

A Potent Influence: The YMCA and YWCA at Penn College, 1882–1920s

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[The Christian Associations] have exerted a potent influence on the course of the history of this institution. Without them it would be impossible to create the “Penn Spirit,” or maintain the Penn Standard. Students are cordially invited to identify themselves with these Associations.

—David M. Edwards, President,
in *Students’ Handbook of Penn College, 1912–1913*

BY THE TIME President Edwards issued these words of welcome to the freshmen in 1912, the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) at Oskaloosa’s Penn College was celebrating its thirtieth anniversary.¹ On a cold Iowa day in February 1882,

I wish to acknowledge my sincerest appreciation to Julie Hansen, the William Penn University Librarian, for her gracious and generous assistance with this project. The majority of the primary documents cited here that are directly related to Penn College are held in the Wilcox Library Archives (WPU-WLA) at William Penn University, Oskaloosa, Iowa, unless otherwise noted. These documents represent the extant information on the two Y associations at Penn College. The insightful comments and apposite suggestions provided by the editor and the anonymous reviewers contributed essential ingredients to the final conceptualization of this paper. I wish to thank and acknowledge them for their assistance.

1. Penn College was the official, chartered name of the Quaker institution in Oskaloosa, Iowa, until severe financial difficulties during the Great Depression led the trustees to reorganize it in 1933. S. Arthur Watson, *William Penn College: A Product and a Producer* (Oskaloosa, 1971), 176–77.

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nine years after the Quaker college was established, Luther Wishard, a recent Princeton College graduate, had ignited the imaginations of the young men and women students. When he came to Penn, the enthusiastic and magnetic Wishard had been traversing the country for five years visiting campuses as the commissioned college representative of the YMCA International Committee, broadcasting the progression of a unique student movement.² To the Penn students, Wishard unveiled the spreading religious alliance that students across the nation were establishing and joining—college YMCAs.

A Christian evangelical movement, the college YMCA (and subsequently the YWCA) appealed to a broad spectrum of students in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As a grass-roots and locally based student movement, the campus associations operated with some autonomy. Yet they were united through two recognized national confederations. Through structured avenues of communication facilitated by the national YMCA and eventually YWCA offices, successive generations of students learned leadership skills and efficient organizational methods and shared their fruitful activities with other collegians. And, since most late nineteenth-century colleges and universities had neither the personnel nor the tools to address the social needs of their matriculates, the Y programs served not only their own organization, but also the students who participated and the institutions they attended, and thus reaped approbation from both. Finally, the Y was relatively inclusive. As a non-denominational Christian movement, it welcomed students from most Protestant affiliations; members of evangelical churches were automatically accepted as active members (eligible for office), while other Protestants, and in time other Christians, could become associate members. The draw was staggering and the effect on most campuses was enormous. By 1912, there were

2. For a detailed picture of the development and decline of the religious mission of the campus YMCAs, see David P. Setran, "Student Religious Life in the 'Era of Secularization': The Intercollegiate YMCA, 1877-1940," *History of Higher Education Annual* 21 (2001), 7-45. See also George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York, 1994), for descriptions of especially the Yale YMCA in conjunction with the disestablishment of the Protestant ethos on American campuses.

772 YMCAs, claiming 69,296 members, on American college, normal school, and seminary campuses.³

This is the story of the Student Christian Associations—the YMCA and the YWCA—on one campus. It is an intriguing story since Penn College had Quaker roots, a religious tradition often not thought of as evangelical. And the story of the Penn College Ys also reflects one that played out similarly on many large and small campuses across the nation. During the fragile early years of Penn College, when its institutional resources were minimal, the YMCA and YWCA made vital contributions to the religious, physical, social, and economic life of the college and its students.

THE COLLEGE YMCA MOVEMENT was not the first to join college students together to pursue religious interests. Princeton appears to have initiated the earliest campus religious society during the 1770s.⁴ At the turn of the nineteenth century, when religion seemed divorced from many campuses, small groups of students gathered into prayer groups at Hampden-Sydney, Williams, and Yale colleges.⁵ Diffusing apparently from Amherst College in 1821, Societies of Religious Inquiry sprouted up at western New England and midwestern colleges through the mid-1800s.⁶ These societies, much like their collegiate liter-

3. Clarence Prouty Shedd, "The Origin and Development of the Student Young Men's Christian Association Movement in North America" (M.A. thesis, Clark University, 1914), 233; C. Howard Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America* (New York, 1951), 646. For the impact of the YMCA on campuses across the country, see Dorothy E. Finnegan and Nathan F. Alleman, "Without Adult Supervision: Campus YMCAs as an Ancestor of Student Affairs," paper presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education, November 2005, Philadelphia.

4. In 1824 a small group of Princeton students established "a secret fraternity called *Chi Phi*, dedicated to its members' spiritual life and personal holiness." *Chi Phi* became The Philadelphian Society by the middle of the century. Introduction to Finding Aid, Student Christian Association Records, 1855-1967, AC135, Princeton University Archives, Princeton, NJ.

5. J. Edwin Orr, *The Light of the Nations: Evangelical Renewal and Advance in the Nineteenth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1965), 20-23.

6. Robert Weidensall, an early campus YMCA promoter, found these societies (or variations on the name) at many colleges in Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana.

ary counterparts, tended to explore religious topics primarily from an intellectual perspective. But for some students, merely discussing religious issues was not enough.

In 1858, inspired by the activities of the urban YMCA movement, students at the universities of Virginia and Michigan gathered, apparently unaware of each other, to establish the first campus YMCAs.⁷ Students at the University of North Carolina (1860) and the University of Rochester (1862) also established YMCA groups prior to end of the Civil War.⁸ After the war, students in Michigan and Virginia again refocused on campus life, and the Y movement gained ground. Students established associations modeled on the two charter groups at Washington and Lee University (1867) and Roanoke (1867) and Emory and Henry colleges (1870) after visits from emissaries from the University of Virginia YMCA. Olivet College also formed a group in 1868 after a visit from University of Michigan YMCA representatives. Associations at Cornell (NY, 1868) and Howard universities (1869), the first African American group, and a consolidated group of professional students in New York City (1868) emerged next.⁹

Much of the early midwestern propagation of campus associations was the work of Robert Weidensall, an employee of the Union Pacific Railroad. Capitalizing on his employment, the YMCA International Committee commissioned Weidensall in 1868 to organize urban YMCAs along the rail lines. Convinced of the importance of the nascent campus movement, Weidensall used the opportunity to visit college students in Nebraska, Kan-

From Amherst the concept spread to the University of Vermont, Union Seminary, Williams College, Hartford Seminary, and the University of Michigan. Many of these societies transformed into YMCAs during the second half of the nineteenth century. Shedd, "Origin and Development," 26-31.

7. A. K. Spence, "The Association in Colleges and Schools," *Association Monthly* 1 (6/6/1870), 125, Archives and Special Collections, Springfield College, Springfield, MA (SC-ASC); Shedd, "Origin and Development", 93-94.

8. Philip Woolcott, "Fifty-four Years of the Y.M.C.A.," draft of manuscript published in *Carolina Magazine*, April 1914, Records of the Campus Y (#40126), University Archives, Manuscript Department, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina; M. Edwards Gates, "The Association in a University," *Association Monthly* 1 (2/2/1870), 33.

9. Hopkins, *History of the YMCA*, 271.

sas, Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois.¹⁰ Although several attempts were made to gain recognition from the national YMCA, formal acknowledgement of the campus movement did not occur until the Louisville Convention in the summer of 1877.¹¹

During his senior year in 1876–77, Luther Wishard led fellow members of the Philadelphia Society (Princeton’s religious club) to affiliate with the YMCA and then urged other campus associations across the country to send delegates to the annual YMCA meeting to seek recognition. Twenty-six college associations, including Iowa College (later Grinnell), and eight other colleges sent representatives. At the Louisville meeting, the YMCA International Committee appointed Wishard YMCA Corresponding Secretary for College Work to organize the loosely tied collegiate groups. By the end of Wishard’s first year as visiting college secretary, students from 100 colleges had exchanged 2,000 letters, and representatives from the campus associations met again concurrent with the International YMCA Conference, during which they wrote a constitution. In addition, Wishard published six issues of his new *College Bulletin* (14,000 copies), distributing them to 350 American and Canadian colleges, visited 30 colleges, and reported the existence of 60 collegiate YMCAs.¹²

10. Richard C. Morse, *History of the North American Young Men’s Christian Associations* (New York, 1913), 88–89; F. E. Seybolt, “Luther D. Wishard and the Intercollegiate Christian Movement” (M.A. thesis, International Young Men’s Christian Association Training School, 1906), 8. Weidensall’s forays were not limited to the Midwest; he suggested the creation of a YMCA at Pennsylvania (Gettysburg) College in 1875.

