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COLLEGE LIFE IN ANTE-BELLUM VIRGINIA

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of History

Westhampton College

University of Richmond

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Arts

With Honors in History

---

by

Diane Keith Light

## COLLEGE LIFE IN ANTE-BELLUM VIRGINIA

In comparison with contemporary collegiate experiences, college life in ante-bellum Virginia offers many contrasts. The college curriculum, teaching methods, student regulations, and behavior were manifestations of nineteenth century thought. These facets combined to form the existence of the institution and its inhabitants.

An inspection of college life at Randolph Macon College, Richmond College, College of William and Mary, and the University of Virginia will present an informative ~~and complete~~ account of higher education in ante-bellum Virginia. Although Randolph Macon, chartered in 1830, and Richmond, officially chartered in 1840, were denominational institutions, they did not differ greatly from the more liberal state university, while William and Mary stood as a connecting link between the two types. Female education took place in various seminaries and institutes of the boarding school variety, but these did not really qualify as colleges.<sup>1</sup>

The college curriculum was a direct expression of the prevalent emphasis on the classics and antiquity; Greek and Latin were required of all students. During the years between 1830 and 1860, however, colleges broadened their offerings. Natural sciences, usually called natural philosophy, replaced the intensive focus on mathematics. Moral philosophy and rhetoric completed the curriculum, with political economy and history

as later additions. Students engaged in the study of history as early as 1838; evidence of this is found in Thomas B. Montague's notebook of that year containing history notes taken from lectures by President Dew of William and Mary.<sup>2</sup> According to President Dew, history is a record of important facts, with the improvement of the social sciences being the chief advantage of its study.

History is a record of facts--all facts are not historical--Those are historical facts which have attached to them some degree of importance. For instance Cromwell's wart is not an historical fact because it had no influence on his conduct and consequently has no degree of importance attached to it--Richard the 3 is said to have had a crooked back--which is a historical fact--because it influenced his conduct--See Mr. Hume--Gen. Washington is said to have written very neatly and also to have been extremely neat on his farm--which is a historical fact--because it is characteristic of that great patriot and gives some idea of his general character--one of the greatest advantages arising from the study of History is that it improves us in the social sciences.<sup>3</sup>

Thus during the period before 1860 the study of Greek and Latin held the position of prime importance, followed by mathematics and later by natural philosophy or science, while the remaining time was devoted to moral philosophy and its related subjects. Omitted almost completely, English literature had a very small place in the nineteenth century American college, but there was a gradual introduction of modern foreign languages. William and Mary made the only provision for literature other than ancient, while Richmond, Randolph Macon, and William and Mary provided for the study of at least one modern language.

The 1859 catalogue of William and Mary listed six departments, including: Latin, Latin Literature, and the Romance Languages;

Greek, Greek Literature, and German; Moral and Intellectual Philosophy and Belles-Lettres; History, Political Economy, and Constitutional Law; Chemistry and Natural Philosophy; Mathematics. Each of these departments required the services of one professor, with the exception of mathematics, which employed two. One of the mathematics professors, however, was also the professor of chemistry and natural philosophy. Among the six professors, there were two with an A.M. degree and one holding a D.D. degree.<sup>4</sup>

The Richmond College catalogue for the 1856-57 session mentioned two broad departments, academic and collegiate. The Academic Department involved pre-college or preparatory subjects, while the Collegiate Department consisted of Latin and French, Greek, mathematics and astronomy, chemistry and natural philosophy, and moral science. The Academic Department required only one instructor, who possessed an A.B. degree and the title of tutor. The Collegiate Department included five professors, four of whom held an A.M. degree.<sup>5</sup>

Listed in the Randolph Macon College catalogue for the same session, the faculty included the president who was also professor of mental and moral philosophy, a professor of chemistry and geology, a professor of mathematics and natural philosophy, a professor of ancient languages and literature, an instructor in analytical chemistry and French, a principal of the preparatory department, and a chaplain. Of these, three held the degree of

A.M., one a D.D., and one a Ph.B. At Randolph Macon the study of French had not attained the status of the classical languages, but it was a part of the curriculum. "Though the French Language is not one of the regular studies, its <sup>catalogue stated,</sup> "an accomplished and experienced teacher has been secured, who, for a moderate fee, instructs all who may desire an acquaintance with it. As will be perceived, his class at this time is quite large." 6

Anticipating later developments in education, Randolph Macon also provided a program in which the student could omit the ancient languages, although by doing this, he forfeited the regular degree, qualifying only for a diploma.

