Reminiscences of the Founding of the University.

An address delivered before the Alummal Association of the University of Cincinnati,

... BY ...

REV. FRANK G. McFARLAN, '77,

The first graduate of the Academic Department of the University.

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INTRODUCTION.

In response to the following invitation the Alummal Association of the University of Cincinnati held its annual assembly on the University Campus in Burnet Woods Park, on the thirteenth of June. Mr. McFarlan's address is printed for its historic interest and the alumni and friends of the University will be glad to have preserved in this way a record of those early days:

CINCINNATI, O., June 4, 1900.

You are cordially invited to meet the Alummal Association of the University of Cincinnati, Wednesday, June 13th, at 3:30 p. m., in Burnet Woods Park, near the University Buildings. The Rev. Frank G. McFarlan, '77, the first graduate of the U. C., will address the Association.

Very sincerely,

F. SANFORD BROWN, '94, President.
UNA VENABLE, '99, Vice-President.
A. J. CUNNINGHAM, Jr., '96, Sec.-Treas.
D. S. OLIVER, '82.
ELDON R. JAMES, '96.
Reminiscences of the Founding of the University.

Mr. President and members of the Alumni of the University of Cincinnati:

I am here to-day, at your invitation, to talk with you about the early days of the University. It was my privilege to know the University when it had no buildings of its own and no campus. What I may say is a matter of recollection, and this talk with you is informal. The first I heard of a possible university was from the late Dr. Comegys, who labored unceasingly for its beginning and for its development. I remember his bringing to the High School a petition for the pupils to sign, asking the Honorable City Council to grant aid, so that the funds, left by Mr. McMicken for higher education, might be made effective. We boys signed the petition, little thinking it would affect any of us. The next move of Dr. Comegys, was to bring the matter of the University before the City Council. To this end, he sought election to that body from the citizens of the old Fifteenth Ward, and was sent to Council to represent that ward. When he was ready to present the subject of the University to the City Council, several high school boys, including the speaker, were present. Mr. Comegys had toiled hard for the opportunity before him. After routine business was disposed of, he claimed the attention of Council and when the clerk had read the petition

and other papers pertaining to the bill before Council, he began his address. The City Council had a political reputation and a name for making money, and the absence of politics in this subject and the indifference of the councilmen to matters of general or of personal education, not to mention higher education, caused them to show the speaker but little attention and respect. But the speaker was their superior in many ways and with a strong appeal to the President of Council, he demanded the attention of its members, saying among other things, he had sought election to Council for the purpose of securing aid for the University of Cincinnati, he had not bothered them before with ordinances nor with speeches, and he claimed he had a right to demand their attention. His speech was effective and the measure carried.

All thoughts of the University passed from my mind. The public were not informed of the proceedings of the University Board of Trustees, and I prepared to go east to college, when certain obstacles arose. But to my joy the following advertisement appeared in the Cincinnati Commercial, August 2d, 1873.

EDUCATIONAL.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI will open classes at Woodward High School building on Monday, the 15th day of September next.

For the present, classes will be formed in the studies of the first year of the University course only.

The course of study is intended to begin where that of the Cincinnati High Schools end, and to be strictly continuous of the High School course.

For the general course in Latin, Philosophy and Science, a certificate of graduation from the High Schools or an examination fully equivalent will be required.
For the special Scientific and Technical courses students will be examined in all the Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry taught in the High Schools and will be required to show proficiency in the ordinary branches of a common English education.

As an index of these requirements, it may be noted that the Cincinnati High School course includes in Mathematics, Algebra, Geometry, Plane and Spherical Trigonometry and Plane Surveying; in Physics, Natural Philosophy and Chemistry; in Latin, Caesar’s Commentaries, Virgil’s Aeneid and Cicero’s Orations; in Greek, Xenophon’s Anabasis and two books of Homer’s Iliad.

It is expected at the close of each year additions will be made to the Faculty and to the curriculum, so that all the classes of the several courses and schools may be put in motion as students are prepared for them and the completed machinery of the University will be in operation before the graduation of the class first matriculated.

The corps of teachers during the first year will be provisional, but the permanent faculty will be selected and announced at as early a day as practicable.

Further particulars can be obtained on application.

