A Dream Is Realized

THOMAS CHURCH BROWNELL was the one man in the Diocese of Connecticut who could bring an Episcopalian college into being. The Bishop of Connecticut had attended Brown University and Union College in Schenectady, New York, from which he was graduated as valedictorian in 1804. Brownell had been brought up in the Congregationalist faith, and it was his intention to enter the ministry of that church. But as has been the case with so many other Protestant candidates for the ministry, extensive reading in church history soon turned his attention to the special claims of the Episcopacy. In order to resolve his unsettled thoughts, he abandoned plans to study Theology for the time being and in 1805 he accepted a tutorship in Latin and Greek at Union College. Two years later he was appointed Professor of Belles Lettres and Moral Philosophy and in 1809 he was made Professor of Chemistry and Mineralogy. These were new disciplines for that day, and Brownell decided to go to England to study the Natural Sciences. For a year he visited the great English centers of learning and there he met some of the eminent men of science of the time. Upon his return to America in 1811, he married Charlotte Dickinson and, as his bride was an Episcopalian, he once more turned his attention to the Church which had so fascinated him as a college undergraduate. Such leisure time as his busy professional schedule afforded was spent in the study of Theology. In April of 1816, Brownell was admitted to the Holy Order of Deacons by Bishop Hobart and in August of that year he was advanced to the Priesthood. In 1818, he became assistant at Trinity Church, New York, and on June 3, 1819, he was unanimously elected Bishop of the Diocese of Connecticut.

Bishop Brownell was an educational enthusiast. Teaching in Union College and in the General Seminary had occupied over six of the years since his graduation from college. Bishop Hobart had once taught at Princeton, and he was every bit as interested in education as was Bishop Brownell. The removal of the Seminary from New York to New Haven had prompted Hobart to establish his own diocesan theological school and, with the return of the General Seminary to the Diocese of New York, Bishop Hobart had used his every effort to expand and strengthen the Seminary, even to the creation of a “Branch” of the Seminary at Geneva, New York. And it was the matter of the “Branch” which was to bring the question of a church college to a head in the Diocese of New York and also, indirectly, in the Diocese of Connecticut.

It had been the hope of several of the leaders in the movement to establish the General Seminary that the Seminary should form the nucleus of an Episcopalian university and that there should be, as soon as possible, a college in conjunction with the theological school. At Geneva there was the old Geneva Academy, founded in 1796 by Presbyterians but since 1813 under Episcopalian influence. From that date on, the story of Geneva Academy somewhat resembles that of the Episcopal Academy of Connecticut, the only difference being, of course, the “happy ending.” On September 23, 1818, Bishop Hobart met with a number of up-state New York Churchmen at Geneva and outlined plans to raise the Geneva Academy to college level. The Bishop’s proposal
was that the Trustees of the Academy surrender control of the school to the vestry of Trinity Church, Geneva, and that the Diocesan Convention of New York endow the institution as a Diocesan college under a charter to be granted by the New York Board of Regents. The Trustees of the Academy obligingly acceded to Bishop Hobart’s request and, on April 10, 1822, the Regents granted a provisional college charter on condition that the Trustees of the college raise, within three years, a permanent fund of $50,000 or a fund sufficient to yield $4,000 per year. Thus, in a period of less than four years, the Episcopalians of New York performed a feat which Connecticut Churchmen had been unable to do after decades of serious effort.

Geneva College (known as Hobart College after 1852) opened its first session on August 5, 1822. The ten college students were soon joined by several seminarians who comprised the student body of the “Branch” of the General Theological Seminary. The college flourished and in 1825 it received a permanent charter. The “Branch,” however, failed to prosper and it was discontinued in 1826.

