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Chapter 01: The Founding, 1885

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CHAPTER 1

THE FOUNDING, 1885

The minutes and hours moved at a maddeningly slow pace for the handful of local inhabitants of Winter Park, Florida, on an April-spring day in 1885.(1) They were awaiting news from Orange City where representatives of the Florida Congregational Association were meeting to select the site for Florida's first institution of higher learning. Confident that their town would be chosen, the residents of Winter Park had prepared for a joyous celebration. They had constructed a miniature altar composed of "fat" pine logs on empty barrels covered with boards and buried in sand at a spot on north Interlachen Avenue. The women had baked cakes and prepared lemonade; speakers had written speeches with appropriate rhetorical flourishes; and a nationally known poet, Emily Huntington Miller, who was wintering in Winter Park, had composed a commemorative poem. The Congregational Association voted in the early morning at Orange City, but it would be well past noon before Winter Park would receive the news. With no direct rail communication between Orange City and their town, Winter Park's representatives had to travel by wagon to the St. Johns River, by boat down to Sanford, and again by wagon to reach little hamlet on the outskirts of Orlando.

In mid-afternoon, the courier arrived with the expected good news. Winter Park had been selected as the site for the new college. As planned, the bell on the tiny, unfinished Congregational Church pealed the happy tidings of victory. Before a roaring bonfire, several prominent residents made short but enthusiastic speeches. The evening was climaxed by the reading of Miller's poem, which ended with a vision of the future:

“Lo! Down the years our fancy strays to see/The wondrous picture of the days to be/When her broad foundations wisely laid/Her fair halls clustering in their quiet shade/By the blue lake, our college towers shall rise/And lift their heads to greet the smiling skies.”

Afterwards people "from far and near" gathered at the home of Frederick Lyman for a victory celebration. As eighteenth century Chinese lanterns illuminated Lyman's home on the corner of Interlachen Ave and the Boulevard, and as dying bonfires glowed in the streets, the celebrants ate cake, drank lemonade, sang songs and listened to more congratulatory speeches. When one orator for the first time spoke of "Rollins College," the term received a loud round of applause. All sensed that a new era had begun for their little hamlet on the Florida frontier.

The launching of Rollins College in 1885 strongly resembled the founding patterns of other small liberal arts colleges throughout the nineteenth century.(2) During most of the century an indiscriminate college-building mania swept the nation, one that produced over two hundred colleges between 1850 and 1900. This incredible orgy of college founding continued in the latter half of the century, leading one writer to describe America as a "land of colleges."(2) Such casual building promoted, however, a high mortality rate. Colleges rose "like mushrooms in our luxurious soils, are duly lauded and puffed up for a day and then sink to be heard no more," one writer intoned. In most cases survival, not academic attainment, was a major achievement.(3)

In this time period, several forces converged to produce this surge in college building. Three stand out as the most significant: religious denominationalism, community boosterism, and real estate development. Denominationalism was an initiating factor in this process because Protestant denominations wanted to assure their children a sectarian Christian education. Congregationalists and Presbyterians, with the tradition of Harvard,

Yale and Princeton behind them, were most active in college building in the early nineteenth century, They were joined in the mid-century by Lutherans, Dutch Reformed and Unitarians, followed later by Methodists and Baptists. These religious sects accounted directly for the founding of eleven colleges in Kentucky, twenty-one in Illinois, and thirteen in Iowa before 1860. And this represented a fraction of the total. (4)

Community pride, called the "booster spirit," became a second prime mover in college building. Regardless of its size, and some were only two or three houses, pioneers dreamed of turning their hamlet into a "town." A post office, a newspaper and a hotel were thought critical in shaping the destiny of a town. A railroad would guarantee its future. But only a college could give the little town a mark of distinction.(5)

Closely tied to this community boosterism spirit was real estate development. Throughout the nineteenth century land speculation provided the most popular and one of the most profitable form of economic endeavor. Those who owned property in a village, which included almost everyone, perceived the growth of their town in economic terms. As the town grew, so did their property values. Real estate promoters sought to foster their town's growth with various kinds of promotional schemes. The quickest way to make the little village attractive to buyers (in some cases of literally putting it on the map) was to found a college. Colleges inevitably meant increased population and a rise in property values. Thus, village property owners were easily convinced to contribute funds to build an institution of higher learning in their town.

The convergence of these three forces created a college founding pattern repeated many times over. A church denomination sent out a circular letter inviting communities with geographic and economic appeal to submit "inducement" bids. Real estate entrepreneurs then took the leadership in mobilizing financial campaigns in the villages, appealing to

community pride and economic gain. Several villages and some towns submitted bids, and as with any other entrepreneurial endeavors, the college went to the highest bidder. As one contemporary wrote: all these forces and more resulted in "a magnetic chain of reciprocal influences, by which light flashes from college to the community, and life streams back again from the community to the college, so that while the college redeems the community from ignorance, the community preserves the college from an undue tendency to monkish corruption and scholastic unprofitableness."(6)

