

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic BUCKINGHAM FEMALE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE HISTORIC DISTRICT (VHLC File #14-127)

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number VA Route 617 N/A not for publication

city, town Gravel Hill X vicinity of

state Virginia code 51 county Buckingham County code 029

3. Classification

Table with 4 columns: Category, Ownership, Status, Present Use. Includes checkboxes for district, building(s), structure, site, object, public/private/both, occupied/unoccupied/work in progress, accessible (yes/no), agriculture/commercial/educational/entertainment/government/industrial/military, museum/park/private residence/religious/scientific/transportation/other.

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple

street & number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Buckingham County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Buckingham state Virginia 23921

6. Representation in Existing Surveys (See Continuation Sheet #1)

(1) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission title Survey (File #14-127) has this property been determined eligible? yes X no

date 1963; 1982 federal X state county local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Buckingham Female Collegiate Institute Historic District consists of six properties located on VA Route 617 in the Gravel Hill area of Buckingham County, five of which are directly associated with the first college for women in Virginia and contribute to the historic character of the neighborhood. While the main Institute building was dismantled in 1906, the structures within the district all relate to the Institute which operated from 1837 to 1863. The surviving buildings in their setting present an image of a 19th-century rural community, whose livelihood depended directly upon the college. Constructed in brick and wood-frame, they are the President's House, the Henry James Brown House, the John S. West store-dwelling, the Institute Tavern, the Cobb-West-England House and Brown's Chapel. The latter structure does not contribute to the district since it was erected in 1980; however, the property itself has been the site of a church since the late 19th century.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

President's House (14-59)

Built in ca. 1852-53, the President's House is the only remaining structure on the original Institute property. The scale of the building is most impressive when compared to its counterpart at the old Randolph-Macon College President's House outside of Boydton, Mecklenburg County. Unlike that one-story, three-bay edifice of two decades earlier, the cottage at Buckingham is a five-bay, two-story brick structure covered by a moderately pitched hip roof. Greek Revival in its detailing, the facade (north) has a one-story Doric porch which shelters the main entrance. The main doorway with its sidelights, symmetrical molded trim, and square corner blocks suggests the influence of Asher Benjamin's Practical House Carpenter. Benjamin's work was first published in Boston in 1830 and reprinted to the period of the President's House. The fenestration is symmetrical and consists of 6/6 hung-sash windows topped by Greek Revival lintels. Four semi-exterior chimneys are found on the east and west elevations. The interior has a central passage and retains most of its original woodwork.

Henry James Brown House (14-56)

Across the road from the President's House is the Henry James Brown House, built in ca. 1852-53. It is a two-story, three-bay structure with its facade executed in stretcher-bond brick. Like the President's House, it has 6/6 hung-sash windows topped by Greek Revival-style lintels. The main entrance took its present Colonial Revival-style appearance in ca. 1948 when a one-story wing was also added to the east side of the structure. Chimney stacks break the roof line on the east and west elevations. The central-passage interior retains its original woodwork.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Women's history
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1837-1863 **Builder/Architect** Carrol M. Shepard and others

