Founding a college in nineteenth-century America required courage and vision, if not foolhardiness. There was no European precedent for creating numerous small institutions of higher education; this was truly an American enterprise. Many colleges were doomed to fail or become secondary schools; a surprising number succeeded. Survival depended on attracting varied sources of support: local, denominational, ethnic, and governmental. The emotions that inspired support also produced conflict: those who cared enough to pay expected colleges to conform to their vision. These extraordinary ventures reflected the aspirations of many different Americans.

A variety of forces shaped the four colleges in this study after the Civil War. To understand the constraints and opportunities they faced after 1865, we must analyze the groups that founded the colleges, the clientele that supported them, and the structures and practices already in place.

One of the nine colonial colleges, Princeton had a long history and national reputation that gave it potential support unavailable to the other three colleges. But by the 1860s, sectional and denominational schism eroded these advantages.

Princeton was the first college of the Great Awakening, born of the Old Side and New Light controversy that split Presbyterianism in 1736. Unwelcome at Old Side Yale and out of place at Harvard and at William and Mary, New Light ministers from the Synod of New York and New Jersey established the College of New Jersey, conventionally called Princeton College, in Newark.
Founded to train Calvinist ministers, its mission and clientele soon broadened. Scotch-Irish New Light Presbyterians in Pennsylvania attached themselves to the new college. The royal governor of New Jersey offered support in exchange for places on the board of trustees for himself and four members of his council. Both groups insisted on a more central site than Newark. Princeton outbid New Brunswick and, in 1756, opened Nassau Hall, the largest building in colonial America.

This impressive edifice reflected Princeton's expanded base. In religiously heterogeneous New Jersey, sectarianism would have been suicidal. Although Presbyterians dominated the board of trustees, it included Anglicans, Quakers, and non-Presbyterian Calvinists. Princeton was not legally tied to the synod, which, in turn, contributed little financially. Most donations came from individuals and were earmarked for liberal rather than ministerial education. New Jersey contributed occasional grants. Thus Princeton had neither formal governmental nor denominational ties; it was a spiritually denominational college with a public purpose. Most faculty were Presbyterian; students and supporters belonged to various Protestant denominations.

Fig. 1. Nassau Hall, the College of New Jersey, ca. 1860.
Princeton had a broad geographic base. Almost half of Princeton's eighteenth-century students came from New England and the South; only about one-quarter came from New Jersey. Financial support came from all sections of the country and even from overseas; contributions for Nassau Hall came from England, Ulster, and Scotland.\(^1\)

The cosmopolitan contacts of the struggling college were enhanced by recruiting the Rev. John Witherspoon from Scotland as president. He became the only Scottish signer of the Declaration of Independence. During Witherspoon's presidency (1768–95), the institution produced many political leaders; its alumni constituted 16 percent of the Constitutional Convention, including James Madison. Later in Witherspoon's tenure and under his successor, Samuel Stanhope Smith, the production of ministerial candidates dropped precipitously. Smith's theological and disciplinary liberalism made enemies for him in the denomination. When students torched Nassau Hall in 1802, the trustees stepped in.\(^2\)

Over the next sixty years denominational influence grew. After another campus riot in 1807, the Presbyterian General Assembly decided that contact with undergraduates contaminated ministerial candidates and built a separate seminary nearby. Although legally discrete, the seminary strongly influenced the wayward college. Of sixty-four trustees elected to the board at Princeton College between 1812 and 1868, thirty-six were also connected to Princeton Theological Seminary.\(^3\)

The college's fortunes sank in the 1810s and 1820s. Presbyterian philanthropy was diverted toward the seminary. Smith's successor showed that the iron hand did not stop student disruptions—but it did effectively reduce enrollment. By the late 1820s there were only

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seventy students, and the president considered closing the institution. But Professor (later President) John Maclean repaired the financial base by organizing the alumni association as a new source of revenue and reformed the curriculum. The result was a financial and intellectual renaissance. Enrollment more than tripled between 1829 and 1839, and talented new faculty were hired. The departure of three of the ablest in the mid-1840s, including physicist Joseph Henry, who went to Washington to become the first director of the Smithsonian Institution, ended the intellectual revival. As Maclean aged, he became increasingly concerned with the faculty’s piety and bequeathed his successor an undistinguished, solidly Calvinist faculty.4

