STUDENT LIFE AT DELAWARE, 1834-1859

By H. CLAY REED*

The first period of the history of Delaware College embraces exactly a quarter of a century, from the opening of its doors in 1834 to their temporary closing in 1859.

This first quarter century was a time of rapid growth in both state and nation. Between 1840 and 1860 the population of the United States nearly doubled, that of Delaware increased from 78,000 to 112,000, and that of neighboring states such as Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, still more rapidly. It was a period of economic prosperity. Although the depressing effects of the panic of 1837 were felt for several years, the forties and fifties witnessed in this state a vigorous development of manufacturing in the northern part, and increasing agricultural prosperity throughout its entire extent.

It was also a time of enhanced interest in education in many forms. "Free schools" made, in this state, slow but sure headway. "Lyceums" and "literary institutes" gave innumerable courses of lectures, and "free libraries" multiplied. Founding of colleges went on apace. In the decade 1830-1839, "New-Ark College" and 34 others were chartered which have survived until the present.¹ Every locality felt the need or desire for its own institution of higher learning, and every synod or other denominational unit was besought to bestow its patronage upon one or more of these institutions, giving them a decidedly sectarian as well as religious tone. Though college attendance grew rapidly through an increasing population, as well as increased interest in higher education, the founding of colleges proceeded still faster.

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Until 1834 Delawareans had had to send their children out of the state for a college education. Five of the 118 students at Dickinson College in December, 1811, were from Delaware. Princeton and Pennsylvania were institutions of long-established reputation and easy access. To the south were Washington College at Chester-town and St. John's at Annapolis.

Delaware's college population was by no means monopolized by the new institution at Newark. This is especially true of Dickinson: ²

Students from Delaware at Dickinson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>1810-9</th>
<th>1820-9</th>
<th>1830-9</th>
<th>1840-9</th>
<th>1850-9</th>
<th>1860-9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At Princeton there was usually at least one, and sometimes as many as five students from Delaware, both before and after 1834.³

A large number of students from Delaware attended the University of Pennsylvania, both the College and the Medical School. The following table shows the attendance at the College:⁴

Delawareans Matriculated at the College, University of Pennsylvania.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>1820-9</th>
<th>1830-9</th>
<th>1840-9</th>
<th>1850-9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Newark College was expected to and did attract Delaware patronage, its chief support came from neighboring states. As the college catalog of 1838-9

² Compiled from G. L. Reed, Alumni Record, Dickinson College (Carlisle, 1905). The biographical data in this volume are not complete enough to make the table above more than a close approximation. For students in 1811, see J. H. Morgan, Dickinson College (Carlisle, 1933), 193. The author, President of Dickinson, is a Dickinson alumnus and a native of Delaware.


⁴ This information was kindly compiled for me by Dr. R. P. Sechler, from the annual catalogs, for the period 1828 on, and a Biographical Catalog of the Matriculates of the College, for the years preceding 1828.
pointed out, "Seated in a small village within less than a mile of the rail-road between Baltimore and Philadelphia, this college combines the great advantages of perfect retirement with ready access." From the first, a majority of its students were from other states. Of the students of 1838-9 the geographical distribution was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>1840-1849 Number</th>
<th>1850-1858 Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other states(^5)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus in these earlier years less than one-fourth of the student body were drawn from our own state. Students during the subsequent two decades were distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>1840-1849 Number</th>
<th>1850-1858 Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other states(^6)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>162</strong></td>
<td><strong>275</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the forties 30% of the enrollment were Delawareans, but this proportion increased in the next decade to 47%, stimulated by the sale of scholarships in the state as well as outside, and by the establishment of courses in agriculture and engineering which drew students who in many cases might not otherwise have gone to college at all.

\(^5\) One each from District of Columbia, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, and Vermont.

\(^6\) District of Columbia, 14; New Jersey, 8; "Choctaw Nation," 6; North Carolina, 5; Georgia, 4; Maine, South Carolina, and Tennessee, 2 each; Connecticut, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Vermont, "Buenos Ayres," and Spain, 1 each.

This table is compiled from an old Enrollment Book, which in a few instances fails to give the student's address.
The unusually large number of students from Virginia is probably to be explained chiefly by the Presbyterian connections of the College in that state. Although sectarian patronage was undoubtedly a factor in drawing students from all sources, the chief consideration was probably accessibility. Maryland students came (as the old catalogs show) chiefly from the Eastern Shore, from the counties around the head of Chesapeake Bay, and from Baltimore, which was easily reached by train. Pennsylvanians were from nearby towns or country or Philadelphia.

