

**Let's Go Peay**

**A History of Austin Peay State University**

**Given at the Athenaeum Society**

**November 4, 2004**

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“Let’s Go Peay!” This paper will not be a discussion of matters urological, but rather a brief exposition of the history of Austin Peay State University. In honor of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Austin Peay State Normal School in 1927, the university commissioned the creation of a written history from Richard P. Gildrie and Thomas H. Winn, both professors of history at APSU. The book appeared last year and I thought it would make an interesting paper for our Society. You may not agree, but you are going to hear it anyway.

While Austin Peay was founded in 1927, Clarksville had a history of higher education stretching back to 1806, when an academy was founded by several local men. The state of Tennessee had received some land grants from the federal government and had agreed to use some of the proceeds from the sale thereof to support colleges and academies, or secondary schools, throughout the state. The funds received by Montgomery County were insufficient to support the school, and the tuitions earned also did not provide enough support. Therefore, in 1822, the academy turned to the Presbyterian Church for support. From 1822 until 1848, the academy functioned with two faculty members and twenty to forty students. The teachers taught a classical curriculum consisting of Latin, Greek, English composition, geography, higher mathematics, and natural philosophy or science. Such a curriculum was the vogue at the time, fitting the young men as gentlemen and preparing them to enter any college in the country.

In the 1840’s, many people in Clarksville wanted to transform the academy into a college. Efforts stalled when the Methodists complained about the Presbyterians receiving state funding. Instead, in 1848 the Masons offered to raise \$15,000 to erect a new college hall, if the state would transfer title to the property of the academy. In 1849, a faculty of six received the first students into the college and the cornerstone was laid for the new college building, which came to be called the Castle Building. Its cost of \$32,000 was termed extravagant by some. Soon after

the opening of the building, Masonic support began to decline, as Lodges in other parts of Tennessee petitioned to form colleges closer to home. By 1851, most support came from the Montgomery County lodge. By 1853, the faculty had grown to 7, and the student body contained 46 in the college and 116 in the preparatory department. Many colleges around the country maintained preparatory departments to help prepare students for enrollment in the college, to provide a flow of students to the college, and to generate additional funds. These preparatory departments flourished until the early years of the twentieth century, typically. While the college enrollment might seem small, we should remember that college educations were quite rare at the time. The whole country contained only four colleges with enrollments over 400. Yale was the largest with 502. The most successful western schools, such as Transylvania, averaged around 100 students. The course work retained a heavy emphasis on the classical, with required work in both Latin and Greek, as well as the choice of a modern language, mathematics, science, rhetoric, psychology, logic, political economy, moral philosophy, and "Evidences of Christianity". This last course was typical of most college curricula, whether at a church or a state sponsored school.

By 1855, Masonic support had dwindled to practically nothing, so the Presbyterians again took up support and changed the name to Stewart College, named after a local Presbyterian iron magnate. The Presbyterians immediately pledged \$9,000 towards the endowment. Rev. R.B. McMullen, the new minister at the Clarksville Presbyterian Church, was named president. He proved a talented fundraiser, meeting the endowment goal by 1860 and finding the funds to construct the first dormitory. At that time, Stewart College was among the top institutions in Tennessee, of which there were 34. Students maintained an active social and intellectual life, creating literary societies similar to those found at all the better schools. The societies provided an informal space for the students to study modern history and literature which were not part of

the official curriculum. Each had its own room and library in the Castle Building and met regularly for discussions and speeches on matter of interest to the members. These student literary societies had died out by the 1920's at most institutions. Upon the death of the societies, the libraries were typically given to the host college and formed the nucleus of the collection of contemporary fiction and history. The impetus to form our own Athenaeum Society probably came from the experience of local men in their own college societies, where they enjoyed the camaraderie and stimulation of shared papers and discussions on a variety of topics.

