



## **LOCAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT**

### **Asheboro Female Academy, 1839**

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*NOTE: The spelling of "Asheboro" has been standardized throughout as such, except when quoting original documents or referred to in a proper name.*

### **LOCAL LANDMARK SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY**

The Asheboro Female Academy, opened in 1839 to offer formal education for girls in the region, is the oldest standing structure in Asheboro. Established in conjunction with a later male academy to address a dearth of educational opportunity in Randolph County, the school was organized and funded by prominent members of the community, notably among them attorney and future North Carolina Governor Jonathan Worth. It was located on the southwest corner of present-day Salisbury and Fayetteville streets. The Asheboro Male Academy opened nearby in 1842.

The Female Academy provided girls with a more expansive education than was generally available to young women in the era. Subjects taught included spelling, reading, grammar, geography, arithmetic, philosophy, rhetoric, needlework and music. Enrollment grew until the Civil War, when the both the female and male academies closed and served as a barracks for soldiers. Revived after the war, the academies operated under combined leadership. They remained the primary providers of formal education in Asheboro until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the community recognized the need for public schools. The academies' trustees then helped lay the groundwork for the transition from private to public education.

After the Female Academy was closed, the property was acquired by W.J. Armfield Jr., founder of the Bank of Randolph. The Female Academy building was used for storage and later converted to living quarters for servants. After Armfield's death in 1968, the building was given to the Randolph County Historical Society and moved to its present location at 1126 S. Park Street on property owned by the Asheboro City Schools. A restoration effort took place in the early 1970s that, while giving a sense of the original building and its purpose, was not historically accurate. The work, however, was sufficient to preserve the structure until a recent initiative underwritten by Trees NC, an Asheboro-based environmental organization, could restore the building to its original historical state for use as an interpretative historical experience for students and other community members. With work on the new restoration underway, the Female Academy was designated as a Local Cultural Heritage Site by the Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission on January 26, 2016. The exterior restoration is now complete.

Although the Female Academy does not sit on its original site, the painstaking and well-researched restoration by Trees NC has returned it to its original appearance and documented its high level of originality. The building is worthy of landmark designation because it symbolizes the early stages of private education for girls in the region; because it represent an effort to educate girls beyond simply basic skills and the domestic arts; because it is Asheboro's oldest standing structure; because of the involvement of prominent local leaders; because of its architectural integrity; and because of its status as a bridge between an era of little formal schooling and the advent of public education in Asheboro. It also stands as a testament to the commitment of the community, in different eras, to preserve and restore an important part of Asheboro's history.

While the recently-undertaken restoration includes both the exterior and the interior of the Female Academy with some adjustments to the interior to make it habitable for interpretive educational use, the scope of this proposed landmark designation includes the exterior of the building only.

## **HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE**

Prior to the Civil War, state-sponsored formal education of children struggled to gain a foothold in a recalcitrant North Carolina.<sup>1</sup> Although the state's original Constitution, adopted in 1776, called for creation of a public school system, little movement toward this goal took place until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The absence of a state-supported school system left families and communities to fend for themselves where the education of their children was concerned. Educated parents often instructed their own children, and wealthy parents might delegate the task to governesses or bring teachers into the home.<sup>2</sup> Often, children of neighbors were included in these sessions. Very few educational opportunities, however, were available for people of more modest means; virtually none for the poor, or for free children of color and enslaved children.

A popular response the dearth of formal educational opportunity was the creation of private academies in communities across the state. Among the limited number of schools for girls, the curriculum often was limited to basic academic skills and domestic arts.<sup>3</sup> None served the Randolph County region. The mid- to late-1830s, however, saw a renaissance for education of young women as more communities around the state began to develop female academies or "seminaries."<sup>4</sup> Many of the institutions would offer more than just a perfunctory education for young women.

At the same time, the Asheboro and Randolph County were experiencing burgeoning growth. Entrepreneurs were developing the textile mills along the Deep River that would power

the county's economy for more than century to come. In Asheboro, the county seat, a modern brick courthouse was constructed in 1839. The town had become a center of trade for the region's gold mining industry. The Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1834; a Presbyterian church would be established in 1850. The main artery, present-day Fayetteville Street, soon would become a plank road to facilitate travel and movement of goods, and there were efforts underway to bring a railroad through town. Asheboro's first newspaper, the *Southern Citizen*, began publication in 1836. Three general stores and two hotels operated in town.

It was in this milieu that a group of leading citizens of Randolph County coalesced in 1838 to establish a school for girls in Asheboro. On January 8, 1839, the General Assembly incorporated the Trustees of the Randolph Female Academy.<sup>5</sup> The group was comprised of the most prominent men in the county: Johnathan Worth, Alexander Gray, John Balfour Troy, Hugh McCain, George Hoover, James M.A. Drake, Alfred. H. Marsh, Henry Branson Elliott, Jesse Lawrence, Sampson B. Glenn and Samuel Hill. Worth was an attorney and investor who would become state treasurer during the Civil War and governor afterwards. Gray was the largest property owner in the county, and a founder of the school that would become Trinity College and later Duke University; he also was the grandfather of philanthropist Bowman Gray. Hoover was a long-serving and iconic Randolph County sheriff, militia general and Asheboro hotelier who operated the stage coach line between Asheboro and Pittsboro. McCain was serving as clerk of the county court. Troy was a merchant in the northeastern part of the county and a county justice of the peace, and grandson of Revolutionary War hero Col. Andrew Balfour (whose gravesite is a Randolph County Historic Landmark). Drake was an Asheboro lawyer and hotelier. Marsh operated a store on the courthouse square in Asheboro. Elliott, with his father Benjamin, was founder of the Cedar Falls Manufacturing Company textile mill, the county's first such enterprise and eventually a major driver of the county economy (investors also included Marsh, McCain, Troy and Worth; Elliott, Troy and McCain also were investors in the Randolph Manufacturing Company, another major industry in what would become Franklinville).<sup>6</sup> Lawrence was the Methodist Episcopal minister. Glenn was a carriage maker. Hill was a major property owner and investor in the Union Mill manufacturing concern near what would become Randleman.

Worth's involvement is particularly noteworthy. He was born in the Center community of northern Randolph County in 1802 to Daniel and Eunice Worth. His family background was Quaker, a faith that placed a high value on education. A follower of Archibald DeBow Murphey, a state senator known as the "father of public education" in North Carolina, Worth became an ardent advocate for public schools.<sup>7</sup> He studied law under Murphey beginning in 1823. He would marry Murphey's niece, Martitia Daniel, in 1824.<sup>8</sup> In 1817, Murphey had articulated a comprehensive strategy for public education in a report to the legislature that would lay the groundwork for the state's public school system – even if it would take several decades to come to fruition.<sup>9</sup> It wasn't until 1839 that the General Assembly passed the state's first law creating a public school system; brief and somewhat vague, it required much further development.<sup>10</sup> The legislator who in the following session drafted and championed the legislation providing structure to the 1839 law was the state senator from Randolph County, Jonathan Worth.<sup>11</sup>

The 1839 legislation placed on each county's ballot a "yes" or "no" vote on establishing a public school system, to be funded by the local government and the state. Randolph County voted "yes" by 847-512.<sup>12</sup> The vote having passed, the county court appointed a group of school system superintendents that included Worth, who was elected chairman; he served in this capacity for 23 years.<sup>13</sup> The superintendents divided the county into 21 school districts, each with a six-man leadership committee, and as more schools were built, into an eventual 71 districts. As was the case elsewhere in the state, the public schools in Randolph County came to life in fits and starts due to the scale of the project, inconsistent funding, the difficulty in finding qualified

teachers, and the lack of centralized authority and standards. Statewide, it took more than another decade for the beginnings of an effective public school system to emerge.<sup>14</sup>

With three daughters ranging in age from three to thirteen, however, Worth would not wait for a state-supported school system to take hold in Randolph County.<sup>15</sup> Parallel with his work on the public school system, he spearheaded development of the Female Academy. In early 1839, Worth, Drake, Hoover, Marsh and McCain began raising the initial capital needed to construct the building.<sup>16</sup> “The friends of female education (and we hope there are many) in this section of the county,” they declared in an announcement promoting the “Randolph Female Academy” in the February 8, 1839, edition of Asheboro’s *Southern Citizen* newspaper, “will be gratified to learn that the citizens of Asheboro have agreed and pledged themselves to erect a female Academy at this place. A suitable building for the purpose is to be commenced forthwith. As the benefit to be derived from the institution will extend through a section of the country heretofore destitute, and considering that we are mostly mechanics and merchants of moderate capital and limited income – consequently not well prepared to raise funds for public enterprise, it is confidently hoped and believed that our fellow-citizens in this and the neighboring counties will be pleased to extend to us such aid as may be within their power.”<sup>17</sup> They also noted that they already had \$300-\$400 in hand, more than half the money needed for the building.

