

# *Blan to Chapel Hill*

Determined to continue his education, Blan left Holly Spring College and Butler, Tennessee, in the fall of 1898 to enroll in the senior class at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. He chose pedagogy (teaching) as his major because by this time, he had become convinced that the only way to improve education for the mountain people he had come to love and respect was to train more teachers for them. Erwin A. Alderman was the president of the college, and there was a new department of education headed by Dr. Marcus Noble.<sup>98</sup> These men and Charles D. McIver were to influence Blan tremendously.

When Blan arrived on the campus, he had a conference with Dr. Alderman who told him to go around and see the professors and find out how much credit he could get for his previous schooling. Blan carried his diploma in his hand. After a few days, he came back and reported to the president that he had received credit for all the work the university required for a degree.

Dr. Alderman looked at the papers in surprise, then turned and said, “Mr. Dougherty, a young man of your experience and turn of mind is likely to get more credit from the professors than he is entitled to.” Displaying his usual quit wit, Blan Dougherty replied, “Don’t you think anyone who can do that is entitled to those credits?”<sup>99</sup>

A letter to his father, the editor of *The Watauga Democrat*, tells of his first days on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus.

*At 12 o’clock we found ourselves at the university. I then looked through the buildings, walked over the grounds, and then thought of the many thousands of men honored in the world, that have studied here. The University is a big thing, forty teachers and five hundred students. New men usually have a pretty hard time at first. This year has been no exception. However, I have escaped all hazing whatever. The students have treated me as kindly as they ever did at a church school. I am stopping at a private house, and I am always in my room at night.*<sup>100</sup>

Finances were very difficult during this season of widespread economic depression.<sup>101</sup> Blan would often mention in his letters to his brother that he was in dire need of funds. The following letters indicate that the idea of starting a school in Boone, or anywhere else, was already in the works. It is clear that the brothers had a close relationship and that Blan was relying on Dauph to see him through college financially.



*Students in dorm rooms at UNC around 1890. (Photographs courtesy of North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)*

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*Dear Bro, Your letter came recently. Glad to hear from you. R. R. boom no good. I & A, & F. D. no good either. I think a school at Boone might do very well. Yes, I am for a school anywhere. F. P. M. is gone west. Globe is busted. Everything is lively at C. H. Dr. Manning—of some law department—a few days ago. Service at University this P.M. In his honor. The Leg. Comm. Was here lately. They will give \$20,000 this year. The University is much larger outfit than W.F.C. [Wake Forest College] It is three times as big, though W.F.C. is the best college in the state.*

*Swift has made a “rep” as a speaker. I do not belong to any society. Listen, I am out of money I— must have \$50 to get home on. I wrote Prof. S. about money. If there is a chance to get any I must know it, and I don’t know where to get any—*

*I must have it. What about the paper? Do you intend staying there next year?*

*Write me about money matters in detail, write quickly.*

*B. B. Dougherty*

*P. S. Tell Prof. S. that if I am sure of the \$30, he can send it in 3 or 4 weeks, but to wait that long and be disappointed would ruin me. Please write me what Prof. S. says. I am bound to get some money from some place.<sup>102</sup>*