

# Rhodes College Digital Archives - DLynx

## Report to the Trustees of Stewart College

Item Type	Other
Authors	McMullen, R. B.
Publisher	Memphis, Tenn. : Rhodes College Archives
Rights	Rhodes College owns the rights to the archival digital objects in this collection. Objects are made available for educational use only and may not be used for any non-educational or commercial purpose. Approved educational uses include private research and scholarship, teaching, and student projects. For additional information please contact <a href="mailto:archives@rhodes.edu">archives@rhodes.edu</a> . Fees may apply.
Download date	2026-04-21 10:45:08
Link to Item	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10267/16175">http://hdl.handle.net/10267/16175</a>

To the Trustees of Stewart College.

Gentlemen:

By an agreement entered into with you on the 5th day of Sept. 1861, I was to take the College for one year on my own responsibility: That is, I was to engage and pay all necessary teachers, have all the income from tuition, bonds, subscriptions, buildings, etc. In accordance with this arrangement, I entered upon the duties of instruction on the first Monday in Sept. [1861] assisted by Mr. A. C. Hirsh, the former tutor of the College at his former salary. The number of pupils in attendance during the first session was thirty-six (36) nearly all of whom were in the Preparatory department, every student of the former College being in the army who was able to bear arms excepting two from Kentucky.

On the 20th day of Jany., 1862, I commenced the second session of the Collegiate year, with as favorable prospects as the preceding tho' much troubled in both as well appear hereafter. This session we taught in the Lecture room of the Presbyterian Church which had been kindly offered to us, the College building being occupied by the Confederate Soldiers as a Hospital. At the end of four weeks our brave and dauntless soldiers were overwhelmed at Fort Donelson thereby causing the surrender of both place and men into the hands of the enemy. At the end of another week the Federals came to this city and the parents thinking it unsafe for their children to pass through the streets on account of the enemies soldiery, the school was closed on the 21st of February. The latter part of March I attempted to revive it but for the reason above stated, the effort was without success and, being attacked with erysipelas, I abandoned all hope of resuscitating the school during the Summer.

The Boarding house of the College was taken by the Confederate Army. The 7th of Jan., '62, brought the demand for the entire College for Hospital purposes, which demand was of course at once cheerfully complied with. And this was followed on the 22nd of Jan. by an order from Col. Wm. A. Quarles, the Commandant of this post, that the Prest. should immediately vacate his residence in the College building for additional Hospital accommodations. This order was likewise complied with the following day and I moved to the house of Prof. Forbes.

Upon the arrival of the Federal soldiers here the Confederate sick and wounded were moved from the College and that building was used by the Federals for a similar purpose. The conduct of these last while occupying the College building was characterized by the grossest vandalism. Notwithstanding their solemn and oft repeated promises to respect and protect the property, they themselves, yes, the very officers who made these promises, four several times forced the doors of the cabinet rooms, broke open the cases of mineralogical and geological specimens and carried away many of the most valuable specimens, and choice portion of the books belonging to the Washing Irving Society, chairs, tables, curtains, etc., finally stripping even the College chapel of everything in it. The soldiers thus acting were in the building only about a month. They left on the 25th of March taking everything from the College, my cooking stove and other property, besides having seriously damaged the building and utterly

destroyed all the furniture. Immediately upon their departure I placed a family in the building with the view of protecting it, but about the middle of April other soldiers took possession of it. The chief officers occupied my residence for their quarters and used my parlor for their kitchen.

They were quite as lavish in good promises as their predecessors and equally reckless in regard to fulfilling them. In respect to the former vandalism I addressed a note to Col. Bayne of whom I certainly had hoped better things stating the excesses and oppressions of his inferiors in office. On the morning of the 25th of March his men being in the door ready to start to the boat, he sent for me and handed me a reply in which he took no notice of my protest, except to berate me soundly for asking such a thing, while I was not loyal to the United States. It may not perhaps be amiss for me to put on record that those who came in April and continued until the 18th of August were the 71st Reg. Ohio. Vol. who were disgraced at Pittsburg Landing or Shiloh for running from their enemies as fast and as far as practicable and who so disgracefully surrendered here, to a very small force without firing a gun.