11. Believing that the movement was not transient but would play an important role in safeguarding young collegians, University of Michigan professor A. K. Spence, one of the Michigan YMCA student founders, presented a resolution at the 15th Annual YMCA Convention in Indianapolis in 1870, asking for support for vigorous promotion of the collegiate associations. Explaining the need for collegiate young men to have guidance in their first days away from home, he urged “a special consideration at the next international Convention for this subject—the CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION IN COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS—its values and how to plant and conduct it in such Institutions.” Spence, “The Association in Colleges and Schools,” 125. The membership was sympathetic and passed the resolution but without monetary support. Shedd, “Origin and Development,” 93–94.

12. Hopkins, *History of the YMCA*, 273–79; “The Inter-Collegiate Work,” *College Bulletin* 2 (October 1879), 2 (SC-ASC). For a list of the colleges represented at the Louisville meeting, see Shedd, “Origin and Development,” 148.

AFTER WISHARD'S VISIT to the meager Oskaloosa campus, the Penn students wasted no time. Unaware that they were laying the foundation of Penn's student life for the next three-plus decades, they organized their own YMCA during the 1882 spring term. Initially, the Penn Y was a coeducational religious club. The following year, however, Wishard returned to Penn with news of the YMCA International Committee's decision that the *M* by definition limited the campus group's membership to men. To continue its affiliation with the national group, Penn's coeducational Y association, like others across the nation, acceded to the decision. Although the men carried on alone for the next year, the women were not left out for long. After learning of a fledgling midwestern campus Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) movement initiated two years earlier by students at the normal school in Normal, Illinois (1872), the Penn women formed their own campus YWCA in 1884 with 15 members.¹³

That the students, both men and women, would take such initiatives expressed the nature of the new institution. Penn College had opened its doors on November 5, 1872, following two decades during which the Iowa Society of Friends had founded academies, seminaries, and a collegiate predecessor, Whittier College (1868-1910) in Salem, Iowa. In fact, Penn College arose from the ashes of Spring Creek Institute, a Quaker school located 2.5 miles northeast of Oskaloosa, which had burned soon after opening in 1863, and an "amalgamation" with the Thorndike Institute, located two miles north of Oskaloosa and owned and operated by Friends from New England.¹⁴ That Penn College was known as "the Pride of the Orthodox Friends in Iowa" suggests one reason for the Y's "potent influence" at the school.

During the nineteenth century, the Society of Friends, or Quakers, experienced two major breaches or "separations" based on differences over the nature of faith and worship. The Hicksite

13. *Students' Hand Book*, presented by the Y.M. and Y.W.C.A. of Penn College, Oskaloosa, Iowa, 1898-99 (WPU-WLA); Hopkins, *History of the YMCA*, 292. The student handbooks, titled slightly differently over the years, are hereafter cited as *Students' Handbook*, followed by the date.

14. Louis T. Jones, *The Quakers of Iowa* (Iowa City, 1914), 247-48.

Separation of 1827–1828 first divided followers into evangelicals (Orthodox or Guerneville Quakers) and traditionalists (Conservative or Hicksite Quakers).

Between 1830 and 1850, most Orthodox Friends in the United States moved in an increasingly evangelical direction. They organized Sunday schools, or what were called at the time First Day schools; joined non-Quaker evangelicals in a variety of reform and humanitarian projects, such as temperance; and spoke increasingly in terms of the necessity of an instantaneous conversion experience, a vision of the nature of religious life that marked a break with earlier practice.¹⁵

At mid-century, several fissures further divided Iowa's Orthodox Friends along progressive and conservative lines. Decisions to endorse or denounce evangelical activity brought on the Separation of 1877.¹⁶

The splintering had begun with the establishment of the Sunday school at Pleasant Plain in 1844, which engaged the younger generation of Friends in formalized study of the Bible. Twenty-one years later, perhaps not surprisingly, the students of Center Grove Academy, about two miles north of Oskaloosa, organized an evangelical group called The Christian Vigilance Band; Whittier College students adopted the idea in 1869.¹⁷ From the mid-1860s until the Separation of 1877, evangelical work—revival meetings, conversions, and renewals—became increasingly common among the Progressive Orthodox Friends and increasingly contentious for the Conservatives.¹⁸ For Orthodox Friends, who belonged to the Oskaloosa-based Iowa Yearly Meeting, the separation advanced with the adoption of a pastoral system (hired ministers) and the appointment of evan-

15. Thomas D. Hamm, "The Divergent Paths of Iowa Quakers in the Nineteenth Century," *Annals of Iowa* 61 (2002), 129.

16. Jones, *Quakers of Iowa*, 163–65.

17. This evangelical movement might be related to particular students who graduated from the academy and went on to the college.

18. Jones, *Quakers of Iowa*, 97–98; Hamm, "Divergent Paths," 140. According to D. C. Mott, "The Quakers in Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 4 (1900), 265, "the Progressive Friends constitute[d] very much the larger and more influential body in Iowa. Their yearly meeting was established at Oskaloosa in 1863." The Separation of 1877 resulted in the Iowa Yearly Meeting of (Conservative) Friends.

gelistic superintendents; evangelism added membership and expanded church extension work to Wisconsin, Minnesota, Dakota Territory, Nebraska, Oregon, Washington Territory, California, and Texas.¹⁹ These evangelical Friends were Penn College's founders, leaders, and early supporters.²⁰

Penn's first president, John W. Woody (1873–1877), came to the college after serving as the first president (1868–1872) of Whittier, Iowa's other Quaker college.²¹ Unlike many other college presidents at the time, Woody, reflecting the Quaker value of democracy for the sexes, did not feel that men and women students had to live separate lives on campus.²² In the college's first official bulletin, published in the summer of 1873, Woody set the tone for the culture of the institution. "We desire that the students should feel they are the rightful guardians of their own characters, and must learn to govern themselves if they expect to become useful members of society. In institutions where young men and women are allowed to associate together under the common restraints of society, few rules are needed save the

19. Jones, *Quakers of Iowa*, 95–108.

20. In a report on Reminiscence Day during the college's quarter-centennial commencement, Cyrus Beede, a member of the college's board of trustees, listed the first faculty: "Joel Bean and Hannah Bean were elected superintendents; J. H. Dillingham, president; O. G. Owen, teacher of Mathematics; and G. L. Pinkham, teacher of History and Literature. In September, 1872, an agreement was entered into with John W. Woody and his wife and Anna Gore to teach an eight months term of school which commenced on the 5th of November following with an attendance of forty-two scholars." "Penn College Commencement," *Western Work* 2 (June 1898), 10. *Western Work* was a serial edited by Penn President Absalom Rosenberger from 1897 until 1909, when President David Edwards assumed the editorship. Edwards published the serial until 1917 (WPU-WLA).

21. Whittier College in Salem, Iowa, closed its doors in 1910 after a series of financial setbacks. Attached only to the Salem Quarterly Meeting, it had limited support from Iowa Friends. Jones, *Quakers of Iowa*, 243.

22. Midwestern colleges in general were more likely to open as coeducational institutions, which "grew out of expedience and traditional rural social patterns." See Doris Malkmus, "Small Towns, Small Sects, and Coeducation in Midwestern Colleges, 1853–1861," *History of Higher Education Annual* 22 (2002), 44. However, coeducation did not necessarily translate into equal treatment for women. See, for example, John Rury and Glenn Harper, "The Trouble with Coeducation: Mann and Women at Antioch, 1853–1860," *History of Education Quarterly* 26 (1986), 481–502; and Lynn D. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven, CT, 1990).

unwritten law of right upheld by the mutual respect of pupils and teachers.”²³

Benjamin Trueblood, a charter faculty member and the third president of Penn (1879–1890), reinforced the culture begun under Woody. He believed that a student “is a living, growing, self-conscious, self-directive, self-responsible being, whose right it is, at the proper time, and his duty as well, to become an independent self, working his own way, under God, through the great realm of truth and conduct in line with what has been taught him, or in better and truer ways if they should open before him, or he be able to find them.” From the college’s earliest days, Penn’s administrators, representing progressive Quaker beliefs and attitudes, encouraged students—men and women alike—to work with the faculty to create an institutional culture of “democracy, sincerity, and simplicity.”²⁴