T. B. Disney,
Clerk of the Board of Trustees.

At the proper time in the fall, I presented myself at the place designated, armed with a High School diploma, a diploma stating more qualifications and accomplishments than any one of the four I received afterwards; for each successive diploma seems to state, implicitly, a greater degree of ignorance. The last one of all, the one highest in scholarship and most justly prized, states that I had attended the public and private exercises of the school, had sustained a good moral character and was honorably dismissed.

About one hundred and fifty persons applied to Principal Harper, most of whom were women. Of those admitted, eighteen were men and forty were women. Classes were organized immediately. Recitations were held from two to five o’clock in the afternoon at the Woodward High School building. There were fifteen pupils in Mathematics under Mr. George W. Smith; thirteen in Chemistry and Natural Philosophy under Mr. Charles R. Stuntz; six in Latin and three in Greek under Mr. W. H. Pabodie. These gentlemen were of the regular staff of Woodward High School. Besides these classes, there was an elementary and an advanced class in French under M. Jules Laquiens, and similar classes in German under Mr. Thomas Vickers. Some of these classes grew smaller. Three only, and they were men, entered with any intention, as far as I know, of pursuing a full four years’ course. At the close of the year we were told a new faculty would meet us in the fall and they would determine our entrance to higher classes. Principal Harper, of Woodward High School, exercised general management during the first year of the University.

The second year of the University was announced by the following advertisement, September 16, 1874, in the Cincinnati Commercial.

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI.

The academic department of the University will be opened on October 1, 1874.

Examinations for admission will be held on the two preceding days.

Candidates for the first year’s class must have the qualifications of graduates of the Cincinnati High Schools.
The Faculty, for the present, consists of Messrs. H. T. Eddy, Prof. of Mathematics, Civil Engineering and Astronomy; F. W. Clarke, Prof. of Physics and Chemistry; F. W. Allen, Prof. of Ancient Languages and Comparative Philology.

Residents of Cincinnati, of either sex, admitted without charge. Non-residents will be charged a tuition fee of $60 per annum.

For permits for admission, and circulars containing further details, apply to

T. B. Disney,
Clerk of Board of Trustees,
N. E. Corner Third and Main Streets.

For a number of days before the fall term opened, Prof. Eddy was at the Clerk’s office to give information to inquirers. There was a feeling of satisfaction about the new faculty, because they were Eastern men, of the highest scholarship, who were secured at a salary of $3,500 each. The trustees then aimed to secure the best help obtainable. The following faculty met the students:

H. T. Eddy, late of Nassau Hall, Princeton, N. J., Prof. of Mathematics, Astronomy and Engineering, and Dean of the Faculty.
F. W. Clarke, late of Howard University, Washington, D. C., Prof. of Chemistry and Physics.
F. D. Allen, late of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., Prof. of Ancient Languages and Comparative Philology.
Mr. E. A. Guetin, instructor in French.
Mr. F. Van Rossunn, instructor in German.

A small number of pupils presented themselves for examination at the building of the Third Intermediate School, Franklin Street. Here the University passed its second year. The hours of recitation were from 9 o’clock in the morning until noon. A question of interest arose now, of interest to the speaker and of perplexity to the faculty. The faculty did not expect a sophomore class and there was one. Of the three men, entering freshmen, with a full course in view, one only entered sophomore. The matter of a sophomore class was considered by the faculty and trustees and the sophomore remained. The number of students may be estimated from the size of the classes. Prof. Eddy had nine pupils; Prof. Clarke, eighteen; Prof. Allen, thirteen; Mr. Guetin, thirty-six; Mr. Van Rossunn, fifty-eight. The large number in the German and French classes was due to free tuition, no examination, and but little qualification. Here began an acquaintance which school years deepened and memory holds sacred. I refer to my intimacy with Prof. Allen. The courses of study were arranged, so that in some studies the freshmen and the sophomore were together, but the sophomore class had an especial advantage of private instruction with Prof. Allen, and the pupil being drawn to his teacher, received much he could not have gained in a class. The only thing approaching college life was the formation of a male quartette, the sophomore class being first tenor. There were three terms and term examinations. During this year the college building on McMicken Avenue was erected.

