This dialogue and bibliography describe the contributions of George Peabody to rebuilding the devastated educational systems in the former Confederate states after the Civil War. At great personal expense, Peabody established the Peabody Education Fund as the first multi-million dollar foundation with the expressed purpose of providing funds to revive public education and teacher education in the South. Peabody was the founder of educational philanthropy in the United States, at a time before tax laws favored charitable giving. The extensive bibliography contains sections dealing with George Peabody: (1) manuscripts, dissertations, and theses; and (2) books, pamphlets, government documents and serials. (EH)
Educational Philanthropist George Peabody (1795-1869) & Peabody College of Vanderbilt University: Dialogue with Bibliography*

by
Franklin Parker and Betty J. Parker

Betty J. Parker: What did Dr. Alfred Leland Crabb, your doctoral committee member, early ask you about George Peabody and Robert E. Lee?

Franklin Parker: He asked if they ever met. I was ashamed not to know then. Dr. Crabb was testing me, stinging me into research action. He was a wonderful professor of English and writing, a fine historian and novelist about Kentucky and Nashville.

BJP: Did Peabody and Robert E. Lee meet?

FP: Yes, they met August, 1869, at the "Old White," now the Greenbrier Hotel, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. Lee had declined business offers to become president in 1865 of impoverished Washington College, Lexington, Virginia, later Washington and Lee University. In 1869, Lee was 62, in ill health, and died in 1870.

Who was George Peabody and what brought him into friendship with Robert E. Lee?

BJP: George Peabody, Massachusetts-born and little known to the world until the 1850s, imported and sold drygoods and other wares. This merchant turned bond broker and banker lived his last 32 years in London, England. The United States was then a developing and a borrowing nation, selling American state bonds in Europe to finance such internal improvement as roads, canals, and railroads. Peabody got into the bond selling business when he was commissioned to help sell Maryland's $8 million bonds abroad. He took as partner in 1854 Boston merchant J. S. Morgan, whose son, J.P. Morgan, began as New York agent for George Peabody & Co. Peabody was thus the root of the banking house of Morgan. After retirement Peabody focused on his philanthropies.

*Dialogue given October 8, 1994, at 1940s, '50s, and '60s Reunion, Peabody College, Nashville (Betty J. Parker, Peabody M.A., 1956; Franklin Parker, Peabody Ed.D., 1956). Address: P.O. Box 100, Pleasant Hill, TN 38578. Phone (615) 277-3268. FAX (615) 277-5396.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE
In August 1869, when Peabody and Lee met, Peabody was 74, feeble, arthritic, hardly able to walk. Sensing that this was his last summer of life, he hurried from London to the U.S. to look after and add to his educational philanthropies: his seven U.S. libraries, a conservatory of music and an art gallery, three science museums, and an education fund for the Southern states.

Explain his fame that August 1869.

FP: Before the London years, Peabody lived and worked for 22 years in the South. Shocked at the devastation he found in the post-Civil War South, he established in 1867 a million dollar fund to revive public education and teacher education in the 11 former Confederate states (West Virginia was added because of its poverty). He added a second million dollars to the fund shortly before visiting the springs in August 1869.

BJP: The total should have been $3.5 million, but because $1.5 million was in bonds two Southern states never honored, it was a $2 million Peabody Education Fund.

FP: Correct. At White Sulphur Springs that August 1869 were eight former Confederate generals (one the former governor of Virginia), Southern officials, Tennessee's state school superintendent John Eaton (later U.S. Commissioner of Education), Northern educator Barnas Sears, and Southern educator J.L.M. Curry. The last two were college presidents and in turn first and second chief administrators of the Peabody Education Fund. Mainly because of the presence Lee and Peabody, informal talks arose spontaneously about Southern public education needs.

What have historians written about the educational consequences of those August 1869 White Sulphur Springs talks?

BJP: Peabody's second million dollars to the fund earlier in 1869 brought vast publicity. That elite group at White Sulphur Springs knew who Peabody was, admired what he had done, and spontaneously passed and published in local newspapers resolutions of praise to him. Merrymakers held a Great Peabody Ball in his honor. You asked what historians wrote about the White Sulphur Springs gathering. Historian Perceval Reniers wrote, "The affair that did most to revive [the Southerners'] esteem was the Peabody ball." Historian E. Merton Coulter added that Southern society was reborn at the Virginia springs, that "the greatest gesture of friendship the South ever made toward the North at the Springs was the Peabody ball in 1869 to honor George Peabody's...foundation to aid Southern education."

