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10-14-55 ✓
(DATE) CB
~~Oct. 12, 1955~~
JR

Dear President Parkhurst

At long last I am sending my mss.
on the beginning of Bennington College
as I myself saw it.

I am sorry to see that there is so
little new or interesting in what I have
to report, but such as it is here it is.

It was a pleasure to be present at
the meeting last Tuesday the 4th and to
take part in it.

My best wishes in every way for the success
of your drive.

Yours sincerely

William H. Kilpatrick

THE BEGINNING OF BENNINGTON COLLEGE AS SEEN BY

WILLIAM H. KILPATRICK

My first acquaintance with the Bennington College proposal came on December 21, 1923. As I now recall it, Mrs. Hall Park McCullough and her sister Miss Van Benthuyssen came to my office at Teachers College with a letter of introduction from State Commissioner of Education, Dr. Frank P. Graves. He had advised them to come and see me about a new college for girls to be established at Bennington, Vermont. If I remember aright, I said that if this were to be simply a replica of existing colleges for girls I was not interested; but if it was willing to build itself on the new views in education I would be much interested. Mrs. McCullough asked what I meant by "new views." I replied that it would take some time to answer that. She then proposed I meet with the friends of the new enterprise at her home and explain what I meant. To this I agreed, and it was settled that I should come for dinner the next day at her home, 116 East 39th Street, and explain what I meant.*

* My diary for 1923 has the following: "Dec. 21. A Mrs. Hall Park McCullough comes with a letter from Frank P. Graves, and wishes to talk with me about a new college for girls to be established in Bennington. In the end I agree to dine with her tomorrow evening."

This I re-wrote February 9, 1942 as follows: "When Mrs. McCullough sought my advice and assistance in the founding of a new girls' college, I asked what kind of college, saying that if it were simply one more of the kind we now had I was not interested, but if they would make it not simply new but a new kind, then I would be interested. She asked how new in kind. I said that was a longer story. Then she asked me to dine with her the next evening to explain."

My diary gives the following account of the meeting the next evening: "Dec. 22. Go down, MPK my wife and I, in a taxi to Mrs. Hall Park McCullough's, 116 E. 39, to dine and talk over the new college. Present: Mr. and Mrs. McC., her sister, Miss Van Benthuyssen, of Albany, and their daughter, a Vassar senior. We find them most pleasant and very intelligent. Graves had evidently prepared them to respect my expert knowledge. The general plan is to put (ultimately) \$10,000,000 into a girls' college at Bennington, Vt. We discuss many matters including a public meeting at Mrs. Straight's, at which I am to make an introductory speech striking the keynote so far as concerns the educational policy. Meanwhile I am to see and talk with the principal promoter, the Rev. Dr. Ravi-Booth."

The next stage in the Bennington College connection is well stated in my diary as follows: "Dec. 28. At one o'clock go to Faculty Club to lunch with Rev. Dr. Ravi-Booth of the Bennington College proposal. He makes me talk, but in the end he opens up and we seem to be pretty well agreed. At his suggestion we draft a short statement of policy:

1. A college for girls of first rank, non-vocational.
2. A curriculum based on the best available modern thought.

An attempt to do for the college what the Lincoln School is attempting in elementary and secondary education.

3. Such administrative control as insures that in the remote future the best thought of that day, not the dead hand of tradition, shall rule.

All these statements were my own except the one on the Lincoln School. This was his. We try to see Caldwell, but fail. He (Ravi-Booth) tells me that the McCulloughs are very wealthy, and that Anson Phelps Stokes has stated for quotation that he believes the proposition will succeed. He left me to attend a meeting of his committee at Mrs. McCullough's."

To clarify the diary note just given I will add the following February 9, 1942 correction: "On p. 248, the statement on the Lincoln School as attributed to Rev. Mr. Ravi-Booth may be misleading. He suggested the name Lincoln School to illustrate the kind of school I had all the time been advocating."