From his vantage point on the Board of Trustees of the General Theological Seminary, Bishop Brownell was able to observe the educational developments in the Diocese of New York. The progress made by Bishop Hobart in Geneva spurred Bishop Brownell to action. A few days before Christmas, 1822, the Bishop of Connecticut met at his home in New Haven with eighteen clergymen whom he had called together to draw up a petition to the Connecticut General Assembly for a college charter. The last Diocesan Convention had granted no authority to take such a step. Indeed, the matter of a college had not even been considered by the Convention at its June meeting and, if the meeting in New Haven
had any Diocesan sanction whatever, it was the vote to continue the committee to petition the Legislature which had been taken in 1818. Nevertheless, the preliminary steps were taken and the Bishop, two clergy, and three laymen were appointed to draw up a memorial to present to the Legislature.9

By March 20, 1823, the committee had prepared its petition which was to be presented to the General Assembly the first Wednesday in May. In order to give the proposed college the broadest base of support, copies of the petition were sent to every parish in the Diocese and all “male Episcopalians, of lawful age” were asked to affix their signatures.10 The petition itself was most moderately worded. The petitioners expressed the hope that the establishment of a second college in Connecticut would be of great benefit to the state and that it would “meet with a liberal patronage” without lessening the usefulness of “the important Literary Institution at New-Haven.” As Episcopalians, and while disclaiming any exclusive privilege, they stated that as there was not a single college under control of the Episcopalians and that, because of the large number of their Communion, an Episcopal College would soon be established somewhere, they were “desirous that the State of Connecticut shall have the benefit of its location.” Especially, they pointed out, would Connecticut benefit by a second college because of the reliance of the South and West upon New England for the education of their sons. A second college would carry Connecticut one step further toward becoming “the Athens of our Republic.” As to the location of the second college, the petitioners asked that it be either Hartford, Middletown, New Haven, or New London and that final selection be left to the discretion of the Trustees. And as to the endowment of the college, the petitioners asked that the act of incorporation should take effect as soon as $30,000 should be raised. Implicit was the suggestion that the college’s location would be determined by the generosity of the four possible towns, and explicit was the request that the portion of the endowment of the Episcopal Academy of Connecticut which had not been contributed by the Cheshire community should be applied toward the initial endowment of the college, provided the Trustees of the Academy and the people of Cheshire should give their consent to the transfer of funds.11

The petition was circulated widely. Apparently the clause regarding the appropriation of a part of the endowment of the Episcopal Academy met with objection from the Academy Trustees and the Cheshire community, and this portion was deleted.12 Certainly the petition had been read in New Haven for, on the day before its presentation to the legislature, the Yale Corporation abolished the requirement that all officers of that college subscribe to that ultimate test of Congregational orthodoxy, the Saybrook Platform.13 This was doubtless done to weaken the Episcopalian claim of discrimination against them at Yale, a point of which much had been made in earlier efforts to establish an Episcopalian college. Bishop Brownell and his asso-
Charles Sigourney

Associates had planned well, and every effort had been made to avoid anything in either their propagandizing or in the petition itself which would jeopardize their case. Thus, once more the suggestion that the college be named for Bishop Seabury was passed over and the name “Washington” was chosen instead. The first President of the United States had, it was true, been an Episcopalian, but the name could have given offense to no one. And even though the petitioners referred to themselves as members of the Episcopal Church, care was taken to include non-Episcopalians among the original incorporators.

These disclaimers of partisan self-interest notwithstanding, it was no secret that the new college would be distinctively Episcopalian. In the April, 1823, issue of the Churchman’s Magazine, official publication of the Diocese of Connecticut, appeared the first public notice of the college project. Here again were the oft-repeated arguments that the predominant influence in the American colleges was either Calvinistic or Unitarian and that the Episcopalians were equally entitled to a college in which the main object would be “not to propagate the peculiar tenets of the Episcopal Church, but to establish an institution where Episcopalians, and all who agree with them in the great points of Christian doctrine, may educate their children without the hazard of their acquiring a strong bias against their own religious principles.”

Great care was taken in the selection of the signers of the final petition as it was presented to the General Assembly. Bishop Brownell had become an Episcopalian because of the particular claims of the Episcopal Church, but it was well known that he had once been a Congregationalist and that he regarded other communions with respect and that, while he never missed an opportunity to state the special claims of episcopacy, his inter-church relations were always conducted on a “live-and-let-live” basis. The Reverend Harry Croswell was rector of Trinity Church, New Haven, and was so well thought of by the Standing Order that in 1817 he was invited to preach the “Election Sermon” before the General Assembly, an honor which had previously been enjoyed only by Congregationalists.

