

A Step Back in Time

By Bobbie Sue Shelton

EAGLEVILLE MALE AND FEMALE ACADEMY

On July 7, 1877 the Eagleville Male and Female Academy received its charter. On December 24, 1877, Chesley Williams sold one acre of land for the Academy. On July 13, 1880, Benjamin F. and Virginia Hooper deeded an additional one-fourth acre of land to the school directors: R. S. Brown, W. J. White and W. H. McCord. The Academy or Institute as it was named on the Beers Map of 1878 was located next to the Baptist Church on "Pig Alley" presently known as Church Street.

The schoolhouse was a frame building with a wing extended on the back right. The private school offered work in grade school, high school and college.

In 1884 Dr. George Savage opened his own school in this building. It was called "Eagleville School" but was known in the area as "The Savage School".

SAVAGE SCHOOL - Professor George M. Savage came to Eagleville in 1884. He was born near Rienzi, Mississippi in 1849 and received his early education in schools near his father's home. In 1871 he graduated from Union University which at that time was located in Murfreesboro and in the same year he married Miss Fannie Williams, daughter of Chesley Williams of Eagleville. Professor Savage taught at Henderson Masonic Male and Female Institute in Henderson, Tennessee from 1871-1877 and again for 1880-1884. During his years at Henderson, he worked on his Master's degree and received it from Union University in 1874.

Professor Savage began his school in the old Male and Female Academy on the second Monday in January 1884. During the seven years the Male and Female Academy had existed, the board members struggled with all sorts of problems due to the lack of public interest in education. The building was in need of repair, problems with the teaching staff, the term was short because the money ran out and not all the board members sent their children to the school. The public was not sold on the business of education. Professor Savage faced a lot of problems upon his arrival to be head of the Eagleville School.

On May 7, 1884, Professor Savage submitted a plan for a new schoolhouse to the board. At that time the board consisted of W. H. McCord, J. H. Hay, L. K. Lowe, J. S. Edmonds, J. F. Christopher and J. C. Williams. The board approved the plan and eventually a new school building was erected and ten small separate houses, each one housing two young men. Only a small charge was made for lodging here. Other male students boarded among the families of the community at a cost of from \$7 to \$10 per month. The female students either boarded at the Savage home or lived in the "boarding-house" or hotel across the street from the school. Mr. Carson operated the hotel, which burned in 1890. The room and board at the hotel was \$10 per month.

Professor Savage, wishing to operate a school within the financial reach of the greatest number of people, set the tuition fees as follows: First and Second grades - \$10. Third, fourth and fifth grades - \$15. Sixth through first collegiate year - \$20.00. Second, third and fourth years in college - \$25.00

The school was a chartered, four-year co-educational college and preparatory school. The curriculum of this school was amazing. The course of study provided an intensive and complete study of English classics, and participation in one of two literary societies. The Latin course embraced Latin Grammar, Caesar, Cicero, Virgil, Horace Livy and Tacitus. Reading in the New Testament was encouraged as collateral reading. Besides Latin three

other foreign languages were taught, French, German and Greek. The mathematics course included Ray and Olney's Higher Arithmetic, two years of algebra, geometry, trigonometry, calculus and surveying. Natural science courses were chemistry, physics, physiology, geology, botany and astronomy. Besides these there were courses in philosophy, logic and Bible. Two degrees were conferred: Bachelor of Arts, upon completion of courses in English, Latin, Philosophy, Mathematics, Natural Science and one of the modern languages. Master of Arts degrees included Greek and one more year's work in branches of the Bachelor of Arts degree. In the school year 1887-1888, there were 178 pupils enrolled.

Some of the teaching personnel for the year 1888-1891, Professor Savage taught English, Hebrew, Mental and Moral Science; Miss M. A. Cason taught Latin, French and Education; S. M. Bain taught Natural Sciences; Miss Evie Franklin, taught Greek and German. There was a children's department under the direction of W. A. Cooksey. Miss Elmira Jackson was the music teacher and S. M. Crick, director of the Commercial Department. There was also a department to teach young men military tactics. Miss Cason and Mr. Bain received diplomas from the school in June 1889. It would seem that they were teaching while they studied.

The students attending this school came from far and near. Not only did local youth avail themselves of the opportunities afforded in Eagleville, but also from Hendersonville, Tn. came students who followed their beloved teacher. From various parts of Tennessee and many other states of the union and from Mexico City, they came.

