CHAPTER THREE

INTRODUCTION TO
“THE HISTORY OF COLORADO COLLEGE
1874-1904”¹

by Louise Buckley

Editor’s Note: The year 1934 marked the 60th anniversary of the founding of Colorado College. There was an attempt at that time to write a scholarly history of the College’s first 60 years, and the first 30 of those years were assigned to Louise Buckley, a graduate student at Colorado College working for an M.A. degree in History. The result was a very thorough and complete description of the College’s early days, which became Louise Buckley’s Master’s Thesis. The second 30 years, 1904 to 1934, was intended to be written about, but that part of the project never came to fruition.

Louise Buckley was the first person to study and write about the early history of Colorado College without having lived during that period. She thus was the first scholar to bring historical perspective to the work. She relied heavily on newspaper articles written during the College’s founding and thereby provided additional details not covered in the writings of James Hutchison Kerr.

Louise Buckley’s impact on subsequent scholars writing about the history of Colorado College has been very great. All have mainly relied on her careful and meticulous work when writing about Colorado College’s first years.

A. FOUNDING

The men who came to Colorado in the early days were men of far vision and resourcefulness. The importance of a college in the Rocky Mountain Region became more and more impressed on their minds. The founders of Colorado Springs were also imbued with the belief that Colorado was destined to become a great state which would need, from earliest times, a college for the training of the future leaders of the state. In the plot made of Colorado Springs in 1871, a tract of twenty acres on the west side of North Cascade Avenue, termed the College Reservation, was set aside for educational purposes. The tract was then, and continued to be for some time, on the outskirts of the town. The Colorado Springs Company made it known that they would deal liberally with any denomination that would establish and maintain a college at Colorado Springs. Later an additional twenty acres on the east side of North Cascade Avenue was also set aside.²

But traces of Colorado College in the thoughts of men go further back than in 1871. In 1868, Reverend Edward P. Tenney was the Pastor of the Congregational Church in Central City, Colorado. He was inspired by the wealth and advantages of the mountainous and prairie land. He also realized that the oncoming generation would need educational, moral and religious training. He therefore proposed to the Ministerial Congregational Association in 1868 that immediate steps be taken to establish a Christian College under Congregational auspices in the territory. The members of the Association were very favorably impressed with Reverend Tenny’s proposition, but most of them felt that the territory was too sparsely settled to support such an institution. In addition, communication and transportation facilities to the East were very slow and difficult. Therefore, the Association decided that it would be better to postpone action until the resources of the state were more completely developed. Within a year, Reverend Tenney was called back to New England. Nothing was done about his proposition for several years, but the men in the territory did not forget it.³

As a graduate student working for her Masters Degree in History at Colorado College, she wrote the first historical study of the College. (Photograph from Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College.)
The first organization to consider seriously the offer of the Colorado Springs Company was the Order of the Jesuit Fathers. This Order had established many schools and missions in the southwestern part of the country, and they felt that there was a need for an institution of higher learning in the territory of Colorado. In 1872 or 1873, a committee was appointed to look over the field. They were to get propositions from the various towns and recommend the one which was best suited to their needs. Although the committee was favorably impressed with Colorado Springs, Denver was their final choice for the location of the school.4

A story is told that in 1873, Professor Thomas Nelson Haskell, late of the University of Wisconsin, came to Colorado Springs with his daughter in the interest of her health. Florence Edwards Haskell was just a young girl, only fourteen years old, and she only lived a few months after her arrival here. It is reported that one day, while visiting at General Palmer’s home, she suggested the “founding of a school near by, where youth inclined to pulmonary diseases might learn to soar,.....”5 She had been forced to leave her school because of her health, and she probably thought how wonderful it would be if other young people, so afflicted, could come to Colorado and, while regaining their health, continue their education. The story is told by two early writers on the history of the College,6 and the young girl’s picture is in a collection of old pictures at Coburn Library, as the one who inspired the founding of the College, so it may be accepted as a true incident.

