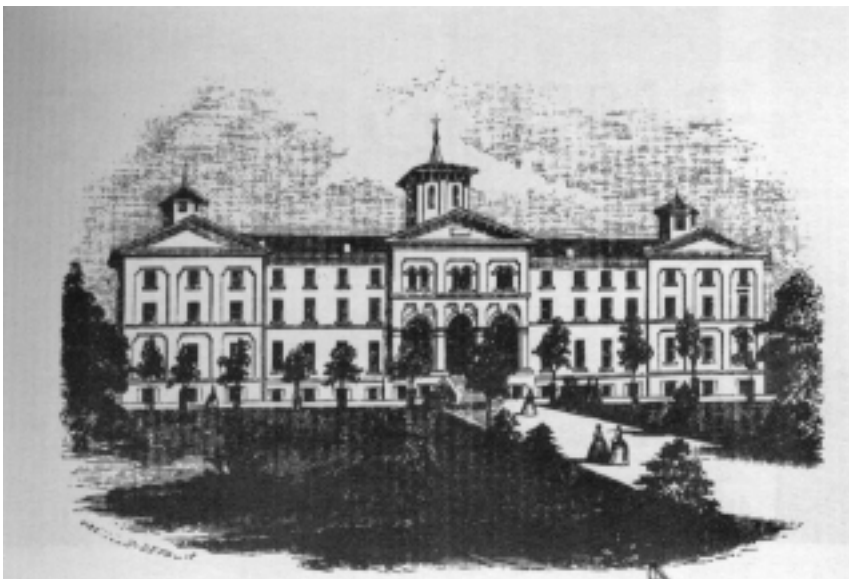


# Crozer Theological Seminary

John P. Crozer had a very sensitive conscience about how to use his money. He gave liberally to his church, charitable institutions and causes in the area. He wanted to establish some educational enterprise that would benefit the largest possible section of the public. He established a “normal school” in 1858. He constructed a large stone building known as “Old Main” on the now Crozer-Chester Medical Center campus. His efforts were challenged by an epidemic of scarlet fever followed by smallpox which decimated faculty and student body alike.



When he founded the school, his intention had been to give underprivileged but worthy young people an opportunity to acquire a good education in order to become good teachers. His hopes were frustrated by some wealthy parents, who saw in his school an opportunity to obtain good educations for their children at a nominal cost. Soon the normal school effort lapsed.

The large building was not used consistently for the next few years though it was used as a prison hospital during the Civil War. After the hospital was set apart for the reception of Confederate wounded, a picket-fence, twelve feet in height, was built, surrounding the grounds, and guards were stationed to prevent the escape of convalescent prisoners of war.

Notwithstanding the vigilance of the authorities, one dark stormy night in August, 1863, Capt. Edward Shay, of the Sixteenth Mississippi Regiment, and Lieut. Davis, of Gen. Trimble's staff, evaded the guard and escaped.

The hospital furnished accommodation for more than six thousand wounded soldiers, and many men, North and South, remembered with grateful hearts the kindness they received while inmates of the hospital at Chester. At the conclusion of the war, in 1865, the building was returned to its owner, John P. Crozer,

and in December of the same year Col. Theodore Hyatt of the Pennsylvania Military Academy leased the property until the summer of 1868.

When John P. Crozer died in 1866 he stipulated in his will that his heirs use the building and some of his money to create an educational institution of some sort. The heirs and their mother pondered the idea of a seminary. There was a department of theology at the University at Lewisburg, now Bucknell University, but it had not been supported by the Baptist Church and did not have an endowment.

Philadelphia ministers met and endorsed the idea of a seminary at Upland. The Lewisburg faculty supported the idea with appropriate resolutions and the college agreed to abandon its Department of Theology. The family; Sallie Knowles, Samuel A., J. Lewis, George K. and Robert A. Crozer plus his daughters, Mrs. Elizabeth Griffith, Mrs. Margaret Bucknell and Emma Crozer gave 20 acres and \$250,000 to establish a seminary in their father's name.

The Seminary was chartered in April of 1867 and opened for students in 1868.