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Among the leading reform movements of the antebellum period in America were the crusades for education and women's rights. Infused with the rising Protestant evangelical zeal of the Second Great Awakening, the two crusades found common ground in the demand that women enjoy the same educational advantages as men. In Virginia the early movement to provide women equal access to colleges and universities is vividly represented by the Buckingham Female Collegiate Institute Historic District in Buckingham County. The first chartered college for women in Virginia, Buckingham Female Collegiate Institute was incorporated by the General Assembly in 1837, opened its doors to scholars one year later, and functioned intermittently until 1863, when it fell as one of the many casualties of the Civil War. Leadership and support for the Institute came largely from Virginia Methodists, who regarded the school much as the female counterpart to Randolph-Macon College for men, from which the Institute itself recruited many of its leading instructors and staff. Although the main Institute building was dismantled in 1906, five other structures survive from the Institute era as tangible reminders of this important educational and religious venture. These include the President's House, completed by 1853 as the residence of Institute President, the Rev. John Chapman Blackwell; the Henry James Brown House, home of Methodist minister and gifted painter Henry James Brown who taught at the Institute and served as the vice-president of its board; the Cobb-West-England-Dennis House, built as the residence of Susan Cobb, a female instructor at the Institute; the Institute Tavern, where visitors and guests of the school lodged and students kept accounts; and the residence of John S. West, an officer of the Institute who served later as village postmaster. Preserving the undisturbed image of an antebellum crossroads in the Gravel Hill neighborhood of rural Buckingham county, the district recalls an interesting chapter in what remains the largely unwritten history of women's contributions to the Commonwealth. While no archaeological fieldwork has yet been undertaken in the district, further investigation of the Institute site may reveal the location and use chronology of various buildings within the original academic complex. Such information should elucidate not only the physical development of the Institute itself, but also broader trends in the evolution of antebellum institutional architecture.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1831 citizens of Buckingham County, proposing the establishment of a local female school, organized themselves into a supervising committee led by Samuel Shepard and Dr. John Wesley Langhorne. The group procured a level site for the school near Alpha on the Richmond-Lynchburg stage route, solicited funds from private investors and the Methodist Conference of Virginia, publicized the usefulness of the school to the community, and finally directed Carrol M. Shepard, a builder and

9. Major Bibliographical References (See Continuation Sheet #9)

- Ahlstrom, Sydney E. A Religious History of the American People. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972.
- Bailey, Rufus William. "Female Education." The Patriarch: or Family Library Magazine, November 1841, pp. 214-216.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approx. 18 acres

Quadrangle name Dillwyn, VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References Gold Hill, VA

A

1	7	7	3	2	1	0	0	4	1	6	2	6	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

1	7	7	3	1	8	5	0	4	1	6	2	4	3	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

1	7	7	3	1	8	0	0	4	1	6	2	7	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

1	7	7	3	2	0	5	0	4	1	6	2	4	9	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

1	7	7	3	1	7	1	0	4	1	6	2	4	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Boundary Justification:

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property of the Buckingham Female Collegiate Institute Historic District consists of eighteen acres. The boundaries are drawn to include a mere fraction of the original Institute property and the
(See Continuation Sheet #10)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date 1984

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

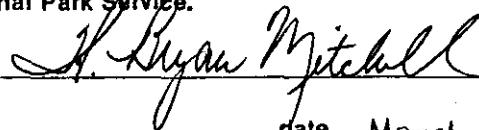
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission



date March 20, 1984

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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6. REPRESENTATIVE IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) John S. West Tavern, HABSI
1957, Federal
Library of Congress
Washington, DC
- (3) Henry James Brown, HABSI (Beverly Brown, II House)
1957, Federal
Library of Congress
Washington, DC

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

John S. West Tavern

(14-27)

Unlike the previous structures, the John S. West Residence is a wood-frame building with a side-passage plan. The edifice was built in ca. 1850 and stands two stories in height on a high brick foundation. It has two exterior chimneys on the western elevation and is covered by a gable roof. The principal fenestration is symmetrical and consists of 6/6 hung-sash windows. One-story porches dominate the north and south elevations. In 1956 a one-story wood-frame wing was added to the west elevation.

The Store-Dwelling

(14-4)

The store-dwelling, located twenty feet east of the main house, features a porch on the front (south) elevation and an enclosed addition on the north elevation. The west elevation has two chimneys. The northwest chimney is stone and has a brick chimney stack. The southwest chimney is executed in American-bond brick. A wood pent is found between the two chimneys.

The interior, while somewhat altered, does maintain a 19th-century ambiance. The first floor has a large open room which was originally divided into two spaces. A small "store keeper's" office is located in a southeast projection. A small space for a former post office occupies the western part of the structure and has a postmaster's office and another room. The building's half-story constitutes an open loft. Two small chambers are found on the north side of the first floor.