A strong religious flavor pervaded the college instruction and government of these early days. The title “Reverend” is prefixed to numerous names in early lists of trustees, and it predominates in the early faculty lists. Students of theology were more numerous than those intending to pursue any other profession, and were frequently given financial concessions. Colleges run by or for ministers are now exceptional, but a century ago this situation was normal. Jefferson’s University of Virginia was non-religious; but to many non-religious meant irreligious, and it is significant to find in an early list of Newark College students two from Albemarle County, in the center of which Charlottesville is located. Even though a boy had no bent toward the ministry, morality at least was fostered by an education godly in atmosphere and content. Hence the trustees of Newark College were quite in harmony with the general, if not the most advanced opinion of the times, when they declared: “The object of the institution is to prepare young gentlemen

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7 Newark was “about three hours” from Baltimore or Philadelphia by rail in 1849, and two hours in 1855 (Newark Academy, Catalogue, 1848-9; Delaware College, Catalogue, 1854-5).

8 “Tuition may be remitted to students (to the number of ten) designed for the Ministry” (Catalogue, 1841-2). “By a regulation of the Board of Trustees, candidates for the ministry, who are in straitened circumstances, receive their tuition gratuitously, without preference of denomination” (Catalogue, 1846-7). In 1852 this resolution “giving the Students of Theology Tuition free” was rescinded (Trustees Minutes, 1 Nov. 1852).

to be estimable and useful citizens, by guiding and aiding them to form such habits and make such attainments as shall be effectual for accomplishing this object. . . . Good order and scrupulous regard to moral habits, are indispensable to the prosperity of the institution." To this end, they continued, "there shall be morning and evening worship" at stated hours—daylight or six o'clock in the morning, and sunset or six in the evening—at which exercises punctual attendance was required.

The Sabbath was to be scrupulously observed. No student residing in the college was to leave the premises without permission, nor to "engage in any diversion or unsuitable reading or study, or receive visitors, or otherwise profane the day." Bible lessons and church attendance were enjoined.

As Powell says,¹⁰ in these regulations "the climax of sabbatarianism had well nigh been reached." But whatever relaxation may have occurred later in rules and enforcement, attendance upon religious exercises remained a part of the college program throughout the period dealt with here. Absences from "prayers" were reported to his parents along with the student's absences from classes, and attendance at some church on Sunday was compulsory and was checked by monitors appointed for that purpose.

Religious studies were also a part of the college course. By trustee requirement, "Paley's Natural Theology and his Evidences of Christianity" were to be "textbooks, unless substitutes for these" could be found by the faculty. Students in the scientific course were in 1855 relieved of the burden of studying Paley, but in the classical course this requirement was continued for juniors, doubtless till the closing of the college.

Student drinking gave the college authorities some trouble. The legislature was appealed to and responded with enactments prohibiting the sale of intoxicants to students. Since 1843 it has been, and still is, unlawful to

¹⁰ History of Education in Delaware, 95.
furnish any student of Delaware College with "any spirituous or fermented liquors or cordials of any kind" within two miles of the college. Students were forbidden to enter places where intoxicants were sold, but not unexpectedly those who desired to drink were able in one way or another to procure intoxicants. A student wrote in 1855: "Almost every week we behold some scene of drunkenness and disorderly conduct. Although the 'Maine Law' has gone into effect and the rum shop shut up the gentlemen who delight in that wholesome beverage vulgarly called 'beelege' are always on the alert and if there is any of the 'critter' to be had within half a dozen miles they are sure to have it. . . ."

Repercussions of "wild parties" are found from time to time in the faculty minutes, students being reported for drunkenness, usually associated with disorder in the building. On occasion such students were suspended or dismissed, especially when their derelictions were accompanied by neglect of studies. While the faculty were trying to keep the students from drinking, the students themselves were debating in their literary societies the changing phases of the liquor problem, from the voluntary abstinence movement of the thirties to the prohibitive "Maine law" of the fifties. Two short-lived prohibitory laws were enacted in Delaware, during this time (in 1847 and 1855), and consequently it is not an occasion for surprise to find that while some students are being

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11 *Faculty Minutes*, 28 Sept. 1846: "Resolved that students be prohibited from going to the Shop kept by Mr. Hill opposite College as faculty have learned that intoxicating liquors are sold by said Hill." Shortly after two students reported "as having been at Hill's Shop" were ordered "privately admonished" by the President (ibid., 6 Oct.). In 1854, after a student had admitted getting liquor from two named hotels and one store, the faculty determined to take immediate steps to prosecute the offending vendors (ibid., 15 July 1854).