At this auspicious moment, when the College seemed to be flourishing, the Civil War broke out. Most of the students and faculty sympathized with the Southern cause and by 1861, most had enlisted en masse into the Fourteenth Tennessee Infantry, led by Professor Forbes as colonel. Of the 29 who enlisted, sixteen were killed in battle and seven by disease. Six survived. With the loss of its students and faculty, the college disbanded. During the winter of 1861-62, the Confederate forces used the campus as a military hospital. After the Union forces occupied Clarksville, they used the Castle Building as their headquarters. While the college was never the site of a battle, the occupying forces, whether Confederate or Union, caused considerable damage and loss to the college buildings and the college property. By the end of the war, nothing was left to the Synod of Nashville but the brick walls. Much later, in 1904, Congress reimbursed the college with \$25,000, but that money did not solve the immediate problem of want and destitution immediately following the war. The Presbyterians considered selling the property, but ultimately decided to allow D.M. Quarles, a University of Virginia graduate, to operate an academy for about sixty boys in the Castle Building while they reconstituted the college. The college finally reopened in 1869 with seventy students, the most it had ever had in that department. John B. Shearer, a graduate of the University of Virginia, was the new president.

He had a vision to combine a secular education like he had received with Presbyterian traditions. He felt that at state sponsored institutions, there was a “danger . . . that we forget all scholarship in our race after the purely practical” while at purely denominational colleges we “may make bigots, from whose eyes the scales will never fall. . . . (W)e propose to lay the foundations of an intelligent faith in the God of nature and of revelation as one and the same God.” Shearer’s vision was evidently in tune with the times: enrollments shot up as high as 151 in 1874.

In 1873, commissioners from several southern Synods of the Presbyterian Church met in Memphis to discuss the formation of a southwestern Presbyterian university. These commissioners liked Shearer’s articulated vision, believing with him that a sound liberal arts education formed the foundation for an education. As was usually the case, the commissioners argued about where to place the school. Some favored Memphis while others favored Clarksville. Memphis had the advantage of size over Clarksville, but had the disadvantage of an unhealthy locale. Clarksville had the advantage of an existing institution with facilities and the pledge of railroad bonds valued at \$41,000 provided the institution would enroll ten Clarksville boys free of cost who could pass the entrance exams. This offer induced the commissioners to settle on Clarksville, resulting in the metamorphosis of Stewart College into Southwestern Presbyterian University in 1875. The Synods set a goal of \$500,000 for an endowment which never fully materialized. As a result, the leaders could not expand beyond the foundation of Stewart College. Southwestern never did achieve true university status, even after its removal to Memphis in 1925.

With an eye on realizing his vision of a liberal education, Shearer reorganized the academics and the curriculum. Out went the total emphasis on the classics and in came a departmental organization, recognizable even today. No longer did each student take exactly the

same subjects. Rather, the students had to demonstrate proficiency in a few basic subjects, then do more in depth work in three or four areas. Shearer's reorganization was in line with the academic trends of the times away from the monolithic emphasis on the classics. Most likely, he was heavily influenced by the pioneering work of Eliot of Harvard in the elimination of the old required classical curriculum and the institution of a system of electives. Shearer did not go as far in eliminating all requirements as Eliot did, but chose a middle course typical of most colleges in the country at the time.

In 1879, Shearer resigned due to the strains of reorganizing and fundraising for the college. The board appointed John N. Waddell, former Chancellor of the University of Mississippi to replace him. He completed the construction of Stewart Hall in 1879, used for instruction in the sciences. Both faculty and enrollment expanded during his tenure. Indeed, enrollment and support expanded enough that Southwestern opened a school of theology in 1884. Joseph R. Wilson, father of Woodrow, became its first head. Student life also flourished. In 1878 they founded the first fraternity, sewing the seeds for the ultimate demise of the literary societies. During Waddell's years, the boys began playing both baseball and football. By 1898, the school had constructed a gymnasium and in 1899, Southwestern held its first homecoming football game, hosting its Episcopalian counterpart, the University of the South.

Around the turn of the century, support for the school declined, partly due to an economic recession, but also due to theological wrangling in the Presbyterian church and to renewed arguing among the supporting synods over the appropriate location for the college. Enrollment declined to around 90. Local board members were dismayed and sued in Montgomery County courts to sever the college from the church. The courts ruled in favor of the church, which

opened the door for the removal of Southwestern from Clarksville at a later date. Memphis gradually emerged as a desirable locale.