The next important item is that of persuading Mrs. Swan to join the movement. My diary for February 22, 1924 has the following: ". . . dine by invitation with Mrs. Swan at her home, 18 E. 83, principally to discuss her approval of the Bennington College matter. She and he are both reluctant for her to go in, lest it means work or money or both."

Mrs. Swan did, however, later agree to join the movement and came to be one of the most valuable and effective workers.

In anticipation of a meeting to be held on April 28, 1924 the New York Times (April 13, 1924) gave an interview with Rev. Ravi-Booth in which it was stated that "the idea was conceived by Dr. Vincent Ravi-Booth." Dr. Booth is quoted as saying that instead of entrance examinations tests will be used to indicate more clearly the intellectual abilities of the applicants; (ii) that the course would be three years instead of four, to be accomplished by cutting

down vacations; and (iii) the college will be "committed to modern and progressive methods of education, so administered that in the future the best light of that day will guide its policy, not the dead hand of tradition."

The first one of these three statements does not give the full reasoning that we had discussed regarding entrance examinations, which was mainly to avoid the hurtful effects of preparation for examinations as well as to give secondary schools freedom from college domination and so develop better schools. The second of Dr. Ravi-Booth's statements I do not recall as discussed by the trustees. The third statement was repeated, word for word, on the program for the April 28 meeting. This does state the commitment of the Board as we had worked it out.

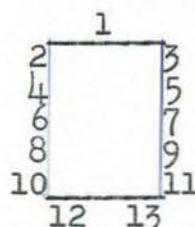
The April 28 meeting at the Colony Club in New York City was, so far as I recall, the first public meeting in behalf of the college. Dean Ada Comstock, of Radcliffe College, presided. The speakers were (i) President William H. Neilson, of Smith College, on "Why a new woman's college?", (ii) the present writer on "Why a new plan?", and (iii) Rev. Ravi-Booth, "Why old Bennington?"

As I look back on that meeting and re-read the ms. of my talk which you have at the College, I think I must have felt repressed by the representation of the older type colleges present at the meeting. I tried to sum up what we had agreed upon as the new plan, with some of the reasons for advocating it: (i) a "cultural" college for women; (ii) as little use as possible of mere tradition and as great use as possible of conscious scientific method in running the college; (iii) "a new deal" in college entrance examinations to free secondary schools from college domination; (iv) no study to be required for its supposed "mental training," but a "new deal" in course contents on the basis of education as life, not a mere preparation for life. To carry these ideas into effect, (v) the college should have a trained research man to study and report on possible leads. To keep continually up to date in thought, (vi) graduate fellowships should be arranged to study and report on the college work. As to the meaning of (i) this is not now clear to me except as (iv) throws light on it. No. (ii) we have followed rather fully, if we change the word "scientific" to something like "defensible." I am interested to note that I used the phrase "new deal" eight years before F.D.R. gave it prominence. The precise proposals of (v) and (vi) I cannot now recall ever hearing mentioned again.

The Colony Club meeting was, I think, counted a success; and we started definitely on the two problems of money and a president. There was quite a division within the Board as to

which should come first, money or president. On the whole the idea prevailed that we must get a fair showing of money before we could hope to attract the type of president we wished and needed.

In August following the April Colony Club meeting we held in Bennington a conference of educators for a more detailed study of the kind of college we should plan. The account given in my diary is fuller and more reliable than my present recollection: "Aug. 29, Friday. The Conference opens at 10 o'clock. I preside by previous appointment. All take assigned seats:



1. Kilpatrick, 2. Miss Kelly of Bryn Mawr School (Baltimore (formerly of Wellesley), 3. Mrs. Bernard, Dean of Smith, 4. Prof. Norton of Wellesley, 5. Prof. Burgess Johnson of Vassar, 6. Mrs. Stannard of the

