By definition education transmits culture to the next generation, a fundamentally conserving duty. The first fund-raising effort for an American college, "New England's First Fruits," explained that after providing for the basic economic, political, and religious needs, "one of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advance Learning and perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate Ministry to the Churches, when our present Ministers shall lie in the Dust."\(^1\)

The "First Fruits" embodied the tensions that have characterized American education ever since. Perpetuating learning to posterity potentially conflicts with new learning and a new generation. For educational institutions to prosper, the culture being passed on must be acceptable to the donors to whom the appeal is addressed. Operating an expansive educational system requires considerable financial backing, making it unlikely that American education would ever radically challenge the fundamental centers of power and wealth. On the other hand, the tradition of decentralized, locally controlled institutions that developed in the early republic made it unlikely that any group would be able to perpetuate its version of culture and to control higher learning unchallenged. Thus, the college can be a center of contention for groups with wealth or for different generations within powerful groups that seek to modify the version of culture being perpetuated.

Between the Civil War and World War I the institution begun in

Massachusetts Bay Colony, the American college, underwent fundamental change. During this period, much of our modern conception of the college was created by institutions such as the four studied here. Rapid social and economic change intersected with the ambitions and ideals of college authorities. The interaction was complex. The institutional changes, analyzed in Chapter 10, can be established more concretely than the social and economic consequences. The colleges were neither centers of radical change nor islands of stasis. In the half-century studied here, these colleges remained the province of affluent, white, Protestant Americans of northern European descent. But within that broad constituency there were competing interests and conflicting visions of American culture that sought to use the college. In turn, they would be shaped and used by the colleges.

These four colleges grew dramatically (Table 11). The three ante-bellum colleges grew from six to twelve times between the end of the Civil War and World War I, while the American population tripled. There were 381 students at those three in 1867, and over 3,000 at the four in 1917.

Determining the social meaning of the growing college enrollments requires knowledge of the social and economic status of students' families. Unfortunately, the records at the four colleges provide little information about class origins. Admissions forms were brief, and few survived. Financial aid was neither extensive nor systematically administered. Presidents personally awarded the small number of scholarships, and their correspondence gives only fragmentary glimpses of the process. Class reunion publications record graduates' occupations, but only Princeton published them regularly before World War I.

Table 11. Total Collegiate and Graduate Enrollments, 1867–1917

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bucknell</th>
<th>F&amp;M</th>
<th>Princeton</th>
<th>Swarthmore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1867–68</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890–91</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909–10</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>1,311</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916–17</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>1,555</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1917–18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The figures were compiled from catalogs and other college publications.
The cost of education provides inferential evidence about the accessibility of these colleges. In 1869 the more extravagant Princeton students spent the most (ca. $400), though more frugal Princeton students spent less (ca. $300) than boarding students paid ($350) for a "guarded education" at Swarthmore. Bucknell and Franklin and Marshall were much less expensive: students spent an average of about $200. In the 1870s and 1880s the differential increased. Costs at Bucknell and Franklin and Marshall declined slightly to about $180 by 1890, while at Swarthmore they rose to $450. Princeton estimated that its students' expenses in 1890 ranged from $311 to $650, depending on room and board arrangements. Because there was deflation of about one-third over these two decades, real costs rose at all four.

Expenses rose in real and absolute dollars at all four colleges during the quarter-century after 1890. By World War I, expenses approximately doubled at Bucknell and Franklin and Marshall to about $350 to $400. Swarthmore calculated $568 as a reasonable student budget, although it reported that one-quarter of the students spent over $800. Princeton projected "necessary expenses" ranging from $570 to $775, depending on the type of room and board and not including books and personal expenses.

The pattern is consistent. Princeton was the most expensive and Swarthmore was second throughout, costing one and one-half to two times as much as the other two colleges. That this was true before 1900 is striking because Swarthmore had little prestige outside a small social circle and was not even fully committed to collegiate work. But the attraction of guarded education to some wealthy Quakers and other Philadelphians provided sufficient students. Bucknell and Franklin and Marshall, even though they were more clearly collegiate than Swarthmore before 1900, charged significantly lower fees. Seemingly, support by an elite urban group was more important than curriculum for institutional prosperity.