Elijah Boardman, a wealthy Episcopal layman, was United States Senator from Connecticut. The Honorable Samuel W. Johnson of Stratford had long been a member of the Upper House of the Connecticut legislative body and had on numerous occasions served on important committees of the Diocesan Convention.

The Reverend Birdsey G. Noble was rector at Holy Trinity Church, Middletown, one of the larger and more prosperous parishes in the Diocese. The Reverend Nathaniel S. Wheaton was rector of Christ Church, Hartford. The Reverend Elisha Cushman was pastor of the Baptist Society in Hartford. The Reverend Samuel Merwin was a Congregationalist minister of New Haven who had been a guiding figure in the organization in 1815 of the Charitable Society for the Education of Indigent Pious Young Men for the
Ministry of the Gospel, an organization whose purpose was to provide scholarships at Yale College. 21

Charles Sigourney was one of Hartford’s leading merchants, president of the Phoenix Bank, senior warden of Christ Church, a gentleman of cultivated tastes, and a devotee of the classical learning. 22 David Watkinson, a Congregationalist, was also a prosperous Hartford merchant. One of the most public-spirited men of the day, he invariably lent his support and patronage to enterprises for the public good, whether of a commercial, charitable, or educational nature. 23

Richard Adams was a leading member of Christ Church, Norwich, and had long evidenced his interest in the affairs of the Church by his service as the perennial delegate from his parish to the Diocesan Convention. 24 Ebenezer Young of Killingly was a practicing attorney and the operator of a cotton mill. 25 Commodore Thomas Macdonough, U.S.N., was a distinguished naval officer and a hero of the War of 1812. 26 Jonathan Starr, Jr., was of an old Episcopalian family of New London and was a warden of St. James Church. 27 Nathan Smith of New Haven, the last of the petitioners, had long served Episcopalian interests in the Connecticut Legislature as a leader of the Tolerationist Party. 28

These men represented a wide spectrum as to place of residence, politics, occupation, and ecclesiastical connection. Although the greater number of them came from Hartford, all sections of Connecticut were represented, except the extreme western counties. Among them were clergy, merchants, attorneys, government officials, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and a Baptist. The Congregationalists, to be sure, were of the more irascible sort, but so too were the Episcopalian petitioners. Conspicuous by his absence was Samuel Tudor, Jr., of Hartford, one of the early promoters of a church college. 29 vestryman of Christ Church, one whose generous contribution headed every pious subscription list, but one who was described as “a Churchman, because he believed in the Church, and possibly also because he did not believe in Congregationalism.” 30

So well had Bishop Brownell and his associates planned their strategy that the bill passed both houses of the Connecticut Legislature without incident, and the Charter for Washington College was granted on May 16, 1823. Great was the rejoicing in Hartford, and that evening cannons were fired and bonfires were lighted. 31 All that remained to be done was to raise the sum of $30,000 demanded by the Charter, select the site, gather a faculty, and open the College for instruction. An Episcopal college in the Diocese of Connecticut at last existed on a piece of parchment and, in terms of the petition and the general feelings of Connecticut Churchmen of 1823, little more could have been desired.

And it is in terms of the petition, as contrasted with the earlier plans to raise the Episcopal Academy to college level, that it must at once become apparent that in 1823 the Church in Connecticut had set a goal somewhat more realistic than when in 1810 the Diocesan Convention asked the General Assembly for an act changing the Episcopal Academy to the Episcopal College of Connecticut. The Academy was a Church-controlled institution with trustees and officers elected by the Convention and responsible to the Church. Washington College was placed under a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees, and the Charter made no mention whatsoever of sponsorship by, or relation to, the Episcopal Church. 32 Section 7 of the College Charter forbade the “making of the religious tenets of any person a condition of admission to any privilege in said college; and [provided] that no president, professor or other officer shall be made ineligible for or by reason of any religious tenet that he may possess, or be compelled by any by-law, or otherwise to subscribe to any religious test whatsoever.” Furthermore, when the bill passed the Senate, the Legislature had added to the petitioners as College Trustees, John Thompson Peters, Asa Chapman, Elias Perkins, Luther Loomis, and John S. Peters, M.D., of whom only John T. Peters and Asa Chapman were Episcopalians. Thus, the question might well have been raised as to whether Washington College was truly a church college. The relationship of the College to the Diocese and to the Church at large would
have to be worked out in the early months of the College's corporate existence.\textsuperscript{39}

