

II. ROBERT BAIRD'S ORIGINS AND TRAINING

Throughout his life, Robert Baird enjoyed referring to himself as a "western man." Yet his entire career can be seen as a flight from his origins and the limitations they would impose on a man with intellectual and social ambitions. His father had moved west, and his brothers moved west: Baird ignored the "go west, young man," dictum and sought his fortunes in the east.¹ Though his labors would occasion return visits to the trans-Appalachian West, the interests he served were generally eastern, and those whose approval he sought were generally eastern men. Ultimately his interest would cause him to labor on both sides of the Atlantic--acting as evangel of Orthodox Protestantism from St. Louis to Moscow.

Baird's father, Robert, Sr., had purchased about 600 acres of land in Fayette County, near the location of Pittsburgh, in 1777. Returning east, he saw brief action in the Colonial Army, married and returned to his farm in 1781. It was there that Robert, jr., was born on the sixth of October, 1798. Thirteen children were born to Robert Baird, sr., and his wife, Elizabeth, and eight lived to adulthood. Robert, jr., was the youngest of four surviving sons and next-to-youngest of all the surviving children.²

¹Franklin Ellis (ed.), History of Fayette County, Pennsylvania, with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1882), p. 637.

²Henry M. Baird, The Life of the Rev. Robert Baird, D. D. (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1866), pp. 9-10. See also Ellis, History of Fayette County, pp. 636-7.

Western Pennsylvania was not entirely virgin territory at the time the elder Robert Baird sought to establish himself there. Many eastern settlers had penetrated it, ignoring the Proclamation Line of 1763. Attempts at enforcing restrictions were sporadic and generally fruitless, and after 1765 or 1766 settlers came in ever increasing numbers, drawn by the fertile soil, the navigable water systems, and by accessibility from the eastern seaboard via Braddock's Road.³ The population was estimated at nearly 700 persons as early as 1768. By the census of 1790 it had risen to 12,995 free whites and 282 slaves. At the time Baird settled in Fayette County most immigrants were from eastern Pennsylvania or New Jersey: there had been some penetration by Virginians, but many of these left for Kentucky when it became apparent that the Pennsylvania legislature was about to pass legislation gradually abolishing slavery. The new settlers were mostly Quakers and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. Among the latter was the senior Baird, who took up residence on the banks of Dunlap's Creek.⁴ Thus the community into which Robert, jr., was born could hardly be called "raw frontier." It was rather well along toward becoming a settled, homogeneous community of yeomen farmers.

Baird's family was poor, but not poverty stricken. At the going prices, the Baird farm must have cost at least 30 £., yet most

³James Veeck, The Monongahela of Old; or, Historical Sketches of South-Western Pennsylvania to the Year 1800 (Pittsburgh: "This unfinished work of the author, which has been 'in sheets' since 1858, is now issued for private distribution only," 1892), pp. 82-3.

⁴Ibid., pp. 99-100.

of it was unimproved land that afforded little more than a bare subsistence for the growing family.⁵ Baird augmented his income by sporadic trips east to trade local produce for salt and other goods.⁶

A staunch Presbyterian, a ruling elder in the local church for more than forty years,⁷ he was a man "with very decided views, which he never avoided expressing on all suitable occasions," he took his religious and paternal duties seriously, teaching his children the Westminster Catechism which he had learned by heart in his own youth.⁸ Out of his religious convictions, he determined that his youngest son should be set apart from his brothers and pursue a sacred career: he should become a minister of the Gospel.

Perhaps the father decided to set his youngest son apart for the Lord's work because he noticed that Robert was unlike his playmates. A shy and diffident child, he preferred reading to the usual boyish sports. His favorite subjects were "History and her handmaid Geography," and he received his first insights into the secular workings of Providence through the works of Jedidiah Morse.⁹ While he read avidly the few books his home had to offer and attended the local school, the meager education available at Dunlap's Creek hardly prepared the boy for college and a career in the Presbyterian ministry.

⁵Ibid., p. 97.

⁶Ellis, History of Fayette County, p. 637.

⁷Ibid., p. 638.

⁸H. M. Baird, Life of Robert Baird, p. 11.