By the late 1860s Princeton was drawing its students from the narrowest geographic range in its history. Princeton had lost its appeal in New England with the reconciliation of the New Light and the Old Side a century earlier. For almost a century Princeton drew primarily on the Middle Atlantic states and the South. Many border-state Scotch-Irish were disaffected when the Presbyterian schism of 1837 left the college in the anti-evangelical Old School camp. Then the sectionalism of the 1850s evaporated the southern student pool. After the Civil War about two-thirds of the students came from the Middle Atlantic states, and most of the remainder from the border states. Its clientele had become regional rather than national.5

While its geographic base and academic reputation were shrinking, Princeton’s potential for raising money grew. The spectacular growth of New York City was particularly helpful. A railroad connected the college to both New York and Philadelphia in the early 1840s, making it accessible to two sources of urban wealth. In the 1850s Princeton raised $60,000 for scholarships and quickly got the funds to repair Nassau Hall after a fire. In the midst of the Civil War the college raised $100,000, primarily from New York businessmen.

The long and sometimes distinguished history of the college gave it credibility with the wealthy of New York and Philadelphia, particularly among Scottish and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. The central


5. Proportions were calculated from the catalogs and class publications. Wertenbaker, 175–81; Patricia Graham, Community and Class in American Education, 1865–1918 (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), 183–84.
New Jersey corridor was the center of early Scottish settlement and culture in North America. A number of Presbyterians involved in the founding of Princeton were Scots or Scotch-Irish. Scottish trading houses in New York, Perth Amboy, and Philadelphia linked with Scotland and Ulster to create a transatlantic Scottish culture. Although initially many Scots and Scotch-Irish were not Presbyterians, and many Presbyterians were English, Scottishness and Presbyterianism became increasingly synonymous in America. With that convergence, in Thomas Wertenbaker’s words, “Nassau Hall became the religious and educational capital of all Scotch-Irish America.” For all of its problems, Princeton retained the loyalty of many wealthy Presbyterians in the Middle Atlantic states. The growing prosperity of Scots and Scotch-Irish in New York and Philadelphia gave Princeton considerable potential for the future.

Franklin and Marshall College also enjoyed a period of internationally recognized intellectual achievement. But it served a small ethnoreligious group with a much more limited social and financial potential than Princeton. Franklin and Marshall was formed in 1853 by a merger of two institutions. Franklin College predated the Constitution, and its founders included several of the framers. Marshall College was one of the most remarkable intellectual successes among the “hilltop colleges” of the early republic.

Franklin College was founded in 1787 by Benjamin Rush and several other prominent Philadelphians to assimilate the heavily Germanic population of southeastern Pennsylvania into the republican values and English-speaking culture dominant in the eastern end of the state. The new college in Lancaster, then the largest inland town in the United States, promoted Americanization with the country’s first collegiate bilingual program.

The college’s orientation soon changed. Its charter established a board of trustees composed of fifteen Lutherans, fifteen German Reformed, and fifteen without denominational restriction, the first legally stipulated church-college relationship. But the real divisions followed geographic lines. The Philadelphians lost interest, thereby allowing Reformed and Lutheran Lancasterians to gain control and reorient the college toward promoting German culture and language.

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Few students appeared, and the college closed without conferring degrees, later operating fitfully as a secondary school.\(^7\)

Higher education did not return to Lancaster until the town lured a college that successfully combined German ethnicity with the denominationalism of the Calvinist German Reformed church. A product of the Reformation, the Reformed church thrived in the Palatinate until the Thirty Years' War and succeeding conflicts ravaged the area, driving Mennonites, Lutherans, and Quakers as well as Reformed north to Holland and England. From there many were drawn by the religious tolerance and fertile lands of southeastern Pennsylvania. German Calvinists initially were affiliated with the Dutch Reformed church before establishing the German Reformed church in 1793.\(^8\)

German immigration following the abortive revolutions of 1830 and 1848 increased church membership from about 20,000 in the 1820s to over 100,000 by the Civil War. In the late 1830s, the church began to develop the denominational apparatus of Sunday schools, missionary societies, journals, and colleges. The fivefold increase in pastorates and the denomination's belief in highly educated/clergy compelled it to make formal provisions for higher education.\(^9\)

Given the Lancasterians' failure to sustain Franklin College, the initiative for German Reformed education fell to a small group that moved from one southern Pennsylvania town to another like medieval scholars for twenty-five years. In 1825 Dr. Lewis Mayer opened a seminary to train German Reformed ministers in Carlisle, attached

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to the Presbyterians' Dickinson College and funded by European contributions. Friction with Dickinson authorities soon led Mayer to York. Since many students did not intend to enter the ministry, a "High School of the Reformed Church" was attached to the seminary in 1832. Financial troubles forced another move, this time to Mercersburg, a small mountain town in southern Pennsylvania.