In his Episcopal Address to the Convention of the Diocese of Connecticut held in Meriden just three weeks after the granting of the Charter, Bishop Brownell proceeded to rationalize the establishment of Washington College and to outline the relationship of the College to the Church. As was his wont, the Bishop rehearsed the past experience of Connecticut Churchmen in having to send their children to schools and colleges whose instructors "dissent from our religious views." But the new element in Brownell's argument was his deploving "a spurious liberality much in vogue at the present day, which, if it do not reach absolute latitudinarianism, professes to regard it as a matter of indifference, or at most, of expediency to what particular denomination of Christians any one belongs. . . . We are Episcopalians," he said, "not from any slight preference, but as I trust, from examination and conviction, and from an imperious sense of duty." And then followed the oft-repeated claim of Episcopalians to the right to educate their children in such fashion as not to have Episcopalian youth "acquire a positive bias" against the Faith of the Fathers. These considerations, argued Bishop Brownell, had happily resulted in the recent incorporation of Washington College which, the Bishop rejoiced, was "to be under the patronage and principal direction of members of our Church." In view of the Charter's condition that $30,000 be raised to get the College under way, the Episcopal Address ended with an "earnest [financial] appeal . . . to the friends of the proposed Institution . . ." and the hope that "it will be met with that liberality which the importance of the object demands."\textsuperscript{34}

A month later, on Tuesday, July 8, 1823, the first meeting of the Trustees was held at Bulkley's Hotel in Middletown.\textsuperscript{35} Officers were chosen and Bishop Brownell was becomingly made chairman. Nathaniel Wheaton was made secretary and Samuel Tudor, although not then a Trustee, was made treasurer. After the organization of the Board, a "Committee to devise ways and means to procure funds for the institution" (comprising Trustees Brownell, Merwin, Crosswell, Cushman, and Noble) was directed to appoint fund-raising agents and to superintend the money-gathering operation. Finally, it was voted that future meetings of the Trustees be advertised in the New Haven and Hartford papers and that the secretary notify the members by sending them a copy of the newspaper in which the announcement appeared. And then was adjourned the first meeting of the Board of Trustees of Washington College.\textsuperscript{36}

Immediately, the "Committee to devise ways and means to procure funds for the institution" set to work. Subscription papers were sent out to the several parishes, and the benevolent spirit of the people of Connecticut was appealed to. The subscription papers were made out in two forms: one form permitting pledges to be made upon condition of the selection of a particular location of the College and the other form for pledges to be made without regard to location. As New London had been eliminated from the choice of locations in the petition's final form,\textsuperscript{37} the possibilities of the College's location had been reduced to three. A large number of the pledges from New Haven, Middletown, and Hartford were, of course, made dependent upon a particular location, and this was to be the determining factor in the selection of Hartford as the site of the College.

Although there was much enthusiasm throughout Connecticut for the College, the committee was not confident that the entire $30,000 could be raised within the Diocese, or even within the United States. They therefore appointed one of their own number, the Reverend Nathaniel Wheaton, to go to England to solicit donations of money, books, and philosophical apparatus.\textsuperscript{38} Christ Church generously granted Wheaton a leave of absence in order to perform this mission, and in September, 1823, he sailed from New York,\textsuperscript{39} armed with a letter signed by Bishop Brownell as President of the College and addressed "To the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Church of England."\textsuperscript{40}

Now this document was a curious one, and one which brought forth both benefit in England and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscription to Washington College on condition of location in Hartford</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Averell, Eliphalet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnold, Barnabas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbott, Joseph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams, Neil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams, Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson, Tira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brace, Jonathan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buck, Daniel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartholomew, Simon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belcher, Samuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangs, Abigail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainard, Charles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnard, Henry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bull, Ebenezer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bassett, Wm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnard, Thomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennett, John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benson, Jeremiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bull, Michael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler, Charles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brase, Thomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnard, Hannah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boardman, Abby</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pages from original gift book
19
controversy in Connecticut. While the Charter for Washington College was still pending (and, indeed, ever since the drawing up of the petition for a Charter), the college promoters had been careful in their public statements to play down the Church influence which may be exerted upon the College and also to assure non-Episcopalian that it was not their intent that the College should proselytize among the students who might attend. In the letter carried to England by Nathaniel Wheaton, however, a different spirit was evidenced, and the document exposed the Episcopalians of Connecticut to the charges of political disloyalty and religious bigotry.