Cobb-West-England-Dennis House

(14-126)

On the south side of the road across from the store and tavern is an abandoned house, built in ca. 1850. The two-story, wood-frame dwelling sits on a stone rubble foundation. A one-story porch serves to shelter the first story of the main (north) elevation and a smaller one-story porch covers the rear entrance. An exterior American-bond brick chimney is found on the west elevation. A smokehouse is all that remains of a small collection of outbuildings.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

*Brown's Chapel (14-128)

The chapel is a one-story, wood-frame structure. It was built in 1980 to replace a late 19th-century church that burned. The church's cemetery is located to the rear of the present building. The building is a noncontributing structure since it is less than fifty years old.

*Indicates noncontributing structure.

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

son of Samuel, to plan and construct the necessary Institute buildings. On January 13, 1837 the General Assembly incorporated the "Trustees of the Female Collegiate Institute," marking the transformation of the projected school into the first chartered women's college in Virginia.¹

This transformation was most evident in Shepard's ambitious design for the main Institute building, erected between 1833 and 1838 on a tract of land donated by A.J. Huestis and Robert G. Loving. A brick structure of three stories with wings of two stories designed to accommodate 120 boarding students, the building contained 52 rooms, some of them large lecture rooms, and stood 180' in length by 36' in width. Its interior featured notable woodwork and plasterwork in the principal hall and lecture rooms, a beautiful modeled plaster hourglass stairway, a paneled music room painted in Greek motifs, and a library in walnut containing about three thousand books. To the west of this imposing building stood the original President's cottage, while to the rear were erected a brick kitchen, a barn and yard for cows, chickens, and pigs, and a stable accommodating twelve horses. A small wooden cottage which stood west of the rear outbuildings served as the Institute infirmary. To the southeast of the main building lay the Institute garden and a large summer house. Unfortunately, nothing remains of any of these buildings, although several engravings of the Institute showing the main building in its setting do survive.²

Welcoming its first scholars in 1838, the Institute offered what was then called "the common college curriculum" and conferred two degrees: Mistress of English Literature and Mistress of Classical Literature.³ Employing a number of textbooks used by the men at Randolph-Macon College, the course of studies included English Grammar, Written Composition, Rhetoric, Ancient and Modern Geography, Natural and Moral Philosophy, Chemistry, Astronomy, Ancient and Modern History, Botany and Mathematics, Ancient and Modern Languages, and Music, Drawing and Painting. This liberal curriculum far exceeded in range and degree of difficulty that of most

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

female schools where the intellectual regimen typically consisted of the most elementary branches of an English education and the rudiments of science, music, and painting, and where no course led to a degree.⁴ The Institute recruited an outstanding faculty from Virginia and the North who were aided by female assistants in all departments. As did few other female schools of the era, the Institute held semi-annual examinations, at the last of which, in June, degrees were conferred at a public exhibition. The common opinion was that participation in public and literary anniversaries such as the Institute's June week were indelicate and unnatural for young ladies.⁵

That the circle of learning at the Institute aimed to be wider than the conventional female school was also apparent in the motives which impelled the interests and activities of its largely Methodist leadership. Officers of the school challenged the accepted notion that a learned education was not suited to the female mind and sphere of action. Illustrating the school's enlightened attitude was the tenor of an address delivered by the Rev. D.S. Doggett of Petersburg at the Institute's June 1841 exhibition.⁶ Doggett, a future Methodist bishop, went so far as to term a well cultivated intellect "the brightest ornament of woman," exceeding in brilliance even the virtues of Christian charity. While he generally acquiesced in conventional notions of a woman's proper sphere at home and in society, he condemned the prevailing system of female education for its lack of competent instructors and scientific illustration, for withdrawing women from school too early, and, above all, for failing to expect as much intellectuality of women as of men. By contrast, said Doggett, the Institute offered a young woman every means of a solid literary and domestic education with the same educational advantages conferred upon the male."⁷ "Let her teachers be competent, her studies thorough, her time of education protracted and knowledge be demanded of her," Doggett concluded, "and she will shine as brilliantly, think as profoundly, and generalize as widely as man."⁸