In order to meet the wants of many young men, the studies of the different classes have been so arranged that students who desire to omit the Ancient Languages can pursue the entire remainder of the regular course. This will require, ordinarily, about three years. Appropriate Diplomas will be conferred on those who complete this course of study. Many young men have pursued this plan with pleasure and profit, and it is believed to be capable of conferring great good. Every practicable facility will be presented to those who desire simply to pursue a partial course. 7

The program was probably popular with many students who did not have great esteem for the study of antiquity. Evidences of this disrespect for the classics are abundant in the diary of Thomas Eugene Massie, a senior at Randolph Macon in 1842-43. In one entry he recorded that he wrote a speech against the study of ancient languages. Later Massie told that he "Read at night some of Aristotle's Ethics. I think him a great reasoner,

and a fine moralist--tho' there are many glaring inconsistencies when compared with our present systems of moral philosophy." 8  
At William and Mary those who followed a similar plan of omitting the ancient languages were eligible for Bachelor of Philosophy degrees.<sup>9</sup> A further example of the expanding curriculum was the exposition on the value and methods of analytical chemistry found in the Randolph Macon catalogue:

Ample arrangements have been made for instruction in this interesting branch of science; and young men have an opportunity of perfecting their knowledge of Chemistry, of subjecting its principles to the test of experiments, of tracing the elements in their changes and combinations, and of learning, to some extent, the processes of the organic world. To those who purpose to be farmers or physicians, to engage in manufacturing or mining pursuits, such instruction is invaluable. Soils, marls, minerals, mineral waters, manures, etc., are analyzed with care and dispatch, and full written reports made.<sup>10</sup>

Massie also related that he heard lectures on electro-magnetism.<sup>11</sup>

Further illustrations of the students' break with the past included student debate topics. The Columbian Debate Society at Richmond College debated such topics as whether a young man should intensively study mathematics and the classics in their original tongues or divide his time between those studies and English authors. Another subject for discussion was "Do the moderns excel the ancients in point of Literature?"<sup>12</sup>

The University of Virginia was the most liberal Virginia institution of higher learning. Chartered under the auspices of Thomas Jefferson in 1819, it opened in 1825 as a state

university completely free from religious domination and offering more than simply an education in Greek and Latin. Jefferson had sought to establish this system at William and Mary as early as 1779, but was largely unsuccessful, although he did introduce some reorganization.<sup>13</sup> From the standpoint of practicality, there was some delay in the permanent application of many of Jefferson's programs at the University of Virginia, but he did manage to institute the curriculum he desired. Article Four of the Charter provided that

In the said University shall be taught the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages; French, Spanish, Italian, German and Anglo-Saxon, the different branches of mathematics, pure and physical; natural philosophy; the principles of agriculture; chemistry; mineralogy, including geology; botany; zoology; anatomy; medicine; civil government; political economy; the law of nature and nations, municipal law; history; ideology; general grammar; ethics; rhetoric; and belles lettres; which branches of science shall be so distributed, and under so many professors, not exceeding ten, as the visitors shall think proper and expedient.<sup>14</sup>

In connection with the innovations in curriculum at the University of Virginia, Jefferson also planned to introduce the elective system. As first practiced at Virginia, however, the system only involved choice between one of the eight original schools or departments: Ancient Languages, Modern Languages, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Natural History, Anatomy and Medicine, Moral Philosophy, Law. Within the chosen department, all students followed the same courses.<sup>15</sup> Even this amount of choice was a liberal change compared with



the uniformly proscribed curricula of William and Mary, Randolph Macon, and Richmond. Three-year students at William and Mary had to master the following texts in their courses:

#### Junior Class

Latin--Arnold's First and Second Latin Lessons.  
Cicero de Senectute, and de Amicitia, Cicero's  
Orations, Virgil, Zumpt's Latin Grammar.  
Greek--Xenophon, Herodotus, Homer's Odyssey,  
Kuhner's Elementary Greek Grammar, and Exercises,  
with Lectures on the Grammar.  
Rhetoric--Fowler's Grammar, Blair's Lectures.  
Mathematics--Davies', Smith and Duke's, or  
Venables' Arithmetic, Davies' Bourdon, Davies'  
Legendre and Plane Trigonometry.

#### Middle Class

Latin--Livy, Horace, Tacitus, Harrison's Latin  
Grammar, Exercises continued.  
Greek--Homer's Iliad, Demosthenes, Euripides or  
Sophocles, Exercises and Lectures on the Grammar  
continued, Kuhner's or Buttman's Grammar,  
Harrison on Greek Prepositions.  
History, Geography, Civil and Physical Chemistry,  
Geology and Mineralogy.  
Mathematics--Algebra and Trigonometry completed,  
Descriptive Geometry, Surveying (theoretical and  
practical), Conic Sections.

