



THE
LAUNCHING
of
DUKE
UNIVERSITY,
1924–1949

Robert F. Durden

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ROBERT F. DURDEN

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*This book is dedicated,
with abiding love and gratitude, to
M. O. D. R., M. F. D.,
and W. I. R.*

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Preface



THAT EACH AMERICAN university shares many features with all the others while also being in various ways unique is a truism. While the unique aspects derive from many things—such as location, mission, and origins—all of these are bound up and reflected in the institution's history. The early, nineteenth-century portion of Duke's history has been competently and fully covered in Nora C. Chaffin's *Trinity College, 1839–1892: The Beginnings of Duke University* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1950). From the modest school begun by Methodist and Quaker farmers in Randolph county in Piedmont North Carolina to the move of Trinity College to Durham, Chaffin recounts in a careful, scholarly fashion how the institution evolved from Brown's Schoolhouse to Union Institute Academy and finally, in 1859, to Methodist-sponsored Trinity College. Chaffin shows how the remarkable dedication, sacrifice, and leadership of one man, Braxton Craven, kept the small, struggling institution alive. Indeed, the most remarkable thing about Trinity College down to 1892 was that it survived.

Picking up the story where Chaffin stopped, Earl W. Porter, in *Trinity and Duke, 1892–1924: Foundations of Duke University* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1964), splendidly reveals how Trinity College gradually became a strong liberal arts college by the time of World War I and how under the leadership of three outstanding presidents—John F. Crowell, John C. Kilgo, and William P. Few—the institution finally began to solve its hitherto unending financial problems and came to be supported by Washington Duke and his family. Although a significant portion

of Duke University's history was rooted in and foreshadowed by Trinity's history, especially after 1892, there seemed to be no point in going back over ground that Chaffin and Porter have well covered. Thus this history focuses on the organization of a research university around Trinity College after December, 1924.

The term "research university" was not commonly used in the 1920s, and President Few and his allies talked of building a "major university" or a "national university." James B. Duke, the principal underwriter of the new university, spoke of his hope that the institution would attain "a place of real leadership in the educational world" and explicitly endorsed the plan of organization that Few had provided. Because "university" is and always has been a loosely used, imprecise word in the United States, I have chosen to use throughout the term "research university," since that was precisely what Duke was meant to be and quickly became.

Duke's history as a research university has a certain larger interest and significance partly because of timing. With the Johns Hopkins University leading the way in 1876, a group of older, private institutions in the Northeast and state-supported ones in the Midwest soon partially emulated the Johns Hopkins model and also became research universities. By the turn of the century these various universities had clearly established themselves as the premier educational institutions of the nation. Complex and expensive, they formed an increasingly important, elite segment of the nation's educational system.

Primarily because of persistent and widespread poverty, the South long failed to share in the revolution that reshaped much of higher education in the other sections of the country. State-supported universities in Charlottesville, Virginia; Austin, Texas; and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, did, however, begin to arouse and gradually transform themselves in the early decades of the twentieth century. And Trinity's President Few had the audacity to hope that the college in Durham might become the nucleus or heart, as he preferred to say, of the first voluntarily supported research university in the South.

By the 1920s, when Few and J. B. Duke collaborated, the strengths as well as the hazards of the research-university model were quite clear. Duke, therefore, became such an institution in a more self-conscious, deliberate, and expeditious fashion than was true in most other cases. Few and his coworkers meant for Duke to be a different kind of research university in two particular ways. First, Few believed, quite correctly, that in the rush to emphasize research and the training of graduate and professional students, many universities had woefully shortchanged undergraduates and liberal education. He meant for Duke to be different and to keep its undergraduate colleges and their students as priority items right alongside the graduate and professional schools. The task would prove

to be difficult but certainly not impossible, and the university's development during its first quarter-century would show the largely successful realization of Few's plan.

President Few wanted Duke to be different in another way also, and that was in the area of religion. He believed that many research universities had for various reasons either downplayed or actually ignored the religious dimension of life and the place of religion in higher education. Without religious tests for either students or faculty, Duke, according to the plans of Few and his collaborators, would try to maintain its friendly but not constricting relationship with the Methodist church; to treat religion, both as a subject for study and as an aspect of life, with great respect and to provide for it supportive policies; and to afford every opportunity for students voluntarily to participate in religious activities.

The new university encountered many problems, of course, some to be expected, some unforeseen and growing out of special circumstances. Perhaps the most predictable problem, and one certainly shared with at least a few other research universities that strove for balance, was the tension between research and teaching, a tension that was reflected not only in various university policies and appointments but in the lives of individual faculty members and in the operations of their departments. Although Few himself had a mistaken notion that those faculty members who primarily taught undergraduates could be differentiated from those who dealt with advanced students, the effects of that shortsighted view were overcome, at least in most departments, by chairmen and senior faculty members who from the first tried to recruit scholar-teachers, that is, men and women who were capable of doing significant research as well as interested in and willing to undertake the teaching of undergraduates. Moreover, there turned out to be less money available for the university than was originally anticipated, and practical exigencies soon dictated that senior faculty members, including the most distinguished ones, had to share in the teaching of both undergraduate and graduate students.

The largest unforeseen problem, aside from the shortage of funds, that Duke encountered arose from the fact that the university had its own governing board of trustees, while the perpetual philanthropic trust that J. B. Duke established late in 1924, the Duke Endowment, had a separate board of trustees. Since down to World War II the university derived approximately half of its annual income from the Endowment, the fact that the trustees of the Endowment were empowered, under certain circumstances, to withhold funds from the university turned out to be a troublesome and dangerous matter for President Few and the university and one that, from the late 1920s until the mid-1930s, caused Few his greatest worry. While he finally worked out a solution to the problem that proved to be satisfactory, at least during his lifetime and during President

Robert L. Flowers's administration in the 1940s, the matter of potential conflict between the two boards was a most serious one.

By the early 1990s, the relationship between the Duke Endowment and Duke University had been maintained successfully for nearly seventy years. While the support that the university received from the Endowment grew steadily larger in dollar amounts over the decades, the proportion of that valuable, even indispensable support to the whole amount of the university's annual income shrank as income increased from tuition, the university's own endowment, and governmental as well as private agencies. Looking back from the early 1990s, therefore, one might be tempted to conclude that a smooth and largely happy outcome was inevitable, but that would be reading history backwards and would distort the sometimes painful realities and uncertainties of the early years.

Another problem that was unique to Duke as a research university was that it inherited from Trinity a strong, deep-rooted commitment to be of as much service as possible to North Carolina and the southeastern region. At the same time, Duke aspired to be a national university (and, later in the century, an international one). This double mission brought problems, especially concerning admissions and with the university's trustees and older alumni. In the main, Few and Flowers, aided by numerous others, managed to keep a balance and remain in pursuit of both objectives. It took considerable effort, however, and added another, distinctive theme to Duke's history.

The first quarter-century of the university's history forms a unit, therefore, not merely because it happened to coincide with the administrations of Few and Flowers but primarily because those were the formative and most critical years for the expanded institution. No other president of Duke has faced or will ever face quite the challenges and opportunities that came to William P. Few. He necessarily looms large in the pages that follow, although a vast number of other people assisted significantly in the building of the university.

When a troubled time came to Duke in the years immediately after World War II, the institution both suffered in certain respects and took various steps that better prepared it for the last half of the century. As Few once said, Duke was successfully embarked on a long journey.

This is not, in any sense, an authorized or official history of Duke's first quarter-century. Acting completely on my own, I began the research for it almost a decade ago and undertook the project because it needed doing and because, in one sense, it continued a story that I had begun to tell in *The Dukes of Durham* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1975). There the focus had been on Washington Duke and his family, especially the two youngest sons, Benjamin N. and James B. Duke. While such a

family history naturally included considerable attention to the family's involvement in the tobacco, textile, and electrical power industries, a main theme throughout the book was the family's philanthropic activity and particularly the Dukes' creative entanglement with Trinity College from about 1890 onward. The philanthropic culmination came late in 1924, when James B. Duke established the Duke Endowment and made possible the organization of a new university around Trinity College. Those matters are dealt with in the last two chapters of *The Dukes of Durham*. In this study the focus shifts from the family to the university itself, and to President William Preston Few and his associates, who began to create the university that James B. Duke's gift had made possible.

Too many people have generously befriended me in this undertaking for me to risk the attempt to list them here. Nevertheless, I greatly appreciate all the help. A large number of active and retired members of the faculty kindly read portions of the manuscript that dealt with their own departments or schools. One group of friends and colleagues, however, critically read all or a large portion of the manuscript, so I particularly thank Frances Brown, Jeff Crow, Paul Escott, Charles Flynn, Bill Holley, Bill King, and Harold Parker.

My research was done largely in our first-rate University Archives, a treasure trove of data not only about Duke but also about American higher education—and myriad other matters—in this century. For graciously taking me on as practically a live-in researcher and constantly helping me in countless ways, I thank William E. King, the archivist, and his associates, Thomas Harkins and Doris Parrish.

In the history department, Vivian Jackson and Grace Guyer, as they have done for many years and other writings of mine, efficiently and graciously typed all the chapters. I am deeply indebted to them and value their friendship as well as their services.

Three chapters in this volume have appeared earlier, in somewhat different form, in the *North Carolina Historical Review*, and I am grateful to its publishers for permission to reprint them.

Anne Oller Durden, my wife, has patiently listened to more Duke history than she ever bargained for. Moreover, she has promised to help, as usual, with the onerous task of compiling what promises to be a whopping index. I can hardly thank her enough and, at the same time, I hope that she will share the mixed pleasures, Providence willing, of a future volume in Duke's history.

Robert F. Durden
Duke University
May, 1992

The Launching of Duke University

*The Origins of the University Idea
at Trinity College*



WHEN THE TRUSTEES OF Trinity College named John Franklin Crowell as president of the small, struggling institution in 1887, they undoubtedly did not realize what the long-range consequences of their action would be. Not only would the Pennsylvanian, who was only twenty-nine years old when he took the job, succeed in moving the institution some fifty miles eastward, from its rural isolation in Randolph County to the booming factory town of Durham, but he also had even more ambitious ideas about transforming the little college into a university.¹

After attending school in New Berlin, Pennsylvania, young Crowell went to Dartmouth for a year, transferred to Yale in 1880, and, after receiving his undergraduate degree there in 1883, spent a year in Yale's divinity school and another in its fledgling graduate school before serving as a school principal for two years.²

Crowell's ambitious hopes for a "Greater Trinity," a university-type institution, were way ahead of their time and doomed to failure. Since Trinity was not yet, in fact, a strong liberal arts college, Crowell's talk of professional schools and other features of a university suggest a certain naiveté and lack of realism on his part. Yet the fact that he brought such ideas with him to Trinity points up an important truth about American higher education in the late nineteenth century.

Although the term "university" was, and is, used with notorious looseness in the United States, there is widespread agreement among historians that the nation's first authentic university—what would later on in the

twentieth century be known as a research university—opened its doors in 1876. The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, deliberately modeled itself on the German universities that were then widely hailed as the best in the world. The training of graduate students, through relatively small seminars where research was the principal concern and the new doctor of philosophy degree the goal, was the prime mission of Johns Hopkins, and its example quickly influenced the whole pattern of American higher education.³

While other forces were also at work, the Johns Hopkins example inspired a select group of American institutions to transform themselves, gradually and in varying fashions, into research universities. In the Midwest and Far West, several state-supported universities—most prominently Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and California—emulated Johns Hopkins and added to their historic mission of teaching that of the advancement of human knowledge through research as one of their primary purposes. In the Northeast, several of the nation's oldest educational institutions—especially Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Pennsylvania, and Columbia—bestirred themselves to meet the new competition and by around 1900 were widely recognized as belonging in the top group of research universities. Joining the five state-supported universities and the five Ivy League institutions, five important new, voluntarily supported universities were launched after the Civil War: Cornell in 1868, Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1865, Johns Hopkins in 1876, Stanford in 1891, and Chicago in 1892. These fifteen institutions, according to a prominent historian of American research universities, “fully embody the emergence of research as a fundamental goal in American higher education.”⁴

Twelve of the fifteen institutions named above were among the fourteen founding members of the Association of American Universities. Its creation in 1900 was an important milestone in the emergence of the American research universities, for the leading Ph.D.-granting institutions of the era not only thereby declared their equality with the much older European universities but also set about strengthening the standards for the doctorate and guaranteeing the value of the best American degrees against “cheaper” domestic and foreign competition.⁵

Although Johns Hopkins is in the border state of Maryland, the revolution that transformed the top echelon of American higher education in the late nineteenth century virtually bypassed the South. This happened primarily because deep, widespread poverty gripped the South for many decades after the Civil War. The large amounts of money that research universities required—from state governments, wealthy alumni, or philanthropists like John D. Rockefeller and Leland Stanford—simply did not exist in the vast area between the Potomac and the Rio Grande. Con-

sequently, just as public schools in the South generally lagged pitifully behind those in most other parts of the country, the colleges and universities in the region remained distinctly weaker than the nation's best.

Yet individuals, such as John F. Crowell at Trinity, began the process of transmitting the ideas and aims of the educational revolution long before certain southern institutions themselves could be recognizably transformed. Individuals comparable to Crowell no doubt acted as key transmitters or conveyers at state-supported universities in Charlottesville, Virginia; Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and Austin, Texas, as well as at various other ambitious institutions in the South. Trinity College, when it moved to Durham in 1892, was a far cry indeed from a research university; nevertheless, it slowly began to reflect important changes wrought by Crowell and other transmitters like him and to move toward acquiring genuine strength as a liberal arts college.