⁹Ibid., p. 12.

Thus, in the fall of 1813, his parents sent the fourteen-year-old boy twelve miles down the road to Uniontown, and the grammar school there. Robert, clad in homespun and financed by the proceeds of his mother's dairy, became the charge of the Rev. Dr. James Dunlap.¹⁰ They felt sure that Robert would be in good hands, for Dunlap was an old friend of the family and their former pastor (Dunlap's Creek had been named after him). Years later, Robert Baird remembered Dunlap as quite an accomplished scholar. At his hand Baird received his first introduction to Homer, Horace, Virgil, Cicero, and the New Testament in Greek.¹¹

Getting Baird to school was one thing--keeping him there was another matter. As much as the scholarly life seemed to suit the young boy's talents, living away from home at first made him miserable. Although his classmates at Rev. Dunlap's academy could hardly have been much more "genteel" than Robert himself was, both they and he noticed enough difference to make him feel inferior and out of place. His fellows teased him because of his rustic clothing and country ways, and he suffered in his studies because of his poor background. Consequently, the Saturday following the Monday his father had brought him to school he walked the twelve miles back to the farm. His parents persuaded him to return to school, but the pattern kept repeating itself.¹² Finally, his father put a stop to such nonsense by setting

¹⁰ibid., p. 13.

¹¹Robert Baird, "James Dunlap, D. D.," Annals of the American Pulpit, ed. William B. Sprague, Vol. III, (New York: Robert Carter and Bros., 1858), pp. 422-3.

¹²H. M. Baird, Robert Baird, pp. 14-15.

him to work grubbing out wild plum trees and clearing more acreage. After four or five days of backbreaking labor, school and the ridicule of his classmates seemed less intolerable. Baird returned to school, and his parents had no further trouble keeping him there.¹³

From the moment of his decision to remain in school can be traced the beginnings of Baird's flight from the frontier and his attachment to eastern symbols of respectability. The romantic "Frontier" was a good place to be from, not a good place to stay. Back at school, Baird compensated for his feelings of inferiority by attacking his studies industriously. As he later remembered, "during the first part of the time which I spent at Uniontown I was compelled to stay much at home, on account of my fear of those who were my equals in age. Having come from the country, I was greatly subject to their derision."¹⁴ As he became more competent in his studies, the stiff young man slowly began to relax. Gradually he found his way into the affections of his classmates as they came to appreciate his judicious combination of helpfulness and "gentle and courteous manners,"¹⁵ traits that served him well throughout his career. After three years he felt adequately prepared to leave Uniontown and enter the sophomore class of Washington College in Washington, Pennsylvania.

At the college, Baird again found that he was far behind his

¹³Ellis, History of Fayette County, p. 637.

¹⁴Quoted in H. M. Baird, Life of Robert Baird, p. 15.

¹⁵H. M. Baird, Robert Baird, p. 17.

classmates in sophistication and training. While no Harvard or Yale, the school was the most cosmopolitan environment the young farm boy had ever encountered. It drew students from various parts of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Virginia. The town in which it was located was a county seat, and therefore had a class of citizens entertaining certain social pretensions. Baird had learned his lesson well in Uniontown: instead of retreating, he sought to establish a place for himself. By avid study he gained the esteem that went with a position at the top of his class, and he managed also to achieve recognition in the community at large by demonstrating a happy combination of "correct views" and "diffident manners."¹⁶

At this time, Washington College boasted a student body of only eighty. The Rev. Matthew Brown, president of the Presbyterian College, Baird recalled as a fatherly man and a vigorous disciplinarian:

While he treated his students with the utmost freedom, and would amuse them with anecdotes, and often stop and converse with them about their affairs with an almost parental solicitude, we all understood very well that this did not imply any exemption from college rules; and that disobedience to those rules would be met by prompt retribution. I knew him expel fourteen students, and suspend four, on one day; making eighteen out of a little more than eighty, which constituted the whole number. Though he felt most deeply on the subject, and his prayers in the College Chapel, for a week or two, had shown clearly enough that there was some painful service before him, yet, when the time came, he performed the duty with unflinching firmness, and in a most impressive and solemn manner.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

¹⁷ Robert Baird, "Matthew Brown," Annals of the American Pulpit, ed. William B. Sprague, Vol IV, (New York: Robert Carter and Bros., 1859), p. 262.