Spurred by the Lutheran's recent founding of Gettysburg College, the synod decided to add a collegiate branch to the Mercersburg institutions. The Pennsylvania legislature responded by incorporating Marshall College and granting it twelve thousand dollars. The Mercersburg community raised another ten thousand dollars. The name "college" was quickly translated into reality by a talented faculty shared with the theological seminary.  

Marshall College evolved from European forms toward an ethnically distinct American denominationalism. While there were classes in German language and literature, most instruction was in English. The German-speaking sections of the literary societies ceased functioning in the 1840s. The contact with German universities was crucial to the remarkable intellectual success of this small institution in an unlikely American setting. Former Heidelberg professor and later Marshall College President Frederick A. Rauch wrote Psychology (1841), one of the first works to bring the new German psychology to America. Professors John W. Nevin and Phillip Schaff epitomized the Anglo-German atmosphere. Schaff was brought from Germany to teach at the theological seminary. Nevin, Scotch-Irish and originally a Presbyterian, trained at Princeton Theological Seminary before being hired by Marshall College and converting to the Reformed church. They published two of the most influential theological journals of the period, the Mercersburg Review and Die Kirchenfreund.

Despite the intellectual achievements and fruitful blending of two cultures, the Mercersburg institutions did not have unified Reformed support. Schaff and Nevin's "Mercersburg Theology" was an internationally respected defense of high church practices, but it split the German Reformed church. The controversy flared up in 1843 when

Dr. Nevin attacked revivalism in "The Anxious Bench." A year later Schaff’s inaugural address portrayed Protestantism as an outgrowth of, rather than a departure from, Catholicism. At a time of fervent revivalism and anti-Catholicism, the Mercersburg Theology divided the denomination and drove some members toward more evangelical sects.¹¹

By the late 1840s the Mercersburg institutions were financially troubled. Reformed congregations in Ohio and North Carolina created separate colleges, and many Pennsylvania congregations refused to contribute to the college or the seminary. The German Reformed church had created the typical institutions of American denominationalism but lacked the wealth or unity to support them comfortably. Marshall College was having difficulty maintaining its high standards; events in Lancaster offered a solution.

In the 1840s Lancaster enjoyed an economic boom. A mercantile city in a fertile agricultural area, Lancaster was the fifteenth largest city in the United States in 1800. Its economy stagnated with the decline of artisanal crafts, but Lancaster became an industrial center after the arrival of the railroad. Most of the successful industrialists were of German extraction; many were German Reformed. Most leading non-Germans were also Calvinists, Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.¹² Lancaster was a booming small city that lacked an important civic institution: a college.

The vestige of Franklin College, operating as a secondary school, offered a solution. Its officers proposed a merger with financially troubled Marshall College, whose trustees accepted despite a sense of betrayal among Mercersburg residents. The German Reformed synod approved the merger in January 1850. The Lutherans, who already controlled Gettysburg College, agreed to sell their one-third share of Franklin College.

The Pennsylvania legislature granted a charter uniting Franklin


College and Marshall College in 1850. For three years the German Reformed church raised the seven thousand dollars owed to the Lutherans, while the citizens of Lancaster raised twenty-five thousand dollars for the endowment that Marshall College demanded before moving. That done, Marshall College combined its students, faculty, and scholarly reputation with the resources of Lancaster in 1853.13

In the next few years an impressive neo-Gothic main building was constructed, along with matching side buildings for the literary societies. But the new college could not escape the Mercersburg Theology controversy. The trustees selected a president who had not been involved in the recent conflicts, but he soon proved to be a Mercersburg Theology partisan. Former Marshall College faculty and their Mercersburg Theology controlled the college, the seminary, and the denominational publications but alienated many in the small denomination.14 The Civil War aggravated the crisis; the class of 1866 numbered only six. The financial condition of the school was desperate. In addition, opponents of the Mercersburg Theology founded

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a rival college (ironically called Mercersburg College) that further divided Reformed support. Franklin and Marshall College entered the post–Civil War era tied to a small, divided ethnic denomination with a tradition of highly educated clergy. Despite its earlier international prestige, its survival now depended on students and money from south-central Pennsylvania, and especially Lancaster.