12 Following an affair involving a number of students who had been "creating disorder in the street at a very late hour of the night," one of the culprits was suspended for the rest of the term, and was not to return at all "until he is willing to take a pledge against the use of intoxicating liquor." (*Faculty Minutes*, 8, 17 Sept. 1855.)
punished for drunkenness, others are viewing their conduct with disfavor, and signing total abstinence pledges.\textsuperscript{13}

Smoking “in the College premises” was prohibited by trustee action. In 1847 it was noted “that students were getting in the habit of gathering about the style & smoking on Sunday evenings.” Students occasionally had to be “admonished” for smoking in their rooms, and in 1853 the faculty found it necessary to resolve “that no smoking be allowed within the college campus.” Nevertheless, the rule continued to be broken. In 1855 a Delta Phi called attention to “the prostitution of our Hall to Smoking purposes by certain Members (one particularly who smokes a pipe) who are unwilling to incur the responsibility of such a violation of the College [rules] in their own rooms.” This was unjust to the other members, “to Many of whom it is exceedingly disagreeable to have their Hall polluted with tobacco.” Otherwise-minded students petitioned in 1856 for the repeal of “the prohibition of smoking,” but their plea went unheeded, for the trustees in 1857 continued the old ban, which the students doubtless continued to violate.\textsuperscript{14}

While the early rigor of enforcement doubtless relaxed somewhat during this quarter century, the rules themselves did not change very much. To appreciate the paternal atmosphere of these days one needs only to read the following paragraphs from the trustees’ \textit{Laws of Delaware College} of 1857, which differed little in these respects from those of earlier years:

\textsuperscript{13} For the debate questions, see the minutes of the literary societies and also, for the Athenaean Society, two MS. books of questions for debate. In one of the latter is a total abstinence pledge for the “present session,” dated 1 Oct. 1849, and with eleven signatures.

\textsuperscript{14} See \textit{Delta Phi Gazette}, 12 Dec. 1857, concerning “a certain Soph” who had “unthoughtedly bound himself in an agreement with a \textit{gentleman} in college, not to visit the shemales or indulge in the use of cigars for a limited time.” He repented of his bargain, and “to get around the smoking part” sat “in his room with closed doors and drawing at his [?] old pipe. He says he never wanted to see two weeks out so badly in his life.”
While all violations of morality, decorum, and propriety on the part of the students are hereby generally prohibited and made subjects of College discipline, it is deemed expedient to particularize, that no student may go out of Newark in term time without leave of the President, or, in case of his absence, that of the senior officer in town; nor may leave the College premises at night, or permit any person to lodge at his room, without leave of the senior officer in the building; nor contract any debt or loan money to a fellow-student without the President's permission; nor injure property adjacent to the College; nor be allowed to engage in any combination to resist the Laws of the College; nor treat any officer of the College with disrespect; nor keep any dog, gun, ammunition, or weapon of any kind, or use any of them in or about the College; nor smoke in the College premises, or do any cooking, or have any intoxicating liquor in his room, or visit any tavern or dramshop.

It shall be the duty of all students to attend punctually and respectfully, at the appointed hours, the exercises of daily College prayers and other religious services directed by the President or Faculty; to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; and regularly to attend every Sabbath morning such particular place of Divine worship as may be chosen by themselves or by their parents or guardians.

Though nothing may be done in the College, at any time, inconsistent with the proper order for an institution of learning, yet, to prevent all improper interruptions of study, the Faculty shall set apart certain hours as special times for study, during which each student, when not attending the appointed exercises, shall pursue his studies in his own room, and shall avoid every thing that may interfere with the duties of others.

Each Professor shall be in his room in College during study hours, shall visit the rooms of the students once, at least, every week, shall suppress all disorder, and in every practicable way seek to promote good order in the Institution.

The Laws of the College extend over the whole period of the Collegiate year—no portion of it being exempt therefrom; and every student shall be responsible for his moral deportment during vacations in the same manner as during term time.
If these regulations seem intolerably oppressive to the modern reader, it must be remembered that they were not out of tune with the views of the times, as entertained, not by the students, of course, who must have chafed under these restrictions, but by the parents who sent their sons to college. It must be kept in mind too that students entered college at an earlier age then than now. Boys could enroll as young as 14 years of age, and many did. From a manuscript enrollment book now in the Dean’s Office, it appears that one-fifth of the students of ante-bellum period were 14 or 15, and two-thirds of them were 17 or younger—\(^{15}\) in contrast to the present age limit of 16 for entrance, and an average age of 18½. Even the older students of the present generation, freed from the compulsory study periods of the preparatory school, sometimes contract habits of idleness and “loaf” their way through college, doing just enough to “get by.” Still less could be expected of 14- and 15-year-olds.