It was precisely this long-established model that led to the founding of Rollins College in 1885. All the elements mentioned above--the frontier environment, denominationalism, boosterism, and real estate development--were present in the founding of Rollins. In 1885, Florida represented America's last frontier. Since the Civil War, northeaster tourists had been pouring into the state in ever-increasing numbers, and enterprising hotel and land developers followed them. Still, in 1885, much of Florida contained frontier characteristics. Central Florida, still sparsely settled, was dotted here and there with small villages. People the local inhabitants called 'crackers' worked small pioneer farms, but northern entrepreneurs were already establishing large scale orange groves. As with most frontier regions, communication was primitive. Transportation consisted of wagons crawling over crude dirt roads and small steamships plying the St. Johns River. A major improvement came with the building in 1884 of a railroad line connecting Sanford and Orlando. The South Florida Railroad allowed Central Florida to become a destination for scores of winter tourists from the North. (7)

Several denominations began to make their way into this virgin, primitive territory, but none was more active than the Congregational Church, having established by 1880 thirteen churches in north and central Florida. Considering the poor condition of education in the

state at that time and given the Congregationalism's historic college founding tradition, not surprisingly the first topic discussed in the initial meeting of the Florida Congregational Association was the need to create a college. Lucy Cross of Daytona was the first to place the matter before the Association. Miss Cross, a graduate of Oberlin College (one of the Congregational Church's oldest co-educational institutions), had moved 1880 to Daytona, Florida, where she established an active, private elementary school. Concerned with the lack of educational opportunity in the state, "Hope sprang in [her] heart and an idea in [her] mind" when she learned of the initial meeting of the General Congregational Association to be held (prophetically) in the little hamlet of Winter Park. Miss Cross made her appeal to her pastor, C. M. Bingham, a delegate to the Florida Association. At the Winter Park meeting, Bingham took advantage of his position as moderator to read Miss Cross's paper even though the subject of a college was not on the agenda. "I dare not go home and face Miss Cross if I do not read this," he cagily told the assembled members. (8)

In the paper Miss Cross made an appeal for the founding of a college in Florida so that Floridians could provide their children with a New England education. It seemed foolish, she said, for the Florida families to send their children out of the warm weather of Florida to the cold, sickly climate of the North. The youth of Florida and the sons and daughters of tourists, said Miss Cross, deserved the "soundest moral and religious teaching" that the Congregational Church could provide.

Accepting Miss Cross's suggestion, the Association appointed a committee to report at the next annual meeting on the educational conditions in Florida. We have no evidence that the committee ever studied the Florida educational system. But if it had made such a study, the committee's report would not have been encouraging. In 1884, Florida possessed only eight county high schools, ones so meager in their course offerings and in session such a

short time that the state was established several publicly supported secondary academies. Even with these academies, one observer described educational conditions in gloomy terms: the elementary and high schools were "running from two to five months per year with little classification and wholly inadequate facilities." Most of the "crackers or poor whites" could not read; "forty-five of every one hundred voters," he concluded, "are illiterate." Several private secondary school academies were scattered throughout the state. They included a Baptist school at Deland, a Christian Church academy at Starke, Catholic Church academies at St. Augustine, Tampa, Key West and Jacksonville. Florida could claim no institution of higher learning in 1884. These conditions served as a magnet that attracted such committed Congregationalist missionaries as Lucy Cross.(9)

As a way of presenting a report to the Association, the committee persuaded a newly arrived minister, the Reverend Edward P. Hooker, pastor of the Winter Park Congregational Church, to prepare a paper for the 1884 annual meeting on the subject of Florida education. The records do not show why Hooker was chosen for this important task, but the choice could not have been more appropriate. He had only recently come to Florida under the auspices of the Home Missionary Society. The fifty-year old Hooker, a pious New England Congregational minister, and a descendant of the famous independent-minded Colonial minister, Thomas Hooker, had received his BA and MA from Middlebury College in Massachusetts in 1855 and an MA in 1858. Ordained by Andover Theological Seminary, a leading seminary in New England, Hooker preached in several Congregational Churches in Massachusetts, and later in his former college town of Middlebury. While at Medford, Massachusetts, Hooker's wife became ill and died. Later he married his second wife, Elizabeth Robbins, the daughter of a missionary, who bore him six children. In 1882 Hooker developed arthritis problems that led him to accept an opportunity for home missionary work

in the warmer climate of Florida. He was assigned to work with Reverend S. F. Gale, director of the Florida Home Missionary Society, who sent Hooker to Winter Park to found a Congregational Church.(10)

When he and his large family arrived in Winter Park in 1883, they found no churches at all in the little hamlet. Hooker therefore began holding union services in a hall over the village's only store while plans were being laid for building a Congregational church. In addition to preaching union services in Winter Park, Hooker spent several Sunday afternoons carrying the gospel to outlying rural areas. These trips on horseback allowed him to become familiar with, in his daughter's words, "the strange pioneer world to which he had come, so different from the long-established order of New England." She recalls his speaking of the crudeness and ignorance prevailing throughout the area and worrying about the role the church should play in "building a wholesome order" in Central Florida.