How intimate were Peabody and Robert E. Lee?

FP: Peabody passed through the Old White drawing room on General Lee's arm. August 16. Promenaders surrounded them and applauded. On August 30 Lee accompanied Peabody a short distance from the springs by train and returned to
Lexington for the last year of his life. Peabody sailed from New York for London where he died November 4, 1869.

What followed from the White Sulphur Springs education talks?

BJP: Years later, they inspired Four Conferences on Education in the South, 1898-1901, involving Curry and other Peabody Education Fund trustees. These led to the formation of the Southern Education Board. John F. Slater acknowledged his debt to George Peabody’s example in founding the Slater Fund for Negro Education in the South. Peabody Education Fund trustees Paul Tulane and Anthony Drexel founded Tulane University, New Orleans, and the Drexel Institute, Philadelphia. John D. Rockefeller’s General Education Board included Curry and other Peabody Education Fund trustees. The Peabody Education Fund, Four Conferences for Education in the South, the Southern Education Board, Slater Fund, Rosenwald Fund, Anna T. Jeanes Fund, and Rockefeller’s General Education Board—all worked together to uplift the South through public education.

What was the common need?

FP: To revive the South and advance the nation. The pioneering Peabody Education Fund provided early educational leaders for the South and the nation, was the first U.S. multi-million dollar foundation to attempt to solve social ills, the first U.S. education foundation without religious conditions, the first whose influence was national, the first to provide for modifications as conditions changed, and the first to select trustees from the professions and business. Precedents set by the Peabody Education Fund were adopted by later foundations and influenced subsequent philanthropic efforts in the South and the nation. George Peabody was the founder of American educational philanthropy. That was the theme of my 1956 dissertation, of the Vanderbilt University Press’s 1971 book, George Peabody, a Biography, and the theme 23 years later of VUP’s reissued (and revised) edition of December 1994.

Tell how we came to Peabody College and how we chose George Peabody as a topic.

BJP: We were Berea College, Kentucky, graduates, married 1950, taught near Roanoke, Virginia, attended Peabody College the summer of 1951 and moved to Nashville for year-round graduate study from the summer of 1952 through August of 1956.

Why was the Peabody campus such a magical place for us then?

FP: Its professors seemed to us then the best in the world: Harold Benjamin who taught adult education and comparative education (he was former education dean at Stanford University and the University of Maryland and was also McGraw Hill education
books editor); Willard Goslin, school administration (he had been fired in a classic school battle as Pasadena, CA, school superintendent); William Van Til, curriculum; Nicholas Hobbs, psychology; Jack Allen, social studies; Maycie K. Southall, elementary education; Robert A. Davis, educational psychology; Fremont P. Wirth, history; H. C. Brearly, sociology; Russell Whitaker, geography; Clifton L. Hall, history and philosophy of education; later, Ida Long Rogers and Susan Gray, higher education, and others. These were to us then academic giants, authors of books and articles, conference speakers, researchers, and nationally known scholars. Mrs. Norman Frost said about majoring under Clifton Hall, "He will compel you to become a scholar and a gentleman."

Why was Clifton Hall so crucial?

BJP: He was a professors' professor, enormously respected on the Peabody, Vanderbilt, and Scarritt campuses. His backing was crucial. He made you dig into manuscripts, rewrite, and rewrite again.

Why was Felix C. Robb so important?

FP: I had to describe an earlier dissertation topic, already begun, to Graduate Dean, later President Felix C. Robb. He mentioned that at Harvard Graduate School of Education, which he attended, historian Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., had suggested that he (Robb) write on George Peabody's educational influence, about which there was no definitive study. Robb chose, instead, to write on school administration. Perhaps regretting a good topic not pursued, perhaps because I was Dr. Hall's candidate, he suggested it to me. This led us onto the trail of George Peabody.

What did we find on that trail?

BJP: His branch of the family's poor origins in Danvers (later renamed Peabody), near Boston, Massachusetts; his four short years in a district school; his apprenticeship in a general store; helping an older brother in a Newburyport, Massachusetts, drygoods store; the Newburyport fire which led him at age 17 to move south with an uncle to open a general store in Georgetown, D.C.: his War of 1812 military service, where he met and later became junior partner of older, experienced merchant, Elisha Riggs, Sr.; their move from Georgetown, D.C., to Baltimore, with Philadelphia and New York warehouses; his traveling years buying and selling drygoods and other wares for Peabody, Riggs & Co.; his five buying trips to Europe, 1827-37; his permanent move to London in 1837 (young Queen Victoria's coronation year); and his founding in 1845 in London of George Peabody & Co., a mercantile firm issuing letters of credit and selling American bonds abroad.