College was more of an all-year-round occupation for the student of a century ago than it is at present, when his summers are entirely free from scholastic pre-occupation—unless perchance the student elects to try to catch up with or forge ahead of his classmates by spending six weeks at “summer school.” In old Newark College there was already a summer term, which began early in May and lasted 22 weeks till late in September. Then followed a vacation of five weeks. Then the winter term began, at the end of October, and continued for 20 weeks, closing early in April. Another five weeks vacation brought the student to the end of the cycle, and by the

\(^{15}\) Age of Students at Entrance, 1838-1858

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>23</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average age at enrollment for the period was 17. In later years the number of 14-year-olds, which was especially large in the early 1840’s, declined. This trend toward later entrance into college is shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>14 or under</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>or over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% to 1849</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% after 1849</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
following May he was ready to begin again on the summer term. Thus the year was divided into 42 weeks of school and 10 weeks of freedom. Strictly speaking, the school year began with the opening of the winter term, and closed with commencement on the fourth Wednesday of September. Students could "enter college at any time during either of the sessions; the most suitable periods, however, are at the commencement or the middle of each session."\(^\text{16}\)

This division of the college year proved unsatisfactory and was soon modified. Six weeks vacation in the Fall, instead of five, was provided by shortening the winter term to 21 weeks, and on the Fourth of July, Christmas, "days that may be set apart by the civil authority," and Saturday afternoons no recitations were to be "required of the students."\(^\text{17}\) However, the matter of Christmas holidays had required faculty action as early as 1835, when, in response to a "petition of the students for a Holiday," ten days between December 23 and January 2 were conditionally granted.\(^\text{18}\) In 1839 by trustee action the Christmas holidays were suspended "with the proviso that any students who wished to visit their homes should be allowed the privilege. Special arrangements were adopted" by the faculty "for conducting the college operations during these days." "Leaves of absence" were granted in 1841, 1842, and 1843, in response to "many inquiries," to students whose parents requested their presence at home during the Christmas holidays. These were days of rapidly improving railroad and steamboat transportation and it is but natural that more and more students should make such requests. Even a Fourth of July vacation of a week was granted on petition of the students in 1843. Finally the college authorities yielded to the demands of the times. In the catalog of 1846-7, an entirely new division of the college year

\(^{16}\) *Catalogue, 1838-9.*

\(^{17}\) *Laws of Newark College, 1841, 10.*

\(^{18}\) "Provided the deportment of the students is orderly & correct" during the meantime (*Faculty Minutes*, 15 Dec. 1835).
was substituted for the old one, which must have met
the newer demands, for it was retained when the college
was reorganized in 1870 and continued with only slight
modifications up to 1905, when the present semester
system was adopted. The college year was further
shortened, to 40 weeks instead of 41. And it was divided
into three, instead of two terms: a “fall term,” of 16
weeks, starting early in September and closing before
Christmas; a “winter term,” of 12 weeks, beginning after
New Year’s and continuing through March; and finally,
a “summer term” opening late in April and closing with
commencement about the middle of July. Vacations were
two weeks at Christmas, four weeks in April, and six
weeks in the summer. Beginning with 1854-5, the April
vacation was shortened to two weeks, in order to lengthen
the summer vacation to eight. Commencement thus came
on or near July 4.

Just as the tendency at first was to view college as
an all-year-round business, so it was intended to keep the
student at work all day long. An extreme illustration of
this attitude is expressed in the “Order of Recitations”
adopted for the summer term of 1841:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 A. M.</th>
<th>11 A. M.</th>
<th>5 P. M.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Class</td>
<td>Prof. Norton</td>
<td>Pres. Gilbert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Pres. Gilbert</td>
<td>Prof. Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soph.</td>
<td>Prof. Allen</td>
<td>Mr. Warner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh.</td>
<td>Mr. Warner</td>
<td>Mr. Bell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At this time it was also resolved “that the study
hours for the present session be from 8½ to 12 A. M.
& from 3 to 6 & from 8 to 10 P. M.”

This rather Spartan regimen was modified for the
winter session, so that classes began at 7 A. M., 11 A. M.,
and 3:30 P. M. The latter hours seem to have been found
satisfactory, as they were continued in 1843.

Three classes or “recitations” a day, five days a
week, constituted the normal schedule for the student.
But there were in addition various “extras” or minor
studies, which were, at least at first, required outside of
the regular recitation hours. For example, in 1834 Wednesday evenings from 6.30 to 7.30 were "devoted to public speaking by the students in the presence of one or more of the Faculty," and Saturday morning from 11 to 12 was "appropriated to the reading of composition." And in 1852 the faculty resolved "that no student be excused from Saturday evening exercises in speaking & composition unless unavoidably prevented from attending."

