

One Heartbeat

The History of the Boys' Latin School
(1847-1960)

Holly Lewis Maddux



ONE HEARTBEAT

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INTRODUCTION: BALTIMORE, 1847



Pratt Street flooded.

The heat wave that Baltimoreans had endured for weeks on end finally crested on August eleventh, and sheets of steamy rain fell on the city. Regardless of the downpour, John Deur, a wholesale hardware dealer with offices and a warehouse on Hanover Street, was determined to make his daily trip uptown to secure

a copy of the Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser, for its listings of the goods that had recently arrived in the harbor were essential to the operation of his business.¹ So off he went, up Light Street toward Pratt, fortified by a massive black umbrella. Pratt Street, the city's main east-west thoroughfare along the harbor, seemed more like a river than a road that morning, as a torrent of rain, mud, and garbage flowed through its bed. Deur had to use the tall stepping stones that had been placed there for pedestrians, and as he crossed, a chicken carcass, turnip peels, and a drenched and tattered bolt of cloth floated by. He cursed under his breath and wondered what had become of that herd of swine the city set loose each night to devour the refuse—was it asleep on the job?

Upon arriving safely on the north side of Pratt, Deur headed up Charles Street and took a right. The rain was steady, and steam rose from the beaten path, now mud. When he reached his destination, Lucas Brothers Booksellers, he lowered his umbrella and ducked inside. He was greeted by the pungent aroma of cigar smoke, which hung like a cloud over an assemblage of benches and chairs in the front of the shop. He picked up a paper from a shelf beside the door, left a nickel on the counter, and joined the men who were gathered there, reading, smoking, discussing the events of the day. Mr. Deur settled into a straight-backed chair in the corner to read his paper and dry off. Yes, just as he expected, a shipment of nails had come in from New York, and cotton cloth had arrived on the Alabama from Charleston. He would tell his friend William Fisher, who owned the dry-goods business on Baltimore Street.²

In 1847 Baltimore was a thriving city, the largest importer of foreign goods in the nation. Its prosperity was due to the harbor, which sat like a gleaming jewel at the center of the thick belt of commercial development that had grown up at its edges and from which wharves extended like greedy hands and piers like spindly fingers to its center. The shipping lanes there provided access to the Chesapeake, the most inland-reaching bay in the nation.

Deur circled the items in the paper that interested him and made a mental note of an agent he would contact upon returning to his office that afternoon. He then set about perusing the remainder of the paper as he waited for the rain to pass. In the education section of the classified advertisements, he saw a notice for Professor Topping's School, which was to be situated in the Moale house, just across the park from his own home on Washington Place in the Mount Vernon area. Topping had also rented an apartment in the Moale house, and Deur had met him on several occasions enjoying an evening breeze in the park. Deur had been impressed by Topping's manner—and his credentials as a former professor of classics at the College of New Jersey at Princeton. Deur had even mentioned Topping's enterprise to Fisher, whose lad was in need of a preparatory education.³ He wondered how things were going for Topping—whether news of his school was circulating and would result in adequate enrollment for the planned September commencement of classes.



The rain ended as suddenly as it had begun. Mr. Deur folded his paper, tucked it under his arm, and made his way back out to the street. Others were doing the same. Pedestrians stepped from doorways and overhangs, and carriages emerged from the narrow mews, where shelter had been sought. Baltimore resumed its busy pace and the business of the August afternoon.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1847 Baltimore's newspapers carried column upon column of classified ads for schools seeking students for the fall. An adequate system of public high schools had yet to be developed in Baltimore; in fact, there was just one public high school for boys, the Male Central High School (later renamed City College), from which a class of eight boys would finally graduate in 1851. To meet the demand of Baltimore's expanding class of prosperous industry leaders and professionals for schools to prepare their sons for roles in the emerging professions of business, medicine, law, engineering, and finance, proprietary schools were proliferating; schools with names like Pilomathean Hall, the Oakdale Academy, Professor Clarke's Classical School, Franklin Hall, St. Mary's Hall, the West Fayette Street Academy, and the Light Street Institute. The list of institutions read by Mr. Deur that day went on and on, but over time, the institutions themselves did not. Within fifty years, nearly all of them had closed their doors, and by the mid-1900s, only one remained in operation: Professor Topping's Classical School, founded in September of 1847. That school grew and prospered, weathering many a storm, and survives today as the Boys' Latin School of Maryland.

Why did this school survive, while all the others fell by the wayside? Certainly, in part, the school's survival can be chalked up to luck, its history emerging as a sequence of events with fortunate outcomes upon which another day, another chapter, could be built. But this history can also be traced through a succession of stewards: headmasters, teachers, alumni, and friends, who, over the years, when the survival of the school was imperiled, stepped forward with the ideas, the talent, or the money that enabled the values and traditions that the school represented, and which they had come to revere, to continue. As a result of this process, many of the characteristics that define Boys' Latin today have roots in an earlier time, with some tracing all the way back to the founder, Evert Marsh Topping, for the Boys' Latin School began as many institutions do: with a man and a "better idea."

comprised in six Departments, viz:

1 English Department.	4 Languages.
2 Mathematics.	5 Belles Lettres.
3 Natural Sciences.	6 Ornamental.

The School for Little Girls, under the exclusive management of a lady, will also be re opened as above.

au 31 dt68

PRIVATE INSTRUCTION.
A PRIVATE CLASS of six or eight Boys is about being formed for instruction in English, the Classics and Mathematics, by a graduate of Princeton College, who has ample testimonials of character and ability from the Faculty. Several of the pupils having been obtained, it is desirable that immediate application be made, as the Class will be opened on the 6th of September. Apply at this office. au 31 dt68

MRS. PEYTON'S ACADEMY
 FOR YOUNG LADIES,
 No. 66 North Calvert street, near Saratoga.
THE EXERCISES of this Institution will be resumed on the 1st MONDAY in September next. Particular information may be obtained by application to the Principal. s,m,w,f,m,w au 28

BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL.
MISSSES SNOWDEN AND NIGHTINGALE will resume their scholastic duties on WEDNESDAY, the 1st of September, at their residence on the South West corner of Sharp and Lombard. References on application. 9m,w&f au 23

MESSRS. S. & A. CLARKE
WILL RESUME the duties of their School on MONDAY, September 6th.

Professor Topping advertised for students in the Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser in the summer of 1847.

I

EVERT MARSH TOPPING: A MAN WITH A BETTER IDEA

Evert Marsh Topping was a tall, dark, and dashing gentleman of Irish descent. A man of keen intelligence and strong convictions, he was compelled to found a school by a desire to teach according to methods he had developed and employed (to the chagrin of his superiors) while serving as a professor at the College of New Jersey. The teaching methods that Topping devised were grounded in his belief that the students' unique interests must be taken into account in order for them to succeed in mastering the classical languages, Latin and Greek. His certainty concerning the effectiveness of his methods resulted in Topping's departure from his post at the college, as he felt that the methods employed there were too drastic, "giving the boys little chance for their own individual development."¹



*Evert Marsh Topping,
founder.*

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

IT IS SAID that "a good teacher is born, not made," yet in the case of Evert Marsh Topping, both nature and nurture appear to have come into play.

From the standpoint of his birth, Topping came from a well-situated family that provided education opportunities—secondary education and college—that were exceptional at the time. Additionally, Topping's lineage provided him with at least one forebear who had taken a scholarly path; his maternal grandfather, Amos Marsh. Marsh, a graduate of the College of New Jersey, had gone on to become a teacher and the founder of a preparatory academy in Vermont. Marsh had also been active in state politics and in 1800 was instrumental in establishing the University of Vermont at Burlington.² Against this backdrop of possibility, Topping pursued a lifetime of scholarship.