Baird remembered Brown more for his religious than for his intellectual influence. Brown seems to have been a supernaturalist in the old eighteenth century style--Baird found the way he had of commenting on the moral implications of passing events "somewhat peculiar."¹⁸ In his later years, Baird fell into the same habit of seeing the hand of Providence in every occurrence.

Of perhaps greater influence were Brown's "truly liberal views and feelings." The journey to Washington, Pennsylvania, broadened Baird's horizons. Dunlap's Creek was populated almost entirely by Presbyterians, but in Washington, Protestants of other denominations cooperated more or less harmoniously with the Presbyterians in promoting the college's interests. Brown's behavior on this point was exemplary. He was a man who, "wherever he thought he recognized the Saviour's image, ...was ready to extend the hand of Christian fellowship." He was also a "friend to revivals," one who "was distinguished also for his benevolence--he delighted in doing good, and in making everybody happy to the extent of his ability."¹⁹ Thus in Matthew Brown appeared a trinity of attributes--cooperation and accommodation among evangelical Christians, a favorable attitude toward revivals, and benevolence--qualities which exerted considerable influence on Baird's religious and social attitudes. Throughout his later life he lived as if he wished someone to eulogize him in the same way.

¹⁸ibid., p. 261.

¹⁹ibid., pp. 261-2.

Had not certain events intervened, Baird would no doubt have been content with remaining at Washington until graduation. The backwoods school was certainly no worse than the others of its type which were springing up throughout the trans-Appalachian west. Its teachers were Princeton-bred, and in a sense it was a child of Princeton's-- with curriculum and administration patterned after that leading Presbyterian college.²⁰ It had the further attraction of being relatively inexpensive: tuition was only twenty dollars a year.²¹ While located far from the center of American social and intellectual activity it was not completely isolated. The teachers were educated in the East, and occasionally the routine of the place was interrupted by a visit from some notable. The students even had a chance to take tea with the President of the United States, James Monroe.²² On such occasions, even a backwater county seat could be an exciting place for a teenage boy.

Events did, however, intervene. A squabble between Washington College and its neighboring school, Jefferson in Canonsburg, erupted which led to the resignation of President Brown and the departure of a sizable portion of the student body. Local pride had kept two schools operating when logic and resources demanded they

²⁰See The Centennial Celebration of the Chartering of Jefferson College in 1802 (Philadelphia: George H. Buchanan & Co., 1903), especially the essays, "Historical Sketch of Jefferson College 1802-1865," by Matthew Brown Biddle, and "Washington College, from 1806 to 1865," by John W. Dinsmore.

²¹Dinsmore, "Washington College," p. 80, n.

²²H. M. Baird, Robert Baird, p. 23.

should merge. Jefferson had been founded in 1802 and Washington in 1806--both staunchly Presbyterian and both ardently backed by their local boosters. Beginning as early as 1807, many attempts were made to combine the two schools, but all were unsuccessful until 1865, when Civil War contingencies forced the schools to choose between amalgamating or closing.²³ In 1817, members of the Board of Trustees of Washington set upon a scheme which touched off one of the major battles in the war between the two colleges. They sought to force a merger of the two schools by first creating a vacancy in the presidency of Washington, then filling it by appointing the president of Jefferson, The Rev. Andrew Wylie. It was hoped that Wylie would bring many of his students with him, and that this situation would force Jefferson into a merger.

To force Brown out, the trustees separated the pastorship of the local congregation from the school presidency. Forced to choose between the two positions, Brown chose to remain in his pastorate, since he was unable to live on the president's slim salary. At the same meeting in which the Board of Trustees accepted Brown's resignation, the college presidency was offered to Wylie. He accepted, but far from accelerating merger, the maneuver only stirred controversy. Baird and a sizeable part of Washington's student body took Brown's side, claiming that he had been mistreated. Shortly thereafter, fifty students, including Baird, left for Jefferson College.²⁴

²³Centennial of Jefferson College, passim.