Certainly one major academic advantage that Trinity College derived from the move to Durham was that, since most of the former faculty members proved unable or unwilling to leave Randolph County, Crowell had to recruit a largely new faculty. Since he did so at the new graduate-training universities in the East, Trinity quickly acquired a young, well-prepared faculty with advanced degrees from Johns Hopkins, Yale, Cornell, and one or two other institutions. Contact with these enthusiastic, relatively cosmopolitan professors soon inspired such recent and promising Trinity graduates as John Spencer Bassett and William Ivey Cranford, who were serving as instructors in the college, to go themselves for graduate study at one of the major universities.⁶

Armed with the new Ph.D. degree from Johns Hopkins, John Spencer Bassett returned to teach history at Trinity in 1894 and within less than a decade, according to one historian, "acquired a reputation as the South's foremost scholar in the field of history."⁷ More important than his professional reputation, however, was the impact or influence that Bassett had on Trinity College.

Even more directly than Crowell, perhaps, Bassett may be seen as an example of the transmitter par excellence of many of the ideas and values of the research university. Unlike some university-trained scholars who became so enamored of research that they disdained teaching "mere" undergraduates, Bassett apparently did not lose his zest for the classroom, though with a teaching load of at least fifteen hours per week—and sometimes more—plus other duties, his schedule would be considered cruel and intolerable by later standards. That he managed to keep a personal touch and to relate with his students is suggested by a former student who recalled that Bassett was the only member of the small Trinity faculty who "believed that Jesus Christ had died for freshmen too."⁸

Neither the amount of his teaching nor its apparently caring quality

was as significant as the fact that Bassett, bringing to Trinity the methods he had learned at Johns Hopkins, required his students to write research papers based in part on original source material in the library.⁹ Rejecting the timeworn class routines that involved a near-sacred textbook and student memorization of data from it or from the professor's lectures, Bassett was among a small group of pioneers at Trinity who believed that undergraduates, no less than graduate students, needed to be trained in analytical, critical thinking and the writing of clear, correct English.

If such an approach was to be used, however, there were obvious implications for the college library, and Bassett was one of the first in a long line of Trinity faculty members who put library development at the top of the institution's list of priorities. Bassett's predecessor at Trinity, Stephen B. Weeks, who was also a Johns Hopkins Ph.D., led interested students and faculty to organize the Trinity College Historical Society in the spring of 1892. Its object, as stated in its constitution, was "to collect, arrange and preserve a library of books, pamphlets, maps, charts, manuscripts, papers, paintings, statuary and other materials illustrative of the history of North Carolina and of the South; . . . [and] to encourage original work in the field of Southern history and to promote the study of the same by means of lectures and publications." Weeks left Trinity before such an ambitious program could be effectively started, but Bassett, recognizing the potential in the organization, proceeded vigorously to utilize the historical society and pursue its aims. "There is reason to believe," one presumably impartial historian concludes, "that no local historical association ever succeeded better in effecting its program than the society at Trinity College."¹⁰

Using the historical museum with its miscellaneous artifacts and relics to catch the interest of the students and the public, Bassett had a more serious purpose in mind for the manuscripts and other historical documents that he and other members of the historical society went after: they were to form the nucleus of a research collection. In 1898, four years after Bassett's return to Trinity, he proudly informed his mentor at Johns Hopkins that whereas Trinity had previously owned no documentary collection, it now possessed over two thousand documents, and he had been promised a fireproof vault in which to keep them. In addition to Bassett's many other duties, the trustees named him "manager of the library," though in 1898 the college also acquired its first full-time librarian, Joseph P. Breedlove.¹¹

John Carlisle Kilgo, who succeeded Crowell in 1894 as Trinity's president, declared in 1901 that the library was "the one department that measures the future development of the college."¹² This was hardly a commonplace view among college presidents in that era, especially in small, church-related institutions, and it was almost certainly an in-

sight or policy that Kilgo himself acquired from Bassett and other young university-trained Ph.D.'s on the faculty. A native of South Carolina and a graduate of Wofford College, Kilgo was a spellbinding and controversial Methodist preacher who quickly earned the admiration and confidence of two groups that were vitally important to Trinity College: the faculty and the family of Washington Duke.

Benjamin N. Duke, Washington Duke's son, had given \$1,000 to Trinity in 1887 and become a trustee of the school in 1889. He and especially his father played central roles in moving the college to Durham three years later. Once there, the chronically poor condition of the college's financial situation did not improve, as President Crowell had hoped, but drastically worsened. Washington Duke, having retired from the family's tobacco business in 1880 at the age of sixty, left most important business and philanthropic decisions and negotiations to his son Ben Duke. Moreover, all of the dissension and wrangling that both preceded and followed the college's move to Durham led Washington Duke, for a time, to regret his involvement with Trinity. Yet since the family had become entangled with it, Ben Duke, together with his sister, Mary Duke Lyon, and his younger brother, James B. Duke, agreed to extend emergency financial assistance that would at least keep the college in operation, even if on a spartan basis that was a far cry indeed from the ambitious program that Crowell had envisioned.¹³

Kilgo's arrival on the scene soon brought a dramatic change in the college's situation, for not only did Ben Duke consider him "a very strong man in every way" and one "admirably fitted for the position he holds," but Washington Duke was equally captivated by Kilgo and again became keenly interested in the welfare of Trinity College. In 1896 he offered to give it \$100,000 for endowment, a princely sum in that era, if it would "open its doors to women, placing them in the future on an equal footing with men."¹⁴ Since the college had earlier enrolled women as students, although on an irregular and nonresidential basis, and since Kilgo and others on the faculty were sympathetic with the idea, the college promptly accepted Washington Duke's offer. The residentially separate or coordinate college for women that Crowell had proposed and that Kilgo preferred would have to wait for another generation and larger resources; but beginning in September, 1897 a small number of women entered Trinity College and lived in the first dormitory for women, the Mary Duke Building.¹⁵

While Washington Duke gave yet another \$100,000 to the college's endowment in 1898, with additional large gifts in subsequent years, Ben Duke began to make annual contributions to Trinity's operating budget and to meet specific needs as they arose. Serving on the executive committee of the college's trustees, Ben Duke, both before his father died in 1905 and afterward, served as the family's chief agent for a wide range of

philanthropic activities in North Carolina, with Trinity College always at the top of the list.

There is no documentary evidence to prove the case, but there is a strong probability that Ben Duke, possibly aided by his father, persuaded his younger brother, James B. Duke, to make his first sizeable gift to the college in 1900. Having moved to New York City in 1884, James B. Duke, who was known only to family and a few intimate friends as “Buck,” never again lived in Durham—though he maintained close ties with his family, especially his father and his brother Ben. What a later generation would know as a “workaholic,” J. B. Duke was primarily involved in the giant American Tobacco Company, which he helped to create in 1890 and long led as president. That task left him little time or taste for the endless letter-writing and conferring with Methodist preachers, college administrators, and others that Ben Duke endured. At any rate, J. B. Duke agreed to give Trinity a handsome library with a capacity of 100,000 volumes and \$10,000 for the purchase of books to go in it. Thus the concern of Bassett and others for Trinity’s library resources reached, via Kilgo and Ben Duke, to the youngest, and eventually the richest member of the family.

Support from the Dukes provided the financial security that Trinity College had always desperately but vainly sought. The college, by national standards, was a long way from being affluent. But by comparison with most other educational institutions in the poverty-stricken South at that time, Trinity was fortunate, and it could gradually begin to build toward the academic strength that it coveted. Enrollment climbed from 150 students when Kilgo became president to 197 by 1903, when the new library was dedicated. Since income from the tuition of \$50 per year amounted to little more than 10 percent of the college’s total income, the significance of the support from the Dukes is readily apparent. The endowment income and the annual gifts from the Dukes were such, in fact, that Kilgo proposed and got in 1900 the establishment of fifty tuition scholarships to be awarded on the basis of ability and character and twelve graduate student awards for those seeking the master of arts degree.¹⁶

While a strong library was essential if Trinity was to become the academically vigorous college that Kilgo, his faculty, and their benefactors envisioned, Bassett may also be used to illustrate another development at Trinity that reflected the practice of the research universities more than it did that of the typical small college of that time. A prodigious researcher himself, Bassett published, among other works, pioneering studies of slavery in North Carolina and of antislavery leaders in the state. Both subjects were then rather novel, and Bassett’s critical, scholarly stance even more so. Since historians, unlike major novelists or poets, write in sand, Bassett’s scholarship has long since been washed away by the tides of revisionism. More enduring, however, was the example he set of scholarly

investigation and of the careful search for truths about the South's past, a past which had to be painfully stripped of romanticism and evasion before it could even begin to be understood.

Since the validity of scholarship must be judged by other scholars as well as by educated laypersons who might be interested, Bassett also brought with him from Johns Hopkins the idea that academically serious institutions had an obligation to support and encourage scholarly publication. Accordingly, in 1895 he inaugurated the *Historical Papers of the Trinity College Historical Society*, a long-lasting series of scholarly monographs produced by both students and faculty. One of the few scholarly historical publications in the South at that time, it was the only one in North Carolina. Since the *Historical Papers* aimed at a limited, scholarly audience, however, Bassett sought another medium through which to reach a larger public. With the support of Kilgo and others on the faculty, in 1902 he launched the *South Atlantic Quarterly*.

Now approaching its centennial, the *South Atlantic Quarterly* is the second oldest such general and literary quarterly in the nation. A later editor of the magazine, William B. Hamilton, noted that Bassett and his allies intended it both as a medium of publication and as an incentive to continued scholarly effort. "The satisfactions of a teacher are the college professor's meat, but publication is his wine," Hamilton declared. "It stimulates him to new efforts, and it prevents his meat from going dry in his mouth."¹⁷ The quarterly was meant to serve a larger purpose, however, than as a mere vehicle for scholarly publication. The South, as the young Ph.D.'s at Trinity College saw it, was a well-loved region that desperately needed to be shaken and awakened. In Hamilton's words, "there were poverty and sloth," and "a tendency to whine that the South's troubles were caused by Yankees." As in the antebellum South concerning slavery, dissent was not tolerated about the region's second peculiar institution, the increasingly rigid and legally mandated system of Jim Crow segregation. With the weakest school systems in the nation, Southerners wrote and read little, and social ills ranging from blatant racial injustice to child labor and notorious political demagoguery cried out for remedial action. "The young men of Trinity girded themselves," Hamilton noted, and "the *South Atlantic Quarterly* was their spear."¹⁸

Bassett hurled his most famous "spear" in the issue of October, 1903. Long privately critical of the racial tactics employed by Southern Democrats in general and Tar Heel Democrats in particular, Bassett fumed when the "White Man's Party" routed its Republican and Populist opponents in the rabid "white supremacy" campaigns of 1898 and 1900. Although African-American voters were effectively disfranchised as a result of the latter election and the Democratic party was more solidly entrenched in its one-party domination than ever before, many leading Democrats, in-

cluding especially such powerful politico-journalists as Josephus Daniels of the *Raleigh News & Observer*, kept up a noisy drumfire of racist appeals and attacks. In a *Quarterly* article entitled “Stirring Up the Fires of Race Antipathy,” Bassett issued a quiet, reasoned analysis and protest and, among other things, predicted that some day in the future Negroes would win equality. That there would be continuing conflict between the races, Bassett conceded, but he saw it as “the duty of brave and wise men” to “seek to infuse the spirit of conciliation into these white leaders of white men.” The conflict could become less dire only if whites substituted a “spirit of conciliation” for their insistence on the inferiority of blacks.¹⁹

The angry outcry that soon followed upon the appearance of Bassett’s article, an outcry orchestrated by but not confined to Daniels’ *News & Observer*, led to the famed “Bassett affair” and an important crisis in the life of Trinity College. Since the affair has been extensively written about elsewhere, there is no need to repeat the story here.²⁰ From the vantage point of the late twentieth century, one has difficulty understanding the genuine fury of those who saw Bassett as a “traitor to the Southern way of life,” a “heretic” who should be promptly dismissed from his position at Trinity. Also, since it was a time when colleges had to worry about recruiting qualified students rather than one when students worried about being admitted to college, Trinity faced a genuine dilemma about its “clientele.” Bassett, in the face of the clamor and recognizing the danger to the college, offered to submit his resignation, and the crucial question became whether Trinity’s trustees, in a specially called session on December 1, 1903, would bow to the storm and sacrifice the professor.

Although Bassett had certainly never intended for such to happen, he inadvertently gave Trinity College—and therefore Duke University—its finest hour. With Kilgo, the faculty, and the student body all solidly lined up in support of Bassett’s right to express his views freely, the trustees voted eighteen to seven in favor of keeping Bassett and of academic freedom at Trinity. Though occasionally talked about, academic freedom scarcely existed anywhere in the United States, much less in the South, in the early years of the century. Trinity’s decision in the Bassett affair and the eloquent statement issued by the trustees thus became historic landmarks: “A reasonable freedom of opinion is to a college the very breath of life; and any official throttling of the private judgment of its teachers would destroy their influence, and place upon the college an enduring stigma.”²¹

Although John Spencer Bassett left Trinity in 1906 to go to Smith College, he left both tangible and intangible monuments. The *Historical Papers* and the *South Atlantic Quarterly* would long continue, the former in changed format into the 1960s, the latter still appearing regularly. On the intangible side, Bassett provided a model for the teacher-scholar that

lasted long after a university had been organized around the college. Bassett's student at Trinity, William K. Boyd, went to Columbia for his doctorate in history and succeeded Bassett as chairman in history, a position he held until his death in 1938. A prodigious collector of manuscripts and other research materials, Boyd also served as director of libraries in Duke University for several years and gave the *Papers of the Trinity College Historical Society* even more substance and merit than they had earlier possessed. When Boyd's son-in-law, William B. Hamilton, who obtained his doctorate in history at Duke and remained there to teach, became editor of the *South Atlantic Quarterly* in 1958, it represented in one sense the third generation of the Bassett-style teacher-scholar.