From the varied facts disclosed above, the pecuniary receipts of the College were very small. That from the pupils being necessarily but little and much of the endowment funds being uncollected, and the Boarding house from which I hoped to realize something being entirely lost to me. Now this is in many respects a dark picture but I have the utmost confidence both in regard to the College and country, that the darkness will soon be dissipated, and the clear, bright light of liberty, honesty and love will soon cover the land.

Being solicited by several of the citizens to commence the exercises of the College again, without waiting till the 1st Monday of September, our usual time and having agreed with you to take the College another year upon the same terms I did the last year, I recommenced teaching on the 11th of Aug. and soon had 30 pupils, about a third of whom were about 15 years of age, and the others mere lads. On Monday, the 18th day of Aug., Cols. Johnson and Woodward, Confederate Commanders of Cavalry made a dash upon the Federal garrison here and captured them as above stated. This produced a war-fever which attacked all my larger boys and they left their studies and took up guns. I asked no one of them to stay but promptly refunded their money. I continued with the younger boys another month. In the meantime a number of men from Fort Donelson bearing the honored name of soldier, but being in spirit highwaymen came and took possession of Clarksville. Their outrages were so great that some of the parents sent their children into the country. Seeing no hope therefore of continuing the school with profit I closed it entirely on the 12th of Sept. And as I could see no prospect of being able to teach for a considerable time and believing that the interest of the College would be promoted by its discontinuance for a season, and allowing me to into some other business, I offered my resignation on the 11th of September, which you saw proper to decline receiving, but concluding to allow me in the meantime to engage in such other business as I wished.

On the same day of Sept. at a meeting of your Board it was deemed advisable to appoint competent workmen, or other persons to examine into and report upon the damages to the College by the Army during the last year. In accordance with your request I saw the persons appointed by you, took them to the premises, had the examination made and reports thereof presented. These damages were done in a small degree by our own Army soldiers, but almost wholly by the Federal Army. They consist of injuries done to the building, Grounds, fences, furniture, cabinets, chemicals, apparatus, etc., etc.

The total amount of damages assessed as given to and agreed upon by the Board is \$10, 780.50 besides the damage arising from having closed the College exercises so long. It is hoped that this amount of damages may yet be obtained in some way through our Government. I still hope through the goodness of God that sometime during the present collegiate year we may be allowed to resume our exercises and be able to prosecute our duties as before.

It is also my painful duty to report through you, and in your behalf to the Synod of Nashville in reference to the decease of Cols. A. Robb and W. A. Forbes. The Board deeply afflicted and in great sorrow report that on the 17th of Feby. Col. A. Robb one of our number was removed from earth by a wound received in the battle on the 15th while defending our rights and liberties at Fort Donelson. Col. Robb was one of our most liberal and efficient Trustees and an unwavering friend of the College. We feel that our loss is great in his removal from earth, but are happy in being able to say that we have not a shadow of doubt that the Saviour whom he served has taken him to himself. Nor is this the only affliction we are called upon to bear - On the first day of Sept. Col. Wm. A. Forbes, our Prof. of Mathematics, was called to a world of peace by a wound received the preceding day on the field of battle at Manassas while repelling our ruthless invaders from the sacred soil of his native Virginia. Col. Forbes was an able Professor and a successful instructor in his department and it will be difficult for us to fill his chair with one in every way so well qualified and with a heart so devoted to the interest of the Institution. But the God of Providence, who is also the God of love, has so ordered the removal of these two Christian gentlemen from our Country and from our College and to Him we look for guidance to fill their places.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

(Signed) R. B. McMullen, Pres.