Colonel Benjamin Elliott, Henry Elliott’s father, gave a half-acre plot of land where the Fayetteville-Salem road crossed the Salisbury road for the site of the school (today the southwest corner of Salisbury and Fayetteville streets), along with an additional donation of \$400.<sup>18</sup> Part of a lot known as Elliott’s Green, the donated land sat on the opposite corner of the intersection from Elliott’s house and about two blocks away from Asheboro’s public square.

The academy trustees selected Eliza Rae of Boston, Mass., as their first teacher.<sup>19</sup> Classes began on June 17, 1839. Among the first students were daughters of some of the founders: Roxanna and Lucy Worth; Martitia and Cornelia Marsh; Nancy Jane McCain and Betsy Hoover.<sup>20</sup> An article in the *Southern Citizen* on June 14, calling attention to an advertisement for the school elsewhere in the issue, announced, “Great pains have been taken to lay the foundation of our Seminary on a firm and durable basis; it is hoped and believed that it will be permanent, and extensively useful, not only to the inhabitants of our county and immediate vicinity, but also to youth at a distance, particularly in the Southern Direction.”<sup>21</sup>

The advertisement also ran in the *Cheraw Gazette* and the *Fayetteville Observer*. Signed by Worth, McCain, Marsh and Hoover as trustees, it announced Rae as director of the school, noting that “The Trustees believe, from the testimonials she brings with her, that she is eminently qualified by her experience, her education and in every other respect, to take charge of such an institution.”<sup>22</sup> Sessions would last five months, and were “intended to give a thorough course of instruction, and to qualify pupils to take their places in society.”<sup>23</sup> The curriculum included spelling, reading, grammar, geography, arithmetic, philosophy, rhetoric, “needlework, &c,” and “music on piano,” with an emphasis on spelling, reading and writing. Tuition was \$6 for spelling and reading (about \$150 in 2017 dollars); \$8 for grammar, geography and arithmetic; \$10 for philosophy, rhetoric and needlework, \$10; and \$20 for piano.<sup>24</sup> Although the school would not be residential, local families had agreed to board students at \$6 per month.

About six months after the school began operation, a writer identified only as “A Visitor” described the two-room building in a letter to the *Southern Citizen*: “I was surprised and astonished to find a House large enough to accommodate 60 Scholars, built and finished off, with 12 large glass windows, and every part of the materials of the best quality; and the workmanship of the finest order and the latest style; and furnished too with the necessary seats, tables and a fine Piano. There is a seat for every two Scholars, and a table in front so that every Scholar has a place for both writing and her other studies.”<sup>25</sup> In his definitive 1915 account of North Carolina private schools of the antebellum era, educator Charles L. Coon observed, “Here

was a village of less than 150 inhabitants, which had a school house large enough for 60 pupils, furnished with tables and chairs, blackboards, and a piano. There are many North Carolina school rooms in these modern times which would not compare favorably with that Asheboro school room of 75 years ago.”<sup>26</sup> The piano, in fact, was the first in Asheboro.<sup>27</sup>

The 1839 visitor went on to share observations on the girls’ rigorous tutelage under Rae: “The first class she examined consisted of some small ones who had commenced 4 months ago in the Alphabet. They could read, and read correctly. They spoke loud, and pronounced each word with distinctness, and after they had concluded the reading of their lesson, the tutoress gave out to them some of the most difficult words in the lesson, and they spelled them correctly – giving a distinct articulation to each letter and syllable. I never saw little children so correctly taught.”<sup>28</sup>

An arithmetic lesson for the older girls was equally impressive – and apparently progressive. “This branch I am told is particularly attended to,” the visitor writes. “Emerson’s Arithmetic is used. They are taught the four principal divisions of Arithmetic *Orally* before they make use of a slate. This is a delightful and interesting study as taught in this School. I understand great pains is [sic] taken by the tutoress to make the pupils understand the *principles* and *reasons* of their operations. They are not permitted to pore over a question they can’t understand, for an hour or two together. A question is performed by the tutoress whenever they commence a new rule; and the principles *Orally* explained and illustrated. When the question is correctly performed on the Slate, she is not content simply to say, ‘It is right.’ She makes the pupil explain the reason of each operation themselves or procure[s] the assistance of those further advanced... It is much the best method of teaching Arithmetic.”<sup>29</sup>

Initially, Rae was the only instructor at the academy, teaching all classes to a variety of age groups. Not only was she an effective teacher, but she also encouraged her students to expand their intellectual curiosity outside of the classroom, therefore increasing enrollment and the need for assistant teachers at the institution immediately after it started.<sup>30</sup> By January 1840, the trustees were anticipating recruitment of an additional teacher “from the North.”<sup>31</sup>

By January 1841, Rae had departed to take charge of the Williamsborough Female School in Granville County.<sup>32</sup> There is little evident information about her background before her tenure in Asheboro, but it is possible she was a graduate of the Troy Female Seminary in Troy, N.Y.<sup>33</sup> Troy was established in 1819 by Emma Hart Willard, a pioneer of education for women in the United States and an advocate of expanded educational opportunities for girls.<sup>34</sup> Willard’s mission was to train young women as teachers and send them to areas of the country where formal education was lacking – most notably the south and west.<sup>35</sup> She had developed a rigorous teaching method that she instilled in her students. She also penned a number of textbooks on subjects including world history, U.S. history and geography. The school and its young teachers gained a mighty reputation early on, providing highly-qualified governesses and in-home tutors to wealthy southern families.<sup>36</sup> As schools for girls were established in North Carolina, Troy alumnae filled the ranks of teachers.<sup>37</sup> Troy graduates taught or served as assistants at schools in Hillsborough, Northampton County, Halifax County, Granville County, Caswell County, Statesville, Wilmington, Greensboro and Tarboro as well as Randolph County. In 1847, Troy graduate Angeline B. Crandall “went to the Southern states in company with six other Troy pupils, under the patronage of Mrs. Willard,” where “With the assistance of four teachers she conducted for some years a successful school in Tarborough.”<sup>38</sup> Even when a Troy teacher was not present, Willard’s influence could be felt: In Greenville, a Female Seminary was operated by a Mrs. Saffery, “[w]ho has adopted for her model, the justly esteemed and much celebrated system of Mrs. Willard, the Superior of an establishment for education at Troy.”<sup>39</sup>

It was to Troy that the trustees turned for a succession of principals for the Female Academy. To follow Rae, they brought in Mrs. B.H. Whitney, “late of Troy, New York,” as

principal – or as she styled herself in a December, 1842, newspaper advertisement, “Mrs. Dr. B.H. Whitney.”<sup>40</sup> The large and detailed ad provides a rare glimpse into the philosophy and curriculum of the Female Academy under Whitney’s tutelage, and her expectations of its students. Promoting a “New Seminary” on “Elliott Green, Asheborough, N.C.,” the ad notes that, “The location, in point of health and morality, is not to be surpassed in the South.” Whitney declares: “Unhappily the intellectual education of Females at the present day is not what it should be, nor what it might be. A great number of Young Ladies think themselves fascinating than scientific. It is too true a large class are taught less to think than to shine. If they glitter, it matters little whether it be the glitter of gilding or of gold.”

She goes on: “In this Institute, it will be the constant aim of the Principal to call forth the powers of mind committed to her charge, and to direct them to the investigation of truth. Her Pupils will be taught to think, to reason, to feel, and that energetic effort and continued application are the only means by which the dormant intellect can be quickened, and the most contracted mind made to expand.” The course of study included no less than 24 textbooks, some of them by Emma Willard, on subjects including rhetoric, logic, history, geography, music, botany, chemistry, geography, geology and philosophy.