The board appointed Neander Woods as Chancellor in 1905. The new leader noted that the college had six buildings on twenty-five acres when he arrived. He also noted that the school boasted six fraternities and two literary societies. He complained, however, that he found it difficult to recruit students to come to Clarksville because of the town's reputation as a "wide-open river town" with taverns which he described as "twenty doorways to hell" near campus. We should remember that Clarksville and the nation were in the throes of the prohibition movement at the time. Enrollment remained a problem during Woods' tenure, so he took the step of admitting women, which he did in 1905. Initially they were allowed to attend classes but not earn credit. In 1916, the board voted to admit women on the same basis as men, but with a maximum enrollment of 10% of the student body. Co-education did not turn out to be the cure for low enrollments, so discussions of moving the school to Memphis continued. In the meantime, as a measure of economy, Woods consolidated some of the departments. Clarksville desperately wanted to keep the school and, in 1916, contributed \$25,000 to construct a commons to serve as a cafeteria and student center.

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, half the school enlisted. Charles Diehl, president at the time, reformed the curriculum once again, this time settling on the pattern of required core courses and electives leading to a major familiar to us to this day. His efforts did lead to an increase in enrollment to 181 students, but it was too little, too late. By 1920, there were too many educational choices for students in the supporting synods and few of them chose to travel to little Clarksville for their education. Southwestern had degenerated into a primarily local college. In 1919, the city of Memphis offered to raise \$1,000,000 if Southwestern would

move there. The Board accepted the offer. After several years of legal wrangling, with Austin Peay, then an attorney in Clarksville, leading the fight to retain the institution in Clarksville, the Board won the right to move the college. In 1925, Southwestern left Clarksville for the greener pastures of Memphis, eventually becoming the college we know today as Rhodes. Clarksville then purchased the land and buildings from the Presbyterians for \$25,000.

While the Presbyterians debated the relocation of Southwestern to Memphis, Tennessee had followed the national trend to establish state normal schools. In 1909, the state founded three such schools, one in each of the major sectors of the state. Clarksville tried to obtain the school for middle Tennessee, but lost out to Murfreesboro. By the 1920's the schools had grown considerably and were upgraded to full colleges granting bachelors degrees. As a result, there was an opportunity to create a new normal school to concentrate on the education of elementary school teachers. Clarksville had the advantage of having the ear of the then governor, Austin Peay, and a campus to offer. Perry Lee Harned, a Clarksville educator and politically powerful head of the state school lobby, organized a committee to study the problem. The committee visited Clarksville, ostensibly to tour some property donated to the University of Tennessee. When they arrived in Clarksville, they ended up touring the old Southwestern campus and meeting with various leaders of the community, all pushing for a normal school. The governor, lieutenant governor, school lobby, and local politicians moved quickly and effectively to put a bill through the legislature, opposed only by an anti-school lobby that presciently believed that schools established for one purpose tended to grow into four-year institutions. The House passed its version of the bill on April 22, 1927, the senate passed its version on April 26 and the governor signed the bill that day. Mighty quick work for a legislature!



The law creating the normal school stated that the state created the school to be a normal school for the training of teachers for white rural public schools and for no other purpose and that it would have \$75,000 per year appropriated for its support. The rider regarding the purpose of the school upset Perry Harned and created much debate over the years about the purpose or vision for the school. Over the next two years, the state took possession of the property, renovated it, and named the school for Gov. Austin Peay, who died on October 2, 1927. His successor, Lt. Gov. Henry Horton, had supported the creation of the school and advocated naming it after Gov. Peay, who had done much to improve the quantity and quality of education in Tennessee and to secure the normal school for Clarksville. The board named John S. Ziegler president in 1929 and the school opened in the fall of 1929. The opening ceremonies were attended by almost every politician of note in Tennessee. Enrollment totaled 158 at the opening of the school and reached 425 by the end of the academic year. All of the faculty held bachelors degrees and most either had or were working towards masters degrees. For a normal school of Austin Peay's type, this represented an extraordinarily accomplished faculty. The only blemish on opening day was the library: none of the books ordered for it had arrived.

While Austin Peay was created for the training of teachers for rural white elementary schools, a number of changes were occurring in society that would quickly modify the course that the school followed. For one, the number of high school students had multiplied from 10,000 statewide in 1920 to over 50,000 by 1925. With the passage of Gov. Peay's education law in 1925, this trend escalated. Also, people moved from rural areas to urban areas, changing the demographics of the state. This trend was accelerated by the great depression, which began with the crash of the stock market in October, 1929, Austin Peay's second month of operation. Then, in 1930, Pres. Ziegler collapsed and the board had to find a new president.