Although none was quite the obvious, even dramatic transmitter of university values and practices that Bassett was, there were, of course, numerous other important transmitters in other fields of study at Trinity. When William H. Pegram in the chemistry department retired in 1919 after forty-six years of service, he was succeeded by the young Paul M. Gross, who received his doctorate at Columbia. In addition to being a vital transmitter himself, Gross was destined to play a major role in the development of Duke University. In economics, William H. Glasson came from Columbia in 1902 and would spend his entire career at Trinity-Duke. In romance languages, A. M. Webb came from Yale, and in German, William H. Wannamaker, an undergraduate at Wofford College, did graduate work at Trinity before continuing it at Harvard and various German universities. Wannamaker, who joined the Trinity faculty in 1902, would play a major role in the university until his retirement.

The English department was strong in Trinity College, and several members of it played significant roles in both strengthening the institution and transplanting the university idea. Edwin Mims, after graduating from Vanderbilt and remaining there for two years of graduate work, joined the Trinity faculty in 1894. A passionate lover of literature who thought philology and other technical matters were best left to graduate students, Mims was both an inspiring, well-loved teacher and a productive scholar; a biography of Sidney Lanier published in 1905 helped establish Mims as a leading literary critic in the South.²² In that same year he took over the editorship of the *South Atlantic Quarterly* from Bassett.

Mims had gone in 1896 to Cornell to complete his doctorate, and his presumably temporary replacement for a year was a young South Carolinian named William Preston Few.

No transmitter of the university idea to Trinity College was as important as Few. That was true both for what he admired in such institutions as Harvard and Johns Hopkins and for what he rejected. After graduating from Wofford College in 1889, Few taught school for three years before going to Harvard in 1892 for his doctorate in English. His four years in



Cambridge were important ones in Few's life, not with reference to his character or personality, for they were already shaped, but in terms of his ideas about higher education. A highly intelligent, hardworking person, Few became an able professional scholar at Harvard and acquired both an understanding of and a respect for true scholarship. His own career was destined to be steered early toward administration, but it is significant that he was a scholar first. Moreover, as he often recalled later, he had been fascinated to observe at first hand what President Charles W. Eliot was in the process of doing at Harvard: changing "a provincial New England college into a true American university."²³

Understandably impressed by the growing excellence of Harvard, both in the arts and sciences and in its professional schools, Few nevertheless developed profound reservations about certain aspects of the then new research university. One misgiving centered on what he believed to be the tendency of the universities and their highly specialized faculties to neglect or minimize undergraduate teaching and to forget that, in Few's words, "the speculative pursuit of new truth" should not be the main end of undergraduate education. Deeply religious, Few clung to an old-fashioned educational notion that the values, character, and even physical health of undergraduates should concern colleges as much as the intellectual development of their minds. "What profiteth a man though he speak with the tongues of men and of angels and leave college a dyspeptic," Few posited, "though he understand all knowledge and have the habit of spending money that does not belong to him . . . ?"²⁴

Few was not, of course, the first person—and certainly not the last—to understand the profound tension that arose particularly in the universities between undergraduate teaching and research. A recent historian of research universities puts the matter succinctly: "The bane of American higher education from the perspective of would-be university builders has traditionally been its large teaching burdens." Compared with their European counterparts, American professors "have been condemned to provide extensive basic instruction to large numbers of relatively poorly prepared undergraduates." Yet, since "American society has chiefly rewarded its universities for the undergraduate education that they provided," the universities, in order to provide the costly resources for research, have accepted their fate.²⁵

Johns Hopkins, from its establishment until well into the twentieth century, was different. With more graduate students than undergraduates and admittedly oriented largely toward graduate and professional training, particularly in medicine, it seized a vanguard position as a research university. William P. Few, however, saw Johns Hopkins as an attempt "to transplant to American soil a full-grown German university." The experiment had been useful, he concluded in 1909, but except in its medi-

cal school (and, he should have added, its graduate school of arts and sciences), it had “not been successful.”²⁶

All of these ideas, formed and gracefully articulated by Few long before there was any notion of organizing a university around Trinity College, were later to become vitally important in that development. At this early stage, however, Few was merely one of a group of faculty members and others led by President Kilgo who were attempting in the years around and after the turn of the century to make Trinity into a strong college. In Few’s own case, English became the first two-person department when Mims returned with his doctorate and Kilgo and his colleagues decided that Few should be retained nevertheless. Ben Duke, as in other such cases, made the decision possible by agreeing to pay the extra salary involved. Edwin Mims, in thanking Duke, was more prophetic than he could realize when he suggested that Few’s retention was “one of the most important steps that Trinity has made.”²⁷

In 1902 Kilgo persuaded the trustees to make Few the dean of the college, the first such official in the institution’s history. Kilgo not only delegated most of the academic administration to his new dean, but, regarding the post as a kind of vice presidency, gave various other responsibilities to Few. One of six founding members of the Southern Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools in 1895, Trinity, while strengthening itself, had moved to the forefront of those institutions that struggled to raise the entire region’s educational standards. Mims and Few were especially active in the work of the Southern Association, an important relationship that Few maintained until the end of his life.

With an endowment that had grown from \$22,500 in 1894 to \$440,000 by 1903 (thanks largely to Washington Duke), Trinity had developed greatly during its decade or so in Durham. There had been only nine faculty members when Kilgo assumed the presidency in 1894, but by 1903 the number had grown to twenty-three. New buildings, and particularly the library given by J. B. Duke, met important needs and made the campus more attractive. With the college shaping up satisfactorily, Kilgo suggested in 1902 that the time had come for the trustees to consider the future development of Trinity.

The first two lines of expansion recommended by Kilgo were a separate, coordinate college for women and a law school. The number of women students enrolled at Trinity had risen from four in 1896 to thirty-five by 1902. Since the majority of them, however, came from Durham, Kilgo argued that more adequate facilities for women would be required to achieve a greater geographical distribution. While the trustees did approve Kilgo’s plan for the coordinate college, and he pushed it forward again in 1904, its implementation required resources that were not yet available.²⁸

Kilgo’s proposal for a law school was more fortunate. Determined that

Trinity's venture into legal training would follow high standards, Kilgo gained a pledge of annual support from the Duke brothers, and at a time when many law schools all over the country required only a high school education (and, in fact, many persons still became lawyers without attending law school at all), Trinity required the completion of two years of college work for admission to the three-year program in law. Opened in 1904 with the colorful and able Samuel Fox Mordecai as dean and senior professor, the school would remain small—there were six students in 1904 and seventeen in 1910—but the year after its establishment, Trinity's law school became the second member from the South, after the University of Tennessee, in the newly organized Association of American Law Schools.²⁹

There was talk of a medical school at Trinity, an idea that Crowell had encouraged. Such a school would meet an undoubted need. Although Shaw University in Raleigh had opened a medical school for African Americans in 1882, it was sadly underfinanced and finally ceased operations in 1918. The first decades of the twentieth century found North Carolina without a four-year medical school for white students and, like most of the Southern states, lagging far behind in the fields of health and medicine. Kilgo, however, wisely held to the view that Trinity should not tackle new ventures unless the resources to support them were in sight. He agreed that, in due time, Trinity might begin with a two-year course in medicine and pharmacy. Again in 1909 there was a flurry of interest in the possibility of a medical school at Trinity, but the old question of money soon arose. The medical school, like the coordinate college for women, would have to wait.

Upon Kilgo's election to the Methodist episcopacy in 1910, the trustees promptly named the forty-two-year-old Few as his successor. Although Few shared many of Kilgo's ideas about educational administration and leadership—in fact, Few clearly learned how to be president primarily from Kilgo—the two men were vastly different in style. Whereas Kilgo was a spellbinding orator, Few spoke diffidently in public and excelled only in writing. Where Kilgo thrived on controversy, and aroused a great deal of it throughout his presidency, Few was a quiet peacemaker. Both men had strong, deeply held convictions about education, religion, and other important matters, but they expressed and acted on them quite differently.

Since Kilgo had first won and then held the loyal support of Washington Duke and his sons, many observers speculated that when Trinity lost Kilgo to the episcopacy it would also lose the backing of the Dukes. The observers could hardly have been more wrong. Ben Duke, like Few, was a quiet, reticent person. Although a businessman with only one year at New Garden School (later Guilford College), Ben Duke from the early



1890s onward grew to know higher education, as represented by Trinity College, and to become a close friend as well as working ally of Kilgo, Bassett, Few, and others. A year after Few's inauguration, itself an elaborate occasion that had led Ben Duke to say he felt "prouder of Trinity than ever before," he informed a friend that Few was "making a rousing good college president." The college, Duke boasted, had so many students that it was "almost impossible to take care of them."³⁰ As he had done for two decades, Ben Duke, and through him his younger brother, stood staunchly behind the college as it grew.

Precisely when James B. Duke first began to think of large-scale philanthropy that involved Trinity College is not known. William R. Perkins, a native Virginian who became J. B. Duke's chief legal counselor in 1914, later declared that almost from that time he had in his desk an early, rough draft of what became, a decade later, the indenture establishing the Duke Endowment.³¹ Clearly the entrepreneurial genius of a hard-working, business-minded family, J. B. Duke had a vast talent for thinking and planning on a large scale. Moreover, he had the persistence and drive to see his projects through. After the Supreme Court of the United States ordered the dissolution of the American Tobacco Company in 1911 on the grounds that it violated the nation's antitrust law, J. B. Duke removed himself completely from the domestic tobacco industry. He remained, however, as president of the globe-circling British-American Tobacco Company, with its headquarters in London, and was deeply involved with building a vast, pioneering hydroelectric power company in the two Carolinas that would ultimately become the Duke Power Company.³²

Many members of the Trinity faculty had never even met J. B. Duke. Kilgo, Few, Robert L. Flowers, and a handful of others had but were certainly not as close to him as they were to Ben Duke. At any rate, beginning in 1914 Few began to have occasional direct contact with J. B. Duke, never as much as Few would have preferred but nonetheless important. After conferring in New York with the Duke brothers in March, 1914, Few wrote what may have been his first letter directed solely to J. B. Duke. "We want you to understand what we are doing and to approve of it," Few explained. "But I do want you to feel that we will live within our means; that we will incur no added financial responsibilities without the approval beforehand of your Brother and yourself, and that any further contributions are to be free will offerings made because you feel like making them and not because they are expected of you." Then, in closing, Few struck a thoroughly characteristic note and employed an idealistic concept to which he returned many times: "And speaking for myself I am particularly anxious that you shall get enduring personal satisfaction and happiness out of what you have done for Trinity College, because you are able to feel that through it you have done some permanent good upon the earth."³³

Never one to speak about ultimate motives or aspirations, J. B. Duke may or may not have been attracted by Few's idea of doing "permanent good upon the earth." The fact remained, however, that the family had become thoroughly entangled with the life and welfare of Trinity College, and beginning in the fall of 1914, Ben Duke, long the chief agent for family philanthropy, became ill. Suffering from debilitating "nervousness" and a "dizziness in the head," he gradually slipped into semi-invalidism. While he would have interludes of improved health and partially restored vitality, Ben Duke at age fifty-nine entered into a prolonged physical decline that lasted for the remaining fifteen years of his life.

Perhaps it was partly because J. B. Duke had always been remarkably close to his older and now unwell brother that he began around 1915 to put more of his own time and a steadily increasing amount of his wealth into the family's philanthropic work. A great lover of gardens and horticulture, as his father and brother were also, J. B. Duke assigned his own landscape architects to work on Trinity's new campus and gave \$10,000 to be used on the grounds. Starting in 1915 he began making an annual contribution of \$10,000 to supplement the funds of the two Methodist conferences in North Carolina for their superannuated preachers and the widows and children of deceased preachers. J. B. Duke requested Trinity College, that is, Few, to disburse the fund, and later used the same procedure with the \$25,000 he gave each year for the building and support of rural Methodist churches.³⁴

With the growing involvement of J. B. Duke in both Trinity College and other Methodist affairs, Few later said that around 1916 he, like Crowell and Kilgo before him, began "definitely" to think about plans for a university.³⁵ Few also said, repeatedly and eloquently, that the greater service that Trinity could render to humanity—in North Carolina, the South, and the nation—if it were expanded and organized as a major university was the essential reason for wanting the change. While that was no doubt true in Few's own thinking as well as in the minds of many others who supported him in the endeavor, there was more to the matter than such high-minded idealism.

Few, born in 1867, belonged to a generation of Southerners who knew poverty and defeat at first hand. After being reared in a deeply religious family and receiving a morally and academically sound education in South Carolina, he ventured into another and much more sophisticated world at Harvard in the 1890s. Although he never harped on the matter, Few undoubtedly became even more sensitized about the South's backwardness through his four years in the highly prosperous, rapidly developing, cosmopolitan university world at Cambridge. A quintessential Southerner in his love of his native region and his abiding sense of history, Few, like Woodrow Wilson, was very much "reconstructed" insofar as acceptance,



even approval, of the outcome of the Civil War was concerned. But he remained deeply mortified by the conditions that continued to prevail in the postwar South, economically, politically, racially, and educationally. "Why is it," he asked in 1905, "that a civilization which has produced such men as Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Marshall, and Lee is now without commanding leaders of national reputation, . . . without ancient and famous institutions of learning, . . . without artists and writers, without so many of the good things of life that make civilization strong and great and beautiful?" Few confessed that he did not have a satisfactory, single answer to the questions he posed, but he believed that there were "two fundamental causes that had made all kinds of high intellectual attainment impossible" even in the antebellum South: "a belated survival at the South of the spirit of English feudalism" and the institution of slavery. The first, he argued, was essentially aristocratic, and while a sense of personal honor at its best was a fine thing, it could and did all too "easily degenerate into a regard for reputation and little concern for character." Just as English chivalry had centered on knights and ladies, the Old South's civilization had been "almost exclusively for the benefit of the well-to-do classes, and there was no chance to build up a great middle class, the mainstay of all modern civilizations." Too well satisfied with things as they were, the privileged groups of the South before the war fixed their gaze upon the past, and "when thought must run in certain, fixed conventional grooves," there could be no competition in the marketplace of ideas.

