

Golden Years

By 1870 Lenox Collegiate Institute had developed college ambitions but it was not until 1873 that the charter was amended to provide for college work "the grade of which is to be at least high enough to prepare the men for the sophomore class in the best colleges of the United States, and the ladies for the second year in the best ladies' seminary in the country. But the school may be raised to any higher grade whatever."

The next four decades from 1875 to 1915 were the golden years at Lenox, for it was during this period that the school realized its greatest usefulness, produced many of its most distinguished graduates, and reached high peaks of achievement along both academic and non-academic lines.

One of the members of the faculty in the seventies was Thomas H. McBride (later written Macbride), a Lenox student of the 1860's who in 1871 was called back to serve as professor of mathematics and modern languages and for two years was assistant to the president. The *Delhi Monitor* of July 11, 1878, carried this Hopkinton news item: "Prof. McBride has been called to Iowa

City. The University offered, it is said, \$1,800 a year. We hope this call is not loud enough for him to hearken to it. Our town would protest against it if that would hinder his going. We wish they would study the command and 'not covet' our best men. We wish, too, we were rich enough to outbid Iowa City or any other school that shall try to get our professors away from us."

The call, however, was loud enough for Professor Macbride to hear and that same year he started his eminently successful career as professor and scientist at the State University of Iowa, culminating in his elevation to the school's presidency in 1914. In 1892 Dr. Macbride donated some 2,000 specimens of minerals and fossils to Lenox College.

The Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. early became part of Lenox. The Young Men's Christian Association was organized in 1876 and the Women's Association a year later under the leadership of Miss Mary George. So far as it is known, this was the first college Y.W.C.A. to be started west of the Mississippi, the first student group having organized only four years previously at Normal University in Normal, Illinois. The Christian associations, the Christian teaching, and the example of the instructors were powerful influences in Lenox life. This was evidenced by the large num-

ber of ministers and missionaries among the graduates.

In 1882, when President Hodge resigned, he could look back with satisfaction on the achievements of his administration. The physical plant had been enlarged by the addition of a wing to the original building. Lenox was the oldest Presbyterian college in Iowa and her alumni list was sprinkled with names of influential ministers, physicians, lawyers, and educators. Two of her early graduates, Reverend H. C. Velte, 1879, and Dr. James McKean, 1880, were active in Christian work in India and Siam.

Some idea of the operation of the school in the 1880's may be gained from the financial statement submitted to the Synod for the year ending on September 1, 1883. This showed \$2,491.00 from tuition; \$341.25 from donations and various fees, and \$922.64 from interest on the endowment and rent of a farm. Expenditures included the following payments: J. H. Ritchey, president, \$1,100.00; W. A. Crusinberry, professor, \$600.00; Sarah E. Buckley, preceptress, \$500.00; Mary C. Lord, teacher, \$270.00; Wm. Flude, financial manager, \$450.00; janitor, \$83.90; publishing catalogues, \$42.15; advertising and printing, \$83.82; interest on last year's balance, \$36.00; fuel, repairs, and contingent expenses, \$376.04; Hodge prizes,

\$40.00; and sixty diplomas, \$59.15, making a total of \$4,097.14 and leaving a deficit on September 1, 1883, of \$341.75. The Institute had the following property: college buildings, grounds, libraries, furniture, and apparatus, estimated worth, \$15,000; interest bearing and installment notes (worthless ones deducted), \$11,000; and 160 acres of improved land in Buchanan County, \$4,000, a total of \$30,000.

In the fall of 1882 the first non-clergy president came to Lenox. He was J. H. Ritchey, "an experienced educator . . . well informed in all the progressive and modern systems of practical and scientific education." The following year the Presbyterian Synod authorized an amendment in the articles of incorporation, changing the name from Lenox Collegiate Institute to Lenox College. This change took effect in 1884.

One of the innovations of the new president was an organized attempt to secure endowment. In 1885 the Presbyterian Synod approved a plan to allow a donor certain privileges, depending on the amount of the donation. A gift of \$25,000 would endow a professor's chair and would allow the donor to select the chair and to name its occupant during the life of the donor.

A gift of \$5,000 would endow a complete scholarship for one student, including tuition, board,

and room, but it was stipulated that students attending on such a scholarship "shall wear a uniform if designated by the Board." It should be added, however, to the credit of the board, that such action was never taken; possibly there was no \$5,000 gift to test this provision of the plan. A gift of \$500 would provide free tuition for one student "in perpetuity", transferable as other property. These scholarships did not, apparently, bring in much money, for in 1887 the Synod's visiting committee reported that "Lenox feels in every department the paralyzing want of sufficient means."