In the memory of his daughter, Professor Haskell took active steps to secure the founding of a college. He succeeded in getting the Congregational Association to sanction the enterprise. When the Association took up the location of the college, it was decided to appoint a committee to investigate the value of the various locations, propositions, and probabilities, and to recommend the location best suited to the enterprise.7

The first real reference to the college found in the Colorado Springs Weekly Gazette, is an article which appeared in the issue on November 29, 1873. The committee which had been appointed to consider the different

---

4 Ibid. I was unable to find any other material on this matter.
5 Hale, Horace M., Education in Colorado, p. 96.
6 Ibid. and Op. Cit.
locations had signified their intention of coming to Colorado Springs. Major Henry McAllister Jr., representative of the Colorado Springs Company, and a number of other citizens, were to meet with the committee. It was reported that the Colorado Springs group was prepared to offer every liberal terms.

Professor Haskell, Moderator of the Congregational Association, and chairman of the committee, spoke at the meeting. He mentioned several items in favor of Colorado Springs. The most favorable factor was the provision in the Colony Deeds which forbade the sale of intoxicating liquors.

Other points were brought out by Professor Haskell. [One was that] the town was smaller, so there would not be so many temptations for the students, and the college would not be an insignificant factor in the town. He brought out the fact that the final choice of the committee could be influenced greatly by the amount of aid which a town could give. The Association, according to Professor Haskell, had in mind a coeducational institution, patterned after Oberlin College at Oberlin, Ohio. Several citizens of Colorado Springs spoke, among them Major McAllister, who indicated the willingness and the desire of the town for the college. He promised that as much aid as possible would be given.8

The committee made several trips to Colorado Springs during the next two months. After careful consideration of all available locations, they decided unanimously in favor of Colorado Springs, and signified their intention of recommending it to the Conference of the Congregational Church to be held in Denver.9 There were several reasons, besides those already mentioned, for the choice of Colorado Springs as the site of the college. It was located centrally in the territory. The opportunities for the study of mining, metallurgy, astronomy, and geology were easily accessible. Its scenery and climate could not be surpassed anywhere in the territory, and it would probably prove to be a health resort as well as a tourist resort in the future.10

The Conference met January 21, 1874. Professor Haskell made the committee report, recommending Colorado Springs as the future home of

8 Colorado Springs Gazette, December 6, 1873.
9 Ibid, Supplement, January 10, 1874.
10 Colorado College, Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1874-1875, p. 15-16.
Colorado College. Although Greeley, Colorado was very anxious for the college, and made a very good proposition as against the offer of Colorado Springs, the Conference decided unanimously to accept the committee’s report.\textsuperscript{11} The Colorado Springs offer included the twenty acre University lot\textsuperscript{12} for college building purposes, ten one acre lots on the west side of Cascade Avenue, directly opposite the University lot, seventy acres of Colony land, and one dollar in cash for each four dollars that the college invested in building, to be paid as the work progressed, until $50,000 had been expended.\textsuperscript{13} That Colorado Springs was very anxious to have the college is shown by the following excerpt from Major McAllister’s offer to Professor Haskell. “We are aware that we have offered liberal terms, terms that even Denver will not offer; but we properly appreciate the value of your institution to our town, and we are willing to go even beyond the risk of competition.”\textsuperscript{14} A self-perpetuating Board of Trustees was appointed, with the power to increase their numbers, to begin preparations for the college.\textsuperscript{15}

Two weeks later a meeting of the Trustees was held in Colorado Springs.\textsuperscript{16} They voted to name the institution Colorado Springs College. They really planned a school on the broad lines of a university, but [for] the time being they designated the infant school as a college. The word “Springs” in the name was apparently never used.\textsuperscript{17} The Board was increased to eighteen members, the maximum number allowed by the organic resolution of the Conference. The Board then took steps to organize