Evert Topping was born on January 3, 1812, in Chester, New Jersey. Evert's father, James, was a cabinetmaker with a shop on Main Street. His handiwork caught the eye of



The Chester Academy, where Topping prepared for the College of New Jersey, may have resembled this "School of Olden Times."

traders passing through who carried samples of it to New York. Subsequently, a demand developed for James Topping's well-crafted clock cases and his business prospered.³

Evert and his seven siblings were enrolled at the Chester Academy, a school in the village run by a scholar from Yale College. Evert, who showed scholarly promise from an early age, was tutored by the schoolmaster to take the examination that would qualify him for admission to the College of New Jersey. In 1826, when Evert was fourteen

years old, he passed the exam and was enrolled at the college as a freshman.⁴ It was customary at that time for youngsters to enter their freshman year at a college with a classical curriculum, such as the College of New Jersey, at that age, which is young by today's standards. The course work covered in the freshman and sophomore years at such a college could also be completed in the final years of some preparatory schools, whose graduates then entered the college as juniors. These two educational paths reflect the lack of uniformity in secondary education in the early 1800s. In the 1820s, secondary education was rare, with only five thousand students in the United States matriculating beyond grammar school to secondary tuition academies and public high schools.⁵

There were fewer than one hundred students enrolled at the College of New Jersey when Topping began his studies there. The classical curriculum that defined their studies was nothing like the liberal arts-based curriculum that is common today. Rather, it was modeled after the curricula in place at Oxford and Cambridge Universities in England,



The College of New Jersey at Princeton.

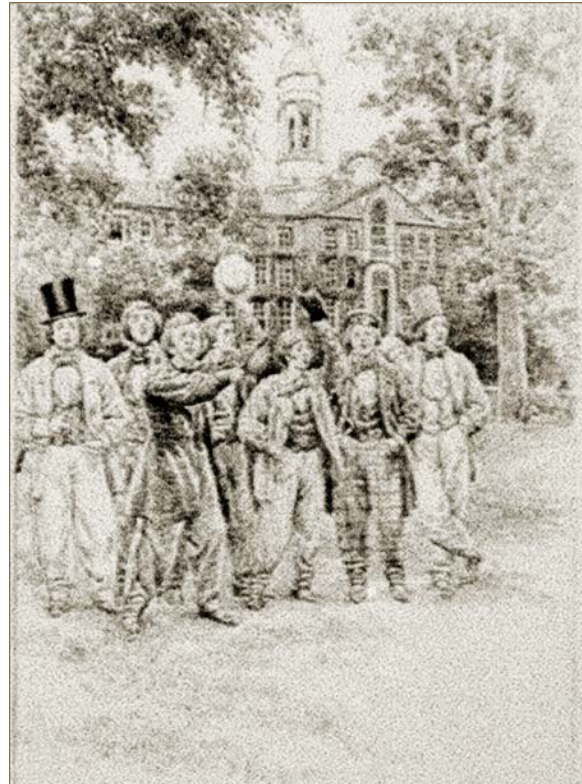
which had originated in the Middle Ages. Study was limited to the classical languages, mathematics, and religion.

In 1830 Topping was awarded a bachelor of arts degree by the college. He then embarked on a path that was common for a young scholar of his day—he enrolled at the Princeton Theological Seminary, which was situated on a campus adjoining that of the College of New Jersey, to pursue a Doctor of Divinity degree. In the time before the evolution of diverse and specialized professions in the United States, the clergy was one of the few attractive career options for a college-educated man.

Although Topping studied at the seminary for just one year before returning to the College of New Jersey to pursue studies that would lead him to a career as a teacher, while there he developed relationships that would be important to his teaching career path. Among that close-knit student body of sixty men, he became friendly with John Chester Backus and John P. Hill, both of whom would later become ministers at prominent Baltimore churches, posts from which they wielded influence in Baltimore society and from which they would aid Topping in the establishment of his school and the recruitment of students, beginning in 1847.⁶

Topping resumed his studies at the College of New Jersey in 1832, in pursuit of a master's degree in the classical languages. He studied under John Maclean, D.D. Maclean was the chairman of the Ancient Languages Department and vice president of the college. In Maclean, Topping found a mentor, and in Topping, Maclean found a promising scholar. After conferring a master's degree upon him in 1835, Maclean hired Topping as a tutor in his department. Tutors held the junior-most teaching positions at the college, the bottom rung of the ladder to a professorship. Topping accepted the post and was assigned the freshman class in Greek grammar.

Topping's class comprised ten young scholars who were fourteen and fifteen years of age—not much younger than he. Topping was only nineteen, and his youth and inexperience may have contributed to the difficulty he had controlling the students' antics. A description contained in the memoirs of E. Shippen, of the class of 1845, illuminates the problems that Topping encountered as a tutor:



This illustration from Old College Songs depicts the early students of the College of New Jersey. Their youthful exuberance inspired Topping to formulate his unique teaching method.

The Tutors did not count for much in my day—there were four of them [Topping included], incritical young men who were working their way to “higher education.” It was a dreadful position—for which they were certainly knocked about a great deal! Their windows [of their living quarters] were more than once blown in by explosives lowered from above. . . . The more these poor fellows tried to do their duty, yet the

*more the junior students—cubs would be the proper name—would be down upon them . . . venting themselves on the Tutors rather than the higher authorities.*⁷

During his years as a tutor Topping became interested in developing methods of teaching that would better engage the interest of his students and thus ameliorate the problem behaviors to which they were prone. Topping served as a tutor for three years, but at the outset of the fourth year he became ill, and was required to hire a substitute for the year so that he could take a leave of absence.⁸ By Christmas time, he had recuperated from his illness, but was nevertheless without a job for the remainder of the academic year. Restless and bored, he penned this woeful note to John Maclean:

Chester, Morris County December 24, 1838

Dear Sir,

I feel disappointed in not having been at Princeton as I intended near the beginning of the session. I returned from Long Island three weeks ago and have remained very strictly at home ever since. I shall be contented to stay as long as the effect upon my health is good though whenever I shall resolve to go out again I shall really be puzzled to know where to go as I have about completed the circle of my acquaintances in the North—a journey to the South in winter is the sort of exodus I do not much like—but if you have any commissions which you could trust me to execute, I should be the obliged person if you will send me off with some letter and a sufficient reason for presenting them. With the best wishes of the season I subscribe myself with more than usual meaning.

Your obliged tutor,

E. M. Topping

P.S. Your wine moves excellent. I shall drink a merry Christmas to you.

EMT⁹

Letter from Evert Marsh
Topping to John Maclean Jr.,
December 24, 1838:

Maclean responded by giving Topping an assignment that would prove to be a stepping stone on the path to the founding of a school in Baltimore. Topping was sent by Maclean to Maryland to recruit students for the college and conduct the examination by which they could gain their admission. It had been Maclean's mission to increase student enrollment at the college since 1829, when enrollment had dropped to just eighty-seven students and the college had nearly closed.¹⁰

While in Baltimore in the early months of 1839 Topping first crossed paths with William Meade Addison, a prominent Baltimore attorney with an interest in a small proprietary school, some students of which sought admission to the College of New Jersey through Topping's services. In Topping's acquaintance with Addison, the seeds were sown

for his eventual return to Baltimore, as Addison, who subsequently became his close friend, would persuade him to make the move in 1847 and thereafter would lend administrative and possibly financial support to the establishment of Topping's school.¹¹

Meanwhile, in the spring of 1839, upon completion of the Baltimore assignment, Topping returned to Princeton. Maclean was pleased with the results of Topping's venture south. Several Baltimore students subsequently enrolled at the college for the fall term, thereby contributing to an enrollment figure of 228 students and helping Maclean achieve the enrollment goal he had set a decade earlier in his drive to keep the college viable.¹² To reward Topping for his part in this achievement, Maclean recommended to the college trustees that he be promoted. In 1839 Topping was offered, and he accepted, the Greek chair and the title adjunct professor.¹³ Pleased with the accomplishment, he sent a copy of the 1839 College of New Jersey catalogue, which listed him as a regular member of the faculty, to his father in Chester. His academic career was a source of pride to the Topping clan, and the catalogue, along with other mementos, was treasured by family members until it was donated to the Princeton University Archives by a great niece in the 1960s.¹⁴

During the seven years that Topping held the post of adjunct professor, it was his duty to teach the fundamentals of the Greek language to the freshmen and sophomores, thus preparing them for their study of Greek literature under John Maclean in their junior and senior years.