Garland School (of homemaking) for Girls, Boston, 7. Miss Kellas, Princ. of Russell Sage College of Troy, 8. Dr. Moody, Pres. of Middlebury (he was late in coming and left at the close of the morning session, his place at the table was taken by Dean Currier of the New Jersey School of Law), 9. Dean Davis of the Boston College for Women (who said not one word during the conference), 10. Miss Bigelow of the Walnut Hill School, Boston, 11. Miss Donham of Boston (who teaches some phase of women's work, 12. Eugene R. Smith of the Beaver Country Day School, near Boston (formerly of the Park Hill School of Baltimore), 13. Wilson of St. Johnsbury (Vt.) Academy (not sure of name).

"Miss Kelly read an admirable paper proposing a reconstruction of curriculum, which was discussed the rest of the morning. I managed affairs much as I do my practicum. Everyone seemed pleased. A number of invited guests 'listened in,' occasionally asking a question. There seemed a striking unanimity of opinion along the general line of Miss Kelly's paper. Her plan involved I. Certain comprehensive courses emphasizing all the various aspects or sides of life, utilizing and extending the notion of the Columbia Introduction to Civilization. These should make up a good part of the curriculum. II. Majors (perhaps as generally conceived). III. Electives (as generally conceived). IV. By-play courses (almost like hobbies, but extending to anything done in the play spirit, art, music, collecting, constructing, etc.).

"In the afternoon we met 3 to 5 and heard first a paper by Mrs. Bernard in which she stressed (i) personnel work to help select entrants and to guide each individual girl in college, (ii) modern current problems, (iii) pre-vocational

courses. This paper was hardly so good as the preceding, but still good. It was discussed at length and with interest.

"After a hurried cup of tea several of us drove with Mrs. Colgate to see the site for the College as offered by Mr. Colgate and later the view from their home. Both are very good, the latter very unusual."

"Aug. 30. Saturday. The Conference addressed itself to a discussion of sundry questions that had been proposed and at the close instructed a committee of three (Kilpatrick, Smith, Johnson) to draft some short judgments to be presented for approval at a short meeting this afternoon. . . .

"We succeeded in drafting about eight conclusions which were approved in substance without much discussion, the committee to polish them later."

I judge that these eight conclusions are in the trustees' records. I do not have a record of them and do not recall them.

My diary for April 22, 1925 shows a point of division still holding in the Board: "Attend meeting at Mrs. Franklin's of the Bennington College Committee. Present: Mrs. F., Mr. and Mrs. McC., Mr. J. C. Colgate, Dr. Ravi-Booth, Mr. Lull*, Mrs. Swan, Mr. Powell and I. We discuss without decision our old problem of which to seek first, president or money. I insist that they cannot get the man they want until they have some money. The curriculum question comes up. I insist they cannot settle the curriculum in advance, though they can lay down a platform."

On May 5 and May 26, 1925 I find references to efforts to draft "a platform for Bennington College." I do not myself have such a draft, and I think it proved difficult to agree on any one statement. Possibly the minutes of the Board contain such a platform. My diary gives other references to the effort, Dec. 21, 1925; Feb. 6, 1926; March 6, 11, 20.

I gather that Miss Kelly's report given on August 29 at our conference pleased certain of the trustees so much so that, such is my recollection, they planned a survey to be made by Miss Kelly with apparently the idea that she should be chosen president. On October 5 my diary gives the following: "Go to a luncheon at 12:45 at Mrs. Swan's, where she, Mrs. McCullough and I hear Miss Kelly tell of her idea and plan of a "survey" of a college curriculum. I am surprised to see that she means to make a detailed study of her own plan only." This was followed up on November 9 as my diary gives it: ". . . to Mrs. Swan's to a meeting of the

* Mr. Hull, I now judge

Bennington trustees. . . . I am called on to make our report about engaging Miss Kelly. We (Mrs. Swan, Mrs. McC., and I) are recommending that her study be, if feasible, conducted under other auspices and that we begin to look for a president." This report aroused such opposition that I began to wonder whether my usefulness on the board had not come to an end.