As the presence of the Rev. Doggett at commencement suggested, the Institute enjoyed official support from Virginia Methodists, who both as individuals and as a denomination exhibited a growing interest in education, including female education, during the 1830s.⁹ Whether the church as a body participated other than as a patron in the actual founding of the Institute is not certain; however, it is known that by 1841 the Institute operated under the direction of the Methodist Conference of Virginia, which had appointed its own agent for the school immediately upon its establishment.¹⁰ The first president of the board of trustees was William A. Smith, an outstanding Methodist minister and later founder of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South and president of Randolph-Macon College. The Institute's first president was the Rev. Purlee Wilbur, a graduate of Wesleyan University in Connecticut. Succeeding presidents to a man were Methodists ministers and graduates of Methodist colleges or universities.¹¹ According to a leading historian of Methodist education

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

in this period, the denomination's involvement in founding colleges such as Randolph-Macon, Emory and Henry, and the Female Institute sprang from a conviction that the Christian gospel was best proclaimed in the context of liberal learning.¹² The church, hoping to promote the rising evangelical movement of the day, encouraged through its conferences the appointment of Methodist preachers to schools and colleges, and, after 1840, enjoined its clergy to take up collections for the support of the schools. The Institute benefited from this support, which underwrote some of its administrative expenses as well as the salaries of Methodist ministers on its faculty. When one considers the founding dates of other Methodist institutions which have put forth claims of priority in the matter of collegiate education for women in America--for example, Cincinnati Wesleyan College for Young Women (1842), Ohio Wesleyan Female College (1853), and Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin (which awarded three women A.B. degrees in its first graduating class in 1857)--it becomes clear that the establishment of the Buckingham Female Collegiate Institute put Virginia and Virginia Methodists in the forefront of the antebellum movement on behalf of college education for women.¹³

In addition to the original Institute buildings erected by Carrol Shepard, a number of residences arose in the vicinity of the Institute to accommodate members of the Institute faculty, three of which survive in the historic district. Most important is the President's House or Institute House, a large, two-story, center-hall, brick dwelling of eight rooms erected for the Rev. John Chapman Blackwell in ca. 1852-53.¹⁴ Blackwell became President of the Institute in 1848, serving in that capacity until the school closed in 1863. A contemporary biographer identified him as the first graduate of Randolph-Macon College and a founder of the Hunton Hill School in Lunenburg, where he served for nine years before his appointment at the Institute.¹⁵ An ordained Methodist minister, he received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Randolph-Macon in 1861. Throughout his tenure at Buckingham he served as professor of Ethics, Mathematics, and Natural Science with the assistance of Miss Mary Blackwell, his daughter, who also lived in the house. He scrupulously preserved the archives of the Institute but after his death his collection was lost in a fire in the 1930s. Blackwell's house today serves as the residence and farmhouse of the Wesley D. Waycaster family of Gravel Hill.¹⁶

Another notable faculty residence preserved at Gravel Hill from the Institute era is the Henry James Brown House, built for Brown and his family in ca. 1852.¹⁷ Brown (1811-1854), an ordained Methodist minister and itinerant artist who studied painting with George Caleb Bingham and Thomas Sully, joined the faculty of the Institute under Blackwell in 1848. In addition to his responsibilities as professor of fine arts, he became a stockholder and served as vice-president of the Institute's board of directors in charge of recruitment. Brown was a native of Cumberland County who moved to Saline County, Missouri after his marriage to Susan Ann Hobson in 1833. In Missouri, he raised hemp, preached the gospel and, in the phrase of his biographer, "built churches and schools."¹⁸ In his adopted state he also met