Rising enrollments at these colleges must not have included many children from the working or even clerical middle classes. In 1910 the average salary for American clerical workers was under $1,200, and industrial workers averaged less than $700. Relatively little financial aid was available to meet the rising costs. In the 1870s and 1880s the colleges offered reductions or tuition waivers for ministerial candidates and children of ministers or, at Swarthmore, for children
of Friends. These dispensations either covered a decreasing proportion of costs or were eliminated in later years. There is no evidence that financial aid kept pace with rising enrollments. The proportion of students assisted and the percentage of student costs covered by financial aid probably declined after 1890. Over a half-century in which deflation and inflation approximately balanced each other, the higher expenses were real increases. Costs were making these four colleges less accessible.

The expense of the gentlemanly student life-style that dominated campuses after 1890 caused much of the increase. The relatively high cost of Swarthmore's guarded education, even when it had little prestige, suggests that as colleges became more residential the costs rose and potential students were squeezed out. The costs of joining campus organizations, maintaining a respectable wardrobe, and participating in the social life added to the expenses of all but the most iconoclastic students. Presumably enrollment growth resulted primarily from an increase in upper-middle- and upper-class students at these colleges. As Colin Burke postulated, accessibility to private colleges probably declined after the Civil War, and students were drawn increasingly from wealthier families.

Although the economic class of students' families can only be estimated, the changing social characteristics can be established more precisely. These colleges reflected the shift from an ethnically and denominationally conscious Protestantism to one that was relatively accepting of all Protestants of northern European descent. In the 1860s each college was the vehicle of a denomination, three with distinctive ethnic or cultural styles. The governing boards and most faculty identified with these groups and expected the college to perpetuate those identities by influencing the students and training future teachers, ministers, and lay leaders. These colleges were open to outsiders, especially local residents of other Protestant denomi-

2. The figures for expenses were compiled from the catalogs. Since each college reported expenses differently and because so many students lived off campus, these are useful approximations rather than precise figures. The late nineteenth century was a deflationary period. Prices dropped by about one-third between 1870 and 1900 and then slowly returned to earlier levels by World War I. See Series E 52–63, Wholesale Price Indexes (Warren and Pearson), Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970 (Washington, D.C., 1975), 1:200–201; Colin Burke, American Collegiate Populations: A Test of the Traditional View (New York: New York University Press, 1982), 226–30.
nations. But the authorities and the principal donors at each institution saw themselves as preserving a distinct denominational identity within Protestant America.

Over the next five decades the colleges' social contexts converged. Ethnicity was subsumed within denominationalism. The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and the German Reformed eschewed behavioral distinctiveness. The Hicksite Quakers made the most enduring attempt to maintain a distinct life-style, based on denominationalism rather than ethnicity. Denominational differences were muted as theological differences declined and the non-Protestant “new” immigration increased the sense of commonality among Protestants.

Students were the first to reject distinctiveness and embrace a common collegiate culture. By the 1880s many students at each college were conscious of developments on other campuses, and most conformed to the general ideals of the emerging student culture. Later, members of that generation, as faculty and alumni, replaced their elders' version of the colleges' missions. By the 1910s virtually no ethnic or life-style distinctiveness remained on the campuses. Each retained a connection to a Protestant denomination, but that did little to differentiate day-to-day behavior at the four colleges. Each campus was dominated by a Protestantism that neither challenged privilege nor required a distinctive life-style. This was not secularism; rather, it was a decline in distinctiveness and piety. Observance of conventional Protestant practices continued to be expected of students and faculty in the 1910s. A demanding and restrictive pietistic Protestantism had been replaced by a more exuberant and permissive muscular Christianity.

The students of the 1870s and 1880s and the faculty and trustees of later decades substituted new lines of social demarcation. They saw themselves as the authentic Americans, an ideal type that plastered over most of the denominational and ethnic divisions of earlier nineteenth-century Protestant America. Other groups remained largely outside the pale. The clearest exclusion was racial. Only one black appears to have attended any of these colleges. Only one case of overt racial discrimination survived in the records (committed by a future president of the United States!), so the exact mixture of discrimination, custom, and accumulated disadvantage is unclear. Catholics and Jews were rare on the campuses. Again, records leave little indication of the mixture of discrimination and custom. It was not until
the 1920s that the beginning of selective admissions made ethnoreligious discrimination overt and traceable.\(^3\)

Gender has been downplayed in this study as a variable “held constant” while examining the creation of the archetypal college model by the dominant groups. The all-male and the coeducational campuses shared a basically similar student culture. Subtle distinctions were lost, and the contribution of female students to campus life was underreported in student publications, which featured male activities at the coeducational colleges (see Chapter 9). The shift from piety to muscular Christianity was a triumph for a style that favored separate activities and masculine leadership. Victorian convention obscures the more intimate contacts between the genders.\(^4\)