#### Senior Class

Latin--Terence, Juvenal, Latin Literature.  
Greek--Sophocles or Aeschylus, Thucydides, Aristophanes  
or Plato, Greek Literature.  
Exercises in Philological Criticism.  
Intellectual and Moral Philosophy.  
Modern History--Political Economy and Constitutional  
Law.  
Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Meteorology. 16

By the 1850s Randolph Macon and Richmond each provided four-year courses leading to a degree, although neither conferred degrees when they opened. Randolph Macon proposed a curriculum similar to that of William and Mary, but divided its academic year into two sessions. [See appendix for course requirements.]

Popular methods of instruction were recitation and lecture, with the latter method gaining in popularity and prominence by the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> According to the recitation method, the student simply memorized portions of the textbook to recite in class the following day; the lecture method, however, was more challenging to students and teachers in requiring thought, synthesis, and interpretation. When Henry Vethake was inaugurated as president of Washington College in 1835, he expressed his opinion that textbook recitation and emphasis by the professor on memory work led to the practice of rote memorization and stifled individual creativity.

I remark then, that the prominent characteristic of a system of college education should ever be that it is chiefly intended as a discipline of the mind. Young men should have it frequently inculcated upon them that they do not come to college to complete their education, but to learn how most effectually to employ the faculties with which they have been endowed by their beneficent Creator.<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, recitation still prevailed at Randolph Macon in 1842, for Thomas Massie mentioned it frequently in his diary. "At 4 we had no recitation, Hardy having gone to the Conference....Our class was examined in the morning on Spherical Trigonometry. I had to find the value of ' $\sin \frac{1}{2}A$ ' which I did by the aid of Sid Smith, who, being next to me, fortunately gave me a very important hint."<sup>19</sup> Being asked to recite was also called "standing" on a certain subject. Massie recorded:

"Stood in the morning on mechanics, and was 'Stumped,' after having 'refused' once, altho' I got up at 1½ o'clock, as did Sid who staid with me....Nothing remarkable occurred today except that I recited very well on optics: This is something very rare: I had rather read than do anything else." 20

As the lecture superceded the recitation as a teaching method, written tests gradually replaced the public oral exams as a criterion for grading. The paramount advantage of written examinations was to have all the students subjected to the same questions. William and Mary initiated written means of testing in 1848, but still retained two public oral exams annually.

Early reports to the parents from the faculty of William and Mary ranked the students according to four categories based on moral as well as scholastic achievement.<sup>21</sup> These reflect the subjective nature of the grading system. Students grouped into the first category were called orderly and attentive and were considered to have made the most improvement. Group two contained students of similar virtues whose advancement was deemed "respectable". The less diligent students who had made little progress constituted group three. Group four included the idle who had learned nothing.<sup>22</sup> By 1824 William and Mary was sending form letters to parents twice annually, with personal annotations about their sons at the conclusion of the letters. These continued to mix moral and scholastic attributes in the appraisal of the student.

Byrd George received the following letter concerning his son John, a student at William and Mary in 1824:

As those whose sons and wards are at a public seminary, must feel the greatest anxiety for their proficiency and their welfare, the Society have determined to send stated communications one after each public examination, to the Parent or Guardian of every Young Gentleman pursuing his studies at this Institution.

In the opinions which the Society express, you may depend upon the greatest candor and impartiality, nor can they commit any mistake with regard to the acquirements of the Students; this being effectually precluded by the daily and semi-annual examinations. But, although the Society omit no opportunity of informing themselves concerning the temper, character and habits of those over whom it is their duty to watch, yet it is obviously impossible for them to obtain in every instance, that accurate knowledge which is so desirable on these important subjects. Here, therefore, they are liable to err, and due allowances for this source of fallacy accordingly are necessary. It is almost superfluous to add that the mistake, where there is one, will be generally on the favourable side. The error, however, it may be remarked must be slight; for, it is deemed impracticable, for any young man to deviate widely and for any length of time, from the rules of propriety without being at least suspected, and even suspicions in an affair of such essential importance to the future welfare of a student, deserve the most serious consideration, and are accordingly stated. From this system, where Parents and Guardians have cooperated with the Professors, the most beneficial effects have already ensued; by means of it, irregularities and improprieties have been nipped in the bud, and that abundant harvest of vice and dissipation which might have followed, has been easily and effectually prevented.

Of your son John the Society is happy to state, that he is among the first in his classes, orderly, diligent and studious and has made the most flattering improvement.

The Society think you had better inform your son of the foregoing opinion. This information it would be well to accompany with those commendations which such conduct merits; the applause of those we love and esteem, being perhaps the strongest incentive to virtue.