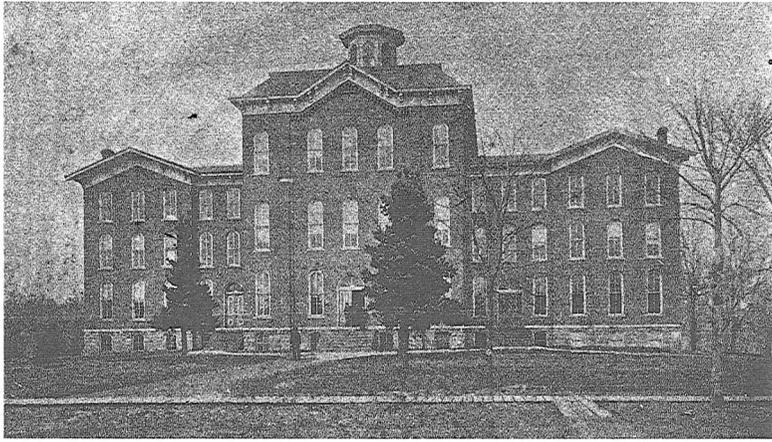
Establishing a college by a relatively small religious denomination such as the Iowa Quakers required ingenuity and sacrifice. Simplicity by necessity extended to the piecemeal construction of the Penn campus, then located near the College Avenue Friends Meeting House. One-third of the Main building, West Wing, was constructed first. All around the building “was prairie. The west wing stood out like a target for a tornado—and years later one did strike it.” President Woody personally assumed the expense of completing the fourth floor of Main building under the proviso that students would rent rooms on the floor to pay back his investment. The following year, he agreed to subsidize the cost of building a student boarding house, East Hall. After receiving student room fees for two years, President Woody was fully reimbursed by the college paid for the rooming house. As more students enrolled, the Central section was added to Main in 1879.²⁵

Penn, like other contemporary small colleges, had to prioritize fiscal decisions. Building the endowment and finishing East Wing, the last section of Main, in 1890 meant sacrificing “much needed increase[s in] the library, apparatus, etc.” Matching the

23. Watson, *Penn College*, 281.

24. *Ibid.*, 283, 68.

25. *Ibid.*, 73; Reminiscence by Dr. Trueblood, “Penn College Commencement,” *Western Work* 2 (June 1898), 10 (WPU-WLA).



Penn College's Main Hall was completed in 1890. This is how it appeared for a photo in the college's 1906 calendar. Courtesy of Charles Russell.

sparse architecture, basic instructional and janitorial staff operated the college for many years. Benjamin Trueblood, in his last report to the 1890 Iowa Yearly Meeting, appealed for a second classics professor and counseled that "the chair of science ought to be divided at the earliest possible date."²⁶ With the college perennially short-handed, few faculty members could muster time beyond their instructional duties, so organized activities had to bubble up from the students themselves.

Penn's campus life matched its sparse resources. Enrollments were slim. In 1879 only 30 of Penn's students studied at the collegiate level; the bulk of students attended the preparatory school.²⁷ Eleven years later, 70 students were enrolled in the baccalaureate program and 84 in the preparatory courses. Quakers then constituted 60 percent of the college students and 34 percent of the academy students.²⁸ Undoubtedly, the Penn collegiate students welcomed the chance to distinguish them-

26. Benjamin Trueblood, "Report of the President of the Faculty of Penn College," *Minutes of Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends* (Oskaloosa, 1890), 32.

27. The real expansion of the collegiate level would not occur until the presidency of Absalom Rosenberger (1890-1910). Watson, *Penn College*, 84, 89, 91.

28. Trueblood, *President's Report*, 31.

selves from the younger students when Wishard visited in 1882; the preparatory department had just become a separate academy.

Literary societies offered some diversion to studies but had limitations. The Studentine (1872) and Brightonian (1873), being the first established, competed for members across both the college and preparatory levels and were segregated by sex. By 1885 the proliferating literary societies consolidated into two larger societies, the Euphemian and the Argonaut, each comprising two single-sex groups.²⁹ The students were obviously comfortable with both single-sex and mixed groups. During that same year, the *Penn Chronicle*, the college's student newspaper, began reporting campus activities.³⁰ The YMCA and YWCA provided an additional outlet for the students beyond their literary explorations and certainly one that met with approval from a religiously oriented president and faculty.

ISOLATED IN OSKALOOSA in the mid-1880s, the small number of Penn collegiate students must have been eager to connect with peers from other colleges. The YMCA and YWCA alliances, unlike the few campus-bound activities that existed at Penn, enabled just that. In November 1884 both groups sent delegates to the first Iowa college Y conference held in conjunction with the state YMCA annual meeting in Cedar Rapids. Collegiate delegates streamed to the conference from Coe, Cornell, Iowa (Grinnell), Iowa Wesleyan, Parsons, Central, Simpson, Tabor, and Western colleges. One of Penn's representatives, Kate L. Ogburn, who later became a missionary to China, served as the temporary chair of the women's conference.³¹

The Y alliances also provided avenues for peer connections beyond the state's borders. Since November 1878 Wishard had been publishing *The College Bulletin*, an intercollegiate newsletter that linked the student Y associations across the country.³²

29. "Penn College Commencement," *Western Work* 2 (June 1898), 10-11 (WPU-WLA); "Argonaut" and "Euphemian," *The Quaker*, 1916-1917, Book II, 2-3, 6-7.

30. *Students' Handbook*, 1892-93, 15-16.

31. "Y.M. and Y.W.C.A. Work," n.d., 4, YM-YWCA file, WPU-WLA.

32. *The College Bulletin*, although a YMCA organ, also reported YWCA information. It became *The Intercollegian* in 1887.

Through *The College Bulletin*, Wishard, as the visiting secretary for the intercollegiate movement, began suggesting normative modes of operation on the campuses, such as national campus days of prayer, and shared the annual growth of the movement. Through the newsletter, student Ys from across the country could boast of their accomplishments and learn about the existence and activities of others. The Penn students joined no small movement. In 1883, YMCAs were active at 176 colleges in 31 states and one province with 9,250 members, approximately one-quarter of the enrollment in those participating institutions.³³

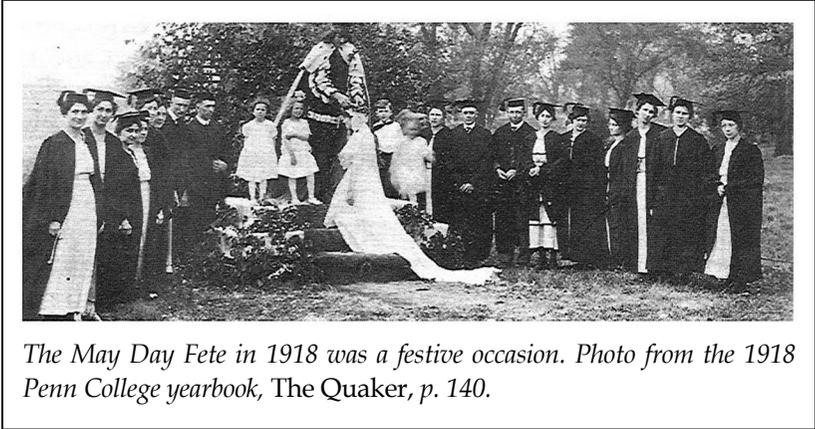
In January 1886 the Penn Y men and women participated separately in the first Iowa college Y conference at Grinnell. At that meeting, students selected representatives to send to the first annual Midwestern YMCA and YWCA College Summer Conferences at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.³⁴ The summer conferences offered a ten-day getaway during which students received religious instruction and organizational training, enjoyed afternoon sports activities, and traded stories with other students. The first summer's encampment was anything but commodious; students "shouldered their axes and rowed across to the wilds of the new camp to clear it of the thick undergrowth and to make it ready for the new buildings to be occupied in the next year."³⁵ Among the four Iowa YWCA delegates elected at the Grinnell meeting to attend a conference of the newly formed midwestern women's campus associations at Lake Geneva was Rosa Lewis. An 1882 Penn graduate, Lewis was now a young instructor at the college. At the 1886 Lake Geneva conference, the midwestern delegates established the national campus YWCA organization.³⁶

33. "Summary of Reports for the College Year 1882-83," *College Bulletin* 7 (December 1884), 4 (SC-ASC).

34. The Lake Geneva YM-YWCA Summer Conference was one of several regional camps for collegian Y members. Other summer conferences brought Y students together at Blue Ridge, NC; Estes Park, CO; Northfield, MA; and Asilomar, CA, among others.

35. "Y.M. and Y.W.C.A. Work," 2.

36. *Ibid.*, 1-5; Dorothy Thelen Clemens, *Standing Ground and Starting Point: 100 Years with the University YWCA* (Berkeley, CA, 1990), 7.



The May Day Fete in 1918 was a festive occasion. Photo from the 1918 Penn College yearbook, The Quaker, p. 140.