Though Monday to Friday were fully occupied with class work, this did not mean that Saturdays were normally free days. In 1843 the Seniors were required "to recite to Prof. Allen at 11 o'clock on Saturdays." By 1855-6 all classes except Seniors had regular 16-period schedules—one class on Saturday and three on each of the other week days. At that time most of the courses met five times a week, and the rest, with a few exceptions, alternated with each other two or three times a week.

More significant than when the students studied is what they studied. The college curriculum was for some years practically limited to one course of study, in which Latin, Greek, and mathematics predominated. According to the "course of instruction" outlined in the catalog of 1841-2, the Freshmen apparently divided their time equally among Latin (Livy), Greek (Xenophon's Ana-basis), and mathematics (algebra and geometry). The Sophomores had more Latin (Juvenal and Tacitus) and more Greek (Homer, Aeschines, Demosthenes), and their mathematics consisted of plane and spherical trigonometry, surveying, and analytical geometry. Besides these intellectual pièces de résistance they had rhetoric, which was, "for the present, committed to the Tutor in

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19 *Faculty Minutes*, 24 Nov. 1834. Cf. *ibid.*, 12 Dec. 1842: An hour on Monday evenings to "be spent for speaking, in the Oratory, a quarter of the present students to speak at a time."

20 *Catalogue*, 1855-6. Bookkeeping, mensuration, and arithmetic were six-hour courses.

21 "Taught theoretically, and practically with instruments."
Mathematics,” and “universal history” which was similarly handled by the professor of Greek. The Juniors continued with more ancient languages—Horace and Cicero, Greek drama and poetry—but apparently doubled up on them, for at the same time they had calculus and “natural philosophy” under William A. Norton, and also went to President Gilbert for instruction in natural theology and “Evidences of Christianity,” logic, and mental philosophy. The Seniors divided their time apparently equally among Professors Allen (languages), Norton (mathematics, natural philosophy), and Gilbert. They had Latin (Cicero) and Greek (Plato, Xenophon). Under Norton they studied astronomy and, “for the present,” chemistry, geology, and mineralogy. President Gilbert gave them “Elements of Criticism, (Kame’s)” in the winter session and “Moral Philosophy—(Paley)” in the summer, as well as Story’s Constitution of the United States.

It is safe to estimate that in this course of study of 1841-2 almost half of the work was devoted to the classical studies, and fully a sixth to mathematics, leaving about a third for other subjects. This course, with its emphasis on the classical and mathematical disciplines, seems to have been continued without change in the “Classical Department” till the suspension of the college’s activities in 1859.

In the midst of this preoccupation with the ancient languages, what of the modern ones? Almost a century ago students were asking the same question, which in 1836 they debated: “Would it be desirable to substitute in this College a course of Modern Languages in place of the present course of Ancient Languages?” Their negative decision, both on the argument and on the merits of the question, is suggestive of the attitude of the time.

22 See the order of recitations in Faculty Minutes, 3 Nov. 1841.  
23 “Mechanics with Applications” and “Optics—Acoustics—Electricity—Magnetism.”  
24 Compare the classical course in the catalogue of 1855-6.  
25 Athenaeian Literary Society, Minutes, 24 Feb. 1836.
However, the modern tongues soon got at least one foot inside the door of the curriculum. Though there is no mention of them in the catalog of 1838-9, in 1841 the trustees announced: "Besides the regular course, instruction in the principal modern languages of Europe will be provided for such as may choose to study them." In the catalog of 1841-2 instruction is offered in French, Spanish, Italian, and German in both college and academical departments, the textbooks listed being identical for both. But these studies formed no part of the required college curriculum. They could be studied as intensively as desired, but only by those who had the time and the money for this educational luxury, for which an extra charge was made.

To the two fundamentals of college instruction, ancient languages and mathematics, a third may well be added—facility in composition and in particular public speaking. Latin, Greek, and mathematics were drilled into the students during the regular class periods. Excellence in English composition, written and oral, was striven for in other ways. In college curricula of the present day courses in "oratory" are relics of the past; but a century ago, when orators of the pulpit and of the forum were the big men of their day, this art was assiduously cultivated.

The statement in the college catalog of 1854-5, that "Systematic instruction is given in elocution, and exercises in Declamation and in English Composition, are statedly required of all the Students connected with the Institution," is applicable throughout the ante-bellum history of the college. Many were the hours which the faculty and students spent in the "oratory," listening to the efforts of a budding Webster or Beecher. More important than these (one suspects) perfunctory performances were the annual "exhibitions" of the classes and the literary societies, and, climax of the college year, the annual commencement, in all of which declamation was the primary object. Through these exercises stu-
dents were forced to accustom themselves to speaking in public.

