Episcopal School for Boys (Raleigh) [1]

Episcopal School for Boys (Raleigh)

by Louis P. Towles, 2006

St. Mary's School, Raleigh, N.C. (Formerly Episcopal School for Boys), c 1909. Courtesy of Library of Congress. [2]

See Also: Episcopal Church [3]; Episcopal School for Boys (Salisbury) [4]; Saint Mary's School [5]

The Episcopal School for Boys (Raleigh) was begun in 1833 by the Episcopal Dioceses of North Carolina under the direction of Bishop Levi S. Ives [6]. Built on a 160-acre tract of land, at that time one mile west of the city, it was intended to improve the quality of religious education in the dioceses and to provide a quality preparatory school in the classics and Christian thought. Students were to be recruited from within the church and from among friends of the denomination, but it was understood that all pupils were to be grounded, as Ives put it, in "the doctrines, discipline, and worship of the Church."

The school was modeled on similar institutions in Round Hill, Mass., and Flushing, N.Y. It was controlled by a committee of clergymen and laity, or trustees, appointed yearly by the convention. This body, presided over by the bishop, employed a rector and several teachers to instruct and mold the young men, generally ages 14 to 19. Students were expected to rise at 5:00 a.m. and to work, with little recreation, until bedtime at 10:00 p.m. Smoking, forays into the capital, and insubordination were strictly forbidden and could result in immediate expulsion. In addition, the rector's word was law and could not be overruled, even by the trustees.

The course of study was both classical and theological. Students were trained in the essentials of English (writing, speaking, spelling, and grammar) as well as in Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, and Italian. Arithmetic, basic algebra, geography, and history were required, and as in most schools of the period, there were classes in the Bible and ethics. Between 1834 and 1835, the student body grew from 36 to more than 100, and the physical plant was increased from one building to five. In 1836 the Episcopal Church's North Carolina General Convention [7] gave $21,500 for the school's support, and ministers in New York subscribed an additional $10,000 a year later.

Progress, however, proved an illusion. The Episcopal School's rapid growth led to the incursion of greater debt than could be retired in the time allowed, and periodic student unrest made it difficult to maintain discipline and public support. Finally, the economic depression of 1836-45 rendered recovery all but impossible. The academy closed in 1838, and for the next three years Bishop Ives used the facility for the training of ministers. In 1842 the diocese recovered part of its investment by converting the academy into Saint Mary's [5] girls' school.

Reference:

Lawrence Foushee London and Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, *The Episcopal Church in North Carolina, 1701-1959* (1987).

Image Credit:

St. Mary's School, Raleigh, N.C. (Formerly Episcopal School for Boys), c 1909. Courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C., call #: PAN US GEOG, 29. Available from http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2007662515/ [2] (accessed June 6, 2012)

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