The letter to the English Church (and an elaborate additional "Statement" which Wheaton felt obliged to issue upon his arrival in England) outlined briefly the history of Episcopacy in America and emphasized the extremely difficult position of the Church in Connecticut, "planted in the midst of Dissenters from her ministry and worship, and opposed by many prejudices, numerous difficulties have heretofore retarded her progress." A college had been founded and called by the name of Washington. ("It was necessary that some name should be given it in the Charter. Should some munificent benefactor to the institution be found, it is intended to honor it with his name.") The needs of the College were frankly stated. Aid from England would place the College on an equal footing with the other literary institutions, and "no measures could be better calculated to promote the prosperity of the Church in this country, and to oppose an effectual barrier to those spreading errors, which are dividing and destroying the other religious communions." And then was mentioned the common bond of religion which united England and America: "The best friends which Great Britain has in America, will be found among the members of the Episcopal Church," and . . . every thing which conduces to the extension of this church, will be found to strengthen the bands of relationship and amity which connect the two countries."

The College Trustees, of course, had no idea that this letter of introduction for Nathaniel Wheaton should be circulated in Connecticut. Even if they had, there was little that could have been changed and the statement of the case still be clear to the English Church. When it is remembered, however, that the Episcopalians, who had been completely discredited in Connecticut for their Toryism during the American Revolution, were referring to strengthening "bands of relationship"—political and ecclesiastical—the recently-defeated Standing Order had full reason to believe that their earlier suspicions of Episcopalian political loyalties were justified. And, likewise, when it is remembered that to the Congregationalists, who had enjoyed legal Establishment until only five years before, Episcopalian references to themselves as members of the Church and to all others as Dissenters (both correct in English usage) could not help but revive the old fear of Prelacy. Copies of the letter did fall into unfriendly hands and were printed in the Connecticut Courant for March 2, 1824. The inevitable consequences followed—but that is part of another story, of which more later.

Nathaniel Wheaton arrived in England on October 3, 1823. During the thirteen months he was abroad, Wheaton traveled the length and breadth of England, visiting almost every possible site of historical or literary interest, paying his respects to the most eminent leaders of Church and State, and inspecting almost countless educational and philanthropic foundations. During this period he even found time to visit briefly in France and Scotland. The account of his travels, which he serialized in weekly three-column installments from June 18, 1827, to August 1, 1829, in the Episcopal Watchman, the newspaper of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, reads like the breath-taking adventures of one who, marveling that such wonders could be, rushed from one new wonder to the next. Indeed, it would seem that few were the corners of England into which Wheaton did not peek on his many crossings of the country. Particularly did he pay attention to the great English universities. There he was able to indulge his taste for music and architecture and to meet the intellectual luminaries of Oxford and Cambridge. On occasion
he attended the lectures of the universities, and in each of the university towns he was entertained by the officers of the several colleges.43

But the pleasant sojourn in England was more than the mere junket Wheaton's published description of it would suggest. He had been sent to secure the assistance of the English Church in setting up an Anglican college in what before the American Revolution had been English missionary territory, and much of Wheaton's coming and going was incidental to the most serious purpose of re-establishing the ties between the Church in America and that of the Mother Country which had been, to all intents and purposes, severed with the War for American Independence.

The task thus assigned to Nathaniel Wheaton was a difficult one, and one which under the best of conditions would have demanded the most happy combination of boldness and tact. But the situation was seriously complicated by the fact that two other American Churchmen were also endeavoring to revive the mother-daughter relationship between the two branches of the Anglican Communion, and for precisely the same immediate purpose as was Nathaniel Wheaton.

