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## UA3/1/4 Why?

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W H Y ?

At the end of this scholastic year, I shall have been connected with the administration of an institution of learning at Bowling Green, my native city for forty-one years. This, in reality, is the only position I have held in my life. It is natural for a man who has been active in life and who has reached my age to think over the past, to consider the best use of his remaining years and to give a little time to a consideration of the temperature of the unknown world. From the time I was eight years old, sixty years ago until now, I have never known anything but a strenuous life, one filled with conflict, responsibility and suffering. I have never been interested in the past, in family history, in records, in graveyards, in monuments and in tombstones. I have not had and do not now have much concern about the life that reaches beyond this world, but I am interested in life, and especially young life in this world. I came to my office at 2:00 this morning when the community appeared to be asleep and I got to thinking and writing a little about my experiences during the past forty-one years. I am giving below the result.

1. We secured a new charter and organized the Bowling Green Business College in 1892, forty-one years ago. The School commenced without local interest, confidence or support and was very severely criticized and even antagonized by the local citizenship. The local community had no confidence in the success of its program and did nothing to aid it in its efforts to succeed. They even put many obstacles in its way. I have sometimes asked myself the question, "why did the people of Bowling Green make it so hard for us to succeed?"
2. Out of twenty-eight students enrolled in the fall of 1892, not one, as far as I know came as a result of the good will of the Old Southern Normal School. The Business College really inherited a temporary liability from the Old Southern Normal School.
3. The Old Southern Normal School was a pioneer in the early educational development of the state. It made a rich contribution to public education. When it closed its doors in 1891 it left in Bowling Green an almost unbearable public prejudice and opposition that made our efforts to organize a new institution an almost impossible task. The new institution did not ask Bowling Green for one cent. It only desired moral support. It only asked the privilege of living in Bowling Green and being a worker for a better community. Why this condition should have been made a part of our experiences is difficult to understand.

*Handwritten note:*  
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- 4 This attitude on the part of the citizens of Bowling Green, continued for many years making the task in every way difficult. The situation became so serious that it became necessary to appeal to the courts for protection. Faculty and students were insulted on the streets and even in the churches. Of course these things should be forgotten and passed by as typical experiences that enter into every active life, but somehow as I think back over a period of forty-one years of toil and sacrifice and the difficulties encountered, I wonder sometimes why this condition should have existed. At any rate, I am thinking today that it takes a real christian to keep his temper and his faith in this world of numerous types of humanity.
- 5 In 1895 we decided to resurrect the Old Southern Normal School, to re-incorporate under the name of the Southern Normal School and the Bowling Green Business College. This policy was favored and carried out because many students who entered at that time for business training, needed a preparation they did not have and because there was a contagion, an interest and fascination in the thought of training teachers who would teach the children of Kentucky. This was a worthy decision. Evidently material motives did not control it.
- 6 The Southern Normal School was a losing proposition but a real contribution to education and to the work of advancing educational, professional and academic standards. The profits made in the Bowling Green Business College were used to finance the losses on the Normal School. This continued until the Southern Normal School became a State institution. What were the motives that prompted this financial sacrifice? They certainly were not mercenary.
- 7 The school grew and became a real influence in disseminating the ideals and principles of universal education in the South and in the development of a unified public school system. We realize that the work the institution has done in carrying education, light and inspiration to the children of the Commonwealth should be a satisfactory reward to any real American, but I must admit at this late date that this kind of a reward tries your faith and calls on you to seek the mountain top for a new courage and inspiration. This is especially true when a man is sixty-eight years of age and begins to wonder whether he will be a charity in old age and whether his family will have the necessities of life, if he should die.

8. On the night of November 16, 1899 the school building was destroyed by fire. The buildings, school furniture, equipment, records and all other property were destroyed. The school was heavily in debt following the loss sustained by the fire. It owed about \$16,000 and was without material assets. Not counting the good will of the institution, the sleeping gown I had on when I climbed down the post from the second story of the burning building, was about all that was left of the institution. There was no insurance on the property caused by the failure of the insurance agent to renew the policies when they expired and by not notifying the insured of their expiration.
9. In thinking over forty-one years of life and sacrifice, the darkest day in the life of the institution was the one following the fire. The public did not know it, but I was in reality a bankrupt and the school was a bankrupt. This was concealed from the public. I think the deception was justified.
10. Between the hours of three and six on the morning of November 17, 1899 while all alone and greatly troubled, I decided I would make an effort to continue the institution. I have often wondered since that time if I were not insane when the decision was made. What I would like to know today is why I made it for it takes real religion to sustain the decision.
11. At this time the big railway companies of the West were selling the big economic opportunities of the West to the East. One of the railway systems that had numerous lines in the West had confidence in my ability to sell an article to the public. It had heard of the fire and as a result I received a letter from the railway company offering me \$3600.00 annually with assurances of real promotion, to take charge of an advertising office located in St. Louis. Even to this day I find myself asking the question, "why did I turn down this offer"? It could not have been a mercenary reason.
12. Following the fire, I took out \$35,000 worth of temporary life insurance and went to a bank in Bowling Green and succeeded after considerable effort in borrowing \$5000.00 for the purpose of meeting the emergency needs of the institution and to keep it from going upon the rocks. The school was opened in the business section of the city. The following year was a real nightmare that I cannot forget.