At this point he received an invitation to speak on Florida education at the forthcoming meeting of the Association. Hooker's paper, entitled "The Mission of Congregationalism in Florida," was a forceful articulation of the Congregational Church's historic educational mission and a moving plea for an institution of higher learning in Florida.(12) He began by summarizing what he called "Congregationalism's mission of Christian education," where he documented the historical Congregational college-building tradition. Hooker then turned to the immediate issue: no area of the nation, he proclaimed, was more in need of an institution of higher learning than Florida. Europeans had settled Florida, he observed, fifty years before the Plymouth settlement. Why was Florida educationally so far behind New England? Hooker's answer repeated a traditional New England Puritan self-serving litany: Florida has remained static because its progress was retarded by a Spanish papal and aristocratic legacy that "forced the torch of learning downward." "Has not the time come,"

Hooker asked the ministers, "to reverse the torch and bid it burn and illumine the forests with the free [Protestant] gospel and the college?"(11)

In a practical vein, Hooker argued that the growth and prosperity of Florida could not be assured simply by planting more orange groves. Prosperity depended just as much on educational institutions because no industry would attract families without educational opportunities for their children. Families of the North, he suggested, were waiting for an answer. Hooker then ended with a final rhetorical flourish: "The outlook is grand and glorious. A few of us stand on these early heights of the new time. We love the State to which we have come; these genial skies, these clear, sparkling lakes, the souls of the people who dwell among the forests. We rejoice at the arrival of those who crowd the steamboats and cars. We are a little before them and we bid them welcome. We rejoice in the privilege of laying foundations for the future. Has not the hour struck for the courage, wisdom and devotion of our Fathers?" He pleaded with them to found a Christian college and announce the decision at the present meeting. (12)

Moved by this powerful exhortation, the Association appointed a committee to consider Hooker's stirring proposal. The following day, January 29, 1885, the committee reported that it agreed with Dr. Hooker that the time had come "to take initiatory steps toward the founding of an institution for higher education in the state of Florida." To accomplish this end, the committee recommended that another group be appointed to receive monetary bids for the location of the college and at the appropriate time to present those inducements to a special meeting where the Association would then select the "most suitable location." The association accepted the proposal and appointed a committee of five: Dr. Hooker and Frederick W. Lyman of Winter Park, Reverend S. F. Gale of Jacksonville, Reverend C. M. Bingham of Daytona Beach, and Mr. R. C. Tremain of Mount Dora. The initial historical step

had been taken; denominationalism had sparked the process of college building on the Florida frontier.(13)

The news that the Congregational Association planned to found a college was initially received with some skepticism throughout the inhabited areas of the state, but within a week newspapers were spreading the word that the Association was "in earnest" in its determination to build a "first class college." The Orange County weekly newspaper reported that "assurances have been received" "from northern friends to the undertaking that important pecuniary aid" was forthcoming.(14) Jacksonville's *Times Union*, the most widely circulated newspaper in the state, was even more optimistic. The Congregational Association, it declared, "has the means to carry out its plans and the school would doubtless, if located in a center of population and wealth, be a credit to the Association and the state, and a great boon to our young people who can not afford to go to Yale or Harvard."(15)

These assurances, combined with the news that a committee was asking for inducements, caused an outburst of community boosterism. Editors and promoters, religious and secular leaders moved to awaken their communities to the "great advantages to be derived from the presence of such an institution." Reverend Bingham and Lucy Cross spurred Daytona to action; businessmen and land promoters in Mt. Dora began accumulating funds; Dr. Nathan Burrows, later a charter teacher and Trustee at the new college, led the activity in Orange City. (16) The *Orange County Reporter* touted Orlando as a railroad, manufacturing and commercial center. "Why not an educational center?" the paper asked. (17)

But Jacksonville, in the state's northeast corner, appeared to lead all other aspirants. With a population of almost eight thousand and a thriving river port, it was a hub of economic

activity and the main port of entry into the state. The most prominent churchman in the state, the Reverend S. F. Gale, director of Florida Home Missionary Society, led its cause. Finally, the state's largest newspaper was published in Jacksonville, and its editor aggressively advocated the site. In an editorial printed in early April, he minced no words in his boosterism: "Here is a chance for our Jacksonville property holders to make a point. They can get this school here if they will do as several places in south and central: give lands and money to the enterprise. If the Congregational Association wants to build up a flourishing and influential school their best plan is to locate it here in Jacksonville where the population is dense. Many of these people have young men and women they are educating. The school will be under the eyes of thousands of wealthy people and doubtless get large volunteer donations for its support. It is utterly useless to locate colleges in out-of-the-way places and in sparsely settled communities. Scholastic studies are no longer pursued in monkish cells or in the solitude of caves and mountain fastnesses."(18)

There was much logic and common sense in the editor's argument, but it was historically flawed. "Sparsely settled, but out-of-the-way places" so disparaged by the editor were precisely the location of most liberal arts colleges in the nineteenth century and for very same reasons that in the final analysis Jacksonville would not be chosen. That river port did not depend for its identity on establishing a college. With or without a college Jacksonville would grow and prosper, and its citizens could not be mobilized with cries of desperation. For Jacksonville's competition, however, a college could very well provide the key to their destinies. Daytona was a small village of a few hundred souls huddled along the ocean; and Mt. Dora and Orange City were small inland communities with no distinguishing features. But in terms of size, no community could have been more desperate for an identity than Winter Park.