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

George Caleb Bingham (like Brown, a transplanted Virginian) who encouraged his artistic development and later brought him to Philadelphia to meet Thomas Sully. By 1847 Brown had returned with his family to Virginia where he again combined a multiple career as planter, preacher, and itinerant painter. His surviving artistic work consists mainly of portraiture done in Southside Virginia during the period of his residence at the Institute. Some fifty of his paintings have been identified, the greatest number of which belong to Brown descendants living in the vicinity of Lynchburg.¹⁹ Brown's closest friend on the faculty was Ar mand Preot, for whom Brown drew the likeness of the Buckingham Female Collegiate Institute that appeared on the cover sheet of Preot's published composition, "The Buckingham Polka," dedicated to the young ladies of the college. It remains the most detailed and handsome contemporary image of the school in existence.²⁰

The 1850 census listed Brown as living at the Institute. In 1851 he bought three tracts of land, including the parcel of one and a half acres on which the present dwelling was erected by 1852. The similarity of the brickwork and other details of the Brown residence to those of the President's House built one year later suggests the possibility of a common builder. Brown died at the Institute in 1854. In 1863, the brick house and seven and a half acres were sold to Col. Beverly A. Brown who gave it to his daughter, Emiline Brown Moseley. In 1917 John Edmund West, son of John S. West, bought the property. The present owners of the Henry James Brown House are Mr. and Mrs. John Francis West.²¹ The Wests have donated West family papers relating to the Institute to the Virginia Historical Society, and it was Mrs. West's diligent research which uncovered Henry James Brown's connection to this property, the construction date of the President's House, and many other important historical details and associations relating to the Institute and the district.

One other residence historically associated with the Institute is the currently unoccupied house on the southeast corner of the intersection of routes 617 and 668. During the life of the Institute, the house belonged to Vernon Cobb, who was married to Sarah Brown, daughter of Institute founder and trustee Beverly A. Brown. According to an advertisement in the Richmond Christian Advocate of January 18, 1855, Ms. Cobb served under President Blackwell as assistant in the English and Scientific Course at the Institute.²² Her house later belonged to the John S. West estate, serving as a tenant house until 1918. Known locally as the West-England-Dennis House, it is presently owned by Mrs. Anne Marie Dennis Miller of Richmond.

Across the road from the Cobb House and the Institute site is an early 19th-century tavern owned throughout the antebellum period by John S. West and known to boarding students at the Institute as the Institute Store.²³ In addition to supplying books and other goods to students and to the school, West took in some of

(See Continuation Sheet #6)

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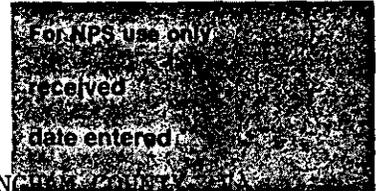
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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

the faculty and students as boarders, and annually put up parents and visitors at the tavern during commencement week.²⁴ Although West's chief business was accommodating travelers passing through Gravel Hill on their way to Richmond or Lynchburg,²⁵ West served as sometimes acting secretary for the Institute's board of trustees. West became the official postmaster of Gravel Hill, and with the close of the Institute, he renamed the store, the West Country Store and Post Office. The building, which served as the village post office from 1865 to 1901, retains its original window panes with bars over the post office keeproom as well as its original floors and floor plan.

Standing only twenty feet west of the store-dwelling is the tavern, erected ca. 1850 possibly after the design of West's brother, Albert Lawrence West, a prominent Richmond architect of the period. The house now serves as the home of Mr. and Mrs. Murril N. Howe, who use the store-dwelling as a guest house.²⁶