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ante}
\textsuperscript{13} The official offer of Major Henry McAllister Jr., Executive Director of the Colorado Springs Company, written on December 10, 1873, to Professor Thomas Nelson Haskell, to locate his contemplated college at Colorado Springs. This is a certified copy and may be found in a Pamphlet Case in the Colorado Room, Coburn Library, labeled \textit{Colorado College History}.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{15} Colorado Springs \textit{Gazette}, January 24, 1874.
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid}, February 7, 1874.
\textsuperscript{17} In all my reading, I did not find this full title. It was always referred to as Colorado College
as a body corporate under the general laws of the Territory. They adopted a set of by-laws and other rules for their future government, and provided for an executive committee to act for the whole board in the intervals between meetings.\footnote{Colorado Springs \textit{Gazette}, February 7, 1874.} The Charter was filed with the County Recorder on February 21, 1874.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, February 21, 1874.}

According to the Charter, a corporation was to be formed which was to be called Colorado College. The object of this corporation was to locate and maintain at Colorado Springs under Christian auspices an institution of learning on the college or university plan. The number of trustees was [neither] to be less than twelve members nor more than eighteen. The Board was to have the power to fill its own vacancies, but two-thirds of the Board was to be members of good standing of Evangelical Churches, and a majority was to be members of the Congregational Church.

The College authorities appointed Professor Haskell, the Moderator of the Congregational Association, as the financial agent for the college.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, February 7, 1874.} Reverend Jonathan Edwards of Dedham, Mass., a brother-in-law of Professor Haskell, accepted the invitation of the Trustees to become the first Principal and Instructor of Colorado College.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, March 28, 1874.} Reverend Edwards had a high reputation as a teacher and minister, and he was very favorably known in the East. While he was in Colorado Springs, he also established the First Congregational Church, in addition to his rigorous teaching activities.\footnote{Ormes, Manly Dayton, and Eleanor R. Ormes, \textit{Book of Colorado Springs}, p. 160-161.}

The Trustees intended to start building a college as soon as funds could be collected, and to form classes as soon as possible. However, it was soon decided to start classes before the erection of a building, and temporary rooms for the purpose were secured in the Wanless Block on the [northwest] corner of East Pike’s Peak Avenue and Tejon Street.\footnote{Colorado Springs \textit{Gazette}, May 9, 1874.}

B. The Early Days
The Colorado Springs Gazette reprints the following passage from Reverend Jonathan Edward’s Diary: “On the sixth day of May, 1874, Colorado College began its work. It opened in [the] Wanless Block (on North Tejon Street, just above what is now the First National Bank Building) with eighteen students. The work began in a room on the ground floor which it soon outgrew. We then went upstairs into a considerably larger room.” The College also made use of an adjacent room for music and German. Thus did Colorado College begin its career.

The students were all in the Preparatory Department. Miss Minna Knapp taught the classes in Music and German; Mr. Sanford C. Robinson, formerly of Oberlin College, at Oberlin, Ohio, taught Arithmetic and Algebra one hour a day, and Professor Edwards taught all the other classes which included Latin, Greek, Geography, Geometry, Physiology, Reading, Writing, and Spelling. The first term closed in July with a public literary exhibition at the Town Hall. After the close of the first term, classifying examinations were given by a committee made up of Trustees, Faculty, and Ministers. Sixteen students were passed to college rank.

Meanwhile, the financial agent, Professor Haskell, had succeeded in raising money for a temporary building and in securing endowment pledges of several thousand dollars in the East. The first college building, which was intended to provide only temporary quarters, was built during the summer of 1874. The structure was located on a twenty-five foot lot on North Tejon Street, across from Acacia Park, which was donated by the Colorado Springs Company.

It was a small wooden building, twenty-four feet by fifty feet, and included three class rooms, a cloakroom, thirty desks, a large book case, a cabinet organ, and lamps to be used in the early morning. The building was erected at a cost of $1,200 and soon carried a mortgage of $1,500, which in itself is quite an achievement. The building was officially opened in

24 Ibid, February 13, 1875.
26 Ibid, July 18, 1874
27 Ibid, September 12, 1874
28 Ibid, August 8, 1874.
29 Ibid, September 12, 1874
September, 1874, with a gala sociable. This building was the home of Colorado College until the new college building was completed in 1880. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which was right next door, was also used for Chapel exercises and some recitations.

