

The Unsettled Years

The financial crisis of 1857 nearly prostrated every business in Fayette except the Court and the Sheriff. Tuition at the college was paid in wood, hay, turnips, and other things that could be used. Professors worked as common laborers during vacations to even out what the tuition receipts did not supply. One student, according to an account by Jason L. Paine, hoed potatoes on what is now the east lawn:

He hoed by the hour, his first being from 4:00 to 5:00 a.m. Then he would go and ring the bell for the rest to arise, and then return and hoe another hour before breakfast. He rang the bell (by means of a long pull rope extending from the tower to the first floor) 19 times a day for his tuition, and paid his board by other work. During his first two terms he paid tuition with milk, bringing it up as he came to recite mathematics at a quarter past seven.

Incidentally, the bell continued to provide tuition employment for students until January 1960. Then the bell was converted into an electrically operated system.

Since there were no athletics or social organizations, students found their entertainment in more academic ways, and eventually established four literary societies, which played major roles in the development of the University.

The Philomatheans, organized in 1857, and the Zethegatheans, organized in 1861, were for young men, while the Aonias, 1857, and the Zeta Alphas, 1882, were for young women. Minutes of these organizations show the students took their literary work seriously, and many evenings of entertainment were provided through their spirited meetings and public debates. These, and other literary societies, continued until 1928, when they were all combined into a Forensic League.

The first chemistry class began in 1858 and was taught by Dr. C. C. Parker, head of the Biology Department. Dr. Parker, a medical physician and an avid botanist, had settled in Fayette in 1855.

One day, in 1858, Dr. Parker came into the recitation room and remarked:

As I came up through the woods from Lima last evening I caught sight of a likely young sapling and decided to bring it home with me. I had no spade. The only tool I had with me was a pocket knife. By hard work with knife and hand, by cutting and pulling, I finally got it out of the ground. I have just set it down by the west gate.

This "likely young sapling" still stands in 1965 by the Memorial Arch at the west entrance — a living memorial over a century old.

President Bugbee resigned on April 21, 1860, and the Reverend William Brush, A.M., was placed in charge. The following July he was elected president, which position he held until June 1869.

President Brush was described as "a man of great natural ability and force of character, with immense reserve power in time of emergency." And emergencies were not infrequent. Twice during his administration the college building was unroofed by storms. Undaunted, President Brush, driving his pair of matched mules, scoured the countryside to raise money with which to repair the damage. Later he also traveled the area, far and wide, seeking students to replace those who left the campus during the Civil War.

Fired by the spirit of patriotism which swept over the country at the outbreak of the war, the student body of Upper Iowa University sent forth the first company of men to enlist from Fayette County. Twenty-two students leaving the school in a body played havoc with the classes and President Brush undertook to counteract the patriotic tendencies of the students by writing letters to parents urging them to use parental authority and forbid the enlistment. His efforts were counteracted by the preceptress, Miss Sorin, who gave the boys her sympathy, became their champion, and remained their friend during the war.

Miss Sorin and the young ladies of the University purchased materials and with their own hands made an American flag for the Upper Iowa company. On it they embroidered the name "University Recruits." In a spirited contest the girls elected Henry J. Grannis as the Color bearer for the

company. Later, when the original flag was captured, a second flag was made identical to the first. This flag is now on display at the University. The "University Recruits" became a part of Co. C, 12th Iowa Infantry. They participated in 17 major battles and sustained the heaviest blows from the Confederate Army in several conflicts.

Though many of the students were gone, others came to fill the places of the soldiers, and Upper Iowa continued to carry on its work. By 1862 the first class was ready to graduate. Two young men received their diplomas and delivered their commencement orations in Robertson's Woods. John Everett Clough from Strawberry Point received the first Bachelor of Science degree. Jason Lee Paine of Fayette was awarded the first Bachelor of Arts degree.

Clough's address was entitled "Skepticism: In Relation to Philosophy." He became a missionary to India, where he established a seminary for teachers. He was credited with over 9,000 converts, founded a college, instituted health programs, and raised \$150,000 for missionary work in India.

Paine's valedictory address was "Price of Liberty." For two years after graduation he served as missionary pastor in the Dakotas where he helped to write the charter for the University of Yankton. For nine years he was a minister in the Upper Iowa Conference and was later professor

of ancient languages at Upper Iowa. He served as a member of the Board of Trustees for 30 years.

Others won honors during the Civil War and its aftermath. The first women graduates received their degrees in 1865 and the first Master's degree was awarded to the Rev. I. K. Fuller. Meanwhile, a permanent endowment of about \$30,000 was secured and a School of Commerce was established.

The years following the Civil War saw frequent changes in administration. The Rev. Charles N. Stowers, A.M., succeeded Dr. Brush as president and remained for one year, 1869-1870. Byron W. McLaine, A.M., was made acting president for the next two years, 1870-1872. In 1872 the Rev. Roderick Norton, A.M., then pastor at Fayette, was elected president and performed the duties of both positions until 1873.

The lowest ebb in the history of the institution to that time was reached during this unsettled period. The frequent changes of administration were not conducive to growth, and the institution became entangled in debt. The outlook for the future was not bright.