Generation is a particularly important social category for analyzing higher education. In this study, three identifiable generations were evident: (1) the governing board, president, and senior faculty; (2) the junior faculty; and (3) the students. Policies planned principally by one generation often had unexpected outcomes in another. The ethnic and denominational commitment of donors in the 1860s and 1870s financed campuses that spawned a student culture which largely ignored those distinctions. Donations designed to promote mid-Victorian pietistic Protestantism wound up supporting a somewhat hedonistic, “muscular Christian” student life. Debates over student life and curricula that were expressed in the rhetoric of democracy and social mobility were often disputes among different generations with similar economic and social status. Debates within the colleges were primarily over life-style and cultural identity rather than more fundamental economic or social divides.

This study was designed to isolate the factors that determined institutional size and material success. The case studies were selected from


among colleges in the 1860s without regard to their form in 1917 or today, in an attempt to avoid the anachronism of grouping institutions by their modern category. Thus, Princeton was included even though it is a university and the other three are colleges; the distinction between college and university was not relevant in 1865. All four had nonbaccalaureate departments before taking their modern form as solely institutions of higher education. Curriculum was not what differentiated the colleges from the nascent universities. Bucknell and Franklin and Marshall had curricula very similar to Princeton's in the 1860s and 1870s, while Swarthmore, the early curricular rebel, came closest to Princeton's prestige and wealth by 1917. Franklin and Marshall, which shared considerable religious and intellectual heritage with Princeton, wound up the smallest and poorest institution. Curriculum proved to be a poor predictor of later material success.

Access to wealth explains much more. Princeton had an endowment in 1869 of over $500,000, a figure not matched by the other three colleges until the twentieth century. James McCosh raised $3 million in twenty years by parlaying reputation and ethnoreligious connections into an entrée to fortunes being made in New York, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh. Under McCosh and his successors Princeton was able to build an impressive campus and hire a large faculty, including some academic stars from research universities.

The other colleges started with more modest endowments and social connections. Swarthmore was run as frugally as possible until the turn of the century; the expenses remained stable from 1878 to 1902. Its annual deficits, ranging from $15,000 to $20,000, were made up by contributions from wealthy managers. In 1880 its endowment was a mere $75,000. Once traditional Quakers capitulated to champions of the new collegiate culture, Swarthmore expanded its connections to broader Philadelphia society and to Carnegie and Rockefeller philanthropy. By 1917 its endowment had soared to $1 million.

5. Some anachronism remained because I perforce chose colleges that survive today. In addition, choosing colleges on the basis of archival sources probably biased the selection toward wealthier colleges.

Under President Hill in the 1880s, Bucknell's student body remained stable while the endowment jumped from $121,000 to $350,000, mainly due to William Bucknell's generosity. In the 1890s Harris took the opposite strategy, using donations to enlarge facilities while the endowment grew only slightly to $400,000. Bucknell's student body grew rapidly under Harris, but by 1910 his fixation with growth was hurting Bucknell's reputation and undermining its fund-raising. A campaign to enlarge the endowment by $1 million begun in 1903 initially raised about $300,000 but then stalled, leaving the endowment at about $800,000 in 1917. Long-term health was sacrificed for short-term growth.

Franklin and Marshall, partially due to its formal denominational tie, remained closest to its mid-nineteenth-century traditions and penury. The college lived modestly throughout the period, experiencing neither crisis nor entrepreneurial success. An endowment of $121,000 in 1875 rose marginally to $170,000 by 1910; then, aided by the General Education Board, it grew quickly to $550,000 by 1916.

The differences in wealth among the colleges was considerable. In 1917 Swarthmore's endowment was at the level of Princeton in the 1880s, Bucknell was at the level of Princeton in the 1870s, and Franklin and Marshall was at the level of Princeton in the 1860s. An institution like Princeton that had the prestige to attract plutocrats like J. P. Morgan and Henry Clay Frick to a presidential inauguration had very different opportunities than did the other three. In turn, an institution like Harvard with several times Princeton's endowment had further opportunities.