The Whitneys also offered students the opportunity to board at their residence, with some requirements. “Young Ladies, placed under the immediate supervision of the Principal, are required to furnish their own Bedding, Napkins and Silver Spoons,” the ad states. “Young Ladies will not be permitted to leave the Boarding House, unless attended by someone in charge. Mrs. Whitney wishes the dress of her Pupils, during school hours, to consist of some unexpensive material made in plain style. Parents and Guardians are requested not to leave their Daughters or Wards the control of money.” Despite the strict curriculum and boarding requirements, Jonathan Worth’s daughter Elvira remembers Whitney introducing some frivolity into the school, including a May Day celebration that drew the whole community and a game called “grace hoops.”<sup>41</sup>

During this period, the academy added a kindergarten known as the “Infant Department,” which met at the Methodist Episcopal Church across the Salisbury road from the academy in the present location of the Asheboro City Cemetery, under the tutelage of Angelina Winborne.<sup>42</sup> Elvira Worth was among the students.

The role of Dr. Whitney in the operation of the school, if any, or his life otherwise in Asheboro is not clear. The Whitneys departed following the death of their one-year-old son, Henry Lee, in 1843.<sup>43</sup> In December of that year, Dr. and Mrs. Whitney still resided in Asheboro but were running a “situation wanted” ad in a Raleigh newspaper for a position at a girls’ school.<sup>44</sup>

The trustees again recruited from Troy, hiring Louisa Olive Willard (no apparent relation to Emma Willard) to take charge of the Female Academy. Born in Canaan, Vermont, Willard graduated Troy in 1841 and taught two years in Elizabeth City, N.C., before coming to Asheboro.<sup>45</sup> Elvira Worth recalls that Willard “was considered an excellent instructress and filled her position with perfect satisfaction as testified by my Worth sisters who were her pupils.” In 1845, Willard returned to New York for a more lucrative teaching opportunity.<sup>46</sup>

An interregnum of indeterminate length followed as the trustees searched for a qualified teacher. During that time, reports Elvira Worth, some students hiked a mile east of Asheboro “through a by path, reaching the bubbling spring” to a log house presided over by a strict but effective teacher, Isaac Lee. The trustees eventually recruited a Miss Judson from Massachusetts for the academy.<sup>47</sup> She “strictly adhered to the rules of the Methodist Church,” eschewing jewelry and wearing an “apostles linen collar... held in place by a simple gold stud.” Among her accomplishments was to develop a “Sunday School literature” book collection and make it readily accessible to the students.

Miss Judson's first initial was "P."<sup>48</sup> She may have been Phebe Judson, who taught at the Greensboro Female College from 1839 until at least through mid-1846, when she was identified as Assistant Governess and Preceptress of Natural Sciences.<sup>49</sup> By late 1847, she no longer appears in the faculty list for the Greensborough institution.<sup>50</sup> There also is an indication that a Phebe Judson taught during 1837-1838 in the Juvenile Department at the Fayetteville Academy in Fayetteville, N.Y., suggesting a possible Troy connection.<sup>51</sup> When Judson departed Asheboro at the end of the spring session in June, 1848, she relocated to New York.<sup>52</sup> She was well ready to leave: "I am quite confident I would not endure to teach school in this way another year, at least without taking a long relaxation.... I believe the expectation of being so soon released from so severe toil sustains me in great measure under it," she wrote near the end of the session.<sup>53</sup>

After Judson's departure, the trustees turned again to the Troy seminary and found Julia Anna Stickney, a native of Rockwell, N.Y., who began teaching in Asheboro after she graduated in 1849.<sup>54</sup> Stickney boarded with the Worth family and taught until 1853. That year, according to Jonathan Worth's 11-year-old daughter Adelaide Ann, the school had 26 students, including five of the Worth daughters. Six more of the students boarded with the Worth family.<sup>55</sup> Elvira Worth noted that Stickney was 17 years old when she arrived in Asheboro. "In full justice to this young lady no predecessor exceeded her qualification, or fitness for the place, and to the end of her term in 1853, she left a host of friends and patrons to regret her resignation," Worth states.<sup>56</sup> The reason for Stickney's departure was her marriage to David Worth following his graduation from the University of North Carolina.<sup>57</sup> David and Julia Stickney Worth relocated to Harnett County and then Wilmington, where David became a prosperous merchant.

From 1853 to 1855, the Female Academy also had a highly-regarded music teacher. Wilhelmina (Minna) Raven, emigrated from Osnabrück, Germany, to Asheboro in 1852, with her brother August Eduard Raven, her sister Bertha and her sister's husband August Julius Brockman.<sup>58</sup> A well-trained and accomplished musician, she relocated to Greensboro in 1855 with her family, where she taught piano at the Edgeworth Female Academy.

The Asheborough Female Academy's counterpart, the Asheborough Male Academy, had opened in 1842 and had been incorporated on January 25, 1843; trustees of the two institutions overlapped.<sup>59</sup> James M.A. Drake and Alfred Marsh donated a half-acre each for the school along present-day Academy Street between Fayetteville and Cox streets.<sup>60</sup> A small house stood on the lot and would become the schoolhouse.

A formal merger of the two institutions took place 1855, as separate operation of the schools under two different boards of trustees was "inconvenient, and attended with difficulty...."<sup>61</sup> The legislation incorporating the combined academies appointed a new set of trustees, including Jonathan Worth, Alfred Marsh, James M.A. Drake, Hugh McCain, A.J. Hale, Reuben H. Brown, Dr. John Milton Worth, Frances Cooper, John Albert Craven, Benjamin Frank Hoover, William B. Lane, and Hardy Brown.<sup>62</sup> Dr. John Milton Worth, Jonathan's brother and prominent physician who would serve as North Carolina treasure from 1867-1885, would remain a trustee almost until the time of his death in 1902; in 1892, he purchased the Female Academy building from his fellow trustees when its utility as a schoolhouse had ended. By the time of the official consolidation in 1855, the academies appear to have become more Asheboro-centric; by this time "common" (public) schools were beginning to take root in parts of the county outside of Asheboro. Original trustees who were more associated with areas of the county outside Asheboro – Gray, Hill and Troy – were no longer serving, while the new trustees included newly-prominent Asheboro names.

Informal merger of the two schools, however, occurred earlier, as evidenced by the appointment of Julia Stickney's successor. About the same time that Stickney departed, the principal of the Male Academy, Josiah Brooks, retired.<sup>63</sup> In December 1853, a newspaper article headed "Ashborough Male and Female Academies" carried an announcement by Secretary of the

Board of Trustees James M.A. Drake that a nationally-known Presbyterian minister, Dr. Simeon Colton, would take over as teacher at the Male Academy, and his wife, Catherine, would do so at the Female Academy.<sup>64</sup> The Coltons purchased a farm from Hugh McCain behind the Male Academy in the block now bounded by Academy, Cox and Main streets, and established themselves in Asheboro.<sup>65</sup>

Simeon Colton was a highly regarded, lifelong educator and minister born in Connecticut. A graduate of Yale College, he had served as principal of the Monson Academy in Monson, Massachusetts, and the Amherst Academy in Amherst, Massachusetts.<sup>66</sup> An unusually prestigious cohort of his former Monson students included Charles Merriam, who established the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*; Moses S. Beach, who served as editor of the *New York Sun* newspaper; Loring Norcross, uncle of poet Emily Dickinson; the Rev. James L. Merrick, the first American missionary to Persia; and other notables.<sup>67</sup> Called to take charge of the Donaldson Academy in Fayetteville, a new school established by the Fayetteville Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, Colton arrived in North Carolina in 1834. He departed in 1846 for a stint as president of Mississippi College in Clinton, Miss., returning to North Carolina in 1848 to serve as principal of the Cumberland Academy at Summerville in Cumberland (now Harnett) County.<sup>68</sup> Shortly after arriving in Asheboro to take charge of the schools, Colton also was appointed to serve as the second minister of Asheboro Presbyterian Church.