Despite the enthusiasm of its founders, the patronage of the Methodist Church, and the nobility of its aims, the Institute quickly ran into financial difficulties from which it was never fully extricated. Accusations of poor financial management, the loss of investor confidence following the Panic of 1837, and the growing schism over slavery and sectionalism in the Methodist Church all resulted in a loss of students, forcing the school to close in 1844.²⁷ In 1845, the trustees offered the property for sale for six thousand dollars to northern agriculturalist J.F. Schermenhorn, who sought to use the buildings for agricultural instruction. Schermenhorn appealed to the General Assembly and to the general public but failed to obtain necessary support for the scheme.²⁸ In a pattern repeated at other Methodist colleges founded in this period such as Drew and Dickenson, the Methodist Conference finally intervened to save the school's existence.²⁹ In 1848 Institute trustees obtained a second charter from the General Assembly, issued a new subscription of stock after refunding the debt, and persuaded John C. Blackwell and Henry James Brown to purchase stock and serve as faculty and officers of the revived Institute. For several years the school's prospects improved as Brown's recruitment campaign began to bear fruit. Once again the optimism of the friends of the Institute was reflected in a building campaign, this time the construction of a new President's House, and the new Brown and West residences. Unfortunately, the school soon lapsed into its former state, steadily draining the finances of its stockholders.³⁰ A letter of William B. Shepard to his cousin in 1856 throws interesting light on the Institute's dilemma:

The Institute has never made any money but it has kept its standards high—perhaps too high for its own welfare. In the beginning it had as remarkable body of instructors as I ever saw, many of whom would have done honor to the University of Virginia. It still has a fine faculty. I wonder at the splendid teachers lavished on the Institute and grow angry at the foolishness of men who make such³¹ a fine undertaking the object of their prejudice and ignorance.

(See Continuation Sheet #7)

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

The final blow came with the Civil War, which caused most of the students to be withdrawn from the school by 1862. In 1863 all instruction ceased except for some private tutoring done by President Blackwell in his home, and the main building became a refuge for several Northern Virginia families displaced by the Union occupation. Dr. Blackwell hoped to reopen the school when the war ended but his dream failed for want of funds and he became Professor of Chemistry at Randolph-Macon College. After discussions of converting the Institute into a private summer resort or public mental hospital came to naught, and no other adaptive reuse could be found, the furniture was gradually carried off, the books dispersed and the interior features removed. In 1906 the main structure was finally dismantled and the bricks sold to neighboring farmers, leaving the remaining buildings in the historic district as the only tangible reminders of this historically important school.³²

A more recent loss was the destruction of Brown's Chapel in an electrical storm on July 17, 1980. Sited directly north of the main Institute building and the President's House, the original chapel had been built in 1884 on a one-acre parcel of land deeded to the chapel's trustees by Dr. John Chapman Blackwell and Armand Preat. A local tradition holds that Methodist families of the community had met previously to worship in the Institute Chapel, a reference either to the principal hall of the college (also the center of worship at Randolph-Macon in Boydton) or to the summer house which stood formerly on a rise overlooking the Institute garden and served after 1846 as a Methodist parsonage. The builder of the chapel was Samuel Williams, charter member of the church and, like the chapel trustees, scion of one of the Institute's founding families. The congregation used the Institute bell and bible in their services and continued to use the Institute cemetery (now destroyed) until 1929 when John Edmund West conveyed one acre of land to the chapel for the present cemetery. The 1980 fire destroyed the Institute bell and bible. Citizens of Buckingham and the surrounding counties responded immediately to the loss by raising sufficient funds for the erection of a new church building on the original site. Although the new structure does not contribute to the historic fabric of the district, the site and the cemetery have been included as historical links to the Institute and its Methodist origins.

RAC

¹William Shepard, "Buckingham Female Institute," William and Mary Quarterly, 2nd Series Vol. 20 (1940): 171, 174.

²Ibid., pp. 172-174.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background (Footnotes)

³Rufus William Bailey, "Female Education," The Patriarch: or Family Library Magazine, November 1841, p. 214.

⁴David Seth Doggett, "The Proper Ornament of Woman," The Patriarch: or Family Library Magazine, November 1841, p. 200.

⁵Bailey, pp. 214-215.

⁶Doggett, pp. 193-213.

⁷Ibid., p. 201.

⁸Ibid., p. 201.

⁹Sylvanus Milne Duvall, The Methodist Episcopal Church and Education Up to 1869, (New York: Columbia University), pp. ix, 62-83.