The decade known as the "gay nineties" is remembered as the proudest and most fruitful period in the Lenox story. It was a period of growth, expansion of interests, great teachers, great students, great victories on the football field and on the podium. The physical growth started with the construction of a girls' dormitory which was named Clarke Hall. It was ready for occupancy in the fall of 1890 and was completely filled the first year with the exception of one room. A boarding club in the basement of the building accommodated about thirty-five students. Board for 1890-1891 cost the students an average of \$2.07 per week. A building to house the science and athletic departments was completed in 1901

and was named Doolittle Hall, in honor of F. W. Doolittle, one of the donors.

Many students of the 1890's were destined in later life to make outstanding records in educational, religious, and professional fields. Among these were three members of the Merriam family. Charles E. Merriam, Sr., was a merchant in Hopkinton and a strong supporter of Lenox College. An older son, John C. Merriam, who graduated in 1886, was for years a distinguished scientist and Professor of Paleontology at the University of California. Charles E. Merriam, Jr., of the class of 1893, became one of the outstanding authorities on political science in the United States. He was professor at the University of Chicago for many years and was active in promoting municipal reforms for the city of Chicago. He was, at one time, a candidate for mayor of Chicago on a reform ticket. Frank F. Merriam, a cousin of Charles and John, and a graduate in the class of 1888, was an editor and became interested in politics. He was State Auditor of Iowa, 1899-1903, and Governor of California from 1935 to 1939.

W. B. Guthrie, a classmate of Charles E. Merriam, was for years Professor of Education at City College in New York and the author of numerous books in the field of education and his-

tory. Miss Franc Earhart (1899) rendered outstanding service at Lenox during her many years of teaching mathematics there. In a recent poll of Lenox alumni, she received by far the largest number of votes for the "Lenox Hall of Fame". E. T. Eaton (1897) became one of the leading educators of the west. For many years he was connected with the schools in Montana and served as president of Billings Polytechnic Institute.

Many graduates in the 1890's turned to the field of religion for their life work and made remarkable records. Daniel Russell was for years pastor of Rutgers Presbyterian Church in New York City, F. C. McKean served as pastor of the Hollywood Presbyterian Church, and Dr. Alexander Wilson was a medical missionary to India.

Such was the caliber of the Lenox men and women of the 1890's. The achievements of the alumni of this period are especially remarkable, when it is remembered that the graduating classes of that period averaged less than nine each year. The largest number of graduates was eighteen — nine men and nine women — in 1885. The enrollment that year reached 173, with 75 doing college work.

While some form of athletics was popular at Lenox from early days, it was in 1893, partly at the insistence of Charles E. Merriam, Jr., student

editor of the college paper, *The Nutshell*, that organized sports became a part of the Lenox program. In that year, the first Lenox-Coe track meet at Cedar Rapids ended with Coe on the long end of a 65-52 count. According to *The Nutshell* (and true to the type of sports reporting fashionable in the 90's), "The Lenox boys were kept busy watching the Cedar Rapids referee lest he would steal our points; . . . The Lenox Boys showed wondrous mettle, standing the efforts nobly. A little practice was all that was wanting to have made the score in our favor."

Football was organized at Lenox in 1893. Upper Iowa was the first opponent, winning 14-4. Although there were no victories for Lenox in that first year, the team was experienced enough in 1894 to win three out of four games. In 1896, Lenox claimed victories over Iowa State Normal School, Coe, Cornell, and U. I. U. Football reached its highest point at Lenox in 1898, when the team was undefeated and claimed the State championship. One of the games long remembered was a 12-0 victory over Rush Medical Institute of Chicago.

Athletics was not, however, the only activity of Lenox students in the 1890's. In 1894, Frank Chalmers McKean won the State oratorical contest with an oration on "Typical American Citi-

zenship". Two years later A. M. Cloud won the State contest for Lenox and, representing Iowa, was declared the winner in an interstate contest, with an oration on "The Policy of Metternich".