How did Peabody make his fortune?
FP: He paid attention to detail. Business success required him to know timetables of coaches, railroads, and ships. He developed a keen sense of everything that affects business. He had to judge correctly how political events, social trends, and technological developments affected economic conditions. One example: Maryland commissioned him in 1837, a year of financial panic, to sell its $8 million bond issue in Europe to finance canals and railroads. Because of continued financial crisis, Maryland and other states stopped their bond interest payments. Peabody had faith that the defaulting states would resume their obligatory interest payments. He bought the bonds cheaply himself and later profited; profited again from selling Mexican war bonds; and profited again as a director and financier of the Atlantic Cable Co., the last as exciting then as is today's computer and information superhighway revolutions.

Was there any romance in his life?

BJP: He had a broken engagement to a Providence, Rhode Island, beauty, Esther Hoppin, 1837-38, then in London for Queen Victoria's coronation. He was 42, she 19. Returning to Providence she met an earlier love, Alexander Lardner, asked Peabody to release her from their engagement, married Alexander Lardner, was early widowed, and outlived George Peabody by 35 years. Other ladies romantically linked to Peabody were Miss Wilcocks, niece of U.S. Ambassador Joseph R. Ingersoll; Elise Tiffany, Baltimore merchant's daughter; and Elizabeth Knox, also of Baltimore who, by one account refused him twice. George Peabody never married.

Was there any other drama in his life?

FP: Favorable publicity came from his timely loan in 1851 which enabled concerned American exhibitors to show their products attractively at the first world's fair (London, Great Crystal Palace Exhibition). Favorable publicity came from his London Fourth of July dinners for visiting Americans and Britons, and at a time when Britons looked down on brash Americans. Appreciation came from his equipping a U.S. Arctic expedition to search for missing British hero-explorer Sir John Franklin. Recognition came from his financing the Mexican War and the Atlantic Cable Co. Britons were amazed that he, a foreigner, would give to a city and country not his own, $2.5 million to house low income working families.

What was our main concern in our search?

BJP: Our focus was on his educational institutions, why he founded them, their history and influence: his music conservatory and art gallery: his seven libraries in U.S. cities where he had lived, worked, or had family ties: his $2.5 million for model apartments in London for low-income working people (1862): his three Peabody science museums: anthropology at Harvard, natural history at Yale, and maritime history in
Salem, Massachusetts: his three science and mathematics professorships (at Washington and Lee University, Kenyon College, and Phillips-Andover Academy); and his $2 million Peabody Education Fund, whose present descendant is Peabody College of Vanderbilt University.

Where did the search take us?

FP: To read manuscripts and newspapers in Nashville, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, New York City, Boston, Cambridge, New Haven; and with a small grant in England at the Peabody Trust (which administers the Peabody Homes of London); Morgan, Grenfell & Co. (descendant of George Peabody & Co.); the British Library; the Athenaeum Club; Windsor Castle Royal Archives; the Admiralty; and the Foreign Office.

What happened when we returned to Nashville?

BJP: President Henry H. Hill sent you a gracious invitation to give the Founders Day Address, February 18, 1955. Then came a year and a half of documenting the George Peabody dissertation, defending it, and graduating. Then came teaching years at the Universities of Texas (Austin), Oklahoma (Norman), and West Virginia (Morgantown). We collected many rejection slips for returned Peabody book manuscripts.

When and how did our fortune change?

FP: When Peabody College's John E. Windrow, that amazing public relations director, brought together in Nashville prominent Massachusetts Peabody family members for the May 1970 commencement. Noting my presence as a speaker, Vanderbilt University Press director asked to see the George Peabody manuscript. The result was the 1971 George Peabody, A Biography book. After it was out of print, I urged the press to consider reprint or revision. On April 5, 1992, Press Director Charles Backus, looking toward the 200th anniversary of George Peabody's birth (February 18, 1995), agreed to reissue the book with additions.

Why does George Peabody merit attention at his 200th birthday?

BJP: His gifts came before tax laws favored charitable giving. He had few precedents. Wealthier philanthropists John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, Henry Ford, and others, had more publicity and were better known. Peabody's philanthropies may seem small and minor, but were in fact considerable when adjusted for time and inflation. They set important precedents, were carefully planned, and were imitated by many later foundations.

How have the Peabody libraries and the Peabody Education Fund fared?

FP: His seven libraries became public, tax-supported libraries. His Peabody Education Fund trustees were allowed ultimately to end the trust. At the Peabody
Education Fund's end in 1914, the total fund was distributed as follows: $468,000 went to fourteen Southern university departments of education (the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's education building is still called Peabody Hall and for years the University of Georgia named its education department and building after Peabody). The sum of $346,000 went to the Slater Fund (used in recent years by the Southern Education Foundation for African-American education). The sum of $1.5 million went to George Peabody College for Teachers. Consider, in perspective, Peabody College's 210-years' academic lineage under seven names: it began as Davidson Academy, chartered by the North Carolina legislature before Tennessee statehood, 1785-1806; rechartered as Cumberland College, 1806-26; rechartered as the University of Nashville, 1826-75; rechartered as State Normal School (soon renamed Peabody Normal College), 1875-1909; rechartered as George Peabody College for Teachers, 1909-79; and renamed Peabody College of Vanderbilt University since 1979.

How happened to the Peabody Institute of Baltimore?

BJP: Economics forced the Peabody Library of Baltimore, a special research library, to become part of the public Enoch Pratt Free Library, 1966-82 (the Peabody Library of Baltimore had such a rich collection in some subjects that the Library of Congress early and occasionally borrowed from it). Since 1982 the Peabody Library and its sister institution, the Peabody Conservatory of Music, have continued as Johns Hopkins University departments.

Enoch Pratt, Johns Hopkins--what was their connection with Peabody?

FP: Peabody influenced both of these fellow Baltimore merchants. Enoch Pratt was trustee and treasurer of the Peabody Library of Baltimore, and was influenced from that experience to endow the Enoch Pratt Free Library as Baltimore's public library. Johns Hopkins specifically asked Peabody's advice on what to do with his fortune. Within 24 hours of their meeting, Hopkins wrote his will creating The Johns Hopkins University, Hospital, and Medical School.

How have the Peabody museums and the Peabody homes of London fared?

BJP: The Peabody museums of science have had to raise funds to make worldwide science expeditions, to publish their findings, and to continue as educational institutions. The Peabody Museum (of maritime history) in Salem, Massachusetts, merged with neighboring Essex Institute to serve adults and schoolchildren as the Peabody and Essex Museum. The Peabody Homes of London successfully adapted to London housing needs and now house 26,000 people. Peabody's legacy remains significant in teacher education, music education, science education, public libraries, and in low cost housing.
What about motives? Why did he give?

FP: One clue to his motive is the sentiment, familiar to Peabodians, sent with his 1852 gift founding the Danvers (now Peabody, Massachusetts) library: "Education, a debt due from present to future generations." Another clue is in his May 18, 1831, letter to a nephew who had asked his financial help to attend Yale College. Peabody wrote his nephew, "I can only do to those that come under my care, as I could have wished circumstances had permitted others to have done by me." Another clue—when Peabody laid out his plans and his philanthropic adviser, Robert C. Winthrop, marveled at their scope, Peabody replied, "Why, Mr. Winthrop, this is no new idea to me. From the earliest of my manhood, I have contemplated some such disposition of my property: ...I have prayed my Heavenly Father day by day that I might be enabled before I died, to show my gratitude by doing some great good to my fellowmen." (the last words are engraved on his Westminster Abbey marker).

What was said of George Peabody at his death?

BJP: French novelist Victor Hugo wrote: "America has reason to be proud of this great citizen of the world and great brother of all men.... Having a place near Rothschild, [he] found means to change it for one near Vincent de Paul." French political writer Louis Blanc wrote: "I mourn for the illustrious American whose life was of such value to the most needy of his fellowmen.... Mourners at Westminster Abbey, their silent sorrow..., the readiness of shopkeepers in closing their shops and lowering their blinds,—these were the homages due one whose title in history will be—the friend of the poor."

Let us list George Peabody’s honors in life.

FP: He was the first American to receive the Freedom of the City of London, July 10, 1862. The only other American to receive this honor was General Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1945.

BJP: He received honorary membership in two ancient guilds: the Clothworkers’ Company of London, July 2, 1862; and the Fishmongers’ Company of London, April 19, 1866.

FP: He received a letter of thanks and a miniature portrait from Queen Victoria, March 1867.

BJP: He had private audiences with Pope Pius IX, French Emperor Napoleon III, and Empress Eugenie, all in 1868.

FP: His statue by American sculptor W. W. Story was erected near the Royal Exchange, Threadneedle Street, London, paid for by popular subscription, unveiled by the Prince of Wales, July 23, 1869 (a replica has been in front of the Peabody Institute of
Baltimore since 1890. London has only three statues of Americans: Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and--before them--George Peabody.

**BJP:** Congress passed a resolution of praise and had a gold medal struck for him, March 1867, in national appreciation for the Peabody Education Fund.

**FP:** His South Danvers, Massachusetts, hometown was renamed Peabody, April 13, 1868.

**BJP:** He was given an honorary Doctor of Civil Law degree, Oxford University, June 26, 1867; and an honorary Doctor of Law degree, Harvard University, July 17, 1867.

**FP:** He was considered as Secretary of the Treasury in President Andrew Johnson's Cabinet, February 1867, which he declined.

Let us list George Peabody's honors after death.

**BJP:** A funeral service and temporary burial was held in Westminster Abbey, November 5 through December 11, 1869.

**FP:** Prime Minister W. E. Gladstone's cabinet decided, November 10, 1869, to return Peabody's remains to the United States on H.M.S. Monarch, Britain's newest warship. This decision was made while near-war hysteria flared over reparations which the U.S. demanded for damages to its Northern ports by the British-built Confederate ship, Alabama. Gladstone said publicly the next day: with Mr. Peabody's country, we will not quarrel.

**BJP:** President Grant ordered the U.S. naval commander in Marseilles, France, to send U.S.S. Plymouth to accompany the Monarch across the Atlantic.

**FP:** Admiral David Farragut commanded the U.S. naval reception, Portland harbor, Maine. Lying-in-state honors were held in Portland, Maine, and Peabody, Massachusetts, with final burial in Harmony Grove Cemetery, near Salem, Massachusetts, February 8, 1870, attended by Queen Victoria's third son, Prince Arthur.

**BJP:** He was elected to the New York University Hall of Fame, 1900; with a Peabody bust by sculptor Hans Schuler unveiled, May 12, 1926.

**FP:** Two Southern state legislatures, Virginia and South Carolina, proposed (unsuccessfully) a George Peabody statue in Statuary Hall, U.S. Capitol Building, 1896.

**BJP:** Between 1904-08, artist Louis Amateis designed two bronze doors for the west entrance to the U.S. Capitol Building, with a transom panel tableau called "Apotheosis of America," symbolizing U.S. intellectual development. Images on that panel are of Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Johns Hopkins, Horace Mann, and George Peabody.
FP: There were two unsuccessful proposals for a commemorative George Peabody U.S. postage stamp, by Tennesseans, 1941; and by Massachusetts citizens, 1993.

BJP: A traveling exhibit for the bicentennial of his birth organized by the Peabody Institute of Baltimore will begin at the Peabody Trust, London, February 18, 1995, and move to U.S. Peabody institutions through 1996.

What was George Peabody's lasting contribution?

FP: Writer Elbert Hubbard, with some exaggeration, wrote: "George Peabody was the world's first philanthropist. His life was not in what he gave, but in what he taught." A perceptive Christian Science Monitor writer, on the Peabody Education Fund's 60th anniversary (February 9, 1927), wrote: "George Peabody was in fact the originator of that system of endowed foundations for public purposes which has reached its highest development in the United States."

Was there a touch of the heroic in George Peabody?

BJP: Many thought so and think so now. He deserves to be better known than he is.

FP: It is fitting that we at Peabody College, and those at other Peabody institutions, remember George Peabody's generosity on his coming two hundredth birthday, February 18, 1995.

Biographical Sketch of Authors

Betty Parker and Franklin Parker (coincidence of same last name) met at Berea College, Kentucky, in 1946. Their marriage in 1950 was followed by teaching at Ferrum College, near Roanoke, Virginia, 1950-52. Graduate study at Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, 1952-56, led to Betty's M.A. degree in English and Franklin's Ed.D. degree in Education Foundations.

Franklin taught at SUNY-New Paltz, 1956-57; the universities of Texas (Austin), 1957-64; Oklahoma (Norman), 1964-68; West Virginia (Morgantown), 1968-86. He held post-retirement positions as distinguished visiting professor at Northern Arizona University (Flagstaff), 1986-89, and at Western Carolina University (Cullowhee, NC), 1989-94.

Betty taught high school and college English and social studies before becoming a full-time research and writing collaborator with Franklin. They did field research on education systems in southern Africa (1957-58; 1961-62), Russia (1971), China (1974, 1978, 1986), Britain (16 visits), other European countries—resulting in 20 books (mostly reference), including Education in the People's Republic of China (1986) and Education in England and Wales (1991), based on field visits and library research.


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