Although the faculty may have felt that they only erred in favor of the students, according to Massie the students did not share the same opinion. "At night heard my grades on 3 studies--satisfied with all except old Hardy's. He must have heard what Bill & myself have said about his breeches. Certain it is he does me as nicarily [sic] as he can."<sup>24</sup> By 1850 a numerical scale based on 100 was the criterion for scholarship achievement at William and Mary. In this system the recitation counted 75 per cent and the examination 25 per cent. Parents received reports determined by this grading scheme, and the demerit system was employed to maintain discipline.<sup>25</sup>

Randolph Macon likewise used demerits and sent monthly reports on conduct to the parents. Academic progress, however, was noted only at the end of each term. As in the case of William and Mary, the faculty of Randolph Macon seemed more preoccupied with the moral behavior of the students than with their academic advancement.

Entrance requirements were normally flexible, and students could enter an advanced class by passing an examination on the previous studies. Randolph Macon observed an annual session of forty consecutive weeks, beginning on the third Thursday in September. The Richmond College session began on October 1 and ended July 1.<sup>27</sup>

At Randolph Macon the trustees conferred a Bachelor of Arts degree after four years' study and upon the recommendation

of the faculty. After three additional years of study, one could claim an A.M. degree. At William and Mary academic officers of the college awarded degrees on the "basis of merit, morals, and good behavior." <sup>28</sup> The three degrees offered at William and Mary included Bachelor of Philosophy, Bachelor of Arts, and Master of Arts. The degree of Bachelor of Philosophy required the three year course with the omission of Latin and Greek, while the Bachelor of Arts degree demanded the full three-year course. The Master of Arts requirements above the Bachelor degree were proficiency in two modern languages, advanced metaphysical course, English literature, analytical geometry, differential and integral calculus, and mixed mathematics. In addition, all candidates for degrees were required to submit to the president at least a month before commencement an essay which could be spoken as an oration. From all the essays submitted, the faculty chose a few for presentation on commencement day. No student who failed to turn in an essay and to deliver it in public if requested could receive a diploma. At Randolph Macon seniors were excused from classes for a month prior to commencement to prepare their speeches. Commencement exercises usually ran from Sunday through Thursday, with Wednesday and Thursday devoted to the orations of students and guests and the awarding of diplomas. <sup>29</sup> According to Massie, the time spent away from classes constituted a partial vacation, and the time spent

on speech preparation brought reward:

I have now (July 12th) to write from memory what has occurred within the last six weeks. Part of our Senior vacation, which lasted from the 17th May to the 13th June was busily spent in visiting the ladies, the remainder in preparing my graduating speech, and talking with my classmates.

June 13, 1843--There came [following a speech and a debate] the address of Dr. Campbell, of Hottoway, to the graduating class, on the occasion of the delivery of the medals-- and of all bores (or "bull-wrags," as we say in College) that certainly takes the palm, in my estimation. He spoke  $3/4$  of an hour, which appeared to me no less than three days; and knew none of his speech. In fact he had none written, but referred very often to some notes he had in his breeches pockets, each reference consuming 2 or 3 minutes....

June 14, 1843--Exercises commenced at 10 o'clock.... Ed. S. Brown spoke the Salutatory Address or "Latin Speech." I was his prompter, but he skipped & changed so much that I should have executed my duty but poorly if he had not known it well.... Benagh spoke the Valedictory, & I hardly think Cicero himself could have written & spoken a better one for the occasion. It was really affecting, and males & females of all ages & descriptions [sic] that were there, shed tears quite freely....<sup>30</sup>

Annual expenses of a college education ranged from \$332 at the University of Virginia in the 1840s to \$162.50 at Richmond College for the 1856-57 session. Virginia, however, was probably considerably less expensive in its early years, for according to a receipt of 1825, room rent was only \$20.12 per session. "Received of Mr. John George Twenty dollars 12/ cents, for the rent of a Dormitory and participation in the public buildings at the University of Virginia, the present session. March 12 1825. A.S. Brockenbrough, P.U.V." <sup>31</sup>  
At Richmond College there was no charge for those who were preparing for the ministry.

Primarily middle class citizens, Students often worked their way through college by manual labor or vacation teaching. The \$162.50 demanded by Richmond College included \$100 for diet and attendance, \$50 for tuition in college classes, \$10 for fuel, a \$2 deposit for damages, and \$.50 for printing. Students provided for their own washing, furnished their own rooms, and provided their own towels and lights. The catalogue also advised students to retain only a few dollars for spending money and to deposit the rest with friends, in the bank, or with faculty members. Students paid one-third of their board on October 1, January 1, and April 1 and one-half of their tuition on October 1 and February 15. In 1843 yearly expenses totalled \$120 plus \$.20 for a copy of the rules and \$1 for use of the library.