²⁴H. M. Baird, Robert Baird, pp. 22-3.

(The two schools, only six miles apart, continued to clash. A few years later, Brown became president of Jefferson, and in 1829, Washington tried to lure him back, even going to the length of rescinding the regulation which had forced him out in the first place. Brown refused the offer.²⁵)

The curricula of Washington and Jefferson were so similar that the transfer from one school to the other caused no interruption in Baird's progress towards the baccalaureate; even a period of illness did not restrain him from commencing on schedule in 1818. The education they offered Baird, if undistinguished, was typical of contemporary church schools. He wrote papers on such typical evangelical themes as "The Practice of Dueling," "The Bible," "Industry," "Education," and "The Slavery of the Blacks." He taught a Sunday school class for Negroes and helped to found a Bible society on the college campus.²⁶

Baird marked his conversion to Christianity from his days at Canonsburg, although in conformance with the practice of serious young men of his day, he began to work the Master's vineyard before he had his credentials in order. He taught his Negro pupils to read Holy Scripture, but had to wait for his own heart to assent to the truths his head already acknowledged. He became convicted of his sinful state while still at Washington, prodded by the pungent preaching of Matthew Brown, and troubled "by the deaths of several

²⁵Riddle, "Historical Sketch of Jefferson College," p. 57. Also, Dinsmore, "Washington College," p. 74.

²⁶H. M. Baird, Robert Baird, pp. 20-22, 26.

of the young men with whom... [he] was acquainted."²⁷ The crisis, such as it was, did not come until he moved to Canonsburg, where he took the decidedly unconventional step of joining the church before being satisfied of his redemption:

The year which I spent in that college was all-important to me. Soon after joining that college, I became much concerned for the salvation of my soul, and after a few weeks, I joined the church. I was far from being qualified for a step so solemn as this. But it was of great service to me ultimately, as, not finding that peace which I expected to find in communion with the people of God, I was more excited to seek earnestly the favor of God and the light of His countenance.²⁸

Baird's conviction of salvation must have crept over him quietly. He never referred to any dramatic spiritual encounter comparable with St. Paul's experience on the road to Damascus; nor did he ever retire to the woods to pray as did Charles Finney. Rather, in spite of being 'much in darkness, and most of the time destitute of hope' he aggressively set to work guiding the morals of his fellow men.²⁹

The next step on the road to a vocation as Presbyterian minister--a career encouraged by his parents--was ordinarily a period of training at Princeton Seminary. Considering Baird's self-doubts and also his financial situation, it was not surprising that he took a more circuitous route. Like many young men on their ways to careers in the professions, he underwent a season of school-teaching, accumulating funds to finance his seminary training. After

²⁷Ibid., pp. 20-21.

²⁸Quoted in H. M. Baird, Robert Baird, p. 23.

²⁹H. M. Baird, Robert Baird, p. 24.

a summer at home, he headed east to Bellefonte, in central Pennsylvania, where he had been offered a position as "principal," indeed, entire faculty, of a grammar school. Bellefonte marked a new phase of Robert Baird's life. Previously, he had never travelled more than thirty-five miles from where he was born, and had been largely in the company of those who either knew his family or his neighbors. Upon assuming his new position he found himself 135 miles from home and among strangers. Bellefonte was the largest town in his experience. It was an important transportation center and also the county seat, with the usual company of lawyers and merchants found in such bustling commercial and political centers. Baird encountered something of a cultural shock in this cosmopolitan, "worldly" place. Presbyterian mores did not preside at Bellefonte, and Baird soon found himself combatting world, flesh, and devil. The town was "frequented by lawyers and others, many of whom, if not avowed infidels, were undisguised enemies of true, spiritual religion. In such a community . . . there was an abundance of wealth, intelligence, social elegance and wit--everything, in short, with the exception of vital, energetic, zealous godliness . . ."30

The citizens of Bellefonte must have found their first encounter with Baird rather uncomfortable. He was an intensely earnest, more than slightly stuffy young man, unable to accommodate himself to his new environs. The townsmen sought to welcome their new schoolmaster with a party in his honor. Unfortunately, the