From then on, Penn's campus associations consistently sought methods to earn money to send delegates to Lake Geneva. In their early days, the two associations charged dues to ensure income. In 1892 the students paid dues of 20 cents per term, netting the YWCA almost \$25 from its members; eight years later, members paid 25 cents per term. The men tended to be more successful than the women at raising funds, operating several needed services on campus. The YWCA eventually began to host the May Tea, entertaining three to four hundred people. The May Pole Dance and May Queen Crowning preceded a supper on the lawn. The supper proceeds furnished a loan fund for women students to attend the Lake Geneva Conference.³⁷

The delegates always returned from Lake Geneva with "inspiration and the increased knowledge of Association methods." Over the years, the collegiate delegates listened to inspirational talks by national Y leaders and "mingl[ed] for ten days with the leaders, the athletes, the debaters, and the orators from the colleges of eight or ten different states" in the Midwest.³⁸ Although only a handful of Penn students could be supported most years, enthusiasm for attendance built for many years. In 1911 the Penn

37. *Students' Handbook*, 1912-13, 15-16.

38. "Iowa has 23 college associations, 4364 young men in college, 1792 professing christians, 1692 members of Y.M.C.A., 641 associate members, 1051 active members, 544 in Bible classes." *Students' Handbook*, 1892-93, 18; "Associations and Societies: Y.M.C.A.," *Penn Chronicle* 26 (April 1912), 12 (WPU-WLA).

YMCA sent ten delegates; the following year, 17 signed up to go.³⁹

Like the Ys on other campuses, the two Penn Y associations were first and foremost religious organizations.⁴⁰ Yet their other activities evolved into a potent force on campus that extended well beyond religion. For more than three decades, they influenced and shaped the spiritual, physical, personal, and social development of students on campus as well as contributing financially to the college's early growth. In each of these dimensions, the two associations supplied needed services and organized far-reaching activities for themselves and other students during the nascent, struggling years of the college. Absent other college-organized activities and facilities and obviously encouraged by the educational philosophies of the college's first presidents, the YM and YWCAs filled the gaps.

DURING THE YOUNG QUAKER COLLEGE'S early years, faculty and students met informally for Bible study and in small prayer groups.⁴¹ Following the creation of the new Y associations on campus, student members regularized the religious activities. At the YMCA Lake Geneva Summer School of 1890, the young Cornell (NY) graduate and newly appointed international YMCA college secretary, Iowa native John Raleigh Mott, motivated students to assume individual or personal religious work, that is, "each member is to work for his fellow."⁴² Other camp personnel instructed the students in exegesis as well as instructional and organizational methods. Bringing new knowledge and enthusiasm back to campus, the Penn summer atten-

39. "Y.M.C.A.," *Penn Chronicle* 26 (June 1912), 18.

40. *Students' Handbook*, 1892-93, 12-19. To be eligible for active membership, students (and faculty) had to be members in good standing of an evangelical church. Other students could join as associate members. Undoubtedly, as in the city associations, only active members could vote and hold office.

41. Watson, *Penn College*, 128.

42. The six-fold plan, initiated by Wishard, was promoted by John R. Mott and C. K. Ober, *Personal Work: How Organized and Accomplished; Studies for Bible Training Classes*, revised and enlarged, College Series no. 307 (New York, 1891). Mott was a native of Postville, Iowa, who attended Upper Iowa University before transferring to Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

dees convened and taught Bible study classes for their peers on campus that fall. The classes were popular. Within two years, Y student leaders taught four sections per term.⁴³ Seemingly recognizing the deep and growing student interest in religious work, the college established its first Biblical Department in 1891 and hired a professor of biblical literature and exegesis.⁴⁴

By 1893, both the men's and women's Y associations gathered for their own Gospel meetings every Sunday afternoon at four o'clock and for half-hour prayer meetings once each week. Those meetings led to the formation of a joint YM-YWCA Missionary Department that held meetings twice per month to explore mission work. Their early discussions awakened an interest in missionary work among Y members. Early Penn missionaries, alumni of the college and former Y members, went to China, Japan, and Jamaica.⁴⁵ In addition, Y students raised money to support a Penn College mission in Peru. And once again, their pursuit spilled over into the college's curriculum: the faculty added a course of study in comparative religions that included an elective year of Spanish to prepare graduates for missions in South America and Mexico.⁴⁶

The Y missionary work was not solely international. At the turn of the new century, deputations or extension work—sending members into surrounding communities to preach (YMCA) and providing instruction to local girls in social culture (YWCA)—became part of the Penn Y services. In 1910, Gospel teams held meetings in such Iowa towns as Fremont, Lynnville, Waukee, Ames, Le Grand, Bangor, Ackworth, Center, and Linden. In response, the college supported the deputation work by offering a class in Practical Evangelistic Work.⁴⁷

43. *Students' Handbook*, 1892–93, 8.

44. *Ibid.*, 18, 22.

45. As of 1883, the Iowa Yearly Meeting officially adopted Jamaica as a site for a mission station, although Quaker missionaries had been working on the island since 1662. Jones, *Quakers of Iowa*, 233–34. Penn students also established a Student Volunteer Band, at least by 1892. Although participation continued for decades, it was also limited in numbers.

46. "Y.M. and Y.W.C.A. Work," 5.

47. "To the Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends: Report of the Penn College Visiting and Advisory Committee," *Minutes of the Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends*, 1910, 3.

The Y men managed to hold four mission-study classes in the spring of 1917 even though the interest in foreign missions was not high. Although the classes explored international topics – “Present World’s Situation,” “South American Problems,” “Challenges of the Country,” and “Effective Workers in Needy Fields” – the men’s real attention seemed to shift toward the domestic arena: several Gospel Teams visited surrounding communities on a regular basis. The 1917 yearbook noted that “the association boasts a gospel team quartette which has been doing good service. The men have a large repertoire and can vary their program to suit the occasion, be it a Sabbath service or an evening concert of secular selections.”⁴⁸ Through the 1920s, YM and YWCA Gospel Teams traveled during school holidays to such towns as Pleasant Plain, West Branch, Richland, Searsboro, Center, and Lacy in Iowa and Westfield, Indiana, to conduct week-long gospel meetings. And, in their spare time, Y students, reminiscent of earlier Quaker evangelism, visited the sick and the jailed in town.⁴⁹

The Y associations’ affiliation with their respective national offices further broadened student members’ concept of community service. The evolving College Department of the International YMCA Committee drew students’ attention increasingly toward national and international events. In 1916, preceding the nation’s entry into World War I, Penn students collected \$755 for YMCA prisoner-of-war relief programs. The following year, they gave \$1,000 to the Army YMCA to support programs for soldiers in the domestic training camps and in the trenches in Europe. Then a year later, they donated \$1,300 to the YMCA Million Dollar Student Fund. Their contributing spirit for the war effort transcended monetary donations. Through Friends War Service, a Penn team of 25 men served in France, Austria, and Germany during reconstruction and occupation.⁵⁰

48. “Y.M.C.A.,” *The Quaker*, 1916–1917, Book II, 13.

49. “College Items,” *Penn Chronicle* 26 (January 1912), 9; “Associations and Societies, Gospel Team—Center,” *ibid.*, 11; “Associations and Societies, Y.W.C.A.,” *ibid.* (May 1912), 14; “Y.M. and Y.W.C.A. Work,” 9.

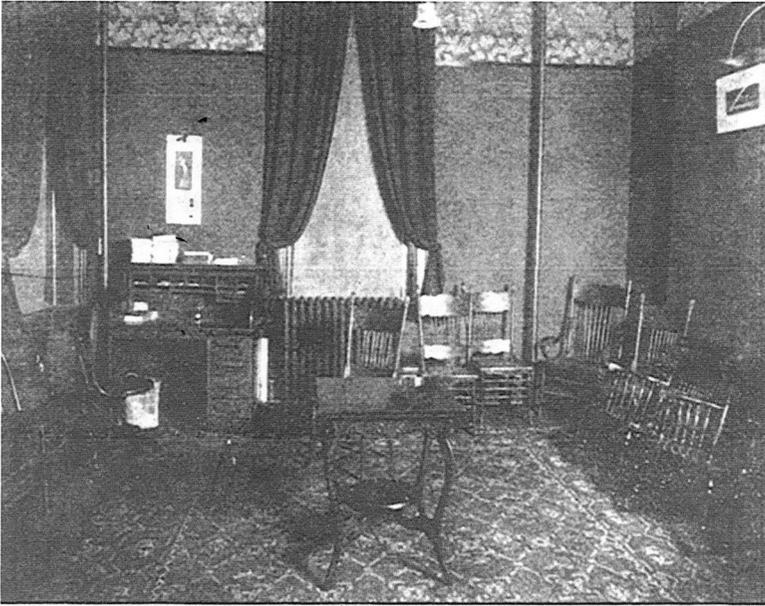
50. “Y.M. and Y.W.C.A. Work,” 10–11.

