha Berry to the Alumni and Students, attached to her will and opened after her death.

CHAPTER II

THE BERRY SCHOOLS: AN EXERCISE IN THE EXECUTION OF MARTHA BERRY'S PHILOSOPHY

The origins of the Berry Schools were strongly rooted in the mind and spirit of Martha Berry, and her philosophy and goals clearly parallel the ideal set forth by leaders of the Southern Education Movement. But how successful was she in transferring her goals and aspirations to the actual daily workings of the school? This question can be answered best by examining the school's history, operation, policy, finances, curriculum, faculty, staff, and students.

From its inception the purpose of the school was well-stated: to provide inexpensive, practical education and training to rural people who had no access to public education.¹ As previously noted, this was a problem in Georgia because of the division between city and county boards of education and the resulting lack of revenue for rural county areas. Martha Berry, concerned less about the issue than with its result, opened the Boys' Industrial School to help mountain families whose only sin was living in an area without adequate educational facilities.²

On January 12, 1902, the Industrial School's doors opened and in the next few weeks six students had enrolled.³ They, along with

¹Boys' Industrial School Catalog, 1902-1903.

²Ibid.

³Berry, Uplifting, p. 8.

their successors, were all from the South, primarily Georgia, but also a good number from Alabama and Tennessee. There were a few students from South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Mississippi.⁴ Because the school relied on student labor to remain self-sustaining, it was necessary to restrict the age of male students to sixteen years of age and older, for younger boys could not manage the grueling work. As a result of this restriction, the average for the student body at the Boys' High School was between eighteen and nineteen. When admitted in 1909, women were restricted to fourteen years and older, with their average ages ranging from sixteen to eighteen. Applicants were further restricted to those individuals who lived in rural areas and were unable to attend more expensive schools.⁵

The Boys' Industrial School was officially chartered and incorporated in 1903, and in the charter Martha Berry stipulated that the school should remain nondenominational, but Christian, and that the teachers be Protestant.⁶ Furthermore, a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees would manage the school, but "Martha Berry shall be consulted as far as practicable; it being the wish, desire and intention of the petitioners to give to said Martha Berry the active

⁴Various School Rosters from 1907, 1913, 1918; Berry Alumni Directory: 1904-1934, April 1935.

⁵Boys' High School Catalogue, 1915-1916; Report by Martha Berry to the Board of Trustees, April 26, 1917. For the first few years this requirement was limited further to those who did not have a school within fifty miles of their home.

⁶Printed in The Southern Highlander, December 1915, pp. 27-28.

management of said school . . . with the right to name her successor in her will."⁷

The charter, renewable in twenty years, was drawn up by attorney Moses Wright, who assisted Martha Berry in the legal matter of opening the school.⁸ The first six members of the Board of Trustees included Martha Berry herself; her brother Thomas Berry, of Rome, co-owner of the Brunswick and Birmingham Railroad; John Paul Cooper of the Darlington School for Boys in Rome; John J. Eagan, the chairman, an Atlantan with large real estate holdings and owner of the American Cast Iron Pipe Company in Birmingham; John H. Reynolds, president of the First National Bank of Rome; and Moses R. Wright, Martha Berry's brother-in-law, of the Denny and Wright law firm in Rome and Judge of the Seventh District Superior Court.⁹ As Martha Berry made more Northern contacts, however, the board expanded to include many wealthy Northern industrialists. Among them were such men as V. Everet Macy, Director of the Seaman's Savings Bank, the Union Trust Company, and the Albany and Southern Railroad, and Henry Higginson of Boston, a director of A.T. & T. and the General Electric Company.¹⁰

Serving as director of the school, Martha Berry was actively involved in the day-to-day operations of the school. She provided for the care and well-being of students and faculty, oversaw all

⁷Ibid.

⁹Cook, pp. 48-76.

⁸Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 59, 61.

financial matters, arranged for the expansion of the school via fundraising and land purchases, and instilled in her students the values of hard work, cleanliness and thrift.¹¹ The school prospered under her hand and growth was continuous as evidenced by the figures shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
STUDENTS ENROLLED, ACREAGE OWNED, AND ASSETS OF
BERRY SCHOOLS, 1902-1912^a

Date	Students Enrolled	Acreage Owned	Assets ^b
1902	75	83	\$ 5,000
1906	--	--	45,900
1908	150	1,000	150,000
1912	200	2,000	250,000

^aSources: Boys' High School Catalogue, 1902, 1906, 1908, 1912; Financial Report by John H. Reynolds, 1906; letter from Martha Berry to Potential Donors, 1908, no month or day.

^bAssets include value of land, buildings, livestock, machinery, buildings, tuition, and goods produced (mostly agricultural).

Through her perseverance, an endowment for the school was obtained with a \$50,000 matching donation made by Andrew Carnegie in 1909.¹²

¹¹Martha Berry, untitled manuscript, 1906.

¹²Letter from Martha Berry to Potential Donors, October 2, 1909.

Intent on providing for the financial security of the school, Martha Berry purchased large amounts of land adjacent to the campus, some of which were owned by her brothers and sisters.¹³

As the Boys' High School stabilized and grew in reputation, Martha Berry decided to open a Girls' High School which would attempt to reach the female counterparts of her male students.¹⁴ The Girls' School opened on Thanksgiving Day, 1909, with twelve girls, two teachers and three buildings. Martha Berry hoped that the Girls' School would provide the women of Appalachia with training comparable to the men in order to prepare them for raising children and keeping respectable households.¹⁵

It is not the aim of the school to send girls to college or to make them specialists in any industrial lines, the purpose is to prepare them for service in the home and to teach them to do the practical things which a woman on a farm should know . . . and also to give them enough literary education to enable them to enjoy good reading and enough of the esthetic studies to appreciate the natural beauties around them and that they may be able to furnish their country homes simply and harmoniously.¹⁶

In her continuing effort to expand the school's land holdings, between 1914 and 1915 Berry acquired 5,000 acres of land at the foot of Lavendar Mountain, some six miles from the Berry campus. The

¹³Cook, p. 35.

¹⁴Berry, "Story of Berry," Part 3, p. 54.

¹⁵The Martha Berry School for Girls Catalogue, 1910.

¹⁶Martha Berry, Report to the Board of Trustees, April 22, 1916.

reason for obtaining the land was to provide additional work opportunities for the high school boys.¹⁷ Because the land was near isolated communities such as Possum Trot, Martha Berry decided to open a grammar school there. Built by student labor from the high school, the Mountain Farm School opened on January 4, 1916, with ten students.¹⁸ The goal of the school was to teach primary grades to boys who were too young to attend regular school at Berry. The school continued to acquire land between the main campus and the Mountain School, and as more buildings were added, the Farm School was able to expand and accept older students. With this growth, its name was changed in 1922 to the Foundation School.¹⁹ As elementary education in Georgia increased, fewer students needed to enroll in the Foundation School, so it was closed, and in 1930 the Boys' High School was moved there.²⁰

This move was made because of the opening of a junior college in 1926. Realizing the educational needs of her students were changing, Martha Berry, along with Leland Green and Board chairman Robert Alston, pushed for this addition.²¹ It opened in 1927 with twenty-one students and was coeducational. This number increased to ninety-nine students in 1928, and in 1932 the Junior College's program was accredited.²² The college expanded to a four-year

¹⁷Cook, p. 36.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Pendley, Sixty Years, p. 10.

²²Ibid.

program in 1932, with seventeen graduates from a student body of 393.²³ Despite the college's inability to gain accreditation for its four-year program, student enrollment grew rapidly, so that by 1940, two years before Martha Berry's death, enrollment was 689.²⁴

The goals of the college were not unlike those of the high schools: to provide low-cost higher education for high school graduates unable to attend a more expensive college. A work earned program was established and operated like that at the high school.²⁵ Although the school stressed industrial and agricultural training, the college was also grounded firmly in the liberal arts. Many of the students were graduates of the Berry High Schools, and those who were not, largely came from Georgia.²⁶

As the school expanded from its early days until Martha Berry began to divest herself of control, the administrative bureaucracy increased. This growth made it necessary for increasing funds; consequently, Martha Berry was absent from campus more and more. Because her approval was needed on all financial matters, these absences often created delays in the school's operation, particularly since almost all goods and services were produced on campus.²⁷

Helping to ease the financial aspects of the school's operation was the comptroller, Herman Hoge, who served in that post

²³Ibid., p. 11

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Myers, pp. 174-176.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Robert Adams, Report of the High School, submitted to the

from 1910 to 1953. Working out of a central office, Hoge directed the financial concerns of the school's several departments, ranging from Academic to Agricultural.²⁸ Because the school did most of the construction, planting and repairing with student help, it was Hoge's responsibility to oversee all purchases, to protect against duplication and waste, and to maintain records of all expenditures, such as salaries, supplies, maintenance and labor.²⁹

In order to operate in Martha Berry's absence, each department would submit monthly requests for their needs and Hoge would review the requests and plan a monthly budget of expenses which would then be submitted to Martha Berry, who would write a single check from the general account to cover all the month's expenses. If the monthly expenditures were to exceed the proposed amount, then the excess would have to be applied to the next month's budget.³⁰ This way, expenses would be kept to a minimum. Any money the school received, whether it be a gift, tuition, or profit from the sale of goods, would be placed in the general account from which only Martha Berry could draw.³¹ This proved to be burdensome during the 1910's and early 1920's because of Martha Berry's frequent absences, so the method was changed. By the late 1920's Hoge had access to funds in the general account.³²

Board of Trustees, the Berry Schools, Spring 1914.

²⁸The Southern Highlander, November 1916, pp. 22-23.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Letter from Herman Hoge to Alice Wingo, April 10, 1931.

As of 1912 the school's non-financial matters were handled by the various department heads. The principal of the high school was in charge of the Academic Department, overseeing the faculty, planning curriculum, enrolling students, maintaining discipline and administering punishment, maintaining the library, providing for the health care of the school, planning the schedule of classes, and assisting with publicity and school publications.³³ The first vice-principal headed the high school and the second vice-principal the grammar school grades. Because the industrial and agricultural work was tied to the academic goals of the school, the principal was responsible for coordinating work schedules of the students with their school work.³⁴

Up until 1912, much of the industrial and agricultural work was poorly organized and administered, and students were not only receiving little educational training from their work, but the necessity of their work meant that many of them suffered academically.³⁵ Because of this, the principal, Robert Adams, proposed some changes in the Industrial Department of the school so it would operate more efficiently and provide students with the most efficient and profitable means of attaining an education and practical training. In his proposal, adopted by the Board and put

³³Adams, Report of High School, 1914.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Robert Adams, Preliminary Report on a Plan for the Industrial Department of the Berry Schools, submitted to the Board of Trustees, the Berry Schools, October 15, 1912.

into effect in the fall of 1912, Adams suggested that the Industrial Department be divided into four divisions: Boarding, which included the kitchen, baking and dining room; Campus, which included grounds keeping, road building, care of buildings, and the laundry; Agricultural, which included the farm, dairy, gardens, orchards, poultry, livestock, experiments and demonstrations, and some extension work in the community; and Mechanical, which included shops, printing, the cannery, building, painting, and repairs.³⁶

To train and utilize the students most efficiently, each would be required to work in every area, the first year being divided between Boarding and Campus, the second in Agriculture, and the third in Mechanical. Finally, the fourth year would be devoted to special work and skills as well as assuming the role of foreman over newer students.³⁷

It is clear that the faculty and staff agreed about the need to make the industrial work serve the students educationally, rather than merely making students serve the Industrial Department. The school was often criticized on the basis that students were not learning but just working.³⁸ Another problem was that students were not graduating with regularity. From founding day January 13, 1902 through 1910, thirty-five students graduated but many of those

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Robert Adams, Special Report on the Organization of the Berry Schools, submitted to the Board of Trustees, the Berry Schools, Spring 1914.

had been in school three years or longer.³⁹ It seemed that their work responsibilities often interfered with their class work. Through Adams' plan, the industrial and agricultural work would parallel course work and consequently more nearly fulfill Martha Berry's goal of a utilitarian education. To accomplish this, certain courses were added, particularly mechanical instruction such as elementary joinery, carpentry and building, and machine usage.⁴⁰ This way students would not be just laboring and going to school, but would learn the importance of their work and the elements that went into it.