At Randolph Macon college bills, payable in advance, included \$120 for board, \$50 for tuition, a \$5 incidental charge, \$10 for washing, \$10 for French (if desired), and \$30 for analytical chemistry (if desired). Juniors and seniors paid an additional \$5 to maintain the apparatus and materials in the chemical and philosophical departments. Students could purchase wood, candles, and textbooks in the town. Parents were "earnestly requested not to supply their sons with unnecessarily large amounts of pocket money, as it most often leads to extravagance and dissipation." <sup>32</sup> Moderately priced Randolph Macon had an enrollment of 144 students during the 1856-57 session,



including nine seniors, twelve juniors, thirty-one sophomores, twenty-four freshmen, thirty-four irregulars, and thirty-four in the preparatory school. At William and Mary \$75 for tuition, \$20 for each modern language, \$4 for servant's hire, \$3 for contingent expenses, \$5 for matriculation, and from \$140 to \$180 for board comprised the annual expenses of \$287. 33

In conjunction with the close academic supervision manifested in the rigidly proscribed curriculum, the ante-bellum college also enforced stringent social rules and regulations. To these the student did not react as obediently, however; he rebelled against the discipline and took pleasure in breaking as many rules as possible. The sons of the planter aristocracy hated restrictions because, in their minds, only slaves took orders, while the sons of the middle class were equally unaccustomed to recognizing the authority of other men. 34

Massie and his friends were an example of this: "In the evening (at Prayers) W. Garland attempted to explain and justify the course of the Faculty in Messrs Hooker and Paul's cases (Paul being dismissed for fighting and refusing to go to his room when ordered) but I think did not gain a single convert to his opinions. The students are not disposed to acknowledge in the Faculty the right to command." 35

At Richmond College the faculty was in charge of discipline and had the power of suspension, in the absence of the Board

of Trustees. The steward was responsible for the college property; his job included the prevention of damages and the collection of damage assessments from the students. At the University of Virginia Jefferson had hoped to institute student self-government. By appealing to pride and ambition, Jefferson planned to make discipline through fear unnecessary. According to Jefferson's plan, the faculty would select a board of student censors to consider all cases of discipline; the law professor would preside; there would be a proctor of discipline with powers of a justice of the peace. Jefferson was unsuccessful in installing this proposal because the legislature would not cooperate. Hindrances to the idea at the time included the youth and immaturity of the students and their refusal to report each other. Written by the University Board of Visitors in 1824, the actual rules provided for discipline by the faculty. For this reason, most of the students believed that the teachers prevented their enjoying life. In fact, the faculty were the objects of hatred, ridicule, and attacks by the young men. John Mason Pilcher, who began his collegiate life at Richmond College in 1854, recorded traditional stories of shaving the tail of President Robert Ryland's horse and even of whitewashing the horse and sending the president a bill for the job. Another prank involved tying a rope from the tail of Ryland's cow to the belfry, causing the bell to ring.<sup>36</sup>

Carried beyond fun or even ridicule, some of the practical jokes were malicious. "By the way, some student had our Tutor's (Crenshaw) name published in the Christian Advocate as having married a free negro woman in the neighborhood. A rough proceeding." <sup>37</sup> Even if the open hostility had not existed, a friendly student-faculty relationship would not have been possible, for the students were apprehensive of accusations of apple-polishing or favoritism.<sup>38</sup>

Administration restrictions even extended to the establishment of definite required study hours.

The hours specially appropriated to study, are from worship in the morning till some hour in the afternoon designated by the Faculty--and from supper till ten o'clock at night--and on Saturdays till 11 o'clock--during the whole of which time students will not be allowed to play on any musical instrument, or to make any noise on the premises.... Students shall not visit each other's rooms during study hours, except on business, nor at other times without the cordial wishes of the occupants. <sup>39</sup>

In addition, before a student could leave the campus or be absent from any college exercises, he had to obtain the permission of one of the faculty members.<sup>40</sup>

Similar rules existed at Randolph Macon, for Massie recorded, "At 4 went to Boydton--which was rather against the law.... In returning met 'old Tike' who I am afraid will report me." <sup>41</sup> With the passing of time, restrictions became a little less severe. The modified study hours were from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. or from 8 A.M. to 2 P.M. and from supper until bedtime.

Students could also be absent from the premises without permission during non-study hours.

The University of Virginia prohibited disturbing noises in the students' rooms or within the University precincts; however, the students could play musical instruments in their rooms. The University punished students for not attending classes, for not paying attention, and for misbehaving. A further stipulation allowing faculty supervision and check-ups required a student to open his door when a professor knocked. If the young man refused, the instructor could have the door broken down, and the repair costs would fall on the student.<sup>42</sup> That the students resented such domination can be seen in an incident recorded by Massie:

Today Charles E. Hooker of So. Ca after two, or three days trial, was dismissed from the College. His offence was a refusal to obey Prof. Hardy when he ordered him to leave Jno. Howlett's room, where he was found by Hardy when going around, at night. Hardy first requested, and then delayed to see it obeyed: which was an impolite act, and one which no student of independence could much fancy. My present opinion is that Hooker acted very rightly: what it may hereafter be I can't say.<sup>43</sup>