The board chose Philander Claxton who had earned a masters degree at the University of Tennessee. He served through the Depression and World War II and hewed to the original purpose of Austin Peay, emphasizing the preparation of teachers for rural elementary schools. Throughout the first decade of his administration, he had to contend with the effects of the Depression, which led to cuts in funding for Austin Peay, as indeed it did for every state school in the country. Like most administrators, he cut salaries across the board and cut expenses wherever possible, including deferring maintenance work. During the Depression, enrollment varied from a low of 281 in 1936 to a high of 581 in 1939, while faculty ranged from 17 to 34 in number. However, all his work was not defensive. He did manage to obtain funds to build a women's dormitory, completed in 1930 and named for Myra Harned, wife of Perry Harned. In the 1980's, this building became the center of a major controversy over whether it should be renovated or razed. Claxton also created a demonstration school in New Providence for training teachers for rural areas. Most normal schools had training schools like this, but usually they were located on campus so as to be easily accessible to the faculty and students. Another feather in his cap appeared in 1939 when the legislature authorized Austin Peay to become a four-year institution granting the bachelors degree. This authorization led to a slight refocus of Austin Peay's efforts; the school now had to include training for high school teachers, which meant the school had to expand its offerings in the liberal arts. With the growth in the number of high schools and high school students and the increasing level of education in the citizenry generally, it is perhaps not surprising that the legislature expanded the mission of Austin Peay. Along with the expansion of the mission came a change in name from the Austin Peay State Normal School to Austin Peay State College. World War II had a significant impact on Austin Peay, as it did on every school in the country. Not surprisingly, enrollment declined from 502 in 1941 to 294 in

1943 as every able-bodied male either enlisted or was drafted into service. With the decline in the number of male students, females played an increasingly large roll in the life of the school. Most athletic programs were discontinued during the war, but basketball continued. Because of the dearth of men, Austin Peay employed a female physical education instructor to coach the men's basketball team - probably the first and maybe the only female coach of a male team. While full-time enrollment declined, Austin Peay served the nation and helped its own budget by cooperating with Camp Campbell in offering night classes for the men stationed there. Additionally, Austin Peay contracted with the War Department to operate a program to train naval cadets which brought hundreds of men to campus. The school provided housing for the cadets in the west wing of Harned Hall, while women continued to live in the east wing, thus creating what was probably Tennessee's first coed dormitory. Additionally, Austin Peay cooperated with the National Youth Administration to obtain a training program that brought further students and funds to campus.

New policies of the State Board of Education mandated President Claxton's retirement in 1946. The board replaced him with Halbert Harvill, who had served as Dean and Registrar and had been on the original faculty. Along with his inauguration came a new age in education. The federal government poured money into higher education, first through the GI Bill, then through research grants spurred by the Soviets' launch of Sputnik. Harvill chose to de-emphasize the preparation of teachers for rural elementary schools. Under his leadership, Austin Peay embraced a General Education Core that purported to teach students skills, understanding, and values in the fields of communication, humanities, science, social studies, health and physical education (p. 71). The liberal arts survived as a part of the general education core; more traditional liberal arts courses were also made available to those wanting or needing them. Partly

as a result of the new core curriculum but also in recognition of the quality of instruction, Austin Peay gained accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools in 1947, thus giving its graduates degrees that were recognized nationally by all accredited institutions.

Shortly after Harvill became president, the Castle Building collapsed. It had served Austin Peay and its predecessor institutions since 1850, surviving the indignities of the Civil War and several changes in institutional organization. A new administration building had already been promised; its construction was pushed forward. Several other new buildings were also completed during Harvill's tenure, including a new science building, replacing Stewart Hall, a new gymnasium with a swimming pool, and a men's dormitory. Later on during Harvill's tenure, the last remaining building from the Southwestern era, the Stewart-Waddell Building, was torn down to make way for a new fine arts building which contained a large auditorium. A new men's dormitory and living quarters for married students rounded out the construction during this period.

In 1949, the Tennessee legislature began the process of integrating Austin Peay. It passed a bill allowing Austin Peay to admit free of charge white students from nearby Kentucky counties! The end of segregation as we more commonly understand it began in 1956 when a black minister was accepted into the graduate school. He and a black woman completed their masters' level work and received their MA at the 1957 commencement. By 1958, the school had four undergraduates of color and the era of segregation was finished.

Throughout the years, Austin Peay has struggled to obtain adequate funding from the legislature. While most state colleges say the same thing, a quick comparison of appropriations does suggest that Austin Peay has been the neglected child in the family of Tennessee's

institutions of higher education. In 1951, Austin Peay had an enrollment of 1456 compared to MTSC's 1412, yet it received \$317,000 from the legislature compared to MTSC's \$381,000.

