

# The Adventures of Alexander MacLachlan:



*Protestant Minister Reverend Alexander MacLachlan was well on his way to achieving his dream: a new state-of-the-art campus for IC. He had the needed capital, he located the land and even managed to secure the Imperial Firman – permission to shut down the old school and build a new one. Now, there was only one thing left to do: build it.*



If Reverend Alexander MacLachlan took on more than he could chew, he didn't let on. The land in Paradise, just a mile and a half away from the city, was in a lovely valley watered by the Meles River, the home it is said of Homer.

MacLachlan himself designed the campus: three main buildings, a few auxiliary ones and enough space to establish a farm and large playing fields.

But in his zest in planning out his vision, he underestimated the construction costs. His budget of \$175,000 (mostly a donation from the Kennedys) would obviously not go very far. In the beginning, he hired a Greek architecture firm to supervise the operations but soon dismissed them after they committed some major errors. Finally, he decided that he would save a considerable amount if he supervised the construction himself.

In the early summer days of 1912, the excavations began.

Every cent had to be counted for: thirty cents a day for the laborers and one dollar a day for the foremen and the master workers. He hired an "efficient Albanian" to do the hiring and firing and put his own son in charge of timekeeping. As luck would have it, a ship coming from Norway landed in Smyrna just as construction was about to begin. MacLachlan went straight to the ship's owner and immediately bought the entire ship load at little over one half the retail price including the scaffolding

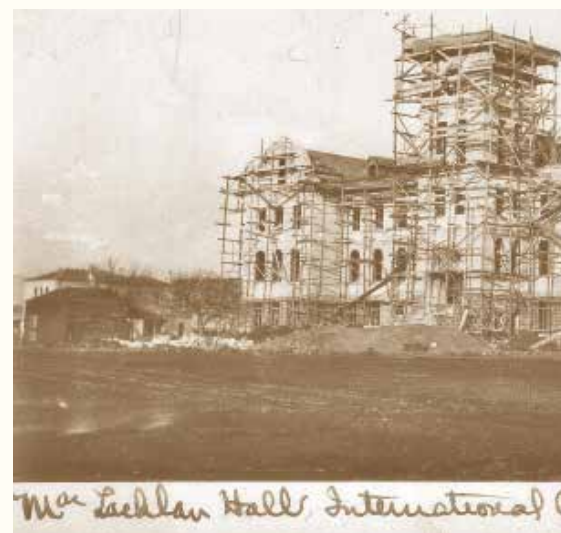
poles and timbers.

He still had to find more ways to cut costs. He suddenly hit upon a great idea: why not open his own quarry right next to the campus?

He offered the neighboring landowner four cents for every cubic meter squared quarried.

"The stone came out in easily worked layers and the many hundreds of cubic meters of choice quality building stone were all provided at an almost nominal cost," he wrote in his 1937 diary *Potpourri of Sidelights and Shadows from Turkey*."

Next he turned his attention to the cement. He found out that using pozzolan (volcanic ash cement) can be used as a cheaper



# Smyrna (Part X)

substitute to cement.

He chartered a sloop (a kind of sailboat) to go to a nearby Greek island and bring a cargo full of the volcanic material. As a final touch, MacLachlan rented hydraulic presses and brought them to the campus to manufacture the needed cement bricks.

By now it was the summer of 1912.

Construction finally began on the first building: the North Gate lodge. MacLachlan put up an adjoining tent and moved his family into the two dwellings for the remainder of the summer.

But once summer was over, the Minister spent his days driving out every morning between 6 am and 7 am, returning for breakfast, taking charge of chapel exercises at 8:30am, followed by his morning classes. He then returned to Paradise at 10 am where he remained supervising the work until after sunset. "It was a very strenuous experience supervising the job in all its details," he wrote.

Racing against the clock, MacLachlan managed to accomplish an incredible feat: the campus was completed in only 15 months - just in time for the fall term. There before him stood three major fire and earthquake proof buildings, seven small auxiliary buildings, servant quarters, two gate lodges, a laundry, drying shed and a lavatory building. The completed plant also included a sewage disposal



system, a power and electric lighting plant, ten foot high surrounding walls on two sides of the campus as well as some wells and elevated water tanks.

His pride and joy seemed to be the gymnasium which at the time was the largest and best in Turkey. It appears that it was designed with the help of Dr. James Naismith, a staunch fellow Presbyterian who just so happened to also be the inventor of the game of basketball.

The President's house was dubbed "Kenarden Lodge" (apparently to associate Emma Kennedy's gift to the College with her summer home Kenarden in Maine).

A considerable amount of leveling had been done to accommodate three tennis courts near the Lodge.

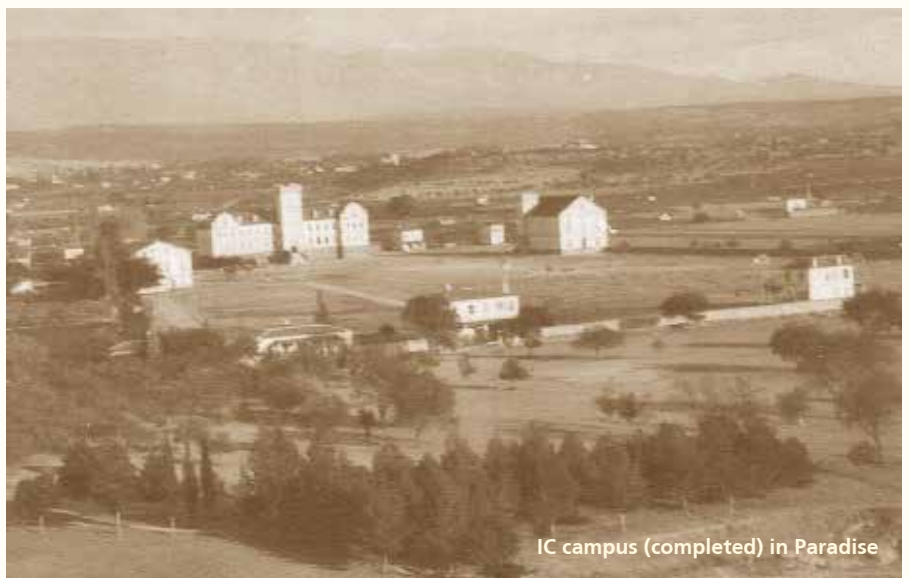
MacLachlan's penny pinching techniques worked. "Only the three major buildings and the President's house were included in

the estimated cost given to Dr. Schaufler and Mrs. Kennedy in New York," he said. "When the buildings and other costs were all paid, we were pleased to find that we had still a balance on hand of nearly fourteen thousand dollars."

It was indeed a state-of-the-art campus in every sense – and a school which will be used for many generations to come. In a sad twist of events, however, IC would only end up using the campus for 22 years. But at this splendid moment in 1912, MacLachlan was still basking in the glory of his wonderful campus in Turkey. And so he set about planning the inauguration.

*To be continued...*

*Historical information based on: an interview with Dr. Howard Reed (summer 2011); Potpourri of Sidelights and Shadows from Turkey, by Alexander MacLachlan, 1937.*



IC campus (completed) in Paradise