Colleges obviously were neither forced to court wealthy sponsors nor accept their offers. But failing to do so reduced colleges' options. They could decline to solicit some sources of support, as did Swarthmore before 1902 and Franklin and Marshall throughout the period, but the "opportunity cost" of distinctiveness increased. If colleges sought to compete for academic and social prestige in the emerging national system of higher education, they became dependent on those who could finance their expansive and expensive ambitions—increasingly, urban donors. William Bucknell's takeover at Bucknell was the most dramatic example of rising urban power. Princeton

drew on the elites of New York and Philadelphia, and later extended its drawing power to Pittsburgh and farther west. Swarthmore's increasing affluence resulted from support by urban Hicksites. Franklin and Marshall's access to Lancaster maintained it modestly, but its failure to tap the elite of Philadelphia or Pittsburgh more fully left it the least affluent of the four. The old reliance on rural, small-town, and small-city money inspired by denominational loyalty no longer sufficed.

The sizable denominationally inspired urban donations lacked predictability. Alumni in the urban elites increasingly offered dependable sources, especially when induced by foundations' matching grants. This also broadened the base of support, drawing in smaller gifts from the upper-middle class to supplement upper-class philanthropy. Committed alumni were often enthusiastic champions of the new collegiate culture who were usually rebuffed in their fight for positions on the governing boards in the 1880s and 1890s. As long as there were periodic contributions from rich members of the denominations and the colleges' needs remained simple, alumni power was limited. But as budgets increased and wealthy alumni proved willing and able to make regular contributions, the penalty for ignoring them grew. Alumni supported their alma mater's competition with other campuses—not to be different, but to do the same things better, from the football team to the chapel. Vocal alumni shared similar values and styles across the four campuses by World War I.

As Laurence Veysey has pointed out, the motives of the donors, students, and faculty might differ, but their relationship was symbiotic.\(^8\) There was certainly a mutually beneficial relationship between the students' ambitions and those of the colleges. The colleges' prosperity was insured by their success in making the baccalaureate degree a valued credential for the most prestigious and well-paid professions. The subsequent occupations of their graduates cannot be traced precisely, as evidence on alumni careers was not collected systematically until offices for alumni affairs and fund-raising were created after World War I. But general patterns can be ascertained.

In a sample of Franklin and Marshall graduates in the classes from 1867 to 1885, 30 percent were lawyers and 26 percent were ministers.

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The remainder was divided among teaching (13 percent), medical (13 percent), business (11 percent), and scientific and engineering careers (7 percent). A striking number changed professions during their lives, some having tried one or two before coming to Franklin and Marshall.

The figures are quite similar to Princeton's, using its classes of 1868 and 1881 as a sample. Law was also the first choice (35 percent). Business was second (19 percent), ahead of the ministry (15 percent), medicine (11 percent), and teaching (10 percent). There were 5 percent in scientific and engineering careers and 5 percent in a variety of others. Business was slightly more popular and the ministry slightly less popular at Princeton than at Franklin and Marshall.

Over one-third of Bucknell's graduates in the 1870s and 1880s entered the ministry. Other professional choices do not seem to have been recorded. Quaker Swarthmore naturally produced no ministers. Of its male graduates in the classes from 1873 to 1892, about one-quarter (26 percent) entered business, 21 percent went into teaching, 16 percent were engineers, 11 percent in law, 10 percent in medicine, and 16 percent in other fields.

After 1890 the number of Princeton students entering business rose sharply. In the class of 1899, almost half (49 percent) of the graduates entered business, while law (16 percent), the ministry (9 percent), and teaching (5 percent) declined. Medicine (9 percent), science and engineering (3 percent), and others (9 percent) remained fairly stable. Later classes followed similar patterns.

Unfortunately, comparable data for alumni who graduated from the other three colleges after 1890 could not be located. Scattered evidence suggests trends similar to Princeton's at the other three colleges, except that teaching was a more common choice at them. At the three colleges that traditionally prepared ministers, the proportion of graduates entering the ministry declined; the absolute number remained constant.

Princeton seems to have drawn students from the wealthiest fam-

10. Data compiled from reunion books published by the classes of 1868 (in 1869), 1881 (in 1901), 1899 (in 1909), and 1912 (in 1922). Since categories were not consistent only general impressions are warranted.
ilies, and, in turn, many of them moved into positions of power and wealth. Swarthmore was the next most prosperous, especially after 1902. Bucknell and Franklin and Marshall were much less expensive and seem to have drawn and produced fewer elite students. But all four attracted the children of well-off parents, and most of their graduates entered relatively lucrative and prestigious careers.