One unusual feature of Austin Peay's educational offerings centered around its relationship with Fort Campbell. APSC offered extension courses on the post. This program supported itself until major deployments occurred, at which time the college supported the programs to maintain them until the soldiers returned. The college faculty taught some of the courses, but there were not enough faculty to carry the full load, so local business and professional people taught some of the classes as well. This mixed faculty caused some problems for APSC through the years, especially from accreditation boards which did not like non-degreed individuals teaching college level courses.

By 1960, the college had to prepare itself to be reexamined to maintain its accreditation, a process that every college and university in the country undergoes. As part of its self-examination, APSC realized that it had become more than a training institute preparing teachers for rural elementary schools. Rather, it had become a "four year, general state college". Enrollments had jumped from 348 in 1945 during the last year of the war to 2932 in 1962. Immediately following the war, the enrollment jumped as GI's took advantage of the education bill. After most GI's completed their education, enrollments fell back from the high of 1500 into the 1200-1400 student range, only to begin rising again in the late 1950's. The influx of students meant a broader range of interests and needs, which helped broaden the offerings of the school and transformed it into a "general state college".

By Tennessee law, President Harvill should have retired in 1960, but local pressure allowed him to remain in place until 1962, thus making his tenure as long as that of his predecessor, President Claxton. In 1963, the board named Joe Morgan president. He served

until 1976. One of his earlier acts as president was to abolish the weekly chapel sessions, which had nothing to do with religion and had been poorly attended for years. Other changes affecting student life during his tenure included the growth of fraternities and sororities, the appointment of student representatives to standing university committees in 1968, the development of student evaluations of courses and faculty, the growth of women's sports, and the appearance of the streaking fad in 1974. The last, thankfully, enjoyed only a brief moment in the sun, so to speak.

The school had joined the OVC back in 1962 and by the early 70's was enjoying considerable success, particularly in basketball. Many in Clarksville remember attending games in the Little Red Barn until the Dunn Center was completed. In spite of the success of some of Austin Peay's teams, the school ran a continual deficit in the athletic budget. Some years this budget approached \$400,000, or an amount roughly equal to the budget for the library.

In 1967, the Tennessee legislature raised Austin Peay to the status of university. As usual, it was the last state institution to be so elevated. It was considered to be a regional university, along with ETSU, MTSU, TTU, and MSU. To support the needs of the region, the university created the nursing program in 1971. University enrollments rose from 3227 in his first year to 5165 in his last. At the time of the change of status, a lively debate occurred about the proper name. Some felt that the name of Austin Peay was inappropriate for a regional institution and suggested names such as Clarksville State College and North Tennessee State University. After some debate, those in charge concluded that in a state shaped like Tennessee, the term "north" had little meaning and that to call the school Clarksville State College would emphasize the local nature of the school at the expense of its regional aspirations.

As at every institution in the country, the late 1960's and early 1970's saw considerable student unrest. In Clarksville, this unrest took the form of efforts to abolish in loco parentis

regulations, to ease regulations regulating student conduct, to grant students the opportunity to participate in institutional governance in a meaningful way, and to afford students the opportunity to evaluate courses and teachers. As already mentioned, students did achieve meaningful progress in the areas of governance and evaluation, although, in the eyes of the students, the changes did not progress quickly enough or go far enough. Most aspects of *in loco parentis* and other restrictive regulations on student conduct were eventually repealed. The administration allowed the first permanently coed dormitory in 1976. The most controversial action at Austin Peay occurred in 1969 when students and some faculty participated in a national anti-war Moratorium Day, taking time out from classes to do so. The then governor, Buford Ellington, ordered the various school presidents to investigate and discipline all faculty who had participated. The State Board of Education created a policy banning moratoriums and other disruptions, including the taking over of public property. At Austin Peay at least, the administration wisely allowed the student tribunals to take care of disciplining the students involved, thus allowing the whole issue to dissipate. The *Austin Peay All State* noted the irony of fighting a war abroad to defend freedom while suppressing freedom of speech at home.