Despite its small size and lack of population, Winter Park possessed two advantages over the other competitors. Two of its residents, Reverend Hooker and Frederick W. Lyman, as members of the committee chosen to receive inducements, were able to gauge the strength of the competition. Both men had established themselves as outstanding leaders in their community and the state, and both had strong personal reasons for wanting a college in Winter Park. Without even considering his moral commitment to Christian education, Hooker must have understood that his education and background made him a principal candidate for the presidency of the new college. Almost assured of that position if the college was located in his community, he therefore took a more than normal interest in raising subscriptions in his little village.(19)

Hooker's co-worker in this endeavor was developer Frederick W. Lyman, who nurtured an even greater personal and professional stake in locating the college at Winter Park. Lyman proved to be a host unto himself. The son of a New England Presbyterian minister, Lyman moved to Minnesota at the age of twenty-two where he prospered as a wholesale druggist. In his early thirties, because of his wife's asthma, he abandoned his successful business in Minneapolis and moved to Florida in search of a milder climate. Interest in land development led him to Winter Park, where he soon became involved with two real estate promoters Loring Chase of Chicago, and Oliver E. Chapman who had recently bought six hundred acres of land a few miles from Orlando that bordered Lake Osceola and Lake Maitland. Chase and Chapman had purchased the land, a newspaper reported, for the purpose of "creating a first-class resort for Northern and Southern men of wealth, where amidst orange groves and beautiful lakes and luxuries that every enterprise and wealth can devise and command, a community of grand winter homes [would arise], a resort second to none in the South."(20)

Before Lyman arrived, the two promoters already had a real estate scheme underway. After platting the town and lots the land, they constructed a railroad station on the South Florida Railroad line running through their prospective village. A three large lot on Lake Osceola had been set aside as the location of a large resort hotel. They called the area, including the settlement Winter Park, and in 1882 took the important step of securing a post office. By the time Lyman arrived, Chase had constructed a two-story building near the railroad station, with the lower floor housing a grocery store. The upper floor was intended to be used for community and church services. In addition, they had given a lot to one A. E. Rogers who had built and was operating a small hotel. By 1885 the little village was beginning to resemble a town.(21)

Lyman, a "natural organizer," as one contemporary saw him, quickly grasped the possibilities in Chase's and Chapman's real estate schemes.(22) He joined the group shortly after arriving in Winter Park, incorporated their efforts into the Winter Park Company with himself as the president, and under Chase's direction, laid out a town along the railroad tracks. Well before the advent of city planning and zoning, they designed an entire town complete with a park, straight and curving avenues, special sites for a business center, for a school, and for hotels and villas. As a final step, they built a separate "coloreds" residential area, predictably across the railroad tracks, intended to provide "help" for wealth residents. After devising "an expensive and alluring" advertising campaign, the company in February 1885, began construction of a large hotel designed to entice easterners and mid-westerners to its new development. (23)

About the time he joined the company, Lyman learned of the Congregational Association's interest in founding a college in Florida. He was struck immediately by inspiration: a college was precisely what the Winter Park Company needed to complete its

resort and real estate plans. Although the evidence is indirect, it seems likely that Lyman was the first to suggest such an idea to Dr. Hooker, who was Lyman's pastor. At any rate, in the persons of Lyman and Hooker, entrepreneurism had joined hands with denominationalism to arouse community boosterism. (24)

With refreshing openness, Lyman later recalled how he and his colleagues mobilized the community. Winter Park, he explained, became the center of the most intense activity and a house-to-house canvassing. Everyone was expected (pressured?) to give. Lyman later wrote: "No sum was too large to ask for and none too small to receive. Every loyal Winter Parkite felt that no place in the state could offer natural advantages comparable to here. Day by day the roll of honor lengthened as signature followed signature on the subscription list, till eight figures became necessary to express the total pledge in dollars and cents. The whole amount subscribed was kept a profound secret, as it was feared that should other places learn what Winter Park would offer they would redouble their efforts and the prize therefore [would be] lost." Lyman's greatest contribution came when he persuaded winter resident Alonzo Rollins to offer land for the location of the college and to donate two large orange groves (one on Lake Osceola and one in Palatka) as a part of his initial gift of fifty-thousand dollars. In return for Rollins's critical donation, Lyman agreed to name the college in his honor.(25)

On April 14, 1885, the Association held a special meeting in Mt. Dora to receive the inducements. Five towns—Jacksonville, Mt Dora, Daytona, Orange City and Winter Park--submitted proposals. As Lyman suspected his and Hooker's membership on the proposal committee worked to Winter Park's advantage. They arranged to have their proposal presented last so as to ascertain the strength of the other inducements. The host town, Mt. Dora, presented a substantial initial proposal. It offered a ten-acre wooded lot on Lake Dora,

cash, lumber, and over seven hundred acres of land for a total of \$35,564. The impressed delegates immediately recessed to tour the location of the proposed site.(26)