Philander Chase, once a prominent figure in the Diocese of Connecticut but by now Bishop of Ohio, had plans to open a theological seminary to train clergy for service in the territory west of the Appalachian Mountains. His clergy were few, his people poor, and Ohio without the financial means of what Bishop Chase regarded as a necessity for his Diocese. The Church in the East had shown no disposition to offer any assistance, and Bishop Chase’s thoughts turned to England where he was sure funds could be raised to carry out his project. Requests for endorsement by the American Bishops had been disappointing. The Presiding Bishop, Bishop White of Pennsylvania, expressed strong disapproval of what he described as “begging.”
Bishop Hobart of New York was even more pointed. The Church already had a General Seminary and, if and when Ohio had need of theological instruction, the General Seminary would establish a "branch" there. Hobart was successful in preventing any Church agency or Bishop from providing introductory credentials or endorsement, but Henry Clay, induced to do so by a mutual friend, wrote a letter for Bishop Chase introducing him to Lord Gambier, a distinguished British admiral and Evangelical Churchman with whom Clay had become acquainted when the two had helped negotiate the Treaty of Ghent, which concluded the War of 1812. With this single letter of introduction, Chase sailed for England and arrived in Liverpool on November 3, 1823, just one month after the arrival of Nathaniel Wheaton.

Meanwhile, Bishop Hobart, who had not been able to prevent Chase's leaving for England, wrote letters to his friends in Great Britain and distributed widely a pamphlet of his own composition in which he declared that Bishop Chase did not have the approval of the Church for his mission nor, for that matter, of his own Diocese. But even this was not enough for Bishop Hobart, for within a few months he, too, was in England, traveling, as he wanted it to be understood, for his health, but really to gather funds for the General Theological Seminary. In England, Hobart continued his efforts to discredit Bishop Chase's cause, and soon Nathaniel Wheaton found that he, too, was being denounced by the Bishop of New York, who, perhaps jealous for the success of his own Geneva College, spared few pains to point out that Washington College was a strictly Diocesan undertaking without the sanction of the Church at large.

Wheaton was genuinely sympathetic to Chase, and well he might have been. Hobart was the common enemy, and Chase had been Wheaton's predecessor, once removed, at Christ Church, Hartford. Upon the urging of several Englishmen, however, Wheaton undertook to mediate between the two Bishops by proposing a joint solicitation for the General Seminary, Chase's theological school, and Washington College. Hobart was willing to enter into the scheme, but Chase, who had already made considerable progress among his connections in the Evangelical party, could see no advantage in the arrangement. With Chase confidently going his own way, Bishop Hobart softened in his attitude toward Wheaton and Washington College and, much to Wheaton's surprise, even proposed that the General Seminary and Washington College bring forward their claims "in conjunction" and that the proceeds of the appeal be shared equally by the two institutions. And on that basis Hobart and Wheaton operated during the remainder of Hobart's stay in England; that is, until Hobart left for the Continent in a huff.

Although the three American Churchmen found additional competition with the arrival of Bishop Inglis of Nova Scotia and Dr. Stewart from Upper Canada, both in quest of English money, the proceeds in each case at least justified the mission. Chase fared somewhat better than the others, for as Wheaton reported, "The giving people are enlisted in the Ohio cause." Thus the Bishop of Ohio returned to his Diocese with $20,000 and the promise of more. Bishop Hobart forwarded to the General Theological Seminary $946.67, and Nathaniel Wheaton, in accordance with his instructions, invested $1,843 in books and several hundred dollars in scientific apparatus and then returned home.

By the time of Nathaniel Wheaton's return to Connecticut in November, 1824, Washington College was already a going concern. The thirty thousand dollars needed to begin the College had been raised, buildings had been started, a faculty had been appointed, instruction had begun, changes had been made in the Board of Trustees, and the Congregationalists and Episcopalians of Connecticut were once more engaged in a pamphlet war into which Wheaton was to throw himself as a leading champion of his Church and College.