A public examination and exhibition was conducted at least as early as the spring of 1836, advance notice thereof being published in various newspapers in and outside of the state. The public examination of the students was to last through three days, to be followed by the "exhibition," for which all Seniors had to "prepare & deliver original compositions," and, in default of Juniors, the Sophomores were called upon "either to select a piece for declamation or to prepare & deliver each his own composition." None was "to exceed ten minutes in length"—a limitation which must have been acceptable to both speakers and audience. Two exhibitions in one year appear to have borne too heavily upon the Seniors, and the mid-year affair was replaced later by a "Junior exhibition" which became an annual event, occurring at the end of the second term, and participated in entirely by Juniors.26

The contents of these student speeches are best left to the reader's imagination, for the florid eloquence of even the most distinguished orators of their day would be tedious enough in the ears of the modern hearer. But it can do no harm to cite a few of the titles of the forensic efforts of our students of bygone years. Here, for example, is the program of the Junior exhibition held on March 29, 1853, the speeches being interspersed with music, and the program opening with prayer and closing with a benediction:

1. Pleasures of Imagination, Jas. D. Thomas, D. C.

2. Examples of Illustrious Men, Thos. M. Martin, Deer Park, Del.

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26 "Resolved that all the junior Class be required to rehearse their speeches to Prof. Boswell at such time as he may appoint." (Faculty Minutes, 20 March 1854). The speeches seem to have been well censored, for we read at this point: "Mustard has presented a speech for exhibition which is not admissible & he was directed to prepare another by Thursday evening or forfeit the right to speak." Student Mustard is listed on the program of March 28, 1854, for a speech on "The Pilgrim Fathers."

No better evidence of the importance attached to these exercises by the participants can be found than the fact that the other classes took the trouble to secure a copy of the program in advance, by hook or crook, and issue a scurrilous printed burlesque of it for general distribution. For example, in addition to the neatly printed program of 1853, the contents of which are noted above, there is also extant a printed folder entitled *Grand Exhibition sex Junior Assinorum of Delaware College* . . . , which also lists six speeches:

2. Importance of Illustrious Youths, By Deer Park Brawler.
3. The Mind of the Negro, By Wac.
4. The Uncivilized Indian, By Lancaster Bull.
5. Greenness of Students, By Brass Monkey.

Under each speech is a note of derogatory explanation which seems rather silly to the modern reader, but was designed to irritate, if not insult, the Junior of 1853. Collections were taken by the students to defray the expense of printing these “false programs.” It was during a struggle in a student’s room to recover a bundle of them consigned to the stove that the fatal stabbing of John Edward Roach occurred in 1858.

Townspeople as well as students turned out en masse for the exhibitions. That of March, 1857, was described in a Wilmington newspaper as “the other great event of

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27 *E. g.*, the following paragraph under the last speech:

“This Orator will no doubt enter into the spirit of his theme in an *energetic* manner. His object will be to promulgate the doctrines and principles contained in Uncle Tom’s Cabin, and to impress upon the minds of the audience the importance of abolishing this ‘abominable’ nigger-selling. . . .”
the week, . . . on which occasion the Oratory was crowded to its utmost extent.”

These Junior exhibition programs seem to have been monopolized by the classical students, to the exclusion of the “scientics.” The latter, however, participated with their more aristocratic fellows in the crowning event of the year, the annual commencement in July. Having taken their final examinations six weeks previously, the graduating Seniors had plenty of time to prepare for their final and supreme effort before the college public. Since the number of graduates was small, each member could make his oratorical contribution, and the flow of eloquence was augmented by an occasional master’s oration.

The literary societies competed for the valedictory and salutatory honors for their members, much as fraternities do now for athletic team captaincies, and in 1846 the faculty in assigning these coveted honors became involved in a controversy between the two societies which led finally to the Athenaeum’s “declining for the sake of

28 "The windows facing on the main street were splendidly illuminated," said the correspondent, "while the lights of the interior were insignificant, compared to the coruscations emanating from the brilliant eyes of the assembled beauties, whose dimpled smiles in connection with strains of music added harmony to the brightness of the scene."

29 In view of the present interest in “comprehensive examinations,” it may be noted that by the Laws of 1841 students at the end of each year were to be “strictly examined, in all studies . . . pursued by them up to that time.” In 1846 the faculty requested the trustees to abolish that rule and leave examinations entirely to the faculty or make them cover only the work of the current year (Faculty Minutes, 28 Sept. 1846). The trustees agreed that examinations should be confined to the work of the year just passed (Trustees Minutes, 15 Dec. 1846), and thenceforth they were so given (Faculty Minutes, 12 June 1854; catalogues of 1852, 1853, 1854-5, 1855-6). In 1856 the faculty suspended the rule and set the examinations “only on the studies of the present term” (ibid., 23 June 1856). But in the trustees’ Laws of 1857 the old requirement of examinations in all subjects up to the time of examination is restored.