With the retirement of Joe Morgan in 1976, the board appointed Robert Riggs as president. His tenure lasted until 1987 and overlapped with that of Governor Lamar Alexander. During that time, Tennessee began to move away from having several comprehensive regional universities. Partly as a budgetary move, the board of regents began to attempt to weed out duplication of effort, reasoning that the state did not need four or five history Ph.D. programs. As a result, Austin Peay emerged as the state's liberal arts institution.

Also during Riggs' tenure, he appointed a commission to consider the fate of Harned Hall. It had been built as a dormitory for women in 1930 and had seen various other uses during

the years. By 1987, it was used primarily for storage and Riggs' commission voted to raze the structure. This decision galvanized the community to come to the rescue. The student paper and the alumni all protested vigorously. The General Assembly even got in on the act. During the midst of the hubbub, President Riggs resigned, leaving the resolution of the problem to his successor, Oscar Page - parenthetically APSU's first president with an earned doctorate. He wisely bowed to local and alumni pressure and agreed to renovate Harned Hall for use in the administration of the liberal arts program. Finally, in 1994, it reopened as a high tech liberal arts building with offices for the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and space for several departmental offices.

Page was a supporter of free speech, which caused him some trouble. While he was president, both Sister Souljah, the social critic denounced by even Bill Clinton, and then United States President George Bush (senior) spoke on campus. Both speakers drew criticism for Page: the one because she was allowed to express her liberal views and the other because he expressed his conservative views! Some saw Bush's appearance as an attempt by Page to curry favor with a conservative state government. Page also supported the free speech rights of one of his faculty, a Professor Stovall, who protested the meager funding of the African American Cultural Center and also sought rectification of various related academic concerns. He did this by performing a classic sit-in in the APSU library, which offended many in the college and in Clarksville, since it was seen as an exercise of force rather than reasoned discussion. Stovall was also engaged in confrontations at local public schools and in a Nashville department store. Page received criticism for defending the man's right to speak his mind.

Page left Austin Peay in 1994 and was followed by Sal Rinella, who proved even more controversial than Page had. Rinella's years proved to be an era of bad feelings. His style of



governance rankled the faculty, since he did not pay much attention to faculty feelings or seek faculty input into campus decisions. He and his cabinet of vice-presidents made most decisions without consulting the faculty. What made matters worse was that most of the vice-presidents came from outside the APSU community. The faculty also complained about how Rinella allocated scarce financial resources, spending some of them on a new Business and Community Solution Center. No new funding accompanied the creation of this center, so it siphoned scarce dollars away from other programs. There were also allegations of violations of Tennessee Board of Regents policies and the use of accounting tricks to disguise the drain of monies away from instruction. During this time, adding fuel to the fire, Rinella raised his salary some 23%, which was much higher than the 2%-3% raises given professors. All of this unhappiness culminated in a vote by the faculty Senate of no-confidence in Rinella on October 23, 1997. The Board of Regents immediately spent a week on campus interviewing most of the parties involved and issued a report that publicly supported the president. However, in the appendices, the report conceded that many of the accusations were justified. The Board practically ordered the faculty and the administration to meet regularly to patch up their differences. While the ad hoc committee made some progress in resolving the issues and in improving relations, the crucial financial issues proved intractable. The atmosphere was not improved by public accusations by the Chancellor of the Board of Regents that some faculty members had been intimidated into voting in favor of the no-confidence resolution.

As if this turmoil were not enough, on January 22, 1999, a tornado struck downtown Clarksville and caused severe damage to several buildings on campus, including Harned Hall. Rinella did an excellent job coping with the emergency, organizing relief efforts and getting the university up and running again in a week's time.

In late 1999, Rinella announced his resignation, to take effect in 2000. The Board of Regents appointed Sherry Hoppe as interim president, later making her appointment permanent. Perhaps the most significant occurrence so far during her tenure has been the opening of the Sundquist Science Building, which at \$38 million, represented the “largest capital appropriation for a single academic building in Tennessee history”.

While Austin Peay, like most institutions of higher learning, has seen presidents, legislatures, mandates, and fads come and go, it has grown from an institution focused on educating teachers for white rural public elementary schools to one that encompasses graduate programs, nursing programs, business programs, fine arts programs, and liberal arts programs. The city fathers made a wise investment back in 1806 when it supported the founding of the first academy; they also made a wise investment in 1925 when they purchased the property of the Southwestern Presbyterian University and transferred it to the state. Clarksville is indeed fortunate to have Austin Peay in its community, enhancing its cultural and intellectual life.