With the adoption of this plan, the school's operating procedures were solidified into a format that, with few minor alterations, would not change until the 1950's. There were now three major divisions of bureaucracy, the Financial Department, Academic Department, and Industrial Department.⁴¹

With changes in the Industrial Department, the need arose for a director. D. W. Densmore, who had been in charge of the shop, was promoted to head of the new department, a post he held until 1924 when O. Wayne Skinner took over until the late fifties.⁴² In Densmore's first year end report in May 1914, it was again apparent how concerned the faculty and staff were with providing a positive

³⁹Alumni Directory List, 1903-1913.

⁴⁰Adams, Report of the High School, 1914.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Adams, Report of the High School, 1914.

correlation between the students' work and education.⁴³ Under his guidance, the Mechanical Division of the Industrial Department added some more classes and streamlined the work schedules.⁴⁴

The school's operation, however, had depended on Martha Berry's presence to make final decisions. Therefore, in the spring of 1914, Principal Adams suggested changes to alleviate problems during her absences.⁴⁵ The Agricultural Division would be separated from the Industrial Department and placed under the leadership of a trained agriculturalist who could provide proper training for the students. Adams hoped this change would take the agricultural operations of the school out of debt through better management and planning.⁴⁶

Organizationally, all aspects of the school would be divided into two general areas: Instruction and Discipline, and Financial. Any matter relating to the finances of the school would be directed to Hoge and any educational matters would be directed to the principal.⁴⁷ Adams proposed that in Martha Berry's absence, the principal would be the acting head of the school with the first and second vice-presidents following in the chain of command.⁴⁸ Adams pointed out several other weaknesses in the existing structure which

⁴³D. W. Densmore, Report of the Industrial Department, submitted to the Board of Trustees, the Berry Schools, April 15, 1914.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Adams, Special Report, 1914, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 2, 4.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 2-3.

had hindered the educational efforts of the school. Adams thought that the school was perhaps losing sight of some of its purpose by seeking to reap profits from student labor. ". . . [B]oth academic and industrial work should be placed on the same plane . . ."49 he noted.

Clearly, Adams made a harsh analysis of the school's past operation, for he as much as said that the school was failing to teach and train its students properly, and that their work for the Industrial Department lacked any purpose or direction.⁵⁰ Because of this he proposed that the Educational and Industrial Departments operate with the same standards and that they be directed by one person, an educator.⁵¹ He suggested the principal as the logical candidate to oversee the school's industrial and academic phases, and it would be to him that department heads answered.⁵²

While no record exists of the reaction to Adams' suggestions, the Board of Trustees adopted some of them in the next three years. The Agricultural Department was separated from the Industrial, and an agriculturalist was hired to consolidate the work and to offer classes in agricultural techniques.⁵³ Although Adams and his immediate successor, W. C. Atkins, were not given control of

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 4-5.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 3-4.

⁵³W. C. Atkins, Report on the High School, submitted to the Board of Trustees, the Berry Schools, April 13, 1915.

the school's operation, the later principal, G. Leland Green, would be.⁵⁴

Both the Board and Martha Berry recognized the failure of the school to coordinate student work and education, for they dropped Latin and higher math from the curriculum in order to accommodate industrial training in such areas as welding and painting. More agriculture courses were also added and integrated into the students' work at the school farm. Each industrial foreman taught a class in his own field to the students who worked under him, and the method of allocating work was altered to make it more efficient and educationally oriented.⁵⁵ Previously, students would work daily two to four hours and then attend classes. With the changes in the industrial program, students worked two days a week for eight hours, then attended classes four days.⁵⁶ This system remained in effect until the late fifties. The renewed emphasis on strengthening education was reflected in the expansion of the library, the addition of a trained librarian, and the training of students in library usage.⁵⁷

With the changes and solidification of the schools' operation, stability was insured and the schools prospered. Part of the schools'

⁵⁴Pendley, Sixty Years, pp. 10-13.

⁵⁵W. C. Atkins, Report on the High School, submitted to the Board of Trustees, the Berry Schools, April 13, 1915.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 3.

success should be attributed to the faculty and staff, many of whom were as equally dedicated to the school as Martha Berry. On the whole, the majority of faculty and staff at Berry were from the South. Until the opening of the college, few had degrees beyond the B.A.⁵⁸ Although not true of faculty members, many staff members were graduates of Berry. Unlike the students, who were primarily from Georgia, no one state dominated. The states of North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia were usually as well represented as Georgia.⁵⁹

In most cases, Berry advertised through the usual methods for faculty members. If considered for the job, prospective teachers and staff members were given an oral interview and a written examination. The written exam was very taxing, covering every field of study including history (all eras), five languages (Latin, Greek, French, German and Spanish), Mathematics, Geography, Pedagogy and English.⁶⁰ If hired, the faculty were given their pay and board. Most lived on the Berry campus, continuing the tradition from the earliest days of the school.⁶¹

The most well-documented hiring of a faculty member was that of Caroline Bostick Hoge. As Miss Bostick, she applied to teach domestic science in 1912. Elizabeth Brewster, then principal of the Girls' High School, responded in a letter that the pay was "forty

⁵⁸Boys' and Girls' Catalogues from 1914-1940.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Written Examinations for Teachers, June 13, 1913.

⁶¹Faculty Contract, 1918.

dollars a month and board for the school year of eight months."⁶² Brewster's letter further stated that "we have a beautiful spirit in the school and all the teachers as well as the pupils are very happy and enthusiastic in their work."⁶³ Stressing the family aspect of teaching at Berry, Brewster asked Bostick to write again "if the position still appeals to you."⁶⁴

The second letter from Brewster detailed some realistic aspects of Berry. She explained that there was a school for boys very near to the Girls' School and that it was important for teachers to conduct themselves "with considerable dignity."⁶⁵ Bostick was hired and taught at the Girls' School until the 1950's.

It was quite common for married faculty to be given houses on campus and they were subject to inspections from Martha Berry at any time. One popular anecdote told by Inez Henry, Martha Berry's secretary, concerns a new teacher's wife who was sitting on her porch rocking one afternoon. She received a call, left briefly, and when she returned, the rocker had disappeared. When she asked about it she was told that no one connected with the schools could be seen idling, and that everyone, including faculty spouses, should work to make Berry better in some way.⁶⁶

⁶²Letter from Elizabeth Brewster to Caroline Bostick, June 23, 1912.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Brewster to Bostick, June 23, 1912.

⁶⁶Kane and Henry, p. 292.

Because Martha Berry stressed the importance of cleanliness, faculty were expected to keep their houses immaculate.⁶⁷ Inez Henry reminisced once that no one dared to hang out laundry or own a pet because Martha Berry thought both were eyesores.⁶⁸

While there is no way to calculate the attrition rate for faculty over the first forty years of the school, faculty employed at the Berry Schools seemed to have been loyal.⁶⁹ Pay was somewhat less at Berry than at other schools, although this was mitigated in part by the opportunity to board on campus. Many faculty would donate large percentages of their salaries back into the school, particularly during the Depression years.⁷⁰ The best example of this loyalty can be seen in Berry's Alumni News, where faculty members even after leaving were noted for their donations to the school.⁷¹

There is only documentation of a few significant figures in the schools' history. While they may or may not have been typical faculty members, these individuals are important in understanding the faculty and staff, and their relation to the school. Elizabeth Brewster, Herman Hoge, S. H. Cook, M. Gordon Keown, Grady Hamrick, and G. Leland Green all shaped Berry, and of the many faculty and staff employed during Martha Berry's lifetime, these are the most important and best known.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Berry Alumni Quarterly, April 1935, p. 3.

⁷⁰Donor Lists in The Berry Alumni Quarterly, 1925-1940.

⁷¹Berry Alumni Quarterly, April 1935.

The first teacher at the Boys' Industrial School was Elizabeth Brewster, but, as noted, her attachment to the school began earlier than 1902. A recent graduate of Leland Stanford University with a major in botany, Brewster came to Georgia in 1900 to assist Martha Berry with the day schools.⁷² During the first two or three years of the Boys' Industrial School, Brewster taught most of the classes, but as the number of students grew so did the number of teachers, and Brewster concentrated her efforts as head of the English Department.⁷³ After the founding and assured success of the Girls' School, Brewster left the Boys' School, in 1913, to become principal of the Girls' School, where she attended to administrative duties, taught English and History, and supervised the landscaping. Brewster left the school in 1920, apparently because of ill health, and went to California. In 1928, she returned to Berry and became the Dean of Women at the newly opened college.⁷⁴

During her years of service to Berry, Brewster remained a close friend and advisor to Martha Berry. While she did not take the mission of the school to heart as strongly as Martha Berry (as evidenced by her skepticism about the opening of the Boys' Industrial School), she nevertheless was instrumental in organizing and planning the school's direction.⁷⁵ Before the solidification of the

⁷²Paine, "Elizabeth Brewster," p. 1.

⁷³Ibid., p. 2.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 3.

⁷⁵Evelyn Hoge Pendley, "Miss Elizabeth Brewster," undated unpublished manuscript.

administrative framework of the school, Brewster often handled much of the administrative responsibilities in Martha Berry's absence. Furthermore, until a permanent Industrial Manager was hired, she often supervised work schedules and the upkeep of the grounds.⁷⁶

Herman Hoge's connection with the school began in August 1910, when John Eagan, chairman of the Board of Trustees, transferred him from his accountant position with coal mines in Jellico, Tennessee, to Berry as comptroller. Before that time, Eagan had taken on much of the management of the school's finances himself.⁷⁷ In 1916, Hoge married Caroline Bostick, a teacher of home economics at the Girls' School. They had two children, one of whom, Evelyn, went on to write extensively about the school and teach English there.⁷⁸ Hoge's most difficult time as comptroller came in the early 1930's. He frequently was forced to bargain with creditors. He later wrote, "they knew we'd come through, and for months we would live off our good name."⁷⁹ Hoge spent forty-three years as comptroller of the school, retiring in 1953. He had handled Berry's finances through the difficult early years and remained in his position to help Berry grow more stable and solvent.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Evelyn Hoge Pendley, "John Joseph Eagan, undated unpublished manuscript.

⁷⁸Evelyn Hoge Pendley, "History of the Beginning of the Girls' School," undated unpublished manuscript.