When I let Mr. and Mrs. McCullough know this feeling of mine, they were both inclined to minimize the apparent opposition. But they asked my advice as to what to do about Miss Kelly. My diary gives my advice as follows: "Nov. 24. I advised that if Caldwell can get no money, then the friends of the enterprise as individuals underwrite the amount and arrange a committee of five to direct it, of which Mr. Powell might be chairman along with Mrs. Swan, Pres. Nielson of Smith, Otis Caldwell, and someone else friendly to Miss Kelly. In this way the matter would not be the act of the trustees of Bennington College."

I do not now recall how Otis Caldwell got into the affair; but the final action as taken on Dec. 15 my diary gives as follows: "Go at 5 to Mrs. Franklin's (111 E. 73). Present: Mrs. F., Mrs. Swan, Mrs. McCullough, Mr. McC., Mr. Colgate, Mr. Hueck, Mr. Powell, Dr. Ravi-Booth. Dr. R-B announced a new subscription of \$100,000, making some \$635,000 from Bennington, a marvelous record. Mrs. McCullough told of the arrangements with Miss Kelly. It was agreed to put as information in the minutes that Mrs. Swan and others would organize a committee of five under whom Miss Kelly will work and that friends of the College (Mr. Hull and Mr. Colgate) were financing the study. The College is thus not officially making the study. It was agreed to appoint a committee to begin search for a president and for a business manager."

On June 28, 1926 we met to discuss plans for finding a president for the College. The question whether to have a man or a woman evoked discussion with some division of opinion. We agreed, however, not to consider a woman unless she was "most outstanding."

On September 4, 1926 I wrote Mrs. Swan, while en route for a year's trip around the world, regarding possible presidents, saying: "As I now see it, the most promising are W. A. Maddox /Rockford College/, Chancellor S. P. Copen /Univ. of Buffalo/, J. J. Coss /Columbia/, Dean F. J. Kelly /Univ. of Minn./, Dean J. J. Oppenheimer /Stephens College/, Miss Kelly, and roughly in this order."

[Copen

My 1927 diary, after I returned, gives the following regarding the choice of a president:

"Oct. 4. Have tea at Mrs. Swan's with Mr. and Mrs. H. P. McCullough; they tell me of their efforts . . . to get a president for Bennington."

"Oct. 11. In the afternoon have tea at Mrs. Swan's and talk with her and Mr. and Mrs. McCullough about the Bennington situation. I tell them again of Miss Meek and J. J. Oppenheimer."

"Oct. 12. At one o'clock we have at luncheon Mrs. McCullough and Lois Meek, that the former may size Lois up with reference to Bennington. It goes well, and Mrs. McC. is much pleased."

"Nov. 16. . . . hurry to Mrs. McCullough's where there is a meeting of the Bennington Committee to meet Dr. Copen of Buffalo. We had been told that he possibly could be persuaded to change his mind and accept the presidency of the college. I was asked to draw him out. In the end he said very positively that he could not consider a call."

"Dec. 9. Meet J. J. Coss at luncheon, after which we talk quite a while. I talk to him about Bennington College, getting his judgment on certain policies. After he has committed himself pretty thoroughly, being on the whole favorable, I ask him if I as an individual may not suggest his name as president. He says no, definitely, that he is happy where he is and has plenty to do. Then I ask him if he can suggest a president. He suggests several names, including Robert D. Leigh, of Williams College, formerly co-worker with Coss in the Contemporary Civilization. I later call up Mrs. McCullough and tell her of my conference with Coss. She is much interested in Leigh and proposes to investigate."

"Dec. 20. In the afternoon meet with Bennington Committee and Robert D. Leigh. The investigation so far makes Mrs. McCullough and Mrs. Swan quite enthusiastic. They are ready to nominate him for the presidency. After discussion we ask L. if he would feel free to consider an offer and we ask him to meet on Jan. 3 with the trustees. He accepts the invitation, I thought gladly."