PRIOR TO THE CIVIL WAR, city YMCA members generally met in rented rooms, often above retail businesses. Early accommodations consisted of reading rooms with a library of books and newspapers and often an open meeting area. After the war, when membership rolls soared, permanent buildings provided additional space for evening classes and larger meetings. In 1866, William Earl Dodge, financier and newly elected president of the New York City YMCA, as well as the champion behind Luther Wishard's promotion of the campus associations, proposed adding the "physical" dimension to the former tripartite mission of spiritual, mental, and social. That constitutional addition permitted the New York City Y three years later to add a gymnasium, baths, and a bowling alley to its new \$500,000 building at 23rd Street. Both the new mission dimension as well as the new facilities reflected the "Muscular Christianity" movement that had begun in England in the late 1850s and quickly jumped the ocean to the United States. Gone, for many, was the ascetic mien for Christian men; embraced across the nation was robust health and an athletic physique for believers. And the YMCA movement took up the corporal challenge.⁵¹

Like the city YMCAs, the college associations quickly recognized the need for a meeting space. At many small colleges and large universities across the nation, Y students conducted capital campaigns to construct their own buildings on campus. Princeton constructed the first Y building, Murray Hall, in 1879 via a bequest of \$20,000. The second, a more modest building, was constructed for \$800 in 1883 at Hanover College.⁵² By the

51. Hopkins, *History of the YMCA*, 106, 151; Morse, *History of the North American YMCAs*, 75; Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA, 2001). One rationale used from the 1890s until the 1930s was that young men were attracted to gyms, and once they were involved with the Y, they would be exposed to Christianity. "In the early 1890s, however, [Luther] Gulick began to emphasize the 'unity and symmetry of body, mind, and spirit rather than a hierarchy of spirit over mind over body.'" John Donald Gustav-Wrathall, *Take the Young Stranger by the Hand: Same Sex Relations and the YMCA* (Chicago, 1998), 26-28.

52. John R. Mott, *How to Secure a College Association Building*, rev. ed., College Series no. 303 (New York, 1891). Mott, as a senior at Cornell in 1889, led his association to raise \$65,000 through student and faculty donations and a major gift by Alfred Barnes, a New York publisher, to build a magnificent Y building, Barnes Hall, on the Cornell campus.



Penn College designated this room across from the president's office in Main Hall for the use of the college YMCA and YWCA. The photo is from a 1906 Penn College calendar, courtesy of Charles Russell.

1890s, some of the campus YMCA buildings contained gymnasiums, bowling alleys, and swimming pools, reflecting the Muscular Christianity movement that swept the nation. Often, the Y buildings served their campuses as early student unions, providing campus members and others with small meeting rooms, auditoria, and guest lodging in addition to the recreation facilities.⁵³

At those colleges in which the students could not mount a capital campaign, the institution's administration often would designate a room or set of rooms for the use of the Y groups. Such was the case at Penn. The associations originally maintained joint rooms in Main, across from the president's office,

53. At the larger universities, such as Texas A & M, the Y buildings also offered barbershops. In Iowa, Y buildings were constructed at the University of Iowa, Iowa State, and Iowa Wesleyan. For the locations of 50 campus YMCA buildings, see Finnegan and Alleman, "Without Adult Supervision."

for meetings. The rooms “were fitted with books and periodicals” to which members had free access.⁵⁴

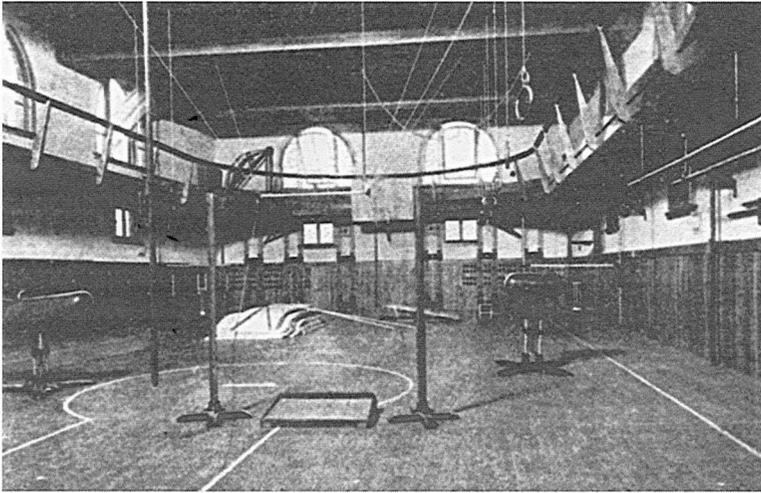
Penn College was not in a position to construct its first gymnasium until 1907. Apparently it was not able to hire instructors to offer physical education courses until then, either. Before that time, however, the lack of athletic facilities did not hold the Y students back. At the seventeenth state YMCA meeting in Des Moines in 1886, Y men from Penn listened to “Mr. Allen of Burlington [who] spoke on the question ‘Is the Gymnasium Antagonistic to Religious Work?’” Sharing their insights from the state meeting with their peers, Y representatives reported in the Penn student newspaper that “more than one in attendance at the convention testified that they were awakened to their lost condition and to the hope for better things while at a gymnasium of the YMCA.”⁵⁵ That promise inspired the Y students at Penn to establish indoor and outdoor sports programs and resources for the college. By the early 1890s, both Y associations had outfitted and begun operating their own gyms in Main’s basement. Three young men – all named Charles (Maris, Lewis, and Michener) – upon returning from the Des Moines meeting initiated a subscription list to support the construction of a men’s gymnasium. “Within two or three days, students subscribed over seventy dollars which [was afterward] augmented by them” and added to by friends from Oskaloosa and elsewhere. Their original \$100 paid for lumber for “a good dead floor, ceiling, windows, and doors, making a neat and attractive recreation resort.” They further announced that “at suitable hours, the gymnasium master will be giving practical illustrations upon the cross bar, or with dumbbells, Indian clubs, etc.”⁵⁶ Although Y members could use the gym for free, non-members paid a small fee to supplement the original capital campaign and to continue to add to the apparatus.

By 1892, the men’s gym sported floor mats, chest weights, a horizontal bar, a punching bag, ladder, rings, a trapeze, and jumping standards. In addition, the YMCA boasted in that year’s student handbook that their Bath Rooms for men

54. *Students’ Handbook*, 1892–93, 9.

55. *Penn Chronicle* 1 (November 1886), 7–8.

56. *Ibid.*, 3 (February 1888), 6–7.



Penn College's YMCA gymnasium was well equipped by 1906. Photo from a 1906 Penn College calendar, courtesy of Charles Russell.

have been in use two years, and during that time they have been extensively patronized. They are fitted out with three showers, a large basin, shoe blacking and brushes, so that after you have taken violent exercise in the gymnasium you may step into the bath room and make your toilet and be prepared for the class room with a clear brain and ready to take hold of your recitation with vigor. The bath is an important factor in maintaining good health.⁵⁷

To accommodate members, the baths were heated on Wednesdays (3–7:30 p.m.) and Saturdays (10 a.m.–8 p.m.). The income derived from the bath rooms and separate towel concession, as well as receipts from non-member user fees, allowed the Y men to continue to add equipment. By the end of 1898, they hoped to purchase “a pair of parallel bars and a number of dumb-bells.” As a gambit to engage the new men when they first arrived, freshmen were given a ticket for the bath rooms to experience the facility firsthand. Since the bath rooms were a successful enter-

57. *Students' Handbook*, 1892–93, 8. It is not known whether the Penn students' creation of a bath room was their own idea, but the YMCA at Friends University (another Quaker college) reported constructing a bath room at their institution in 1901. “The Student World,” *The Intercollegian* 25 (January 1903), 89 (SC-ASC).

prise, the men decided to remodel them in 1902 at a cost of \$150.⁵⁸ Clearly, the men earned significant revenues. In 1910–11 they had enough money in their coffers to hire a graduate as a part-time general secretary, who managed the association for a year.⁵⁹

The women's gym was located in the basement of the East Wing of Main building. Through donations from friends in 1891, the YWCA outfitted its space with apparatus and planned to offer courses in physical culture. Not to be outdone by the men, they added a "Rest Room" in the spring of 1898 and sponsored a series of health talks for female students.⁶⁰

When the college built its first free-standing gymnasium in 1907, the Y men donated \$1,000 toward the building and were given a room on the third floor for their meetings. Since the bath room in Main was no longer needed, the YMCA looked for another avenue to serve while gaining needed revenues. It purchased 102 steel lockers for the new recreation facility, using the income generated from renting the lockers for administrative expenses. Subsequently, abuse prompted the men to purchase locks for one-quarter of the lockers and to make other improvements to recoup their investment. Likewise, the YWCA spent \$209 to purchase rental lockers for women athletes, assured that they would provide a "constant source of income to [its] treasury."⁶¹

For its outdoor program, the Y associations formed the college's first Athletic Association (AA) in 1891. As the initiators, the Y students ran the outdoor athletic program: all AA officers were required to be members of the YMCA or YWCA. The Y

58. *Students' Handbook*, 1898–99, 10; *ibid.*, 1892–93, 8; "Y.M.C.A.," *Penn Chronicle* 18 (1903), 4.