*Baltimore attorney
William Meade Addison.*

EVOLUTION AS A TEACHER AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A METHOD

JOHN MACLEAN was known for his staunch belief in the importance of mental discipline. He and his like-minded colleagues at the College of New Jersey (and elsewhere in nineteenth-century academic circles) were ardent believers in the mandates of the classical canon. In this, the mind was likened to a muscle, which, to be properly trained, must be strenuously exercised, ideally through the rigors of parsing the grammar and memorizing the declensions of Latin and Greek and the like. Mastery of the languages spoken at the dawn of Western civilization was, according to the classical canon, essential to the perpetuation of the values, virtues, and ideas of that civilization. In this sense, Maclean and his colleagues believed that the students at the College of New Jersey and other elite colleges were being trained as conduits of the very ideas and values upon which civilization—and morality—depended. This was thought to be serious business. Concerns for student self-esteem and pleasure in learning were foreign to the premise. Rather, in the view of these men, the learning process was to be rigorous (even painful) and endured with a stiff upper lip.¹⁵

Thus, when it came to Maclean's attention that Topping's students were enjoying his classes in Greek—that spirited discussions were taking the place of rigorous grammar drills and recitations—he was convinced that something was awry. The teaching method that Topping had begun to employ, and Maclean's reaction to it, created a stir on the small campus, the particulars of which were recounted by then-student Edward Wall in his memoirs:

In Greek we were taught during the sophomore year by Adjunct Professor Topping. He was a very exact and thorough instructor. He would strive in translating a passage, for instance

*in The Iliad, to find terms, which would not only give a meaning, but which would give also the mood of the speaker. He would sometimes pause long on a passage, reproducing the situation, and suggesting one synonym after another to express the precise shade of the meaning. . . . I think that Professor Topping was not altogether a man after Dr. Maclean's heart. The Doctor once remarked in my presence that Professor Topping was doing work that belonged to him.*¹⁶



John Maclean Jr.

Maclean was opposed to Topping's use of themes from the Greek literature at hand as a context for teaching the grammar to his sophomores, rather than maintaining a narrow focus on the grammar contained therein. The faculty of the college was divided over the issue. Some supported Topping and approved of his teaching methods, while others concurred with Maclean. An overt confrontation between Topping and Maclean was thus averted—temporarily—but with the death of Topping's most influential supporter, a revered mathematics professor who had been hired by John Maclean, the path was cleared for Maclean to take action, and he drafted a letter to the trustees of the college informing them that Topping had deviated from the classical "way." Maclean recommended that Topping be sanctioned and, in the event that he refused to change his ways, fired. But before posting the letter to the trustees, Maclean sent a copy to Topping—in essence, giving him one last chance to return to the classical fold.

But Topping was a man of conviction, and he refused to abandon the methods he had devised and which he firmly believed enhanced the learning process for his students. He therefore responded to Maclean's letter with a letter of his own, dated June 22, 1846, in which he explained in detail his methods and the thinking behind them. The letter is significant because the methods described there are those that Topping employed when he opened his Baltimore school, and components of his pedagogy have survived at Boys' Latin to the present day.

Topping began the letter by telling Maclean that for five years he had attempted to teach Greek as it was supposed to be taught, requiring his students to memorize passages extracted from the works of Homer and other classical writers and then to recite them with exactness. He professed to have filled his role as a teacher, as proscribed by the classical canon, by pointing out the students' failings and requiring that they start from the beginning of a passage, again and again, until they achieved perfection, and thereafter requiring that they convey their understanding of the structure of the language by dissecting each sentence and explaining the forms and functions of its parts.

These were not easy tasks for the students, Topping reminded Maclean, as they were beyond the age, and developmental stage, at which learning by rote comes easily. The students, who had come to the college "handicapped by elementary deficiencies that a flagitious system of preparatory teaching had inflicted upon them," were therefore in need of remediation, but they were daunted when it was attempted as proscribed. Topping "saw, again and again[,] contrition in their eyes . . . [due to] a want of exact, elementary and grammatical knowledge." He insisted that the teaching methods he had been required to use were "stultifying" and resulted in "moans and groans and other willful noises in the recitation room . . . and misconduct requiring the discipline of the faculty." Not only that, but

*copy
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they failed to produce the desired learning: “I was not able to persuade even the best student among them to commit with perfect exactness or to secure what they had learned.” As a result, in desperation, he told Maclean, he developed “additional classroom activities to address the failings of the accepted method.” Then Topping described the teaching method which he devised and which he eventually implemented at his own school.

Having already reduced class size to 12 or 14 members, I began to invite the intellect of the class by adding to the mere translation and parsing of the lessons, instruction and exercises upon the passages read as had interested my mind and which I thought it no presumption to teach the class. I pointed out the exact meaning of words, in Greek and often in English, by comparing synonymous words, and by an exegesis of remarkable passages and occasional criticisms founded upon words thus prepared.

*...to let the
...not a few
...noises, some
Faculty, -
...it estab
Letter from Evert
Marsh Topping to
John Maclean Jr. June
22, 1846, explaining
the teaching methods
he had developed. & parsing
the passage*

The discussions of the literary and philosophical themes contained in the passages the students were required to read in Topping’s classes “excited a true intellectual interest [from which he could] turn [the students] with advantage to the elements . . . making them believe what they only partly believed before—that grammatical and verbal knowledge lies at the foundation of all attainments in language.”

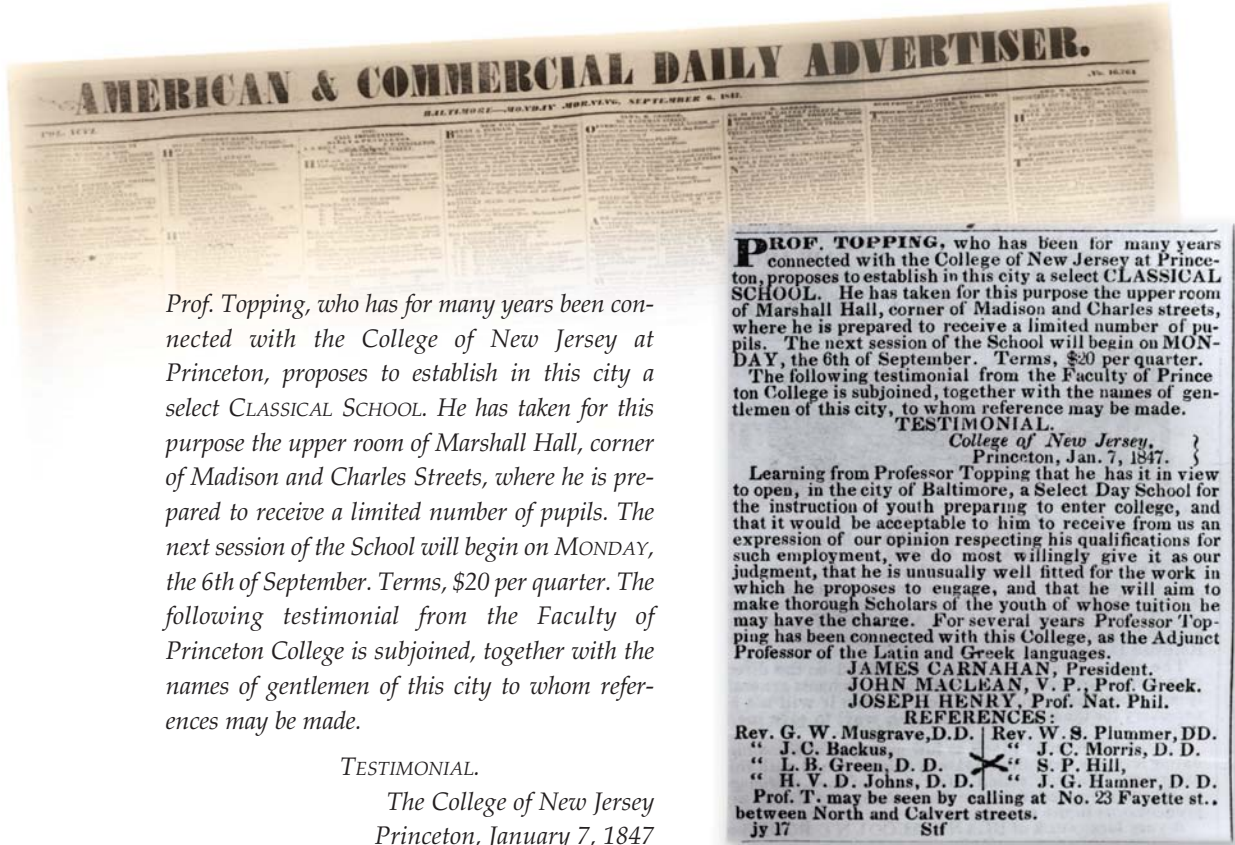
One can imagine the lively discussions of heroes, and journeys, and the meaning of life charging what had been a dreary recitation room with excitement and motivating the young men to “crack the code” (that is, learn the grammar) that would enable them to read on to the next turn of events in *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey*. “By being thus made to seek, [the student] has at last found—and he is prone to believe he will never forget what he has learned so well,” Topping concluded.