Approximately forty students attended the College during the school year 1874-1875, of which sixteen were in the college Freshman Class, and the remainder were preparatory rank. The enrollment remained at about the same figure until after the classes were moved to the new college building in 1880.

For the fall term of [1874], Professor Jonathan Edwards was elected Professor of Literature and Principal of the College, and Professor Solon Tenney French was elected Principal of the Preparatory Department. There were other instructors who [only] taught for short periods each day. However, most of the teaching the first year was done by Professor Edwards.

The Faculty in those early days was supposed to receive salaries from tuition payments. When one considers [the] small number of students and the fact that tuition only amounted to $39 a year, it becomes apparent that the salaries were not large. In 1877, children whose parents had contributed to the building fund were admitted free except for the $2 janitor fee, so salaries would probably be even less.

One cannot help but admire those early teachers for their faith and perseverance. Of those early days as a teacher, Professor French remarks in a letter to Reverend Ormes, “...the work was very trying and very hard, and

---

31 Colorado Springs Gazette, September 12, 1874.
33 Colorado Springs Gazette, February 13, 1875. In 1877, Colorado College had an enrollment of fifty students, according to the Colorado Springs Gazette, October 6 1877. Three years later, in 1880, there were fifty-two students in attendance at the College. The latter figures were given in the Colorado Springs Gazette, October 30, 1880.
34 Ibid, September 12, 1874.
35 Ibid, August 18, 1877.
my overwork brought on an attack of mountain fever, from the effects of which I suffered a long time.”

During the year the men students organized the first Literary Society of the College. It was called Phi Delta Pi, and it met regularly each Friday night in the wooden college building. The purpose of the club was to improve the elocutionary power of the students, and public literary exhibitions, including declamations, orations, and debates were presented each Friday night.

At the end of the term, Principal Edwards and all the instructors, except Professor French, resigned. Reverend James G. Dougherty of Wyandotte, Kansas, was elected the first President of Colorado College. Professor French became Professor-in-charge with Miss [Minnie] S. Mackenzie as his assistant. By this time the panic of 1873 and the grasshoppers of 1874 had completely paralyzed business and hopes in the region. Thousands of people left the territory to seek new homes. It was impossible to raise money for a small college, when it was a problem even to eat.

In August, 1875, Professor French resigned and Professor James H. Kerr took his place. Professor Kerr was a graduate of Yale, and just previous to coming to Colorado Springs he was in charge of Jackson Academy, Missouri. Professor Haskell as financial agent gave up all active efforts. In his report he showed promises of $17,050, obtained both in Colorado and in the East. President Dougherty made several tours of Colorado and went east to make appeals for financial aid. After a sincere effort, he reported to the Trustees that for the time being nothing could be done in a financial way.

---


37 Colorado Springs Gazette, December 13, 1878.

38 Ibid, January 16, 1875.

39 Ibid, February 6, 1875.


41 Colorado Springs Gazette, September 4, 1875.

42 Ibid, September 12, 1875
He also resigned during the winter of 1875, leaving the infant College in a very dangerous and precarious condition.\textsuperscript{43}

Regular classes were suspended that winter due to lack of funds. Professor Kerr conducted classes in Assaying, Chemistry, Metallurgy, Geology, and Mining at his own expense and responsibility. He carried on these classes until 1880, when Professor William Strieby took over part of the work.\textsuperscript{44}

In the spring of 1876, the outlook for the institution was exceedingly discouraging. During the summer of that year, however, Reverend F. B. Perkins, then a general missionary to Colorado, visited Colorado Springs. He was deeply impressed with the earnest spirit shown by Reverent E. N. Bartlett and Reverend R. C. Bristol, Colorado Springs pastors, in their desire to develop the College which had been founded in 1874. At his suggestion, Reverend Bartlett wrote to Reverend E. P. Tenney, then at Ashland, Mass.\textsuperscript{45} The result was that in September, 1876, Mr. Tenney took charge of the College.\textsuperscript{46} He brought with him from the East Professor Winthrop D. Sheldon, who had supervision of the instruction of the institution.\textsuperscript{47} Mr. Tenney himself devoted most of his time to the effort of securing the necessary funds.