59. Grover C. Hawk served both as the YMCA secretary and as a science teacher in the academy during the 1910–11 academic year. By 1916, Hawk was a professor of biology at Penn. "Faculty during President Edwards' Administration," n.d., Dr. [David] Edwards' file, WPU-WLA; "Faculty," Book I: The School, *The Quaker, 1916–1917*, 7. Hiring a general secretary was a mark of stability and success within the campus YMCAs.

60. *Students' Handbook*, 1892–93, 10; *ibid.*, 1898–99, 12–13.

61. "Annual Report of the Y.M.C.A. President," *Penn Chronicle* 22 (1907–08), 5; "Associations and Societies: Y.M.C.A.," *ibid.* 26 (April 1912), 12; "Annual Report of the Y.W.C.A. President," *ibid.* 22 (1907–08), 8; Penn College YM-YWCA clippings, WPU-WLA.



As part of its athletic program, the Penn College YMCA enlarged the College Pond and built a heated "rest house" for ice skaters during the winter. Photo from a 1906 Penn College calendar, courtesy of Charles Russell.

associations managed and maintained the athletic grounds and equipment, supported by annual dues of 50 cents charged to AA members. As part of its new athletic program, the YMCA permanently enlarged the College Pond to provide ice skating during the winter. It "raised money by chapel collections and private solicitation" to excavate the pond for proper drainage and to construct on the bank "a rest house, heated by an old rusty stove." From its first full academic year (1892-93), the Athletic Association planned to sponsor football in the fall term, baseball in the spring, and lawn tennis in the fall and spring.⁶²

From the late nineteenth century through the first decade of the new century, Penn's Y students offered a variety of physical activities and services for themselves and their peers, and by extension, for the college. And they earned a significant amount of revenue, which they reinvested in their endeavors. However, once the gymnasium was constructed, the culture began to shift. The college finally employed its first men's and women's physical directors in 1910.⁶³ The hiring of these faculty members was one of many tactics in the strategy of Dr. David Edwards, the newly elected president, to stabilize the institution by expanding the staff and curriculum, extending administrative control over operations, and leading an endowment campaign to ensure North Central Association accreditation.

62. Watson, *Penn College*, 120-21; *Students' Handbook*, 1892-93, 23-24.

63. "Faculty during President Edwards' Administration"; Watson, *Penn College*, 299-312.

In 1912 a faculty committee, chaired by Professor Forrester C. Stanley, took control of athletics, and all students became members of the Athletic Association. A year later, the Penn Letter Club was established. Membership was open to "all the men who have been awarded a letter in any branch of athletics, or in oratory or debates, during their college course at Penn." Its purpose was "to stimulate and maintain a proper spirit and enthusiasm in athletics and forensics." The Letter Club finished a cinder track on Penn Field and sponsored a Southeastern High School Field and Track Meet in 1917 and planned for a concrete stadium for football.⁶⁴ As the college grew in complexity and appropriated the Y's physical education program, the Y students redirected their energy back into religious outreach activities.

FRESHMEN have always been dazed when they arrive at college for the first time. In the late nineteenth century, professional student affairs staff had yet to be imagined. Freshmen, many of whom were new to the town and the campus, required a certain amount of care and assistance. Some students needed help to find employment and housing. By the early 1890s, Penn Y students provided a host of services and activities to ease student transitions and advance the social atmosphere of the college. The techniques employed on the Penn campus were not unique. Many of the ideas came from the national YMCA college secretary, John Raleigh Mott. In his pamphlet *The Fall Campaign*, Mott summarized the variety of activities and services that Y associations had initiated on their campuses across the nation, which then were adopted by others.⁶⁵ These services, designed to lend a friendly hand to confused freshmen, also served as recruitment tools for the Y by engendering a positive attitude in the new students toward the Y groups.

At Penn, YMCA Reception Committee members, sporting identifying ribbons of the college's colors of Old Gold and Blue, met arriving freshmen at the train station and helped them

64. *Students' Handbook*, 1912-13, 67; "Penn Letter Club," Book II: Organizations, *The Quaker*, 1916-1917, 1.

65. John Mott, *The Fall Campaign or How to Reach New Students*, College Series no. 305 (New York, 1891).

manage their luggage and secure or find their rooms. Freshmen could find their way through the administrative maze of registration and tuition payments by visiting the Y's information bureau in Main. To introduce new students to faculty and older students, the Y associations jointly sponsored an opening reception just after classes began.⁶⁶

Across the country, campus Y associations also initiated a service to help male students find employment off campus to help with college expenses. At some point in the first decade of the new century, the Penn YMCA established an employment bureau as a "connecting link between the students desiring employment and the people in the vicinity who have work to be done." In 1907-08, the bureau, headed by student Y member Clarence Hinshaw, "furnished permanent employment for ten [male students] and odd jobs for about twenty others," which accounted for about half of the male students.⁶⁷

Most campus Y associations also published pocket-sized leather-bound student handbooks. This service to the students and to their colleges began in the early 1880s at several colleges.⁶⁸ The earliest extant Penn handbook was published jointly by the YM-YWCA for the 1892-93 academic year. Each year a new handbook committee gathered what it deemed to be important information about the college and student life and relevant information about the town, such as church and train schedules. Subsidized by advertisements for local businesses, the handbooks were distributed free to freshmen often during the summer prior to their arrival at the college. Eventually, handbooks grew to contain appointment calendars and memoranda

66. Reception or Freshmen Committee chairs are noted in the 1892-93, 1898-99, and 1912-13 handbooks, and a fixed date for the fall reception is in the 1919-1920 and 1929-30 editions. From an extant invitation, it appears that the reception continued to be sponsored by the Ys at least until 1935.

67. *Students' Handbook*, 1912-13, 11; "Annual Report of the Y.M.C.A. President," *Penn Chronicle* 22 (1907-08), 6.

68. Handbooks dated 1883 have been identified for Hillsdale and Otterbein colleges and Northwestern University. The 1885 University of Virginia handbook is listed as volume three. Hopkins, *History of the YMCA*, 284, cites only the Hillsdale handbook. If four institutions published handbooks in 1883, it remains unclear which institution is responsible for devising the idea. I have collected Y-sponsored handbooks from more than 100 colleges and universities ranging from 1883 to the mid-1950s.

pages. With the handbooks, the Ys welcomed new students and introduced their goals and services. As college activities and athletics programs grew, the handbooks also presented descriptions of clubs, team schedules, school cheers, and the *alma mater*.

The 36-page 1892-93 Penn College student handbook provided everything an incoming freshman would want to know about Penn, and a little more. It included a greeting from the Y associations, explained their histories, missions, and activities, and listed the officers and committees. The two associations organized and administered their groups through committee structures. The men's committees included new students, religious meetings, Bible study, missionary, membership, financial, intercollegiate relations, and handbook. The YWCA used many of the same types of committees but added one to manage its gymnasium.

The 1892-93 handbook also supplied students with an annotated history of the college and its faculty. It described the literary societies and the *Penn Chronicle* and provided a list of the faculty. To help orient freshmen to Oskaloosa, the handbook included directories of churches and streets, streetcar routes, and the schedule for the Central Iowa train. It even informed the freshmen of this Quaker college's one and only college yell:

Hi, Hi, Hi, He!
Pennagorunk, gorey, gore!
The, Thou, Thy, Thee!
Penn! Hooray!

The two associations paid for the handbook with five full-page advertisements from Oskaloosa merchants, including two photographers, Wilson's dry goods store, Hedge Bros. ("mammoth") Book Store, and the Brewster-Welch Shoe Company, which boasted "'t'is a Feat to Fit the Foot." The handbook committee informed freshmen that they must obtain a catalog from the president's office; professors each had separate policies about tardiness to class; the rising bell rang at 6 o'clock, breakfast was at 7 a.m., dinner was at 12:30 p.m., and supper was at 5:30 p.m.; mail was delivered twice a day; and "no one can afford to miss the Y.M. and Y.W.C.A. reception on Saturday evening."⁶⁹

69. *Students' Handbook*, 1892-93, quotations from pp. 30 and 3.

