

# TENNESSEE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN COLLECTION

AR 765



Come and Go Club, 1926

Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives  
Nashville, Tennessee  
1997

Updated October, 2012

# Tennessee College For Women

## Collection

### AR 765

#### Summary

Main Entry: Tennessee College for Women Collection

Date Span: 1905 – 1993

Abstract: Collection consists of publications documenting student life at Tennessee College for Women, a Tennessee Baptist college in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and offers important resources on higher education for women in Tennessee in the first half of the twentieth century.

Size: 2.5 linear ft. (11 boxes)

Collection #: AR 765

#### Historical Sketch

The Tennessee Baptist Convention authorized the establishment of an institution of higher education for women at its convention in 1905, and the Tennessee College for Women was chartered by the state legislature December 18, 1905. The Convention selected the site of the defunct Union University in Murfreesboro for the new school. Union University was established in 1848 to train ministers, but it closed at the beginning of the Civil War in 1861. In 1873, the fifteen-acre property, in the heart of Murfreesboro, was placed in trust with the Tennessee Baptist Educational Association and, thus, was available when the Convention sought a location for Tennessee College in 1905.

The cornerstone of a new facility was laid in September, 1906 and, one year later, Tennessee College for Women (TCW) opened its doors with nearly 200 students. The collegiate course of study included Latin, Greek, French, German, English, philosophy, Bible, history, economics, mathematics, home economics, music, and art. Admission to the collegiate course required completion of two years of high school, recommendation of a principal, and an admission exam. Young women without those qualifications, however, could attend a preparatory course at TCW and subsequently apply for admission to the college. Within the first few years, science courses were added to the curriculum, and the first bachelor's degrees were awarded in 1910–1911. TCW also developed an extensive athletic program and later added courses in secretarial science and business.

Enrollment at TCW peaked at about 260 just before World War I. By the end of 1936, enrollment had dropped to below 100. The Southern Association of Colleges had accredited the academic program of TCW in 1930, but the school never qualified for membership in the Association.

Membership required that the school have an endowment of approximately \$500,000, but TCW never acquired an endowment substantial enough to put it on solid financial ground. The depression years dealt the school a financial blow from which it never fully recovered. Although debt-free by 1945, the school struggled to survive from one year to the next. As co-education became more popular, enrollment continued to drop.

November 14, 1945, the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention appointed a committee to investigate the feasibility of making TCW a co-educational college. Meanwhile, the trustees of Cumberland University in Lebanon, TN, formerly affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. but then independent, offered their institution to the Tennessee Baptist Convention. The Convention accepted, and, on December 11, 1945, the state Executive Board voted to merge TCW and all its assets with Cumberland University to create a co-educational college. January 10, 1946, a majority of the trustees of TCW approved the merger. A minority, however, objected and filed suit to stop the process. The suit was unsuccessful, and TCW closed forever on July 1, 1946.

Rutherford County and the city of Murfreesboro purchased TCW's property, and, until 1950, used the facility to house Central High School, which had burned in 1944. After a new high school was completed in 1950, the facility housed veterans who were attending Middle Tennessee State College under the G.I. Bill. The old TCW structure was destroyed in 1963, and a new middle school was built on the site.

When TWC merged with Cumberland University in 1946, its assets were \$115,000 in cash and government bonds and \$8000 in student notes receivable. That was not enough, however, to turn around the financially strapped Cumberland University, which was not accredited. Its enrollment declined and its debt continued to increase.

Ward-Belmont was a women's college formed in 1913 by the merger of two separate women's institutions – Ward Seminary (est. 1865) and Belmont College (est. 1890). In 1951, the trustees of Ward-Belmont College in Nashville offered to sell all of its assets, including property, buildings, and equipment, to the Tennessee Baptist Convention for the balance of its debt, approximately \$650,000. Located in the heart of Nashville, the college offered more promising prospects for a co-educational college than the Lebanon site of Cumberland University.

The Convention's Executive Board voted to accept the Ward-Belmont College offer on February 27, 1951, and Cumberland University's trustees were asked to move the college of arts and sciences to the Ward-Belmont site. The new institution would be called the Cumberland-Belmont College. Cumberland's trustees refused, however, and the Tennessee Baptist Convention returned the Cumberland University property to the group from which it had been purchased in 1946. The assets of Tennessee College for Women were transferred to a new co-educational institution called Belmont College, which opened as a junior college in September, 1951. Belmont College had both accreditation from and membership in the Southern Association of Colleges.

The alumnae of TCW continued to support the cause of women's higher education by transferring their support to Belmont College. An Alumnae Association had been established in 1910 with 39 charter members. In 1911, that organization had established an endowed scholarship fund. The

Alumnae Association of the Tennessee College for Women now operates under the auspices of Belmont University. It supports a trust fund memorializing the alumnae of TCW and is administered by the Tennessee Baptist Foundation. The proceeds provide scholarships for Belmont students.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Tennessee College for Women Collection contains 2.5 linear feet of material dating from 1905 to 1993. The bulk of the collection consists of publications documenting student life at TCW and offers important resources for historians interested in higher education for women in Tennessee in the first half of the twentieth century. Other material documents the work of the Alumnae Association, primarily from the 1970s to the 1990s.

### **Bibliography**

Entries for Union University, the Tennessee College for Women, and Belmont College in The Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958.