Next, Bingham and Lucy Cross presented Daytona's proposal of \$11,500, that fell woefully short of Mt. Dora's. Sullivan F. Gale represented Jacksonville, but he could offer only \$13,000. Most of his time was spent pressing the advantages of locating the college in a population center. To Lyman's relief, the last town, Orange City, submitted a smaller amount than Mt. Dora. Lyman later described the drama of the meeting when Winter Park made known its inducement: "As one proposal after another was read it became evident to [me] who alone knew what its subscription was--that other towns were hopelessly distanced, and [I] was resoundingly elated, but managed to maintain a calm exterior, perhaps even to assume an aspect of gloom, which was misleading. When [my] turn came and [I] presented the pledge from Winter Park, there was consternation and deep despair on many faces." Winter Park had offered \$114,180, a sum that easily eclipsed other bids. Included were an attractive high-ground site on the shores of Lake Virginia, pledges for cash, stock in the Winter Park Company and finally the generous gift of \$50,000 from Alonzo Rollins. Stone-faced, Lyman had held his cards close to his vest, playing them like a master poker player to achieve an overwhelming moment of drama.(27)

The size of Winter Park's proposal stunned the delegates, particularly those from Mt. Dora, who had been overly confident of their bid. As one participant noted: "The discussion grew hot and bitter and full of suspicion of misrepresentation." Several representatives claimed that the college site offered by Winter Park was covered by water most of the year. Lyman vehemently denied this accusation, but the concerned delegates postponed a final decision until they could visit both the Winter Park site and also that of the third highest bidder, Orange City. They journeyed to the village the following day. As Lucy Cross

described the trip: "The ride from Mt. Dora to Winter Park, a distance of twenty-five miles was, as far as Apopka, through hilly country full of small lakes; beyond Apopka, it was quite level until we reached the vicinity of Winter Park where it is rolling. We were given a pleasant ride through the town and out to the proposed site of the college. It was quite level until we reached the vicinity of Winter Park where it is rolling. We were given a pleasant ride through the town and out to the proposed site of the college; this rises fifty feet above Lake Virginia, across which some Pleasant looking residences and grounds were in sight, giving a pretty view. The college site is a handsome piece of property valued at \$23,000 and overlooks Lake Virginia." (28)

The delegates then proceeded to Orange City where the town residents turned out a large welcome. "Young ladies greeted us with wavy handkerchiefs," Lucy Cross wrote, "and led us into the midst of a joyous social where an excellent supper was served." The efforts of Orange City citizens were to no avail. On April 17 the Association met in session for a formal vote. The results were: Mt. Dora 2; Orange City 9; and Winter Park 13. Dr. Nathan Barrows made a motion that the Association unanimously declares Winter Park as the location of the new college. The motion passed without dissent.(29)

The representatives from Winter Park had pulled off an incredible feat. In their visions they could see a group of stately buildings clustered around Lake Virginia, forming a beautiful addition to their little town. What they did not visualize was the strain and stress, the burden of anxiety and debt, the days and nights of struggle that lay ahead. When the euphoria of college founding had worn off, the awful weight of college building descended. Lyman later captured the morning-after reality: "What a simple thing it seemed to build a college. At that time we did not think of the sorrow and travail of the years ahead." (30)

The unanimous vote of the Association did not satisfy everyone by any means. Some were skeptical of Winter Park's ability to raise the promised money. Others still considered that Winter Park was an unsuitable location. With obvious bitterness the *South Florida Times* of Orange City adamantly maintained that the college's chosen site was "surrounded by swamps and about nine months out of the year the hooting owls hoot to the few families that will forever be the only inhabitants." (31) The Jacksonville *Times-Union* admitted that the site was probably acceptable but still argued that large sums of money would be thrown away "in building a schoolhouse where there are not enough pupils to fill it," (32) Orlando's *Orange County Reporter*, as might be expected was lyrical in its approval. "The moral atmosphere {of Winter Park}," it said, "is as pure as the breezes from the crystal lakes and the scenery of the sort to assist in the development of the moral and good in the nature of the pupils." (33) The *Sanford Herald* carried a stinging rebuttal to the attackers: Jacksonville and its editor had no right to complain, because, in a fair competitive bidding, Florida's largest city could not raise as much as a single citizen did in Winter Park. "A magnificent bid of over \$100,000," the paper declared, "is not to be weighed against the pitiful offer of Jacksonville with a sum of money in just about a sufficient amount to buy a bell." No one, the article continued, had reason to complain when "a more enterprising community captures an influential institution by reason of its superior public spirit and liberality." As the editor so pointedly suggested, Jacksonville and the other communities were simply "out-boostered" by a little frontier village.(34) But Winter Park citizens were much too busy celebrating to be concerned with the envious criticism.

At the April 17 meeting in Orange City, the delegates also elected eighteen (later increased to twenty-one) charter trustees for the college. Lyman, who took responsibility for formal incorporation, issued a call to form "a corporate body for the purpose of establishing

a Christian College at Winter Park, Orange County, Florida, to meet in the Directors' Room of the Lyman Bank in Sanford, Florida on Tuesday, the 28th day of April, AD 1885 at 9 o'clock in the morning." (35)