Slavery, Few suggested, strongly reinforced those tendencies in southern life, while it also was against the civilization of the nineteenth century. At war with the thinking of the rest of the Western world, southerners, he asserted, felt bound to defend themselves and concentrated their thought and energies on that defense rather than on a search for the truth which liberates. With cries of "white supremacy" and "Negro inferiority" even more raucous around 1900 than before the war, Few argued that southerners had to escape from the "miasmatic intellectual regions where we have lived for three quarters of a century," give truth and freedom their old ascendant place in life, and "hold aloft in our democratic Southern society high, national, universal standards of excellence in all human concerns."³⁶

In short, Few passionately wanted his beloved South to have a major university, a research university, both because the region did not yet have one and because he believed such an institution could play a significant role in the work of intellectual and spiritual liberation that he deemed necessary. Few's long, patient, and ultimately successful wooing of James B. Duke involved a great deal more than mere ambitions for Trinity College.

Few claimed to have begun contemplating the idea of a university just before the United States entered World War I, but involvement in that war naturally affected Trinity as it did so much else in the nation.

The college faced a series of new problems, including the loss of male students and some faculty to military service, the increased enrollment of female students without adequate facilities for them, and particularly the war-induced inflation that eroded the college's real income from its endowment and pitifully shrank the buying power of faculty salaries.

Although J. B. Duke agreed in 1918 to Ben Duke's suggestion that he become a trustee of Trinity, he did not attend meetings of the board, for he strongly disliked all the talk involved in what he called "town meetings." If Few could not manage to confer in person with J. B. Duke, he could at least write to him, and in a particularly forceful letter late in 1918 Few advised the elusive industrialist that ever-improving conditions in the Methodist church in North Carolina were largely attributable to Trinity College. It not only furnished a large part of the Methodist preachers in the state but was "the inspiration of North Carolina Methodism." The strength of the church, therefore, was inevitably tied to Trinity's ability "to keep pace with the growing needs of a growing section of the country in a time of rapid change." Few ended his letter with a frank appeal: "I shall be grateful if you will allow me, as opportunity affords, to talk freely to you upon these questions and then leave action to your judgment and to your own good time. I am giving my life to these things that seem to me to be most worth while. That is all I can do, except to bring the needs and possibilities of these great causes to the attention of a man like you."³⁷

The letter must have worked, for early in 1919 J. B. Duke met with Few and apparently for the first time began to get more specific about his philanthropic plans, which at that stage apparently involved giving a significant portion of his equity in the electric power industry for the support of Trinity College and of certain Methodist causes in the Carolinas. "As I have thought of your plan," Few wrote J. B. Duke soon after their talk, "it grows in my mind." Few believed that it was a sounder idea than that around which any other large benevolence in the county had been built. In another letter shortly afterwards, Few advised J. B. Duke that if he and his lawyer found that the property could not be administered under the charter of Trinity College, then Duke could "create a separate corporation, perhaps to be called the James B. Duke Foundation or Fund, as you might prefer." The self-perpetuating trustees of the fund could be the seven members of the executive committee of Trinity's board of trustees. "To carry out your ideas as I understand them," Few continued, "I think the charter of the Foundation ought to provide that the income is to go to Trinity College, Durham, N.C., and to the building of rural Methodist churches and the supplementing of rural Methodist preachers in the states of North Carolina and South Carolina."³⁸

Few's hopes seem to have soared, but he was not yet aware that there

was to be an inevitable delay. James B. Duke simply was not ready to act. For one thing, he believed that the stock of the power companies was not paying what he considered to be adequate dividends and could not do so until the rates could be adjusted upwards. Too, Duke, already heavily involved in strengthening and expanding his utility holdings in the Carolinas, was about to become the prime mover in the construction of what would be the world's largest hydrostation up to that time, in a remote region of the Canadian province of Quebec.

While J. B. Duke's delay was perfectly understandable from his point of view, President Few could not allow the vision of future good fortune to distract him from grim realities close at hand, such as woefully inadequate faculty salaries and the college's rusting heating plant, which had somehow to be replaced. Ben Duke, as always, remained Few's strongest ally despite his illness. Another important friend of Trinity, who was also one of Few's closest personal friends, was Clinton W. Toms. A former superintendent of the Durham schools, as were several other able young men whom the Dukes recruited for top positions in the tobacco industry, Toms long served as a trustee of Trinity and as a member of the executive committee. Quiet and always offstage, he ultimately became president of the Liggett & Myers tobacco company and a vital link between Trinity and Few on the one hand and the Duke brothers on the other. Individuals like Toms, who were as sympathetic with and informed about higher education as they were about big business, were rare, and for many years Few relied on Toms in a variety of routine as well as critical matters. In an uncharacteristic moment of gloom in 1919, when worries about salaries, the heating plant, and other such immediate problems kept mounting, Few confessed wearily to Toms: "If we can within the next two or three years make adequate provision for six hundred men and for a relatively small number of women who will come here I shall be content to leave further developments to a windfall or to future generations."³⁹

The normally indefatigable Few soon recovered from his passing moment of fatigue and shriveled hope. Concerning the most urgent problem, that of inflation-hit faculty salaries, Ben Duke offered \$12,000 and informed Few that he had talked over the situation at Trinity with his brother and persuaded him to give another \$12,000. "I am very sorry he did not make it at least double this amount," Ben Duke added.⁴⁰

Immensely relieved by the assistance, Few also took heart from a campaign among the townspeople of Durham to raise money for a women's dormitory at Trinity. It would be a memorial to the recently deceased James H. Southgate, longtime chairman of Trinity's board of trustees and a widely respected citizen. Clinton Toms in New York sent encouraging word in September, 1919, that as best he could learn progress was "being

made on the formation of the Trust to be administered by the College and that within a year it would yield a very substantial income to the College.”⁴¹

Toms’s information turned out to be incorrect, for J. B. Duke was still not ready to act. He did, however, yield to the nudgings of Ben Duke, Toms, and other champions of Trinity and promise to give \$100,000—\$20,000 a year over a five-year period. Few promptly thanked him for the “generous gift” that would “help relieve the strain put upon us by the rapid growth of the College at the very time the value of money has fallen to the lowest level this generation has known.”⁴²

From one perspective, the Duke brothers might well have protested the demands that Trinity College made on them, for in the final analysis each additional student admitted to the burgeoning college cost them money. This was because Trinity, long proud of its accessibility to “poor boys”—and, to a more limited degree, “poor girls”—clung to a tuition rate of \$50 per year. Even that was remitted for all pre-ministerial students, sons and daughters of preachers, and often for others who pled hardship or emergency. From 1910 to 1916, for example, enrollment increased by 60 percent, but income from tuition increased only 30 percent. By 1924 Trinity had 980 undergraduates (245 of whom were women), and since that was almost double the number in 1916 (551), one explanation for the soaring costs became obvious.⁴³

Since neither of the Duke brothers was in any sense blind or dumb, they well knew that postwar inflation was not the only cause of Trinity’s problem. Yet they, like Few and so many others connected with Trinity, accepted the burden of service that was the mission of the college and acknowledged the reality of the poverty and hard times that again struck home in North Carolina after 1921. Few, like Kilgo before him, had always insisted, however, that Trinity was more interested in quality than in numbers or size. From about 1920 on Few began to ponder the matter of selective admissions for the college.

As the student body grew, so did the faculty, which numbered 103 by 1924. More important than the size, however, was the quality of at least a significant portion of the group. John Spencer Bassett had early on counseled his protégé and successor, W. K. Boyd, that he should make his “stand for scholarship; it is what Trinity needs most and what the South needs most.” Bassett went even further by adding that they needed scholarship “more than influence or numbers or even religion.”⁴⁴ Precisely to help faculty members along that line, Few appointed a faculty committee on research in 1919 and made available a small fund to award research grants to faculty members and to help pay travel expenses to professional meetings. The first volume bearing the imprint “Trinity College Press” appeared in 1922, and the beginning of the sabbatical-year policy—a year’s

leave every seventh year at half-pay or a half-year at full pay—meant that more faculty members would have the time to write books for Trinity’s or some other press.

Trinity established a committee on graduate instruction as early as 1916, and gradually the requirements for the degree of master of arts were clarified and formalized. Boyd and his Johns Hopkins-trained colleague who had come to Trinity in 1909, William T. Laprade, had long urged both a required thesis and greater concentration in a major field. Those features, as well as residence and foreign-language requirements, were spelled out by 1923, and in the following year the college had forty-one graduate students. A significant number of them were in the Department of Education, which Holland Holton, an alumnus and former superintendent of Durham county schools, led with marked vigor and flair.

With Trinity clearly maturing as a liberal arts college, symbolized by its finally winning a much-coveted chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in 1920, soon after the war Few turned again to the matter of Trinity’s attempting to do something about the increasingly obvious need in North Carolina for a full-fledged, four-year medical school. As early as 1916 Few established contact with Dr. Abraham Flexner, the author of a famous report for the Carnegie Foundation in 1910 that helped to revolutionize medical education in the United States. Among other things that Few learned from Flexner was that medical education, if done properly and well, was enormously expensive.

Knowing that the General Education Board was interested in encouraging soundly conceived and adequately financed medical schools in the South, Few approached George W. Watts of Durham, longtime business partner of the Dukes first in tobacco and then in other ventures, about a plan to link a medical school with Watts Hospital, which Watts had given to the city in 1895. The school and hospital could also seek the cooperation of the two-year medical school at the University of North Carolina in nearby Chapel Hill. The death of Watts in March, 1921, interrupted but did not halt the plan, for Watts’s widow and his son-in-law, John Sprunt Hill, were also interested in it.

Before Few could pursue the matter further, the situation became complicated by a discussion about a four-year medical school that began in Chapel Hill and in the state legislature. Controversy soon arose as to whether the school should be located in Chapel Hill, then still a small town, or in the much larger city of Charlotte. Few, assured privately of J. B. Duke’s support, thanks in part to Clinton Toms, then made a somewhat audacious effort for an unusual compromise.⁴⁵

The president of the University of North Carolina at the time was Harry W. Chase, a major figure in the transformation of the venerable school into a modern research university. Having gained the support of

Chase for his plan, as well as that of Governor Cameron Morrison, Few proposed late in 1922 that Trinity College and the University of North Carolina cooperate to build a medical school in Durham that would be operated in conjunction with Watts Hospital. The Baptists' Wake Forest College and the Presbyterians' Davidson College would also be invited to cooperate in the venture, which would be a highly unconventional but obviously economical merging of effort by state-supported and voluntarily supported institutions. Given North Carolina's great need of a full-fledged medical school, the high cost involved, and the prevailing economic realities, there was obviously much to be said for the plan.

Opposition to Few's scheme, however, arose quickly in various quarters. Josephus Daniels and the *Raleigh News & Observer*, favoring a school controlled solely by the University of North Carolina, opposed the plan, and some Baptists were reported to be disturbed by any proposed mingling of church and state. Once again, too, disputes arose about which city would be the best site for such a school. When even Chase, who had to worry about other needed appropriations from an economy-minded legislature, decided that the matter should be postponed and his trustees rejected the scheme, Few was disappointed but not particularly unhappy. He had privately explained part of his motivation for the plan by saying, "We are planning for large expansion here, but I am anxious to get rid of Trinity College [alone] tackling a medical school."⁴⁶ A little later, when the plan had clearly collapsed, Few advised the president of the state medical society that he could "safely assume that Trinity will build a medical school without too much delay." Looking back much later, Few observed that the abortive plan had served two purposes: "It kept the road open for a first-rate School of Medicine later on, and it put Mr. James B. Duke on his mettle."⁴⁷

If Few had come to recognize the expensiveness of medical education, J. B. Duke was also beginning to appreciate that fact. Just how much else he learned from the episode may only be conjectured, but one of Few's strongest supporters in the effort for a cooperative medical school was Dr. Watson S. Rankin, then the secretary of the state board of health. Rankin warned, however, that a full-fledged medical school, as much as it was needed, would not alone alleviate the shortage of doctors in North Carolina, which remained one of the most predominantly rural states in the nation. Rankin believed, on the basis of his study of the experience in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan and elsewhere, that the principal remedy for the shortage of medical care in much of the state would be the establishment of local hospitals jointly financed by the state and counties. Both B. N. Duke and J. B. Duke had a long-standing interest in Watts Hospital as well as in Lincoln Hospital, which they had given to Durham's African Americans in 1901. But Few's early efforts in seeking a medical

school and Dr. Rankin's emphasis on local hospitals clearly exerted a great influence on J. B. Duke's thinking about his projected philanthropy.

In the midst of his unsuccessful efforts to secure a medical school, Few made his most elaborate and ultimately influential move to prod J. B. Duke into action. Hospitalized throughout much of the summer of 1920, probably as much from sheer fatigue as anything else, Few continued to be intermittently unwell through the following winter. During his convalescence from pneumonia in the spring of 1921 he had time for reflection, and a number of ideas, many of them foreshadowed by earlier efforts or proposals, finally fell into place in his mind. He produced the initial blueprint for a "Duke University" that could be organized around Trinity College. The plan was not a hastily conceived scheme to lure a large gift. Rather, it was the carefully considered synthesis of a number of Few's ideas that had long been evolving and of developments in Trinity College that had long been underway.