In substance, Topping concurred with a premise of the classical canon—that in order for a teacher to be effective, the method employed must be geared to the student’s age and cognitive development. Younger students were adept at learning by rote, a method that tapped into their propensity for concrete thought, whereas the older students, for example, the fifteen-year-old college sophomore, was best taught by appealing to his ability to think abstractly, regardless of his level of prior accomplishment—or lack thereof. “If my students had been my pupils at School [that is, preparatory school, thus younger], I would have compelled them to learn as I wished[,] but in College I could only persuade and mark them.”

Topping ended his letter with an ultimatum: “I have thus stated to you . . . the views upon which I have taught the Sophomore Class. It is in your power by insisting upon a change to compel me to an act of disobedience, which would injure me in the opinion of the highest authorities of the college. If you feel it to be your duty I must be content with the approbation of my conscience.”¹⁷ Maclean responded by forcing him to resign. In December 1846 the trustees accepted Topping’s resignation from the College of New Jersey.¹⁸

Topping’s departure from the college was viewed by the administration as a philosophical parting of ways. A deal was struck whereby the college administration agreed to support Topping’s efforts to open a school in Baltimore. This support came in the form of a glowing letter of recommendation signed by Maclean, as well as college president Carnahan and another professor. Topping was able to incorporate the letter into the newspaper advertisements he placed for the purpose of recruiting students. In exchange for the college’s endorsement, Topping agreed to prepare students for admission to the college. This agreement is substantiated by the increase in the representation of boys from Baltimore at the College of New Jersey, beginning two years after Topping had opened his school, including,

according to notes in student files, the admission of numerous boys from Topping's establishment.¹⁹ The following advertisement announcing the opening of a new school to be operated by Evert Marsh Topping ran in the *Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser* several times a week, from April through September 1847:



Prof. Topping, who has for many years been connected with the College of New Jersey at Princeton, proposes to establish in this city a select CLASSICAL SCHOOL. He has taken for this purpose the upper room of Marshall Hall, corner of Madison and Charles Streets, where he is prepared to receive a limited number of pupils. The next session of the School will begin on MONDAY, the 6th of September. Terms, \$20 per quarter. The following testimonial from the Faculty of Princeton College is subjoined, together with the names of gentlemen of this city to whom references may be made.

TESTIMONIAL.

*The College of New Jersey
Princeton, January 7, 1847*

Learning from Professor Topping that he has it in view to open, in the city of Baltimore, a Select Day School for the instruction of youth preparing to enter college, and it would be acceptable to him to receive from us an expression of our opinion respecting his qualifications for such employment, we do most willingly give it as our judgment, that he is unusually well suited for the work in which he proposes to engage, and that he will aim to make thorough Scholars of the youth of whose tuition he may have the charge. For several years Professor Topping has been connected with the College, as the Adjunct Professor of Latin and Greek languages.

*JAMES CARNAHAN, President
JOHN MACLEAN, V.P., Prof. Greek
JOSEPH HENRY, Prof. Nat. Phil.*

REFERENCES

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <i>Rev. G. W. Musgrave, D.D.</i> | <i>Rev. W. S. Plummer, D.D.</i> |
| <i>Rev. J. C. Backus</i> | <i>Rev. J. C. Morris, D.D.</i> |
| <i>Rev. L. B. Green, D.D.</i> | <i>Rev. J. P. Hill</i> |
| <i>Rev. H.V.D. Johns, D.D.</i> | <i>Rev. J. G. Hamner, D.D.²⁰</i> |

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JAMES CARNAHAN, President.
JOHN MACLEAN, V. P., Prof. Greek.
JOSEPH HENRY, Prof. Nat. Phil.

REFERENCES:
Rev. G. W. Musgrave, D.D. | Rev. W. S. Plummer, DD.
" J. C. Backus, " | " J. C. Morris, D. D.
" L. B. Green, D. D. | " S. P. Hill,
" H. V. D. Johns, D. D. | " J. G. Hamner, D. D.
Prof. T. may be seen by calling at No. 23 Fayette st.,
between North and Calvert streets.
jy 17 Sif

Advertisement, August 7, 1847.

The endorsement from the College of New Jersey established Topping's professional credentials, but in order for Baltimore's prominent families to entrust him with the education of their sons, Topping, an outsider, needed personal references. John Chester Backus and John P. Hill were Presbyterian ministers in Baltimore with whom Topping had been classmates at the Princeton Theological Seminary in 1828. These men helped him make the inroads into Baltimore society that were necessary in order for him to recruit students. They did this by endorsing him in the letter and persuading other clergyman to do so as well, which resulted in an impressive list of Baltimore clergymen in his advertisements for the school.



First Presbyterian Church, Baltimore.

II

PROFESSOR TOPPING'S CLASSICAL SCHOOL FOR BOYS



*617 Washington Place,
Boys' Latin's first location.*

FOUNDING: A SCHOOL IN MOUNT VERNON

ON SEPTEMBER 6, 1847, a small group of boys climbed the stairs to a schoolroom on the second floor of a brownstone townhouse and were greeted by Professor Evert Marsh Topping, from Princeton, as they settled in for the first day of instruction at his school, Professor Topping's Classical School for Boys. Professor Topping had located his enterprise in a house at 716 Washington Place. (In the 1890s it would be demolished to make room for the construction of the Stafford Hotel, now the Stafford Apartments.) The property was owned by Randall Moale, and improvements included the house, a stable, and some outbuildings. The grounds were bordered by Washington Place (Charles Street), Madison Street, Cathedral Street, and Branch Alley. Moale had inherited the property the previous year from his father, but as he already had a suitable residence elsewhere in the city, he leased it to tenants.¹ In addition to Topping, who had the schoolroom as well as an apartment on the second floor, another educational concern, the Newton University School, maintained classrooms on the first floor.² The house was commonly referred to as Marshall Hall, the name Newton University School used in order to link it to a building it leased elsewhere for classrooms which was referred to as Franklin Hall. Marshall Hall faced the park that spread to the north from the base of the Washington Monument, and the boys who attended Topping's school used the park as their playground.

Mount Vernon was a fashionable enclave in 1847. The elevation, which afforded relief from the stench of the city air, made it desirable to Baltimore's prosperous citizens, some of whom were beginning to build homes there. Nevertheless, the area surrounding Mount



Washington Monument, Baltimore

This view, looking north from the intersection of Franklin and Charles Streets, drawn in 1848, depicts the neighborhood at the time that Boys' Latin was founded. The house to the left of the monument is the Greenway House. The house in which the school was located is behind it, out of view. To the right of the monument is the home of the Howard family, in which early student McHenry Howard resided.

Vernon retained its rural character, and the boys who attended the school had many places to explore before heading home at the end of the day. Farm fields spread to the north and sloped eastward to the valley formed by the Jones Falls River, and a westerly walk on Madison Street meandered through a grove of majestic oak trees.

By its second year of operation, Professor Topping's school could boast an enrollment of sixteen or seventeen pupils, according to Dr. Samuel Chew, a prominent physician and dean of the University of Maryland Medical School, who, on February 8, 1849, enrolled his son Sam there and that night penned this entry in his journal:

I went with Sam this morning to Mr. Topping's school, N.W. corner of Charles and Madison streets where I entered him as a pupil. There are 16 or 17 boys in the school which I believe will be a very good one and I hope will prove beneficial to my boy. He left the Kemp's school two days ago. He commences with Mr. Topping the Latin grammar and . . . for the present confines to that study. He has entered upon it with Mr. Kemp, but made little or no progress, . . . his teacher knowing but scant Latin and no Greek.³

Feb. 8. Went with Sam this morning to Mr. Topping's School, N.W. corner of Charles & Madison Sts. where I entered him as a pupil. There are 16 or 17 boys in the school, which I believe to be a very good one, & hope will prove beneficial to my boy. He left Mr. Kemp's school two days ago. He commences with Mr. Topping the Latin Grammar & for the present confines to that study. He had entered upon it with Mr. Kemp, but made little or no progress, being chiefly occupied with his teacher knowing but scant Latin & no Greek.