### **Arrangement**

Arranged alphabetically by topic or publication title

### **Provenance**

Donated by the Tennessee College Alumnae Chapter, 1992.

### **Preferred Citation**

Tennessee College for Women Collection, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee

### **Access Restrictions**

None

### **Subject Terms**

Tennessee College for Women (Murfreesboro, TN)  
Women's colleges – Tennessee  
Women – Education (Higher)

### **Related Materials**

Tennessee College for Women. Student records, 1905-1950. Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, MF 1969.

### **Container List**

#### **Box 1**

- 1.1 Alma Mater and Songbook, 1935
- 1.2 Alumnae – Clippings – Albanese, Naomi
- 1.3 Alumnae – Clippings – Ervin, Violet Gross
- 1.4 Alumnae – Clippings – Reunions, 1960, 1965, 1968, 1971 –1984, 1991
- 1.5 Alumnae – Rosters

- 1.6 Alumnae Association – Directory, 1985, 1987 – 1989
- 1.7 Alumnae Association – Directory, 1990 – 1993
- 1.8 Alumnae Association – “Feature the Teachers, a Script,” 1978
- 1.9 Alumnae Association – Miscellaneous, 1912, 1963, 1984
- 1.10 Alumnae Association – Newsletters, 1985 – 1986, 1988, 1990 – 1993
- 1.11 Athletic Association 1937
- 1.12 Board of Trust, 1912
- 1.13 Bulletins, 1910, 1915 – 1916, 1927 – 1928, 1941, 1944
- 1.14 Charter, 1905 (copy, 1966)
- 1.15 Clippings
- 1.15a Founders’ Day Program, 1941
- 1.16 Historical sketches, 1947, 1952, 1963, 1984
- 1.17 Photographs, 1911 – 1912, 1915
- 1.17a Photographs, 1926 – 1927
- 1.18 President’s Report, 1941
- 1.19 Programs – Commencement, 1920 – 1921, 1926, 1939, 1946
- 1.20 Programs – Founder’s Day, 1941
- 1.21 Programs – Music, 1920, 1928, 1930, 1939
- 1.22 Programs – Other, 1917
- 1.23 Rules for Freshman Week – Manuscript

## **Box 2**

- 2.1 Student handbooks, 1914 – 1915, 1916 – 1917, 1936 – 1937
- 2.2 Successor Institutions (Cumberland and Belmont), 1951
- 2.3 Tennessee College Magazine, 1909, 1919
- 2.4 Tennessee College Magazine, 1920
- 2.5 Tennessee College Magazine, 1926, 1928, 1930
- 2.6 Yearbook, 1912
- 2.7 Yearbook, 1913

## **Box 3**

- 3.1 Yearbook, 1914
- 3.2 Yearbook, 1915
- 3.3 Yearbook, 1915 (c2)
- 3.4 Yearbook, 1916
- 3.6 Yearbook, 1917

## **Box 4**

- 4.1 Yearbook, 1918
- 4.2 Yearbook, 1919
- 4.3 Yearbook, 1920
- 4.4 Yearbook, 1921
- 4.5 Yearbook, 1922

## **Box 5**

- 5.1 Yearbook, 1923

- 5.2 Yearbook, 1924
- 5.3 Yearbook, 1925
- 5.4 Yearbook, 1926
- 5.5 Yearbook, 1926 (c2)

**Box 6**

- 6.1 Yearbook, 1927
- 6.2 Yearbook, 1927 (c2)
- 6.2(2) Yearbook, 1928
- 6.3 Yearbook, 1928 (c2)
- 6.4 Yearbook, 1929
- 6.5 Yearbook, 1929 (c2)

**Box 7**

- 7.1 Yearbook, 1930
- 7.2 Yearbook, 1931
- 7.3 Yearbook, 1932
- 7.4 Yearbook, 1933
- 7.5 Yearbook, 1934

**Box 8**

- 8.1 Yearbook, 1934 (c2)
- 8.2 Yearbook, 1935
- 8.3 Yearbook, 1935 (c2)
- 8.4 Yearbook, 1936
- 8.5 Yearbook, 1936 (c2)
- 8.6 Yearbook, 1937

**Box 9**

- 9.1 Yearbook, 1938
- 9.2 Yearbook, 1939
- 9.3 Yearbook, 1940
- 9.4 Yearbook, 1940 (c2)
- 9.5 Yearbook, 1941

**Box 10**

- 10.1 Yearbook, 1941 (c2)
- 10.2 Yearbook, 1942
- 10.3 Yearbook, 1945
- 10.4 Yearbook, 1946

**Box 11**

Glee Club posters – three

Tennessee – Ann (newspaper)

June 1934

December 12, 1936 (fragment)  
May 18, 1937  
September 27, 1937  
October 18, 1937  
December 13, 1937  
January 21, 1938  
March 7, 1938  
March 15, 1938  
April 5, 1938  
May 7, 1938  
June 6, 1938 (2)  
January 19, 1939  
February 16, 1939  
June 5, 1939  
October 21, 1939  
January 27, 1940  
May 15, 1940  
June 3, 1940  
September 25, 1940  
October 12, 1940  
November 2, 1940  
November 30, 1940  
January 25, 1941  
May 3, 1941  
February 11, 1942  
March 18, 1942  
November 14, 1944  
November 13, 1945  
November 26, 1945  
February 25, 1946  
May 4, 1946