Like Franklin and Marshall, Bucknell University owes its existence to the unique American combination of denominationalism and boomtown boosterism. But while it seemed strange for a city of Lancaster’s size not to have a college, founding Pennsylvania’s first Baptist college in Lewisburg, a small town far up the Susquehanna River, was brashly optimistic.

As evangelicals, Baptists accepted the concept of a highly educated clergy more slowly than the high church Presbyterians and German Reformed. But by the 1820s Baptists, particularly in the North, were attracting a wealthier clientele and developing denominational organizations and a professionalized clergy. The rapidly growing demand for ministers led Baptists in many states to found colleges in the 1820s and 1830s. However, the New Jersey and Pennsylvania Baptist organizations, including the influential Philadelphia Baptist Association, failed in their attempts to create a college. In the early 1840s, the New Jersey and Pennsylvania Baptist education societies still sent their ministerial candidates to colleges in New York state.

The opportunity to build an institution commanding the loyalty of New Jersey and Pennsylvania Baptists was seized by a small group in Lewisburg, a town of two thousand on the Susquehanna River in north-central Pennsylvania. In 1840 the Northumberland Baptist Association, composed of Lewisburg area congregations, had only 267 members, and there was no Baptist church in Lewisburg. A revival bolstered membership, and in late 1843 Baptists in Lewisburg began planning for a church and, improbably, a university. Two years later the Northumberland Baptist Association endorsed the audacious

15. Dubbs, 302–14; Klein, 93–101; Franklin and Marshall College, Board of Trustees, Minutes (Franklin and Marshall Archives), 7 and 8 July, 1868.
project and formally proposed to Pennsylvania’s Baptists “that a Literary Institution should be established in Central Pennsylvania, embracing a high school for male pupils, another for females, a college, and also a theological Institution, to be under the influence of the Baptist denomination.”

A committee drew up plans, purchased land, and hired an agent, Stephen Taylor, who had recently resigned from Madison (now Colgate) University. He secured legislative approval of the charter creating the University of Lewisburg, which was to be governed by a board of trustees with general powers and a board of curators to oversee academic affairs. All of the trustees and a majority of the curators were to be Baptists.

The charter placed the institution under the “patronage, supervision and direction” of Baptists but also stipulated that “no religious sentiments are to be accounted a disability” in the selection of faculty or students. The charter also required the backers to raise $100,000. The Lewisburg Chronicle supported the venture, and residents from various denominations quickly raised $12,000. The demand for Baptist ministers had created an extraordinary opportunity for a small town.

This interdenominational support reflected the economic base of Lewisburg. The construction of the eastern branch of the Pennsylvania Canal in the late 1820s spurred a commercial boom. The two canal builders, a Presbyterian and a Baptist, were founders of the college. The leading merchant was a Lutheran and a prominent college supporter. Lewisburg was the market town for the fertile Buffalo Valley, and by the 1840s it had foundries, gristmills, tanneries, and other industries. Members of its elite were willing to back any institution that would advance their civic ambitions. But a population of less than two thousand was a modest base for an institution of higher learning.


The Lewisburg community and the Northumberland Baptist Association pledged about one-third of the requisite $100,000. Taylor then approached the Philadelphia Baptists. He convinced the pastors and congregations to support this unlikely venture, then a three-day journey from the metropolis. They pledged another third of the required sum. Among the leading contributors were two men whose names grace the two institutions later spawned by the University of Lewisburg: John P. Crozer and William Bucknell.

Classes started in Lewisburg while two Baptist ministers canvassed Baptist congregations in the rest of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey for financial support. It took them three years to collect the remainder of the $100,000; the University of Lewisburg was then officially incorporated in 1849. Three wealthy Philadelphians (William Bucknell, John P. Crozer, and Dr. David Jayne) had donated a total of $25,000, while 4,481 others contributed the other $75,000.

From its inception, the university was a multipurpose institution. Since only one of the twenty-two original students knew Latin and Greek, the studies were necessarily preparatory. In the second year, a few students began collegiate work. When this group became the first graduating class in 1851, enrollment in the four college classes numbered sixty-one, a figure that remained relatively stable for forty years. This first collegiate section was dwarfed by the 186 students in other sections of the university: the academic department (i.e.,

Fig. 3. Old Main, the University of Lewisburg.
college preparatory), the English division, the female division, and the primary department. The last was soon handed over to a local schoolmaster, but the other three divisions remained part of the university for over sixty years, and a theological seminary was soon added.

Taylor became professor of mathematics and natural philosophy and built a solidly Baptist faculty for the collegiate department. For reasons that remain unclear, Taylor was passed over for the presidency in favor of the Rev. Howard Malcom, a Baptist educator whose antislavery stance had recently cost him a college presidency in Kentucky. Malcom's tenure in Lewisburg was also stormy. His combination of liberal curricular ideas and stiff pietism discomfited some trustees and led to his resignation in 1857.

The university was soon torn by the tension of being situated in Lewisburg while drawing on Philadelphia for a major share of its students and funds. In 1856 John P. Crozer offered fifty thousand dollars if the institution moved to Chester, twenty miles south of Philadelphia. The trustees declined the offer by a 10–4 vote, with Crozer and William Bucknell in the minority. The division resurfaced in the search for a new president. The nominating committee proposed a prominent Philadelphia pastor, but a Lewisburg resident and son of one of the founders nominated University of Lewisburg professor Justin Loomis. After fourteen ballots Loomis became the president, at the cost of alienating some Philadelphia trustees.¹⁹

The geographic schism and other problems plagued the university during Loomis's presidency. Minor disputes angered important supporters, including several of the founders, and weakened the university's appeal in some Baptist congregations. Financial limitations put faculty pay in arrears and delayed dormitory improvements, leading to the death of three students from tuberculosis. These problems and the disruption caused by the Civil War reduced the enrollment to thirty-five in 1862. President Loomis averted disaster by raising $100,000 in the last years of the war. The major contribution, $20,000, came from John P. Crozer. Conspicuous by his absence from the list of major donors was William Bucknell.

The University of Lewisburg entered the postwar years renewed.

Collegiate enrollment in 1865–66 reached a record eight-six, and the academy was booming. Local Baptists had to be gratified to be running a large institution that served local needs for secondary education as well as offering baccalaureate degrees and graduate theological studies for Baptists in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. By 1865 the institution could also claim the loyalty of many Philadelphia clergy who were alumni or trustees. On the other hand, some former supporters, including William Bucknell, had been alienated by the factional disputes. Localism, denominationalism, and chance had conspired to bring a large educational institution to an unlikely spot on the banks of the Susquehanna.\(^{20}\)

The evolution of Swarthmore College is one of the more unusual sagas in the history of American higher education. Swarthmore is a nationally prestigious college that Burton Clark labeled a “model of undergraduate education.”\(^{21}\) But Swarthmore developed along a unique path that contradicts most assumptions about nineteenth-century denominational colleges. Many of its Quaker founders were uncomfortable with intellectual endeavors and ambivalent about education beyond the secondary school. Swarthmore was rooted in traditional piety, yet it was a curricular innovator and one of the first coeducational colleges in the Northeast. Its curriculum emphasized science, downplayed the classics, and had an elective system before Charles Eliot’s famous speech at Harvard.

For five decades after it opened in 1869, Swarthmore College was torn between its distinctive Quaker tradition and more worldly pressures. The demanding Quaker life-style and beliefs originated in the religious turmoil of seventeenth-century England. Discomfited by Stuart elegance and Cromwellian authoritarianism, Quakers challenged both with a “plain” life-style and pacifism. The resulting persecution drove many members of the Religious Society of Friends to William Penn’s colony. After actively participating in Pennsylvania affairs into the 1750s, most Quakers withdrew into “Quietism.”

Friends exhibited as much nonconformity in education as in politics. Their aversion to legal, political, and clerical professions made

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20. Theiss, 67–68, 114, 136–41, 154–75; Bucknell University, Quinquennial Catalogue (Lewisburg, Pa., 1900).
much of traditional education irrelevant or repugnant to them. The clerical faculty and denominationalism of most colleges alienated Quakers. They valued training for teaching, commerce, and agriculture, subjects that were not taught in most colleges.

