From Rogers to Netherton:
A Heritage of Baptist Presidents
The Ninth:  B. G. Manard, D.D.

“President MANARD’S Inaugural to the students of Carson College was a real treat. It was a scholarly, energizing, inspiring production.

Among many other interesting things, he remarked the change made in the Faculty elect, and outlined the administration and future policy of the institution.

He hoped the present Faculty and administration would be the pride and inspiration of the students. That we begin the present year without reference to any preceding plan or policy, faulting no one. That we have lofty ideals and make progress with the age.

That ours is an exalted work, a work of high and noble impulse. That the professors labor not so much for the present as for the future good of the student. ‘How call out the students’ possibilities and enter them the panoplied actors in the world’s grand drama will be the absorbing thought of himself and colleagues.’ That we would recognize no mediocre standard in our grand work; but like the late HORACE MAYNARD, inscribe above our door some significant initial to first honors and a noble destiny. HORACE MAYNARD inscribed a V and it meant valedictorian of his class. He worked up to his ideal, and made the scholar, the statesman, the Christian, the gentleman.

We believe every student now has lofty aims, and will doubtless be the subject of an exalted destiny.”

(From The Carson Index, September 1882. Published by the Literary Societies of Carson College.)

While serving the second shortest tenure of any president (William Rogers served from August 1851 until his death in November), B. G. Manard was in office during one of the school’s most important transitions and one of its greatest trials.

Birdwell Gibson Manard was born the oldest of ten children December 10, 1837 in Panther Springs, TN in what is now Hamblen County. His parents, Meshack “Marshall” Manard and Mary A. “Polly” Shelton, were charter members of the Cedar Grove Baptist Church (now Alpha Baptist Church) in 1868. His father’s family was from North Carolina and descended from the Lieutenant Manard who helped drive the infamous Blackbeard from the state. His father’s mother was a Cate and as Borum notes, “closely related to Reverends Noah, Michael and William Cate, so prominently identified with East Tennessee Baptists’ interests and history.”

His earliest education most likely took place at the Panther Springs Academy that was built in 1845. In 1852 Manard accepted Christ at age sixteen. Late in 1860 Manard probably began his studies at Mossy Creek Baptist College which were interrupted five months later when the Civil War began. He served four years in Tennessee’s Confederate cavalry (Ashby’s 2nd and Branner’s 4th) and appears to have worked his way through the ranks as a private, lieutenant, captain, to assistant adjutant general.

After the war he briefly served on the editorial staff of the Union and American in Nashville. From there he entered the University of Virginia and according to Borum “graduated in some of its schools.” He taught at King College in Bristol and was instrumental in establishing a school that may have possibly continued as Bristol Female Institute (later Bristol Female College). During this time
he also served the Southern Baptist Convention’s Sunday School Board as the District Secretary for Mississippi.

Manard spent the spring and summer of 1871 in Memphis as editor of The Baptist but returned that same year to East Tennessee. He was licensed and ordained by the Baptist church in Bristol and became the pastor of Goodson Baptist Church. In 1873, Mossy Creek Baptist College awarded him an honorary Doctor of Divinity. He pastored there and also served as co-editor of the short-lived Monthly Messenger from 1873-74. He then became president of Bristol Female College (a forerunner of Virginia Intermont College) where he served from 1874-75. In 1872 he had been one of twelve men who incorporated that institution.

A few years later, Manard returned to the pastorate, probably at Lynchburg, VA. In June 1879 he married Mary Louise Evans, daughter of Judge Walter Evans of Tazewell, TN. They would have three children: Gertrude, Mattie, and Hardin Bowman. During this time he also served as president of Tazewell College as he would later at Aydelotte College.

On June 23, 1882, the trustees of Carson College elected Manard president. He would succeed N. B. Goforth. With the newly established female Newman College on the old campus, Carson College was heading into a transitional time, one that would eventually see the school become co-educational in 1889. On September 17th he and Mary joined the Mossy Creek Baptist Church upon letter of transfer from their church in Tazewell. The term began August 24th and Manard had plenty of work as the catalog lists him as president and professor of literature and philosophy.

Manard’s efforts apparently produced early results and challenges to the students. The September 1882 Carson Index notes the following: “Under the direction of President MANARD, the College campus has been greatly improved in appearance.” “Prof. B. G. Manard advises us to observe the laws of hygiene in the species and amount of food we consume, as our ability to study depends very much upon the state of our physical constitution. We fear this will require more self-denial than many of us possess.” “On the morning of August 29th the President delivered an interesting lecture relative to social law. He insisted that the young men of the institution inform themselves on this subject, and then reduce this knowledge to daily practice. He considers the observance of etiquette indispensable to our success in life.”