In contrast, the 1898–99 handbook illustrates Penn’s growth and the continued expansion of the Ys’ activities. The handbook contained 72 pages with an index to assist the reader. Local merchants bought 31 advertisements—five of which were full pages—that plugged everything from books to insurance, and from bakery goods to hardware. Fourteen pages described the Ys’ work, services, and activities, with a slightly expanded committee structure. Although the committees in both groups were similar to those in 1892–93, the men added gymnasium and lecture committees to their organization. And the YWCA boasted a membership of 60 students, who paid annual dues of 60 cents. The men did not report their membership numbers, but 39 different men, including the college president’s son and three faculty members, served on committees. In both campus Y associations, active membership, which qualified one to hold office, required membership in good standing of an evangelical church.

Five pages of the 1898–99 handbook detailed the college’s athletic program managed by the YMCA’s Athletic Association, which then included men’s football, tennis, and basketball, and the beginning of women’s intramural sports. One page touted the official athletic records of the college dating back to 1891; the records included track and field competitions and bicycle races. And the college yells had increased to four.⁷⁰

The extent of participation in the Y associations—and the effectiveness of the groups’ leadership—largely depended on the year, the nature of the student body, and the college’s leadership. In 1910 almost half of the male students and about two-thirds of the female students belonged to the respective Y, but the level of enthusiasm did not match the reported membership. In their annual reports for 1911–12, both Ys lamented failed activities due to individuals neglecting their responsibilities, yet applauded the success of other services. The handbook, for example, which had not been published for several years, had once again been placed in the hands of the freshmen by a joint YM-YWCA committee in 1912.⁷¹

70. *Students’ Handbook*, 1898–99, 4–17, 30–34.

71. “Report of the Penn College Visiting and Advisory Committee,” 1910, 3. In 1908, the collegiate enrollment at Penn was 136, while the entire college’s student contingent was 468, including academy, music, and commercial students.

No doubt, participation in Y activities dwindled with the spreading smorgasbord of secular groups on campus and the leadership emerging from the new groups. A 36-page daily calendar inserted in the 1912–13 handbook shows the increasingly complex schedule students were keeping. Six literary societies competed for members along with the Forensic League, the Penn College Glee Club, the yearbook and newspaper publications, Student Council, Glaukides (a classics club), a Prohibition League, the College Band, athletic teams—and, of course, the YMCA and YWCA.⁷² A year later, the Letter Club emerged.

Leading Penn during this second decade, David M. Edwards (1910–1917) conveyed to the college the modern higher education administrative model of efficiency. A Quaker from Dallas County, Edwards had studied at the Bear Creek [Friends] Academy in Earlham, Iowa, and then at a normal school before entering Penn College in 1896. Although married and a bit older than most collegiate peers, Edwards was active during his student days at Penn. His secular activities included student newspaper editorial board member and president of the Alcimian [literary] Society. For the YMCA, Edwards served as president in his second year and chaired the Bible Study Committee in his fourth year. After earning a master's degree at the University of Chicago in 1902, he returned to Penn to teach until 1905, when he left for doctoral work at Boston University. Succeeding Absalom Rosenberger as president in 1910, Edwards was the first Penn alumnus and the first Ph.D. (1908) to lead the Quaker college. Embracing a realistic vision of quality for Penn, he not only installed a modern administration, but also ensured fiscal resources and regional accreditation, and recruited scholars from Harvard, Wisconsin, Chicago, and Haverford.⁷³

Iowa Official Register, 1909–1910, 854–80, available at <http://iagenweb.org/history/register/colleges.htm>; "Associations and Societies: Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A. – 1911–1912," *Penn Chronicle* 26 (April 1912), 12–14.

72. *Students' Handbook*, 1912–1913, 19–55, 59–69, 72–73.

73. *Penn Chronicle* 11 (9/30/1896); *ibid.* 12 (3/15/1897); *Aurora* (yearbook, renamed *The Quaker* in 1905), 1900, WPU-WLA; "Dr. David M. Edwards," undated manuscript describing the endowment campaign, and "David Morton Edwards #1," compiled by daughter Susie, Edwards' file, WPU-WLA. Edwards went on to serve as president of Earlham College (1917–1929) and Friends University (1934–1939). Watson, *Penn College*, 286.

Edwards created the College Council in the spring of 1911, which was composed of the Faculty Council, an administrative-faculty group, and the Student Council, a committee of various student organizational leaders. The Student Council was

to form an intermediary link between Faculty and students, thus fostering the democratic ideals that had always characterized the college government, and to help to establish the idea that the College is governed, not by rules, but by standards which the whole college shall establish and thus eliminate the vexations incident to Faculty rule. The Faculty remains the final legislative and executive body, but these organizations have great weight in the final decisions.⁷⁴

Yet, even with a structured vehicle created to ensure democratic student representation, problems arose.

Toward the end of the 1911-12 academic year, the faculty voiced concern over the lack of attention to study and increased extracurricular activities. During the spring term, they began to exercise control over the activities of the 153 collegiate students.⁷⁵ The motivation appears to have been the accelerating competition between the Y associations and secular groups for the control of student activities. In an explicit move to support the Christian associations' services to the new students, the faculty decided that beginning with the 1912-13 academic year, the literary societies would no longer be permitted to hold private social functions until after Thanksgiving so as not to "offset the previous work done by the Christian Associations." At the same time, the faculty created a scale of activity points to regulate students' participation in extracurricular activities. Leadership positions in the literary societies, the Y associations, and the student publications (newspaper and yearbook) as well as playing football and basketball garnered the most points. Fewer

74. "College Council," Dr. Edwards' Adm'r, 1911, 3, Edwards' file, WPU-WLA.

75. "As Others See Us," 11/9/1911, 1, Edwards' file, WPU-WLA. The document cites the institution as having 387 students in 1910, spread throughout the academy, music school, and other auxiliary departments, with 14 faculty members in the college. The report continues: "Since the founding of the college nearly 6,000 have attended Penn. Thirty-seven classes, containing 429 students, have been graduated. Higher degrees have been taken by 150 of Penn's 429 alumni."

points were assessed for participation in debating activities. Then, according to their grade point average, students were placed on their honor to limit their activities.⁷⁶ In this way, the faculty, while safeguarding some of the Y's freshmen services, had begun to assert authority over student life.

By 1919–20, the YMCA lagged behind the YWCA and no longer dominated campus social life. The YMCA competed for membership with the literary societies, publications, the men's glee club, the college orchestra, an intercollegiate forensic team, and five athletic teams. The YMCA committees had dwindled to only Bible Study and Employment, and the group solicited membership subscriptions according to means rather than dues. Yet the YWCA continued to hold its own, perhaps because it provided women students with a viable social outlet beyond their one sport (intercollegiate basketball), the literary societies, a glee club, and their suffrage league. The YWCA continued to maintain a complex set of committees and collect membership dues of 50 cents per term. The women also continued to sponsor the May Day Festival to raise money to send representatives to the summer conferences at Lake Geneva.⁷⁷

By 1919–20, the injunction on secular social activities had been relaxed. Still, the literary societies were not permitted to "rush" new students for membership or hold any "private spreads or picnics" until Pledge Day, October 9. Although the range of activities appears to have remained constant since the beginning of the decade, the number of clubs diminished, except for the expanded men's athletic program.⁷⁸

The YMCA and YWCA still published the handbook in 1929–30, but at a condensed size of 43 pages in which the Y activities span four pages. The directory lists the addresses and telephone numbers of 324 students by class, taking up 12 pages. The men's association regained some of its former complexity in its committee structure, although Bible Study changed to Christianity Study. The new YMCA president, Harold Saun-

76. The students actually proposed a "truce" to the faculty for the remainder of the academic year, but the latter took control of the situation. Minutes of the Faculty Meeting, 6/8/1912, 45-47, WPU-WLA.

77. *Students' Handbook*, 1919–20, 4–9.

78. *Ibid.*

ders, fresh from serving as a midwestern delegate to a national summer YMCA convention, refocused the group's attention: The "committees of the [YMCA] are arranging their activities for this season so that more effort will be brought upon campus problems. Difficulties of the individual are to be investigated and solved rather than an abundance of the outside national or international work carried on by the organization." Seemingly as popular as ever, the YWCA had added new specialized officers (pianist and chorister) and two new committees (World Fellowship and Publicity and Art) to its complex structure.⁷⁹

During the late 1920s, the college's societies and clubs took on a decidedly academic and intercollegiate orientation in addition to their social nature. No longer were the Y associations the only nonathletic groups with external input. The 1928 *Quaker* reported that the Dramatic Club (known as the Penn Players by 1930) was in its second year and the Home Economics Club (1926) had in its second year become affiliated with the National Home Economics Association. The Cosmopolitan Club, which carried the motto "above all nations is humanity," met once a month at noon "to promote fellowship and understanding among all races and nationalities." The club attracted international and domestic students, white as well as students of color. By 1930 the club was linked with the national society, *Corda Fratres*.⁸⁰ In the 1929-30 academic year, the French Club emerged, and the college newspaper and yearbook staffs organized the Journalism Club that spring.