13. The people of Bowling Green had seemingly become interested in the school and willing to help save it, but not until committees of leading citizens representing commercial clubs from Hopkinsville, Owensboro and other places waited on me and assured me that they would provide buildings and other accommodations, provided I would agree to move the school. The funny thing about the whole experience was the brotherly love and interest manifested by the people after they heard what was going on in Hopkinsville, Owensboro and other places. I stayed with my native town. I kept faith with those places seeking the school by telling them frankly that I would not do anything until after I knew what Bowling Green would do.
14. In order to provide for the needs of the institution the Southern Educational Building Company was organized and incorporated. Sufficient stock was sold to restore and enlarge the college buildings and equip them for the resumption of instruction. The task of raising the money was a most difficult one, but the people of Bowling Green manifested a real interest and a fine spirit by subscribing for the stock and by giving the effort earnest support. I subscribed for \$1250.00 worth of stock in the building company. This was \$250.00 more than the largest subscriber in Bowling Green. When the time came to settle all the bills for the construction of the buildings, there was a deficit of \$2,250.00 which I paid making a total of \$3500.00. I never felt this was just and I do not think at this time that it was just. I have occasionally asked myself the question, "why did Bowling Green permit me to do it?" I felt an injustice, but nobody came to my rescue.
15. The Southern Normal School and Bowling Green Business University, although a private institution was at all times actively interested in public education. Its faculty and Alumni were participants in the educational campaign which culminated in the establishment of the State Normal Schools in Kentucky in 1906. This active interest was manifested, notwithstanding the fact that the Southern Normal School, a privately owned institution had no assurance that a State institution would be located in Bowling Green, provided they were established by the Commonwealth. This was a very challenging gamble. Earnest support was given the program to establish State Normal Schools because the private institution was interested in doing anything it could to advance universal intelligence throughout the Commonwealth.
16. When the Kentucky Education Association met in Maysville in June 1904 a committee was appointed to devise a plan for the organization of the teachers of the State into a federation and to report its work to the Association at Mammoth Cave in June 1905. I took an active interest in bringing about this action on the part of the State Association. I attended many conferences and meetings in different sections of the state and paid all my expense accounts made as a result

of attending these meetings. These expense accounts amounted to several hundred dollars.

17. In the spring of 1905 I attended a conference called by the State Superintendent at Frankfort for the purpose of discussing a program looking toward the making of a state-wide campaign for the establishment of State Normal Schools in the State. I attended this and many other meetings at my own expense. Besides I made several contributions to the campaign by the purchase of literature, stamps and other items of expense.

18. I was appointed as a member of a legislative committee to memorialize the General Assembly of 1906 for the purpose of influencing the General Assembly to establish State Normal Schools in the Commonwealth. I spent seventy-one days in Frankfort during the session of the General Assembly. I paid my entire expenses including hotel bill and many others items of expense made necessary in order to secure effective legislation and make proper contacts with influential sources. My personal expense during this session of the General Assembly amounted to at least a thousand dollars. I have often wondered why the citizenship of Bowling Green did not share this expense with me.

19. The legislature of Kentucky of 1906 passed a bill authorizing the establishment of two State Normal Schools in the Commonwealth without a dissenting vote. The Governor appointed a commission to locate the schools. One of them was located by the commission in Bowling Green. There was quite an expense connected with receiving the commission and making such contacts as would enable the institution to present its claims in an effective way. All of this expense was paid out of my own pocket.

20. The commission located the Western State Normal School in Bowling Green on the condition that the city of Bowling Green give to the State the buildings now located on the Business College site including the main building, Frisbie Hall, Bailey Hall, etc.

21. Before these buildings could be turned over to the State it was necessary to get all of the subscribers of the Southern Educational Building Company to donate their stock and it was also necessary to get additional cash subscribers. After a hard, earnest campaign requiring much effort on the part of the citizenship of Bowling Green, the money was raised, the property donated to the Commonwealth and the school located in Bowling Green.