Catherine Eleanor Raboteau Colton came from a prominent Raleigh family.<sup>69</sup> She was educated at the rigorous Raleigh Academy.<sup>70</sup> Their marriage in 1851 was his third and her second. Catherine's first was to the successful Fayetteville merchant Thomas Fuller, who died at age 32 when she was 25; their sons Bartholomew and Thomas became prominent in North Carolina civic life. Catherine was an experienced teacher and had taught girls at the Cumberland Academy.<sup>71</sup> She was "a lady of unusual ability and attainments," according to Elvira Worth. "There are those now living," Worth writes, "who raise up to call her blessed for her rectitude and impartial administration of the affairs entrusted to her keeping." Catherine also appears to have had a role in providing education for the children of free people of color, who would not have been allowed to attend either academy. Worth reports, "The colored population owe much to her for we have none, other than the School in which she took the lead for many years."<sup>72</sup> This is one of the few references to formal education of African American children in Randolph County prior to the Civil War.<sup>73</sup>

An 1855 advertisement in the Fayetteville Observer identified Simeon Colton as superintendent of both academies; Catherine as principal of the Female Academy; and Colton's son from a previous marriage, James Hooper Colton, as principal of the Male Academy.<sup>74</sup> "Asheboro' is in direct communication, by tri-weekly stages, with Fayetteville, Salem, Raleigh and Salisbury," the ad states. "It offers a pleasant and healthy residence for those who would send their children away from the sickly localities of the low country." James had graduated from the University of North Carolina in June 1855. He took over as principal of the Male Academy for its session beginning on July 5, 1855, during a period of indeterminate length when Simeon Colton was in ill health.<sup>75</sup> The previous summer, James had delayed his return to college to substitute for his father, who had taken a trip to New England for a reunion with his Monson students at the school's Semi-Centennial Celebration.<sup>76</sup> By fall 1856, James had taken a position as professor of mathematics and ancient languages at the Fayetteville Female High School.<sup>77</sup>

With the arrival of the Coltons, it appears that the trustees took a less direct role in the operation of the schools. The 1855 advertisement mentions the Coltons, but bears no signature of any trustees, as did ads in earlier years. With the exception of Whitney, previous teachers had been young single women hired by the trustees and provided room and board. These teachers do not appear to have been directly responsible for the financial well-being of the school. The



Coltons, however, appeared to rely on tuition – and therefore enrollment – as a substantial part of their livelihood, perhaps indicating that they were more like independent contractors than employees. Thus when enrollment declined, so did the Coltons' fortunes. "The school has been small numbering in all only 15 and a part of these were present during only a part of the Session," Colton wrote of the Female Academy in 1856. "The whole amount of the tuition bills \$138.35, a small compensation for a four month labor."<sup>78</sup>

Nor were the academies immune from problems facing society at large. In March, 1855, a 17-year-old student at the Male Academy who was boarding with the Coltons died following an "ague," or fever, and a "violent cold."<sup>79</sup> The attending physicians were baffled at the cause of the illness, but on his deathbed the student confessed that immediately prior to the onset of his illness, he was "drawn into company where others were drinking" and took part himself. Later that spring, a measles outbreak affected the schools.<sup>80</sup> Disputes in the community could also take their toll. In the summer of 1855, some kind of harm allegedly caused by one male student against another led several parents – including founding trustee Hugh McCain – to pull their children out of both schools. "Asheboro is divided into family feuds and a great deal of bitterness prevails among them," Colton wrote.<sup>81</sup>

Despite such tribulations, the schools continued to operate. Simeon Colton taught until his retirement from both the church and the school in 1862. Catherine remained principal of the Female Academy until Simeon's death in December 1868, after which she relocated to Raleigh to live with her son Bartholomew.<sup>82</sup>

It is at this point that the documentary history of the Female Academy – and that of the already scarcely-described Male Academy – flags, and local reminiscence takes over.<sup>83</sup> During the Civil War, both academies were closed and used as barracks for soldiers. The site of the Male Academy long had been used as public ground, serving as the county fairgrounds and as a muster site for militia as far back as the post-Revolutionary War era.<sup>84</sup> During the war, Catherine Colton continued teaching students, according to one account, in the Male Academy building until it was converted to a barracks later in the war. Another local woman, Jennie Page Hancock, was said to have conducted a school in her Main Street home.

Classes resumed after the war, but the site at which they were held remains unclear. One history of Asheboro schools, written in 1934, has a one-room school constructed on the Male Academy grounds where Catherine Colton taught in the late 1860s.<sup>85</sup> The 1934 history also reports that Jennie Hancock took over teaching in the one-room school in 1872. "The schoolhouse was used each year for exhibits of the County Fair," the account states. "A high, board fence surrounded the property and it was commonly spoken of as 'The Fair Lot'. Mrs. Hancock, who was a good teacher, enjoyed the love and respect of her pupils."<sup>86</sup>

Classes had resumed in the Female Academy building by 1876. An advertisement in the *Randolph Regulator* announced the upcoming "Spring Session" lasting 20 weeks, with Eliza Spencer as teacher.<sup>87</sup> Alexander Worth (A.W.) McAlister, son of Adelaide C. Worth (daughter of John Milton Worth) and Alexander Carey (A.C.) McAlister, at age 83 in 1945, recalled that Spencer was "a very charming and talented lady from Virginia." Spencer appears to have departed by July, 1878, when she was listed as a student from Forsyth County in the Normal School at Chapel Hill, a teaching institution associated with the University of North Carolina.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to girls, the school was admitting "a limited number of boys under thirteen years of age" in this era (A.W. McAlister was one of these, according to Elvira Worth). Tuition for primary and intermediate classes was \$2.00 (about \$43 in today's dollars) per month; those classes included spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, English grammar and history. "Higher English" and foreign languages also were offered, along with instrumental music, including piano and guitar, and vocal music. Mrs. E.E. Jackson – Elvira Worth, now married to attorney S.S. Jackson – taught three drawing lessons each week. Boarding with private families

cost \$10-\$11 per month, with a \$1 charge for washing. The ad was signed by trustees John Milton Worth, Benjamin Moffitt, Sam Walker and A.C. McAlister.

Other teachers following Spencer may have included a Mrs. Phillips, Fanny Bluford and Maggie Wilson, who is said to have taught from 1886 to 1887. Nannie Bulla, who was a Female Academy student of Minna Raven in the 1850s, was a longtime local music teacher.

It is possible that at some point during this period, the Female Academy building fell into disuse as the trustees made an effort to consolidate operations at the Male Academy/Fairgrounds site. Several accounts refer to multiple buildings on the Male Academy grounds operating as part of the school. The trustees also made continuing efforts to acquire contiguous property.<sup>89</sup> In 1875, John Milton Worth and his wife Sallie deeded land to his fellow trustees “for the purpose of being improved, and a female academy, seminary or college established and maintained thereon.”<sup>90</sup> This appears to indicate that the trustees were considering the need for a new female school or a school at the Male Academy location, although this particular initiative never came to fruition and the trustees were authorized to sell the lots in 1887.<sup>91</sup>

Wherever learning took place, the academies served as the main source of formal education in Asheboro through the late 1800s, although with what level of consistency is not known. There also were a number of small or “short-term” schools operating in the community.<sup>92</sup> A December, 1891 advertisement in *The Courier* touted the spring term of the “Asheboro Academy (Male and Female)” opening January 7, 1892.<sup>93</sup> The school would offer primary, grammar and high school, and music in “Handsome buildings.” Students would be “prepared for any College or University, or for active life” under the tutelage of the Rev. J.B. Game. Game had left his post as principal of the Cedar Grove Academy in Orange County.<sup>94</sup> In August 1892, he was offered and accepted a position as principal of the Wymton School in Columbus, Ga.<sup>95</sup>

By the 1890s, however, the public school system in North Carolina was expanding so rapidly that many smaller private schools closed to make way for public institutions. The citizens of Asheboro had determined that public schools capable of serving the entire community were necessary. In 1891, the legislature amended its 1855 incorporation of the Male and Female Academies, appointing trustees for the academies and for the defunct Randolph Agricultural Society (in regards to that organization’s interest in the Male Academy lot, the old county fairgrounds), empowering them to sell the Female Academy property and instructing them to apply the proceeds “to the building of a larger and more suitable house... for educational purposes.”<sup>96</sup> The trustees of the academies again were among Asheboro’s most prominent citizens: Eli A. Moffitt, W.F. Wood, W.H. Moring, Dr. P.H. Morris, A.C. McAlister, J.E. Walker, John Milton Worth, G.S. Bradshaw, J.A. Blair and Marmaduke Swaim Robins. Appointed to represent the interest of the Agricultural Society were Thomas J. Redding and J.C. Fuller.

