



WASHINGTON AND JEFFERSON COLLEGE
MUSEUM
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Archive No. *VII A n 1.*

Subject *Minutes of the Board of Trustees
in connection with the Brown -
Wylie Case.*



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Archive No. VII-A-n-1

*Brown- Wylie Case, Minutes of
the Board of Trustees Washington
College.*

THE BROWN WYLIE CASE

FROM

Minutes of the Board of Trustees
of
Washington College

December 2, 1816.

Board met pursuant to adjournment.

Present:	James Brice, Pres. pro. tem.	Alex. Murdoch
	Rev. Thomas Hoge	Daniel Moore
	Hugh Wilson	James Ashbrooke
	Robert Anderson	Rev. Ob. Jennings
	Rev. Cephas Dodd	Thomas McGiffin
	Elx. Reed	Parker Campbell
	David Shields	George Baird, Secy.
	Joseph Pentecost	
	David Morris	

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of this college learn with much regret that some tavern keepers of this place are so far lost to a sense of both duty and interest as to permit some of the students to behave with great impropriety in their houses.

RESOLVED, that any public housekeeper in this town or its vicinity who may after the date of this resolution in any wise encourage or permit any of the students attending at this college to commit any indecent acts or behave in any riotous manner shall be punished to the utmost extent of the law, and our councillor is hereby instructed on behalf and in the name of the Board to make immediate application to the court for the purpose of having such public housekeeper deprived of his license.

RESOLVED, that the secretary furnish each tavern keeper in this Borough with a copy of the above resolution.

The committee appointed at the last meeting of the Board not being prepared to report, Mr. Campbell offers for consideration the following resolution. Viz:

Washington, College,
December 2, 1816.

This Board being earnestly impressed with a belief that the interests of this college and the cause of science generally require the undivided attention of the principal of the college -- and being moreover deeply impressed with the high talents, important services and great fidelity of the Rev. M. Brown as principal of the college do hereby declare it expedient, and necessary to have his undivided attention in the college -- to appoint a committee to confer with him upon this interesting subject, and to ascertain from

him as soon as may be convenient, whether it be not practicable for the college to have and possess the benefit and advantage of his talents and qualifications exclusively or at least without more interruption than may arise from an occasional interchange and performance of clerical duties."

And after considerable discussion it was moved and seconded that this Board adjourn to meet again on the 3rd Monday of December inst.

Which was determined in the affirmative.

ADJOURNED.

December 16, 1816.

The Board met pursuant to adjournment.

Present Rev. Jno. Anderson, President

Rev. Joseph Stephenson

" William Speer

" Andrew Gwinn

" Cephas Dodd

" Thomas Hoge

" Thomas Allison

Daniel Moore

James Brice

Alex. Murdoch

Thomas McGiffen

Alex. Reed

David Morris

David Shields

Hugh Wilson

Joseph Pentecost

Parker Campbell

Robert Anderson

James Ashbrooke

George Baird, Secy.

"The resolution offered by Mr. Campbell on the 2nd instant being under consideration, it was moved by Mr. Campbell and seconded by Mr. Reed that a committee be appointed to wait upon the Rev. M. Brown and respectfully request from him a definite answer in writing to the following enquiries:

1st. Do you consider yourself under any obligation by contract with this Board to continue for any particular period of time, as principal of the college. If so,

2nd. Be pleased to state for what particular time you consider yourself so bound to remain in that capacity.

3rd. In the event of a resolution or determination of this Board declaring a separation of the duties of the principal of the college, from those of the Pastor of the Congregation, so as to have the undivided attention of the principal devoted to the duties of the College, will you adhere to the college or will you relinquish the charge of it. And if you will relinquish the college be pleased to state at what particular time you will so relinquish whether immediately or at the end of the present session."

It was moved by Mr. Speer and seconded by Mr. Gwinn, that the question on the preceeding resolution be postponed for the reading of a

communication from Mr. Brown which was agreed to and the communication was read. (Filed).

The question on the resolution offered by Mr. Campbell recurring, it was determined in the affirmative and Messrs. Allison, Stevenson, and Dodd were appointed a committee to carry said resolution into effect.