A February 1849 entry in Dr. Samuel Chew's daybook described Professor Topping's School.



Dr. Chew's hopes for Sam's academic success would be realized, for Samuel Chew Jr. became a prominent physician whose ideas regarding medical training and practice revolutionized the field.

Thirteen-year-old John Prentiss Poe was among the boys already in Professor Topping's classroom on the February morning, 1849, when Samuel was enrolled by his father. John's father, Nielsen Poe, was a Baltimore attorney, and he wished for John to follow in his footsteps first by attending the College of New Jersey, as he had, and then by preparing for a legal career as he had, by reading law in the office of a practicing attorney for a year or two—an apprenticeship of sorts, typical of the way in which lawyers were commonly trained in Maryland at the time.

John Prentiss Poe, like Sam Chew, would actualize his father's dreams for him, matriculating to the College of New Jersey and thereafter becoming a leader in the emerging legal profession.

William Fell Giles was also a pupil in Topping's early classroom on the day young Sam Chew was enrolled. William's father had heard positive reports of Topping's school from William Meade Addison, a close associate of Topping's with whom Giles served on the U.S. District Court. Young Will made the steep uphill trek each day to the school in Mount Vernon from his family's home on Fells Point, the peninsula just east of Baltimore named for his forebears, and on this morning he may have been a bit out of breath from the climb when McHenry Howard came leaping up the stairs of Marshall Hall, two at a time and looking fresh as a daisy. McHenry had only to cross the park to get to Topping's classroom, as his family's home was on the northeast corner of Mount Vernon Place and Washington Place (where the Mount Vernon Methodist Church now stands). The Howard house was the first built in Mount Vernon before McHenry's grandfather, Col. John Eager Howard, bequeathed a segment of his estate, Belvidere, to the city for the erection of the Washington monument.

By 1852 Topping's classroom in Marshall Hall was bursting at the seams, and Topping may already have been considering a move to larger quarters, when, in the spring of 1852, Randall Moale announced his intention to sell the property. The sale became final in June, and as the new owners had other plans for the house, the tenants, including Topping, had to vacate the premises.



Early student Samuel Claggett Chew.

SAMUEL CLAGGETT CHEW, upon graduating from Professor Topping's School, earned a bachelor's degree from the College of New Jersey and then, in 1858, a medical degree from the University of Maryland Medical School. Chew next pursued further training in Paris, where he was exposed to new models for medical teaching, which, upon his return to Baltimore, he implemented at the University of Maryland Medical School. The new approach, which incorporated bedside clinical training using actual patients in place of the purely academic training that had previously prevailed, was eventually emulated by medical schools across the nation. Chew was also responsible for moving medicine away from general treatment to treatment that was framed by training and practice according to specialties, another concept that was eventually adopted by medical institutions across the United States.



Early student McHenry Howard pictured here later in life, on the right, fishing.

EXPANSION ON MADISON STREET

A FEW BLOCKS NORTHWEST OF MOUNT VERNON, a neighborhood was growing up around a new church, Mount Calvary (built in 1842), on a parcel of land that had previously been a portion of a sprawling estate owned by one of the two brothers Tiffany, whose adjacent properties comprised what is now most of West Baltimore.

Eutaw Street had been extended into the new neighborhood, and other streets, including Madison Street, Garden Street (later renamed Linden Avenue), Hamilton Terrace, and Moore Alley, had been laid. A line of the omnibus, the city's horse-drawn trolley-car system, had been extended to include a final stop in the neighborhood, making it accessible from other parts of the city. It seemed an ideal location for

a school, and on July 13, 1852, Topping purchased a lot on the southeast corner of Madison Street and Moore Alley, one block south of Biddle Street; at the time the property was identified as 187 Madison. He had a schoolhouse constructed on the lot, facing Madison Street and Mount Calvary Church, across the street.⁴



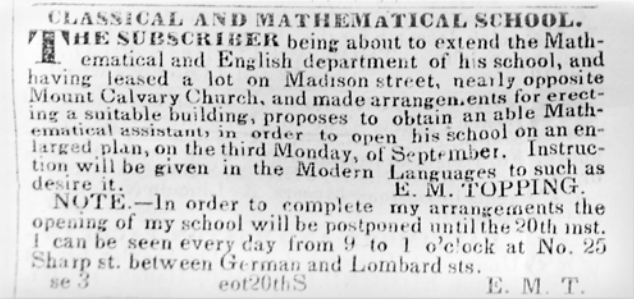
Sallie Hebb Topping.

While the building was under construction, Evert and his wife, Sallie Hebb Topping, whom he had married on July 22, 1850, resided with William Meade Addison and his family in his cottage adjoining the Tiffany estate.⁵ Addison, in addition to being Topping's close friend, was Sallie Topping's cousin, and Sallie had been raised by Addison's parents in his childhood home in Oxen Hill.⁶ The Addison cottage was just a mile's walk from the construction site, which allowed Topping to oversee the project closely. Despite his attention, construction ran



behind schedule, and on September 10, 1852, the building not yet completed and a mathematics instructor still to be hired, Topping ran the following ad in the *Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*:

CLASSICAL AND
MATHEMATICAL SCHOOL.
The subscriber being about to extend the Mathematical and English department of his school and having leased a lot on Madison Street nearly opposite Mount Calvary Church, and made arrangements for the erection of a suitable building, proposes to obtain an able mathematical assistant in order to open his school on an enlarged plan on the third Monday of September. Instruction will be given in Modern Languages to such as desire it.
E. M. TOPPING



Advertisement, September 10, 1852.

NOTE—In order to complete my arrangements the opening of my school will be postponed until the 20th. I can be seen every day from 9 to 1 o'clock at No 25 Sharp st. between German and Lombard sts.⁷

The school opened as planned on September 20, 1852, and by 1855 was filled to capacity, and Topping used advertisements not to recruit students but to communicate the date and time that classes would begin in September. What had begun in 1847 as a schoolroom



This view from the northwest depicts the Baltimore neighborhood in which Topping built a schoolhouse at the corner of Madison Street and Moore Alley. The church steeple, seen to the right of the Washington Monument, adorns Mount Calvary Church, which stood directly across Madison Street from the school.



Many of Topping's students traveled to and from school on this early form of public transportation, the omnibus.

in a house in Mount Vernon in which seventeen boys were versed in Greek and Latin grammar had evolved into a “modern” schoolhouse in a fashionable new neighborhood in which forty boys studied the classical languages as well as English grammar, composition, mathematics, and French. The name of the school was changed to the Classical and Mathematical School, to convey the broader curriculum—though it was popularly referred to simply as Professor Topping’s School. Topping maintained a feeder-school relationship with the College of New Jersey, and the number of students sent on to Princeton increased in proportion to the increase in the size of the student body. The school served Baltimore’s prominent families, and the majority of its graduates, following college, went into the practice of law or medicine or into family-owned businesses.

THE WINDS OF WAR

As the school thrived in the years before the Civil War, its vitality mirrored that of Baltimore, but stability and prosperity were not to last—for the city or the school. Shortly after Professor Topping’s School had moved to Madison Street, events ensued in rapid succession which fanned the winds of war. In 1856 the violence that came to be known as Bleeding Kansas horrified the nation. The Dred-Scott case followed in 1857. John Brown’s Raid on Harper’s Ferry fueled the fire in 1859. Abraham Lincoln was elected president in 1860, and finally, in 1861, the Southern states seceded from the Union.

In Baltimore, tensions mounted between the factions that held allegiance to the North and to the South, and the schisms ran deep. Families that had interacted harmoniously as members of the same churches, as partners in businesses, and as families with children in school together, were polarized by the issues of the day: slavery, the rights of states, and whether Maryland should join the Confederacy. In 1856, against the backdrop of these events, Topping employed Baltimore native George Gibson Carey to be his assistant and a Latin teacher at the school.



George Gibson Carey upon graduating from the College of New Jersey in 1855.