³⁰ibid., p. 27.

planned celebration "partook of the character of a ball," so Baird refused to attend and the affair was called off. While perhaps surprised at his uncongeniality, the sponsors of the affair could at least draw some consolation in the fact that the morals of their youth were going to be guided by a highly righteous man.³¹

Not content with resisting the temptations of Bellefonte, Baird sought to elevate the morals of his class and those of the community at large, using as a vehicle for his ideas the pages of the local paper, the Bellefonte Patriot. In its columns he attacked not only the dance, but also the evils of alcohol and "profane swearing." Had Baird had his way, the citizens of Bellefonte would have shunned those evils, and avoided the "pernicious influence of plays and novels" as well, cleansing their social intercourse and evincing a new spirit of moral dedication.³² In all fairness it should be added that even in small county seats, alcohol and riotous frontier conditions were major social problems in the early nineteenth century. Baird went a little too far, however, when he attacked both the saloon and Sir Walter Scott.

The school which Baird operated was like those educating children in countless towns across the American countryside. His twenty scholars in the one room school ranged from the very young to some older than Baird himself. It was his responsibility to acquaint them with the rudiments of an elementary education and to

³¹ibid.

³²ibid., p. 25.

frame their morals within the context of orthodox social thinking. In the six hours a day he spent with his class he performed these tasks well, tempering firmness with gentleness and tact, ". . . convincing the pupils that the directions of the teacher must be obeyed to the letter, at the same time [forcing] them all to admit he was their true friend, upon whose assistance they could rely in every time of difficulty."³³ In fact, by the standards of his day, Baird, though lacking in experience, probably was an exemplary master. The people of Bellefonte were well pleased with their young teacher, and he could have remained at his pleasure: but his aim was still Princeton and the ministry. Therefore, having saved enough to support himself during his first year in the seminary, he resigned and headed eastward.

At this time, Princeton Theological Seminary was a young institution built upon old foundations. Established in 1812 as an autonomous institution, it was founded on the sturdy base provided by the College of New Jersey, which had for over fifty years produced more than its share of Presbyterian divines. The college and the town had captured the seminary by offering such inducements as free land for its site and free use of the college's library. Such advantages could not be matched by the other cities which sought the institution, notably Philadelphia and New York.³⁴ The fledgling

³³ibid., p. 26. Baird's educational theories and practices will be discussed in the succeeding chapters.

³⁴John Frelinghuysen Hageman, History of Princeton and Its Institutions (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1879), Vol. II. passim.

institution could not fail to thrive in such a promising environment; indeed, during Baird's period of attendance it seemed as if the seminary would usurp the dominant position of the college, then undergoing a series of disturbances which caused the wrath of the trustees to fall on its administration and led to a decline in the number of students attending. On the other hand, the Seminary was growing at a rapid pace. When Baird entered, the two faculty members, Archibald Alexander, Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology, and Samuel Miller, Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government, had sixty-nine young men in their charge.³⁵ By the time he graduated, a new faculty member had been added, and the student body had increased to ninety-four.³⁶

The program at the seminary was quite ambitious. It involved three years of study, although professors were permitted to make exceptions under certain circumstances. Applicants had to produce references to their character and prove they were church members in good standing. They had either to have proof of regular academic study or take an entrance examination. After a six month probationary period they were admitted to full standing in the seminary upon signing the following pledge:

³⁵H. M. Baird, Robert Baird, p. 32.

³⁶J. H. Dulles, "Princeton Theological Seminary," in David Murray, ed., History of Education in New Jersey ("Contributions to American Educational History Series," ed. Herbert B. Adams, [United States Bureau of Education Circular of Information No. 1.]), Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1899), p. 342.

Deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of improving in knowledge, prudence and piety, in my preparation for the gospel ministry, I solemnly promise, in a reliance on divine grace, that I will faithfully and diligently attend on all the instructions of this seminary and that I will conscientiously and vigilantly observe all the rules and regulations specified in the plan for its instruction and government so far as the same relates to the students, and that I will obey all the lawful requisitions and readily yield to all the wholesome admonitions of the professors and directors of the seminary while I shall continue in it.³⁷

During his first year, Baird worked his way through a curriculum staggering in its breadth, if not in its depth. There were, of course, no electives--all students took the same program. The first year's studies included "the original languages of the scripture, sacred chronology and geography, biblical and profane history, Jewish antiquities and exegetical theology."³⁸ Following a successful trial period he applied for permanent status, appearing before the New Brunswick Presbytery, whose jurisdiction included Princeton:

Mr. Robert Baird, a student in the Theological Seminary at Princeton appeared before the Presbytery and requested to be taken under their care on trials for the Gospel ministry. Mr. Bard [sic] produced a document signed by the Clerk of the Presbytery of Redstone within the bounds of which he had lived recommending him to the care of some Presbytery near the Seminary in which he is now situated. Presbytery having considered Mr. Bard's [sic] request--this recommendation & having gone through a regular course of education; of his being in the Communion of the church, the Presbytery resolved to receive him under their care.³⁹

³⁷Hageman, Princeton and Its Institutions, Vol. II, pp. 327-8.

³⁸Dulles, "Princeton Theological Seminary," pp. 334-5.

³⁹Minutes of the July 5, 1820, Stated Meeting of the New

The presbytery kept close watch over their young charges. At the meeting in which Baird was accepted, he was assigned to prepare a Latin exegesis on the question "An fides saivica consistat in solo assensi intellectus?" and a Presbyterian exercise on 1 Cor. 15: 29. These were to be delivered at the next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery. On that occasion Baird proved to the satisfaction of the Presbyters that salvation did not occur solely through the assent of the intellect to the truths of the Gospel. He was then given the further assignment of preparing a lecture on the eighth Psalm. Preaching ability and correctness of theological opinions were not the only concerns of the Presbytery, however, for they also examined him and some of his classmates "on the Greek & Latin languages & on their college studies in general." He passed these hurdles without difficulty.⁴⁰

Between sessions before the Presbytery, Baird continued his studies. The second year curriculum was much like that of the first, consisting of more theoretical subjects--biblical criticism, didactic theology, ecclesiastical history, and Hebrew. The third year offered instruction of a more practical nature--more didactic theology, but church government, homiletics, and studies in pastoral care as well.⁴¹

Brunswick Presbytery. Page 417 of the New Brunswick Presbytery Minutes for the years 1814-1827. (In the files of the Presbyterian Historical Society Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.)

⁴⁰Minutes of the New Brunswick Presbytery, Stated Meetings of July 5, and October 4, 1820. Minutes for the years 1814-1827, pp. 423, 447.

⁴¹Dulles, "Princeton Theological Seminary," pp. 334-5.

The seminary was eminently conservative, both in theology and social philosophy. Its professors were not ecclesiastical pioneers, but rather, one might say, museum keepers and antiquarians. As Charles Hodes, who began his half-century career with the school during Baird's attendance, reminisced,

It has no new theories. It is content with the faith once delivered to the saints. Its theological method is very simple. The Bible is the Word of God. That is to be assumed or proved. If granted: then it follows that what the Bible says, God says. That ends the matter. I am not afraid to say that a new idea never originated in this seminary.⁴²

Training of this type would hardly create a class of theologians and scholars. Rather, it helps to explain why Baird lost interest in theological speculation early in his career, turning instead to the more practical matters of the benevolence movement and the extension of evangelical Protestantism.

Baird did not seem to find the curriculum at Princeton Seminary too demanding, and filled his spare hours in a variety of ways. In order to supplement the money he had saved from his salary at Bellefonte, he took in private pupils. For recreation, he turned to the rather serious pleasures offered by the various intellectual and benevolent societies which were flourishing in Princeton, and avoided the pitfalls of "society." As if these activities were insufficient to occupy a young man's vacant hours, he served as a tutor at the College of New Jersey at the beginning of his senior year. Baird

⁴² Hageman, Princeton and Its Institutions, Vol. II., p. 375.

considered the post an honor, for while tutors were most often talented seminarians, it was very seldom that one was chosen who was not an alumnus of the college.⁴³