Proceeds from a sale of the Female Academy would go to establishment of the Asheboro Graded School on the site of the Male Academy and the fairgrounds – Asheboro’s first public school.<sup>97</sup> On December 3, 1892, the Asheboro Female Academy was sold into private hands – to Dr. John Milton Worth – for \$250 (about \$6,500 in today’s dollars).<sup>98</sup> Worth died in 1902; the next year, his executors sold the property to W.J. Armfield Jr.<sup>99</sup>

In 1894, the Male and Female Academy trustees executed a 10-year lease of the Male Academy site, buildings and their contents to the School Committee of Asheboro, consisting of J.E. Walker, Eli A. Moffitt, H.C. Rich, Romulus R. Ross and A.O. Redding, “for the purpose of running a school....”<sup>100</sup> The era being that of Jim Crow, the deed indicated that the school would be for white children; schools for African American children in Asheboro would develop separately. The School Committee members were the representatives of the Asheboro district of the Randolph County public school system. The Asheboro Graded School, a frame building, was

constructed facing Academy Street, and opened in 1894 offering nine grades, with some high school level studies included.<sup>101</sup>

In 1905, the North Carolina General Assembly created the Asheboro Graded School District separate from the county school system, known today as the Asheboro City Schools.<sup>102</sup> The Asheboro Graded School came under its auspices. In 1906, the Male and Female Academy trustees donated the leased property to the School Commissioners of the Town of Asheboro.<sup>103</sup> Thus concluded, after 67-years, the operations of the Asheboro Male and Female Academies.

The new public school quickly outgrew its frame building, which was replaced with a brick building in 1909 that would be known to generations to come as Fayetteville Street School. In 1911, the Randolph Bulletin reported that the “old Asheboro academy” – which could have been the original graded school or a building associated with the Male Academy – was dismantled, moved and rebuilt as a school for African American children.<sup>104</sup>

The Female Academy property, meanwhile, was now in the possession of William Johnston (W.J.) Armfield Jr., founder of the Bank of Randolph, whose family would become one of the county’s wealthiest. He also had recently acquired adjoining property on the corner of Salisbury and Fayetteville Streets.<sup>105</sup> There he would build his family’s home, moving the Female Academy building several feet west, toward present-day North Street, to make room for the residence.<sup>106</sup> During the Armfields’ ownership, the academy building was used for storage and later converted into living quarters for the servants. The building had sentimental value for Armfield’s wife Sallie, as her mother, Cornelia Walker Millis, and other relatives were students at the school.<sup>107</sup>

After Armfield’s death in 1968, the building was given to the Randolph County Historical Society and became the focus of a restoration project to be completed in the early 1970s. A new location for the building was provided by the Asheboro City Board of Education near its Park Street headquarters, facing Walker Avenue. Restoration work began at the original site of the building and continued after the building was moved.<sup>108</sup> Exterior restoration was to be completed first, following with the interior.<sup>109</sup> A ribbon cutting ceremony was held and the newly-furnished schoolhouse was opened to the public for a tour on the night of the Asheboro City Schools’ annual open house in November of 1976.<sup>110</sup> This was the first time that members of the public were able to access the newly renovated building.

After the restoration in the 1970s, not much was done with the Asheboro Female Academy. Small events took place surrounding the building in the 1980s, but general interest, concern, and upkeep significantly decreased over the course of the 1990s and 2000s. By 2014, the building was again in need of restoration. Much of the exterior paint had peeled off, there were open gaps in siding and under the entry doors, and the building sagged in the center, indicating the need for structural support.

TreesNC, a grassroots environmental organization with deep roots in the Asheboro community, began seeking a solution for preserving the Academy around 2008. In 2014, TreesNC organized a meeting with Preservation North Carolina Regional Director Cathleen Turner, Asheboro Mayor David Smith and several concerned citizens, to discuss possibilities for preserving the Academy. TreesNC formed an *ad hoc* committee and commissioned a Historic Structure Report for the Academy by Restoration Contractor Carl Kessler. In 2001, Kessler had become the first North Carolina contractor to complete a newly established three-year Certification of Historic Preservation Technology Program, established by the N.C. Community College system at Randolph Community College. Kessler’s work on the restoration of private homes and museums had earned him Preservation NC’s Gertrude S. Carraway Award of Merit in 2007 and Best Restoration of the Year from Preservation Greensboro in 2009. Kessler was particularly interested in the opportunity to work on the restoration of the 1839 Asheboro Female

Academy as this was the very structure which served as his research project that had earned him the Certification of Historic Preservation Technology Program credential years before.

Kessler's Historic Structure Report yielded a highly detailed analysis of the current state of the Academy building, and proposed a plan for a historically accurate renovation. With the plan in hand and significant funding from local and regional donors in place, a second restoration got underway. By spring of 2017, the restoration was largely complete and the building now appears as it likely did in 1839, with much of its original bones intact.

The Asheboro Female Academy thrived as an educational institution through many decades, whereas most similar institutions that dotted the state's counties and municipalities were relatively short-lived.<sup>111</sup> The institution sent cohorts of young women into the world equipped with a schooling rivaling that of young men at a time when education for girls outside basics skills and the domestic arts was scarce. During its heyday, it drew the finest educators from one of the country's most prestigious teaching institutions. Along with its counterpart Male Academy, it acted as bridge between an era of little formal schooling and that of mature public schooling, and laid the groundwork – literally – for Asheboro's city school system. It also is associated with a number of prominent figures, including Gov. Jonathan Worth, the Rev. Simeon Colton, D.D. and, by association, Emma Willard. Architecturally, it retains much of its original integrity (see next section), and has undergone a carefully-researched restoration to return it to its original appearance; although moved from its original site, it sits on a small wooded lot that suggests the character of the original location. Finally, while not reaching all strata of society, it extended the opportunity for formal education beyond the domain of the very wealthy to the "mechanics and merchants" who comprised the community's emerging middle class. The Female Academy also is emblematic of the desire of the community in more recent years to preserve its shared history, community members twice having invested significant resources to restore the physical remnant of the important early school.

## ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY

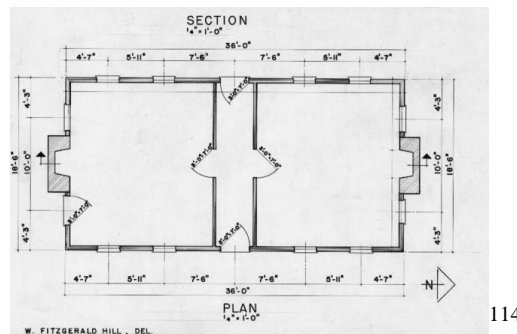
The construction history of the Asheboro Female Academy centers around three significant events. The first event is the initial construction of the building in 1839. The second event occurs over a century later with a restoration and change of location by the Randolph County Historical Society in the 1970s. The third is a historically-accurate restoration just completed by Trees NC in collaboration with the Asheboro City Schools.



*The earliest known photograph of the Asheboro Female Academy, probably circa 1890.*

There is little documentation on the initial construction of the building; more emphasis was placed on its purpose as a place for female education in the rapidly expanding center of Randolph County. The earliest written record of the academy appeared in *The Southern Citizen*, a local newspaper, before construction began. Along with stating the function of the building, the article asked for monetary donations from “friends of female education.”<sup>112</sup> There is no record that credits an architect or builder for the school. The earliest description of the building after its completion came from a letter to *The Southern Citizen* in 1839, approximately six months after the school opened for operation. A visitor states, “I was surprised and astonished to find a House large enough to accommodate 60 Scholars, built, and completely finished off, with 12 large glass windows, and every part of the materials of the best quality; and the workmanship of the finest order and the latest style: and furnished too with the necessary seats, tables, and a fine Piano.”<sup>113</sup>

The schoolhouse measures eighteen by thirty six feet, consisting of two rooms with a central hall, as depicted here:



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The foundation was made of brick, with the remaining architectural framework, like the joists, sills, and piers, being made of wood.<sup>115</sup> The original roof material is unknown, but it is possible that the building had a wood shingle roof based on the earliest known photograph. A standing-seam metal roof was installed between 1946 and 1953.<sup>116</sup> The building also featured a moderately pitched side-gable roof, wood cornices and, weatherboard siding.