⁷⁹Kane and Henry, p. 272.

Samuel Henry Cook had an equally long tenure with the Berry Schools. He arrived from Davidson College in 1909 and taught English. When World War I came, Cook enlisted and this was his only time away from Berry in the sixty-six years he was connected with the school.⁸⁰ After the war he returned and several years later assumed the position of Dean of the Boys' High School. As Martha Berry opened her college and was striving to attain accreditation, she persuaded Davidson College to award him an honorary doctorate. It was as Dr. Cook, then, that he became the Dean of the College in 1927, a position he held until long after Martha Berry's death.⁸¹ Cook was particularly popular with the students because of his counseling ability and willingness to bend the more restrictive rules.⁸² He never married and lived and worked at Berry in some capacity until his death in 1975.⁸³

Rivaling Cook for his tenure at Berry was M. Gordon Keown. Keown's connection with the school began in the spring of 1904, when at the age of twenty-two he left Everett Springs Academy, where he had been teaching, to come to the Boys' Industrial School to complete a high school degree. Upon graduation the following year, he briefly attended the University of Georgia, but returned to Berry to work

⁸⁰Taped interview with Samuel Cook, part of Fiftieth Anniversary, 1963.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Samuel H. Cook, Obituary, The Cabin Log, Student Annual, 1975.

as a cashier in the school store.⁸⁴ Keown left Berry after marrying a teacher in the Girls' School, but Martha Berry persuaded him to return and act as purchasing agent.⁸⁵ Keown was known as a shrewd bargainer, and is attributed with saving the school a great deal of money in land and property transactions.⁸⁶ In 1921, the Board of Trustees made him an Alumni Trustee, a position he held for thirty-five years. Upon Martha Berry's death in 1942, he was appointed, as her will requested, acting director of the schools.⁸⁷ He relinquished that position in 1944, and two years later became treasurer of the Board of Trustees, a position he held until his death in 1956.⁸⁸

Henry Grady Hamrick also arrived at Berry first as a student. He came in 1908 and graduated in 1912. After graduation, he went to business school in Atlanta to study business administration and bookkeeping.⁸⁹ In August 1913, he received a letter from Martha Berry asking him to return as assistant bookkeeper. He returned and shortly thereafter, in December 1913, Martha Berry asked him to go to Lavendar Mountain and begin what would become the Foundation School.⁹⁰ He moved to Lavendar Mountain with twelve high school

⁸⁴Cook, p. 60.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Kane and Henry, p. 270.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Byers, For the Glory, p. 67.

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 68-69.

boys and began the work. By 1932 he was given the title of superintendent of the Boys' High School, but his connection with Berry ended in 1940 when he and his wife left.⁹¹

The last faculty member to be considered is, in many ways, the most important, in the sense that he shaped the operation and direction of the school more than the others. G. Leland Green came to the Berry Schools as principal in 1920. Martha Berry had been unwilling to delegate much authority to prior principals, but Green soon took sole responsibility for the academic side of the schools.⁹² He was Berry's first faculty member with a doctorate, having received an honorary degree before arriving at Berry.⁹³ As Martha Berry began to give herself over to fundraising more and more, Green took on an even greater load of running the schools. It is to Green that the idea of starting a college is usually attributed.⁹⁴ When the college opened, he became president of the Berry School, Incorporated, thus giving him control of the college and high schools.⁹⁵ He led the fight for accreditation for several years. Upon his retirement in 1944, he was briefly succeeded by Dr. Cook, but it was twelve years before another president with any permanence was hired.⁹⁶

⁹¹Ibid., p. 71.

⁹²Various letters from G. Leland Green dealing with the administration of school policy; Pendley, Sixty Years, pp. 13-15.

⁹³Pendley, Sixty Years, pp. 12-13.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 14-18.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 16.

Through their loyalty and adherence to Berry's philosophy, Green and his fellow faculty and staff members accepted and reflected the twin ideas of work and mission. In much the same way, the life of students at Berry mirrored Martha Berry's ideals. While their tenure at the school was shorter than most faculty and staff members, students were constantly inundated with Martha Berry's values. Every aspect of their lives was planned, from their course work to their social life.

From the opening day of the school, the instillation of values was stressed. The first school catalogue, published in 1902, noted that "the teachers occupy the building as the students, and they endeavor by precept and example to inculcate gentlemanly habits and manners."⁹⁷ In that first catalogue, the work ethic of the philosophy of the school was not yet completely outlined, but each student was required to work two hours a day in lieu of tuition.⁹⁸ As expenses and the size of the student body grew, it became increasingly difficult to keep from charging tuition. By 1905, tuition costs were implemented, although the two hours of work a day were not eliminated because of the need to utilize student labor to keep operating costs at a minimum.⁹⁹ Instead, work was integrated into the school's philosophy. What developed in place of no tuition was a work-earned

⁹⁷Boys' Industrial School Catalog, 1902-1903.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Brewster, "Chronicles of a Flatwood School," p. 20.

tuition program. For a limited number of students who qualified, the school would allow students to work for their tuition.¹⁰⁰

Aside from the age limit and restriction to rural youths, further admission requirements also obligated each student to submit a physician's report and two letters of reference referring more to the character of the individual than to his academic abilities. Application forms also required students to identify the city or town closest to them, the last school they had attended, the teacher there, and the textbooks they had used.¹⁰¹ This information was used to evaluate students, place them in the proper grade, and make certain no other school was available to them. On the parent or guardian form there were questions about character, religion, previous education, and ability of the parents to pay tuition costs. There was also a qualification at the bottom of the form. Boys were admitted "only upon the express condition that they . . . remain at the school until the end of the term."¹⁰² It was therefore made clear to the parents, who had to agree to this in writing, that they could not have their children return home during the term except for very unusual circumstances. This reflected Martha Berry's concern that students might be hindered by outside influences which interfered with their education and work schedule.

¹⁰⁰Adams, Report of the High School, 1914; Cook, pp. 35-37.

¹⁰¹Catalog for the Boys' High School, 1915; attached applications.

¹⁰²Ibid.

It is difficult to evaluate the financial hardship of students and their parents, for records would indicate that for some the cost was too much since they had to leave school, while for others it was not too difficult to accommodate. Work-earned tuition was available, but only for students who had been enrolled in school at least one quarter.¹⁰³ The number of these tuition credits increased as the school gained financial solvency, so that by the Depression most of the high school students were at least partially working for their tuition. Those on the work-earned program worked eight to ten hours a day for six days a week during the summer or the term preceding a semester in school. They were then credited with so many hours of work at a rate of pay per hour.¹⁰⁴

Aside from tuition, other costs which students had to absorb either through accumulating more work hours or money included an athletic fee, a physics and chemistry lab fee, a diploma fee, board, textbooks, any off-campus medical expenses, and uniform fees. For a senior in 1915-1916, one semester would cost approximately \$54, making his yearly expenses over \$100. During the 1914-1915 school year, half of the students paid all their expenses, a fourth paid a half or more of their expenses, and the rest paid some portion of their costs.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 11; Cook, pp. 35-37.

¹⁰⁴Catalog, 1915-1916, p. 19; Cook, pp. 35-37.

¹⁰⁵Catalog, pp. 18-19.

If necessary, upon arrival students would receive medical attention such as vaccinations or hookworm treatments. In 1914, the school physician reported performing twenty-three circumcisions.¹⁰⁶ With medical treatments completed, students were assigned to dormitories according to age and classification. At the Boys' High School, each student was required to bring sheets, blankets, a bedspread, towels, a clothes bag, a broom, and light bulbs. Blue overalls were the uniform for the boys and each had to have three pairs in addition to work clothes, night clothes, coats and shoes.¹⁰⁷ Students entered the school according to how much education each possessed. To enter the high school, students had to present either an acceptable diploma or take an entrance exam which led to their placement.¹⁰⁸

The Grammar School, a subdivision of the Boys' High School, was a four-year course of study offered to those boys who were not educationally ready to enter high school. The course of study at the Grammar School consisted of a series of required classes and no electives. English was taken each semester and ranged from the simple ABC's, composition and required readings of Black Beauty and The Swiss Family Robinson, to learning grammar, spelling, letter writing and more difficult reading like Charles Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare, Tennyson's Enoch Arden, and Buhling's Business English.

¹⁰⁶Adams, Report of the High School, 1914.

¹⁰⁷Catalog, 1915-16, pp. 20, 23.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 36.

Arithmetic was also required each year and began with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, then fractions, decimals, U.S. money, measures, and practical applications of problems to industrial and agricultural work. The third year of math added square roots and percentages. The fourth year included interest, vocational algebra and business forms. Spelling, penmanship, and physical education were required each year, as was a course in Bible study.¹⁰⁹

Geography, which focused on the United States and Europe, was added the second and third year. A course in country life was taken during all four years. In the third and fourth years some elementary vocational classes were required in wood and iron work. Singing was also taken in the third and fourth years. In the fourth year of grammar school, students took U.S. history, civics and government. The first class in agriculture was required during the fourth year with a focus on soil analysis, plant life, manure and fertilizers, farm crops, trees, gardens, plant diseases, insects, livestock, dairying, feeds and farm management. A four-year hygiene, sanitation and physiology sequence centered on understanding the human body and its care, including the study of the effects of alcohol, drugs and diseases on the body as well as the prevention of illness through domestic and public hygiene.¹¹⁰

Recognizing the financial limitations of some of their students, Berry offered a special short course at the Grammar School

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 31-32.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

to provide quick but practical training for efficient farm work. This special short course consisted of concentrated work in all the areas offered during the four-year course, but added more practical study in animal husbandry, mechanical work, gardening and horticulture.¹¹¹

For those accepted into high school or moving up from the Grammar School, there was a four-year course of study with more flexibility in course selection. There were four majors in the program: Agricultural, English, Mechanical and Normal (teaching). Each student was expected to select a major during the semester in order to begin the sequence of necessary classes. Four classes were the required load for each student and only those maintaining an eighty-five average or above could take more courses. The following shows the four-year sequence, with an asterisk marking electives taken toward particular majors. The figures indicate the number of periods per week for each class.

FRESHMAN YEAR

<u>Fall Term</u>		<u>Spring Term</u>	
English V	.4	English V	4
Mathematics I	.4	Mathematics I	4
General Science	.4	General Science	5
*Animal Husbandry	.5	*Horticulture & Gardening	5
*Woodwork	.8	*Woodwork	8
*Ironwork	.8	*Ironwork	8
*Mechanical Drawing	.8	*Mechanical Drawing	8

¹¹¹Ibid., pp. 32-33.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

English VI	.4	English VI	.4
*Algebra II	.4	Modern History	.4
Modern History	.4	Physiology and Hygiene . .	.4
*Mechanical Drawing	.8	*Mechanical Drawing	.8
*Farm Mechanics	.8	*Farm Mechanics	.8

JUNIOR YEAR

English VII	.4	English VII	.4
*Geometry	.4	*Geometry	.4
*Education I	.4	*Education I	.4
*Chemistry	.6	Civics & Advanced U.S. His.	.4
American History	.4	*Chemistry	.6
Chorus Leading	.2	Chorus Leading	.2

SENIOR YEAR

*English VIII	.2	*English VIII	.2
*Solid Geometry	.4	*Algebra III	.4
*Education II	.4	*Education II	.4
*Economics	.2	*Economics	.2
Physics	.6	Physics	.6
*Agriculture	.5	*Agriculture	.5
*Soils and Fertilizers . . .	.2	*Botany	.5
Woodwork or Ironwork . . .	.8	Woodwork or Ironwork . . .	.8 ¹¹²

Each class counted as one-half a credit, despite the fact some met four periods weekly while others met eight. Students were required to have sixteen credits to graduate, with between thirteen and fourteen credits being earned from required classes.¹¹³ Although not listed above, two weekly Bible study periods were required, as were two years of Physical Education. Classes in spelling and penmanship were continued until a "satisfactory standard was achieved."¹¹⁴

¹¹²Ibid., p. 37.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 38.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 48.