If Wheaton's fund-raising campaign in England was conducted in a hit-or-miss fashion, that of Bishop Brownell in Connecticut was a well-directed and highly-organized affair. The entire Diocese was divided into districts, more-or-
A D R E A M  I S  R E A L I Z E D

less on a county basis, which were placed under
agents who were responsible to the Bishop as
Chairman of the “Committee to devise ways and
means to procure funds.” Each agent was pro-
vided with a file of promotional literature which
consisted of letters from the Bishop and newspa-
per clippings favorable to the cause, and the
agents were required to report weekly to the
Bishop on their progress. Although the Board
of Trustees had decided that there should be two
forms for the subscription papers, the committee
first circulated only the “general” subscription
form for pledges not dependent upon the par-
ticular location of the College. The close of Jan-
uary, 1824, was set as the date for the end of this
phase of the campaign, and it was hoped that
the entire sum of $30,000 could be raised by the
middle of March.

Henry Watson of East Windsor was made
principal agent for the Hartford district; the
Reverend Daniel Burhans acted for the New Ha-
ven district; the Reverend Stephen Jewett, rect-
or of Christ Church in New Haven, acted for
the New London-Norwich district; and Bishop
Brownell himself assumed responsibility for
Litchfield County. The Bishop, however, did not
confine his fund-raising efforts to the district to
which he had assigned himself. Jewett had fared
badly in eastern Connecticut, and the Episco-
palians there, perhaps angry because New Lon-
don had apparently been deleted from the latest
list of the College’s possible locations, had given
him, as Bishop Brownell put it, the “go-bye.” On
September 10, 1823, disgruntled Churchmen
from Norwich and New London held a mass
meeting at Kinney’s Hotel in Norwich to con-
sider “such measures as may be deemed neces-

A D R E A M  I S  R E A L I Z E D

dering that it should be opened in Nor-
wich.55

Although there was no “follow-up” on the
Norwich meeting, eastern Connecticut remained
sullen, if not hostile, and the agent received no
pledges. Brownell personally went to Norwich,
New London and, while he was at it, to Middle-
town. In both New London and Norwich he re-
ceived pledges from the “principal churchmen”
and in Middletown he immediately added $500
to the “general” subscription and received a firm
promise of two or three hundred more. By
March, 1824, the “general” subscription amounted
to about $10,000.

But beyond this “general” subscription, an-
other $20,000 had to be raised before the College
could be put into operation, and the location of
the College would depend upon the result of the
“particular” subscriptions. Bishop Brownell had
great hope for a generous contribution from
Hartford, and he urged that the Hartford district
be canvassed first, for well he must have known
the open purses of such men of Christ Church as
Charles Sigourney, Samuel Tudor, and William
H. Imlay, whose largess had always supplied the
Diocesan charities. Certainly these men would
be Washington College’s greatest hope.

In his hope for Hartford, Bishop Brownell was
not to be disappointed. When Hartford’s “par-
ticular” subscription was opened, the list was
headed by three pledges of $1,000 each by Tu-
dor, Sigourney, and Imlay. David Watkinson and
David Porter subscribed $500 each, and Caleb
Pond and John Russ put their names in
the book
for $400. Two commercial houses, Stedman &
Gordon and A. D. Cook & Sons, pledged $900
and $500, respectively. In all, the pledges in
money amounted to $10,865. But what perhaps
Bishop Brownell had not expected even in his
most optimistic moods was the response from
the artisans, laborers, and shopkeepers of Hart-
tford, many of them not members of the Episcopal
Church. Goods and services, translated into mon-
etary value for the subscription list, were pledged
in excess of $4,000, and the great variety of the
skills and materials offered must have convinced
everyone that the building of Washington Col-

23
Excerpt from Trinity College Bulletin, Volume II, No. 1, listing gifts in kind

The locating of the College in Hartford was no mere formality, for the other towns were still regarded as "in the running." When the Trustees met in Middletown on Thursday, April 22, 1824, the Board at once addressed itself to this delicate problem. Representatives of the several towns put in their appearance at the meeting, and the Board decided to proceed at once to the selection of the College's location. The town representatives appeared before the Board in person with written proposals for the completion of the endowment. Hartford, of course, was well prepared, but Middletown also put forth her claims and New Haven also (through Trustees Smith and Croswell) was not to be denied. The Trustees proceeded to debate the merits of the several claims, and the argument (which raged until 11:00 P.M.) was resumed the following morning at 7:30, only to end in a deadlock between Hartford and Middletown. The New Haven Trustees sought to resolve the impasse by moving the debate to neutral territory, and thus the meeting was adjourned to New Haven until May 6, when the Trustees were to make the final decision on the location of Washington College.