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The original schoolhouse had symmetrical exterior brick chimneys in the center of the gable ends. There were three doors leading into the structure; two primary doors on the east and west elevations that led into the center hall, and one door on the south elevation that led directly into one of the two classrooms.<sup>118</sup> The eight sections of windows in the building are distributed evenly in each classroom, with four on both the east and west elevations. The windows were a double-hung nine-over-nine sash. The door is topped with a four-pane transom, flanked by fluted pilasters the same height as the transom.



The alterations to the school building after it closed down in 1892 and before it was restored in the 1970s are not specifically documented. However, the building was explicitly described as being “converted” into servants quarters under the Armfield family, giving the impression that it underwent prominent changes during this period.<sup>120</sup> This can be seen in an undated photograph of the building, simply referred to as a “before restoration” image. One major difference is the overgrown landscaping that surrounds the building, giving it a look of being uncared for or unkempt.



The photograph shows wooden lattice work around the doorframe as well as a screen door and a tin roof. These are significant aesthetic differences from the wood-shingle roof and plain weatherboard siding found in earlier documentation of the building’s construction.

Eventually, when the building was given to the Randolph County Historical Society by the Armfield family in the late 1960s, plans were formulated for the first official historic restoration of the building, beginning with the exterior changes.<sup>122</sup> The goal of the restoration was to alter the building in such a way as to make it resemble its original state. However, the field of historic preservation was fairly new and constantly changing during this time period and that had a significant effect on the procedures of the project. The window glass of the building was replaced with an inadequate imitation of hand-blown nineteenth-century glass in an effort to keep the aesthetic while maintaining functioning windows. The chimneys were altered but are not the correct size or design for a historic restoration of the period. The tin roofing was removed and the original framing was covered by a half-inch thick plywood sheathing before adding the new wood shingles.<sup>123</sup> Supposedly, the tin from the roof was salvaged but not used in any other part of the restoration. The Historical Society worked with local saw mills and painters to create reproduction window sashes, shutters, and weatherboard siding. The exterior restoration did not seek to remove old materials from the building, but to instead supplement the older materials with modern interpretations. For example, the original brick foundation of the structure was not

removed, but new bricks were handmade by Old Carolina Brick Company of Salisbury, North Carolina to place alongside the original where they were needed.<sup>124</sup>



*The 1976 restoration after a period of deterioration.*

The biggest effect of the 1970s restoration was the decision to move the building to property owned by the Asheboro City Schools, adjacent to the school system's Central Office building. This took the structure out of its original context and created a new landscape for the academy, complete with a new wooden sign, a small porch with white hand railing, and a white picket fence lining the property. Thus the building remained until the TreesNC restoration over the past three years.

The 2014 Historic Structure Report by Carl Kessler, commissioned by TreesNC, yielded a highly detailed analysis of the state of the Academy building by that time, and proposed a plan for a historically accurate renovation. A physical study of the four major areas of concern was performed:

- Crawl space, foundation and chimneys.
- Exterior walls, windows and trim.
- Interior walls, windows and trim.
- Attic space, ceiling joists, roof rafters and roof.

In addition to describing the general state of the structure, the Report detailed the amount of original/ replacement material in the structure, as follows.

- **Frame.** The building is a center hall design with a post and beam frame that is mortised, tenoned and pegged. The post and beam frame of the structure was found to be in near original condition. The floor beams were original 10" diameter hand hewn logs placed on 36" centers. There were 11 floor joists with seven original logs and four replacement beams. One floor beam displayed heavy termite deterioration. All other floor beams appeared sound.
- **Floor.** The floor boards are a mixture of modern circular sawn planks and original sash sawn planks. Circular sawn boards were easily depicted by their radius saw marks and flame patterns on the backside of the boards. Historians have documented that all lumber in 1838 was dimensioned by sash sawn (vertical teeth marks) or pit sawn (slightly angled teeth marks) and the first circular saws were not in the area until 1852 when the Fayetteville and Western Plank Road came to Asheboro. The original sash sawn planks were quarter sawn, an old technology used to create the hardest wood for flooring.
- **Walls.** The exterior walls are clapboards and the interior walls, ceiling and floors are tongue and grooved wood planking. The windows are nine over nine double hung sashes. The 1976 restorations included the addition of a three tab asphalt shingle roof, the replacement of the foundation and both chimneys, and the replacement of all doors with replicas. The interior tongue and grooved wall planks were in good condition and

consisted of a mixture of original and replacement boards. The saw marks were not visible as all the boards were planed and painted, but when a light was angled across the grain of the board the plane marks become visible. Chatter marks from machine planed boards become very noticeable under these lighting conditions, while hand planed boards had smooth, light grooved paths from the plane. Many of the east and west walls boards had been replaced, while a large portion of the north and south walls were original.

- **Ceiling.** The ceiling boards are mostly original sash sawn boards as visible saw marks can be seen in the attic on the reverse un-painted side of the boards.
- **Interior Trim.** The mantel in the east room was determined to be original, as all of the wood had been hand planed and the moldings were simpler and filled with paint. The mantel in the west room was machined planed and the moldings were much cleaner. The chair railing in both east and west rooms were a mixture of original and new trim. It appeared that most of the north and south walls were original.
- **Attic.** Inspection of the attic revealed both the ceiling joists and the original roof rafters were hand hewn beams that were dimensioned by sash sawing. A few extra new rafters were added for support and plywood decking was laid for the shingle roof in the 1976 restoration. There were 11 original rafters and four replacements on 30" centers. As mentioned earlier in this report the ceiling boards were sash sawn indicating that most are original.
- **Roof.** Was the original roof a shake roof? This was very common at the time. The original roof rafters were inspected for evidence of attic ghost marks on the side of the rafter beams very close to the decking surface. If there was a roof leak that ran down a rafter it would show different color marks directly under the lattice. Several such marks were found and all of them were 5" long. This would indicate that originally there was a lattice system that supported a shake roof.

Over the years there had been significant replacement of materials and components throughout the Female Academy building. However, most of the post and beam framework was original, as was approximately 60 percent of the interior ceiling, floor, wall planking and trim work.

Following development of a restoration plan and a major fundraising effort by TreesNC, Kessler was appointed as contractor / specialist for the renovation of the structure. Restoration of the primary structure is now essentially complete. Every effort was made to use historically accurate materials and craftsmanship.

Improvements include:

- Repaired stress cracks and missing bricks in the foundation.
- Added support piers to the north wall. Coated and injected deteriorated beams and floor joists with cedar oil and similar products to harden and solidify wood.
- Removed lead-based paint (using permits and EPA guidelines) on the exterior siding and trim.
- Replaced or treated all deteriorated and soft wood with second growth or old growth heart pine siding machined to match existing clapboards and exterior trim. Primed and finish painted all siding and trim.
- Removed asphalt shingle roofing and replaced with historically accurate hand-split cedar shake roofing.
- Installed reinforcement rafters to support cedar shake roof.
- Custom built new entry doors, using historically accurate pegged construction.
- Sanded and sealed floor boards.



- Analyzed paint layers to identify original paint colors, and painted exterior in original color. Hand sanded and repainted ceiling and wall boards and all interior trim.
- Removed all glass from sashes, repaired glazing, replaced glass as needed with historically accurate restoration glass. (windows rebuilt by Double Hung Windows, Greensboro, NC)
- Replaced shutters with custom built historically accurate (pegged) shutters.
- Reworked finish grade at foundation
- Built 3 new stoops and steps.
- Installed HVAC system for heating and cooling as needed for proper use of building as an educational facility.
- Installed electric utility. Discretely installed electric wiring upgrades.
- Reinforced beams, joists and rafters as needed.
- Replaced door hardware with period locks and hinges.
- Researched and commissioned historically accurate student work tables and benches.
- Researched and purchased original period antique furniture and artifacts.