The adopted constitution or charter provided that the corporation name be Rollins College and that it would be located in Winter Park, Florida. It then stated the college's purpose: "Its object, which shall never be changed, shall be the Christian education of youth and to this end it proposes to provide for its students the best educational facilities possible and throw about them those Christian influences, which will be adopted to restrain them from evil and prepare them for a virtuous, happy and useful life."(36) To fulfill this purpose the trustees proposed to establish preparatory, industrial, normal, and collegiate departments and any professional or graduate education "as present or future exigencies may require." The charter also vested the government and management of the college in five offices: President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer, and Auditor. The By-laws created a five-member Executive Committee of the Trustees and authorized it to "transact any ordinary business during the interval between the regular meetings" of the trustees. The By-laws further established a faculty composed of professors, tutors and a president. The faculty, headed by the president, was made responsible for governing the institution, for determining admission standards, and for creating a curriculum embodying "a classical course which {gives} extensive attention to the liberal arts." In addition, the faculty was to be responsible for rules and regulations governing of student conduct and "for promoting in the highest degrees their health and decorum, their mental, moral and spiritual welfare, giving the institution, as far as possible, a parental influence and the atmosphere of a Christian home." Finally, the By-laws required that members of both the trustees and the faculty proclaim connection with some evangelical church.(37)

The incorporators then elected the following officers: F. W. Lyman, President, C. M. Bingham, Vice-president, A. W. Rollins, Treasurer, Nathan Barrows, Auditor, S. D. Smith, Secretary, and Reverend Edward Hooker, President of the Faculty. They authorized Hooker "to engage such professors and teachers for the ensuing year as, in his judgment may seem best." Hooker, Lyman, Francis Knowles and Franklin Fairbanks formed a building committee with powers to erect the necessary structures for the new college. Although the minutes are silent on the matter, apparently the Executive Committee decided to open the college in the coming fall of 1885. (38)

The day following incorporation the local newspaper reported that Dr. Hooker and others would be going north to raise funds, to seek students and to hire "the best faculty that can be found." (39) The announcement was revealing for several reasons. These northern Congregationalists viewed the founding of the college as serving not only the people of Florida but also for contributing to the larger national purposes of instilling northern values in the former Confederacy. Hooker perfectly expressed this sense of mission in a letter to Noah Porter, President of Yale University: "We intend that Rollins College shall be such that you might step into any department of it and think you were in New England. The teacher standards, the methods, are all to be Northern. Rollins College will be a sample of New England educational institutions in the South. How can we, as lovers of country, make this land one without changing the civilization of the South and making it in education like the North? Florida will be the first Southern State to become Northern in its civilization, and the College will be the right hand of this true progress." (41)

The *Boston Herald*, noting Hooker's initial visit to the Northeast, echoed Hooker's sentiment: "New England has taken Florida captive as a pleasure and health resort, and the question [is], why cannot a New England college be planted in the heart of the state?" The

editor saw no reason why, and predicted that Hooker would make a successful fund-raising effort because a "those who know the importance of giving southern youth a New England education are emphatic in commending Dr. Hooker's mission."(42)

From the outset the college's basic resources--students, teachers and finances—came largely from the Northeast, or from northerners who wintered in Florida. Few financial resources were available to the college in Florida's frontier agricultural economy and local schools could not prepare students for the college's rigorous curriculum. Only colleges outside the South could provide professors. For many, many decades after the founding, presidents, therefore, turned to the Northeast, particularly New England, to fulfill the college's financial and academic needs. As a result, the college gained the reputation of being a New England college located in Florida, which turned out, as we shall see, to be both a blessing and a problem.

On his trip north Hooker did realize success on his first call. One of the trustees, Francis B. Knowles, a wealthy Massachusetts industrialist, had earlier indicated a special interest in helping to open the college. During the founding campaign he pledged one thousand dollars and promised four thousand more if the college was located in Winter Park. In March, he suggested that Hooker come Massachusetts and "beg" for money among Knowles's friends in his hometown of Worcester. Hooker had little luck with Knowles's friends, but the generous industrialist himself added five thousand dollars to his original pledge, for a total of \$10,000 for the purpose of building a classroom. The assurance of a classroom building, destined to be named in honor of the donor, finally made the college a reality. Within a few weeks, Hooker collected enough pledges to begin construction of a dormitory.(43)

With money pledged and with Hooker and Lyman in the North seeking more funds, Trustee Loring Chase assumed responsibility for getting construction underway. Fortune

continued to smile on the undertaking for a while at least, as George Rand, a Boston architect residing in Winter Park, volunteered to design the new buildings and George Rollins, son of Alonzo, who was building the Seminole Hotel, agreed to superintend the project. Work began in mid-summer, but even under the best of circumstances they had a very short period to construct a building in time for an October opening.(44)

Meanwhile, Hooker and the Executive Committee faced the daunting task of creating a college from scratch. In a period of six months they planned to construct buildings, enroll students, find or build quarters for the students, locate and hire teachers, order textbooks from distant places, publicize the college, and, most urgent, raise funds to support these requirements. Fortunately, The Executive Committee found a sufficient number of qualified faculty living in Florida. On August 12, they announced the first members of the charter faculty: Dr. Nathan Barrows, as professor of Mathematics and Physics, and Annie Morton, Instructor in History and later Principal of the Training Department. A few weeks later, they hired William M. Lloyd, Professor of Ancient Languages and Principal of the Preparatory School, and Louise Abbot, Assistant Principal of the Training Department. Others would be added during the year, but this little band of teachers would greet the students on opening day.(45) Decades later, Lloyd, who came from Chicago, left a bleak picture of what this intrepid band of instructors faced: From Jacksonville, Lloyd traveling “up the St. Johns River on the steamboat by night, the search light thrown from side to side on the black, pitchy waters hemmed in by forests of water oaks and pines,” He embarked at Sanford and boarded a train. When he “stepped off the train in Winter Park, he seemed to be set down in a forest of telegraph poles in a sandy desert” dotted with a scattering of a few wooden buildings. A few blocks away he received another surprise when he viewed what was supposed to be a college campus. “The non-existence of the college buildings shown on

the prospectus of Winter Park was a chilling shock. The Ladies' Cottage, though not complete, proved to be an actuality, and Knowles Hall was under construction, but the rest of the buildings were as yet but noble fantasies. This was much worse than expected. . ."

