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Catalogue and Circular

OF THE

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Memorial Institute.

CHARLOTTE, N. C.

1867-8.

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FIRST ANNUAL
CATALOGUE AND CIRCULAR

OF THE

Biddle Memorial Institute,

CHARLOTTE, N. C. 1867-8.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S COMMITTEE ON FREEDMEN.
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A. WHITE,-----	<i>Alexander, N. C.</i>
H. WRIGHT,-----	<i>Lancaster, S. C.</i>
Total, 43.	

TERMS OF ADMISSION.

The Trustees offer gratuitous instruction, and rooms free of rent, to all young men of color bringing satisfactory testimonials of moral character and talent.

They can provide bedroom furniture, for forty students, free of charge. Candidates for the Ministry, will receive such aid as their necessities, and the resources at the command of the Faculty will allow, but no student will be aided until he has remained in the Institute one month, and given satisfactory evidence of piety and talent.

No student will be considered a regular member of the Institute, until he has signed the By-Laws, and has paid a fee of one dollar for contingent expenses.

EXPENSES.

A steward will be appointed by the Trustees, and the board of the students will be fixed at as low a rate as can be afforded. It will not exceed nine dollars per month. All students desiring it will be allowed to board themselves. The expenses can thus be reduced to five or six dollars per month.

TERM AND VACATION.

To enable the students to earn something for their support and to save traveling expenses, there will be but one session, of eight months, commencing September 16th, and closing May 16th.

Students wishing to enter the Institute should make early application.

Address

REV. W. L. MILLER,
Secretary Biddle Memorial Institute,
Charlotte, N. C.

Contributions either in aid of the Building Fund, or for the support of students may be sent to

REV. S. C. ALEXANDER,
Charlotte, N. C.,

Or to the Treasurer of the Assembly's Committee on Freedmen,
at Pittsburgh, Pa.

CIRCULAR.

ORIGIN OF THE B. M. INSTITUTE.

At the close of the war the Freedmen were found exceedingly anxious to be organized into churches of their own. Two difficulties were experienced: 1st, That of securing suitable Ministers. 2d, The paucity of means compared with the work to be done. In the spring of 1867, at a meeting of the Missionary Committee of the Catawba Presbytery, with the Secretary of the General Assembly's Committee on Freedmen, after a full discussion of the fields, and methods of successfully prosecuting the work, a resolution was unanimously passed, declaring that an institution to prepare Ministers and Teachers of the colored race, was not only the most judicious measure to be adopted, but indispensable to the successful prosecution of the work.

The first donation towards founding such an institution was given by Mrs. Mary L. Biddle, of Philadelphia. Two of the Missionaries were elected Professors, and to them, in addition to the charge of several churches, was assigned the work of securing funds and training the first students.

Amid great embarrassment from want of funds, the Institute has made steady progress, enlarging its sphere of usefulness, and adding constantly to the number of its friends, as its object, plan and promising opening, became known to the Church.

LOCATION.

Many reasons combined to influence the Trustees in the selection of a location. Before the emancipation of the slaves, no seminary of learning for the colored people was tolerated in the South, and the friends of that race were compelled to establish schools for them far away from the sections inhabited by them. It was

thought highly important since their emancipation that seminaries should be established in their midst; not only from motives of economy, but on account of the powerful elevating influence exerted by their presence, and the valuable missionary work the students might perform during the time they were under instruction. Charlotte, N. C., one of the most prosperous towns in the South, the terminus of five railroads, in the midst of a large and unusually intelligent colored population, and surrounded by many organized colored churches, was unanimously selected as the location.

A few students were under instruction during the summer months of 1867, but the first regular session commenced on September 16th, 1867, and will close May 16th, 1868. During this period forty-three young men have been connected with the institution, of whom twenty are candidates for the Ministry.

These last have been employed on Saturdays and Sabbaths in teaching schools in the adjacent congregations, holding prayer meetings, and distributing papers, tracts, Bibles, &c., thereby giving an opportunity to hundreds of both old and young to learn to read the Word of God. The success of the plan has been truly remarkable. The congregations served by these catechists are strongly attached to them, and much evidence of the usefulness of their humble labors has come before the faculty, who, in the character of evangelists, superintend the field. After much difficulty in securing a suitable site, eight acres of a beautiful grove, on a ridge overlooking the city, and within a mile of its centre, were donated by Col. W. R. Myres, a citizen of Charlotte. On this lot a building three stories high, 54 by 50 feet, is being erected, with chapel, recitation rooms and dormitories.

IMPORTANCE OF THE INSTITUTE.

Four millions of semi-civilized, and partially Christianized inhabitants of our land appeal loudly to the Church of God, for those religious and educational advantages necessary, not only to qualify them to discharge their novel duties, but to prevent their retrocession in civilization and religion. Startling as the announcement may seem, a thorough knowledge of the character and con-

dition of the Freedmen compel us, mournfully, but solemnly, to declare our convictions. The rebellion exhausted the material resources of the South; successive bad crops, the jealousy of races and mutual wrongs, the withdrawal instead of introduction of Northern capital, together with the necessary State and National taxation, forbid the hope that much can be done for several years by the State in the way of educating the poor. Never before, have American Christians had so heavy a burden imposed upon them, or such motives to aid in the evangelization of any class. The restoration of the material prosperity of the South, and the stability and peace of society, as well as the spiritual interests of millions, depend, in a great measure, on the awakening of the Church to the magnitude of the work to which, in the wonderful providence of God, she is called. The object of the Institute is to educate the most talented and pious of the Freedmen, that they may go out and educate the people. The various Missionary associations engaged in the work are now adopting the same plan, educating the teachers rather than the masses.

No other institution, aspiring to a collegiate grade, is to be found in Western Carolina. If the importance of the enterprise is realized by the Church, and the means are furnished, one hundred or more students of approved talent and piety doubtless will avail themselves of the advantages of the Institute, during the ensuing session. Some of these will support themselves—some will require small amounts to enable them to remain during the entire session; while others, candidates for the Ministry, will depend entirely on Christian benevolence for a support. Of the forty-three connected with the Institute during the present session, only twenty-five have received aid, and the sums given have ranged from six to one hundred dollars.

SCHOLARSHIPS.

Young men studying for the Ministry, suitably recommended, are received on trial for one month, at their own expense. If their talents and piety are approved, they are then placed on scholarships of one hundred dollars per session, or less if they have any resources of their own. Fifty scholarships can be filled with excellent men

during the session. Smaller amounts are required for a "General Aid Fund," to supplement the means of worthy young men. Quarterly reports will be sent to the patrons of the Institute. No charge is made in any case for tuition or room rent.

ENDOWMENT.

No provision has been made for the endowment of the Institute. Of the three Professors now connected with it, two are supported by the General Assembly's Committee, and the third is bearing his own charges. The success thus far attending the Institute, and the prospects of unparalleled usefulness, encourage the Trustees, to appeal to the Church for the endowment of three Professorships.

BUILDING FUND.

No costly edifice is designed; the utmost economy consistent with good judgment has been consulted. The Trustees ask the small additional sum of eight thousand dollars to erect all the buildings necessary to accommodate one hundred students.

ENDORSEMENT BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The following is the action taken by the Assembly in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1867, on the Report of the Committee on Freedmen :

Resolved, 9. That the Assembly hereby express its approval of the measures taken by the Committee to establish schools and other institutions of learning among the Freedmen, and would especially commend to the interest and aid of the churches the "Biddle Memorial Institute," established for the training of catechists and other religious preachers, that it may be enabled fully to meet the important purposes of its foundation, and to fulfill the designs of its generous founder.