On November 3rd Manard gave the evening session address on “The Modern Pupil” at a two-day program of The Teachers’ Institute held at Westminster Church. The November 15, 1882 issue of The Carson Index reveals that at this time he was boarding with Gideon Cate, of Mossy Creek - a relative of his father’s mother.

It is during this time that smallpox broke out in Mossy Creek. The December 20th issue of the Republican Banner reported one case with sixteen more a week later. The January 24, 1883 issue noted: “We are sorry to learn that the smallpox has seriously crippled Carson College this winter. The College had started out with flattering prospects under the presidency of Prof. Manard.” In his History of Carson-Newman College, I. N. Carr relates that mid-semester “the community and college suddenly experienced a terrible epidemic of smallpox.” Many students left for home and Manard and mathematics professor S. E. Jones resigned, with Manard’s “courage [having] reached a low level” and that he “left the college in haste” never to return.

Two Pages From 1881-82 Catalog Advertising For

The Republican Banner’s January issue also ran a blurb though which read: “Rev. B G. Manard, president of Carson College, will leave in a few days for Mo.” In addition, the January 21, 1883 Mossy Creek Baptist Church minutes record that the church provided “letters of dismissal” to the Manards “to unite with the Church Platteburg, Mo.”
The January 1883 Morristown Gazette reported that “Rev. B. G. Manard, President of Carson College … will be leaving to become pastor of the Baptist Church at Plattsburg, Missouri.”

While Manard did leave the college for good, it was perhaps a more logical choice given the circumstances and opportunities available for a man who appears to have shifted roles quite frequently as opposed to abandoning his charge in cowardly flight.

In January 1883 the Manards moved to Missouri where B. G. became pastor of the Baptist church in Plattsburg. In 1885 he accepted the call to pastor at Holden but after a few years left for Little Rock, AR where he became secretary of the state Board of Missions. In this role he addressed the Nolachucky Association in August 1889 and “spoke of the Sunday school and colportage work as being the ‘hope of the Baptists of the State.’”

In 1891 he was appointed to the state convention’s newly established post of “historical secretary” in which he served briefly. That same year he was named by a convention committee to the first board of trustees of what would become the female (later co-ed) Central College. During this time he also served as pastor of Fayetteville Missionary Baptist Church.

Despite his active involvement, Manard did not stay long in Arkansas. Around 1892 he returned to pastor at Holden in Missouri and then in 1895 became pastor of First Baptist Church, Warrensburg. In 1898 he resigned and went to work as associate editor for the Word and Way in Kansas City, traveling and conducting revivals.

In early 1899 after conducting a meeting in Hamilton, Manard became ill and pneumonia developed. He died at home on January 27th. His obituary read that although he “fought with all the strength of his indomitable will …he was forced to yield at last, and his soul went out to meet the Master whom he had served so long and so faithfully.”

Baptist History Resources: Raymond DeArmond Manuscript Collection

The Baptist Archives has recently completed processing the Rev. Raymond DeArmond collection. Born in 1908 in Blount County, TN, DeArmond graduated from C-N and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He pastored churches in Tennessee, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Alabama. Included in the collection are primarily sermons and church-related material from his work at Berney Points Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL, Chesterfield Baptist Church, Chesterfield, SC, and Sevier Heights Baptist Church, Knoxville, TN. Rev. DeArmond was the father of Carson-Newman’s Carolyn DeArmond Blevins, Associate Professor of Religion since 1977 and 1959 C-N graduate.


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BAPTIST HISTORY AND HERITAGE SOCIETY
Formed in 1938 under the leadership of W. O. Carver at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the Society functioned from 1951 to 1995 as an auxiliary of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. When the SBC decided in 1995 to eliminate the Commission, the Society became an independent organization. Today the Society operates on its own, does not receive Cooperative funds, and is self-supporting. The Society is a voluntary, non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to provide leadership and direction for the study, preservation, and communication of Baptist history and heritage. Membership entitles members to receive the journal Baptist History and Heritage, the Baptist Heritage Update newsletter, a 10% discount on other Society publications and products, and reduced fees for participating in the annual meeting.
For more information, contact Charles W. Deweese, Executive Director & Treasurer. Mailing address: BHHS, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024-0728 Phone: (800) 966-2278 Individual Membership: $30/1 yr. $55/2 yrs. $75/3 yrs. $20/1 yr. (student) $25/1 yr. (senior 60+)
Email: cdeweese@tnbaptist.org Website: www.baptisthistory.org

TENNESSEE BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY
The Tennessee Baptist Historical Society is composed of individuals, churches, associations, institutions, and other organizations that are willing to share their resources and interests for the cause of Baptist history in Tennessee. Membership ($15 per year) entitles members to receive publications of the Society and attend the annual meeting that is usually scheduled in conjunction with the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Website: www.tnbaptist.org/whoweare/tbhs.htm
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