"Dec. 26. At 3:30 meet with the Bennington Committee to consider Robert D. Leigh. We vote to call a meeting of the trustees and recommend his election. I am not jubilant, but still not opposed. I think he is a good man. I should have been happier had Maddox or Lois Meek been chosen. . . . But I am relieved that I do not have to carry the responsibility for Leigh."

[1929]

"Jan. 3. Go to Mrs. McCullough's (10 E. 82) to attend a meeting of the Bennington trustees. We first hear Dr. Leigh discuss his general ideas of the College. A good many questions are asked of him. After an hour's talk Dr. Leigh retired and a poll disclosed all favorable for electing him. I pointedly kept myself back and out of the discussion. I was anxious that L. not be counted my man and my responsibility and that the others assume full responsibility. This I thought they did, Colgate, Powell, Both, Hall*, and Mrs. Franklin. C/olgate/ was perhaps most careful in his appraisal, but all I thought were clear. No formal vote was taken, but it was understood that the McC's would be a committee to sound him out and if he were willing to accept, then make a formal offer. The salary was not definitely fixed, but \$10,000 and a home and traveling and entertaining expenses extra was the general idea. My own feeling is that he is a very capable and reliable man, not brilliant nor startling in any way, but the kind that will wear; that he will not make much of an appearance in an address nor at first impression, but that he will win the confidence of those who come to know him. I feel sure that he is progressively minded and firmly committed to the idea of remaking the college. . . . I hear well of his wife and I recall well of her as a student. They met each other in my classroom."

"Jan. 4. Hear from Mrs. McCullough that Dr. Leigh has accepted the presidency of Bennington."

"Jan. 5. Talk to the newly elect President Leigh. I am sure he will not be any man's man, certainly not mine. We talk over a good many matters. I warn him not to tie himself too quickly to Miss Kelly."

We have a long stretch of waiting, made worse by the 1929ff. depression. My diary for March 18, 1930 gives the following: "In the evening we have as guests at dinner Dr. and Mrs. R. D. Leigh of Bennington College (to be). It begins to look probable that Bennington will fail to come into being. If so, it will not be the fault of Mrs. Swan or of Mrs. McCullough. The money is hard to get."

For May 5 the following: "Attend meeting of the Bennington trustees. Dr. Leigh suggests that we determine to keep on till our idea is effected at Bennington or elsewhere; that we engage a certain job promoter at \$10,000 a year for four years, that we have a conference of progressive educators at old Bennington to discuss the whole proposition, including the location at Bennington and co-education. The last is agreed to, the others postponed till then."

And May 8 the following: "Talk with Dr. R. D. Leigh about the Bennington conference. He asks me to preside. I

* Hull, Snow judge

suspect he is a bit apprehensive lest I seem the educational expert rather than he. I am sorry."

The question of a possible merger with some other college came up for consideration. My diary for June 3, 1930 gives the following: ". . . meet at the Town Hall Club with Dr. Leigh of Bennington College and Dr. Meader, president of Russell Sage College of Troy, and a Mr. Betts, trustee of the same. We four have been appointed to discuss the educational policies of the two institutions to see what if any obstacles there are from that point of view to a further study of a merger. We talk until about 11 o'clock, having meanwhile adjourned to the Yale Club. The discussion convinces me of two things, one that Russell Sage wishes the merger, the other that Bennington will not agree and this mainly because Russell Sage has already commitments which will not please the backers of B. I can readily conceive that, given success with money, R.S. would eventually achieve the B. program, but I can hardly conceive that B. money (so far as promises now exist) would be available for R.S."