The 1936-37 *Wm. Penn College Directory and Handbook*, by then published by the Christian Associations—the combined and renamed YMCA and YWCA—shows the ravages of the Great Depression.⁸¹ The 48-page book contains only 34 pages

79. *Students' Handbook*, 1929-1930, 11, 13.

80. Cosmopolitan Clubs were often affiliated with campus YMCAs, although apparently not at Penn. *Corda Fratres*, an international movement begun in Italy in 1898, was introduced into the United States after the turn of the century. "Cosmopolitan Club," *The Quaker*, 1928, 65; "Cosmopolitan Club," *ibid.*, 1930, Book IV, 10.

81. A fire destroyed Main in 1916, requiring Penn to construct a new administrative-instructional building about two blocks away at the campus's present location. Once again, President Edwards led the college in a capital campaign to finance the construction. From then on, the college was financially unstable

of college information; the remaining pages are given to advertisements. The handbook listed the 23 faculty (an almost entirely new group compared to the 1930 teaching staff) and 157 students with their local addresses and home towns in 13 pages. Surely reflecting the financial difficulties of the time and of the college, 15 faculty members lived in the dormitory. With the smaller student body, the range of clubs was reduced. No doubt the diminished size and less extensive expertise of the faculty made it impossible to continue many of the clubs, although the Home Economics Club, the drama club, the Student Council, the newspaper, the pep club, and International Relations (probably the successor to the Cosmopolitan Club) survived. The rest of the handbook details the library schedule and rules, athletic team schedules, sundry songs and yells, and, finally, a directory of local churches. By 1945, the student handbook had become a publication of the college rather than the students, providing basic rules and information, reminiscent of its precursors, but containing little of the personal work emanating from the Y associations' endeavors.⁸²

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century most city YMCAs contracted four or five itinerant lecturers and performers for what they often called a "Star Course" that spanned the year.⁸³ In the late 1880s the Oskaloosa YMCA (founded in 1869) sponsored a similar lecture series. In 1892-93, the Penn YMCA formulated its own lecture series for the following academic year, a popular Y activity on many campuses across the country. To support the series, the Penn Y men raised a guaranty fund of \$500. The first season, the men contracted for four lectures, one impersonator (of David Copperfield), a singing quartette, and a Hungarian violinist. The series realized a small profit, but its

and thus was vulnerable when the Crash occurred in 1929. In early January 1931, the faculty responded to pleas for contributions to the annual fund to ease the college's financial crisis with pledges of \$2,694.48. Minutes of the Faculty of Penn College, 1930-31, WPU-WLA. The college was forced to reincorporate in March 1933 as William Penn College. Watson, *Penn College*, 171-78.

82. The Christian Associations, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., *Wm. Penn College Directory and Handbook*, 1936-37; *Students' Handbook*, 1945-1946.

83. See Dorothy E. Finnegan and Brian Cullaty, "Origins of the YMCA Universities: Organizational Adaptations in Urban Education," *History of Higher Education Annual* 21 (2001), 47-77.

overall success was marked by pledges of a thousand dollars to support the second season.⁸⁴

For the third annual season, the Penn Y associations teamed up with the Oskaloosa YMCA to sponsor the "Union Association Course" of six evening lectures and entertainments. Patrons paid two dollars for the entire series, an eight-week season that included Russell H. Conwell, founder and president of Temple University (as well as the Minneapolis YMCA), and Booker T. Washington. Other events over the years included lectures by Jacob Riis and Jane Addams and concerts by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Temple Male Quartette.⁸⁵

Obviously, the coordination and management needed to ensure a successful season required considerable attention and leadership ability. During the 1910-11 season, however, the series must not have attracted large enough audiences to sustain the productions. The YMCA reported a deficit of \$69.06 for the lecture course and decided not to offer a series the following year.⁸⁶ The college sponsored lectures thereafter, further evidence of the new organizational control exerted by the president and faculty.

GRADUALLY, the college assumed responsibility for the social and athletic activities on campus that the Y associations had started. The transition began when President Edwards modernized the administration and management of the college during his eight-year tenure. Twelve years after leading the YMCA as student president, Edwards extended the participation of student representatives in the college's governance by creating an advisory group, the Student Council, that discussed college issues with the faculty in the composite governing group, the College Council. The culture of democracy begun by the early Quaker presidents continued under his leadership. In 1912 the faculty started to exert control over the amount of time students could engage in extracurricular activities. As campus culture, which included intercollegiate athletics, developed across the

84. Y.M.C.A. Lecture Course, 1893-1914, 1, YM-YWCA file, WPU-WLA.

85. *Ibid.*, 2.

86. "Annual Report of the Y.M.C.A., 1910-1911," *Penn Chronicle* 25 (April 1911), 8.

country, Penn College's student social life changed in similar ways.⁸⁷ The Athletic Association gained in stature and was no longer restricted to Y members. A faculty committee supervised athletics. A college gymnasium was constructed and physical education directors were hired, replacing the Y students, who managed their own gyms. And the lecture series became a college-run endeavor.

Student Affairs as we know it today emerged only gradually at most colleges in the 1930s and 1940s. Many colleges appointed deans of women in the late nineteenth century to guide and control women students' comportment, but deans of men did not appear on many campuses until 1920.⁸⁸ By the time the president and the faculty at Penn started to assert control over secular student activities, interest in the Y associations apparently had begun to wane among the students. New activities, such as debating teams, glee clubs, publications, student council, seminars, and intercollegiate sports, competed for student attention. Although a small but fervent group continued the YMCA and YWCA's religious activities through the 1920s, their social programs were progressively appropriated by the college. Penn's Class of 1929 first experienced the "new" collegiate innovation of Freshmen Week.⁸⁹ In 1929-30, two undergraduates were placed in charge of the employment and housing services under the direction of Penn's vice-president and the dean of women.⁹⁰

The college's gradual assumption of responsibility for the activities and services rendered by the Y associations was not

87. See Henry D. Sheldon, *Student Life and Customs* (New York, 1901); and Helen Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the 18th Century to the Present* (Chicago, 1987).

88. See Caroline Terry Bashaw, *"Stalwart Women": A Historical Analysis of Deans of Women in the South* (New York, 1999); Jana Nidiffer, *Pioneering Deans of Women: More Than Wise and Pious Matrons* (New York, 2000); Kenton Gatyas, "Thomas Arkle Clark and the Office of Dean of Men at the University of Illinois, 1901-1917," *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 30 (1998), 129-45; Robert A. Schwartz, "How Deans of Women Became Men," *Review of Higher Education* 20 (1997), 419-36.

89. "Juniors," *The Quaker*, 1928, 30. One of the earliest reports of this innovation, which appeared at larger institutions in the mid-1920s, is in Ernest H. Wilkins, "Freshman Week at the University of Chicago," *The School Review* 32 (1924), 746.

90. *Students' Handbook*, 1912-13, 57; *ibid.*, 1929-30, 26.

just a local phenomenon; it represents a general pattern in many colleges across the nation. As offices of student affairs began to take shape in the late 1920s and through the 1930s, campus activities and services were commandeered. However, at some institutions, such as the University of California at Berkeley, Clemson, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Texas A&M University, and the University of Illinois, the YMCA, especially, remained a potent force on campus through the rest of the interwar period and in some cases into the present. In general, those campus Ys were large enough to employ a full-time general secretary, who was a charismatic leader and revered confidant for the young men on campus.

The Penn Y Associations, which were succeeded first by the coeducational Student Christian Association and then by the Penn Christian Fellowship, were a breeding ground for leaders. Participating and leading their associations during their first thirty years were students who achieved distinction. They included missionaries all over the world, two presidents of Penn College (David M. Edwards and H. Linneaus McCracken [1928-1931]), a long-serving Penn academic dean (Stephen M. Hadley [1908-1930]), a Penn faculty member (Rosa E. Lewis), YMCA secretaries in city YMCAs and at regional offices and the national office, a senior economic adviser to Presidents Nixon and Reagan (Paul McCracken), and countless other leaders. For more than thirty years, YMCA-YWCA students created and sculpted the religious and social nature of Penn College just as it was getting on its feet.