

DIXIE COLLEGE CHARTER FOUND

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Herald-Citizen Staff, Cookeville, TN
Saturday, Mar 28, 2009



Herald-Citizen Photo/Ty Kernea
Dixie Murray shows the Dixie College charter she found in a 1919 Chancery Court file to Putnam County Archivist Glenn Jones and her husband, Charlie Murray.

PUTNAM COUNTY -- Old records from Putnam County offer glimpses into the community's past. That's one of the reasons the county established an archives program to protect those records for future generations.

Recently, Dixie Murray, a volunteer with the Genealogical Society of

Utah, stumbled across the charter that established The University of Dixie in a 1919 Chancery Court file.

"We handle every document," Murray said. "I noticed it was a **charter for the University of Dixie** and said 'Here's my university.'"

Murray, who is from Alberta, Canada, mentioned the find to Putnam County Archivist Glenn Jones who knew that was the predecessor of Tennessee Technological University.

"We find things like this all the time," Murray said. "If this were about my home town, I'd be excited."

The charter of incorporation for the University of Dixie was filed Dec. 1909 for a fee of \$3. It was recorded by S.F. Carr, register of Putnam County at the time.

The charter is signed by J. Whitson, R.L. Farley, Gid H. Lowe, G.A. Maxwell, J.C. Elrod, J.N. Cox, W.B. Boyd, J.B. Dow, A.G. Maxwell and T.D. Ford, who together formed the corporation to form the school.

"The particular purposes for which this charter is sought are to establish, maintain, manage and conduct a school or college or university at Cookeville, Putnam County, in the state of Tennessee, in which all branches of learning may be taught and in which the Bible shall be taught in a special or separate department, daily; and said university shall have full power and authority to confer degrees and to exercise all other powers which are usually exercised by schools, colleges and universities."

Dixie College, as the Church of Christ school was popularly know, opened its doors to student in 1912.

Derryberry Hall, Kittrell Hall and Bartoo Hall made up the college facilities. Today, those three buildings still stand on the TTU campus.

The college, however, had low enrollment and financial difficulties. It also never achieved college status, serving instead as a secondary school. In 1915, the college deeded its property to the governments of Cookeville and Putnam County. Later that year, Tennessee Polytechnic Institute was formed after local leaders lobbied the state to establish a school in the Upper Cumberland region.

The charter was discovered in a 1919 court document for the case B.G. Adcock versus Jere Whitson, A.G. Maxell, J.N. Cox, Dixie University and the Tennessee Board of Education. Adcock was seeking payment of \$700 in legal fees for work he had undertaken on behalf of the school and its trustees.

A record of the court's finding had not yet been found among the numerous boxes of court documents.

Today, TTU boasts an enrollment of more than 10,700 students and offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees in numerous fields of study. It has been named one of America's 100 Best College Buys, at top public school in the South by U.S. News and World Report and as a best southeastern college by The Princeton Review.

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