

discernible in Charleston. Dancing and card-playing were taboo among many of the local citizens. Thus Sunday had prepared the ground for another evangelist, the Reverend A. A. Nichols, who conducted a revival from January 31 to February 28, 1909. The first dance in the gymnasium attached to Pemberton Hall was a "Martha Washington" dance, held on February 22 and sponsored by the residents of Pemberton Hall, and attended by seventy couples.⁴¹ One feature of Mr. Nichols' services was a pulpit "question box." Some of the questions called for his opinion of dancing at the Normal School, others implied that Mr. Lord had urged the students to dance, and one even accused Mr. Lord of encouraging wine-drinking. At first Nichols answered these questions with generalities, whereupon a few Normal School students who were attending the revival asked him if he was afraid to deal directly with the issues raised. On February 26 he launched into an attack on the school in general and Mr. Lord in particular for encouraging such scandalous conduct. One of the ushers at the services was a Normal School student whom we shall call (as does Miss McKinney), "Gus Marsh", "since that is not his name."⁴² Immediately after this sermon, Gus telephoned an account of it to the *Mattoon Star*, which the next morning carried a highly distorted report on dancing at the Normal School, with quotations from Nichols' sermon of the evening before. The afternoon of that day (February 27) the *Charleston Courier* carried an indignant article, captioned "Undue Publicity Given Normal School by Evangelist Nichols", which referred to the *Mattoon Star's* article as "an enlarged report, distorted as to facts, and absolutely false in many of its details. . . ." The *Courier* printed an interview with Mr. Lord in which he pointed out that dancing was permitted at Normal and at the University of Illinois. As for dancing in the Charleston school, it was not encouraged, but rather it was permitted under proper conditions.⁴³ The attitude of the *Courier* throughout the controversy was sympathetic to Mr. Lord and the school. It deplored the attack, coming from a "foreign" preacher and appearing in a Mattoon paper.

Two days later the *Courier* printed a statement by Evangelist Nichols, in which he claimed that he denounced the school with reluctance, and only after being urged to speak by the students who were attending his meetings. As for the account of his remarks in the Mattoon paper, it was accurate except that it included personal references which he had not made.⁴⁴

On March 3, Mr. Lord used the attack on the school as the basis for a chapel talk on "trustfulness". He emphasized the point that "a man is greatly at fault who is not zealous in acquiring and examining the data upon which his opinions are formed." The published attack on the school had alleged: (1) that the school had encouraged dancing and other forms of frivolity at the expense of serious study; (2) dancing had been made a prominent element in the curriculum;

⁴¹*Charleston Daily Courier*, February 23, 1909. The music was furnished by Bidle and Hill of Charleston. The dance was chaperoned by members of the faculty.

⁴²McKinney: *Mr. Lord*, p. 238.

⁴³*Charleston Daily Courier*, February 27, 1909.

⁴⁴*Charleston Daily Courier*, March 1, 1909.