As his starting point, Few held passionately to the notion, as he expressed it in 1919 and repeated many times, that the best American universities "have at their heart a great college of arts and sciences."⁴⁸ A simple fact, perhaps, but it was one that some educators as well as much of the public either minimized or failed to understand. Few not only saw the undergraduate college as the heart of any true university, but he placed effective teaching, especially of freshmen, near the top of his list of educational priorities. Much of the strength that Trinity College had obviously achieved by the early 1920s derived from the fact that a significant proportion of the faculty shared Few's faith in the college and in teaching. Yet beginning with Bassett and others like him, many of the faculty also liked to do research and, despite the inevitable tensions, wanted an opportunity to engage meaningfully in both teaching and investigation.

While the law school that was established in 1904 had been a respectable one in that era, it appeared increasingly inadequate in light of developments in legal education after World War I. The hope for a coordinate college for women had resurfaced at various times since Washington Duke's gift in 1896, but Trinity's commitment to the education of women was simply not yet matched by adequate facilities for them. In addition to the possible medical school, Trinity's interest in theological education was manifested in the early 1920s by a significant expansion in that area, and Few pushed for a school of religion. A department of engineering had long existed in the college, but it too needed strengthening and development. If Trinity were to be enlarged, why not keep it as the "heart" and use another name for a university that might be built around it?

The idea for naming the enlarged institution "Duke University" came from Few. The principal reason that he gave for favoring it was that there was already a Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, and several other

Trinity Colleges in the United States. In Great Britain and elsewhere in the English-speaking world numerous other institutions were named Trinity. Not wishing to share a name with so many, Few turned to the idea that various people had begun to suggest as early as the 1890s. There is no evidence, however, that any member of the Duke family had ever shown any interest in changing the institution's name.

Thus it was that Few, pulling together all his ideas in the spring of 1921, submitted the following statement, which he apparently hoped J. B. Duke would sign.

I wish to see Trinity College, the law school & other schools expanded into a fully developed university organization. It has been suggested to me that this expanded institution be named Duke University as a memorial to my father whose gifts made possible the building of Trinity College in Durham, and I approve this suggestion. I desire this university to include Trinity College, a coordinate College for Women, a Law School, a School of Business Administration, a School of Engineering (emphasizing chemical & electrical engineering), a Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, and, when adequate funds are available, a Medical School. I desire this enlarged institution to be operated under the present charter with only such changes, if any changes at all, as the enlargement may require. To this university that is to be thus organized I will give _____ millions of dollars. I agree to pay in within _____ years _____ millions in cash or good securities.⁴⁹

Few, as soon as he was able to get out, took the plan to Ben Duke, who was in residence at his home in Durham at the time. He promptly approved the whole idea, but when Few soon thereafter went to New York, J. B. Duke was still not prepared to commit himself so definitely and refrained both from filling in the all-important blanks in Few's memorandum and from signing the document. J. B. Duke apparently gave some sort of general approval to the scheme, however, for when Trinity's trustees met in June, 1921, Few alluded briefly to a possible reorganization looking toward the status of a university. To one or two of the closest friends of the college he mentioned "great plans which I think in due course will be completely realized" and hinted about "our reorganization for the future." Conferences between Few and J. B. Duke followed, one later in 1921, but the record reveals nothing about them except that they occurred.⁵⁰

Movement toward the creation of J. B. Duke's foundation accelerated in 1923. Duke had once told a friend that the electric power industry would never be as profitable for the owners as the tobacco industry had been.⁵¹ Yet Duke and his allies had succeeded finally in getting the rates adjusted

upward, and with what Duke regarded as a more adequate return on the investment, he was ready to proceed with his philanthropic plans.

Early in 1923 Duke arranged for Few to meet George Garland Allen, who in the final years of Duke's life became his close associate in business and who was destined to play a highly important role in the early history of Duke University. A native of Warrenton, North Carolina, Allen had attended business school after completing high school and had become a bookkeeper for the American Tobacco Company in 1895. Working his way up through that and J. B. Duke's other organizations, he finally became Duke's chief lieutenant in the early 1920s. Although Allen had no previous connection with Trinity College, his relationship with J. B. Duke and the large plans concerning the institution led to Allen's election to the board of trustees late in 1923.

Amidst all the various confidential preparations, J. B. Duke found, as he told one friend, that it had been easier to accumulate his wealth than it was to give away a large portion of it wisely.⁵² Nevertheless, he proceeded as carefully and systematically in his approach to philanthropy as he always had in his business affairs. One who took much pleasure in the physical construction involved with certain large enterprises, J. B. Duke probably looked forward to the extensive building that would go on at Trinity as much as anything else. He picked his architectural firm in 1923, and Horace Trumbauer of Philadelphia, whose staff had designed Duke's mansion on New York's Fifth Avenue as well as some elaborate greenhouses at Duke's estate near Somerville, New Jersey, began to correspond with Few about the overall plan of the campus.

In the spring of 1924, Few and Frank C. Brown, the chairman of the English department, who was a good friend of Ben Duke and a key aide to Few in matters pertaining to the grounds and buildings, went on an extensive tour of a large number of colleges and universities in the North. After conferring first with Trumbauer, Few and Brown carefully studied the stone buildings at Bryn Mawr College that were constructed in what was usually referred to as the collegiate Gothic or Tudor Gothic style of architecture.

At Princeton University, where handsome dormitories in the Tudor Gothic style had been built before World War I, Few and Brown collected pictures, some blueprints, and much information about the buildings as well as about such prosaic matters as arrangements for the kitchens and mail delivery. J. B. Duke's country estate was not far from Princeton, and he had seen and liked the newer stone buildings there. His half-brother, Brodie Duke, had much admired the buildings at Oxford University on a visit to Britain in 1891. The Duke brothers probably could not have explained all of their reasons for being attracted to this architectural style,

but they seemed to share, even if half unconsciously, the thinking of Woodrow Wilson, who offered this explanation early in the century while he was still president of Princeton: "By the very simple device of constructing our new buildings in the Tudor Gothic style we seem to have added to Princeton the age of Oxford and of Cambridge; we have added a thousand years to the history of Princeton by merely putting those lines in our architecture which point every man's imagination to historic traditions of learning in the English-speaking race."⁵³

Few and Frank Brown certainly shared Woodrow Wilson's notion about the Tudor Gothic style, and they studied it further at Yale, Cornell, the City College of New York, Chicago, and on other campuses. At Harvard they took special notice of the Widener Memorial Library, which Trumbauer's firm had designed, and at Johns Hopkins and particularly at the University of Virginia, as well as at some other schools in Virginia, they were impressed by the felicitous use of red brick and white columns in buildings of neoclassical or Georgian design.⁵⁴

By September, 1924, still three months or so before the public knew anything about the projected university, J. B. Duke, after conferences with Few, Brown, and Trumbauer, had decided that the new buildings to be erected on the Trinity campus would be constructed of stone in the Tudor Gothic style. Few reported happily to Ben Duke that it was "distinctly my first choice." Clearly elated by the prospect of what lay ahead, Few declared, "It is but the sober truth to say that when these buildings as now planned are put on the grounds we will have here the most harmonious, imposing, and altogether beautiful educational plant in America."⁵⁵

George G. Allen predicted to Few in September, 1924, that when once J. B. Duke had made up his mind definitely to go ahead, he would "see that a most creditable job is done."⁵⁶ Duke had indeed concluded to move ahead on his large project, and in October, 1924, Robert L. Flowers, now vice president of Trinity and Few's close associate in administration, began sending to Few from New York some most interesting, handwritten letters marked "personal & confidential." Flowers got much of his information from Alex. H. Sands, Jr., the executive secretary of the Duke brothers, and from Allen, as well as from William R. Perkins. A native Virginian, Perkins graduated in law from Washington and Lee University and worked for the American Tobacco Company before becoming chief legal counselor to B. N. and J. B. Duke around 1914. The principal author of the indenture creating the Duke Endowment, Perkins, like Allen, would play a key role in Duke University's early history.

Flowers found that explaining various aspects of Trinity College and of higher education in general to New York businessmen was not always easy. Still, he remained optimistic. "I think everything is going all right," he assured Few. "From what they all tell me, Mr. J. B. is right behind the

thing now. Mr. B. N. is greatly interested." Later that same day, Flowers dispatched more substantial and important news: "Mr. J. B. is undecided how to have the trust fund administered." During the five or more years of preliminary discussion and planning, the idea apparently had been to have the executive committee of Trinity's board of trustees administer the foundation. Now, however, Flowers reported a significant development: "They have been to confer with the Rockefeller Foundation and at present they are very much inclined to have fifteen trustees of the fund." Flowers confessed that he thought it might be unfortunate for Trinity to have the trustees of the foundation too widely separated from those of the college. Yet he believed that the people on the foundation's board would be the crucial element, and he found both Allen and Perkins eager to "get in touch with the College."⁵⁷

Ben Duke, who probably shared Andrew Carnegie's belief that rich philanthropists should carry out their plans during their lifetimes rather than trust to posthumous arrangements, had long urged J. B. Duke to act. Now, Flowers found Ben Duke in "better shape than for a long time" and in "fine spirits." Flowers credited Allen with "spurring up Mr. J. B. not to wait longer to establish his trust," and at long last "Mr. J. B. is pushing things just as fast as he can."⁵⁸

Flowers proved to be quite correct about J. B. Duke's "pushing things" rapidly, for early in December, 1924, Duke arrived in Charlotte with his wife, his twelve-year-old daughter Doris, Allen, Perkins, and several other associates. They were soon joined at Duke's home in Charlotte by the top officers of the power company, and for part of the time by Few, Flowers, and one or two others. Duke announced that, after working on his philanthropic project for a number of years, he now wanted the group to remain assembled until the job of polishing and completing the indenture that would establish the perpetual trust was finished. Unfortunately for history's sake, no record of the meeting was kept, but the group worked steadily for about four days and discussed, section by section, the draft of the indenture that W. R. Perkins had prepared. Many years later, one participant recalled no substantial alterations or additions that the group made. "Of course, Mr. Duke . . . was a positive man," this participant added, "and when he made a positive assertion very few people controverted it."⁵⁹ J. B. Duke might have been better served by candid, critical suggestions from the group, for the indenture was not without flaws, and at least one of them, to be discussed later, would cause much unnecessary embarrassment to Duke himself.

Even before Duke could formally sign the indenture at his legal residence in New Jersey on December 11, 1924, news of the large philanthropy leaked out in the newspapers. While the nation at large paid ample heed to the story, the news had its largest impact in the Carolinas, where all of the

beneficiaries were located. Securities worth approximately \$40,000,000—mostly, but not exclusively, in the electric power company—were turned over to the trustees of the Duke Endowment, and the annual income from the principal was to be distributed among educational institutions, hospitals, orphanages, and the Methodist church in a manner specified in the indenture.⁶⁰

While three other educational institutions were named as beneficiaries—Davidson College (Presbyterian, near Charlotte), Furman University (Baptist, in Greenville, South Carolina), and Johnson C. Smith University (an institution for African Americans in Charlotte)—the lion's share, 32 percent of the annual income, was designated to go to “an institution of learning to be known as Duke University.” To establish it the trustees were authorized to spend \$6,000,000 from the corpus of the trust. “However, should the name of Trinity College . . . be changed to Duke University” within a three-month period, then the \$6,000,000 and the annual income should go to that institution.

Starting back in the 1890s, Ben Duke had acted for the family in disbursing modest sums for a variety of charitable purposes, with Trinity College heading the list. In 1924, J. B. Duke apportioned the income from a \$40,000,000 perpetual trust that was destined to grow much larger, for it would be more than doubled by the terms of J. B. Duke's will. Moreover, he made Duke University the prime beneficiary. The striking point, however, is not really the difference in the sums of money in the 1890s and 1920s but the continuity in the purpose of the giving. The creation of the Duke Endowment, with its large commitment to Duke University, was certainly not inevitable, for many rich individuals have found countless other ways to dispose of their wealth. Yet the Duke Endowment was the culmination of a deeply rooted tradition and pattern of giving that Washington Duke had initiated, that Ben Duke had supervised for many years, and that J. B. Duke, the youngest and by far the richest of the clan, freely chose to institutionalize for posterity on a princely scale.

As Christmas approached in 1924, no North Carolinian could have been happier than William P. Few. “Then after all, my dream and your dream is to be realized in full,” he exulted to Ben Duke. “Isn't it glorious?”⁶¹ In truth, it was to be glorious in many ways, but unforeseen trouble also lay ahead for Few and Duke University.

*Building on Two Campuses:
“The Most . . . Beautiful
Educational Plant in America”*



ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT FEW privately expressed his fear that some of the Trinity College alumni might object to the organization of a new university around the old college, he quickly secured overwhelming support from the great majority of the institution's alumni and friends. "Personally, when it comes to that point where Trinity can take the lead in educational circles of the entire South," one alumnus wrote, "I am inclined to shout with Shakespeare: 'WHAT'S IN A NAME?'" Another prominent alumnus declared: "As you are aware, changing the name to Duke University has been my wish for some years, and it is with genuine satisfaction that I now see a realization of this about to take place."¹

While alumni and the public focused on the matter of the new name, Few concentrated on more important matters and prepared for the crucial meeting of Trinity's trustees on December 29, 1924. Apparently untroubled as yet about any problems that might arise from the indenture creating the Duke Endowment, Few first submitted his carefully drawn statement of Trinity's response to J. B. Duke's offer to Joseph G. Brown, the chairman of the trustees. Brown commended Few's draft and thought it made "perfectly clear that the college is not in the hands of that [Endowment] board and yet we know that a great many do not get the idea that the Trustees of the fund are simply to handle the business at that end of the line."² Voting unanimously to accept J. B. Duke's offer and issuing the statement drafted by Few, the trustees declared, among other things: "We have found that the university is to be developed according to plans that are perfectly in line with our hopes for the expansion of this historic col-

lege. . . .” Furthermore, they added: “The control of Duke University and all its relations to its constituency will remain identical with the control and relations to constituency that Trinity College has had.”³

Few and the trustees also responded to ideas that J. B. Duke had advanced in his indenture. He had included Duke University as a principal beneficiary, he explained, because he believed that “education, when conducted along sane and practical, as opposed to dogmatic and theoretical lines, is next to religion, the greatest civilizing influence.” J. B. Duke requested that the institution “secure for its officers, trustees and faculty men of such outstanding character, ability and vision as will insure its attaining and maintaining a place of real leadership in the educational world. . . .” For its students he urged that “great care and discrimination be exercised” to admit “only those whose previous record shows a character, determination and application evincing a wholesome and real ambition for life.” Finally, he advised that the courses at Duke University should be arranged “first, with special reference to the training of preachers, teachers, lawyers and physicians, because these are most in the public eye, and by precept and example can do most to uplift mankind, and, second, to instruction in chemistry, economics and history, especially the lives of the great of [the] earth, because I believe that such subjects will most help to develop our resources, increase our wisdom and promote human happiness.”

The trustees in their statement responded that Duke University would “be concerned about excellence rather than size” and would “aim at quality rather than numbers—quality of those who teach and quality of those who learn.” Moreover, the university would be developed “with a view to serving conditions as they actually exist” and would be “for the use of all the people of the State and Section without regard to creed, class or party, and for those elsewhere who may seek to avail themselves of the opportunities it has to offer.”⁴

Enthusiastically supported by the students then enrolled at Trinity-Duke, Few also received an encouraging word from an important neighbor. President Harry W. Chase of the University of North Carolina, a generous and broad-visioned man like Few, declared prophetically: “Two universities, located as ours are, growing up side by side, the one in response to private benefaction and the other under State control, should supplement each other, and each, I believe, will be a stimulus to the other’s development.” Chase suggested that J. B. Duke’s gift to Duke University would “advance at the same time the whole level of thinking about higher education in the State and in the South.”⁵

While happy harmony seemed to reign among J. B. Duke, Few, the trustees, and most of the alumni, there were a few scattered dissents. A small number of alumni objected to the new name for the institution.

One opposed not so much the name as the location in Durham and J. B. Duke's failure to consider Asheville, in the mountainous region of North Carolina, as the site for the university. "The Divinity which engineered the building of the Pyramids in the desert sands of Egypt probably understands why Duke University is going ahead in Durham County," the irate alumnus declared, "but His great plan does not comprehend that people outside of Durham should understand it." Few, ever patient, explained that he had once discussed with J. B. Duke the possibility of "going to Asheville" but found him opposed to the idea. "When you go out to get \$40,000,000 from a man," Few noted, "you will find that he has some ideas of his own." When the stubborn champion of Asheville retorted by arguing that "nothing short of a *miracle* can ever establish a truly great university in a place like Durham," Few closed the correspondence magisterially: "We have never thought of ourselves as miracle workers but we have not a shadow of doubt that we can work the miracle that may seem to be necessary to build a great university here."⁶

More serious perhaps than the complaints of a small handful of unhappy alumni was the widespread and long-lasting misunderstanding about the role of J. B. Duke in the naming of Duke University. This arose from a clumsily worded section of the indenture that could easily have been avoided. The document had provided that \$6,000,000 should be used to establish "an institution of learning to be known as Duke University," but "should the name of Trinity College . . . be changed to Duke University" then it would receive the \$6,000,000.

Journalists and others across the entire nation promptly seized on this section of the indenture and interpreted it, understandably enough, as a blatant case of "Buck Duke's buying himself a university" or "bribing" a college in order to memorialize himself and the family name. That seemingly obvious interpretation was simply not correct. In the first place, since the idea of building a university around Trinity and naming it Duke had originated with Few, the popular interpretation was hardly fair to J. B. Duke. Secondly, the widespread emphasis on the "name change" helped obscure the important facts that a new university was to be organized around an old college, and that, furthermore, Trinity College would actually continue to exist as the undergraduate college of arts and sciences. Yet J. B. Duke and W. R. Perkins were themselves primarily responsible for the unnecessarily awkward language that inspired the whole furore. Few issued explanatory statements to the public and privately confessed that he was "only sorry that the legal phrasing in the Indenture of Trust seemed to put Mr. Duke in a bad light."⁷

Unfortunately, history is replete with examples that illustrate how truth often never catches up with error, particularly when the falsehood may be turned to witty, amusing ends. H. L. Mencken's *American Mercury* spe-

cialized in sophomoric attacks on J. B. Duke and his alleged presumption in thinking he could buy himself a university to be built from scratch.⁸ Numerous other journalists for many years ignored Few's repeated efforts to set the record straight. An additional twist was soon added with the allegation that J. B. Duke had first tried to "buy" Princeton (because of its proximity to his estate in Somerville, New Jersey?) but, having failed there, turned to a small college in the South that was unknown to many in the Northeast. Oddly enough, students and even some faculty members at Duke University itself have for decades passed along the tale about J. B. Duke and Princeton. A 1973 version in the student newspaper at Duke put it this way: "Many years ago, before the expansion of Trinity College, James Duke tried to 'buy' Princeton so that he would have a little school to which to give his name." A variation appeared in another publication: J. B. Duke is "reputed to have first urged his money (and his name) on Yale. Rebuffed by Yale, he decided to rival it in prestige and physical beauty. Thus was Duke University grandly formed from Duke's millions."⁹

The examples could be multiplied endlessly, but most of the utterly groundless tales arose out of ignorance not only about President Few's role in the naming of the university but more especially about Trinity College and the Duke family's long and close relationship with it. At any rate, if J. B. Duke ever became aware of the brouhaha about the name change, one must doubt that he lost any sleep over the matter. He had long before developed a tough hide, possibly too tough for his own good, when it came to what journalists had to say about him and his activities. On the one hand, such indifference to public image stands in refreshing contrast to a tendency in the later twentieth century for image often to seem more important than substance or reality. On the other hand, indifference to the public's opinion could easily leave one's actions open to serious misinterpretation. As a long career in business had demonstrated, however, J. B. Duke believed that he had more important things to do than worry about misunderstandings on the part of the public.

Starting early in 1924, many months before the Duke Endowment was officially established, J. B. Duke and Horace Trumbauer, or some of the latter's associates, visited the Trinity Campus from time to time in connection with the contemplated expansion. In January, 1924, Few informed Duke that he had given much thought to the "re-laying out of our campus along the general lines you suggested to me in Charlotte the other day." Sending preliminary sketches, Few expressed his eagerness to cooperate in the planning.¹⁰

Essential for the projected expansion was the acquisition of additional land. Despite the fact that Trinity's campus was already spacious—approximately 108 acres—it was not big enough for all the new buildings that J. B. Duke planned to give to the university. Land to the north of

the campus, particularly between it and Watts Hospital, would be needed for the possible medical school. By the spring of 1924 Few's agents had been quietly securing options for land around the campus for more than a year. When informed in May, 1924, that the price of the various parcels of land under option totalled \$161,000, J. B. Duke sent word to Few that "it would be all right to go that far but not to pay any more than that, and to be sure that you get all of it."¹¹

Getting "all of it" at reasonable prices, however, proved to be increasingly difficult as rumors spread through Durham about Trinity's expansion, and land prices rose accordingly. By October, 1924, Few was still optimistic about acquiring the desired land but confessed that "it will require some time."¹² Impatient with the delays and angered by what he regarded as the price-gouging of landowners in the vicinity of Trinity's campus, J. B. Duke made threatening noises about giving up in Durham and trying to build a university in Charlotte. One kinswoman to whom he allegedly said something along those lines reported that she made this reply: "Uncle Buck, that would be awful. This is the place you all were born; your father started that college and he lived here and had great faith in Trinity College and all, and [going to Charlotte] would look awfully silly and foolish." When J. B. Duke responded that the university was going to be a large one and that Charlotte might be better able to handle it, the staunch partisan of Durham and Trinity recalled saying, "Well, you do it, but I don't think it is a true memorial to the Duke family or to your father if you move it to Charlotte."¹³

If J. B. Duke was merely trying to light a fire under Few and his associates with the talk of Charlotte—and he probably was attempting just that—he succeeded admirably. Few, walking with his sons through a lovely wooded area a mile or so to the west of the Trinity campus, hit upon the idea of expanding in that direction rather than north towards Watts Hospital. The ground rolled gently, there were pine and hardwood forests, and no one, including the landowners, had even dreamed of Trinity's going that far afield. "It was for me a thrilling moment," Few later wrote, "when I stood on a hill . . . and realized that here at last is the land we have been looking for."¹⁴

J. B. Duke agreed to an effort to acquire land in the new direction, and while some limited buying continued north of the old Trinity campus, Robert L. Flowers, operating with great discretion and quietness, put an agent to work. Securing the first option on November 7, 1924, Flowers had, by the spring of 1925, succeeded in acquiring at reasonable prices much more land than was immediately needed. In fact, purchases to round out the holdings continued for many years, and Duke University, in addition to two spacious campuses, eventually wound up owning approximately 8,000 acres, most of it in a forest preserve. The university

would never face the problem of land scarcity that has plagued so many educational institutions.¹⁵

“The acquisition of the land,” Flowers informed his old friend Ben Duke, “has been to me one of the most absorbing things I have ever been connected with.” All who saw the new land, Flowers declared, were “carried away with the prospect,” and there had never been “any greater mystery in Durham than the land transaction.”¹⁶ For several months while the new land was being acquired, however, no one knew for sure whether or just how it might be used. J. B. Duke had the final word on that, and not until late March, 1925, was his decision made.

The North Carolina Piedmont, with its abundant dogwood and redbud trees along with other native flowering shrubs scattered among pines and hardwood trees, can be a glorious place during the long, slow spring season. Such it was when J. B. Duke finally inspected the new land and, in consultation with Few and others, quickly made a series of decisions that had a far-reaching impact on Duke University. The Tudor Gothic buildings, J. B. Duke decided, would have a soaring chapel at their center and would be built on the new land on a crest overlooking a deep ravine. There J. B. Duke, who had a penchant for lakes and fountains, envisioned a lake, and a large fountain in the central quadrangle would send water cascading down a series of terraces into the lake. The long-desired coordinate college for women, instead of being crowded into the northwest corner of the old Trinity campus, would occupy the entire campus. Several of the existing buildings would be retained but some would have to go in order to make room for eleven new buildings to be constructed of red brick and white marble in the Georgian or neoclassical style.

One of the few documentary sources for the important decisions concerning Duke University’s physical plant that J. B. Duke, Few, and their associates made late in March, 1925, is a prosaic work diary or notebook kept by Horace Trumbauer’s construction superintendent, B. M. Hall. He merely noted: “Met Mr. Duke today and went over the ground for the new university.” On the following day Hall recorded that he had met with Trumbauer and another of the architects and “explained the new location of the layout on top of the hill moving the chapel forward so it will come on the high ground.” The superintendent added that the library was “to be moved over to a high spot to the right of where shown on plans, this being Mr. Duke’s idea of how the layout should be.” Further on, after mentioning various other matters, Hall wrote: “Went over to the new location and Mr. Duke approved of the general layout but ordered another fountain on the opposite hill [where the traffic circle would be built] to flow down into the lake. . . .”¹⁷

Amidst all this activity, the trustees of the Duke Endowment were meeting in Durham, in Ben Duke’s home. Many years later two things

about the meeting remained vivid in the memory of one of the trustees who was present. The first was that during one of the trustees' sessions twelve-year-old Doris Duke entered the room, climbed onto the knee of her father, J. B. Duke, and remained quietly there for the remainder of the meeting. The other memory was that J. B. Duke invited the trustees to inspect the new land with him. "We walked all over those grounds," Dr. Watson Rankin stated, "jumping ditches and crossing wagon roads and going through shrubbery and all that kind of thing, with Mr. Duke always in the lead. Again I was impressed with the man's vigor."¹⁸

On the third day of all the intense activity and planning, Few, Flowers, and Frank Brown attended a "full meeting" where a reduction of over 900,000 cubic feet was made in the plans, but at a subsequent session, B. M. Hall noted, "a goodly portion of our saving was put back by Mr. Duke and Mr. Allen."¹⁹ Trumbauer and his associates headed back to Philadelphia with instructions to proceed with working drawings, first for the new Georgian buildings on the Trinity campus, which was soon to be known as the East campus, and then for the Gothic structures eventually to be erected on the new land, or the West campus. Much of the preliminary planning for the two campuses of Duke University had been accomplished in three busy spring days of 1925.

