

Thomasville Female College ^[1]

Thomasville Female College

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by Jay Mazzocchi, 2006

Thomasville Female College was a nineteenth-century academy for girls that grew out of a series of previously established Christian schools in the [Davidson County](#) ^[3] town of Thomasville. The school's history actually began in 1856, when John W. Thomas, considered the founder of Thomasville, bought the Glen Anna Female Seminary and housed it in a new building north of the railroad on the eastern edge of his land. Thomas took over as president of the school. The 1857 graduating class consisted of five women, whose diplomas were given to them at the graduation ceremony not by Thomas but by [Braxton Craven](#) ^[4], the president of nearby [Trinity College](#) ^[5]. (The two schools were closely linked.)

Thomas soon renamed his institution Thomasville Female College, but the exact date of this change is not known. An 1861 letter from Thomas to a prospective student's father listed the contemporary expenses of the school: "Board and washing, \$25 for session; Tuition in English, \$7.50 for session; Music, \$8 for session; French, \$4 for session; [and] Latin, \$4 for session." A catalog from that era emphasized the strictness of the school's social environment: "The discipline of the institution combines mildness with firmness, inculcating strict order, prompt obedience, correct deportment and industry. . . . Students persisting in violations of morality or good order, or incurably indolent, will be promptly dismissed as unworthy a place in this or any other well regulated literary institution." None of Thomasville's students was allowed to "receive calls from gentlemen during study hours, at unreasonable hours and by no means on the Sabbath." The dipping of snuff was also "strictly forbidden."

Thomasville Female College continued to operate during the [Civil War](#) ^[6], although many of its northern teachers left at the start of the conflict. In 1885 Baptist minister J. N. Stallings arrived to help run the school. Soon after Stallings took over the entire administration, the student body began to dwindle and several quality teachers left. In 1888 Stallings abandoned the Thomasville campus and moved the college to [High Point](#) ^[7] in hopes of regaining the school's previous success. After four years of struggle, however, the college closed.

References:

J. W. Cannon, "Old School for Girls Has Place in History Despite Hectic Career," *Greensboro Daily News*, 3 Jan. 1932.

Mary Green Matthews, *Wheels of Faith and Courage: A History of Thomasville, North Carolina* (1951)

Subjects:

[Education](#) ^[8]

[Schools \(K-12\)](#) ^[9]

[Universities and colleges](#) ^[10]

[Women](#) ^[11]

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Origin - location:

[Davidson County](#) ^[13]

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^[1] <https://ncpedia.org/thomasville-female-college> ^[2] <https://ncpedia.org/education/womens-colleges> ^[3] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/davidson> ^[4] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/craven-braxton> ^[5] <https://ncpedia.org/trinity-college> ^[6] <https://ncpedia.org/history/cw-1900/civil-war> ^[7] <https://ncpedia.org/high-point-0> ^[8] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/education> ^[9] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/schools> ^[10] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/universities-and-> ^[11] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/women> ^[12] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/mazzocchi-jay> ^[13] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmon-11> ^[14] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia->