When Professors Had Servants

As the census taker for the south ward of Lewisburg interviewed families on wide tree-lined streets in the summer of 1860, he visited the homes of the five members of the Bucknell faculty. The Rev. Justin Loomis lived in a house worth five thousand dollars with his wife Mary, three children, and a servant. His colleagues, the Revs. George Bliss, Charles James, and Thomas Curtis, lived in similarly substantial homes on the same street. The newly appointed Rev. Francis Tustin rented nearby, where he lived with his wife and a servant. In addition to their houses, the five faculty listed personal estates averaging one thousand dollars. All had servants except James, whose household included two young women who probably served a similar function. Some of the most affluent and powerful citizens in Lewisburg were their neighbors.¹

The census and other sources show that faculty at these four colleges were generally affluent and lived among the local elite.² For instance, in 1870 professors Bliss, James, and Loomis still lived next to each other in Lewisburg. Their close neighbors included Thomas Frey, a flour manufacturer living in an $18,000 house, and Daniel Kreamer, a reaper manufacturer listing a personal wealth of $10,000

². Historians have relied on rhetorical evidence due to their inability to examine faculty in the context of local communities. The manuscript census, which has rarely been used by historians of higher education, facilitates reconstruction of faculty families and their social milieu. I accidentally discovered this while checking Colin Burke’s assertion that the census is not very useful for studying students. Burke proved to be correct, but in the process I kept stumbling across faculty families.
and a house worth $5,000. Professionals and skilled craftsmen headed most of the other neighboring households.³

Princeton faculty had even more affluent neighbors. An extreme case was Lyman Atwater, who lived next to a wealthy widow whose house was valued at $100,000 and personal wealth at $50,000. Professor Stillwell Schanck's more typical neighborhood included a banker, a dry goods merchant, and a tailor.⁴

![Fig. 8. House built by Professor (later President) Loomis in Lewisburg in the 1850s. Later purchased by the university and still used as the president's house.](image)

3. The censuses used were 1860 (reels 697, 1125, 1126, 1188), 1870 (871, 1337, 1356, 1458), and 1880 (788, 1125, 1142, 1143, 1197). Although 1860 predates the period covered in this chapter and the founding of Swarthmore, the fire that consumed the 1890 census necessitated including 1860 to provide a twenty-year period. In selecting the “neighbors” and “community” I created random samples of about fifty cases for each college. The sample ratios ranged from one in ten for Lewisburg in 1860 to one in seventy-five for Lancaster in 1880. The colleges’ political units (my definition of “community”) were Lancaster City, Lewisburg Borough, Princeton Borough and Township, and Springfield Township (Swarthmore).

4. In the 1860, 1870, and 1880 manuscript censuses for the four college towns, I located faculty and presidents eighty-eight times, over three-quarters of the possible total. In addition, I sampled 262 of the faculty members’ “neighbors,” defined as the five households listed immediately before and after the faculty member on the census roll. For another comparison I sampled the whole “community,” defined as the college’s political unit, coding 470 households. The findings are explained more fully in W. Bruce Leslie, “When Professors Had Servants: Prestige, Pay, and Professionalization, 1860-1917,” History of Higher Education Annual 10 (1990): 19–30.
Faculty reported much higher personal estates in the 1860 and 1870 censuses than those of their neighbors, who in turn were considerably more affluent than the general community. Of faculty reporting personal estate, 74 percent listed over one thousand dollars as opposed to only 12 percent of their neighbors and 4 percent of the general community. No faculty member reported less than one hundred dollars, whereas a majority of their neighbors and the community reported such a nominal sum (Table 2).

Faculty also owned considerable real estate (Table 3). Thirty-two percent of faculty were not homeowners, as opposed to 42 percent of their neighbors and 52 percent of the community. Among those who owned homes, faculty had slightly higher home values than their neighbors, and considerably higher home values than the rest of the community. For instance, 79 percent of faculty homes were valued at two thousand dollars or more, as opposed to 72 percent of their neighbors' houses and 53 percent of those in the community.5

Table 2. Personal Estate, 1860 and 1870

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Neighbors</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None listed</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under $100</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100-999</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000-4,999</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000-49,999</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000+</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: United States Census, 1860 and 1870; see notes 3–5.

Note: Some families listed no property. Because the meaning of these omissions is ambiguous, two sets of statistics have been calculated. In Tables 2 and 3 the left-hand columns in each category include all heads of households. The right-hand columns calculate only those who listed Personal or Real Estate. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

5. These figures probably underestimate the neighbors' wealth. The 1860 and 1870 censuses did not record addresses in small towns, forcing me to sample from the ten nearest census visits. Some of these "neighbors" probably lived down alleys and around corners. This bias and impressionistic evidence suggest that faculty and their "real" neighbors were more similar than the figures indicate. If so, it bolsters my conclusion that faculty were living among the local elite.
Lee Soltow's *Men and Wealth in the United States, 1850–1870* provides comparative national figures. Soltow calculated that only 3 to 4 percent of white adult males had real estate valued at more than ten thousand dollars. In my sample 24 percent of faculty, 16 percent of their neighbors, and 6 percent of the community listed such plush dwellings. The mean value of real estate in his sample is $1,492 in 1860 and $1,782 in 1870. My figures for faculty are about two and one-half times higher, $4,146 and $4,000. Soltow created another measure that he labeled "total estate" by averaging real estate (double weighted) and personal estate; his figure for white adult males in 1870 is $2,691. My calculation for faculty is $5,898, a little more than double his national average. Thus, the faculty were privileged members of relatively affluent towns.

Unfortunately for understanding class, wealth questions were dropped from the census after 1870, making assumptions about wealth from later censuses inferential. The number of servants living in the household, which continued to be recorded after 1870, is a possible surrogate. Comparing the number of servants and the personal estates in 1860 and 1870 shows the former to be a very useful surrogate for wealth. In those censuses 77 percent of faculty households included servants, as opposed to 28 percent of their neighbors and 10 percent of the community at large. The percentages of those listing one hundred dollars or more in their personal estates are: faculty, 91 percent; neighbors, 31 percent; and community, 16 percent. These two sets of figures are strikingly parallel.

6. Lee Soltow, *Men and Wealth in the United States, 1850–1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 53–77. Note that Swarthmore is omitted from the 1870 figures because faculty lived on campus and no wealth was listed for them.
If servants continued to bear the same relation to wealth, faculty were still very affluent in 1880. In that census 79 percent of faculty households included servants, as opposed to 31 percent of their neighbors and 13 percent of the whole community. Thirty-seven percent of faculty households included more than one servant, as opposed to 8 percent of their neighbors and 1 percent in the community sample.

For the combined 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses, 79 percent of faculty households included servants, as opposed to only 30 percent of their neighbors and 11 percent of the community (Table 4). Even the households of young married faculty members usually included a servant, such as those of two Bucknell professors in their twenties living on Lewisburg's "faculty row," William Grier and George Phillips. The most pampered was a young Princeton historian, William Sloane, whose household of seven included four servants. Stereotypically, most faculty servants were Irish or black.7

By the time most faculty reached middle age, their households were large. Franklin and Marshall professor William Nevin's household of seven, including two servants, was typical of the older generation. The average faculty household had six members; in addition to a spouse, children, and servants, many of these households included relatives from outside the nuclear family.

The census yields similar evidence for three colleges. However, Swarthmore's faculty lived in the main college building and did not head households as defined by the census. Since the census taker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Servants</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Neighbors</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=58</td>
<td>N=262</td>
<td>N=470</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: United States Census, 1860, 1870, and 1880; see notes 3-7.

7. I included those labeled "domestics," "companions," "nurses," and "housekeepers" as "servants." Since the other labels occurred more frequently in nonfaculty households than in faculty households, their inclusion biased the data against my conclusion.
recorded only minimal information for those in institutions, there is no way to ascertain the wealth of the Swarthmore faculty.

Comparing the professions of "heads of household" of neighbors and the entire community provides another indicator of faculty status (Table 5). Throughout these decades, faculty neighborhoods were about twice as likely to contain professionals or proprietors of large enterprises (15 percent) as the rest of the community (7 percent). Fewer faculty neighbors were manual workers and small businessmen (53 percent) than was typical in the community (66 percent). The elusive category "none" (in which I included the retired) probably hides a greater disparity between neighbors and community. Impressionistically, it appears that many reporting "none" who lived near faculty were independently wealthy, a status sometimes indicated by phrases like "living on own income." "None" in other parts of town often seemed to be linked with poverty. The census establishes that the faculty at Bucknell, Franklin and Marshall, and Princeton lived in affluent neighborhoods, headed privileged households, and possessed considerable personal wealth.

The source of faculty affluence is less clear. Some brought family wealth to the job; a striking number of faculty wives recorded personal wealth in the 1860 and 1870 censuses. Many families maintained a higher standard of living than their salaries could have provided. No doubt teaching was a calling for some who gave up better-paying alternatives, but historians have been too ready to accept contemporary complaints about faculty pay.8

Table 5. Occupations in the Neighborhood and Community, 1860–1880

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Proprietor</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business/Craftsmen</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi- and Skilled Manual</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled Manual</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping House</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N=262</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>N=470</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Faculty salaries were considerably above those of most Americans. Thomas Winpenny’s study of Lancaster permits a direct comparison between the salaries at Franklin and Marshall College and those of local industrial workers. The average annual wage in Lancaster’s fifteen leading industries ranged from $168 to $290 in 1850 and from $204 to $461 in 1880. Professors at Franklin and Marshall earned an average of $1,200, and the president’s salary ranged from $1,500 to $1,800 in these decades. Thus, Franklin and Marshall salaries were three to four times the average wage in the highest paid local industry and six to nine times the average in the fifteenth-ranked industry.9

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Lancaster's manufacturing wages were typical of those in the Middle Atlantic states, which averaged about $350 in 1880. From the 1860s through the 1880s, salaries at the four colleges ranged from about $1,000 to $3,400, averaging about $2,000. Swarthmore and Princeton faculty averaged $2,500, about $1,000 above Bucknell and Franklin and Marshall. Presidential salaries ranged from $1,200 at Bucknell in the 1860s to $4,000 and a house at Princeton and Swarthmore in the 1880s. 10 Thus, faculty made more than five times the average industrial wage in the region, and presidents received as much as twelve times that figure. 11

Olivier Zunz's study of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad provides another comparison. Of its more than 10,000 employees in 1880, 191 were executives. The twenty-three top-level executives made over $4,000, more than all college employees except the Princeton and Swarthmore presidents. Salaries of the 168 middle-level managers ranged from $1,500 to $4,000. 12 The faculty at the four colleges were in the lower end of this range. Faculty made less than the few top executives, but their salaries were similar to those of middle management, equating them with the top 2 percent of Chicago, Burlington and Quincy employees. The cries of poverty must be put into perspective; if faculty were poor, it was only in comparison with their wealthiest neighbors.

Faculty affluence and social status were not accompanied by modern professional prerogatives. Faculty had little influence over selecting their colleagues. Appointments were made by presidents and governing boards that, in the absence of strong professional expertise, felt competent to make the decisions. The procedures were similar at the four colleges, although the balance of power between the president and trustees differed.

Franklin and Marshall trustees filled vacancies at their annual June meeting; but if the candidate declined or if a vacancy occurred during


11. These estimates are in line with Colin Burke's estimate that faculty salaries were 7.5 times those of unskilled workers in 1850, 5.2 in 1890, and 4.0 in 1910. Colin Burke, *American Collegiate Populations* (New York: New York University Press, 1982), 233; see also Charles Bishop, "Teaching at Johns Hopkins," *History of Education Quarterly* 27 (Winter 1987): 138–47.

the summer, the appointment was left in the president's hands, limited only by a stipulated salary. The faculty and president were formally deferential, as in 1880 when they told the board that "we have no request to make of the Board, but we express our desire that a good and competent man be appointed to the position." Records do not indicate whether such formal deference hid a stronger role.

At Princeton, better records and a forceful president, James McCosh, reveal occasional confrontations. To fill important positions, such as the new professorship of civil engineering and applied mathematics in 1875, the board of trustees appointed a committee to make suitable inquiries and to present a candidate; the committee's charge provided no role for the president and faculty. But surviving correspondence indicates that McCosh investigated the candidates and undoubtedly influenced the final decisions. President McCosh had considerable authority to make minor appointments. He presented the candidate's credentials to the trustees along with a faculty recommendation that usually was accepted.14

Through formal and informal power, McCosh was able to shape a new faculty in his twenty-year tenure. Although McCosh discomfited some trustees by reaching beyond the ministry and even beyond Presbyterianism for many of his appointments, he often prevailed. Only where McCosh did not exercise his influence did the board seem to determine appointments, and in doing this it committed at least one extraordinary gaffe. In 1883 John Bach McMaster, a young engineering instructor, surprised all but his closest friends by publishing the highly successful History of the People of the United States. The faculty recommendation that a chair in American history be established for him was serenely brushed away by the trustees, with the sentiment that McMaster should stick to engineering. McCosh stayed on the sidelines, miffed that McMaster had not acknowledged Princeton in his volume. McMaster soon accepted a chair at the University of Pennsylvania, where he became an eminent historian.15

13. Franklin and Marshall College, Board of Trustees, Minutes (Franklin and Marshall Archives), 15 June 1880.
14. James McCosh to President Caffree, 1875, McCosh Papers (Princeton University Manuscript Collection); Princeton University, Trustees, Minutes (Princeton University Manuscript Collection), 26 and 28 June 1876, 29 June, 25 August, and 27 October 1875.
15. William B. Scott, Some Memoirs of a Paleontologist (ca. 1930, Princeton University Manuscript Collection, typescript), 586; Eric F. Goldman, John Bach McMaster
At Swarthmore the governing board played a stronger role, particularly in the early years. President Magill formed careful alliances with several sympathetic managers and gradually increased his role. It was a touchy process, as indicated in an 1885 search for science and Latin professors. Some candidacies began with personal letters to Magill or the board, while others stemmed from direct intervention by interested managers and Quaker educators. Magill apparently took the initiative in seeking out candidates' views and qualifications and checked carefully with Eli Lamb, chairman of the Committee on Instruction. Lamb secretly advised Magill on how to maneuver past some managers: "I think thee managed the Dr. Leidy business admirably. It was entirely proper to write Dr. Dolley. Thee could do no less. Dr. B. Sharp though will try for the place with a pretty good backing. Emmor Roberts is decidedly [for] him, so do one or two others from our Com. [on Instruction]. Thee would do well to see Emmor." Dr. Dolley was appointed.

Such conflicts usually resulted from different attitudes toward professional qualifications. The governing boards and presidents shared many values, but the latter were more sensitive to the claims of expertise and the former to the claims of piety. The disagreements were never a clear-cut dichotomy between piety and expertise. Rather, they disagreed over how to blend the competing demands of denominationalism, institutional mission, and scholarship.

In the 1870s and 1880s, the expansion of knowledge, the prestige of European universities, and the new opportunities for nontheological graduate work slowly changed the accepted standards of scholarly competence. The colleges sought to combine their traditional demand for proper religious qualifications and willingness to provide personal, even pastoral, service to students with the growing demand for specialized scholarship. The choice of a new mathematics professor at Franklin and Marshall in 1880 exemplifies the desired amalgam. The trustees' Committee on Instruction considered five acceptable candidates before selecting Jefferson Kershner. He filled every qualification: Kershner was German Reformed, had done grad-


16. Eli Lamb to Edward Magill, 9 April 1885, Magill Papers (Friends Historical Library).
uate work at Yale, and was the only Franklin and Marshall alumnus among the candidates. The committee's recommendation emphasized the latter qualification. A member of the board, writing in the leading Reformed journal, acknowledged that faculty members must increasingly be specialists, yet he maintained that even in a world of specialists the colleges should seek out clergymen first, and if none were available with a special fitness for teaching then "let other men of sound Christian faith ... be employed."\(^{17}\)

At Princeton, McCosh similarly broadened the criteria. Six of the ten faculty he inherited had graduated from the college or Princeton Theological Seminary or both, and all were Calvinists. McCosh aggressively recruited candidates from outside Princeton, Presbyterianism, and even the country. He came to Princeton both as an outsider determined to build Princeton's academic reputation and as an evangelical who chafed at Old School Presbyterian sectarianism. Thirteen of the seventeen appointments made between 1868 and 1880 had no previous affiliation with the two Princeton institutions, and several were not Presbyterian. McCosh recommended that the board of trustees "should take at times an instructor belonging to another evangelical denomination, provided he is very eminent in his department. This will not impair but rather strengthen our Presbyterianism. Of the 30 officers of the College, 28 are at the present time Presbyterians, and a good number, perhaps too many, are Presbyterian ministers."\(^{18}\) The trustees did not like hearing this, even from a Presbyterian minister. They countered with a preference for alumni, for teaching ability, and, as far as possible, for "members of the Presbyterian Church, or of those denominations closely allied to it, the Reformed Dutch and the Congregational."\(^{19}\)

Although McCosh accepted non-Presbyterians he wanted formally religious faculty who would act as moral guardians. Inquiring about a candidate, McCosh explained to another president that "we do not expect any religious pledge. We do not require candidates to belong to any particular denomination. But as we are professedly a religious College we should like our instructors to be people showing respect to religion and attending on its public ordinances. Can you say any-


\(^{18}\) Princeton, Trustees, 26 June 1876; see also Hoeveler, 238–45.

\(^{19}\) Princeton, Trustees, 8 February 1877.
thing on this point? Did Professor Kerr wait on your religious ser-

vices—Episcopal I believe[?]” 20

A similar concern pervaded McCosh’s correspondence with Wil-

liam Scott, a recent graduate. The president encouraged Scott’s grad-

uate work at Heidelberg but, before offering him a job, broached

his concern. “You are aware that the Trustees and all your friends

here are resolute in keeping the College a religious one. You have

passed through various scenes since you left us. . . . If a man has the

root in him he will only be strengthened in the faith by such an

experience. It will be profitable to me to find how you have stood

all this.” 21 McCosh even tolerated a few skeptics and hired two tal-

tented young scientists who made little pretension of theism. They

were neighbors on what was branded “atheists’ corner.”

In his last report to the board of trustees McCosh described his

recruiting policy as looking for the best man available and then in-

quiring about his probable influence on the college’s religious and

moral life. But his definition of the best man changed during his

presidency. To build a respected faculty quickly, McCosh recruited

from other colleges at first. Then in the 1880s he sought out “me

bright young men” like Scott. McCosh encouraged talented under-

graduates to pursue graduate work, usually in Europe. He often

chose the sons of wealthy Princeton backers who could afford the

project. If their work was successful and their faith unshaken, a

Princeton position beckoned. Fifteen of his last twenty-three appoint-

ments were alumni. This may have been McCosh’s response to the

trustees’ opposition to his academic ambitions for Princeton. With

these appointments he still gained faculty with European training

and personal loyalty to him, while soothing trustee fears of out-

siders. 22

Although McCosh respected scholarly research, teaching ability

also weighed heavily. His letters to Scott were filled with advice on

teaching. In a letter to Daniel Gilman at Johns Hopkins University,

McCosh reported that although he was convinced of a candidate’s

20. McCosh to Caffree, 1875, McCosh Papers (Princeton University Manuscript

Collection).


Manuscript Collection).

22. Princeton, Trustees, 9 February 1888; Scott, 456; Princeton University, General


284–95.
scholarly ability he was "anxious to know whether he is also a lively teacher."23

At Swarthmore the managers constantly pressed for more Quakers on the staff. Traditional Quaker antipathy to higher education, the absence of professional clergy, and the college's recent founding limited the normal sources of faculty, and many non-Friends had to be hired. Magill had to defend his staff publicly in the *Friends Intelligencer*, pointing out that twelve of the twenty-one faculty were Friends and that four others had Quaker lineage. Furthermore, he maintained that "in the appointments of professors and instructors at Swarthmore, other things being equal, a member of our Religious Society is always preferred."24 At another time he pointed out to traditionalist manager Clement Biddle that the number of Friends employed had risen in the thirteen years of operation. Magill questioned prospective faculty members on their religious affiliation, apparently to be sure that their beliefs would not prevent them from participating in the campus meetings rather than to require adherence to Quakerism.25 Magill also questioned applicants on their ability to maintain discipline. His concern with this quality overshadows any interest in scholarly attainment in his correspondence.26

The autonomy of faculty members increasingly became an issue as they began to resist overseeing student life. The extent of their autonomy depended on the circumstances at individual institutions, especially on the president and his relationship to the board of trustees. Presidents then were not primarily administrators. They were the heads of the faculty, carrying a heavy teaching load and chairing weekly faculty meetings. Sometimes they were far more. Some, such as Nevin and McCosh, brought significant academic reputations to the job. Others, like Hill and Magill, were relatively unknown. But presidential reputation and personality intersected with denomina-

23. McCosh to Daniel C. Gilman, 11 December 1876, Gilman Collection (Johns Hopkins University Manuscript Collection); McCosh to Scott, 15 March and 14 May 1880, McCosh Papers (Princeton University Manuscript Collection); Scott, 451–52.
25. Magill to Biddle, 24 June 1882, Magill Papers; see letters to Magill from Thomas Stein (3 April 1883), Edward White (4 April 1885), and H. I. Riley (5 April 1885), Magill Papers. Poor records and little hiring prevent getting a clear picture of the process at Bucknell.
tional traditions, institutional finances, and the composition of the board to create widely divergent conditions for faculty at different colleges.

At Franklin and Marshall, fiscal crisis and the ouster of the president in 1866 led the trustees to increase their campus oversight. A new trustee committee observed final exams, while another frequently visited to oversee religious and moral life. Although the new president, John W. Nevin, was a prestigious theologian, his advanced age prevented him from being a strong administrator. The board was delighted to have Nevin’s prestige but unwilling to give him much autonomy.27 Nevin even had difficulty defending faculty control of honorary degrees. He complained that since the public held the faculty responsible for the quality of academic degrees, earned or honorary, could “it be right then to allow the faculty no voice whatever in the conferring of them?”28 The board refused to change the procedure, although it began to screen candidates more carefully. The faculty did not receive an effective veto over honorary degree candidates until 1884.29 While this change reflected a growing national concern about cheap degrees, it also resulted from the election of a less prestigious, but younger and more vigorous, president.

During the Rev. Thomas G. Apple’s tenure, the trustees became less intrusive. They elected Apple with a keen sense of the need to strengthen the faculty after Professor Nathan C. Schaeffer wrote a scathing letter of resignation, calling for an infusion of new talent. Enough dissatisfaction existed to prompt the unusual step of reading the letter into the minutes of the board of trustees. The board, increasingly occupied with operating the academy and raising money for new facilities, allowed Apple and the faculty more discretion in educational matters. Apple received broad powers to deal with problems arising between the board’s annual meetings. The trustees, intimately involved in campus affairs after the crisis of 1866, retreated to a more distant role enforced primarily by controlling the purse strings in the 1880s.30

At Bucknell the trustees also backed away after a period of intense involvement. Both of its governing boards were intensely involved

27. Franklin and Marshall, Trustees, 7 and 8 July 1868.
28. Ibid., June 1870.
29. Ibid., 27 June 1871 and 17 June 1884.
30. Ibid., 1877–88. Schaeffer’s letter was recorded in the June 1877 minutes.
in the firing of Professor James, the forced retirement of President Loomis, and the William Bucknell "coup." With the defeat of the Lewisburg elements and their replacement by William Bucknell's Philadelphia coterie, the board of trustees became literally more distant. Most lived at least a day's journey from the campus. By gaining William Bucknell's confidence and avoiding controversy, President Hill gained a free hand.

At Princeton, President McCosh dominated events in his early years, but in the 1880s traditional trustees began to assert their influence. McCosh played faculty and trustees against each other. One example was his campaign against fraternities in the early 1870s, in which he marshaled faculty support to convince trustees to eliminate the Greeks. But at the same meeting he showed no compunction about asking the board to remind the faculty of his right to be informed whenever they sought to leave the campus. The trustees accepted many of McCosh's ideas for modernizing the campus, but they continued to be regularly involved. Young Professor Scott complained: "The Board had gained a most inflated conception of its authority and importance. When I came home [from Heidelberg University in 1880], the Trustees were a first-class nuisance, meddling with every petty detail of administration and demanding that they be consulted before anything whatever could be done." He soon found himself in a trustee's law office in New York, apologizing for an outburst during a joint trustee-faculty committee meeting. Young faculty recruited by McCosh to bring scholarly distinction to Princeton chafed under continuing demands from both the president and the board to act in loco parentis. The conflict between two ideals was heightened by the selection, over the objections of the faculty and the retiring president, of a very conservative Presbyterian minister to succeed McCosh in 1888.

The other three campuses were models of academic autonomy compared with Swarthmore, where the board of managers zealously enforced the ideal of a guarded education. The tone was set early: President Parrish did not survive Swarthmore's second year, after conflicts with the managers. Edward Magill, principal of the pre-

31. W. Scott, 454. His visit to the trustee is described on 455. Princeton, Trustees, 22 December 1875.
32. The executive board minutes record only the appointment of a committee to deal with trouble in the faculty. A month later Parrish's resignation was recorded without comment. Swarthmore College, Executive Board, Minutes (Friends Historical
Gentlemen and Scholars

paratory school, was elevated to the presidency in 1871. Magill was more malleable, catering to the board to an extent that even he later regretted. Despite his deference, the managers considered reducing Magill's salary near the end of his term.33

The board of managers was organized to give close scrutiny to the campus. Its four-member visiting committee made weekly inspections. At monthly meetings its executive board dealt with everything from admissions and faculty appointments to outbreaks of measles and the use of tobacco. The board defended the faculty from external attack on occasion but barred even Magill from its meetings.34 Although the visiting committee reports were verbal, and thus inaccessible to the historian, the committee’s vigorous oversight surely restricted faculty prerogatives.

Trustees’ expectations that faculty would continue to provide moral stewardship were generally accepted by older faculty. But the younger generation, trained in doctoral programs, were more resistant. Across the four campuses, nonacademic duties were reduced slightly during the 1870s and 1880s but remained onerous by today’s standards. Although specialized expertise was slowly becoming more valued, faculty were still multifunctional professionals, in the mold of ministers. Faculty had numerous nonacademic tasks; acting in loco parentis was hard work. Professor Ferris Price found himself overseeing lunch six days a week at Swarthmore, as well as proctoring study halls and taking attendance at Bible classes and Sunday meeting. Other professors doubled as librarians, museum curators, and registrars. The president and trustees took the nonacademic tasks as seriously as the academic ones. President McCosh sternly held the faculty to their chapel duties. At Bucknell one of President Loomis’s charges against Professor James was that he refused to spend evenings keeping order in the college dormitory. Professor Maria San-


33. Magill, 152–53, 191–92; Swarthmore College, Board of Managers, Minutes (Friends Historical Library), 20 June 1887.

34. Magill, 191–92; Swarthmore, Executive Board, 8 December 1869–26 June 1872; Swarthmore College, Annual Catalogue, 1871/72, p. 35–36.
ford was fired from Swarthmore for failing to inform the managers' Committee on Instruction when she left campus for speaking engagements.35

Professional duties were not standardized. Faculty were expected to be willing to vary their work to serve the institution. A death in the faculty, new courses, or financial retrenchment meant increased teaching loads. When President McCosh called on the Princeton trustees to reduce the size of freshman classes by creating extra sections, the trustees responded by adding an hour to each tutor's daily work load. Although in this case there was extra pay, the board reiterated the principle that "the Trustees do not by such act admit that the Trustees are not entitled to all of the time of each tutor."36 Such bonuses rarely rewarded extra work; the faculty had to wait for relief until the board chose to augment the staff.37

The positive side of the lack of specialization was the potential for a sense of academic community. Before 1890 all four colleges were small enough to hold weekly meetings to deal with discipline, scheduling, grading, and student activities. The largest, Princeton, had ten regular faculty and nine junior and part-time members when McCosh arrived. By 1890 there were forty-five faculty, many in junior positions. The complement of each of the other three faculties never exceeded a dozen in these decades. In a day when professors frequently spent an entire career in one institution, close ties no doubt developed. The absence of departmental barriers and the presence of common religious commitments provided a basis for social and intellectual community.

Although the college community probably offered psychic comfort, faculty lacked formal security. Faculty salaries could be reduced in times of financial distress. The payroll was sometimes in arrears, especially at Franklin and Marshall. One year at Swarthmore, salaries were attached to a sliding scale based on enrollment. The lack of a tenure system made it possible for a professor with years of service to be dropped suddenly, as happened to Professor James at Bucknell.

35. See, for instance, "General Organization 1890–91," a notebook in the Appleton Presidential papers (Friends Historical Library), or McCosh's reports to the board of trustees on 22 December 1875 and 9 February 1888.
37. Trustee minutes at the four colleges give similar pictures of working conditions, job security, and nonacademic tasks in the 1870s and 1880s.
But arbitrary dismissal was rare; despite the lack of procedural protection, faculty enjoyed considerable de facto security.

The absence of guaranteed pensions was a more serious source of insecurity. When a professor died in office, trustees apparently had clear consciences as long as the survivors received the remainder of the year’s pay. A few venerable professors were lucky enough that, when they could no longer teach, the trustees arranged a pension. When William Nevin (brother of the famous theologian and former Franklin and Marshall president) could no longer carry a full teaching load, he received a pension and continued to teach a few classes. By setting the pension at eight hundred dollars annually and hiring a young replacement at seven hundred dollars, the pension involved no additional initial expenditure. Like other Americans, aging faculty had to depend on family, personal fortune, and good health.

While institutionalized pensions were decades away, working conditions improved in the 1880s. Most notably, boards began to support leaves of absence for graduate study in European universities or American graduate schools. More money was also appropriated for scientific research, field trips, and libraries.

Despite the limited institutional provisions for support, formal security, and career “ladders,” college teaching was a long-term commitment for most faculty, one usually tied to a single institution. The average career of a faculty member in 1870 ranged between twenty-three and thirty years. For a faculty member in the mid-1880s, the average length of service at Princeton declined slightly to twenty-seven, while it jumped to thirty-three at Bucknell and at Franklin and Marshall. Swarthmore went against the trend, declining to an average of eighteen years due to rapid turnover among assistant professors. The managers considered this to be unhealthy and took steps to increase stability. The mean for full professors at Swarthmore was twenty-four years, and two-thirds of them remained at Swarthmore for over a quarter of a century. William Owens, professor of physics and chemistry at Bucknell for fifty years, served the longest. While most faculty spent their entire teaching careers at one institution, some taught at other colleges, making the total professorial careers longer than the figures shown in Table 6.

38. Franklin and Marshall, Trustees, 15 June 1886. Some expense ensued later as the replacement’s salary rose.
39. See, e.g., Bucknell University, Board of Trustees, Minutes (Bucknell University Archives), 23 June 1885 and 12 January 1888.
Table 6. Length of Faculty Service at the Colleges, 1869–1885

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>1869–70</th>
<th>1885–86</th>
<th>1883–84</th>
<th>1884–85</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bucknell</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F&amp;M</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeton</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>27 +</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swarthmore</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The figures were calculated from college directories and include assistant, associate, and full professors. Tutors and lecturers were not included. The years served by faculty as emeriti were not included.

Note: This table measures the average length of service (past and future) to that college of all faculty employed in the specified year. The Princeton 1884–85 figure is a minimum, as some had not completed their service when the directory was published in 1906. Swarthmore's proximity to Philadelphia enabled it to use more part-time and short-term staff than the other three colleges, but the rapid turnover of assistant professors concerned the instruction committee, which recommended granting more professional autonomy to retain faculty (Swarthmore College, Committee on Instruction, Minutes [Friends Historical Library], 6 February 1885). Marilyn Tobias, Old Dartmouth on Trial: The Transformation of the Academic Community in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: New York University Press, 1982), 35, found similar longevity at Dartmouth (almost 75 percent worked at least twenty-five years) as at the three colleges in this study outside metropolitan areas.

The prevalence of clerically trained faculty has often been cited as a congenital weakness of the "old-time college." Appointment of non-clerical faculty became historians' litmus test for the victory of professional standards over narrow piety. Most faculty at Franklin and Marshall, Princeton, and Bucknell in 1865 had been trained in theological seminaries. In the next quarter-century the proportion at the latter two declined, with few clerical faculty appointed after 1870. But the significance of this change has been exaggerated. This can be demonstrated by juxtaposing Franklin and Marshall with Swarthmore. The former maintained the most clerical faculty in 1890, whereas Swarthmore, due to the absence of ministers in Quakerism, had none. Swarthmore led in science, but overall Franklin and Marshall probably had a stronger faculty; clerical faculty did not yet necessarily obstruct intellectual life.

Faculty trained in theological seminaries were not simply ministers exiled to academia. In Donald Scott's terms, the clergy moved "from office to profession" in the mid-nineteenth century, becoming a profession that encompassed far more than the ministry. The seminary became the major outlet for those desiring an intellectual profession. The growth of denominational and interdenominational
organizations, churches, academies, and colleges offered hope that one's religious and intellectual calling could lead to a profession. College teaching was one of several potential careers for theological seminary graduates.

To criticize colleges for the high proportion of clerical faculty before 1890 anachronistically ignores the realities of intellectual life in the period. Rather than the clergy restricting progress in higher education, the opposite may be closer to the truth. The proliferation of colleges after 1800 created a demand for academics that could only be filled by drawing on the main supply of trained intellectuals: the clergy. The use of clergy, therefore, permitted a remarkable expansion of higher education.

Much of the advanced scholarship of the time was produced under theological auspices. Seminaries had higher standards of admission than other professional schools and provided training in the most advanced intellectual areas, especially linguistics and philosophy. Pre-dating disciplinary barriers, moral and natural philosophy ranged across what today is called the arts and sciences. Only with the founding of Johns Hopkins in 1876 did a more advanced rival appear, and few other graduate schools appeared before 1890. Denominational quarterlies such as the *Reformed Church Review* and *New Princeton Review* were among the most important scholarly outlets of the time. They were sponsored by denominations but published articles on a wide range of intellectual and social issues as well as on specifically theological topics. They were not surpassed until the new disciplinary organizations began publishing their own journals near the end of the century. Theology provided an umbrella for scholarly activities that later divided into the various humanities and social sciences, a transition exemplified by the merger of the *New Princeton Review* and *Political Science Quarterly* in 1888.40

Burton Bledstein has written that “above all, what had been missing

in the old-time college was an academic culture."41 Such an observation may be accurate, but it misses the point. College faculty in the mid- to late nineteenth century were part of a larger intellectual life that centered around scientific organizations, the lyceum movement, professionalized clergy, and journalism. Clergy, men of letters, and lecturers were cultural heroes within polite circles. Their pictures were available, their works were recited in schools, and their images were even used in the popular parlor game of Authors. They formed the intellectual and cultural leadership that Lewis Perry calls “the inner circle of respectability” within the “larger circle of sentimental culture.”42

Other faculty moved between scientific and literary circles and the colleges. The lines between genteel culture and academia hardened slowly, first in science. Increasingly, acceptance as a scientist required individuals to join certain scientific organizations, subscribe to certain journals, and be either a doctor, a college-educated lawyer, or a scientist in a college or the government. While many were not full-time scientists, science was becoming more exclusive, and by the 1880s the practice of hiring doctors to teach college science was being replaced by attempts to hire those with Ph.D.’s. The development of an academic culture occurred slowly, and at different speeds in different areas of knowledge.

The older professors who dominated the faculties in the 1870s and 1880s were products of the denominational theological seminaries and the broader literary and scientific world. They were moderately wealthy men who lived alongside the town’s elite. They sacrificed potential income in order to teach and had little of the formal security accorded modern academics, but they were much better paid and more secure than most Americans. Most faculty made long-term commitments to college teaching and to a single college. Most were in touch with the intellectual leaders of their local community and denomination. While their intellectual accomplishments would soon be overshadowed by those from research universities, these faculty made possible an extraordinary experiment in higher education.

Faculty life at these four colleges contradicts depressing images of an impoverished, socially isolated college professoriate before what

42. Perry, 185–95, 248–76. The phrases are on 254.
Christopher Jencks and David Reisman dubbed the “academic revolution.” Frederick Rudolph, in his classic *American College and University*, concluded that “everyone knew that faculty salaries were distressingly low,” which “helped to alienate a large body of American intellectuals from the mainstream of American life.” Many other works, documented with pithy quotes from early university reformers, have echoed this theme.

Convincing as the scenario appears, some scholars have challenged it recently. Colin Burke questioned whether late nineteenth-century professionalization brought higher salaries or security. Lewis Perry placed college faculty within the small-town and urban cultural elites. Louise Stevenson found that Yale faculty blended evangelical Protestantism with a lively interest in the most pressing literary, social, and scientific problems.

Modern academic culture was in its infancy in 1890 and beginning to be represented by the junior faculty members, especially at Princeton. As Louise Stevenson has shown for Yale, the generation in power in the 1870s and 1880s at these four colleges acted initially as reformers. These presidents sought to blend antebellum criteria for faculty with new epistemological developments as they recruited the next generation. But one generation’s reformers become the next period’s conservatives. Those like McCosh’s “bright young men” were affiliated with the new disciplinary organizations and had a different vision of academia. Most accepted genteel Protestantism but were committed neither to pious evangelicalism nor to denominational organizations; their world was more exclusive and specialized. After experiences in European or American graduate schools, they chafed at nonacademic chores and sought to invoke university values.

The younger faculty, especially those trained in graduate schools or European universities, changed academia and pioneered academic

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culture after 1890. But the academics they succeeded bore little resem­blance to the descriptions of Rudolph and others. They were not just antebellum holdovers, resisting change; the postbellum generation forged its own model. As Louise Stevenson has observed, we must not overlook stages of academic professionalization merely because they were not the final form.