That rigid discipline was the order of the day at Lenox is shown from the following pledge which was required of all students in the 1890's: "Impressed with the great importance of improving my time and opportunities while in connection with Lenox college, I solemnly promise, in reliance upon divine help, that I will faithfully and diligently devote myself to the studies that I undertake; that I will conscientiously observe all the rules and regulations that relate to the conduct and deportment of the students; and that I will readily yield to the wholesome admonitions of the Professors or Teachers of the college so long as I shall continue a student of the same."

The Lenox program of studies in 1893 included six courses or departments — Classical, Scientific, Normal, Commercial, Preparatory, and Musical. Some idea of the content of a college course of the day may be obtained from the following comments taken from the 1893 catalog:

"The Classical course embraces the philosophical and literary courses of American colleges . . . It is symmetrical throughout, providing a full course in the classics.

"The Scientific course is of equal length with the Classical . . . while giving special prominence to the sciences it does not lack the other elements of a rounded education . . .

"The Commercial course includes plain and ornamental penmanship, bookkeeping and business forms. The student can avail himself of an extra course in typewriting . . .

"The Preparatory course (two years before entering college) is designed to fit the student for a college course, and a sufficient amount of Mathematics, History, Latin, Greek, and German is provided for that purpose."

Some of the texts used in 1893 were Swinton's *English Grammar*, Barnes' *History of the United States*, and McCord's *Psychology*. The courses offered the freshman students in the classical course in 1893 included Geometry, Rhetoric, Virgil, Cicero's Orations, Horace's Odes, Greek, Bible study, Old Testament History, and Botany.

In 1900 the fortieth anniversary celebration was held on the Lenox campus and one of the accomplishments at this celebration was the subscription of enough money to permit the finishing of the "science and athletic" building.

In 1906, Dr. E. E. Reed, former president of Buena Vista College, was chosen to head Lenox. He was a man of great energy and an experienced

and accomplished educator and administrator. One of his first jobs in Hopkinton was to push forward an endowment campaign. A bequest of \$25,000 had been obtained from Carnegie funds, subject to the provision that \$75,000 be raised from other sources. This was a large undertaking for Lenox, but under the direction of President Reed a final figure of \$107,000 was reached.

With the 1907 commencement, Lenox celebrated another milestone — her fiftieth anniversary. It appears that the discrepancy in dates — a 40th anniversary in 1900 and a 50th in 1907 — may have caused the mathematicians on the faculty some difficulty, but the explanation lies in the fact that the Bowen Collegiate Institute was incorporated in 1856 and building began in 1857, but classes did not start until 1859. The year 1907, therefore, marked the end of the 50th year since its incorporation. Incidentally, Lenox is not the only college in the State guilty of this type of historical mathematics!

The fiftieth anniversary celebration was long remembered. High dignitaries of the educational and political world attended. One of the memorable days of this week-long celebration was the inaugural address of President Reed. He stressed the importance of agriculture in Iowa and the Middle West and advocated a strong school

of agriculture in colleges such as Lenox. This suggestion bore fruit in 1909, when a course in agriculture was established at Lenox with the help of the Extension Department at Ames.

The school for teachers also received attention. The 1910 catalog stated: "The principle that a teacher must have attended a more advanced school than she proposes to teach is now thoroughly established. Only prepared people will in the future be licensed to teach, . . . Scholarship is what is required. Teachers must know more subjects and know all of them more thoroughly."

Nor was the religious side of life neglected at Lenox, for in 1910 it was reported that for the fourth consecutive year, nearly every student was "a professing Christian". Gospel teams were active, and during the Christmas holidays of 1912, the Y.M.C.A. conducted evangelistic meetings at Stanley, reporting thirty-nine conversions.

A new endowment campaign was launched by President Reed. A \$30,000 legacy for the school of agriculture was received from Archibald Livingstone provided another \$25,000 be raised for that department. This legacy was included in a campaign for \$105,000 which was carried to a whirlwind conclusion just a few hours before the deadline. This gave Lenox a total well in excess

of \$200,000 raised in about five years. Of this total it was planned to use about \$35,000 in building and current expenses, leaving nearly \$170,000 as endowment. And so in 1912 all seemed bright for Lenox and plans for additional endowments and a new building were being discussed.

During the heat of the campaign, however, many persons pledged amounts which in later months they were either unable or unwilling to pay, and much of this pledged \$200,000 failed to materialize. Some paid the interest on their notes for a few years and then forgot the obligation. The amount which was paid failed to have the stimulating effect and steadying influence which Lenox officials sought. The finger of fate pointed down.

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