As that day approached, the realization dawned that the new classroom would not be ready. Hooker therefore advanced the planned September opening date to November 4. On October 6, Barrows arrived to relieve Chase of the preliminary work of opening the college, just as students began registering in surprisingly large numbers. Chase wrote to Lyman that Orlando was sending a "big delegation almost every day." But as late as the middle of October the college officers still had no place to house or teach students. Chase reported that George Rollins had the money to pay only ten men to work on the classroom building and none on the dormitory. "If we had funds," he lamented, "we would put on more men on the college building, and it is a great pity {because} if we had been ready I think we should have had 150 pupils." Under the circumstances only seventy students had registered.(46)

The college had no place to accommodate even this number of students. Chase later acknowledged that as the day of opening drew near he and Hooker were at their "wits' end." The weeks before opening found Hooker and Chase scurrying around Winter Park, arranging for rooms and trying to locate classrooms. On the evening before opening day, Chase wrote Lyman with some relief that things were "fairly fixed," meaning that they had secured White's Hall above the Ergood Grocery store for classroom space, the Larrabee house at Morse Boulevard and New York Avenue for the boys' dormitory and had rented the Ward cottage for girls located on Osceola Street. At the eleventh hour yet another serious complication arose: the plastered partitions of White's Hall completed at the last moment were not dry. Chase deemed the room unsafe. At that point, he realized that the

unfinished Congregational Church, might serve as a temporary classroom, even though the sanctuary was without seating. The congregation was using boards set on small barrels, Chase which had no pews only boards set on small barrels, described the scene: "Tonight as I write (10 p.m.) our whole force of carpenters is there setting up desks and partitions." Sometime in the late evening hours they made the spare little carpenter gothic building ready for Rollins's first classes.(47)

Opening day on November 4, 1885, according to the *Orange County Reporter*, proved to be a "typical Florida fall day, with sunny skies and mild temperatures." The weather may have been pleasant, but panic seized William Lloyd, the new classics professor, when he arrived at the Congregational Church an hour before classes were scheduled to begin. As he later recalled: "At 8 o'clock the church door was still locked. Pupils and parents began to arrive, and stood waiting on the steps." Once inside after retrieving the keys he found the room bare. The newly order school desks were still sitting in a freight car several blocks away. Lloyd quickly organized a crew of young men, moved the church pews to the sidewalls, and unloaded the desks, just in time for the arrival of the first students. Promptly at 9:00 a.m. the Congregational Church bell pealed the beginning of a new era. In addition to the sixty-six students and five teachers, twenty friends of the institution had gathered to launch the new enterprise. The program was a simple one: the audience sang a hymn to open the convocation program, and a prayer followed. President Hooker and Reverend Sullivan F. Gale, destined to be an indefatigable worker for the new college, gave "interesting addresses," at the conclusion of which Hooker called the roll of students, and formally announced the beginning of classes. The *South Florida Sentinel* bannered a sentiment common to all who gathered in the little Congregational Church on that fall day in 1885: "Joy to the Park, the school's begun!"(48)

NOTES

1. The following narrative is constructed from sources in the Rollins Archives, including Frederick Lyman, "Early Days at Rollins," *Rollins College Bulletin V* (October 1911); Kitchell Diary, *South Florida Sentinel*, April 18, 1885; *Orange County Reporter*, April 18, 1885.

By 1885, when she wrote the poem commemorating Rollins's founding, Emily Miller had achieved national renown as a novelist, poet and hymnodist. She also served as editor of *The Little Corporal*, a children's magazine and as associate editor *Ladies Home Journal*. In 1891 she was appointed Dean of Women at Northwestern University. The records do not reveal why she was in the little village of Winter Park.

2. Donald Tewksbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War* (1962), 4-8; Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University* (1962), 48-50.

3. Quoted in Tewksbury, *Founding*, 24.

4. Rudolph, *American Colleges*, 49.

5. Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience* (Vintage edition, 1967), 152-160.

6. Quoted in *ibid.*

7. Maurice O'Sullivan and Jack C. Lane, "Introduction," *The Florida Reader*. (1991). South Florida Railroad began running between Sanford and Orlando in 1880. A Henry B. Plant purchased the railway in 1883 and extended the line to Port Tampa where he planned a resort hotel to rival that of Henry Flagler's Ponce de Leon in St Augustine. For decades after South Florida was the only mode of transportation into the Florida interior.

8. Lucy Cross, "The Beginning of Rollins College," Manuscript, Rollins Archives; Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the General Congregational Association of Florida, 1883. (Hereafter cited as Minutes, GCAF).