The Conference of Educators suggested by Dr. Leigh came off as my diary shows: "June 20, 1930. Catch 9:56 (10:56) for Troy and Bennington. Find on board John R. Clark (Lincoln School), Dr. Del Manzo, Robert and Helen Lynd (authors of Middletown), Dr. Fred A. Moss (former student), E. M. Sipple [of Baltimore], Carleton Washburne [Winnetka], Dr. Vincent Ravi-Booth, J. J. Coss, Mrs. George S. Franklin. . . . At 4 p.m. we meet, Dr. Leigh presiding. In addition to those named above there are present, Wilford Aiken, W. W. Beatty (Bronxville), Ralph Boothby, Professor John M. Gares (Meikeljohns College), Frederick H. Kent (a financier), Miss E. Langley (Edgewood School, Greenwich), Miss Helen Parkhurst, Mary E. Pierce (Park School, Cleveland), Eugene R. Smith, Mrs. S., Herbert Smith (Fieldston), Perry Dunlap Smith (N. Shore, Winnetka), Morton R. Snyder, Mrs. S., Katharine Taylor (Shady Hill School, Cambridge), Dr. Eleanor Rowland Weinbridge (Cleveland), Edman Yeomans (Ojai), Mrs. Arthur Holden (B), Mr. and Mrs. H. P. McC., Mrs. Clarence M. Woolley (Greenwich). (CAUS)

"Dr. L. had the group discuss certain matters pertaining to the school. In the evening the Conference divided. I was put in charge of the Educational Committee, to discuss what if any policies of the school [proposed college] are questionable, and what they count the strong points. For this I had as members, P. D. Smith, Herbert Smith, M. Pierce, Gipple, Snyder, Washburne, Clark, Weinbridge (whom I seem not to admire), Mrs. E. R. Smith, Miss Langley, Mrs. Leigh, Mrs. ~~Woolley~~, Miss Taylor. We principally discuss 'coeducation,' 'location,' and tuition. A rather good discussion."

Woolley

"June 21. At 10 we meet, all together, I presiding, to hear the reports of the two committees. We principally (1) endorse heartily the general B. program as mapped out by Dr. Leigh, (2) approve co-education if located in Bennington, 19:5, (3) divide on location, 8:9; (4) urge the trustees to open in 1931 if feasible, approving (if feasible) the borrowing of funds to build dormitories and the making of temporary scholarship arrangements. It was one of the best discussions I have ever seen, with as little tangential talk as one ever finds." ~~Does did up the honor to say that it was the best but discussion he had ever seen.~~

The trustees met at 3:15 to face realities: "Mr. Kent shows that borrowing on dormitories is dependent on students and that guarantees will be needed to borrow funds and to ensure salaries for three years. Whereupon Mr. Valentine and Mr. Hull (who had just come) sat down squarely on the plans (not much to my surprise). We adjourn with Mrs. McC. depressed."

The trustees met again in the evening: "We canvass the situation. There remain possibilities (i) that some large donor may yet be found before Dec. 31 (when the Bennington pledges fall due), (ii) that a dormitory loan building fund might be arranged; (iii) that sufficient dwellings might be found available for a beginning. There seems no physical possibility to begin in 1931, since at least a college building is necessary and that cannot be built in time. We agree to canvass the situation for one month, then meet. The chief difference of opinion arises over employing Mr. Kent as a financial agent for four years at \$10,000 a year. Dr. L. wishes this. Dr. C. and I (who supply no money) would be willing to have it done. So would Mrs. F. and Mrs. McC. Mr. McC. is doubtful of the man. Ballantine and Hull oppose. I make the suggestion that this be underwritten outside of board action, which may prevail. (It would, if Mr. McC. were convinced.)"

After this President Leigh worked out a plan to begin on a smaller outlay and the Board was called to meet at Bennington on Sept. 3, 1930: "At 4 the trustees of Bennington College meet. I preside as vice-president. The chief business is the consideration of President Leigh's plan to begin with only an addition to the present pledges of \$513,000 (collectible in 2 to 4 years, but this with the tuition as sufficient to guarantee the college for ten years on a basis of 240 students). It is a good deal discussed, pro and con, till we adjourn for dinner. After dinner I sum up the situation as I see it . . . and invite further discussion. When we come to an informal poll, Mr. Ballentine (as was expected) opposes. Mr. Hull while skeptical favors (he has been very undecided). Mrs. Franklin, to everybody's surprise, opposed.