Later the administration attempted to justify its stand, but the students continued to agree with Hooker.<sup>44</sup>

In keeping with the nineteenth century return from rationalism to religion, the colleges placed great emphasis on the development of religious habits. Nineteenth century religion, however, was sensational and revivalistic in nature.<sup>45</sup>

Emotional religion of the camp meeting variety penetrated college life also; according to Massie, "At night the Faculty stated that 25 students were allowed to go to the Camp Meeting at Lion." <sup>46</sup> Cultivation of religious habits included compulsory attendance at prayers twice daily and church once a week. "At the hour designated for morning and evening prayers, every one must attend unless prevented by bodily indisposition.... Students are expected to attend public worship in the City every Sabbath morning. They shall report themselves to the Faculty when they fail to conform to this rule." <sup>47</sup> According to A.B. Clarke, <sup>48</sup> attendance was taken at prayers, but the students did not always attend in the true spirit of reverence.

The bell for morning worship rang while it was yet dark, and the students assembled in the chapel. Some would come running in with faces unwashed, and hair uncombed, and only partially dressed. The roll was called and absentees noted. One of the teachers read a portion of scripture, and called on one of the students to lead in prayer--all who were church members were called on in regular rotation. Just before supper, the bell again rang for worship, the roll was again called and absentees noted. In evening Dr. Ryland usually read a Psalm then a hymn was sung, and he offered prayer. <sup>49</sup>

Randolph Bacon too required its students to attend prayers which were held every morning. According to his diary, however, Massie frequently slept during the prayers. Likewise, weekly church services were mandatory; Massie was more conscientious about observing the sabbath, and sometimes he even enjoyed the services: "Heard Dogget~~t~~ preach in the morning. Whilst preaching an old black negro fell asleep in the Gallery, and

snored most audibly so as to disturb the attention of the audience. Doggett stopt; and requested another negro to wake the snorer, which was done; but the congregation all tittered for a few moments, and Doggett himself had to laugh a little, notwithstanding just effort to refrain." 50

The presence of strict rules, nevertheless, did not make the nineteenth century college student any more moral than his twentieth century counterpart. Nineteenth century collegians engaged in lying, cheating, stealing, and forging excuses. Socially, dating, usually in the form of visits, was accepted, and the young people had a healthy attitude toward sex. Illicit sexual activity existed, but was probably not too widespread because of the strict dormitory rules, the youth of the students, and social disapproval; at this time society forbade the use of the word "sex." 51

Drinking posed more of a problem. It was common in the South although temperance societies and lectures fought against it. The faculty especially objected to students drinking in taverns.<sup>52</sup> Students at the University of Virginia were not allowed to "keep or use any spirituous or vinous liquors" and were warned against "riotous, disorderly, intemperate or indecent conduct."<sup>53</sup> Certainly, however, there were incidents of student intemperance, such as those recorded by Massie: "Made some poetry in the evening....My poetical humour was destroyed by Jno. Billups who was 'tight' and made a good

deal of noise on a visit to me." and "Within the last few days several students have withdrawn from the College for being charged with drinking and gambling." 54

Among the main problems of university life was violence. The students engaged in frequent riots and often destroyed property. Conjectural causes of the violence include the overemphasis on piety and the boring curriculum. In addition, physical exercise through athletics was not provided; in fact, it was even prohibited. The students were not allowed to play football on campus, go boating or fishing, or even run up and down the steps. In lieu of athletics, Jefferson had proposed military drill. He did provide two gyms which soon came to be used for banquets because of their length and low ceilings. Thus, largely unsuccessful in releasing their physical energy in proper channels, the students resorted to riots and destruction of school property. The administration took elaborate care to curb this wanton destruction, largely by holding the students financially responsible. University of Virginia students paid for "all damages done to instruments, books, buildings or other property of the University." In addition, fines were levied for "wilful injury to any tree, shrub or other plant within the precincts." 55 As a further precaution against destruction of college property, the administration of Richmond College required its students to sign this pledge:

I have carefully read the rules of Richmond College, and subscribe myself a student thereof. It is my sincere desire to reap the benefit of its instructions, and my serious purpose to conform to its regulations. I promise especially not to injure the building, furniture, enclosures, or property of any kind; and if I should do so accidentally, to repair the damage at my own expense, or to report it immediately to my hotel-keeper for assessment. 56

Another rule stated that "No student shall throw water or any thing from his windows that may annoy the rooms below, or disfigure the building." 57 Richmond College further stipulated that if the individual offender could not be determined in a particular case of damages, the whole student body would assume the financial responsibility. 58

Finally the violent spirit found expression in duels. To prevent them, Virginia and Richmond students were forbidden to keep arms or any deadly weapons. Virginia further prohibited dueling on threat of expulsion and report to the civil magistrate. 59