GEORGE GIBSON CAREY was born on October 21, 1836, the son of George Carey, an insurance company owner, and Mary Gibson of Richmond, Virginia. He was twenty years old when he went to work for Topping in 1856. Carey had attended a classical secondary school in Baltimore (possibly Professor Topping's school) and in the fall of 1853 had enrolled at the College of New Jersey as a junior. There he had studied classical languages under John Maclean, earning a bachelor's degree in 1854 and, in 1855, a master's degree.⁸

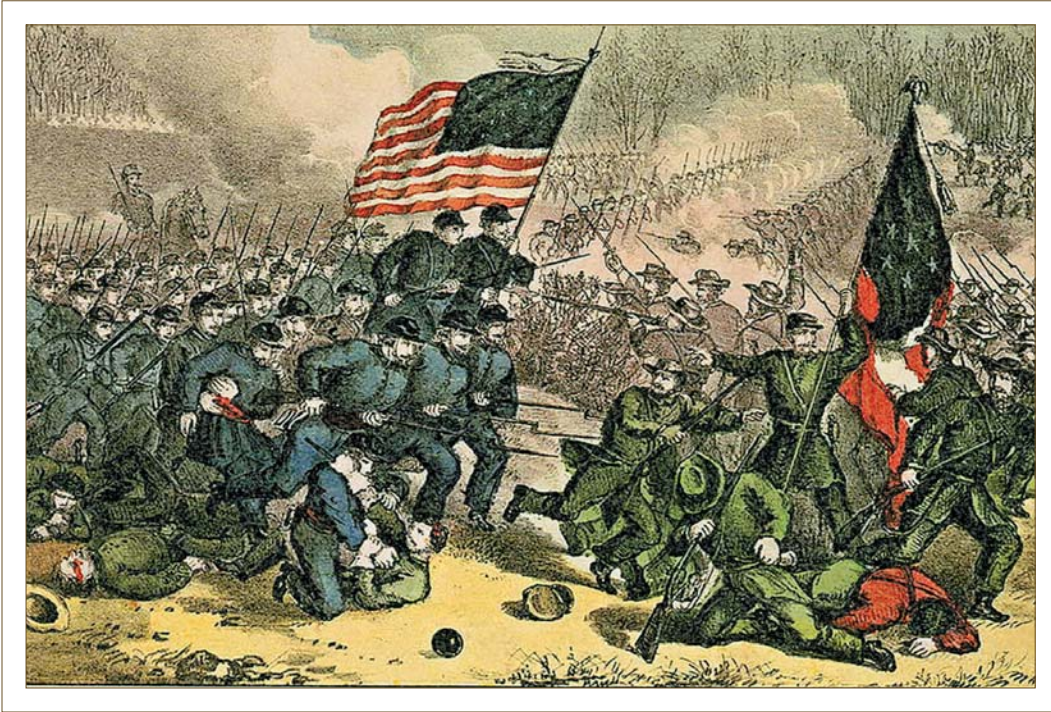
In 1858, Topping made Carey a co-principal of the school, and in 1861 Carey invested in the school, and the firm of Topping and Carey was formed. Carey's investment allayed a financial shortfall Topping had begun to experience in 1858, when he transferred the title of 187 Madison Street to Catherine Griswold in order to raise cash. He then leased the building from her, while continuing to operate the school from that location.⁹

Carey's subsequently stronger association with the school resulted in a benefit beyond the improvement of the finances; it helped ensure the school's survival during the Civil War. Carey, who was, in keeping with his roots and family's business interests, sympathetic to the Confederate cause, provided a counterpoint to Topping, whose adamant support of the Union cause would certainly have alienated the school's families who supported the Confederacy. An anecdote related by early student William Pegram demonstrates the point: "E. M. Topping . . . came from the North and was a strong Union sympathizer. [When] one of the larger boys had made up his mind to leave the School and join the Confederate army, the day before leaving, he said, 'Mr. Topping, if you should join the Northern army and we should meet on the field of battle, what would you do, sir?' With great emphasis and intense feeling in his voice Mr. Topping replied, 'I'd shoot you through the heart!'"¹⁰



The riot on Pratt Street depicted here between Union Troops from Massachusetts passing through Baltimore on their way to Washington D.C. and Confederate-sympathizing Baltimoreans set the tone for the rancor between North and South that prevailed in Baltimore throughout the Civil War.

Although a shadow was cast on life throughout the city as boys and men went off to war, and news of the bloody conflicts fought on fields just a day's journey away reached Baltimore in the form of lists of the dead and wounded, posted in public places, the Classical and Mathematical School carried on—until 1864, when amity between the two factions at the school finally became untenable. In the summer of 1864, Topping and Carey, mirroring the split between North



The Second Battle of Bull Run and other major conflicts of the Civil War were fought on fields less than a day's travel from Baltimore.



Meanwhile, Union troops on Federal Hill kept Baltimore under martial law.



and South in the nation, ended their partnership and split the school in two. In 1864, according to newspaper advertisements, the Classical and Mathematical School, at Madison between Orchard and Biddle [187 Madison Street], was scheduled to reopen on Monday, September 12, with Mr. Topping aided by Mr. J. W. Beach of Yale College, while just a short block away, in the basement of the Swedenborgian church, "George G. Carey, late of the firm of Topping & Carey, and assisted by Wm. H. Keighler Jr.," was preparing to open his own "School for Boys."¹¹

The two small schools limped through the fall and winter months of 1864. Then, on April 9, 1865, like a shaft of light streaming through the clouds at the break in a storm, word came from Richmond that General Robert E. Lee had surrendered. The Civil War was over and Baltimore, along with the rest of the nation, could begin to rebuild.

By 1864 tensions at the Classical and Mathematical School became untenable and the school split in two.



GEORGE G. CAREY, late of the firm of TOPPING & CAREY, assisted by WM. H. KEIGHLER, JR., will open, on the 12th of September, a school for Boys on BIDDLE STREET, ONE DOOR NORTH OF MADISON. Circulars, containing terms and other particulars, may be found at the principal Book Stores, and at No. 70 CATHEDRAL STREET, after the 1st of September. Applications for admission may be made at any time to Mr. CAREY, No. 70 Cathedral street, or to Mr. KEIGHLER, at No. 326 North Eutaw street. au4-eo2w&atf

BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL.

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Baltimore county, Md.
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CLASSICAL AND MATHEMATICAL SCHOOL,
On Madison, between Orchard and Biddle Sts.,
E. M. TOPPING, } Principals,
J. W. BEACH, }

Will reopen on **MONDAY**, September 12th. In addition to Language and Mathematics, all the usual branches of an English education will be thoroughly taught. Mr. TOPPING will be aided by Mr. J. W. BEACH, of Yale College.

After Sept. 7th, Mr. Topping may be seen at his school rooms from 11 to 12 A. M., and in the afternoon at his Residence, No. 182 PRESTON ST. au25-eot85&atf

Topping's school, patronized by families that backed the Union, is pictured on the left, and the school operated by George Carey can be seen a block away, in a church basement at the corner of Biddle and Madison Streets.

Topping's and Carey's separate schools may, in peaceful times, have enjoyed conditions in which to stabilize, grow, and prosper. Perhaps they would have merged, becoming one again, and in combination, a larger, more stable school. But there are enemies that cannot be vanquished with the signing of a treaty. In the aftermath of the war, the smallpox epidemic that had plagued Baltimore for more than a year was fueled by the return of weary, sick, and wounded soldiers, and it raged with a new vengeance. Evert Topping succumbed to smallpox that spring and, perhaps thinking that rural Chester would offer a better environment for recovery, went home.¹² He died there on July 6, 1865, at the age of fifty-three and was put to rest in a family plot on a gently sloping hill behind a Presbyterian Church just outside of town. But Topping's ideas regarding education—ideas on how best to “incite a manly interest in learning” in adolescent boys, lived on in his protégé, George Carey, at the Carey School. At the time of Topping's death Carey was operating independently, but, having been mentored by Topping, he shared Topping's philosophy of education and methods of teaching. Carey was therefore in a position to carry on alone, beginning in September of 1865, with the mission that Topping had begun seventeen years earlier upon founding the school.