When the Trustees met again in the Assembly Room in New Haven on May 6, 1824, John S. Peters, who had been delegated at Middletown to examine the proposals from Hartford and Middletown, presented a report in favor of Hartford. Whereupon Nathan Smith of New Haven...
immediately made known that New Haven was still regarding herself as a contender, and that additional money had been promised to the New Haven subscription greatly in excess of the sum previously announced. The New Haven Trustees could point to the fact that the New Haven newspapers had intensified their campaign to have the College located in New Haven and that the Episcopalian editor of the New Haven Pilot had chided both the New Haven townspeople and the College Trustees, the former for subscribing over $100,000 for the Farmington Canal and the latter for giving more consideration to the local subscription than to the desirability of location. The Pilot had argued that two colleges in New Haven would result in a healthy competition such as was found among the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge.65

The situation was further complicated by the rumor started in the pages of the Connecticut
Mirror that the townspeople of Wethersfield had offered the village green as the site of the College so as to compromise between Hartford and Middletown interests. The New Haven claim, however, was not seriously considered, and the rumor of Wethersfield's offer of a site for the College was discounted. When the ballot was taken, voting was along lines of local self-interest. Hartford received nine votes, Middletown received five, and New Haven received two, and the Trustees voted that whereas the sum of $30,000 had been raised it was to be paid to the Treasurer and that the College be established in the town of Hartford. Whereupon the Trustees proceeded to organize the institution.

In his letter to the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Church of England, Bishop Brownell had already signed himself as President, but the title was now formally bestowed upon him by vote of the Board of Trustees. Charles Sigourney was elected President of the Board of Trustees and Samuel Tudor was made Treasurer. Bishop
A D R E A M IS R E A L I Z E D

Brownell and Trustees Cushman and Wheaton were appointed to a committee to devise a course of study and to outline a plan for the government and discipline of the College. The Hartford Trustees were constituted a committee to advise and assist the President. President Brownell, John S. Peters, and Richard Adams were authorized to select the site of the College. And William H. Imlay, Samuel Tudor, and Michael Orcott were appointed to superintend the erection of the college buildings.

Each committee set to work at once. The men appointed to select the site of the College chose a splendid tract on West Street fronting on Buckingham Street about one-hundred rods west of the South Meetinghouse. The college site, known in Hartford as the Whiting-Seymour place, was purchased for $4,000. The college grounds, somewhat expanded, are now occupied by the State Capitol and Library buildings.

The Building Committee at once solicited bids for the erection of a "College" (or dormitory) and a chapel. The architects secured by the Trustees were among the best of the day. The College (later to be called Jarvis Hall) was designed by Solomon Willard, who had drawn the plan for the Bunker Hill Monument and, according to Trinity tradition, the Chapel (later to be called Seabury Hall) was executed by Samuel F. B. Morse, known by later generations as the inventor of the telegraph but regarded in his own day as a skillful portrait painter.

The "Curriculum Committee" of the Trustees prepared an outline of the course of studies, and a Prospectus, signed by Charles Sigourney as Secretary of the Board, was issued on August 10, 1824, and reprinted in the Connecticut Courant for September 7 of that year. The Prospectus announced the Faculty for the College, consisting of the Right Reverend Thomas Church Brownell, President; The Rev. George W. Doane, A.M., Professor of Belle Lettres and Oratory; Frederick Hall, A.M., Professor of Chemistry and Mineralogy; Horatio Hickock, A.M., Professor of Agriculture and Political Economy; George Sumner, M.D., Professor of Botany; and the Reverend Hector Humphreys, A.M., Tutor. Classes were scheduled to begin on September 23, 1824, but as the college buildings had scarcely been started by that date, instruction began in the basement of the Baptist Meeting House at Temple and Market Streets, and a private house on Main Street was taken over as a dormitory. Nine students— one senior, one sophomore, six freshmen, and one young man enrolled for a "partial course"— comprised the first student body. Washington College, an Episcopal College in Connecticut, was at last a reality. A dream had been realized.