A board was named and assembled for the first time on June 12, 1867 at 10 A.M. at the American Baptist

Publication Society in Philadelphia. Samuel A. Crozer was named president, Horatio Gates Jones, secretary, and J. Lewis Crozer, treasurer. Samuel A. served as chairman until his death in 1910.

A constant benefactor of the Chester community, Mr. Crozer's concern for the school was extraordinary. He visited the campus weekly and sometimes daily. When scholarship money was needed, he provided; when student housing was needed, he built it. The list could be extended infinitely. Something of the measure of the man is indicated in the fact that in 41 years he missed only two official board meetings. No mean accomplishment for a man, who managed a business, visited every major city in Europe and crossed the Atlantic Ocean over seventy times.



Crozer Theological Seminary began with a fine endowment. No Baptist seminary had ever started with so fine a gift or excellent a location. As a long time professor at Crozer, Henry Vedder, said “Crozer was born full-grown”. Being “born full-grown” also involved the board’s selection of a president. Henry Griggs Weston, the choice, was an outstanding Baptist minister and educator. He brought age, stability and respect of all Baptists to the School. He served as president from 1867 until his death in 1909 at the age of 89.

The school always stood for the best in scholarship. Early students were put through a rigorous schedule; learning Latin, Greek, Hebrew and almost

memorizing their theological manuals. In later years, though the area was conservative Crozer's excellence in scholarship and objective research led it to become one of the leading classical liberal seminaries in the east. Professors were chosen from among the best graduates of the University of Chicago. Lecturers came from Union, Yale and Harvard, Crozer's chosen peers. The seminary was an excellent place to study.

Permanence, civility and urbanity were also hallmarks of Crozer. The grounds were like a park, well ordered and quiet. Henry Vedder said, "the ideal place to lead the life of a scholar".

Add to the above, stability. Through the munificence of the Crozer family, who were on the board, the budget was balanced and funds were always available for worthy causes and students. For example, someone suggested that Crozer needed a chapel. Without fanfare Samuel Crozer had his workmen appear on campus one day with bricks and lumber to build one.



*First Students of Crozer Theological Seminary 1868.*

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To the historian, stability is a virtue and a vice. Since the school was endowed and did not look to the general public, the community or the Baptist constituency for support, it was somewhat isolated, and since professors moved here and generally stayed all their working lives, the school did not always have the flexibility or sensitivity to change that would have allowed it to keep “up with the times”. By the end of the 1950’s, Crozer faced the post World War II era with answers to questions of the 30’s and 40’s. Recognizing the need for change, new faculty and new administration allowed Crozer to perform through the 1960’s as a vital institution providing a climate where men such as young Martin Luther King, Jr. came to prepare for service to their world.

Crozer Theological Seminary closed and merged with another Baptist Seminary in New York in the late 1960's.

## Our History



For almost 200 years, Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School has served as one of the world's leading progressive theological schools, preparing socially conscious, socially active leaders who impact the world through Christ-centered leadership and service. Its name and its rich heritage speak to a series of unique unions and partnerships among several outstanding seminaries. The result of these visionary unions and collaborations is the progressive gem we know today as Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School.

### **The Establishment of the Oldest Baptist Seminary in America**

The roots of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School trace all the way back to 1817 when a small group of 13 Baptists concerned about the education of clergy, gathered in rural Hamilton, New York with \$13 and 13 prayers to form what would soon become the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution. The vision and effort of this group also eventually



led to the founding of Colgate University with the seminary one of its schools. Thus, the seminary was soon renamed Colgate Theological Seminary. Its first graduate, Jonathan Wade, began a tradition of outstanding ministerial and socially engaged leadership when he conducted pioneering mission work in Burma.

Throughout its history, Colgate Theological Seminary was noted for its uncompromising commitment to academic freedom. William Newton Clarke (1840-1912), one of its faculty members, wrote *An Outline of Christian Theology* (1898) that became, in the words of a leading historian, “virtually the Dogmatik of evangelical liberalism.”