The student body was divided into three sections. Two sections went to classes for four days and the third section worked two eight-hour days. Kitchen help rose at 4:00 or 4:30 a.m., as did the students who milked in the dairy. Work students rose at five, ate breakfast and were at work by 6:00 a.m., while the regular students rose at 6:00 a.m., had breakfast at 6:30 and were either at work or in classes by 7:00 a.m. Except for a break for lunch and chapel, students were in classes or worked until 4:00 p.m., when those not working had a recreation period. Dinner was served at 5:30 followed by evening chapel, and by 6:30 students were required to be in their rooms studying until 9:05. After that time they could relax or talk until 9:30 when all talking ceased. Lights were turned off at 10:00 p.m.¹¹⁵

There was no study time on Saturday nights when the various extracurricular clubs and organizations met. Among the extracurricular activities open to the students were literary societies, somewhat akin to debating societies, the most prominent and long-lasting being the Athenian and Philomathean. Members learned speaking techniques, public speaking, and held inter-club debates, usually with prizes. A Country Life Club, later the Agricultural Club, met once a month and carried on the ideals of the country life courses. There was a very active YMCA chapter that not only held the weekly Bible study classes but did work in nearby Sunday schools.¹¹⁶ A

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 63.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 15.

bi-monthly student newspaper entitled The Berry School News, reported on various student activities and provided informative articles on practical topics and innovations in agriculture and mechanics.¹¹⁷

For the athletically inclined, there was an Athletic Association that coordinated inter-dorm competitions in such events as basketball, baseball and track.¹¹⁸

Sunday School began at 9:30 a.m., followed by a sermon at 11:00. Lunch was at 1:00 p.m., and dinner at 5:30 p.m. In between, students could study, visit fellow students, go to the library, or participate in other acceptable activities. At 6:00 p.m. dormitory prayer meetings were held on a voluntary basis, and at 7:15 p.m. voluntary Bible classes were offered by the campus YMCA. On Sunday lights were out by 9:30 p.m. This schedule applied to both the Boys' Grammar and High School students and varied little over the next forty years.¹¹⁹

The school also arranged to have campus or visiting lecturers speak on a wide range of subjects from science and economics to literature and travel. Because of these events, there was an opportunity for students not only to broaden their education but also to develop social skills.¹²⁰ Student life was not completely restricted to work and study, for there was also time to develop friendships.

¹¹⁷Berry School News, 1911-1932. Also called the Mt. Berry News.

¹¹⁸Catalog, p. 15.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 63.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 15.

Women hoping to attend the Martha Berry School for Girls had admission requirements similar to the men. Aside from having to be fourteen and live in the country, female applicants had to supply a doctor's certificate of health and have letters referring to personal character. Like the men, women also had to take an entrance examination to place them in the proper class.¹²¹ The women's fees were comparable to the men's. Tuition was approximately the same, but the women's spring semester was one month longer than the men's, primarily because of the extra duties the women had to do in preparing for summer visitors.¹²² Women were required to purchase material from which uniforms were made in the Senior sewing class and thus did not have the luxury or economy of bringing clothes from home. The women's uniforms consisted of a blue wool serge jacket, four blue chambray day dresses, and two aprons. Like the men, women were required to furnish bed clothing, towels, and personal items.¹²³ Women were not allowed to leave school during the term except in an emergency, nor were correspondence or visitation with men (even family) permitted without permission of the dean, who also reserved the right to open mail.¹²⁴

The women's program, while not divided into a grammar and high school, was a six-year course into which the student entered

¹²¹Catalog of the Martha Berry School for Girls, 1913-1914.

¹²²Ibid., p. 14.

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 15; letter from Elizabeth Brewster to J. W. Ratchford, student, November 7, 1916.

according to her previous education. During the first year English, arithmetic, geography, Bible, reading, penmanship, spelling, cooking, and basketweaving were all required. The second year had the same courses and added hygiene. In the third year physiology and American history were added, hygiene dropped, and basketweaving replaced by color studies and interior decorating. The fourth year, called the Junior year, included more English, classics, algebra, civics, English, history, and science, which emphasized agriculture, flower and vegetable gardening, poultry raising and dairy work. A course in home nursing was also added which centered on the care of the sick, home remedies and dietetic rules of health. Courses in the Bible, spelling, penmanship, sewing and cooking continued, along with a textile course to familiarize students with different types of fabric and weaving techniques.¹²⁵

During the fifth, or Middle year, the English, spelling, penmanship, Bible, cooking and sewing classes were continued and ancient history, physics and botany were added. The math course focused on the practical use of algebra and a course in applied design showed women how to furnish a house using such homemade items as rugs, pillows, lampshades, book-racks and pin-cushions.¹²⁶

In the sixth, or Senior year, the women's basic yearly studies continued. For those seeking to go to college, plane geometry was offered as an elective. For those preparing to teach a course in

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 21.

¹²⁶Ibid.

math, teaching was available in conjunction with a short course in practical business math and accounting. Many of the senior classes were designed to prepare women for a teaching career, such as a pedagogy class which focused on a review of common school subjects and the methods of teaching and school management. Finally, for those focusing on home economics, electives were available in house planning, including the study of locations, buildings, and interior design.¹²⁷

The women's day began at 7:30 a.m. and continued until 3:30 p.m. There was a half hour chapel exercise which they attended with the men, and an hour lunch period. Evening hours were spent in activities similar to those of the men and there were several extracurricular groups for women.¹²⁸ Their literary society was the Clionian and they had a chapter of the YWCA. While no athletic activities were organized, there was a Home Economics Club, a Glee Club, and women worked on the student newspaper. They could attend lectures on the men's campus, but were not allowed to sit or talk with them.¹²⁹

As the men's industrial and agricultural training was to prepare them for practical work, the women's courses were designed to train them to become efficient housekeepers, teachers, or nurses. Math classes were practical in orientation and useful endeavors such as record keeping were taught. Furthermore, each girl had an account

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 22.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 16.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 33.

book which she was to maintain satisfactorily; thus they learned to write checks and to take charge of their finances, no matter how meager. When the girls lived in the Practice Cottage as part of their home economics training, they were responsible for purchases and supplies for it, and were limited to a tight budget.¹³⁰

Since teaching was a profession deemed admirable for girls, many of the courses were in teaching methods and the care and supervision of children. The women were also put in charge of a kindergarten and primary school which was populated by faculty and staff children.¹³¹

The practical nature of the girls' training extended also to hygiene, health and home nursing. While there were courses to train nurses, a good foundation was provided to prepare girls for nursing school and at least to care for the sick and prevent illness through hygiene. Because cleanliness was a particular concern of Martha Berry's, the girls were required to take a class which taught them the proper way to scrub floors, polish windows, and maintain a proper house. The resident physician taught a course in sex hygiene, the prevention of typhus, care and nutrition of children, and community health procedures.¹³² The practical nature

¹³⁰Ibid., pp. 23-31.

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Martha Berry, Report to the Board of Trustees, the Berry Schools, April 22, 1916.

of the women's classes extended to the cooking courses, with seniors training in teaching taking over the first year class. Four months residence at the Practice Cottage was required of all students their junior year, and in the Senior year more advanced classes in household chemistry, household management and childhood development were offered.¹³³

The more traditional academic courses were also intended to prepare the women for handling their household or professional duties. Math courses were designed to prepare the women for maintaining a budget. It seems likely that Martha Berry attempted to strip her pupils, male and female, of the unpleasant aspects of the mountain dialects; therefore, English courses stressed the importance of proper speech and writing. Letter writing was deemed an essential tool for any proper woman and emphasis was placed on it. Classics were taught with the goal of teaching poise and self-confidence through reading and performing aloud.¹³⁴ One of the more interesting aspects of the womens' training was the collection and preservation of folk games and old English ballads from their heritage as mountain people; these courses reinforced the importance of the students returning to the mountains to carry on Martha Berry's work.¹³⁵

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴Martha Berry, Report to the Board of Trustees, the Berry Schools, April 26, 1917.

¹³⁵Martha Berry, Report to the Board of Trustees, the Berry Schools, 1915.

Like the men, the women were required to work but did not use the two work days, four school days schedule until several years after the men. Instead, they followed the old procedure of working two hours a day, primarily because the women were in charge of taking care of visitors, often a daily job.¹³⁶ The women were graded on their work like the men, and each girl was required to serve at least a short time in each Industrial Department.¹³⁷ The areas of work for the women included the greenhouse, the dairy, where they learned to milk, make butter and cheese, the Weaving and Manual Arts Department, where they were trained in spinning wool and cotton, weaving, and the production of material which in turn was used by the girls in the Sewing Department to make all the uniforms.¹³⁸

Berry kept in fairly close contact with her graduates and liked to point to their success as proof of their good training. One can see the impact of the educational and practical atmosphere at Martha Berry's School for Girls, because many of the graduates went on to become teachers or nurses. In a sense, these women were receiving a dual message from their training. The school stressed the domestic aspects of women's roles but the graduates were not taught simply to go home with that knowledge and raise a family. Rather, they were to pass it on to as many people as possible. They were Martha Berry's torchbearers, and they carried the light of her educational goals throughout the South. Of the first

¹³⁶Berry, Report, 1917.

¹³⁷Ibid.

¹³⁸Ibid.

thirty-eight graduates of the Girls' School, only one returned home without engaging in some sort of work.¹³⁹ In a letter to John Eagan, Martha Berry detailed what had happened to the previous year's sixteen graduates. Through Martha Berry's pride in her students' work, one can see not only the values inherent in their training, but the subtle indoctrination they received while at the school. Of the sixteen, three were training to become nurses and one had already become an assistant head nurse after the training she received at Berry. Christine Wright, the assistant head nurse, wrote Martha Berry that "my highest ambition is to become a good nurse and do good for others."¹⁴⁰ Four of the graduates married, and one of these continued to teach while another, Lena Lanier Baxter, became a voluntary attendant to the sick and elderly in her neighborhood. Six others were unmarried and teaching.¹⁴¹ In their letters to Martha Berry their words echoed her ideals. "I tried and succeeded to some extent to correlate their studies with their practical every day problems and work,"¹⁴² Elsie Andrews wrote. Winnie Shankel reported that "I have put into practice many practical things that I learned at Berry."¹⁴³ One graduate, Anne Sellers, wrote of experiences that almost paralleled Martha Berry's:

¹³⁹Girls Catalog, pp. 4-6.

¹⁴⁰Letter from Martha Berry to John J. Eagan, May 24, 1916.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*

¹⁴²Letter from Elsie Andrews quoted in letter by Berry to Eagan, May 24, 1916.