Cross was born in New York in 1839, the fourth of seven children of a Congregational minister. After graduating from Oberlin College in 1868, she taught high school in Iowa. She came to Dayton in 1879 for health reasons and afterward decided to make Daytona Beach her permanent home. She started the Daytona Institute, a school for sons and daughters of winter visitors. She continued to operate the school until 1904 when she retired. Cross was killed in a automobile accident in 1927. With the possibility that the college would be built in Daytona, we may assume that an entrepreneurial motive had sprung into her heart as well. Rollins's built a "hall of science" in 1937 dedicated to Lucy Cross. It was originally intended as a "hall of science," but was used exclusively as a girls' dormitory. In 1935, the Florida DAR placed a stone honoring Lucy Cross on the Walk of Fame.

9. George Cary Bush, *History of Education in Florida* (1899). 50-54; Edward Hooker to Noah Porter, September 1, 1885. Hooker Papers.

10. Minutes, GCAF, 1884; "Biographical Sketch of Edward Hooker," in Hooker Papers.

Most of the early pioneers of Winter Park were Congregationalists. They built the first church in the little village, a little wooden carpenter Gothic structure located on the corner of Interlachen and New England where the present neocolonial church stands today.

II. Elizabeth Hooker, "Edward Hooker." Manuscript in Rollins Archives.

12. Copy in Hooker Papers.

13. Minutes, *GCAF*, 1884.

14. *Orange County Reporter*, February 19, 1885.

15. *Florida Times Union*, April 5, 1885.

16. *Ibid*, April 9, 1885.

17. February 19, 1885.

18. *Florida Times Union*, April 9, 1885.

19. For a hint of Hooker's ambitions see Elizabeth, "Hooker."

20. *South Florida Journal*, September 8, 1881. Copy in *Chase Scrapbook*.

21. William F. Blackman, *History of Orange County Florida* (1927), 167-71.

22. William O'Neal, "Recollections," Manuscript, Rollins Archives.

23. Blackman, *History*, 172; Frederick Lyman, "Early Days of Rollins," *Rollins College Bulletin*, V (October 1911).

24. *Ibid*.

25. *Ibid*.

26. Minutes, *GCAF*, 1885.

27. Lyman, "Early Days."

28. Cross, "Beginnings of Rollins."

29. *Ibid*.

30. Lyman, "Early Days."

30. Minutes, *GCAF*, 1885.

31. April 22, 1885.

32. April 21, 1885.

33. April 23, 1885.

34. April 27, 1885.

35. Lyman, "Early Days."

36. Minutes of the Rollins College Board of Trustees, April 27, 1885. (Hereafter cited as Trustee Minutes).

37. *Ibid.*, APRIL 28, 1885.

38. *Ibid.* Francis Knowles, a wealthy New England textile magnate and Franklin Fairbanks, president of historic Franklin Scales Company, were two of the first investors in the Chase and Comstock Land Company. Fairbanks and Knowles were the chief investors in the Seminole Hotel. Both were charter members of Rollins's Board of Trustees. It was Fairbanks who introduced Charles Hosmer Morse to Winter Park and Rollins College. The Knowles family remained firmly attached to Rollins through the 1930s. Francis's daughter, Frances, provided the funds for Knowles Chapel in 1932.

39. *Ibid.*

41. Hooker to Porter, September, 1, 1885. Hooker Papers.

42. *Boston Herald*, June 21, 1885. Copy in Hooker Papers.

43. Knowles to Lyman, March 27, 1885. *Chase Scrapbook*.

44. *Orange County Reporter*, July 30, 1885.

45. *Chase Scrapbook*.; *Orange County Reporter*, August 12, 1885.

Decades later, Lloyd, who came from Chicago, left a bleak picture of what this intrepid band of instructors faced: From Jacksonville, Lloyd traveled "up the St. Johns River on the steamboat by night, the search light thrown from side to side on the black, pitchy waters hemmed in by forests of water oaks and pines." He embarked at Sanford and boarded a train. When he "stepped off the train in Winter Park, he seemed to be set down in a forest of telegraph poles in a sandy desert" dotted with a scattering of a few wooden buildings. A few blocks away he received another surprise when he viewed what was supposed to be a college campus. "The non-existence of the college buildings shown on the prospectus of Winter Park was a chilling shock. The Ladies' Cottage, though not complete, proved to be an actuality, and Knowles Hall was under construction, but the rest of the buildings were as yet but noble fantasies. This was much worse than expected. . ."

Lloyd to Hanna, 1935.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.* At the same time, Chase was supervising the construction on Winter Park Company's Seminole Hotel. "I am overwhelmed with work and get no such thing as rest," he wrote," Lyman who was in the northeast trying to raise funds for the college. Rand was born on May 24, 1833 in Vermont. He studied architecture and in 1881 partnered with Bertrand Taylor. He is known for Queen Anne style which was characterized steeply pitched rooflines and turned columns. At Rollins College he designed Knowles Hall (1886), Pinehurst Cottage (1886), Lakeside Cottage (1886), and Lyman Gymnasium (1890). One of his most well-known building is was the city hall in Winchester, Massachueset.

48. *Ibid.*; *Orange County Reporter*, November 5, 1885.