III

THE CAREY SCHOOL

SETTLING IN ON LINDEN AVENUE

GEORGE CAREY operated his school in the basement of the Swedenborgian church for two years before purchasing the lot that in 1867 was known as 265 Eutaw Street. The lot, which was on the west side of Eutaw, faced the Richmond Market, but Carey chose to build his schoolhouse in the rear, facing Garden Street. (Garden Street was later renamed Linden Avenue, and beginning in 1887 the address of the school was 870 Linden Avenue. In 1978 the building that had been Carey's school was demolished to make way for a Maryland General Hospital parking garage.) Carey's schoolhouse was smaller than the one he and Topping had operated on nearby Madison Street, but it was "more than adequate for its intended purpose," according to a later catalogue. "No pains or expense were spared [in the erection of the building] to secure abundant heat and light and thorough ventilation." The description continued: "The ground floor is occupied by a large play-room . . . fitted with simple apparatus for exercise and [it] serves as a place of assembly before the recitation rooms [on the second and third floors] are opened [each morning]. Being thoroughly warm in the winter and cool in the summer, the school house is comfortable at all seasons of the year."

The location was described as accessible from all parts of the city and the suburbs, and yet the students at the Carey School were a homogeneous lot, sons of Baltimore's pros-



The Carey School, 870 Linden Avenue—1866-97.



Early student of the Carey School,
Frederick Reese.

perous Christian families of Anglo-Saxon and German descent, and a good number of them sons of alumni who had attended the school under Topping.

It is common for remembrances of school days to include recollections of pranks and their punishments, and the Carey School presents no exception. The few accounts that survive are replete with their descriptions. Frederick Reese, a student of the Carey School from 1868 to 1872, remembered Carey as “a good scholar, a fine teacher, and a man of unusually forceful character . . . and a thorough disciplinarian,” and he imparts this description of life at the Carey School:

No tricks were played under him [without consequence]. I received a number of demerits for faults not serious, too much forbidden conversation, an occasional spit ball, or other minor infractions of the rules. Mr. Carey called them “extras” because for every one a boy had to stay in school and work an extra fifteen minutes. At three-thirty every delinquent was sent home and if by Friday at that hour his extras were not worked off he was invited to return on Saturday morning, which invitation he accepted, if not joyfully. Mr. Carey said it was not an inconvenience at all as he was always in the school house on Saturday morning and liked to have the company.¹

Apparently, by the time William Pegram was enrolled at the school in the 1880s, Carey’s measures had taken on a new dimension:

Mr. Carey sat at his desk on a little raised platform and for minor infractions he would make a boy come and sit beside him on the edge of the platform. Then, as he went on with his writing, he would dip his pen in the inkwell and wipe it on the top of the boy’s head. Sometimes a boy would get a pretty good dose of ink. There was one boy with curly bright red hair who was a frequent offender. Every now and then after Mr. Carey wiped his pen on his head, he would say, “Oh, did I get too much on?” and the boy would say, “No, sir,” at which the whole school would laugh and then Mr. Carey would keep everybody in that afternoon.

Pegram remembered the antics of fellow student Alan McLane, who could perfectly imitate a natural sneeze, making a tremendous noise when he did it.

He would sneeze with great vigor when he was close to Mr. Carey, causing Mr. Carey to jump. Then he would start to apologize, but his apology would be interrupted by another sneeze, and the same thing would be repeated until Mr. Carey would tell him he’d better take his books and go home, which was what he’d wanted all the time.

Basil Wagner’s favorite prank, according to Pegram, was to put snuff down the register so that it would fall onto the stove. He reported that “when Mr. Carey finally caught him, he gave him a whipping that stood out for years among all others.”

More serious altercations during Pegram’s time reportedly involved battles with the students at the public school on Pennsylvania Avenue:

There were vacant lots between the two schools and when we went outdoors we filled our pockets with stones and those lots became a battleground. We held regular stone battles and boys on both sides were frequently cut and bruised and one or two serious casualties occurred.²

Regardless of their pranks and problem behaviors, the students at the Carey School found time to learn, for the school was regarded by many as the finest college preparatory institution in the city. Upon Carey's death in 1894, the *Baltimore American* reported that "George Carey was a highly respected educator" and noted that "enrollment at his school grew to 90 pupils, making it the largest school of its standing in the City. For a period of 40 years, when the question of higher education or preparation for university was mentioned, Carey's was chosen as the school."³

SCHOOLYARD PHOTOGRAPH, 1884

Imagine a handful of boys, eager to heft things with their new-found strength, volunteering to carry four benches and a chair to the play lot in the rear of the school: Francis Riggs, Frank Thomas, Campbell James, and Lee Marshall, perhaps, supervised by the older, more responsible head boy, Richard Meeker. The benches screech as they push them across the cobbled surface, arranging the furniture in front of the building's rear wall in the light of the morning sun. Two benches are flush to the wall, and in front of them is the headmaster's heavy wooden desk chair, flanked by two more benches. "Create a space between the two rows," Mr. Klenner, their German teacher, instructs them, "for a row of boys to stand." He is busy screwing a big box camera onto a tripod he has set up about thirty feet from the spot where the boys have arranged the furniture. He disappears under a black canvas cloth and peers through the lens. Four exposures, he figures, will be needed to photograph all ninety-three students at the Carey School.

The rear door bursts open and the boys spill onto the play lot. Mr. Carey and his instructors, attempting to contain them, order them to the rear of the lot to await their turns at being assembled by class groups for the photographs.

"Quietly," they are told. "No horsing around."

Carey directs the youngest boys, the first and second formers, to take their places on the set, calling them, one by one: "George Weers," "Rufus Gibbs," "William Fisher," "Leopold Fisher," "Gunther!" "Thomas Harrison," "Worthington!" "Roland West." And the boys are directed to the back row; to stand on the bench. Highland Burns, Sam Theobald, Frank Bonsel, Harry Riggs, Campbell James, Lee Marshall, William Harrison, and John Fisher take their places in the middle row. In the front, the two smallest boys, Carroll Baldwin and Francis Riggs are directed to opposite ends of the bench, and then "Thomas!" "Manning!" Carey calls to two boys who pet an old dog that has wandered onto their the play lot sensing opportunities for affection, and he directs them to the inside seats. Finally, "Riley," "Russell," "Donn," he calls, and these, the largest



George Carey with students (1884). Front row (l-r): Carroll Baldwin, Frank Thomas, ? Riley, John Donn, George Carey, ? Russell, ? Manning, Francis G. Riggs, F. Middle row: Highland Burns, Samuel Theobald, Frank Bonsel, Harry Riggs, Campbell James, R.E. Lee Marshall, William Harrison, John Fisher. Back row: George Weers, Rufus Gibbs, William Fisher, Leopold Fischer, ? Gunther, Thomas Harrison, ? Worthington, Roland West.

of the second formers, take their places in the middle of the row.

Satisfied, Carey makes his way to his chair. Taking one last look behind him before settling in, he sees that Rufus Gibbs, who arrived just as the boys were filing out for the photo, is still wearing his hat, and he tells him to remove it. Gibbs squashes it under his arm. Roland West asks what to do with his books and starts to jump from the bench to put them on the ground. "Simply hold them," Carey tells him. "Hold them at your side."

Finally, the old schoolmaster turns to face the camera, gives his trousers a tug and lowers himself into the chair. He is a portly man, and the three-piece suit he wears for the occasion is clearly challenged by his girth, but his formidable stature, combined with his full white beard, serves him well, lending him an aura of distinguished authority that is clearly evident in the context of the sea of youthful faces that surround him.

"Be still!" Mr. Klenner commands from beneath the cloth, and he counts backward in his native tongue: "Drei," "Zwei," "Eins." The boys freeze and stare at the schoolmaster's hand, perched like a bird frozen in flight just above the camera—that is, all except for John Fisher, who looks off toward the sound of the old dog, now barking, as the shutter falls on this assemblage of students frozen in a moment of their youth, on a sunny spring morning in 1884.

“Ausgespielt!” Klenner declares. The photograph taken, the boys begin to scatter, but they don’t get far before Carey corrals them inside, where they resume their study of Latin with him.

Once the second assemblage of boys has finished posing for their photograph, science master Walker leads them inside, to the school’s makeshift laboratory, a classroom outfitted with two wooden tables and a shelf that holds test tubes and beakers and other supplies. He unlocks the closet where the chemicals are stored, some in powdered, others in liquid form, and removes those that are to be used for the day’s experimentation. The boys gather round.