That the problem of honesty in examinations was not entirely lacking in the good old days may be inferred from the faculty’s censure of a student “for his conduct in refusing to give up his book in examination to Prof. Crawford—when the Prof. had reason to suspect a concealed translation” (Faculty Minutes, 14 July 1854).
peace & on the principles of honor & magnanimity any special orations which might be given to the members of the Senior Class belonging to that Society.” Conduct as well as scholarship was taken into account in awarding commencement honors. The commencement of July 19, 1854, had no less than 16 orations on the program, including one by a candidate for the master’s degree. In this case the faculty limited the youthful orators to eight minutes each, in their oratory attempts to convince a critical world that their four years in college had not been spent in vain. It is worthy of note as an exception to the general rule that at this time the faculty voted to omit one graduate from the program because of “a low grade of scholarship”; but it was soon discovered that his average was too low to graduate at all.

In addition to the formal training given to students in the class room and on the platform, the faculty also sought a wider field for the display of their own scholarly attainments by giving lectures for the benefit not only of the student body but of the general public as well. In the fall of 1841 it was resolved:

That a course of Lectures be delivered, during the present session, by the Senior members of the Faculty:

1. A course of lectures before all the students by the President.

2. A public course of ten lectures on English literature before the Sen. & Junior Classes—by Prof. Allen. Single tickets (admitting a gentleman & two ladies) $1.00. Family tickets $2.00. [These prices were soon lowered.]

3. A public course of ten lectures on Astronomy before the Senior Class—by Prof. Norton. [Same admission prices.]

That the students of the Academy not intending to pursue a collegiate course and pursuing studies parallel to those of the Coll. Classes before which lectures are delivered, may, on application of the Principal and vote of the Faculty, be admitted to the Lectures free of charge.

How greatly these lectures contributed to the cultural benefit of the students and the financial emolument
of the lecturers, we have no means of determining, but this scheme of semi-public instruction seems to have been continued, for in 1846 we find a reference in the faculty minutes to "the contemplated Lectures" in 1846, and in the fifties it seems to have been an established custom to have an "annual course of lectures" in the winter, probably free of charge, by various members of the faculty.

A 1934 faculty would be reluctant to bid for public attention, even in the dull mid-winter season, with a series of lectures on six successive Friday nights. Perhaps the modesty of the program of 1856 as compared with that of 1841 measures a decline of interest in such performances. But in the fifties the lecture-attending habit was still strong, and in this form of educational extension our Delaware College professors were attempting to do their part.

The Athenaeian Literary Society once debated the question, "Would it be advantageous for a young man to acquire a classical education if he did not intend to pursue a profession?" This was a live question in 1849, for up to that time only a "classical education" had been available at Delaware. A vast majority of the earlier graduates of the institution had gone to college to prepare themselves for "a profession." Of the 68 graduates up to and including 1846, 26 were ministers of the gospel or students of theology, 16 were attorneys at or students of law, eight were doctors or students of medicine, and two

\footnote{Attendance was to be required of juniors and seniors, and optional for others.}

\footnote{Faculty Minutes, 16 Jan. 1854. "Complimentary cards of invitation" ordered printed.}

\footnote{"... The lectures for this winter... The President to commence & to proceed in the order of the catalogue through the the Faculty (ibid., 8 Jan. 1855). Resolved "that public lectures commence in the oratory in the first Friday night in February to continue for 6 ensuing Friday evenings by Profs. Kirkwood, Boswell & Crawford" (ibid., 21 Jan. 1856).}

\footnote{Athenaeian Literary Society, Minutes, 17 Nov. 1849. The question was decided in the affirmative.}
were educators. The occupations of the other eight were not stated.

However fondly the conservatives may have clung to the traditional classical training, the thoroughness of its discipline could no longer make up for the narrowness of its scope. There were fresher and broader fields of knowledge to be explored, new techniques to be acquired, which were beyond the bounds of the classics and even of the more formal mathematics. When Presbyterian patronage proved insufficient and new sources of financial support were sought, the newer educational demands were catered to.

Many who were interested in the development of the free school system were calling for "normal schools" for the preparation of teachers. The views of this element found expression in the new charter granted to the college in 1851, under the terms of which there was to be "a normal school, connected with the college, for the preparation of teachers, into which pupils shall be admitted from the district schools of this State at reduced rates of tuition," on their pledge to teach in the district schools for at least a year, if required. The degree of "master of school keeping" could be conferred upon such of these students as might be "found qualified to act as teachers, and judged worthy of the degree."