¹⁴³*Ibid.*

I have a . . . bad house to teach in . . . there is only one whole window in the house and several of the windows have half of the panes broken out. . . . I am trying my best to get them in the notion to fix it up this summer, I'm going to try to help pay some on it myself.¹⁴⁴

Sellers' story bears a striking resemblance to Martha Berry's difficulties in getting members of her early Sunday school classes to repair the building where the meetings were held.

The final three of these sixteen, Ruby Tallent, Ethel Edwards and Lulu Ray, remained at the school and worked, Ruby in the kitchen, Lulu in the laundry, and Ethel at various jobs.¹⁴⁵ The practice of remaining at Berry was common for at least four or five graduates each year; they stayed and worked at Berry for a short time, often to pay off their tuition debts. Familiar with how things were run, they would act as foremen for two or three years, usually at lower wages than someone hired off campus. This kept Berry from having to hire outside help, pay them higher wages and train them.¹⁴⁶

The concrete aspects of student life, classes, work and extra-curricular activities provide some idea of what student life was like. They do not, however, paint a complete picture, for they give no insight into such intangibles as student values, camaraderie, fears and anxieties. Examining the Berry School News one can get a flavor of life on campus. Students were fairly knowledgeable about current

¹⁴⁴Letter from Annie Sellers in Berry to Eagan.

¹⁴⁵Berry to Eagan

¹⁴⁶Berry, Report, 1915.

events and issues of the day. Among the various topics argued by the debating societies were whether the United States should enter World War I and the pros and cons of public utilities. Articles in the News also dealt with subjects of state and local concern. Students took to heart their country life lessons, for many of the articles and activities of the clubs revolved around up-to-date agricultural innovations.¹⁴⁷

If the newspaper is any indication of student opinion, then most believed in the school's philosophy of work and mission. Articles appeared regularly which praised hard work and the accomplishments of those who had made sacrifices to help others. Little poems and sayings reinforced the values set forth in the school mottos: "You will never be sorry for: helping others at every opportunity, doing your best every day of your life, for living a clean . . . life, always being square and true, done as you would be done by."¹⁴⁸ The school ethic was often extolled in print as was the courageous and self-sacrificing work of Martha Berry. "You [Martha Berry] have lived a devoted life of service and have taught us the lesson of devotion to a noble purpose."¹⁴⁹

Other aspects of student life illuminated in the school paper included a spirited competition among the various dormitories on the men's and women's campuses. Interdorm athletics, artistic and

¹⁴⁷The Berry School News, 1916-1932.

¹⁴⁸The Berry School News, 5 May 1926, p. 1.

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

academic contests were apparently quite heated and the results were published in most editions of the paper. This rivalry came from an apparent sense of camaraderie, for the student body on both campuses was close-knit and students had nicknames for each other.¹⁵⁰

Although students were personally close to the faculty and staff members, few students had close contact with Martha Berry because she was away much of the time. The distance between Martha Berry and the students grew greater as she grew older and the size of the student body increased, making it more difficult for her to meet with each one personally. Yet she tried to keep at least some contact with the students if only to maintain certain standards, such as prohibiting visitation between the two campuses and limiting student parties.¹⁵¹ Usually, Martha Berry wrote open letters to the students in the newspaper in order to keep the students aware of her and to stress her traditional message. Her message was often infused with a sense of martyrdom which was designed, perhaps, to make students realize how much they were indebted to her.

I have had to stand very much alone to give you boys these advantages. You know, boys, it actually costs \$250.00 to keep a boy here for one year. Recently I have been very much hurt because two of our boys left here without saying "good-bye" to me. . . . These little things mean much to me, and you remembering them helps me write the letters that must bring in the money for current expenses. I may seem busy and

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

¹⁵¹Letter from Martha Berry to Elsie Ford, January 1, 1939.

hurried, but I am never too busy to stop and say "good-bye" and "God bless you" to my boys. . . . I am telling you all this because I want you to bear in mind and to remember that the people in this little office upstairs have to work very hard. . . . Although the sun shines brightly on the outside it is sometimes very dark in this office and I go home feeling very weary.¹⁵²

Obviously no place is idyllic, and for students at Berry there were occasional problems. One of the major concerns often voiced by students, alumni and even some faculty questioned the separation of the sexes. These students were biologically adults, yet for reasons of Victorian propriety and prudery they were kept isolated from each other with the threat of expulsion hanging over their heads.¹⁵³ Tobacco and alcohol were not permitted and for many who had grown up on country farms these were not vices, but a part of daily life. These prohibitions proved particularly difficult for students returning from the army after the war to get their diplomas. In fact, for a few years the ban on tobacco was discreetly lifted by the men's Dean of Students, Dr. Cook, who recognized the difficulties in treating adults as children.¹⁵⁴ The restriction to campus was equally frustrating for many students who wished to visit home or go into Rome.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵²Berry News, 18 April 1916, p. 1.

¹⁵³Letter from Grady Hamrick to Alice Wingo, March 24, 1930; List of Regulations for Girls, undated.

¹⁵⁴Cook, taped interview, 1962.

¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*

For some students the sheer difficulty of adjusting to work and school was too much and this, coupled with their feelings of homesickness, accounted for a number of yearly withdrawals from school. For example, in 1917 eight of nineteen voluntary withdrawals (excluding military enlistment) from the Boys' School total enrollment of 217 was because of homesickness.¹⁵⁶ Dissatisfaction among some students was recorded in a group of three letters written to George Jones, the headmaster of Saint John's Haven on St. Simon's Island, by two of his former students. The two, Edgar Brown and Gordon Butler, wrote to Jones complaining that the faculty and staff did not like them. "All of the faculties [sic] has got it in for me and Gordon. . . ." wrote Brown. "They want us to work three or four months and then ship us from here . . . the principle [sic] or Miss Berry hasn't even spoke to me since I been up here."¹⁵⁷ In a letter to Principal Leggett, Jones responded to Brown's letters by urging Leggett to have patience with him. "I am simpley [sic] urging you to help him through his readjustment,"¹⁵⁸ he notes, particularly with his new work schedule.

While this is only one case, it nonetheless reflects some of the frustrations and anxieties of the students, male and female, who had been thrust from the psychological security and comfort of

¹⁵⁶Report on Reasons for Student Withdrawals, October 12, 1917.

¹⁵⁷Letter from Edgar Brown to George Jones, April 1918.

¹⁵⁸Letter from Jones to Leggett, April 13, 1918.

their homes into a new and alien environment, cut off from their families, and placed into a situation requiring strenuous daily work, both physical and mental. But for the most part, despite hardships and apprehensions, most students stayed at Berry and graduated. They assimilated its values to the extent that many graduates went into areas of service or community work, with some even returning to Berry to teach or become staff members.

CHAPTER III

THE PHILOSOPHY THREATENED: THE BERRY SCHOOL STRIKE

During the first two decades of the school's history, Berry experienced very little opposition or controversy other than the disaffection of some of the Rome community. As the school grew in size, so did its reputation and Martha Berry's, whose national image was secured with her selection by Good Housekeeping Magazine as one of the twelve most influential women in America. In fact, the few minor controversies that touched the school in the early days were all resolved in the school's favor. In 1916, when a student, Wilma Butler, lost her arm in a work related accident, her parents sued the school.¹ Berry successfully thwarted the parents' efforts by having the case postponed for four years until 1921, when courts declared the school to be an eleemosynary institution. Since this meant that the school existed on charitable donations, it was therefore not legally responsible.²

In 1921 a local Rome attorney, R. A. Denny, questioned the tax status of Berry. In a letter addressed to Georgia governor Thomas Hardwick, that appeared in the Rome News Tribune, Denny pointed out that Berry was not actually a free institution serving only poor mountain people. Students were required to supply money or labor

¹Cook, p. 20.

²Ibid.

for tuition and, in addition, were required to work sixteen hours a week throughout the school year.³ At that time, Georgia had a law exempting endowments from taxation, but Denny maintained that if the endowment were invested in land then it was subject to taxation. ". . . This institution has bought an enormous acreage in Floyd County, taking out of taxation such acreage and thereby . . . increasing the burden of the other property owners in the county."⁴ It was Denny's contention (as well as the popular belief of many local residents) that Berry was purchasing an excessive amount of land which it neither needed nor used.⁵ In the letter Denny also voiced another concern which would continue to grow and eventually lead to the most explosive event in the school's early history, the 1933 Berry strike.

While this institution benefits a comparatively few children, who are all required to pay either in work or money a substantial tuition for their education, the common schools of the State of Georgia are crying for money, and the teachers of the common schools, to which the common people . . . who do not have . . . \$140.00 must resort for the education of their children. . . . We feel that the duty that the state owes to these schools and pensioners . . . is an infinitely higher moral obligation than any duty owed by it to such private institutions as the Berry schools.⁶

Berry remained for the most part untaxed, but this controversy was the first public indication of the misgivings many people had about the Berry schools and their role in education.

³R. A. Denny, correspondence, Rome News Tribune, 2 November, 1921.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

This explains some of Martha Berry's insistence on raising funds in the North and publicizing the school through The Southern Highlander, a magazine published at the school and used as a fund-raising tool in the North.⁷ This magazine, begun in 1914, told of Berry's origins and reported activities of the school and its students.⁸ As with any publicity device, the Highlander was important in helping raise funds as well as in creating the school's public image. The magazine was not distributed to students or their parents. In fact, students were prohibited from having copies.⁹

Despite its popular press, there were those who questioned Berry's value as an educational institution, as well as its avowed goals. Public education in Georgia was still being neglected and Berry served the needs of only a few. With this came a concern about the philosophical ideals of Berry. Was this school really fulfilling its goal of educating the poor so they could, in turn, help fellow Southerners, or was Berry helping only a few who were being educated to enter the mainstream of society?¹⁰ This new questioning of Berry was best exemplified in the work of several radical groups and institutions in the South. One such organization was the Highlander Folk School located in Monteagle, Tennessee. Founded by Myles Horton

⁷The Southern Highlander, published beginning in 1914.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Taped interview with Tracy Byers, 1962.

¹⁰Frank Adams, Unearthing Seeds of Fire: The Idea of Highlander (Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair, Publisher, 1975, pp.

and Don West, the school opened on November 1, 1932, and sought to provide an educational center in the South for the training of rural and industrial leaders and for the conservation and enrichment of the indigenous cultural values of the mountains.¹¹ "We propose to use education specifically as one instrument to build a new social order,"¹² stated Horton.

While the purpose of Highlander was very similar to Berry's professed ideals of training leaders for agriculture and industry, there was a marked difference in the long term goals of each. Martha Berry never wanted to alter the existing social order for she was a member of the elite who prospered within the system. Rather, she sought to elevate the poor Appalachian farmer to a better position in the system. This notion was typically Progressive and was shared by many turn of the century reformers. The Highlander School, however, manifested a more radical philosophy. To those at Highlander, schools like Berry were not rectifying the poverty and unemployment of Southern Appalachia, but instead were exploiting the few and maintaining an unjust system.¹³ Highlander School sought to alter the socio-economic structure which habitually kept farmers and

3, 13, 15; Don West, "Sweatshops in the Schools," correspondence, The New Republic, 4 October 1933, p. 216.