Violence, however, should not be condoned because of lack of athletics and exercise. Although there was not an organized athletic program, plenty of exercise was available through such activities as chopping wood, carrying water, and walking. 60 Certainly the students recognized the benefit of such activity when they did participate. Massie for instance, extolled the value of cutting wood: "Then I cut some wood; and experienced vast benefit, physically, from it. I believe I could make myself almost as strong as a jackass if I were to



exercise severely every day." <sup>61</sup> A few months later he commented: "I have cut wood, most manfully, for the last three, or four days; and I fancy my muscles are greatly developed even in that short span....It has vastly improved my spirit, and energy; so that I now not only do a great deal more study than formerly in the same time; but effect it, with infinitely more pleasure and happiness." <sup>62</sup> He concluded that academic success depended upon "vigorous physical" exercise and eschewing in thought and company, the opposite sex. <sup>63</sup>

If, however, the students were unsuccessful in constructively venting their physical energy, the same was not true intellectually. In this realm the literary societies offered a positive contribution. The societies existed on nearly every campus, Randolph Macon and Richmond each having two, and constituted a true training ground for young men through public debates. The members usually met weekly to debate topics of interest and to hear speakers. <sup>64</sup> A second valuable service which the societies provided was libraries. Often these were more extensive than the regular college library. According to the Randolph Macon Catalogue, "The College Library, though comparatively small, contains many valuable standard works, and any deficiency is compensated by the extensive Libraries of the two Literary Societies, to each of which every student has access." <sup>65</sup>

A product of the times in his closeness with the classics, his subjection to rigid academic and social restrictions, and his emphasis on emotional religion, the nineteenth century Virginia college student also displayed ideas that set him a little ahead of his parents; he was more eager to break with the past in studies, subject matter, and social regulations. Although his physical energy produced immature activity, his intellectual curiosity and initiative were instrumental in establishing literary societies complete with libraries which furthered his academic awareness through debates and discussions of current events.

## APPENDIX

The following curriculum was required at Randolph Macon, according to the Catalogue of Randolph Macon College For the Collegiate Year 1856-'57 (Richmond, 1857), 18-20:

### Freshman Class

First Session--Ovid, or Georgicks of Virgil; Cicero's Orations; Latin Prose Composition; Herodotus; Greek Prose Composition; Algebra, through Quadratics.

Second Session--Livy or Tacitus; Latin Prose Composition; Homer's Iliad or Odyssey; Greek Prose Composition; Geometry.

### Sophomore Class

First Session--Horace, Latin Prose Composition, Xenophon's Cyropaedia or Memorabilia; Greek Prose Composition; Plain and Spherical Trigonometry, Mensuration, Navigation and Surveying.

Second Session--Horace or Lucretius, and Terence or Plautus; Latin Prose Composition, Demosthenes or Aeschines; Greek Prose Composition; Algebra, completed.

### Junior Class

First Session--Cicero's de Oratore, de Officiis, Brutus, or Tusculan Questions; Exercises in Latin Prose Composition; Euripides or Sophocles; Exercises in Greek Prose Composition; Philosophy of Language, and its application to Latin and Greek, in Lectures; Analytical Geometry; Chemistry, with Lectures; Logic, with Lectures.

Second Session--Juvenal or Persius; Exercises in Latin Prose Composition; Aristophanes or Aeschylus; Exercises in Greek Prose Composition; Grecian and Roman History and Literature, in Lectures; Chemistry, with Lectures; Rhetoric, with Lectures; Differential and Integral Calculus.

### Senior Class

First Session--Natural Philosophy, with Lectures; Optics; Moral Philosophy; Political Economy, commenced; Lectures on Domestic Slavery.

Second Session--Astronomy, with Lectures; Geology and Scientific Agriculture, with Lectures; Political Economy, completed; Mental Philosophy, with Lectures on the Will.