All others favored (8 to 3). Mrs. F. had already offered informally a new campus in place of Mr. Colgate's.

Addendum to the foregoing, written May 5, 1944:
 "When the time came to take the informal vote, we knew that Mr. Ballentine and Mr. Monroe opposed. We thought that the issue turned on Mr. Hull, if we could save his \$100,000 subscription we could open. All sat at a long table. As presiding I sat at one end. Mr. McCullough sat at the other end. All to my right were known to favor. Mr. B. and Mr. M sat at the extreme left; Mr. Hull between me and them, Mrs. Franklin on the near side of Mr. Hull. We took an oral straw ballot. I started with Mr. McCullough, who said yes; all down the right side said yes. Up to Mrs. Franklin all had said yes; she said no [her husband practically forcing it on her]. Mr. Hull hesitated, but said yes. Ballentine and Monroe said no. We then made the vote legal and so decided to open. B. and M. resigned. Mr. McCullough has many times said that the way I took the poll and marshaled the vote won Mr. Hull and so decided the issue. Had I started the other way, Ballentine and Monroe would probably have carried the day and we should have had no college."

But this decision does not seem to have settled the issues as we see from my diary: "Jan. 19. Go with Mrs. Swan to Mrs. McCullough's, where we discuss what Bennington is to do about a conference with the Sarah Lawrence people. Decide to suggest to Dr. Leigh (now convalescing in Bermuda) that he write to Dr. McCracken proposing a conference. It seems increasingly probable that the College will never be at Bennington." Feb. 19. "Go to Mrs. Swan's to a Bennington College meeting. We gather that any arrangement with Sarah Lawrence would have to be on such conditions as would eliminate Dr. Leigh. Decide not to meet with Sarah L. people any further till after April 1. It seems to be a consensus that while there is a chance to get the needed money by April 1, the chances are not great. Mrs. Swan practically announces that she is getting out in any event."

Mrs. Swan's intention to leave the Board led to a meeting between the two of us: "March 20. At 4 p.m. go to Mrs. Swan's (in her car) to talk over the Bennington situation. It appears that there is a probability that the requisite sum as named will be secured. Mrs. Swan wished then to discuss what she should do, seeing that she has lost confidence in Dr. Leigh's ability as an executive. She has thought of telling him of her attitude and resigning from the board, this in the hope of spurring him to greater efforts and at the same time relieving herself of further responsibility. After a good deal of discussion I propose that it would be better for me to advise him, and with him also as to my course, and that I had better include Mrs. Leigh."

At this distance in time, I do not quite understand the last clause set off by commas.

I followed up my plan to talk with Dr. and Mrs. Leigh, as my diary shows, on March 30. The total situation was at the time thus summed up: "It appears that we lack \$179,000 of our goal, that the McCulloughs will put in another \$100,000; that there is some hope that the remaining \$79,000 may be raised yet in Bennington. I see then four possibilities: (1) that we get the full \$300,000 and begin at once on the Bennington site; (2) that failing the \$79,000 we may still begin; (3) that failing the \$79,000 we may make some arrangements with Sarah Lawrence; (4) that we may decide to let the whole thing drop till such time when and if the idea would again be taken up by any who would care to push it."