Future planned work includes new landscaping based on a report drafted by Tony Mayer of Piedmont Perennial Landscapes and Dr. Marie Weil of the University of North Carolina School of Social Work. This report proposes a landscape design that “doesn’t add anything to the landscape without evidence that it was present historically,” and which “make[s] it clear to visitors that this is not an ac<sup>125</sup>curate depiction but an interpretation of the historical site.”<sup>126</sup>



*The Asheboro Female Academy as restored 2014-2017.*

<sup>1</sup> William S. Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill:, The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 245 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Chris Myers and Jaquelin Drane Nash, “Education, Private,” *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 375.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> The term “seminary” as used in this era is interchangeable with “school” or “academy.”

<sup>5</sup> “An Act to incorporate the Trustees of the Randolph Female Academy, in Randolph County,” *Laws of the State of North Carolina Passed by the General Assembly at the Session of 1838-'39* (Raleigh: J. Gales and Son, Office of the Raleigh Register), 1839, 95.

<sup>6</sup> *Randolph County 1779-1979* (Asheboro: Randolph County Historical Society, 1979), 76.

<sup>7</sup> Richard L. Zuber, *Johnathan Worth: A Biography of a Southern Unionist* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 42.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 8-11.

- <sup>9</sup> Powell, 257 ff. See also H.G. Jones, "Murphey, Archibald DeBow," *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Vol. 4 (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 345.
- <sup>10</sup> M.C.S. Noble, *A History of the Public Schools of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 59 ff.
- <sup>11</sup> Zuber, 42
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 47
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 53
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.
- <sup>15</sup> Worth and his wife, Martitia Daniel, would have eight children, seven of whom were daughters: Roxana Cornelia, b. 1826; Lucy Jane, b. 1828; Eunice Louisa, b. 1831; Elvira Evelynna, b. 1836; Sarah Corinne, b. 1839; Adelaide Ann, b. 1842; and Mary Martitia, b. 1846. Son David Gaston, Eunice Louisa's twin, was born in 1831. William Underwood, "Miss Elvira" (manuscript), Worth Family File, Randolph Room, Randolph County Public Library, Asheboro, NC. Dates verified at findagrave.com.
- <sup>16</sup> Zuber, p. 42.
- <sup>17</sup> "Randolph Female Academy," *Southern Citizen* [Asheboro, N.C.], 8 February 1839, in Charles Lee Coon, *North Carolina Schools and Academies, 1790-1840: A Documentary History* (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1915), 337.
- <sup>18</sup> Randolph County Deed Book 25, 274-275.
- <sup>19</sup> "Asheborough Female Academy," *Southern Citizen*, 14 June 1839 in Coon, p. 338. Various spelled as "Rea."
- <sup>20</sup> Elvira Evelynna Worth Moffitt, "Asheboro Randolph County Schools," [1915-1916] *Moffitt Papers – Randolph County (Envelope 3)*, Randolph Room, Randolph County Public Library, Asheboro, NC. Later compiled in "Reproduction of Education History by Mrs. E.E. Moffitt," *The Daily Courier* [Asheboro, N.C.], 12 August 1937, *Moffitt Papers – Randolph County (Envelope 3)*. Moffitt was a daughter of Jonathan Worth and an alumna of the Female Academy, writing from firsthand recollection. See also Underwood. Moffitt was married three times: to Samuel Spencer Jackson, Samuel Walker and Eli N. Moffitt. She is hereinafter referred to as Moffitt, her name at the time of her writing, and to distinguish her from Randolph County Historian Laura Worth, who also is cited.
- <sup>21</sup> "Asheborough Female Academy," *Southern Citizen*, 14 June 1839, in Coon, 338.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* Dollar value calculated at Inflation Calculator, <http://www.in2013dollars.com/1839-dollars-in-2017?amount=6>.
- <sup>25</sup> "The Asheboro' Academy," *Southern Citizen*, 1 November 1839, in Coon, 339.
- <sup>26</sup> Coon, xiii.
- <sup>27</sup> Laura Worth, "Asheboro Female Academy," *The Courier-Tribune* [Asheboro, N.C.], 26 August 1945, 8. Worth was county historian when this article was written.
- <sup>28</sup> Coon, 339-340
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 340. The *Emerson's Arithmetic* mentioned is *The North American Arithmetic* by Frederick Emerson .
- <sup>30</sup> Worth.
- <sup>31</sup> "Asheboro, Female Academy," *Southern Citizen*, 17 January, 1840, in Coon, 342.
- <sup>32</sup> "The Exercise of the Williamsborough School...," *Raleigh Register and North-Carolina Gazette*, 22 January, 1841, 4 [GenealogyBank.com]. Unless otherwise indicated, newspaper articles cited herein were accessed at North Carolina Historic Newspapers, a product of Newspapers.com, via NC LIVE ([www.nclive.org](http://www.nclive.org)), or directly at Newspapers.com.
- <sup>33</sup> Coon, xiii. Coon states on his own authority that Rae matriculated at Troy, but primary source documentation has not been found.
- <sup>34</sup> For background on Willard, see "Willard, Emma Hart," *American National Biography*, Vol. 23 (New York: Oxford University Press), 1999, 408-410.
- <sup>35</sup> Mary Mason Fairbanks, *Emma Willard and Her Pupils or Fifty Years of Troy Female Seminary, 1822-1872* (New York: Mrs. Russell Sage, 1898) 14 [Archive.org. By 1872, over 200 schools employed the Troy teaching philosophy, half of them south [*ibid.*, 15].
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.
- <sup>37</sup> See various references in Fairbanks and Coon.
- <sup>38</sup> Fairbanks, 155-156.
- <sup>39</sup> Coon, p. 335.

<sup>40</sup> “New Seminary,” *Fayetteville Observer*, 7 December 1842, 3. Whitney’s Christian and maiden names, and other background information are not evident; she does not appear in Fairbanks, which includes an exhaustive, if not necessarily complete, listing of Troy alumnae during its first 50 years.

<sup>41</sup> Moffitt.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. See also “Died,” *Fayetteville Weekly Observer*, 6 September 1843, p. 3.

<sup>44</sup> “A Situation Wanted,” *Raleigh Register*, 15 December 1843, p.1.

<sup>45</sup> Fairbanks, 254-255.

<sup>46</sup> Moffitt.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> P. Judson, letter to Marinda Branson, 1 June 1848, Branson Family File Box 1, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C.

<sup>49</sup> “Memoir,” *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, 24 September 1857, 4., referencing Phebe Judson as head of the Greensboro Female College in 1839; various 1939 newspaper articles refer to “Miss Judson” at the college. Also “Greensboro’ Female College,” *The Raleigh Register*, 25 August 1846, 4.

<sup>50</sup> “Greensboro Female College,” *The Raleigh Register*, 18 December 1847, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Kathy Crowell, “Fayetteville Academy,” *rootsweb.ancestry.com*, 25 February 1999, and “Fayetteville Academy,” *Fayetteville Academy: Nathan R. Chapman, A.B. Principal...*, Fayetteville, N.Y.: Fayetteville Academy, undated flyer [Google Books]. But she doesn’t appear in Fairbanks.

<sup>52</sup> P. Judson, letter to Marinda Brinson.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Fairbanks, 396.

<sup>55</sup> Zuber, 43.

<sup>56</sup> Moffitt.

<sup>57</sup> Zuber, 43.

<sup>58</sup> “Wilhelmina (Minna) Raven,” Unidentified family history excerpt, Asheboro – Schools – Female Academy File, Randolph Room, Randolph County Public Library, Asheboro, N.C.

<sup>59</sup> “An Act to Incorporate the Trustees of the Ashborough Male Academy, in the county of Randolph,” *Laws of the State of North Carolina Passed by the General Assembly at the Session of 1842-43* (Raleigh: Thomas J. Lemay, Printer, 1843) 16. Drake, Marsh, McCain and Worth were appointed trustees, along with William A. Hamlin and John D. Clancey. This school was located on the southeast corner of Fayetteville and Academy streets, the future location of the public Fayetteville Street School. The Male Academy building does not survive.

<sup>60</sup> Randolph County Deed Book 25, p. 274, June 13, 1843.

<sup>61</sup> “An Act to Incorporate the Two Academies in the Town of Asheboro’,” *Public Laws of the State of North Carolina Passed by the General Assembly at its Session of 1854-55...* (Raleigh: Holden & Wilson, 1855), 12-13.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. Hardy Brown, Drake, Marsh, McCain and Jonathan Worth all had been appointed town commissioners when the legislature re-chartered Asheboro in 1845. “An Act to Appoint Commissioners for the Town of Asheborough, in the County of Randolph, and to Incorporate the Same,” *Laws of the State of North Carolina Passed by the General Assembly at the Session of 1844-45* (Raleigh: Thomas Lemay, Printer, 1845), 167.