## **An Urban Seminary Begins in Rochester**

An offshoot of Colgate Theological Seminary was planted in Rochester in 1850 by a group of Baptists who wished to remove both Colgate University and its theological seminary to an urban setting. The initial removal

controversy failed in a legal dispute; however, a number of faculty and students came from Colgate to Rochester to help begin a new university and seminary in what was then a booming urban center. As a result, the Rochester Theological Seminary was founded concurrently with the University of Rochester.

The seminary soon distinguished itself for its combination of academic rigor and social witness, traits remarkably combined in its most famous faculty member, Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918), the founder of the Social Gospel movement of the late 19th century. For 40 years, Augustus Hopkins Strong (1836-1921) served as president of Rochester Theological Seminary while producing theology that incorporated the new doctrine of evolution and the emerging practices of biblical criticism. Like her sister school in Hamilton, Rochester Theological Seminary was ecumenical in its mission, enrolling seminarians from many denominations while remaining firmly rooted in its Baptist heritage.

## **Two Seminaries Unite**

In 1928, the Colgate and Rochester seminaries merged to become Colgate Rochester Divinity School, and as part of that merger, the present campus was built on one of the highest hills in the southeastern corner of Rochester, New York, thanks to funding from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The joining of these two schools represented a distinctive blending of roots and heritages. In time, it would serve as a precedent for other mergers by demonstrating that two distinctive institutions could strengthen their lives by becoming one.

## **Women's School Merges with Colgate Rochester Divinity School**



In 1961, the Baptist Missionary Training School joined Colgate Rochester, adding another important branch to the school's lineage.

The 19th century was a period of great ferment and social change. While the Social Gospel movement concentrated on the widening gap between the rich and poor, the Baptist Missionary Training School, founded in Chicago in 1881, was created to address another issue: the role of women in the Church. Its founder, Mrs. Rumah Crouse, possessed a vision both local and global. She created a community for women who were "responding to God's call as revealed in Jesus Christ," even when the Church failed to recognize their call. Typical of its graduates was Joanna P. Moore, a graduate of its first class in 1881, who worked with African-Americans for more than 40 years, instituting "fireside schools" to teach literacy skills to women and children. To prepare its graduates for such forms of service, the training school innovatively combined classroom work with field education to equip its students to minister wherever the need was greatest.

## Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Alma Mater Moves to Rochester

In 1970, Crozer Theological Seminary merged with Colgate Rochester Divinity School to form Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School (CRCDS), bringing Crozer's deep commitment to social justice and theological education oriented to the work of ministry.

Crozer Theological Seminary was a result of the generosity of Baptist industrialist John P. Crozer. In 1867, he donated the building and land in Upland, Pennsylvania, that would eventually become Crozer Theological Seminary. His investment paid great dividends. In 1951, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. graduated from Crozer. A few years later, he would put to use the social ethics he had been taught at Crozer and lead the emergent Civil Rights Movement that would change forever the character of American society.

## Collaborative Partners Bring Ecumenical Richness to CRCDS

### *Saint Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry*

In 1893, St. Bernard's Seminary was founded to provide education for Roman Catholic diocesan priests. Following the Second Vatican Council, the seminary turned its attention to educating men and women for lay ministry. In 1981, St. Bernard's Seminary was closed, and St. Bernard's Institute was born and entered into a covenant relationship with Colgate Rochester Crozer. It moved to the CRCDS campus, where it remained until 2003 when it moved to a new campus nearby, changing its name to St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry. St. Bernard's remains a vital covenant partner with Colgate Rochester Crozer to this day.

### *Bexley Seabury Federation program in Anglican studies*

Another educational institution more recently joined our ecumenical partnerships. In the fall of 2013, CRCDS, in collaboration with Bexley Seabury and the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, initiated a program in Anglican Studies. This program provides a local and regional option for Episcopal students to prepare for ordination as students earn a Master of

Divinity degree from CRCDS while concurrently earning a Certificate in Anglican Studies from Bexley Seabury.

## **Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School Today**

Through a series of unusual and even improbable unions and covenant partnerships, Colgate Rochester Crozer has emerged as witness to God's faithfulness and to all that can be accomplished when like-minded, steadfast individuals work together to serve and educate God's people. The school lives as a vibrant community of learners who seek to know and understand themselves and others while learning the critical skills necessary for successful leadership, ministry and service.