

Forey, Martin Rudolph ^[1]

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by R. Hargus Taylor, 1986

24 Dec. 1817–13 June 1881

Martin Rudolph Forey, clergyman and educator, was born in Troy, N.Y. In 1840 he matriculated in the preparatory department of Madison University (now [Colgate](#) ^[2]) upon recommendation of the Tabernacle Baptist Church in New York City. After two years of preparatory study, he spent two additional years in the collegiate department before moving to South Carolina in 1844. There he was principal of Barnwell Academy, Barnwell District, from 1844 to 1845 and a teacher in the Charleston Female Seminary from 1845 to 1847. While in Charleston he served for a time as an assistant to the pastor of Wentworth Street Church.

By October 1847, Forey was in New Bern, N.C., and serving as pastor of the [Baptist](#) ^[3] Church. He was ordained by that church to the full work of the ministry on 30 Jan. 1848, and continued to serve as pastor until January 1849. On 20 May 1849 the trustees of [Chowan Female Institute](#) ^[4], Murfreesboro, appointed him to succeed [Archibald McDowell](#) ^[5] as principal, a position he held until August 1854. During his first two years in Murfreesboro he also was pastor of the Murfreesboro Baptist Church.

Forey's administration witnessed two events of special significance for the life of the institute. First, he helped to devise and execute a plan to permit the expansion of its already crowded physical facilities while ensuring financial solvency. The plan called for the incorporation of a joint stock company, with shares of stock in the institute to be sold at \$25 each and to provide 6 percent interest to the shareholders. A spacious new building was to be erected upon the subscription of the first \$4,000 in the company. Within six months of the announcement of this plan, the friends of Chowan had subscribed over \$10,000. Second—and as a direct consequence of the initial success of this financial scheme—the "Columns Building" was constructed on a 28-acre site that had been obtained for this purpose. By November 1852 the four-story building was ready for occupancy. Constructed at a cost of \$15,725, the "Columns Building" remains a central landmark on the present campus of [Chowan College](#) ^[4].

However, the initial financial success did not continue. Even before the new structure had been completed, Forey had to report that the financial affairs of the board were "somewhat embarrassed in consequence of the recent reverses of the agricultural portion of the community, from whom our subscriptions were chiefly obtained." Financial arrangements became a bone of contention between Forey and the board of trustees, and between Forey and the Murfreesboro Baptist Church. It is also probable that Forey felt that the board was interfering unduly with his management of the academic affairs of the institute. At any rate, he made it known that he was resigning his position in order to open a new female seminary in Hampton, Va.

During his later years, Forey served as principal of the [Chesapeake Female College](#) ^[6] (1854–57); as a missionary of the Baptist Missionary Convention of New York, located in Delhi, N.Y. (1859–60); as pastor of the Baptist Church in Oswego, N.Y. (1860–63); and as a general agent for the Chicago Baptist Theological Seminary (1863–67). He was a leading spirit in the formation of a "Baptist College Colony," which in 1870 established Judson University and the town of Judsonia, in White County, Ark.

Forey's published works included *Female Education*, *Premature Church Membership* and *The Bible in Advance of Science*.

In October 1852 Forey married Elizabeth DeLancey of Hamilton, N.Y. He was buried in Unadilla, N.Y.

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Murfreesboro Baptist Church: <http://murfbcb.org/history> [8]

National Register of Historic Places, Cowper-Thompson House: <http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/HF0387.pdf> [9]

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