¹¹Adams, pp. 26-28, 46; Anthony Dunbar, Against the Grain: Southern Radicals and Prophets, 1929-59 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), pp. 42-45.

¹²The Highlander Folk School, Monteagle, Tn., undated statement of purpose sent to the Berry Schools.

¹³Adams, pp. 205-206.

laborers oppressed. Through education they would overturn the status quo, but by knowledge rather than by violence.¹⁴ In Depression era America, this philosophy grew stronger as more and more people were touched by poverty and starvation. It was perhaps inevitable that these two opposing educational philosophies would clash eventually, and at the depth of the Depression such a symbolic clash did occur, in the form of the Berry strike.

Don West, co-founder of Highlander, left the Highlander School in April 1933, to return to his native North Georgia. There he sought to organize schools similar to Highlander which would educate farmers and industrial workers for the "cooperative commonwealth."¹⁵ Settling in Kennessaw, Georgia, forty miles southwest of Berry, West was practically in Berry's backyard.¹⁶ West knew first-hand he would be competing against the Berry schools, for he had attended the school from 1923 until the spring of 1926. While Berry would later try to blacken his record, earlier it had applauded his efforts in the March 1932 Berry Alumni Quarterly. West was gaining fame for his poetry and the Quarterly reported his success with pride, claiming West had realized the noblest ideals of Berry.¹⁷ West himself seemed proud of his Berry roots for in an April 15, 1932 letter to Martha

¹⁴Adams, pp. 36, 53, 205-206; Highlander Report.

¹⁵Letter from Myles Horton to Will Alexander, November 11 1953.

¹⁶Ibid.; Dunbar.

¹⁷"Don West Achieves Fame as Poet," The Berry Alumni Quarterly, March 1932, pp. 11-12.

Berry, he thanked her for her hospitality towards him on a recent visit to the school and remarked about his deep feelings for the school and its purpose.¹⁸ Only a year later, both parties would look on the other with disdain, seeking to separate from each other.

West's dissatisfaction with Berry had its roots in the growth of his radical philosophy. After leaving Berry, he briefly attended Lincoln University and Vanderbilt before teaching school in Kentucky, after which he travelled to Europe and studied at the International School at Alsinor, Denmark.¹⁹ Returning to the United States in the fall of 1931, he re-entered Vanderbilt where he majored in religion with Alva Taylor before leaving to join Myles Horton in founding Highlander.²⁰ In a letter to Martha Berry following the Berry strike, Taylor said of West that,

he seems to have a smouldering temperament that broods over the wrongs of the working people, coupled with a highly individualistic ego that makes . . . working with others . . . impossible. . . . He seems to think all institutions handicaps to truth and right and all who labor in them timorous souls.²¹

If this description of West's nature and philosophy is accurate, it is understandable that he would become dissatisfied with Berry.

¹⁸Letter from Don West to Martha Berry in the Berry Alumni Quarterly, p. 22.

¹⁹Dunbar, p. 30; letter from Alva Taylor to Will Alexander, October 16, 1933.

²⁰Taylor to Alexander.

²¹Letter from Alva Taylor to Martha Berry, October 16, 1933.

This dissatisfaction manifested itself in action during the fall of 1933.

In late August of 1933, students on the Boys' High School campus, disgruntled over a change in tuition and work credit policy as well as the restrictive social policy of the school, sought redress for their grievances. Specifically, the students charged that the school had lowered the amount of money or credit per hour for summer work from 18 cents to 14 cents.²² This is an interesting and perhaps trivial concern considering the school had traditionally adjusted work to tuition for work-earned students.²³ Five or six students served as leaders, with the most important being Willis Sutton, Don West's nephew.²⁴ Indications are that about seventy-two students were sympathetic to the cause, but their exact goals were never completely clear.²⁵ They definitely sought a loosening of restrictions and most wanted some sort of student government organized so they would have a unified voice in responding to administrative actions.²⁶ Following in the footsteps of contemporary labor leaders, the students decided that a strike would be the most effective way to show student solidarity and, with some organizational advice and

²²Dunbar, p. 53; West, The New Republic.

²³Cook, pp. 35-36.

²⁴Dunbar, p. 53.

²⁵Letter from Bill Crawford, Berry student, to Willis Sutton, October 16, 1933.

²⁶Crawford to Sutton; Dunbar, p. 53; Hamilton Basso, "About the Berry Schools, An Open Letter to Miss Martha Berry," The New Republic, 4 April 1934, p. 207.

assistance from Sutton's uncle, West, the students called for such a strike on August 28.²⁷ Whether caught up in the emotions of the event or coerced by peer pressure, the high school students did not report to work on the 28th.²⁸

There are conflicting reports as to the length of the strike. Don West, in talking with Anthony Dunbar, author of Against the Grain, stated that the strike lasted two days, while Hamilton Basso in a story for the August 4, 1934 New Republic reported that the strike lasted only a few hours.²⁹ Despite the discrepancy, the strike was brief and non-violent; the students returned to work after faculty and staff members talked with them at a general assembly and promised to make changes without retaliation.³⁰

Still dissatisfied, a few of the students requested outside aid and through Sutton, Don West became more directly involved in the student movement. West contacted the National Student League (NSL), a leftist organization which advocated worker revolution.³¹ According to West, he and Clyde Johnson, an executive in the NSL, came to Berry to meet with some students about the incident, only to be removed from campus and arrested.³² In a letter addressed to "Fred," a student at Berry, an unidentified NSL organizer discussed

²⁷Dunbar, p. 53; Basso, pp. 207-208.

²⁸Dunbar, p. 53. ²⁹Dunbar, p. 53; Basso, pp. 207-208.

³⁰Dunbar, p. 53; Basso, p. 208.

³¹Dunbar, p. 53. ³²Ibid., pp. 53-54.

the events at Berry and leaflets were sent which related conditions at Berry. The NSL also sent copies of the leaflets throughout the country, including to the Berry Board of Trustees members and well-known donors like Henry Ford and Emily Vanderbilt Hammond.³³ Through its actions and language, the NSL highlighted the opposing and non-conciliatory philosophies of the school and the newer leftists. Since both thought its own method of reform was the best, it was impossible for one school of thought to be reconciled with the other.

The NSL even sent flyers to the office of the National Recovery Administration, for one of the leaflets claimed that Berry flew the Blue Eagle, symbol of the NRA, but did not abide by its eight hour work day limit.³⁴ The content of the handbills reflected the more radical tone of the NSL and West, emphasizing the wage decreases and lack of a student union. One of the two leaflets, entitled "Berry Students Demand Justice," claimed that an unjust administration was denying students their civil rights of free speech and right to assembly.³⁵ Furthermore, Principal Grady Hamrick had broken promises made at the time of the strike, threatening to expel any student who continued to complain.³⁶ There were six demands in the

³³Letter from National Student League to Fred, an unidentified Berry student, no date.

³⁴Protest Injustice to Berry Students, pamphlet, undated.

³⁵Berry Students Demand Justice, pamphlet, undated.

³⁶Ibid.

flyers: (1) formal organization of a student government; (2) consultation of elected student officials on matters pertaining to students; (3) formation of student committees to investigate the cost of maintaining a student and the income received from his labor; (4) student reviews of work supervisors, with the right to fire them; (5) reduction of tuition or an increase in wages to meet the cost of tuition; (6) two co-educational parties a month as well as the two monthly trips to Rome promised in the catalogue.³⁷ In general, the tone of this handbill was defiant, tinged with a good deal of indignation at the school's poor treatment of its students.

The other leaflet was decidedly more radical, expressing the socialist leanings of the NSL and Don West. Addressed "To the Farmers and Workers of Floyd and Bartow Counties, to All Communities of the South, to All Fair Minded People," this flyer condemned the exploitation of the poor and starved farmer and worker at the hands of the rich.³⁸ Furthermore, it accused Berry of exploiting its students by working them at slave wages and reaping a profit from their agricultural and industrial goods to the detriment of local farmers and laborers.³⁹ Attempting to play on the existing fears and hostilities of local residents, the flyer accused Berry of accumulating vast sums of untaxed land and flooding local markets with cheap goods that would undercut fair competition.⁴⁰

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Protest Injustice.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

In the East Berry tells many "sob stories" about the poverty and ignorance of us and you hard working farmers. . . . They get money from rich people on the pretext [sic] that they will help you poor farmers. But what has Berry done for you? Nothing. Berry has taken a few of the best country boys and girls, and instead of educating them to return to their communities to better conditions there, they have been given desires to go away to cities.⁴¹

According to the NSL letter, articles and letters would be written to magazines around the country.⁴² No articles appeared; however, a letter from Don West did appear in The New Republic of October 4, 1933. Headed "Sweatshops in the Schools," West's letter was brief but inflammatory. He said that a strike had recently occurred at Berry and reported the issue as the reduction in student wages coupled with increases in prices at the school store.⁴³ West claimed that the strike ended after administrative promises were made but that students were afraid to speak up because the school was "holding the club of expulsion over their head."⁴⁴ West did not mention sweatshops: the headline was created by The New Republic's editors. Completely absent was any mention of the fact that the strike had taken place only at the Boys' High School.

With the publication of this letter and the nationwide circulation of the leaflets, the school could no longer keep quiet about the incident. Instead of rationally answering West's accusation, the school and Martha Berry over-reacted, making their

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴³West to New Republic.

⁴²NSL to Fred.

⁴⁴Ibid.

own harsh accusations. One wonders why the school took this approach since public sentiment and the press were on their side. First, the school turned inward to make sure the activities of student agitators were stopped. Calling a general assembly of all the students in both the high school and college, Martha Berry, along with Robert Alston, chairman of Berry's Board of Trustees, addressed the student body.⁴⁵ At the meeting students took the pledge of loyalty, which was important to Martha Berry.⁴⁶ The students supported the school, but it would have been very difficult for any dissenters to express disagreement for fear of reprisal from faculty and peers.

Perhaps fearing the bloody and violent connotation the word strike had in that era, the school was unwilling to admit that a strike had taken place.⁴⁷ Instead, the school presented half the story, that which occurred after the NSL and West became actively involved. In the Associated Press (AP) article, which appeared throughout much of the country, Berry claimed that seditious literature was sent to students who, in turn, gave it to school authorities. Stressing that the trouble was entirely external, Berry contended that a former student, using several aliases, attempted to call a

⁴⁵Letter from Clyde West, Berry student, to Martha Berry, October 4, 1933; Edwin Holman, Atlanta Constitution, 8 October 1933.

⁴⁶Letter from Martha Berry to Emily Vanderbilt Hammond, October 6, 1933; letter from Martha Berry to Eugene Gunby, alumnus, October 12, 1933.

⁴⁷Letter from G. Leland Green to L. Koch, Director, Commonwealth College, Mena, Arkansas, October 10, 1933; letter from Robert C. Alston, chairman of Berry's Board of Trustees, to Nicholas Murray Butler, President, Columbia University, October 6, 1933.

strike at the Gate of Opportunity but "not a single student heeded the call."⁴⁸ This corroborates West's assertion that he came to campus.

Maintaining this story, Berry set out to undo what it felt were false and damaging accusations. Using a good offense as their best defense, the school and Martha Berry first confronted The New Republic. In an October 6 telegram to the magazine, Alston asserted the West letter was libelous and that the magazine should print a retraction.⁴⁹ Bruce Bliven, one of the editors, immediately responded, saying he would investigate, and requested a letter from the head of the school stating the school's position.⁵⁰ Alston responded the same day, inviting a representative to come to the campus, and again asked the magazine to make amends for the damaging statements.⁵¹ In hopes of further swaying the magazine and demonstrating the students' loyalty, the school sponsored a massive letter writing campaign.⁵² The magazine responded as follows:

Most of the letters are from students and bear internal evidence that the writers have not seen Mr. West's letter.

⁴⁸Atlanta Constitution, October 8, 1933; other papers quoting from this article included the Montgomery (Alabama) Advertiser and the Washington D.C. Star.

⁴⁹Alston to Bliven, October 6, 1933.

⁵⁰Bliven to Alston, October 6.

⁵¹Alston to Bliven, October 6.

⁵²Letter from Martha Berry to Charles Proctor, October 10 1933; The New Republic, October 25, 1933, p. 292.

Indeed, a number of them say that his charges are not true, and add "Please send me a copy of the issue containing his statement."⁵³

Aside from solidifying student support, the school and Martha Berry began a letter writing campaign to its donors, fearful of losing their support.⁵⁴ In personal letters to her closer friends, and in a form letter to most donors, Martha Berry stressed the students' loyalty, noted the show of support in the assembly, and impugned Don West by playing up his socialist--"Red"--activity.⁵⁵ Reversing their praise of him from the year before, Martha Berry and the school now maintained West had been expelled from school and was seeking revenge.⁵⁶ Some students were also asked to write letters to donors and West. "It is of the gravest importance that Herman Coots should write a letter to Don West. . . ." Martha Berry insisted. "I think it should be in his own handwriting . . . and [it should be] down [to my office] right away."⁵⁷

⁵³The New Republic, October 25, 1933.

⁵⁴Aside from individual letters to such individuals as Emily Vanderbilt Hammond, Charles Proctor and Eugene Gunby, Martha Berry also had prepared a form letter in which she maintained that the attack on the school was instigated from the outside and that the students had not gone on strike.

⁵⁵Letter from Martha Berry to Emily Vanderbilt Hammond, October 6, 1933.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*; letter from Martha Berry to Homer Cummings, Department of Justice, October 9, 1933.

⁵⁷Letter from Martha Berry to Grady Hamrick, Principal, Boys' High School, October 6, 1933; letter from Joseph L. Hillman, Berry student, to Emily Vanderbilt Hammond, no date.

Berry's response to the incident seems excessive at this level but normal considering its general insular nature and fear of losing donors. But Berry's further action in the matter was even more questionable, for the issue was under control on campus and public support was by and large on their side. Indeed, the only negative national publicity had come in the form of West's letter. There were a few letters from students' organizations at various colleges around the country and a few individual letters protesting Berry's treatment of its students, but these were relatively harmless.⁵⁸ Berry responded to all of them and received several retractions.⁵⁹ Yet Berry sought to undercut West and expose any communist attachments he had. To do this the school's leaders indirectly attacked the Highlander Folk School and Myles Horton, primarily because The New Republic had listed West's address incorrectly as Monteagle, Tennessee.⁶⁰ The school's president, G. Leland Green, wrote Sherwood

⁵⁸Letter from Arline Nowak, Secretary, National Student League of Fenn-Nash Colleges of Columbus, Ohio, to Martha Berry, October 10, 1933; letter from Serril Gerber, NSL member and student at Los Angeles Junior College, to G. Leland Green, October 6, 1933; letter from David Lee, student at unidentified college in Atlanta, Ga., to Grady Hamrick, October 5, 1933.

⁵⁹Letter from A. R. Mann, Provost, Cornell University, to Martha Berry, October 12, 1933; letter from William H. Snyder, Director, Los Angeles Junior College, to G. Leland Green, October 23, 1933.

⁶⁰Letter from Martha Berry to the Men of Justice, an organization based in Atlanta, October 14, 1933.

Eddy and Will Alexander, the director of the Commission on Inter-racial Cooperation, because of their attachment to Highlander.⁶¹ Green asked them how they could support Don West (and therefore Monteagle) when he had made "ungenerous and unwarranted attacks upon an institution which . . . had done so much to build up the rural South."⁶² In a letter of defense to Will Alexander, Myles Horton pointed out that Don West was not attached to Highlander as of April and, while he was supportive of any effort to redress injustice, he had no knowledge of the situation at Berry.⁶³

Seeking more substantial action against West, Berry wrote the Federal Bureau of Investigation on September 26, 1933, claiming that he had carried out communistic threats against the school.⁶⁴ After being advised that no federal statute covered such activities, Martha Berry personally wrote Attorney General Homer Cummings, requesting that he protect Berry. Cummings did not respond.⁶⁵

In the school's fear of communism and the possible results from attacks on the school, several innocent individuals came under attack. Central among them was Walker Martin, a former student at Berry, who had left because there was no opening for him. Martin

⁶¹Green to Eddy, October 9, 1933; Will Alexander to Myles Horton, October 14, 1933 (mentions the incident at Berry).

⁶²Green to Eddy.

⁶³Letter from Myles Horton to Will Alexander, November 11, 1933.

⁶⁴Letter from J. C. Hanson, Acting Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Investigation, October 7, 1933.

⁶⁵Ibid.; Berry to Cummings, October 9, 1933.

went to Monteagle in the fall of 1932 to attend Highlander.⁶⁶ In a series of letters to a Berry student, Merle Barton, dating from October 27, 1932 (which the school confiscated, copied and kept on file), Walker recounted his life at Highlander.⁶⁷ The letters reflected his radicalism as he wrote of a new social order and condemned Berry for taking the "flower of Southern youth . . . and turning out more supports for the system."⁶⁸ These letters seem to carry the stamp of Don West's influence in their analysis of Berry and its uselessness in bringing true change to the South. "The psychology . . . of the regime that makes Berry possible 'in the training and education of youth,'" he wrote, "is sultifying [sic] and paralyzing the fine material that comes under its warping, twisting hand."⁶⁹

While these letters reflect Martin's socialist ideology, they were not enough to convict him of complicity in West's actions at Berry. The school, however, held West responsible. Shortly after the appearance of the NSL leaflets, the school published a bulletin signed by thirty-one student organizations denouncing the propaganda, and one of the addressees was Walker Martin alias Martin Walker.⁷⁰

⁶⁶Letter from Walker Martin to Merle Barton, October 27, 1932; letter from Mrs. L. N. Martin, Walker's mother, to Martha Berry, October 10, 1933.

⁶⁷Martin to Barton, October 27, 1932; December 17, 1932; January 4, 1933.

⁶⁸Martin to Barton, December 17, 1932.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Berry students.

Later, in the AP news article, Alston implicitly accused Martin of being the true outside organizer of the strike, claiming he had been arrested during a raid in Atlanta with literature entitled, "A Declaration Against Berry."⁷¹

Berry's suspicions were no doubt further aroused when Martin wrote Dr. Green about having his brother, Gordon, admitted to Berry.⁷² Green's response, while cordial, focused on the reports of Martin's involvement in the events at Berry and his alleged arrests.⁷³ Furthermore, students at Berry were informed of Martin's activities and many wrote accusatory letters to him.⁷⁴ Despite written denials of his involvement but acknowledging support of his radical activities, Martin was still hounded by Berry. A private detective, identified only as Mr. Page, was hired by the school to investigate Martin.⁷⁵ In a report filed October 12, Page discussed Martin's relationship with West and said West had asked Martin to assist a Ruth Mulkey at the International Labor Defense office in Atlanta in August. It was this office that had been raided, but

⁷¹Atlanta Constitution, 8 October 1933.

⁷²Martin to Green, October 4, 1933.

⁷³Green to Martin, October 1933, no day given.

⁷⁴Martin to Matson Guthrie, Berry student and friend of Martin, October 7, 1933.

⁷⁵Internal Report entitled, "Information Brought in by Mr. Page," October 12, 1933.

no report was made of Martin's arrest.⁷⁶ The report further accounted for West's activities for most of 1933.⁷⁷ On October 14, Page went to Martin's parents and talked with them.⁷⁸ Mrs. Martin, while defensive, was responsive enough to write Martha Berry indicating her son's former love of the school, and admitting he had been radicalized after he left the school and fell under the influence of Don West.⁷⁹ On December 1, when Mrs. Samuel Leonard from Birmingham, Alabama (Martin's home), wrote the school requesting information on Martin with regard to hiring him,⁸⁰ Berry had her investigated by Charlie Whiteside, who reported that she lived in a poor section of town on the fringes of a black community where she spread "communist propaganda."⁸¹ "I'll find out more later . . . ," Whiteside continued. "We will see that both of these parties are taken care of in case they start the least bit of trouble."⁸²

Aside from Martin, Berry kept information on other people and accumulated a large file of material on the strike and the principles involved, as well as on various communist and socialist organizations.⁸³ Students' mail was searched, copied and sometimes

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Mrs. Martin to Berry, October 10, 1933.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Letter from Mrs. Samuel Leonard to G. Leland Green, December 1, 1933.

⁸¹Letter from Charlie Whiteside to Martha Berry, December 6, 1933.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³There were several file folders of material relating to

confiscated.⁸⁴ For example, after Willis Sutton left school in the fall to attend school in Adairsville, he wrote to his sister, Quinn, but the school kept the letter.⁸⁵ Quinn and her sister were closely watched by school officials, who made periodic spot inspections of their rooms.⁸⁶

The final word on the strike took the form of the promised investigation by The New Republic, which sent noted South Carolina author Hamilton Basso.⁸⁷ Arriving in Rome on January 8, 1934, he immediately went to the Sutton home to talk with Willis.⁸⁸ The next day, Basso was escorted to Berry where he attended a chapel service, ate lunch, and began to interview various faculty and staff members about the work conditions at Berry and the charges made by West in his letter.⁸⁹ On Wednesday, Basso talked privately, off campus, in a rented car, with various students he selected at random.⁹⁰ Exactly seven months after Don West's letter, The New Republic issue of April 4, 1934 carried Basso's report in the form of an open letter to Martha Berry.⁹¹ In his article, Basso spoke kindly of Martha

the strike including reports on the Highlander School, the National Student League, copies of incoming and outgoing letters, and internal reports.

⁸⁴Letter from Charles Proctor to Martha Berry, October 18, 1933.

⁸⁵Letter from Willis Sutton to Quinn Sutton, his sister, October 3, 1933.

⁸⁶Proctor to Berry, October 18. ⁸⁷Basso, T

⁸⁷Basso, The New Republic, pp. 206-207

⁸⁸Ibid. ⁸⁹Ibid., p. 207. ⁹⁰Ibid. ⁹¹Ibid.