Apparently unbeknownst to most people at the time, the self-effacing but brilliant architect who worked quietly along with others in Trumbauer's office in Philadelphia and who actually designed the new buildings for Duke University was Julian Abele. The first African-American graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's architectural school, Abele had also studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Now known as the designer of Harvard's Widener Library and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, among other important public buildings, Abele, following the practice in Trumbauer's large firm, did not put his signature on any of the blueprints for Duke University until after 1938. While Few no doubt met Abele early on and corresponded on occasion with him in later years, J. B. Duke may neither have met nor known of Abele. In light of Washington Duke's and his family's generous attitude toward African Americans, however, one may safely conjecture that J. B. Duke would have been pleased by Abele's important role in Duke University's architectural history.²⁰

Concurrently with the matter of the new land and the siting of the buildings on it, J. B. Duke helped to decide another matter that much interested him, and this concerned the kind of stone to be used in the Tudor Gothic buildings. He originally thought that the stone should come from one of the well-known quarries in the North, in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, or Massachusetts. He therefore arranged for carloads of various samples of stone to be shipped to Durham and for test walls to be built on the Trinity campus. In the meantime, Frank Brown investigated

the possibility of North Carolina stone and found in the possession of the state geologist some specimens of volcanic stone from an abandoned quarry near Hillsborough, only a few miles from Durham. On the eve of J. B. Duke's inspection of the new land in March, 1925, Brown informed Trumbauer that a sample wall of the local stone revealed that it was "much more attractive than the Princeton wall" and "much warmer and softer in coloring." Brown estimated that it could be quarried and delivered on the ground at not more than \$3.50 per ton, whereas he thought that the Princeton stone would cost approximately \$21.00 per ton. When Flowers informed George Allen about the exciting possibilities of the local stone and how cheaply the "entire ridge" with "an almost unlimited supply" of stone could be purchased, J. B. Duke ordered the acquisition of the quarry and further testing of the stone.²¹

J. B. Duke, pleased by the wide range of colors in the local stone as well as reassured of its durability by tests conducted both in the state geologist's office and in the Bureau of Standards in Washington, proudly led the trustees of the Duke Endowment to the sample walls in late March, 1925. Balloting there indicated an overwhelming preference for the native stone, but J. B. Duke wanted additional test walls built with "less of the yellow and gold colors." Accordingly, Frank Brown suggested a wall showing "as predominating colors the dark blue, the light blue, the light green, the light gray and the dark blue with face mottled with dark brown." All these colors, Brown believed, could be obtained from the Hillsborough quarry in "unlimited quantities."²² Thus it turned out that while the original buildings of the university's West campus were inspired by a venerable style of English architecture, the warmly colored stone came from a neighboring hillside in Piedmont North Carolina.

Like Washington and Ben Duke, J. B. Duke loved horticulture and landscaping, and to lay out the grounds of the new campus as well as to redesign those of the old Trinity campus, he selected one of the leading firms in the nation, Olmsted Brothers of Boston. The firm had been founded by Frederick Law Olmsted, the creator of Central Park in New York and of many other famous gardens and parks. Even before J. B. Duke had seen the new land, he requested that contour maps of its central portion show all the large trees, for he clearly hoped to build the new campus in such a fashion as to save as many of the significant trees as possible. In emphasizing the physical setting or environment in which educational activities were to occur, J. B. Duke unknowingly concurred with John Spencer Bassett. Although he had left Trinity some years earlier, Bassett remained keenly interested in the institution, and in 1920 he had admonished Few that educated persons in the South needed "to turn to this aesthetic problem." Bassett thought that Trinity College (thanks to the Dukes) could "afford to spend money liberally for beautiful grounds

and artistically designed buildings well placed.” They were “educational in just the way we need education just now.”²³ J. B. Duke probably would never have articulated the matter in the way that Bassett had, but the industrialist-turned-philanthropist instinctively understood and acted accordingly.

One of the most important attributes of Washington, Ben, and J. B. Duke as the enablers or backers of Trinity-Duke was that they gave, generously and repeatedly, but they never interfered in the academic side of the institution. In the particular case of J. B. Duke, he strongly agreed with Few on the intention to have Duke University maintain an emphasis on religion and the tie with Methodism, to pursue excellence rather than mere bigness or numbers, to be of as much service as possible, and to have a national as well as regional orientation. J. B. Duke apparently intended to provide the buildings, the grounds, and as much of the monetary means as he could and leave the rest to Few, Flowers, Wannamaker, and their associates in the university. All of this was somewhat ironic in light of what would happen after J. B. Duke’s death, but in early 1925 he concerned himself with large planning problems, such as the location and even the style of the projected chapel, and with small details, such as the width of the hallways in the women’s dormitories (he wanted, and got, wider ones). Even the arrangements of the rooms within the projected new buildings on the East campus, where construction was to begin later in the year, interested him.²⁴

As greatly interested as J. B. Duke was in the physical construction of Duke University, he still had other large projects of vital concern to him. In July, 1925, he, George Allen, and various officials of the Aluminum Company of America visited the Saguenay River in Canada to inspect the vast hydroelectric plant there that Duke had swapped for a one-ninth interest in the aluminum company. At the same time a serious drought in the Carolinas posed massive problems for the Duke Power system, and J. B. Duke had visited Charlotte to wrestle with the urgent need for more coal-burning steam plants.

Joining his wife and daughter at the mansion in Newport, Rhode Island, that he had purchased for them in 1922, J. B. Duke continued to confer there with associates who came up to deliver important papers or to gain a final decision on some question. Robert L. Flowers visited him about university matters, and in September Allen sent word from Newport that J. B. Duke, who believed in going first class, had decided to use the “pinkish granite” rather than the less expensive gray granite in certain parts of the new Georgian buildings and that marble rather than limestone would be used, even though the former cost \$350,000 more.²⁵

Despite J. B. Duke’s continuing interest in university and other affairs, he became ill at Newport in late July, 1925. A month later his wife con-

tinued to be optimistic, for she wrote Few that “though Mr. Duke’s improvement has been slow, it still continues from day to day.” She thought it would be “at least two or three months, however, before he is back to his normal health again.”²⁶ When Duke’s illness only seemed to grow worse, he was carried in his private railway car to New York, and there his doctors discovered in September that he suffered from what they diagnosed as pernicious anemia. On October 10, 1925, J. B. Duke died in his mansion on Fifth Avenue. He would have been sixty-nine years old on December 23.²⁷

Death seems to have caught J. B. Duke by surprise, for he had been vigorous for a man of his age and had suffered few serious health problems during the two decades or so before his death. Happily involved in building Duke University and in the problems of the power company, he had mentioned to several close associates that he hoped to live long enough to see his favorite projects completed. Even on his deathbed he continued to make important decisions concerning them. Earlier in the year he had added \$2,000,000 to the original building fund of \$6,000,000. Few had hammered away at J. B. Duke about the great expensiveness of medical education, and in the indenture creating the Duke Endowment Duke had incorporated Few’s own guarded phrasing about the university’s including a medical school “as and when funds are available.” Carefully refraining from committing the university until funds were clearly in sight, Few persisted in reminding J. B. Duke about the need to make special provision for a medical school if he truly wanted to see one built at Duke University. In his will that had been signed in December, 1924, when the Endowment was established, Duke specified that an additional \$10,000,000 be given to the Endowment and that \$4,000,000 of that sum should be used for the construction of a medical school, hospital, and nurses’ dormitory at Duke University, with the annual income from the remainder to go to the university. Another provision of the will left the remainder of his estate after all other bequests—which turned out eventually to be more than the equivalent of the original \$40,000,000—to the Endowment.²⁸

Not content with those provisions that were not made public until after his death, J. B. Duke continued to worry about the adequacy of the funds for building the university. Consequently, on October 1, 1925, nine days before his death, he signed a codicil to his will leaving an additional \$7,000,000 for “building and equipping” Duke University. Altogether, then, and apart from the annual income that the university would derive from its share of the Endowment, J. B. Duke provided \$19,000,000 for the building of Duke University on its two campuses.²⁹

Ben Duke, a semi-invalid who was already saddened by the accidental death of his only son, Angier Buchanan Duke, in 1923, was particularly crushed by the death of his younger brother. Shortly before that happened,

Ben Duke made one of his most significant gifts to Duke University. To commemorate his dead son, he established the Angier B. Duke Memorial, Incorporated, which immediately became and remained a principal source of scholarships and loan funds in the university. Institutionalizing on a large scale something that he, his father, and others in the family had been doing constantly since the early 1890s—helping able but needy students attend college—Ben Duke could hardly have selected a more useful way to erect a special kind of monument to his son.³⁰ Having earlier divided much of his fortune among his wife, son, and daughter, Ben Duke, despite increasingly frail health, spent much of his time during the last four years of his life dividing nearly \$3,000,000 among a large number of churches, orphanages, and especially colleges, both for whites and for African Americans, in the South.³¹

One who kept Ben Duke much in mind was William P. Few. As he had done for many years, Few regularly wrote long, personal letters to Ben Duke in New York reporting on the progress of construction at Duke University and on various other matters that he knew would be of interest. “You would get extreme pleasure out of it, I am sure,” Few declared to Ben Duke in 1926, “if you could see here with your own eyes the wonderful developments that have come from the small beginnings that you nourished in the big formative years of the past quarter-century.” Earlier, on Ben Duke’s seventy-first birthday, Few had written that he spoke to the students in a chapel assembly about “what you have meant to this institution in all its strivings” for thirty-five years or more. Few added: “I told them if they or their successors in the long future ever allowed themselves to forget all this then they would be unworthy of their great heritage. But they will never forget in this or in any other generation.”³²

One matter that Few did not discuss with Ben Duke, or with anyone else for that matter except Clinton Toms and a few other intimates, was an embarrassing situation that had to do with Duke University and its needs. On the one hand, the new university being organized around an old college was spectacularly blessed and richly endowed. The South, certainly, had never known its like, and the whole nation was taking much notice of the good fortune of Duke University. But on the other hand, Few had first suggested in his memorandum of 1921, and J. B. Duke had included in his indenture creating the Duke Endowment, a large number of tasks for Duke University. By comparison, Princeton University, another relatively small institution in size and only one generation older than Duke as a university, had a much larger and richer body of alumni. Moreover, despite its wealth, Princeton had no coordinate college for women nor a medical school, law school, divinity school, or one or two other professional schools that Duke University included. In other words, J. B. Duke, at Few’s suggestion, had called for a most ambitious undertaking at Duke

University. If J. B. Duke had lived, matters might have been different, and Few would not have felt the embarrassing financial constraints that he knew to be a painful fact but could hardly explain to a public dazzled by Duke University's good fortune.

A leading historian of American research universities has suggested that the leaders of many if not most of them tended to be "gambler[s], dealing in university 'futures.'" The common tendency was to expand the institution in advance of guaranteed resources, then hope, pray, and struggle that "benefactors could be goaded into alleviating the consequent plight by responding to the 'emergency.'" William R. Harper and John D. Rockefeller had such a relationship with the University of Chicago, and so did G. Stanley Hall and the benefactor of Clark University.³³

When the dust began to settle and various realities became clear after J. B. Duke's death, no one knew better than Few that his "gamble," if such it had been, had resulted in a large, embarrassing difficulty. More likely, neither Few nor anyone else knew just how much money would be needed to build as large and complex an institution as Duke University was intended to be. The Duke Endowment would eventually, of course, grow much larger, for J. B. Duke had more than doubled it by the terms of his will—though tax problems would force his estate to remain unsettled for several years. Moreover, he had specified in the indenture creating the Endowment that the trustees should, after dividing among themselves 3 percent of the annual income as compensation for their services, set aside 20 percent of the annual income to be added to the principal until the original corpus of the trust had been doubled in size. While the future, therefore, held great promise for Duke University's support from the Duke Endowment, the immediate situation in the late 1920s was much more problematical.

Few, painfully aware of and embarrassed about his own share of responsibility for the situation, could only confess privately his own—and Duke University's—dilemma, as he did for example to Dr. W. S. Rankin.

I am frankly worried. It was just as clear to me the day Mr. Duke died as it is now that we do not have either in hand or in sight sufficient resources to develop the other departments of the University as Mr. Duke expected us to develop them and also support the sort of medical school and hospital that the public expects of us and that all of us want to see here.

Few went on to admit that he did not yet see a solution but, eternal optimist that he was, insisted that his faith had "always been that what ought to be done can be done." To another good friend of both Duke University and the Duke family, James A. Thomas, Few explained that J. B. Duke had "done one of the greatest things in the whole history of America; still he

died before he had finished his work.” Few continued with an appeal: “To do promptly all the things he expected us to do involves an overwhelming financial burden unless the burden can be rather widely distributed. The good friends who help now help twice because they help quickly.”³⁴

The widespread, persistent public misunderstanding about the resources actually available to Duke University added enormously to Few’s problem. Despite careful efforts on the part of Few, Allen, Perkins, and others to issue exact statements for the public, many journalists garbled the facts and informed readers that the entire income of the Duke Endowment went to Duke University. The *New York Evening Post*, for example, declared that Duke University was “thinking over the best ways to use its \$80,000,000 endowment.” Even more erroneous was the widely repeated assertion that Duke had become the “richest endowed university in the world.”³⁵

Few gave liberally of his time to visiting journalists, and the university’s own news bureau attempted to set the record straight. But it was uphill work. “It will be wise I am sure,” Few advised one concerned alumnus, “for all our graduates and entire constituency during the next few years to exercise a good deal of patience.” Many people were going to write about Duke University, Few continued, and he had spent numerous hours with reporters from the *Baltimore Sun*, *New York Times*, *New York World*, and other newspapers. Nevertheless, Few insisted that it would be “quite unfair to hold any of us responsible for what is written about us in the way of interpreting either the past, present and future.” He concluded on a characteristic note: “I am trying my best to keep it all straight, and I am trying my best to see that nothing goes into the building of this new institution that will not be true and abiding in its power for good.”³⁶ A few years later, a wearier but still indefatigable Few confessed to the same alumnus, “While I am something of a reformer, I have given up all hope of keeping straight the facts in newspapers even as they affect Duke University.” Few declared to another friend of the school, “Nobody in America should become excited by anything in a newspaper until he first makes sure that he has the bottom facts.”³⁷

Despite the general public’s exaggeration of the university’s wealth, Few, Flowers, Allen, and Perkins grappled with a painfully tight budget even for the massive building program and had to cut down on various plans in order to stay within the limits of available income. The lake that J. B. Duke had envisioned on West campus and that preliminary plans had shown had to be eliminated, as were the two great fountains that he had wanted on West. On the East campus a fountain that J. B. Duke planned for the large circle between the handsome Georgian library and the matching Union building had to be omitted. More serious perhaps were the cuts that had to be made in the plans of the Gothic dormitories



on West, for various amenities, such as commons or assembly rooms, had to be eliminated, and the cubic space of various buildings reduced.³⁸