He wrote and published a book entitled \textit{The New West}, which received favorable comment in the East and did much to awaken interest throughout the East in the College.\textsuperscript{48} In this book he emphasized the rugged mountain scenery, the mineral wealth, the superb agricultural possibilities, the unexcelled climate and brilliant future of the state of Colorado. It was, he claimed, an ideal place for an institution of higher learning. Above all, he emphasized the need for a Protestant Christian college to train the future leaders of the state. He compared the beginnings of Colorado College to the dubious starting of Yale, Harvard, and other institutions in the East.

President Tenney was untiring in his efforts. He not only encouraged the faculty in raising the standard of education, but he founded as feeders to

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Ibid}, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{45} Colorado Springs \textit{Gazette}, February 12, 1900.
\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Ibid}, September 23, 1876
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Ibid}, September 9, 1876
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid}, September 4, 1880.
the College, Preparatory Schools in Salt Lake City; Trinidad, Colorado; and Las Vegas, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe, New Mexico.\textsuperscript{49}

President Tenney, from the beginning, had great faith not only in the College, but in the possible development of Colorado Springs, and the whole vicinity. He believed so strongly in the mission of the College and its future greatness, that he devoted his entire resources and energies towards putting the College on a firm financial basis.

C. The Presidents

Reverend James G. Dougherty, M.A., was the first President of Colorado College.\textsuperscript{50} He was a graduate of Brown University [in Providence, Rhode Island]. He was invited, in the spring of 1875, by a vote of the Board of Trustees, to take over the duties of the President.\textsuperscript{51} He accepted the offer and came to Colorado Springs in May, 1875.

In a report of his connection with the College, he says: “I taught five hours a day, preached every Sunday, usually twice, and corresponded with many persons regarding financial aid.”\textsuperscript{52} President Dougherty made numerous trips around the state in the financial interest of the College, also in an attempt to bring more students to the College. He made talks in churches, and other public meetings, all in the interests of the College. Later, President Dougherty went east in search of financial aid, but it was a time of great financial stress, and he found it impossible to procure any sort of backing. His salary while on the campus was very uncertain. Professor Haskell, as financial agent, had secured more than enough subscriptions to cover expenses, but it was impossible to collect such pledges.

During the summer of 1875, President Dougherty prepared and printed the first catalogue of the College.\textsuperscript{53} His work for the College was characterized by great earnestness and zeal. However, it was a very difficult

---

\textsuperscript{49} Kerr, \textit{Op. Cit.}

\textsuperscript{50} Reverend Jonathan Edwards, the first executive head of the College, refused the title of President. He preferred to be called the “Principal.” Ante, 7.

\textsuperscript{51} Ante, 11.

\textsuperscript{52} Ormes, \textit{Op. Cit.}, p. 162.

\textsuperscript{53} Colorado College, \textit{Catalogue of the Officers and Students}, 1874-1875.
time to build up an infant college. In April, 1876, just a year after his arrival in Colorado Springs, President Dougherty resigned.\footnote{Ormes, \textit{Op. Cit.}, p. 162.}

Reverend Edward Payson Tenney was the next president of Colorado College. Reverend Tenney had been interested ever since 1868, when he was Pastor of the Congregational Church in Central City, Colorado.\footnote{Ante, 1.} Mr. Tenney in his [book] \textit{Looking Forward Into The Past} says that the Trustees offered him the position of President, if it would put them under no official obligation. He was to furnish all instruction and to meet College expenses.\footnote{Tenney, Edward Payson, \textit{Looking Forward Into The Past} (Nahant, MA: Rumford Press, 1910), p. 76.}

