

## THE HISTORY OF GREENEVILLE COLLEGE

[This excerpt is taken from Brief History of the Synod of Tennessee From 1817 to 1887, by Rev. J.E. Alexander, D.D. (Philadelphia: McCalla & Co., 1890).]

"The founder of this institution was the Rev. Hezekiah Balch, D.D., who had graduated at Princeton College, N.J., and having first engaged in preaching and teaching on the Atlantic slope, removed to Greene county, Tenn., about 1780, and became permanently settled over Mount Bethel Church at Greeneville in 1783. Soon afterward he resolved to found a Literary Institution on a plantation which he had purchased and on which he had fixed his own residence, on Richland creek, about three miles south of Greeneville.

On the 3d of September, 1794, he obtained a charter from the General Assembly of the Territory of the United States South of the Ohio River, establishing what was known as Greeneville College, and appointing Mr. Balch to be its first president.

At the first meeting of the board of trustees, held in the house of James Stinson, in the town of Greeneville, February 18, 1795, the Rev. Robert Henderson was elected secretary of the board. They also adopted a memorial to the President and the Congress of the United States, for aid in their enterprise. In the same year, Mr. Balch made a tour to Philadelphia and through the New England States, and collected \$1350 in cash, \$350 in subscriptions, and a large number of books.

On the 16th of August, 1796, a building committee was instructed to contract for erecting a college building on a site selected near the residence of Mr. Balch - the building to be a frame, 32 feet by 26 feet, and two stories high, with a chimney stack at each end.

The record of the doings of the trustees from 1796 to 1800 was lost without being transcribed by the secretary.

The next meeting of the trustees on record was held March 3, 1800. At a meeting, January 9, 1901, they elected the Rev. Charles Coffin as their vice-president in the room of Mr. Henderson, resigned.

Mr. Coffin, a native of Newburyport, Mass., graduated at Harvard College in 1793. After being licensed by the Essex Association, he made a tour southward for the benefit of his health, and visited Greeneville at this time (1800), and afterward became permanently identified with the institution, which owed not less to him than to the founder himself.

Mr. Coffin was immediately commissioned as a financial agent, for the house was yet unfinished and there is no evidence that the College was yet opened. The hindrance was no doubt in a want of funds. It appears from the record that the College was opened October 28, 1802. In 1803, the trustees authorized the president to have the windows glazed and the house prepared for the comfort of students. Mr. Coffin had sent forms and lists for subscriptions from the Northern States to stimulate subscription in the home field. When he had spent four years mainly in the East, South, and West, on the financial agency, he reported \$14,000 collected, of which \$8000 were from beyond the mountains. He had also obtained a large addition to the library and apparatus. This report of agency was made in 1805, when a serious difficulty arose in regard to