The committee having waited upon Mr. Brown, returned the following answer in writing from him which was read: Viz:

In answer to the enquiries of the Board I beg leave respectfully to reply

1st. That I do not consider myself under any obligation by contract with the Board to continue for any particular period as principal of the college. This is my answer to the first inquiry, and this supercedes the necessity of any reply to the second. With respect to the third enquiry, I consider it answered in part in the communication already made -- I have stated that in case of an alternative I will not give up my congregation but must relinquish the college. As to the latter part of the 4th enquiry "at what particular time will you so relinquish, whether immediately or at the end of the present session." I have, as the result of mature deliberation resolved to relinquish immediately. After what has passed, and my own views of the origin, the tendency of such a resolution, and its aspect towards myself, I would consider that I had lost the confidence of a majority of the Board; that I was occupying a station for which I was considered disqualified, and could not for these and other reasons consent to remain any longer as principal. I am not, however, prepared to say that I would not consent after my resignation to serve the institution in an individual capacity for some time until they could obtain a successor.

With much respect

(Signed) M. Brown

To the Board of Trustees

It was moved by Mr. Campbell and seconded by Mr. McGiffen that the consideration of the resolution offered on the 2nd inst. be postponed.

On the question, will the Board agree to it?

It was determined in the negative.

Whereupon Mr. Campbell and Mr. McGiffen, the mover and seconder of said resolution withdrew it.

ADJOURNED.

April 30th, 1817.

A stated meeting of the Trustees held of this date.

Present: The Rev. John Anderson, President
Rev. Thomas Hoge Joseph Penticost
" Andrew Gwinn Robert Anderson
" Joseph Stephenson Alexander Reed
" Obadiah Jennings Alexander Murdoch
" William Speer James Brice
" Thomas Allison David Shields
Thomas McGiffen Parker Campbell
Hugh Wilson David Morris
Daniel Moore Rev. Cephas Dodd
James Ashbrooke George Baird, Secy.

A motion was made by Mr. Campbell and Mr. McGiffen and read as follows: viz: Resolved, that it is expedient to separate the duties of the principal of this college from those of pastor of the congregation so that the college may have and enjoy the undivided attention of the Principal to the duties of the college; and said duties are hereby declared to be separated for the purpose aforesaid.

It was moved by Mr. Jennings and Mr. Stephenson to postpone the above for the purpose of considering the following as a substitute. Viz:

Whereas the Rev. Matthew Brown has officially communicated to this board his determination to relinquish his charge as principal of the college and to adhere to the congregation if a separation of the duties of principal and pastor of the congregation should be deemed necessary.

And whereas this board do deem it necessary to promote the interest of this college that the undivided attention of the principal be devoted to the institution -- Therefore,

RESOLVED, that after the end of the next session the duties aforesaid shall be separated, and that a committee of three members of this Board be appointed to take the necessary measures to ascertain without delay, when a suitable person can be procured to take charge of the college as principal who will devote his whole time and attention to the same.

And on the question will the board so agree to postpone.

The yeas and nays were required and are as follows: viz:

Ayes	Nays
Messrs. Hoge	Messrs. Allison
Gwinn	McGiffen
Stephenson	Wilson
Jennings	Moore
Speer	Ashbrooke
Penticost	Anderson
Reed	Murdoch
Dodd	Brice
Morris	Shields
Baird	Campbell
(10)	Anderson, Pres. (11)

So it was determined in the negative.

And the question recurring on the original resolution.

The yeas and nays were required and are as follows:

Yeas		Nays	
Messrs.	Allison Anderson	Messrs.	Hoge Morris
	McGiffen Murdoch		Gwinn Baird (7)
	Wilson Brice		Speer
	Moore Shields		Penticost
	Ashbrooke Campbell (10)		Reed

So it was determined in the affirmative.