Few saw to it that news of these stringencies and curtailments did not reach the increasingly frail Ben Duke, for toward him Few felt two primary obligations. On the immediate and personal level, Few tried through his letters to cheer and support his old friend and longtime ally as best he could. As for the larger obligation and the future, Few desperately wished to have within Duke University some fitting memorial to Ben Duke, whose long years of service and generosity to Trinity-Duke had been overshadowed by his younger brother's spectacular philanthropy. "Speaking for myself," Few wrote to one friend of Ben Duke's, "may I say to you that there is not one thing about this whole big development here which concerns me more than the building up here of an appropriate and adequate memorial to Mr. B. N. Duke? And I so much wish that we could get this done in his life time."³⁹

As had been the case for many years, Clinton Toms stood by in New York to assist Few, for Toms also was keenly interested in honoring Ben Duke. Toms and Few first hit on the idea of a specially designated Benjamin Newton Duke Endowment Fund, with the securities that had been given by Duke himself as the nucleus. Since he had, however, contributed annually for so many years to the operating budget of the institution and given various buildings and other improvements on the Trinity campus, the amount of endowment attributable directly to B. N. Duke was not extensive, being only about \$400,000.⁴⁰

Persisting in the search for a sizable and significant memorial to B. N. Duke, Few in 1928 advanced the idea of a "Benjamin Newton Duke Institute for the Advancement of Knowledge" to be established within Duke University. Essentially Few had in mind a graduate school of arts and sciences, a research council to assist in scholarly enterprises, and a few other features designed to enhance the advanced research and teaching in the university. An ambitious plan that clearly focused on a vital center of any true research university, Few's proposal attracted much faculty support. Flowers spoke further about the plan when he unveiled a marble bust of B. N. Duke in the library on the occasion of Ben Duke's seventy-third birthday. If B. N. Duke had not been born, Flowers declared, probably without exaggeration, "Trinity College would never have been in Durham . . . and Duke University would never have existed."⁴¹

Ben Duke died in his home in New York on January 8, 1929, and Few never succeeded in obtaining a special memorial to him alone. Immediately after the death, Few renewed the call for the institute that he thought would be a significant, living memorial as well as a vital contribution to the scholarly mission of the university. Friends of the Duke family, however, and particularly James A. Thomas, who was joined by George Allen

and W. R. Perkins, proposed the creation and incorporation of "The Duke Memorial." It would attempt to raise money for a suitable memorial to all three of the major philanthropists of the family—Washington, B. N., and J. B. Duke. Thomas appealed widely to the students and staffs of the various educational institutions that had been assisted by the Dukes and also to the employees of the power and tobacco companies, the well-to-do business associates of the Dukes in New York and elsewhere, and even the schoolchildren and other groups in the Carolinas.⁴²

Before it became clear that Few's plan had lost out, however, W. K. Boyd, chairman of Duke's history department and an outspoken fighter for worthy academic causes, wrote an interesting letter to his friend James A. Thomas. "It seems to me that the Dukes represent as no other group of persons," Boyd declared, "the latent productive power of men which was unloosed by the Civil War." He saw the family as typifying "the creative forces of Southern society of the modern period." The most appropriate memorial to them would therefore be, Boyd argued, one which "stimulates and serves creative power," especially "the creative power of mind." Boyd continued: "And this is just what the South needs, particularly it is what Duke University needs more than anything else." As chairman of the Library Council as well as of the university's Committee on Research, Boyd claimed intimate knowledge of the university's resources for advanced scholarly work. He had concluded that "those resources must be multiplied by three before Duke University can take rank with the *real* universities of this country—and then it will rank only with small real universities, such as Stanford, Princeton and some of the western state universities." Boyd insisted that his comparison was also true with respect to the other universities in the South, for he asserted that "not one of them is on a par in equipment with such institutions as I have just named." He strongly advocated, in conclusion, the establishment of a "Duke Foundation for the Advancement of Knowledge," with the income to be used to increase the intellectual resources of the university. Art should be included within the scope of "knowledge," Boyd added, especially since he believed that no southern institution then had a "high-grade curriculum and equipment" in the area of the fine arts.⁴³

Other influential persons on the faculty agreed with Boyd in supporting Few's proposal. Paul M. Gross, the able young chemist who had come to Trinity in 1919, studied J. B. Duke's indenture creating the Duke Endowment and concluded that, above all, J. B. Duke had been interested in the service which Duke University could render its section of the country. "The proper rendering of this service by the university will call for ever increasing expenditures for research and investigation in the social and natural sciences," Gross maintained, "both for the acquirement of new knowledge and for the application of knowledge already in existence."⁴⁴

All of the arguments of Few and his academic allies were in vain, for Thomas, Allen, and others in New York had early decided that the chapel, or some part of the chapel, to be erected on the West campus would be the most appropriate form for the memorial to take. Construction of the chapel, the centerpiece of the Gothic campus as originally envisioned by J. B. Duke, had not begun when B. N. Duke died and was not scheduled to begin until 1930. It was to be, in fact, the last of the original Gothic structures to be erected.

Few accepted with good grace the defeat of his own plan. "It is a big matter you are engaged in," he assured Thomas, "and it is being laid down along lines that not only assure immediate success but even larger ultimate good to Duke University." Few conceded that the "B. N. Duke Foundation for the Advancement of Knowledge . . . will have to wait perhaps," but he hoped that in the long run the efforts of Thomas and his associates might also help that cause.⁴⁵

With Few's blessings, therefore, Thomas and his associates set out to raise money for the memorial to Washington Duke and two of his sons. Thomas had once hoped to raise more than a million dollars, but the crash of the stock market in the fall of 1929 ended that dream. With the approximately \$135,000 that actually was raised, the Duke Memorial, Inc., contributed primarily to three things: the creation of the small Memorial Chapel to the left of the chancel in the chapel of Duke University; the three marble sarcophagi with recumbent statues in the Memorial Chapel where rest the remains of Washington, B. N., and J. B. Duke; and the bronze statue of J. B. Duke which stands on the quadrangle in front of the chapel.⁴⁶

Few could accept with equanimity the frustration of his hopes for some significant memorial to B. N. Duke because, to a greater degree than most persons, William P. Few lived in the realm of the mind and the spirit. As much as he loved the rich architecture and the handsome grounds of Duke University, no one needed to tell him that those were hardly of central importance. A great college or university, Few once suggested, was essentially an "assembling of great personalities." Deeply conscious always of the long future as well as of the past, Few believed that "an institution like this [Trinity-Duke] lives on and will live as long as American civilization endures, and it cherishes the memory of those who have served it."⁴⁷

Few's failure to sell the idea of significant support for the graduate school and the research council as a memorial to B. N. Duke is important for several reasons. First, the proposal itself shows that Few well understood, despite his deep commitment to the undergraduate colleges and the teaching that went on therein, that the graduate school of arts and sciences was the sine qua non of a research university, what Boyd had

called a “real” university. Few’s failure, however, is also instructive, for not only do many donors or potential donors to educational institutions prefer to give tangible things such as buildings—or statues—but the graduate school of arts and sciences and its central role in research universities are matters that are not always understood even by many groups that are vitally important to such institutions. Professional schools, especially those for law and medicine, are another matter. But the myriad ways in which the graduate school of arts and sciences is inextricably tied to and interwoven with the undergraduate college (or colleges in Duke’s case) of arts and sciences—through faculty, libraries, and laboratories, to name only three—was a matter that Few, just like the leaders of most other research universities, had difficulty in getting across. The connection was hard to explain not only to the public but even to many trustees—and certainly to most undergraduates, their parents, and all those who saw Duke and other research universities mostly through their eyes.⁴⁸

Even as Few tried and ultimately failed to raise money for Duke’s graduate school, he was simultaneously coping with an even more urgent problem about financing for the projected medical school. Convinced that Duke could not open a proper four-year medical school, no matter how much it might be desired and needed, unless additional support for it could be obtained, Few set out to obtain funds for the medical school from other philanthropic foundations. It was that process that led Few to his first agonizing awareness about Duke University’s problem concerning governance and ultimate control. Coping with the problem over a period of seven or eight years, Few later said that nothing else connected with the launching of the university caused him so much worry and trouble.⁴⁹

Sympathetic with and supportive of Few in his search for outside funding, George G. Allen as the chairman of the Duke Endowment and William R. Perkins as its vice chairman were destined to play leading roles in the formative period of Duke University’s history. As new to the world of higher education as J. B. Duke had been, both men exerted an enormous influence on both the Endowment and the university. Since J. B. Duke’s widow had limited interest in his business affairs and philanthropy and his daughter, Doris, was only thirteen when he died, Allen and Perkins became, for all practical purposes, the primary inheritors of much of the late multimillionaire’s power and the chief interpreters of his plans and intentions.

Just as Few, patiently and diplomatically, had earlier undertaken to inform and educate J. B. Duke about the needs and aspirations of Trinity College, he also tackled a similar task involving Duke University with Allen and Perkins. Both men, of course, were unlike Few in that they had to deal with many large business affairs, especially those of the Duke Power Company. Yet as Few tackled the job of gaining essential support

and approval for Duke University from the powerful Rockefeller-funded General Education Board (GEB), he had to have the help and cooperation of Allen and Perkins.

Having invited Wallace Buttrick, the distinguished chairman of the GEB's board, to visit Duke early in 1926, Few sought his help in trying to find "big outstanding men" to head the new or reorganized professional schools and to fill certain posts in the arts and sciences. Buttrick replied that he and his associates would be happy to help and that he had been quite favorably impressed by what he had seen at Duke and what Few had told him. "I believe you are on the right track," Buttrick concluded, "and in the way of doing great service for the well-being of mankind."⁵⁰

Buttrick then helped Few to arrange a meeting at the Johns Hopkins Medical School in early March, 1926, and that eventually led to Few's brilliant and lucky choice of Dr. Wilburt C. Davison to become the first dean and organizer of the projected medical school. Unfortunately, however, Buttrick's death forced Few, in a sense, to start anew. In late June, 1926, after conferences with GEB officials in New York, Few wrote a long, detailed letter to Dr. Abraham Flexner, also with the GEB and a leading authority on medical schools and their costs, explaining that since J. B. Duke's residuary estate had not yet been settled, the exact amount of his gifts to Duke University could not yet be ascertained. Aside from the medical school and hospital buildings, for which the philanthropist had made special provisions, Few noted that the hospital was assured of as much as \$75,000 a year from the Duke Endowment's hospital fund, and he asked for the GEB's help toward establishing an initial endowment of \$6,000,000 for the medical school and hospital. Few added that despite the uncertainty caused by the unsettled estate, enough was already known for him "to say definitely that if the medical school is otherwise endowed we shall then have for the support of the other departments an endowment of not less than \$25,000,000." J. B. Duke had believed, according to Few, that in accordance with the provisions of the indenture the endowment would eventually increase so as to raise the \$25,000,000 to an endowment for the university of \$40,000,000 within a period of a dozen or so years. Flexner and his associates already knew, Few concluded, that "we are committed to the policy of trying to do well what we undertake to do—of trying to build up a university which while adapting itself to the conditions and needs here in the South will at the same time . . . keep in line with the best educational standards and ideals of our time."⁵¹

After additional conferences and letters back and forth, the GEB in early March, 1927, refused Few's request. Not only was Few disappointed, but he also now grew profoundly worried as he gradually learned that the officials of the GEB had made their negative decision because they did not believe that Duke University had adequate monetary resources, and,

even more importantly, they were skeptical of its system of governance because of the division between the two boards of trustees.⁵²

Down but by no means out, Few set to work to convince the GEB that its judgment was mistaken. As for the monetary resources, Few could not argue too much, for he was obviously knocking as hard as he knew how on the GEB's door. As far as governance was concerned, and that seemed to be the most crucial problem in the eyes of the GEB, Few felt confident that the complicated relationship between the university and the Duke Endowment could be satisfactorily explained. He proceeded to draft two documents, both of which he ultimately had printed for private distribution, one on the history and the various charters of Trinity-Duke and one on the relationship between the university and the Endowment.

The latter pamphlet proved to be the crucial one. In it Few, after quoting the scattered provisions in the indenture concerning the university, argued that the trustees of the endowment were "in a very real sense . . . also trustees of Duke University, providing as they do, a large part of the income and responsible as they are, for seeing that the University keeps true to the purpose for which it was founded." After elaborating on his confidence in the trustees of the Duke Endowment and in their wholehearted devotion to Duke University, Few expressed his belief that they would "never under any circumstances be a menace to the educational integrity of the University. . . ."

Perhaps the most important part of Few's pamphlet was his explanation that as president of the university, he had adopted a policy of presenting to the trustees of the Duke Endowment, or to a committee of the same, for their consideration "all proposals, before the proposals are fully adopted and made effective, if they call for expenditure of money by the University or involve changes of importance in the operations of the University and come under the terms of the Trust Indenture establishing The Duke Endowment." Few, in effect, meant that he already was giving and expected to continue giving a veto power over most matters of large policy and planning concerning the university to Allen and Perkins.

Few concluded by noting that the above procedure had been approved by all concerned, was working well, and would most likely be recognized by all as "a safe procedure that is apt to become permanent." Since both boards were self-perpetuating and not apt to be "subject to violent changes," there would be every likelihood that they would pass on from one generation to the next whatever procedure that "has been proved to be good."⁵³

Working with Allen and Perkins on the pamphlet and the application to the GEB as closely as circumstances allowed, Few also suggested to them his belief that within a year or two there probably should be worked out in the university's charter from the legislature an addition which provided