

Genetic History of Chicora College

Barry Waugh

September 2016, presbyteriansofthepast.com



The diagram describes key events in the history of Chicora College. It has been compiled from information found in Greenville newspapers, church records, *History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina Since 1850* by Jones and Mills, Chicora publications, and an M.A. thesis on the college by Jenny E. Cerny held by the South Caroliniana Library. The postcard image at the left above shows Chicora circa 1907 and is from the Greenville County Library Digital Collection. A third story and central dome were added in later years. The text in the lower left hand corner of the postcard reads “Wm. H. Cobb Co., 5 and 10 cent Stores.” According to Walsh’s *Directory of the City of Greenville, S. C. for 1905-1906*, p. 353, the Cobb store was located at 209 N. Main. While Chicora was in Greenville its property was approximately delimited by the current streets of South Main, River, Rhett, and West Camperdown Way. A 1913 map of the West End of Greenville can be found in the online collection of Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of the South Caroliniana Library in Columbia. The image to the right above views what is currently the Hampton-Preston Mansion and Gardens in Columbia which is located across Blanding Street from the Robert Mills House and Gardens. The building and property was the campus of Chicora College when it moved to Columbia to merge with The College for Women. The picture is from *Bulletin: Chicora College for Women*, Series 2, July 1916, No. 1, *Book of Views, Columbia, South Carolina*.

Greenville

Aug. 12, 1893—E. A. Smyth was elected president of the Board of Trustees for establishing a college for women to be chartered as “Greenville Female Seminary.” Other board members were G. A. Taylor, W. A. Hudson, O. P. Mills, W. H. Cely, G. H. Chapin, W. J. Graham, J. S. Cothran, J. A. Russell, Rev. N. J. Holmes, R. E. Henderlite, and T. M. McConnell.

Sept. 20, 1893—The school opened as “Chicora College” with J. F. McKinnon the president.

May 1899—Rev. S. R. Preston, D.D., became the second president of the college. Preston had been doing part-time work for Chicora since he became pastor of Second Presbyterian Church in December 1895.

1906—The presbyteries of Enoree, Bethel, & South Carolina of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (P.C.U.S.) purchased Chicora.

May 30, 1906—Chicora was re-chartered as a Presbyterian college.

June 1, 1906—Rev. Samuel Craig Byrd, D.D., became Chicora’s third president.

1914—In need of a larger campus, Chicora College sought union with The College for Women in Columbia. The funds obtained from the sale of the Greenville campus would be used to retire the debt of the college in Columbia.

Columbia

1887—The Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, Dr. N. M. Woods, along with W. A. Clark, and Dr. George Howe of Columbia Seminary, secured a charter for “South Carolina Presbyterian Institution for Young Ladies,” but nothing further was done until 1890.

1890—Presbyterian College for Women was established. The Hampton-Preston house was purchased from the Ursuline Sisters (Roman Catholic). The location was across the street from the Columbia Theological Seminary campus which made it convenient for the men of the seminary to socialize with the women of Chicora. Dr. W. R. Atkinson spearheaded the work to organize the college and became its first president.

1913—Two new buildings were added to the campus. Miss Euphemia McClintock assumed the presidency for a brief term during which time she changed the name to The College for Women.

1914—In financial difficulty, The College for Women sought consolidation with Chicora College.

Columbia

1915—The Greenville and Columbia institutions were united and the freshman class matriculated at the newly named Chicora College for Women in Columbia. Dr. Byrd continued as the college president.

1921—Growth of the school made Chicora College for Women the largest Presbyterian college in the South. The increasing needs at the Hampton-Preston house campus led to the purchase of 55 acres in east Columbia. However, this grand effort led to financial trouble for the institution.

Charlotte

1930-1931—Continuing financial difficulties caused the Presbyterians to merge Chicora with Queens College in Charlotte, N.C. The newly united institution was briefly named Queens-Chicora College. The Charlotte school had been known earlier in its history as The Charlotte Female Institute, then later it changed its name to The Presbyterian College for Women before it became Queens College.

1932—Queens College was admitted into the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.