Berry's work and reminded readers of the purpose for his visit. Chronicling his investigation, Basso discussed the charges that West had made concerning tuition and work earned credit. He was puzzled by the school's failure to inform him of the recent adjustment of the wages. Basso concluded that while school prices were not at cost, as some letters to the magazine had claimed, the prices were generally less than average retail.⁹² Basso refuted Berry's assertion that there was no strike. He accurately recounted what had taken place on August 28 and surmised that most of the students were disgruntled over social policies. Students wanted to smoke, visit home during the school year and visit with members of the opposite sex more freely.⁹³ Finally, Basso reported a rumor that he was being followed while in Rome. While not convinced that he was being watched, the seeds of doubt were clearly in Basso's mind.⁹⁴ While there is no written proof that Berry had Basso trailed, the school did keep a detailed report of his visit and discussions while on campus.⁹⁵ Needless to say, Berry was not pleased with the article and despite the magazine's submission of the article to the school for a response, no official statement was made and the issue finally died a quiet death.⁹⁶

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid., p. 208.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Report on the Visit of Hamilton Basso, Representative, The New Republic.

⁹⁶Basso, p. 208; letter from Martha Berry to John Graham, her nephew, October 20, 1934.

It seems probable that the incident was blown out of proportion by the school. Few papers outside the South ran the AP article and most donors recognized the flyers for what they were. The level-headed Emily Vanderbilt Hammond wrote to Martha Berry:

I think you make a mistake taking Don West so seriously.
. . . The whole affair will make the right-minded realize more than ever the need there is for just such a school as yours to counteract the radical element in this country.
. . . You must not let fear creep in. . . . Don't encourage your students to hate even Don West and Walker Martin.⁹⁷

Unfortunately, Berry did not heed Hammond's Good Samaritan ideals but over-reacted to what was basically a simple student expression of dissatisfaction. While the involvement of the NSL was understandably aggravating, the school was in no danger of infiltration for it had quickly roused student, alumni and donor support.

The actions of Martha Berry and the school officials stem from several roots. One was their longtime insularity which sheltered them from the outside world. Being so isolated they had long controlled the outside press, with the only strong criticism coming from Rome. When this harsh attack came, Berry, unaccustomed to criticism, did not know how to react and, instead, over-reacted. The left wing ideology of the attackers simply resulted in the school's defenses being intensified. Labor unions, communists, and strikes were all very dirty words in 1933 as the entire country

⁹⁷Letter from Emily Vanderbilt Hammond to Martha Berry, October 14, 1933.

played out a struggle over the rights of laborers and the validity of the capitalist system in the context of the weakened economy of the Depression. Always prone to shirk controversy, Berry feared having its name attached to such issues. Finally, the focus of the radical attack, Berry's donors, struck right at the Martha Berry schools' survival, for the schools had lived through the support of philanthropists and a scandal could destroy their credibility and remove their major source of revenue.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

With Martha Berry's death, the Berry Schools entered a fourteen year period which saw them, among other things, confronted with indecisive, short-term leadership and the problem of acquiring accreditation for the college. Ironically, one of Martha Berry's most sincere goals in the thirties was, in many ways, in direct conflict with her wishes as stated in her last letter, particularly the admonition to "keep the schools a separate community and protect and guard the property." For the college to be accredited, President Leland Green believed that new industries should be brought into the scope of the school and that the faculty should engage in greater interaction with the faculty of other colleges. When Martha Berry died, Green was still working with areas that the Southern Association had recommended the school concentrate on before accreditation, hiring teachers with higher degrees and concentrating on lessening faculty work loads.¹

Two recommendations made by the Board of Trustees before Martha Berry died seemed quite radical. First, the Board suggested that the faculty should participate in instructional policy and, second, that the selection and retention of faculty should be left up to the Board of Trustees rather than the director of the schools.

¹Pendley, Sixty Years, pp. 13-18.

After Berry's death these recommendations suddenly seemed less radical. John Sibley had been elected chairman of the Board of Trustees in 1940 after J. Bulow Campbell's death, and the school was directed by a triumvirate including Sibley, M. Gordon Keown, acting director of the schools, and Green, the president.²

The absence of the founding figure, however, meant that her philosophy seemed to weaken. When Green retired and Keown stepped down as director in 1944, the Board found itself looking outside the Berry community for a new president, one that would not have had direct exposure to Martha Berry, her admonitions, and her plans for school growth. The Board appointed Dr. Cook acting president until they hired Dr. Jesse Baird, the former president of Berea College.³

This started what was to become a minor succession crisis at Berry. Baird constantly ran into interference from the Board of Trustees as well as the alumni over the way he wanted to run the school. After a little more than a year, he retired as president. Over the next ten years Berry was unable to keep a president. Each one entered into conflict with the Board of Trustees, faculty, or the alumni over his handling of school matters. It appeared that no one could be found to run the school satisfactorily.⁴

In 1955, William McChesney Martin, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, was elected chairman of the Board of Trustees. In

²Ibid.

³Ibid., pp. 20-24.

⁴Ibid.

1956, he found himself succeeding Dr. Cook as acting president of the schools. At his recommendation, the Board chose Dr. John R. Bertrand as the new president. This proved to be a felicitous choice. Bertrand moved with incredible speed to make changes in the school. Among his major reforms were the abolition of uniforms in the early 1960's and mandatory chapel for students. His most impressive achievement, however, was in finally obtaining accreditation for Berry College from the Southern Association.⁵ The school was now on equal footing with all other private colleges in the Southeast.

Bertrand retired in 1981 and was replaced by Board of Trustees member Gloria M. Shatto. Shatto's major reform took place in 1983, when she closed Berry Academy, the high school that was operating on the site of what had been the Boys' School. Shatto cited the lack of necessity for what had become an expensive private boarding school that no longer carried out Martha Berry's philosophy. Furthermore, Shatto pointed out the surprising fact that the Academy had been operating as a steady drain on school finances.⁶

By 1984, there are few examples of Martha Berry's philosophy at work at Berry College, with her importance lying more with her place in school folklore and tradition. Several yearly celebrations are held to honor her. And although the school still emphasizes Martha Berry's philosophy of "work, study and religion,"⁷ students

⁵Ibid., pp. 45-78.

⁶Berry Alumni Quarterly, Summer 1983.

⁷Berry College Catalog, 1983, p. 4.

are neither required to work nor attend church. Academically, the school has de-emphasized the practical aspects of education in favor of liberal arts, although they still have agriculture and industrial arts departments. However, these departments are strictly academic and no longer contribute to the school's self-sufficiency. In fact, almost all of the school's goods are purchased off campus, from food-stuffs to furniture. Finally, very few students at Berry today are poor mountain children from rural areas. Instead, many come from large cities, in particular Atlanta.

Why then did Martha Berry's philosophy not continue after her death? For one reason, education grew as an important state and national issue, with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare being created in 1953. With this increasing interest came a rise in funding for public education. This meant that Georgia and other Southern states were able to expand their education facilities, so that by the 1940's every county in Georgia had at least one public high school.⁸ No longer was the need so great for indigent mountain children to attend the Berry High Schools.

As government assistance spread into other areas beside education, the poor people of Appalachia found their lives and needs changing. With the advancement of society's technology and modernization, many of the skills taught at Berry were no longer needed. Furthermore, continued movement of rural peoples into urban areas led

⁸Orr, History of Education in Georgia, pp. 310-312.

to the growth of such Southern cities as Atlanta, Chattanooga, Birmingham and Nashville.⁹

Aside from these tangible changes, the school was confronted with the problem of changing American attitudes and values. Veterans, funded by the GI Bill, did not need to work for their tuition. More importantly, in Berry's case, they found many of the restrictions annoying and childish. Berry's slow move to alter them led to a drop in enrollment, and the college's inability to gain accreditation also hurt it.

Ultimately, for Berry to have succeeded in the fifties and sixties it would have had to alter or eliminate many of Martha Berry's policies. The school did abolish many regulations such as uniform wearing, separation of the sexes and mandatory chapel. The educational focus changed as well from primarily agricultural and industrial in nature to liberal arts. Financial concerns made it increasingly difficult to maintain self-sufficiency, for it was too expensive to produce all the foodstuffs and equipment the school needed. Divisions such as the foundry, pig farm, and laundry were gradually closed. Furthermore, the school began to sell and lease its property, thereby failing to adhere to Martha Berry's philosophy to "protect and guard the property." In the meantime, the high schools evolved into Berry Academy, a private coeducational college preparatory school.

⁹Norton et al., p. 872.

It is interesting to speculate whether Martha Berry would have approved of the changes the school made following her death. During her life, she did recognize the shift in the educational needs of her students as exemplified in her opening of the Girls' School and college. However, it is doubtful that she could have predicted the postwar growth and change in American industry and technology as well as the shift in values and attitudes. Therefore it would have been difficult for her to continue to mold values and behavior with the same success she had during her lifetime.

Ultimately, the failure of the school to maintain Martha Berry's standards was due to her death. While she was alive, the school, faculty, staff and students were constantly faced with her presence. Even with her many trips off campus her sheer force of will was enough to instill appreciation for her methods and philosophy. Furthermore, her desire to mold young minds with the ideals she thought right was successful during her life. But Martha Berry's ability to do this came less from her philosophy itself than from her forceful personality. Therefore, when she was no longer there to direct and guide students and faculty, this aspect of her ideals deteriorated.

Her death also ended her reputation and influence as a national figure. During her life many articles were published about her and the Berry Schools, but following her death this was no longer the case. The school was unable to sustain the national interest that Martha Berry had generated. The vacuum left by her death harmed

the school more than the legacy of her work helped it. Despite the demise of her philosophy, the changes made by her school in its operation after her death, and the loss of Martha Berry as an important historical figure, her contributions to educational growth in Georgia as well as the South should not be forgotten. Opening as it did during a push for education in the South, the Berry Schools exemplified the need and good of education. Martha Berry not only served as a force in promoting education, but her schools themselves served as models for the growing interest in practical industrial and agricultural education.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

IMPORTANT DATES

- 1866 Martha Berry born at Oak Hill Plantation, Floyd County, Georgia, on October 7. She was the second child of Thomas Berry and Frances Rhea Berry.
- 1882 Martha sent to the Edgeworth School in Baltimore, Maryland.
- 1883 Martha Berry returns to Oak Hill following her father's stroke to act as his aide and secretary.
- 1886 Thomas Berry dies and leaves Martha 125 acres of land in addition to her share of his estate.
- 1897 Martha Berry meets three mountain children, begins the Sunday School in her cabin study.
- 1898 Possum Trot Sunday school opened. First day school built on Martha's farm property.
- 1899-
- 1901 Martha Berry opens day schools at Possum Trot, Mt. Alto and Foster's Bend, Ga.
- 1902 Boys' Industrial School opens at site of first day school. Possum Trot, Mt. Alto and Foster's Bend schools close.
- 1904 Clayton Henson becomes the first graduate of the B.I.S.
- 1908 The Berry School chartered.
- 1909 The Martha Berry School for Girls opened.
- 1916 The Mountain Farm School is opened at the foot of Lavendar Mountain with preparatory grades and students who are too small for the Boys' School.
- 1923 The high schools are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.
- 1926 Berry Junior College begins.
- 1927 Foundation School is closed. The Boys' High School begins the move to its site.

1932 Berry College becomes a four-year institution.

1942 Martha Berry dies in an Atlanta hospital on February 26.

VITA

Carol Anne Guthrie was born on July 4, 1958 in Cocoa Beach, Florida. After being educated in various schools throughout the Southeast, she was graduated from Peachtree High School in Chamblee, Georgia in 1976.

She was graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Berry College, Mount Berry, Georgia in 1980.

In December 1984, she received the Master of Arts degree from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in history at that same institution.