When President Tenney entered upon his duties as President of Colorado College, the situation appeared hopeless. The few people that were in the state were desperately poor and the standard of education was extremely low. To take over the leadership of a college without funds, building, or adequate teaching staff, required the utmost faith, courage and resourcefulness. President Tenney was equal to the occasion, however, and when he came to the College, it seemed to give it new life and new hope.\footnote{Kerr, \textit{Op. Cit.}}

During the eight years that President Tenney remained at Colorado College, he accomplished a great deal. He strengthened the faculty, increased the enrollment, started a library, and most significant, he was singularly successful in raising enough money, both in Colorado and in the East, with which to construct the first college building.

The end of his administration was clouded over by the very tragic outcome of his Endowment Policy.\footnote{President Tenney worked out a land scheme whereby the College secured title to property with the idea of holding it until its value increased and it could be sold for a profit. Such profits were to go into the Endowment Fund of the College. The business failed in 1884, and President Tenney was asked to resign his place on the Board of Trustees. Post 67.} As is customary at such a crisis, President Tenney was bitterly criticized and censored for his management of college affairs. False statements and haphazard guesses were taken as the
truth without adequate investigation, and President Tenney left Colorado Springs in 1884, broken in health, and an exceedingly embittered man.\(^{59}\)

President Tenney was a deeply religious man. His every act was motivated by the highest ideals and motives. That all the good he had accomplished for Colorado College, that all his devotion and untiring effort should have been forgotten, is one of the most tragic things that has ever happened at Colorado College.\(^{60}\) As his Endowment Policy came to be better understood, and the false accusations against him were proven false, resolutions and a purse of gold were sent to him, exonerating him of all implied accusations of mismanagement of funds and excessive expenditures.\(^{61}\)

Reverend William Frederick Slocum was the third President of Colorado College. He was born at Grafton, Massachusetts, [in] 1851. After he completed his undergraduate work at Amherst College, he spent a year in Europe doing post-graduate work. On his return to the United States, he attended the Andover Theological Seminary, and became a regularly ordained minister of the Congregational denomination. His first church was in Amesbury, Massachusetts. Later, in 1883, he became the pastor of the First Congregational Church in Baltimore. While in Baltimore, Reverend Slocum showed himself to be a very aggressive and capable leader. In 1888, persuaded to a great extent by Professor George N. Marden, he came to Colorado College.\(^{62}\)

In addition to his regular administrative duties as President of the College, President Slocum occupied the chair of Philosophy.\(^{63}\) He acted as President of the State Board of Charities and Corrections and was head of the Colorado Board of Pardons.\(^{64}\) He was a contributor to the leading magazines and publications on educational, sociological, and ethical


\(^{60}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{61}\) Professor J. H. Kerr was Acting-President of the College [for] the four years interval between the resignation of President Tenney in 1884 and the arrival of President Slocum in 1888. *Ibid.*

\(^{62}\) Colorado Springs *Gazette*, June 3, 1888.


\(^{64}\) Colorado Springs *Gazette*, October 13, 1893.
During President Slocum’s administration, curricular changes were made and the educational standards were materially raised.

To show the degree of his executive ability, and the extent to which he was known as an educator, he refused the presidencies of Oberlin College, at Oberlin, Ohio, and the University of Illinois, at Champaign, Illinois. He, however, had unbounded faith in the future of Colorado College, and he would not consider that his work was finished until he had made it one of the highest ranking colleges in the West.\(^{65}\)

Colorado College experienced its greatest growth and expansion during President Slocum’s administration. From an insignificant little college in 1888, scarcely known outside of the town, he built up the enrollment, enriched the college life and activities, expanded the course of study, increased its faculty, constructed ten buildings on the campus, and built up an endowment fund of half-a-million dollars.\(^{66}\)

\(^{65}\) Ibid, August 31, 1897.
\(^{66}\) Ibid, February 23, 1904.