But two days later there was again discouragement: "Attend meeting of Bennington trustees. On the face the campaign has failed. We lack \$152,000 and few or none believe in going ahead on this basis. But we understand sub rosa that the McCulloughs will give another \$100,000, and there is some grounds for hoping that the balance may come from some who have let their previous pledges lapse. We hear also that Mr. Pugsley of Peekskill offers \$750,000 for the college to come there. I hear this with mixed emotions. I had begun to wonder if we had not better let Bennington College die and start over again. As between Peekskill and Bennington I prefer the former, as being much nearer New York City. Some of us feel that this P. offer cuts off all possibility of Sarah Lawrence. Mrs. Swan, however, does not feel so sure about it. We decide to meet the Sarah L. people and also to look into Peekskill."

We did talk with the Sarah Lawrence people, but nothing came of it. We did nothing about the Pugsley suggestion. My diary for April 7 gives the facts as follows: "Attend a joint meeting of the Sarah Lawrence and Bennington groups to see if there is any joint undertaking they can engage in. Little came of it, except that Raymond L. Fosdick was clearly interested to explore further. After that the Bennington group discussed the Pugsley offer of \$750,000 to go to Peekskill. It appears that (1) the money is too small and (2) that the Pugsleys, one or both, are notorious for seeking publicity."

After this matters began to look more promising. Dr. Leigh recommends Mrs. Mabel Barbee Lee for admissions secretary. She seems promising. "It appears that the full goal as set last September has been met as the necessary and sufficient condition for establishing the College at Bennington, tho not quite the amount we had later stated (\$300,000 additional) to fix ideas. There appears to me now no sufficient reason for not voting to-morrow to start work."

April 29: "Attend Bennington College trustees meeting. Everything had been done. We had raised, mirabile dictu, more than we had set as goal and that in this worst of all years; but to our great surprise and almost consternation it was announced that Mr. Hull refused to ratify his pledge after the postponement from April 1. We vote to open contingent upon Mr. H's change of attitude and agreed that a letter be written by a committee of the trustees to tell him how we see the situation. I was asked to draft the letter for revision. It took me nearly two hours. Then I had dinner with Mrs. Franklin, and we spent an hour and a half revising. I left at 10:30 pretty tired. My present thought is that Dr. Leigh is tactically at fault (1) in not getting Mr. Hull definitely to agree to the postponement, and (2) in sending out the minutes of the April 1 meeting to Mr. Hull without explanation. If the college dies before it is born it is his fault." The May 20th meeting, however, brought the news that Mr. Hull had agreed to give his \$100,000, and we decided to go ahead.

On October 13 the committee in charge approves Dr. Leigh's proposals as to janitor and librarian. I am elected president of the Board. "I demur as to the work involved, but the others try to reassure me on the point."

The following from my diary of February 16, 1932 shows actual progress under way: "At 4:30 call together the Bennington College trustees at 109 E. 73 St. Appears that we are really getting started off. Buildings are going up. We elect a number of the staff. Students are being enrolled. The prospects seem good."

On April 5 and June 9 we practically finish the staff for the opening year.

This is how I saw things on June 10: "Visit the Hall House now in process of being remade for faculty apartments. I am much pleased. We then go to the College grounds and I see the buildings for the first time. The effect is very good. The big barn really makes an excellent administration building with good quarters for science and library, and seminar rooms, etc. The Commons building is the imposing one. It is in good colonial style and good looking. The students' houses, four in number -- 20 students and a house mother to a house -- are very good indeed. I am much pleased. We . . . look over the grounds. The view is magnificent. All in all I feel quite hopeful. We have 73 students accepted of our quota of 80 for the first year, with 30 other applicants yet to be studied. Apparently our financial affairs are in good shape, especially so considering the general depression."

The next year (May 19, 20, 1933) I visited the College and was very favorably "impressed by the honest seriousness with which the girls seemed to be facing their problems."

And with this I close my review of the beginning of Bennington College. I hope my account adds at least a little to what has already been said. The chief ones to praise are Mrs. McCullough, Mrs. Swan, Mrs. Franklin, and Dr. Leigh. The first three brought the College into existence, while Dr. Leigh defined its character, ^{progressive} he himself having been chosen on the platform early approved.