The third year of the University opened in the new building. The Faculty was enlarged by the addition of E. W. Hyde, Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Civil Engineering, and of R. B. Warder, Assistant Professor of Physics and Chemistry. Later on in the year James Mor-
gan Hart, Professor of Modern Languages and Literature, and Wayland R. Benedict, Professor of History and Philosophy, were added to the Faculty. Prof. Benedict commenced his work in the spring of '76; Prof. Hart commenced in the fall of '76. Among the students were several from Brazil, attracted to the University by the reputation of Prof. Eddy. And when the Emperor of Brazil visited the United States, the following year, he favored the University with his presence. The morning hours were the recitation hours mostly.

The size of the classes, and the absence of tutors, placed the pupils in direct touch with the regular professors, an advantage justly prized by the early students today, as we measure results. It was during this year the junior class began to have private instruction from Prof. Allen and Prof. Hart, four to six hours per week. I shall be grateful always for this opportunity, which extended through the senior year also. Three hours per week private instruction in Comparative Philology was part of this private work. The class used for a text-book Schleicher’s “Grammatik,” fourth edition, 800 pages, in German. It was not translated then. I look at my library, and at a glance I see old friends, such as Schade’s “Altdoetisches Lesebuch,” Gotisch, Alt- sächisch, Alt und Mittelhochdeutsch; Heyne’s “Laut und Flexionslehre der altgermanischen Dialecte”; F. L. Stamm’s Ulfilas, etc. These and such as these indicate a part of the work done. Grimm’s Law is as fresh in my mind today as the letters of the alphabet. Prof. Frederick W. Allen is dead. Prof. Hart is engaged elsewhere. But there is one professor at the University today whose scholarship needs no mention, and whose faithfulness in educating his pupils I wish to refer to gratefully. If I mistake not, he was a pupil of Dr. Martin B. Anderson, of Rochester University, who, as a teacher, drove principles to the inmost part of one’s being, and also of Dr. E. G. Robinson, of Rochester Theological Seminary, a rare thinker and instructor. After studying abroad, Prof. Wayland R. Benedict came to the University. It was my privilege to have both public and private instruction from him, and I remember my walks with him, from the University building on McMicken Ave. to the Post-office, on Saturdays, when he gave me invaluable help. Many private suggestions, many special aids he gave me, and today, while he is living and esteemed by you, members of the Alumni, I want to express the wish that he may be professor here many years. And so interested have I become in the study of philosophy that, when a few weeks ago, the literary committee of the Phi Beta Kappa asked me to deliver the oration at the June meeting, I chose for my subject “The Stable and the Unstable Element in Philosophy and in Religion.”

You may have noticed I have not referred to the Professors of Mathematics and of Chemistry and Physics. The reason is a simple one; my course in Physics and in Chemistry was finished before the permanent Faculty was chosen, and in Mathematics I had no special interest. Prof. Hyde came to the University with an enviable reputation for Mathematics. Prof. Eddy needs no mention at my hands. Besides ranking as superior in his departments, his gentlemanly bearing as Dean made him deservedly popular. His wish was law.

The distinguishing feature of the early days of the University was thorough work due to personal contact with the professors. The first classes were not lost in the mass, neither did they have tutors. Whatever instruction they received was from professors deemed competent, and who were paid large salaries.
At the close of the fourth year my term book of four years was filled. Each term of each year had the professor's mark of "passed", or "passed successfully", or "passed with distinction", as there was more or less proficiency. A thesis was written and accepted by the Faculty. The trustees granted the degree B.A. A diploma in regular form was not given, because a form of diploma had not been adopted, but a statement to the effect that the University had conferred the degree was written by Hon. Rufus King, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and signed also by T. B. Disney, clerk of the Board. There were no public exercises held, as the program would have been too short. A year later the paper signed by Mr. King was exchanged for a diploma in regular form. I have tried a number of times to secure that paper, but without effect. I suppose it was thrown away twenty years ago.

Mr. President, I have tried to give, in a simple, informal way, a brief account of the early days of the University. My authority is my memory only, except in three instances. And now after an absence of twenty years, members of the Alumni, it is a pleasure to meet you with buildings and campus strange to me; and to share with you hopes of a still greater University under the direction of the new President of the University.