¹⁰Bailey, p. 214; Shepard, p. 178.

¹¹Shepard, pp. 178-181, 348-349; William M.E. Rachal, "Virginia's First College of Women," Virginia Cavalcade 2 (Summer 1952): pp. 44-46.

¹²Duvall, pp. 73-75.

¹³Ibid., pp. 73-75.

¹⁴Sue West, "The President's House, Gravel Hill, Buckingham County," Gravel Hill, 1983 (Typewritten).

¹⁵Shepard, p.349.

¹⁶West, "The President's House, Gravel Hill, Buckingham County."

¹⁷Sue West, "The Brick House, Gravel Hill, Buckingham County," Gravel Hill, 1983 (Typewritten).

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹George C. Grace and David H. Wallace, eds., "Henry James Brown," The New York Historical Society of Artists in America, 1564-1860 (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 86-87; Lucille McWane Watson, "Virginia planter-painter Henry James Brown," Antiques, October 1971, pp. 591-595. Ms. Watson incorrectly disputes Brown's identity as a Methodist minister.

²⁰Brown's signature on the sheet music as "Rev. Henry J. Brown" was first noted by Sue West. The painting is reproduced in Rachal, p. 45.

(See Continuation Sheet #9)

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background (Footnotes)

²¹Sue West, "The Brick House, Gravel Hill, Buckingham County."

²²Shepard, p. 353.

²³Sue West, "The Tavern Store-Dwelling and Post Office for Gravel Hill, Virginia," Gravel Hill, 1983 (Typewritten); Shepard, p. 358.

²⁴Shepard, pp. 358-364.

²⁵Sue West, "The Tavern Store-Dwelling and Post Office for Gravel Hill, Virginia."

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Rachal, pp. 45-46; Shepard, pp. 187-193.

²⁸Rachal, p. 46; Shepard, pp. 346-347.

²⁹Duvall, pp. 68-70; Rachal, p. 46; Shepard, pp. 347-349.

³⁰Shepard; pp. 349-352.

³¹William B. Shepard to J.C. Shepard, November 1856, Quoted in Shepard, p. 353.

³²Rachal, p. 47; Shepard, pp. 363-365. Blackwell's nephew was Robert Emory Blackwell (1854-1938), distinguished president of Randolph-Macon College.

³³Sue West, "Brown's Chapel Methodist Church, Gravel Hill, Buckingham County," Gravel Hill, 1983 (Typewritten).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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(See Continuation Sheet #10)

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- _____. "The President's House, Gravel Hill, Buckingham County." Gravel Hill 1983 (Typewritten). Located in Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives (14-59).
- _____. "The Tavern Store-Dwelling and Post Office for Gravel Hill, Virginia." Gravel Hill 1983 (Typewritten). Located in Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives (14-27).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA -- Verbal Boundary Description and Boundary Justification

only visible reminder of the first college for women in Virginia: President's House, the Institute Site, the Cobb-West-England-Dennis House, the John S. West Tavern. the John S. West store-dwelling, the Henry James Brown House, and the Brown's Chapel site and cemetery.

Verbal Boundary Description: Beginning at a point on the S side of VA Route 617 approximately 750' W of intersection of said route and VA Route 668; thence following W side of private drive for approximately 400' S; thence following said side of said drive for approximately 300' WSW; thence following natural contour line for approximately 1200' in an easterly direction to a point approximately 150' E of VA Route 668; thence extending approximately 600' NNE crossing VA Route 617; thence extending approximately 1000' W; thence extending approximately 200' S, crossing VA Route 617 to point of origin.

USGS 7.5' quadrangle
Dillwyn, VA
Gold Hill, VA

(scale:1:24000)
1968
1968 (PR 1981)

BUCKINGHAM FEMALE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE
HISTORIC DISTRICT, Buckingham County, VA

UTM References:

A 17/732100/4162660
B 17/732050/4162490
C 17/731850/4162430

D 17/731710/4162410
E 17/731800/4162700

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