Colleges had always been attended and supported primarily by the upper and middle classes. But the nature of those classes was changing with urbanization and industrialization. In the 1880s and 1890s upper-class culture was institutionalized through “blue books,” country clubs, elite resort areas, and educational institutions. Residential collegiate prep schools were created to provide the ultimate class, religious, and age segregation for upper-class youth. Certain colleges—primarily older, private Protestant ones—acquired the mantle of social acceptability. Princeton and, later, Swarthmore were among those most favored. Such colleges received the offspring of the upper class and, more important, its benevolence. Possibly because the American elite lacked the titles and estates of the British aristocracy that it emulated, colleges became an important source of identity and a primary recipient of elite wealth.

The managerial and professional upper-middle class increasingly separated itself not just from the working class but from the clerical and small-business middle class as well. College education was one way to demarcate and perpetuate that distinction for one’s children. High school, which had become a necessity for most nonmanual jobs, created the expectation that youths would spend twelve years in age-segregated institutions among their peers. Success depended on negotiating age-specific obstacles: the next step was college at about the age of eighteen. The concept of generation was being fine-tuned, and parents and students came to expect that the latter’s next four years would be spent with peers their own age.

The urban environment came to be viewed as socially and physically unhealthy. Much of the upper-middle class moved to streetcar suburbs if not farther out to railroad suburbs. These neighborhoods were homogeneously affluent and beyond the range of most Catholics and Jews. Upper-middle-class youths were kept in age-segregated institutions for longer periods of time, preferably in nonurban set-
tings far from immigrant and working-class neighborhoods. The emerging upper-middle class contributed many of the students and some of the funds for college expansion.

These four colleges increasingly adopted styles that fit upper- and upper-middle-class educational needs and cultural expectations. In addition to becoming a prerequisite for professional success, colleges successfully convinced affluent parents of the social and moral superiority of private colleges. College publicity featured small and bucolic campuses, gentle and personal oversight, healthy activities, and desirable peers. The rapidly growing eastern and midwestern universities could not convincingly make the same claims. The collegiate spirit had broad appeal, reinforced by collegiate novels and athletics. For most students and parents the sense of community and the social rewards of college life no doubt overshadowed the intellectual attractions.

These four institutions adapted to the increasingly age-specific youth culture expected by secondary school graduates by shedding other functions and becoming primarily collegiate institutions populated by eighteen- to twenty-two-year-olds. Most secondary and normal programs were dropped. Franklin and Marshall Academy survived but was increasingly separated from the college. Three of the colleges abandoned graduate programs. Princeton eventually added a graduate school, but the main campus maintained an essentially collegiate atmosphere for the undergraduates.

Colleges helped form the new upper and upper-middle classes, which, in turn, were willing to support elite colleges in a style to which they wanted to grow accustomed. All four beautified their campuses. In 1917 even the least affluent, Franklin and Marshall, offered an attractive 58-acre campus with ten buildings as well as athletic fields and tennis courts in a leafy area on the outskirts of Lancaster. Bucknell occupied a scenic site in the Susquehanna River valley and could boast of a recent Carnegie library among other new buildings.

Swarthmore added new science buildings in the early 1900s and also received a library from Andrew Carnegie. New gardens and other horticultural additions created Quaker quietude at Swarthmore within the Philadelphia metropolitan area. Princeton students no doubt preferred getting a lake instead of a library from Carnegie; their campus became a showpiece featuring “collegiate gothic” buildings designed by the style’s leading proponent, Ralph Adams Cram.

The four colleges increasingly fulfilled the ideal of the college that was attractive to the upper and upper-middle classes, especially in the East. College life was to be a residential experience on a relatively tranquil campus small enough to provide a sense of community. Only Swarthmore provided room and board for all students, but Bucknell and Princeton were moving toward that by 1917 and Franklin and Marshall eventually would follow. The desire to have residential campuses raised questions of size. Soaring numbers of high school graduates and college applicants meant that continuing to accept every qualified student would create large institutions, delay becoming an all-residential campus, and change the social makeup of the student bodies. These four campuses provided an attractive, stable community in an increasingly urban and crowded society. They also offered a socially homogeneous community for Protestants of northeastern European ancestry at the height of the new Catholic and Jewish immigration. This atmosphere, so valued by the Eastern upper and upper-middle classes, would be threatened by further enrollment growth. The colleges did not erect formal barriers until the 1920s, when the exclusiveness of these colleges as implied by their definitions of character and community was explicitly enforced through selective admissions.