Quaker emphasis upon practical knowledge dictated a utilitarian education. George Fox, founder of the movement, wanted schooling restricted to the "civil and useful," a view shared by most Friends. To provide vocational training within the context of "guarded education" and prevent common schools from luring away young Friends, a number of Yearly Meetings established boarding schools in the early 1800s.22

Dissatisfaction with Quietism led to denominational schism in 1827. A restive group desiring a more activist approach gained control of the Philadelphia Meeting. A dominantly Quietistic group seceded to form a separate meeting, dubbed "Hicksite." Similar splits occurred in the New York, Baltimore, Ohio, and Indiana meetings. The ideological split partially followed urban/rural lines. This was particularly pronounced in the Philadelphia Meeting, where the Orthodox outnumbered Hicksites in the city by 3,000 to 1,500 but had a mere 5,000 followers in the surrounding environs, where there were 14,500 Hicksites.23

The Orthodox included most wealthy urban Friends who could finance denominational activities. They started a journal seventeen years before the Hicksites created their Friends Intelligencer. The Orthodox also seized the initiative in education. Having retained control of most Quaker schools, they added new academies and founded Haverford College and Earlham College in the 1850s.24

Hicksites were composed of three main groups. The largest was


made up of rural Friends who resented the wealthy urban Orthodox leaders. A second group consisted of urban artisans who were threatened by the Industrial Revolution and wanted to cling to traditional ideas. The third group, and the one that later financed much of Swarthmore's work, represented established wealth that viewed the Orthodox leaders as nouveau riche. Hicksite Quietism discouraged denominational activism and stunted educational progress. But a non-Quietist minority who valued the Hicksite movement more for its tolerance than for its Quietism and traditional life-styles became increasingly anxious to have a college under Hicksite auspices.25

In 1860 several members of the Hicksite Baltimore Yearly Meeting proposed establishing a boarding school and a teacher training institute to provide “additional facilities for the guarded education of Friends' Children, and especially for the supply of suitable teachers in membership with us to whom to entrust our children in our neighborhood Schools.”26 The Baltimore Yearly Meeting approved the proposal and soon procured assistance from the Philadelphia and New York meetings. The three Yearly Meetings published a joint appeal for financial support in early 1861, but national events intervened.

The contributors elected sixteen male and sixteen female Hicksite Friends to a board of managers and authorized it to start classes when fifty thousand dollars had been subscribed. In 1864, the Pennsylvania legislature chartered Swarthmore College, named for George Fox's home. The following year land was purchased outside Philadelphia, and a president selected. Four years of fund-raising lay ahead before Swarthmore could open its doors.27 The Hicksites developed their denominational mechanisms, including their college, late and ambivalently. But their purpose was clear: to defend a distinctive denominational life-style.

When the Civil War ended, these four institutions were very different from what they would be when the United States entered World War I. Each could depend on denominationalism and localism for modest

27. Babbidge, 50–68; Swarthmore College, Board of Managers, Minutes (Friends Historical Library), 2 December 1862–5 December 1865.
support. But each suffered from divisions within those groups. All four were constricted by limited resources, albeit the financial potential of their supporters differed considerably.

Although their existence was modest, the mere survival of these institutions and hundreds like them showed a remarkable commitment to advanced education, though the four-year college was just one part of a broader commitment. Only the College of New Jersey stood alone. At Bucknell and at Franklin and Marshall, secondary education appeared first and continued to be a major part of the institution, and the founders of Swarthmore were more interested in secondary and normal education than higher studies. These were multifunctional institutions rather than the freestanding colleges of the twentieth century. They were also surprisingly popular institutions that were not isolated from antebellum American society.

Denominational ambitions were essential to the creation of each college, and most faculty and trustees were members of the sponsoring denomination. But the phrase "denominational college" obscures the complex nature of support. In two cases denomination-
alism also conveyed ethnicity, and in a third a unique life-style. Only Bucknell was the product of a relatively undifferentiated American Protestant denominationalism. In all cases the colleges depended on local boosterism for financial support as well as for students, regardless of denomination. State and local public funds mixed with private. Formal denominational fund-raising brought in only modest sums; the largest donations came from wealthy New Yorkers, Philadelphians, and Lancasterians, most of whose donations were induced by denominational loyalty.

In 1865 higher education was not yet a national enterprise. Historians have wondered why a modernized academia with a professionalized professoriate based on national organizations and shared values did not emerge more quickly. But as Bucknell, Franklin and Marshall, and Princeton emerged from the Civil War and Swarthmore planned to open its doors, none faced a strong demand to heed reformers’ calls to promote research and stop giving moral guidance. Indeed, it would have been strange for these schools to have done so—strange and disloyal to their roots. These four colleges were staffed by, and served, members of communities to whom university reform had little relevance. The colleges shared an intellectual tradition but developed within the context of local, regional, and denominational communities whose values would be challenged by rapid social change after Appomattox.