Upstairs, Mr. Klenner, having completed the picture-taking and put away the equipment (which he owns, as photography is his hobby), commences with the French lesson. It is Klenner’s duty to teach French in addition to his native German, and, as always, he opens the period this morning with “Young Gentlemen, we will now waste an hour on the French!” Klenner, once an officer of the Austrian army and a veteran of the Franco-Prussian War, believes, and regularly informs the boys, that there will soon be another war between Germany and France and that thereafter there will be no more France, thus making mastery of the language superfluous. As far as he is concerned, he tells them, it is all simply in a day’s work.⁴



Students of the Carey School (1884). Front row (l-r): Edgar Allen Poe, Franklin Upshur, ??, Robert McLean, Richard Meeker, ??, Ernest Gunther, ?. Middle row: Mr. Walker, Instructor, ??, George H. Morrison, William Knower, ??, ??, Henry Knower, Robert Preston, George Thompson, Kelso Cross. Back row: Joe Welsh, Frank Baldwin, ??, ? Marshall, ??, Shellman Brown, Roland Harvey.

George Carey, like Topping, had been trained in the classical mode by John Maclean at the College of New Jersey, and he adhered to the pedagogy that Topping had put in place at the school's founding. The methods and curriculum at the Carey School were therefore rooted in the classical canon, with the boys in first through fifth forms mastering Latin grammar by memorization and rote, and the older boys, those in the sixth form, reading Ovid, discussing the themes therein, and composing original essays in Latin. They also delved into Greek. By the 1880s, Greek had been dropped from the schedule at all other grade levels to make room for curriculum changes that were implemented at the Carey School shortly after the founding of the Johns Hopkins University in 1876.

*The Johns Hopkins University,
Physical Laboratory Building,
corner of Monument Street
and Linden Avenue.*



The Johns Hopkins University, founded 1879.



COURSE OF STUDY.				EACH FORM ONE YEAR.			
FORM I.	Spelling and Dictation English Grammar and Composition	Reading and Declamation	Geography- Map Drawing, U. S. History.	Arithmetic, Written and Mental	Latin Lessons Easy Translation		Drawing and Penmanship.
FORM II.	Spelling and Dictation, English Grammar and Composition	Reading and Declamation.	Geography- Map Drawing, English History.	Arithmetic Written and Mental.	Latin Forms Completed, Gate to Caesar.		Drawing and Penmanship.
FORM III.	Spelling and Dictation, English Grammar and Composition	Reading and Declamation	Greek and Roman History	Commercial Ar- ithmetic, Alge- bra and Geom- etry Alternately.	Caesar Completed Latin Grammar and Composition Sight Readings	French Conversation	Drawing and Penmanship.
FORM IV.	Lockwood's English Lessons Composition and Declamation.	Greek Lessons Easy Translation	Chemistry and Physics.	Geometry, Algebra.	Cicero, Latin Grammar and Composition.	Chardens's First French Course, Conversation.	Otis' Elementary German, Translation.
FORM V.	Lounsbery's Eng. Language, Composition and Declamation.	History, Lectures and Readings.	Chemistry and Physics.	Geometry, Algebra.	Virgil, Latin Grammar and Composition.	Whitney's French Grammar, Super's French Reader.	Whitney's German Grammar Translation.
FORM VI.	Greek, Homer and Herodotus.	Composition.	Reviews in Geometry and Algebra.	Trigonometry and Analytical Geometry Reviews.	Ovid, Latin Composition Reviews.	French required for College.	German required for College.

NOTE: Numerous selections from English and American Authors are read in school and at home during each year of the course under the direction of the Instructor.

The schedule of courses from a Carey School catalogue reflects curriculum changes put in place to meet Johns Hopkins admissions requirements.

Johns Hopkins was unique in that it had been established with the mission of providing opportunities for advanced study and research in specialized areas. The focus on graduate study reflected the increasing specialization that had evolved in many professions after the Civil War. But the university also admitted students at the collegiate level, and its undergraduate programs became an attractive option for Baltimore families.

The standards for admission to Johns Hopkins as an undergraduate were rigorous, requiring competency in areas that had not previously been included in the curriculum at the Carey School. It was, therefore, in response to the requirements for admission to Johns Hopkins that Carey broadened the curriculum to include the new subjects—history, science, and advanced mathematics—while retaining the classical curriculum, which over the years had evolved to include, in addition to Latin and Greek: English, French, German, arithmetic, and geometry.

The study of history at the Carey School, and in the United States in general, was conducted within the milieu of Darwinism, which had taken hold since the 1859 publication of *The Origin of Species*. In this context, history was taught as a process of evolution, the principles of which were accordingly applied to the origin of societies. The first form at the Carey School studied the history of the United States—in the parlance of Darwinism, the most evolved stage of English society, which was studied by the second formers. In the same vein, third formers examined the societies of ancient Greece and Rome as precursors of modern Western societies. Meanwhile, in science, the fourth form studied physics and the fifth form studied chemistry.

A BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS

IN 1894, at age of fifty-five, George Carey died of a heart attack. It was a Friday night in May, just before or just after midnight—Josephine, his wife, wasn't sure—so the date of death in the obituaries that appeared in the following days was variously reported as May 25 and May 26. But these announcements did not vary in their praise of Carey and the school he had overseen for twenty-eight years. The Carey School was characterized across the board as a prominent institution—"one of the best-known schools in Baltimore," said the *Sun*. "A classical and mathematical school of wide reputation," pronounced the *Gazette*. "An institution where men of the finest families have procured their educations," declared the *American*. But the reputation of the school was so inextricably tied to the man whose name it bore that it seemed that without him, the school might not survive.

Had it not been for the timing of Carey's death—just two weeks shy of the end of an academic year—the school would probably have followed George Carey to an early grave. But there were exams to be given, grades to be averaged, diplomas to be awarded, and seniors to be sent off to college, so the parents of the Carey School boys came together in the days after Carey's death to forge a plan to bring the school year to a conclusion. They selected Latin teacher James Annesley Dunham, a thirty-nine-year-old teacher who had been with the Carey School for three years, to perform the administrative duties of headmaster through the end of the year.

Dunham was popular with the students and he brought the 1893-94 school year to a successful conclusion, so the parents were heartened, perhaps seeing in him what would years later be remarked on as "a genius for the work he did."⁵ They were pleased to observe that his philosophy and the teaching methods he employed were consistent with those upon which Topping had founded the school and which Carey had believed in and practiced. Being "opposed to the use of collegiate and university methods in the training of young minds," Dunham was philosophically aligned with the precepts of the classical canon; yet, much in the vein of Topping's ideas, as expressed in the letter to John Maclean, Dunham professed a belief that "students must be led to understand the [underlying] principles, rather than [be] required to work an unreasonable number of examples under a rule learned by rote."⁶

A core group of the Carey School fathers, many of whom were alumni of the school, felt that in James Dunham they had found an educator who could lead the school on a permanent basis and in so doing perpetuate the teaching methods and philosophy of education the school had come to be known for. But Dunham did not have the means to buy the school—and even if he had, there wasn't much to buy. After Carey's death, student enrollment had dropped to half of what it had been, and the Linden Avenue building was outmoded and in need of extensive renovations. Therefore the group pursued an alternate route: They incorporated the school in late 1894 as the Boys' Latin School of Baltimore and became its board of trustees, stewards who would see the school into the new century. James Dunham was installed as the third headmaster—he was also a trustee—and they began to formulate plans for the future.

Immediate improvements to the Linden Avenue schoolhouse were essential, and a "new set of chemicals, a new globe, the best of ancient and modern maps" were installed, new chalkboards were mounted, and the building was freshly painted.⁷ But this was not enough, and the trustees began an effort to raise the capital to build a new school. They did not expect a return on their investment, but simply wished to see the school's "aims and principles perpetuated into the future."⁸ Within two and a half years they had raised the necessary funds, and on June 17, 1897, they took title to a lot on Brevard Street, at the base of Bolton Hill and facing the Mount Royal Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Station.⁹ The station

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THE BOYS' SCHOOL
LATIN SCHOOL
FORMERLY
THE CAREY SCHOOL.

1895-96

THIRTY SECOND YEAR



J. A. DUNHAM, A.B., Head Master Boys' Latin School.

J. A. DUNHAM. A. B.
HEAD MASTER.

A group of Carey School fathers and alumni formed a board of trustees following Carey's death and appointed Latin teacher James Dunham headmaster. They provided the financial backing for the school to continue operating and, in 1894, they renamed it the Boys' Latin School of Baltimore.

In One Heartbeat, the story of the Boys' Latin School, founded 13 years prior to the onset of the Civil War, comes alive as a chronicle of school days and boyhoods...



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