<sup>63</sup> Moffitt. Brooks had married Nancy Jane McCain, daughter of Hugh McCain, on September 28, 1849. “Married,” *Wilmington Journal*, 28 September 1849, 3.

<sup>64</sup> “Ashboro’ Male and Female Academies,” *Weekly Raleigh Register*, 21 December, 1853, 3.

<sup>65</sup> Randolph County Deed Book 29, 394, 395

<sup>66</sup> See Franklin Bowditch Dexter, “Simeon Colton,” *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College...*, Vol. VI (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1912), 19-23 [Google Books], and Charlesanna Fox, “Colton, Simeon,” *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Vol. 1, 408-409.

<sup>67</sup> See Simeon Colton, *Diary, 1851-1861*, Simeon Colton Papers, 1840-1861, Southern Historical Collection, UNC-Chapel Hill, p. 41, <http://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/01394/>.

<sup>68</sup> The location of Summerville is now in Harnett County, which was created in 1855.

<sup>69</sup> See *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* entries for Robert Thomas Fuller, Bartholomew Fuller and Thomas Charles Fuller. It is interesting to note that details about this very accomplished woman’s life must be sifted from information focusing on the male sides of her families.

<sup>70</sup> Coon, 465

<sup>71</sup> Simeon Colton, "A Card," *The Raleigh Times*, 13 August 1852, 4. In an announcement about the upcoming term of the Cumberland Academy, Colton notes, "Mrs. Colton, who has long been engaged in teaching, will take charge of a class of females, in a separate department, aided by such assistance as may be required."

<sup>72</sup> Moffitt. The pupils would have been free people of color, as education of enslaved people was illegal.

<sup>73</sup> Another was sifted from the 1850 Census by historian John Hope Franklin, indicating that six children were reported by their families as attending school that year. See John Hope Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina 1790-1860* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1971), 169.

<sup>74</sup> "Ashborough Male and Female Academies," *Fayetteville Observer*, June 18, 1855, 3 [Digital NC]. James Hooper Colton graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1855.

<sup>75</sup> Colton, *Diary*, 56.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>77</sup> "Fayetteville Female High School," *The North-Carolinian* [Fayetteville, NC], 11 October 1856, 3.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 65

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-52. The student was John Beebe Strong, son of John McKay Strong, the mayor of Selma, Ala. The Strongs were originally from Fayetteville, and the boy had been placed under Colton's tutelage in preparation for college.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 53

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 58. Colton had previous experience with the potential consequences this type of division: a dispute between two prominent community members had undermined his Cumberland Academy. *Ibid.*, 11-12

<sup>82</sup> Moffitt.

<sup>83</sup> See various accounts in vertical files on the Female Academy, the Male Academy and the Asheboro Graded School, Randolph Room, Randolph County Public Library, Asheboro, N.C. Many are written or collected by former County Historian Laura Worth, and some continue to rely on the memory of Elvira Worth Moffitt.

<sup>84</sup> Henry King "School Holds Memories for Many," *The Courier-Tribune*, 11 June 1968, B1.

<sup>85</sup> Mildred Lambe, "History of the Asheboro Schools," [1934], Asheboro – Schools – History of City Schools and School Libraries file, Randolph Room, Randolph County Public Library, Asheboro, N.C., 2.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> "Asheboro Female Academy," *Randolph Regulator* [Asheboro, N.C.], 16 February 1876, 3.

<sup>88</sup> "State Normal School Second Annual Session," *The Chapel Hill Ledger*, 20 July 1878, 1.

<sup>89</sup> Randolph County Deed Book 29, p. 379, 1854; Randolph County Deed Book 31, p. 170, 1860; Randolph County Deed Book 32, p. 170, 1860; Randolph County Deed Book 38, p. 648, 1875.

<sup>90</sup> "An Act to Authorize Trustees of Ashboro Male and Female Academies to sell or donate and convey certain lots in the town of Ashboro, in Randolph County," *Laws and Resolutions of the State of North Carolina Passed by the General Assembly at its Session of 1887...* (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, State Printer and Binder, 1887) 907.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Lambe, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> "Asheboro Academy," *The Courier* [Asheboro, N.C.], 3 December 1891, 3.

<sup>94</sup> "Hillsboro," *The Farmer's Advocate* [Tarboro, N.C.], 2 December 1981, 1.

<sup>95</sup> "News of the State," *The State Chronicle* [Raleigh, N.C.], 19 August 1892, p.3.

<sup>96</sup> "An act to re-enact and amend chapter sixty-five of the laws of eighteen hundred and fifty four and fifty-five...," *Laws and Resolutions of the State of North Carolina Passed by the General Assembly at Its Session of 1891...* (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, State Printer and Binder, 1891), 1103.

<sup>97</sup> King.

<sup>98</sup> Randolph County Deed Book 73, 349. Dollar value calculated at <http://www.in2013dollars.com/1892-dollars-in-2017?amount=250>,

<sup>99</sup> Randolph County Deed Book 104, p. 500.

<sup>100</sup> Randolph County Deed Book 78, p. 450, 1894.

<sup>101</sup> King.

<sup>102</sup> "An Act to Build a Graded School Building in the Town of Asheboro," *Private Laws of the State of North Carolina Passed by the General Assembly at its Session of 1905...* (Raleigh, N.C.: E.M. Uzzell & Co., 1905), 1035.

<sup>103</sup> Randolph County Deed Book 122, p. 311, 4 April 1906.

<sup>104</sup> "Randolph Bulletin," *The Union Republican* [Winston-Salem, N.C.], 22 June 1911, 7.

<sup>105</sup> Randolph County Deed Book 122, p. 373.

<sup>106</sup> Worth.

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> "Female Academy, Schools Schedule Open Houses," *Randolph Guide* [Asheboro, N.C.], 10 November 1976, 1.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Zuber, 43

<sup>112</sup> "Asheboro Female Academy" *Southern Citizen* (North Carolina), February 8, 1839.

<sup>113</sup> Chip Womick, "'Friends of Female Education': The Asheboro Female Academy Opened in 1839," *The Courier-Tribune* [Asheboro, N.C.], 18 July 2015: 1B+.

<sup>114</sup> W. Fitzgerald Hill, "Longitudinal Section, Floor Plan, and Detail, Asheboro Female Academy, Asheboro, North Carolina," in *Built Heritage of North Carolina: Historic Architecture in the Old North State*, UA #110.041, University Archives, North Carolina State University Libraries, Raleigh, North Carolina.

<sup>115</sup> Randolph County Historical Society, "Plans for Exterior Restoration: Phase One" Asheboro Female Academy file, Randolph Room, Randolph County Public Library, Asheboro, N.C.

<sup>116</sup> "Asheboro Female Academy before restoration, 1946" *Randolph County Historical Photograph Collection*, Randolph County Public Library, Randolph Room, <http://www.randolphlibrary.org/historicalphotos.htm>

<sup>117</sup> "Asheboro Female Academy," *Randolph County Historic Photograph Collection*.

<sup>118</sup> Charles Burkhead, "Details, Asheboro Female Academy, Asheboro, North Carolina," Historic Architecture Research. Project Records (UA110.041), Special Collections Research Center at NCSU Libraries. <http://d.lib.ncsu.edu/collections/catalog/bh011304501>, "NCSU Libraries' Digital Collections: Rare and Unique Materials."

<sup>119</sup> Randolph County Historical Photographs, Randolph County Public Library, Randolph Room, <http://www.randolphlibrary.org/historicalphotos.htm>

<sup>120</sup> "The Old Female Academy," *The Courier-Tribune*, August 26, 1945, 8.

<sup>121</sup> "Asheboro Female Academy before restoration," Randolph County Historical Photographs

<sup>122</sup> Randolph County Historical Society, "Plans for Exterior Restoration: Phase One."

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>126</sup> Tony Mayer and Dr. Marie Weil, "Asheboro Female Academy Restoration: Landscape Design Report," Asheboro, N.C.: TreesNC, 27 April 2016, 3.

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