The opening which Baird filled occurred as a result of one of a series of crises which rocked Princeton during the administration of President Ashbel Green. Green, although well-intentioned, little understood the nature of the college boys he sought to guide. As a result of his iron-handed and clumsy discipline, the college was wracked by a series of demonstrations and near-riots, the worst being the "great rebellion" of 1817, when rioting students barricaded themselves in their rooms and showered firewood on the heads of irate faculty members who sought to storm their quarters.⁴⁴ The one faculty member truly sympathetic with the students was Professor Henry Vethake. Green was unhappy with Vethake's moderate approach to the student problem, and a growing rift between the two men culminated in Vethake's resignation. John Maclean, later Princeton's President, was elevated from tutor to Professor of Mathematica and Mechanical Philosophy, and Baird was appointed to Maclean's old post on November 7, 1821.⁴⁵

⁴³H. M. Baird, Robert Baird, pp. 33-4.

⁴⁴Collins, Varnum Lansing, Princeton (New York: Oxford University Press, the American Branch, 1914), pp. 131-2.

⁴⁵John Maclean, History of the College of New Jersey from its Origin in 1746 to the Commencement of 1854 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1877), Vol. II, p. 190. Baird listened to recitations in arithmetic, English Grammar, and composition, and helped his students through Mair's Introduction to the Making of Latin, Dalzel's Collectanea Graeca Majora, and the works of Horace, Ovid, Virgil, and Xenophon. Ibid., p. 197.

A tutor at Princeton was a combination junior faculty member, guidance counselor, and surrogate parent. Besides hearing freshman recitations in Greek, Latin, arithmetic, and composition six and one-half hours a day, he supervised study hours, conducted daily morning prayer, and catechized the students on Sundays. The tutor made sure the students got up in the morning and also that they were in their rooms for the night no later than eight o'clock. The tutors presided at meals in the refectory and made sure that all students observed proper decorum. No one could change his room, go to the tavern, leave the campus during study hours, leave the refectory (or eat, should he happen to arrive after grace had been said) or receive a letter on Sunday without the tutor's permission. Under such a system, continual student disturbances were inevitable, although it should be mentioned that college freshmen were often no older than fifteen or sixteen at this time. It was equally inevitable that no matter how personable a tutor might be, any attempt at conscientiously performing his duties would make him the object of cordial hatred of students groaning under the restrictive rules. For the duties they performed the "Ishmaels of college society" received the small stipend of \$280 a year, plus a room in Nassau Hall.⁴⁶ Low as it was, however, most business apprentices earned little more in the 1820s, with no free rent included.

The duties of tutor were onerous at best, and during Baird's tenure the position was made less desirable than ever by a renewal in

⁴⁶Collins, Princeton, pp. 112-3.

warfare between student body and faculty. Once again it was faculty insensitivity which caused the trouble. It had been a twenty-year tradition that the first day of every month was a school holiday, a prize highly treasured by the students. The faculty decided it would prefer a longer spring vacation and abolished the old holiday. The students endured the new regulation for half a year, but by February their endurance came to an end. They petitioned the faculty for the reinstatement of the old system. When the faculty declined their petition, the students boycotted classes for the day anyway. Faced with such massive resistance, the faculty did nothing in retaliation, but tensions on campus continued to mount. In March, a giant "cracker," or home-made bomb consisting of three or four pounds of black powder stuffed in a hollow log, exploded on the campus.⁴⁷ Even though property damage was minimal, the trustees were outraged, and visited their wrath upon the campus in the form of wholesale dismissals and suspensions. With few regrets the peace-loving Baird resigned his post in 1822, when his seminary education was completed. Immediately he was granted a license to preach by the New Brunswick Presbytery,⁴⁸ and in light of his seminary achievements was given honorary Master of Arts degrees by the College of New Jersey and by his alma mater, Jefferson.⁴⁹ His formal preparation over, he spent the next several years seeking a career congenial to his abilities and training.

⁴⁷ibid., pp. 136-7.

⁴⁸H. M. Baird, Robert Baird, p. 38.

⁴⁹Miller, "British and American Influences on the Religious Revival in French Europe, 1816-1848," p. 131.