A motion was made by Mr. Campbell and Mr. McGiffen and read as follows: viz: Whereas the Rev. Matthew Brown has officially announced to this Board his determination to relinquish his charge as principal of the college and to adhere to the congregation of a separation of the duties aforesaid should be declared by this Board, and whereas the Rev. Andrew Wylie has resigned his situation as Principal or president of the college of Jefferson, and signified his disposition to accept the office of principal of this college and to give his whole and undivided attention to the duties thereof. Therefore, Resolved, that the said Andrew Wylie be, and he is hereby appointed by this Board as principal of the college with a salary of twelve hundred dollars per annum, payable semi-annually as heretofore. And on the question will the Board agree to the same, The yeas and nays were required and are as follows: viz:

Yeas		Nays	
Messrs.	Stephenson Anderson	Messrs.	Jennings
	Allison Murdoch		Speers
	McGiffen Brice		Penticost
	Wilson Shields		Reed
	Moore Campbell		Morris
	Ashbrooke Dodd (12)		Baird (6)

To this question was determined in the affirmative.

To the above two resolutions offered by Mr. Campbell, the undersigned numbers of the board of trustees enter ~~their protest~~ for the following reasons.

1st. Because it is believed that the changes which these resolutions are intended to effect will be highly injurious to this institution as they involve an increase of expenditures entirely inconsistent with the funds of the college, by a large addition to the salary of principal at a ~~xxix~~ period when additional buildings are undertaken, which demand resources beyond the contrroll of this Board, and the expenses of which in the present embarrassed state of pecuniary affairs in the community it will be very difficult if not impracticable to meet.

2nd. Because it is deemed unnecessary, inasmuch as the most determined advocates of those resolutions have not ventured to say that there has been any difficiency of attention, industry or talents on the part of the Rev. Matthew Brown, the present principal, and inasmuch as we have seen him enter a few years since within the desolate walls of our academy and by an extraordinary zeal, extensive influence, and indefatigable industry with very scanty compensation, becoming the instrument of rearing up a college which if it does not excell equals any in number of students, respectability and usefulness in this, or the adjoining states.

3rd. Because we believe that wanton innovations in prosperous circumstances are frequently punicious, and deprecate with deep concern the risque of introducing into the principalship a person whom we consider in some important respects less qualified for the duties of that office; and perhaps blasting the flattering prospects which the recent prosperity and present state of this institution have afforded us.

4th. Because we shrink from the violence to our own feelings which displacing a worthy and successful servant of this institution and of the public without cause; and in a manner calculated to wound his feelings would effect; and from the strong charge of ingratitude which such a proceeding will incur from an attentive and intelligent community.

5th. We solemnly protest against the aforesaid resolutions inasmuch as we are persuaded that the manner in which the arrangement entered into by eleven trustees of this college, to engage the Rev. Andrew Wylie to undertake the superintendence of this institution was on their part secret, informal, and we believe contrary to the spirit of our charter, and on the part of Mr. Wylie, highly derogatory from that candor, uprightness and dignity of conduct which we consider as necessary requisites in the character of the man whom we would wish to see placed at the head of this seminary. And inasmuch as we cannot but view the aforesaid Mr. Wylie in entering into such an arrangement as thereby violating that good faith which he was solemnly bound to exercise toward Jefferson College of which he was at the time of entering into that contract the principal.

Signed: Alexander Reed
George Baird
Andrew Gwinn

Joseph Penticost
David Morris
William Speers

It was moved by Mr. Campbell and seconded by Mr. McGiffin that a committee of five be appointed to communicate to Mr. Wylie the proceedings of this evening so far as relates to him; and address the public and the students on the situation of the College if ~~th~~ in their opinion it may be necessary, which was agreed to:

Resolved, that Messrs. Stevenson, Campbell, Allison, Anderson and Murdoch be said committee.

Resolved, that this board now adjourn to meet again on the 8th day of next month.

ADJOURNED.

October 7, 1819.

"Resignations of Rev. William Spear and Alexander Reed accepted and filed"

"Rev. Elisha McCurdy having refused to accept of the appointment as a member of the Board Rev. Joseph McClurg of Pittsburgh and the Rev. Charles Wheeler elected to supply the places of Messrs Spear and McCurdy. Honbl. Th H. Baird elected in the room of Mr. Reed."