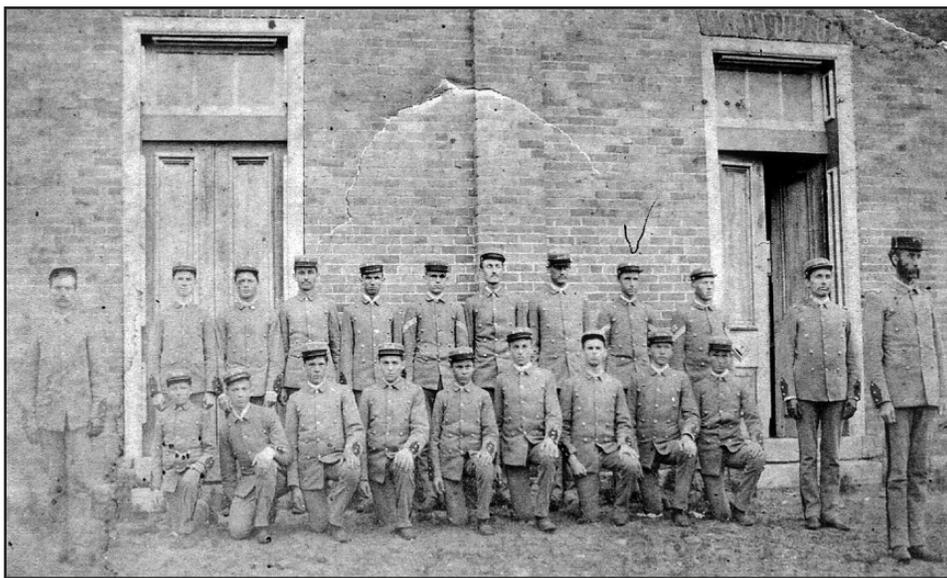
Discipline was kind but rigid, firm and impartial. No student was allowed to receive the special attention of one of the opposite sex. Buggy riding for pleasure on Sunday was prohibited for both teachers and pupils.

On June 4, 1890, the trustees of the Eagleville School were present for commencement exercises. Graduating essays were read by W. G. Young, Miss Elmira Jackson and Miss Nimmie Williams. Diplomas were signed for these three. After the exercises, Professor George Savage announced that he had been unanimously elected president of Southwest Baptist University and would resign from the Eagleville School. This came as a shock to the community.

In September 1890 when the Eagleville School term began with an enrollment of 186, there was an entirely new faculty. The principal was W. T. Davis. Other teachers were Miss Janie Nichol, N. B. Williams, Miss Sadie Agnew, W. W. Mosley, Miss Mattie Wilhoite and Miss Susie B. Talley. The curriculum was essentially the same as the year before.

Over the next twenty-five years, this private school gradually evolved into a public school. The principals who served the Eagleville School near the old Baptist Church location were as follows: W. T. David, Willie Lyle, M. Wingo, J. Robert Bass, John W. Williams, F. M. Bowling, "Bowser" Wilson, W. L. Foster, J. E. Brandon, K. W. Warren, and J. L. Bynum. While Mr. Foster was principal, the school was made a junior high school with pupils graduating from the tenth grade.

In 1914 Eagleville School became a consolidated school as the smaller schools in the area closed. With the consolidation, a new school building was needed. In 1915 the school was moved to its present location. (This article on the Eagleville School will be continued in next month's publication). I want to express my appreciation for all the research and work the late Mrs. Minnie Dyer and others did on our local school history in the past.



This group of students attended the Eagleville School in 1880's and early 1890's and were part of the military tactics department. The leaders were: Rev. Johnson, at the left, W. A. Cooksey and O. L. Haley on the right. **1st Row kneeling:** John D. Moore, Will Hart, John D. Cromer, R. C. Owen, Joe Posey, Sam Williams, George Littlefield, Jim Nance and Oscar Harrison. **Standing:** Will Posey, Will Mosley, Fate Jackson, Mace Jackson, Mack Bain, R. E. Williams, Alonzo Stamper, John Jordan, Otho Nance.



Directors of Eagleville School 1903-1904—Front Row: J. H. Hay, Wm. A. Bailey, Pres., J. C. Williams, Sec'y. **Back Row:** U. J. Owen, D. H. Hughes, Rev. J. E. Sullivan, R. T. Russell.