[The courses are listed as they appeared in the catalogue,] but the textbook authors have been omitted.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Albee Godbold, The Church College of the Old South (Durham, 1944), 5, 22, 36; Mrs. I. A. L. Blundin, History of Higher Education of Women in the South (New York, 1909), 313-327.
2. Thomas B. Montague, Notepad, 1836. In the Montague Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.
3. Ibid.
4. A Catalogue of the College of William and Mary in Virginia From Its Foundation to the Present Time (1859), 98.
5. Fifteenth Annual Catalogue of the Trustees, Faculty, and Students of Richmond College, Session of 1856-'57, 4.
6. Catalogue of Randolph Macon College For the Collegiate Year 1856-'57 (Richmond, 1857), 5, 21.
7. Ibid., 21.
8. Thomas Eugene Massie, Diary, Sept. 21, 1842, Sept. 29, 1842.
9. Catalogue of ... William and Mary, 1859, 161.
10. Catalogue of Randolph Macon, 1856-'57, 21.
11. Massie, Diary, March 3, 1843.
12. Minutes of Columbian Debate Society, Richmond College, December 12, 1840-March 15, 1845. In the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, March 12, 1842, Sept. 18, 1841.
13. John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, Higher Education in Transition (New York, 1958), 97; Ernest Earnest, Academic Procession (Indianapolis, 1953), 57.
14. Charter of the University of Virginia, 1819, in Edgar W. Knight, A Documentary History of Education in the South Before 1860 (Chapel Hill, 1952), III, 120-121.
15. Earnest, Academic Procession, 58; Brubacher and Rudy, Higher Education, 97.
16. Catalogue of William and Mary, 1859, 99.
17. Brubacher and Rudy, Higher Education, 82.
18. Henry Vethake, An Address Delivered at His Inauguration as President of Washington College (Lexington, 1835), 6-9.
19. Massie, Diary, Nov. 16, 1842, Dec. 8, 1842.
20. Ibid., Dec. 19, 1842, Dec. 2, 1842.
21. Brubacher and Rudy, Higher Education, 91-92; Mary Lovett Smallwood, An Historical Study of Examinations and Grading Systems in Early American Universities (Cambridge, 1935), 16.
22. Smallwood, Historical Study, 44.
23. Ferdinand S. Campbell, William and Mary College, to Byrd George, February 23, 1824. In the Mary Ober (Boykin) Gatewood papers, Virginia Historical Society.
24. Massie, Diary, May 18, 1843.
25. Smallwood, Historical Study, 66-67, 72.
26. Catalogue of Randolph Macon, 1856-'57, 24.
27. Earnest, Academic Procession, 58; Randolph Macon, 1856-'57, 20, 23; Catalogue of ... Richmond College, 1856-57, 11.
28. Richard Irby, History of Randolph Macon College, Virginia (Richmond), 53; Smallwood, Historical Study, 18.

29. Catalogue of...William and Mary, 1859, 101; Godbold, Church College, 94.
30. Massie, Diary, July 12, June 13, June 14, 1843.
31. Receipt, In the Mary Ober (Boykin) Gatewood papers, Virginia Historical Society.
32. Earnest, Academic Procession, 122-123, 127-128; Catalogue of...Richmond College, 1856-57, 15; The First Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Richmond College (1843), 11-12; Catalogue of Randolph Macon, 1856-'57, 22-23.
33. Catalogue of...William and Mary, 1859, 101; Catalogue of Randolph Macon, 1856-'57, 17.
34. E. Merton Coulter, College Life in the Old South (New York, 1928), 84, 115.
35. Massie, Diary, Nov. 16, 1842.
36. First Annual Catalogue...of Richmond College, 1843, 6-7; Brubacher and Rudy, Higher Education, 52-53; Knight, Documentary History, 151-153; Coulter, College Life, 85; John Mason Pilcher, Recollections of Life at Richmond College, Virginia Baptist Historical Society.
37. Massie, Diary, Dec. 9, 1842.
38. Brubacher and Rudy, Higher Education, 50; Vethake, Address, 18.
39. First Annual Catalogue...of Richmond College, 1843, 8.
40. Ibid., 8.
41. Massie, Diary, Nov. 24, 1842.
42. Catalogue of...Richmond College, 1856-'57, 10; Knight, Documentary History, 152-154.
43. Massie, Diary, Nov. 15, 1842.
44. Ibid., Nov. 16, 1842.
45. Brubacher and Rudy, Higher Education, 42-43.
46. Massie, Diary, Oct. 21, 1842.
47. First Annual Catalogue...of Richmond College, 1843, 8.
48. A.B. Clarke was a student at the Virginia Baptist Seminary, forerunner of Richmond College, from 1836-1838.
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50. Catalogue of Randolph Macon, 1856-'57, 23; Massie, Diary, Nov. 24, Nov. 26, Dec. 4, 1842.
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52. Ibid., 113, 115.
53. Knight, Documentary History, 152-153.
54. Massie, Diary, Dec. 3, Nov. 23, 1842.
55. Earnest, Academic Procession, 102, 104; Knight, Documentary History, 153.
56. Catalogue of Richmond College, 1856-'57, 11.
57. Ibid., 11.
58. First Annual Catalogue...of Richmond College, 1843, 9.
59. Knight, Documentary History, 153; First Annual Catalogue... of Richmond College, 1843, 8.
60. Earnest, Academic Procession, 104.
61. Massie, Diary, Nov. 25, 1842.
62. Ibid., March 1, 1843.
63. Ibid., March 1, 1843.
64. Earnest, Academic Procession, 82; Catalogue of Randolph Macon, 1856-'57, 22; Catalogue of...Richmond College, 1856-57, 16.
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