

A Timeline of North Carolina Colleges (1766–1861) ^[1]

In addition to the University of North Carolina, more than thirty private colleges were founded in North Carolina before the Civil War. Most were small, and some were short-lived, but several grew into colleges and universities that are prominent ^[2] today.

1766

David Caldwell's Log College ^[3]

David Caldwell (1725–1824), a Presbyterian minister, educator and statesman, ran this academy for prominent young men in Guilford County until old age required him to close its doors in 1822.

1767

Queens College ^[4]

The school closed in 1780.

1772

Salem College ^[5]

Believing in the value of education for women, the Moravians founded this school, originally called Little Girls' School and later The Salem Female Academy, in Salem Village. Today it is the oldest female educational institution that remains a women's college.

1787

Louisburg College ^[6]

Present-day Louisburg College emerged from three earlier institutions--Franklin Male Academy, Louisburg Female Academy, and Louisburg Female College--making it our nation's oldest chartered two-year, church-related, co-educational college.

1789

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ^[7]

Although the establishment of a state university was proposed in the first state constitution of North Carolina in 1776, the American Revolution delayed its charter until 1789. The school has the distinction of being the oldest public university in the United States.

1834

Wake Forest University ^[8]

Originally founded as a Baptist institution for young men, sixteen miles north of Raleigh, the university agreed to relocate to Winston Salem in 1946 after receiving significant funding from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

1837

Davidson College ^[9]

Originally founded by the Concord Presbytery as a manual labor institute for white males, Davidson later became racially integrated when it accepted two students from the Congo in 1960 and officially co-educational when it enrolled women in 1972.

1837

Guilford College ^[10]

The Religious Society of Friends founded New Garden Boarding School in 1837, which became a four-year liberal arts institution called Guilford College in 1888.

1838

Duke University ^[11]

The Union Institute, founded in 1838, became the state supported Normal College in 1851 and re-chartered again as Trinity College in 1859. In 1892 the college was re-located to Durham and became Duke University in 1924.

1838

Greensboro College ^[12]

Founded by the Methodists Church as Greensboro Female College, this institution grew into Greensboro College and became co-educational in 1954.

1840

Edgeworth Female Seminary ^[13]

Founded by North Carolina Governor John Motley Morehead in Greensboro, North Carolina, the school's success was cut short by the arrival of the Civil War. It shut down completely in 1871.

1841

Floral College ^[14]

Floral College was founded in the town of Maxton by John Gilchrist, Jr., and remained open until 1878. It holds the distinction of being the first women's college in North Carolina to confer degrees.

1841

Warrenton Female College ^[15]

The college, initially established by Presbyterians, closed in 1866 and then briefly reopened from 1870-1873.

1842

St. Mary's College ^[16]

Rev. Aldert Smedes, an Episcopal priest, founded St. Mary's School in Raleigh as a institution to educate young ladies. Although in the past the school offered junior college courses, it is currently a college preparatory boarding and day school for girls.

1848

Chowan University ^[17]

Chowan Baptist Female Institute was founded by Dr. Godwin Cotton Moore as a four-year women's college in Murfreesboro, North Carolina. It later became Chowan College, and today is a co-educational institution known as Chowan University.

1850

Oxford Female Seminary ^[18]

This Baptist institution was first named Oxford Female College, and it is believed to have merged with Raleigh Female Seminary. It was later re-named Oxford Female Seminary and then closed in 1925.

1850

Carolina Female College ^[19]

This women's college existed in Ansonville, North Carolina, until 1868.

1851

University of North Carolina at Asheville ^[20]

Originally founded by Dr. John Dickson and Rev. Erasmus Rowley as Asheville Female Seminary, this school later became Holston Conference Female College and then Asheville Female College. It evolved into a co-educational institution that is known today as University of North Carolina at Asheville.

1851

Catawba College ^[21]

The college was established in Newton, North, Carolina, and later moved its campus to Salisbury. It began as a men's school, but admitted women as early as 1890. It is affiliated with the United Church of Christ.

1852

Oak Ridge Military Institute ^[22]

Oak Ridge Male Institute was founded by The Religious Society of Friends in Guilford County, North Carolina. Today, it is Oak Ridge Military Academy, a private, coeducational, college-preparatory military boarding school.

1853

Wesleyan Female College ^[23]

The school was established in Murfreesboro, North Carolina, by the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was not reopened after a fire in 1893.

1853

Olin College

The college was established in Iredell County in 1853. By 1869 it was operating only as a high school, and the date of its closing is unknown.

1854

Concord Female Presbyterian College

The college was located in Statesville, North Carolina, and the date of its closing is unknown.

1854

Goldsboro Female College ^[24]

The college closed in 1871.

1855

Davenport College ^[25]

Davenport Female College was established in Lenoir, North Carolina, as a girls school affiliated with the Methodist Church. In 1915 the school's name was changed to Davenport College, and in 1933 it merged with Greensboro College.

1855

[North Carolina College](#) ^[26]

Affiliated with the Lutheran Church, this college was established as a school for men in Mount Pleasant and was later renamed Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute. It was closed in 1902.

1856

[Mars Hill College](#) ^[27]

Located eighteen miles north of Asheville, the school was originally established as the French Broad Baptist Institute. In 1859 it became Mars Hill College and still exists today as a four-year college. In 2013, the name was changed to Mars Hill University to "reflect the institution's expansion, both in terms of enrollment and variety of offerings."

1856

[Mitchell Community College](#) ^[28]

Originally founded in Statesville, North Carolina, as Concord Female College, the school was purchased by Robert and Roxanna Simonton around 1872 and renamed Simonton Female College. It became Mitchell College in 1917.

1856

[Yadkin College](#) ^[29]

Founded in Davidson County by the Methodist Protestant Church, the men's preparatory school attained collegiate status in the 1870s and later women were admitted as students. Around the turn of the century the school went into decline, and it closed in 1924.

1856

[Weaverville College](#) ^[30]

Affiliated with the Methodist Church and later renamed Weaver College, the school merged with Rutherford College and Brevard Institute in the 1930s to become Brevard College.

1857

[Peace College](#) ^[31]

The school was founded by Raleigh's First Presbyterian Church in 1857. Due to the Civil War, it did not open until 1872. It now operates as a four-year women's college.

1857

[Queens University](#) ^[32]

Founded in 1857 as Charlotte Female Institute, the school has gone through many changes over the years, including moving to its present location in the Myers Park neighborhood of Charlotte, changing its name to Queens College, and becoming a co-educational institution.

1861

[Judson College](#) ^[33]

Judson Female College was established as a Baptist school for girls in Hendersonville, North Carolina. After several name changes and setbacks, the school became the co-educational Judson College. It lacked the necessary funding and closed in 1892.

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