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# Schools of Covington

By

Mrs. Charles Miller

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SCHOOLS OF COVINGTON

About one hundred years ago my grandfather, Captain James H. Prather, settled in Covington with his wife and four small children. He was Commander of the Steamer, Magnolia, U.S. Mailboat, and later, during the Civil War, pressed into service and used as General Grant's Flag-Ship at Pittsburg's Landing, Tenn., in conveying wounded soldiers, both Union and Confederate, to Cincinnati hospitals. His children were all educated in the schools of Covington. My mother, Mrs. Frances Prather Kirk, attended the Judsonian Female Seminary in 1861. Often during my girlhood days did I hear her recall those perfect days at school. This institute was founded in 1856 by Miss S.A. Haines, she being principal, assisted by a full corps of teachers. Professor A. Drury was teacher of mathematics and latin. At the beginning of the Session there were about one hundred and sixty-seven students in attendance. This fact, in itself, furnished evidence of the high favor in which the Institute was held by the parents of the most outstanding families in Covington. The Seminary was a great credit to the city of Covington. Then the Civil War came and the school closed. My Uncle and Aunts attended the Valley School on Greer Street, between 7th and 8th Streets. It still stands and has been converted into a tenement and printing establishment.

The Western Baptist Theological Institute was founded in 1834 at Cincinnati and because of fruitless efforts to procure a site at moderate expense in that city, property was offered immediately south of what was then the city of Covington. This was the old building that stood on 11th Street between Madison Ave. and Russell St., possibly remembered by some later as the St. Elizabeth Hospital. The grounds of this building extended from Eleventh Street to what is now Eighth Street and from Madison Ave to Russell Street, shaded on each side by large trees. The entire park was beautiful. In the course of two or three weeks several purchases were made consisting of about three hundred and fifty-six acres of land, laying nearly the whole of it in one tract and at an expense of \$33,250. Sale was soon made of a portion of the land for \$22,500. and sufficient further sales were made to pay for the whole purchase and leave over two hundred acres clear of incumbrance for the purpose of the Baptist Institution. After a prosperous career of over twenty years, the Institution was removed to Georgetown, Ky., the seat of Georgetown College, which has proved the greatest feeder of the Theological School.

The Covington Female Seminary on Sandford Street was very popular for young women. It had two sessions of twenty weeks each and had been operation since 1843 under the same instructors, Mr. and Mrs. Orr. Board and tuition was \$100. for each session of twenty weeks with music and drawing extra.

Among other private schools of this time was Beech Grove Academy for both males and females. The course of instruction embraced all the branches of education usually taught at that period.

The first public high school was located on the northwest corner of 11th & Scott Streets, shortly after the Western Baptist Theological Seminary was abandoned. The first district school was erected in 1867 and still stands on its original site.

Mrs Charles Miller.