However, this normal school seems to have existed only on paper. Although the charter was accepted by the trustees of the college, their minutes contain no evidence of any effort to carry out this requirement. The catalog of 1852 contains nothing regarding normal schools or educational courses of any sort, except the statement that the new Department of Agriculture was designed to "meet the wants of those intending to pursue

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34 It is interesting to note that while the faculty struggled to uphold scholastic standards by voting "no dispensation from the Calculus," at the same time they had to accede to "Mr. Du Pont's" desire that "his son Charles study more Practical Mathematics" (Faculty Minutes, 30 Jan. 1843, 14 Sept. 1846).
Practical Agriculture, or Manufacturing, as well as those who propose to engage in teaching."\(^{35}\)

The supporters of the free school movement in Delaware were themselves divided on the question of college training for common school teachers, and this division extended to the college board of trustees. Trustee Charles Marim urged the normal school idea, but Trustee Willard Hall vigorously opposed it. "Colleges supply their own teachers," said Hall. "Why can not scholars of common schools, having gone through a course of education in them, likewise become teachers of what they have learned?"\(^{36}\)

It was indeed a school of agriculture, not a normal school, that Delawareans demanded at this time. The decade of the 1840's had been a prosperous one. Industrial development proceeded apace, while the introduction of more scientific methods had produced an agricultural renascence. Farmers were keenly interested in the chemistry of soils, in the restoration of worn out lands by the application of various new fertilizers. Scientific agriculturalists were turning to professors of chemistry for guidance. Hence, when in 1850 the financial resources of Delaware College were so depleted that one trustee moved to close the doors of the college, others turned to plans "relative to a continuance of the College," which embraced "the engrafting upon the same of a Scientific or High School." In 1851 the trustees voted to add "a scientific course" to the existing schedule. An endowment was raised by the sale of scholarships. "Certain sums" were subscribed to this fund on condition "That an Agricultural Department shall be established; that Analytical Chemistry, Geology, Entomology, Botany and Agricultural Mathematics shall be taught: that the services of a Professor eminently qualified to teach

\(^{35}\) Later a normal school scheme was agitated by President Newlin, with the approval of the trustees. See Trustees Minutes, 24 March 1857, 30 March 1858.

Analytical or Agricultural Chemistry shall be forthwith obtained, and a Professor of the other Agricultural branches within one year."

Consequently when the college was reorganized in 1851 a new department was added. The old classical course was continued virtually unchanged, but a "Scientific Department" was instituted to meet the newer educational demands. In the Scientific Department Latin and Greek were dropped, both in the college course and in the entrance requirements. Mathematics was continued, but practical subjects, "higher arithmetic" and bookkeeping, were added. Chemistry was given in both departments, but in the scientific was supplemented by agricultural chemistry. Evidences of Christianity, Political Economy, Mental Philosophy, and in general most of the other non-linguistic subjects were retained for both courses, but by the elimination of the others the scientific course was shortened to three years, instead of the traditional four, the classes being called Junior, Middle, and Senior. The degree of Bachelor of Philosophy was granted for the scientific course, instead of A. B. 37

In addition to the above two-fold division, instruction was further organized into five departments:

1. English Literature
2. Mathematics
3. Latin and Greek
4. Natural Philosophy and Engineering
5. Agriculture

The Department of Agriculture consisted "of a selection of such studies from the other departments, as will best meet the wants of those intending to pursue Practical Agriculture, or Manufacturing, as well as those who propose to engage in teaching. . . . As the Agricultural are the great interests of our country, it is intended to make this department the centre of Agricultural knowledge." 37 As a supplement to classroom instruction an

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37 Catalogue, 1852.
"experimental farm" was soon established, where stu-
dents of this department could "enjoy facilities. for
becoming practical farmers."\textsuperscript{38}

Thus the agricultural interests of the educational
community were to be served. In addition, under the
fourth department, a one-year course in civil engineering
could be taken, without the rest of the longer course, by
those who did not care to spend more than a year in
college. New professorships were established to handle
these new courses of study. From this time on, students
could not complain that Delaware College offered instruc-
tion suitable only for those who planned to follow the
older professions. Enrollments mounted,\textsuperscript{39} under the
combined impetus of the new curriculum and the sale of
scholarships, and of this increase the Scientific Depart-
ment got a generous share, as the enrollments of the next
few years indicate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Classical Dept. (4 years)</th>
<th>Scientific Dept. (3 years)</th>
<th>Scientific Dept. (&quot;irregulars&quot;)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>1853</td>
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<td>1854–5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>1855–6</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
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In the foregoing pages incidental references have
been made to "literary societies." Participation in the
affairs of these societies was undoubtedly the most
important extra-curricular activity of old Delaware College
students. Such organizations were a recognized part of
the collegiate instructional apparatus of the time. Within
six months after the college opened the faculty resolved
"to recommend to the students the formation of Literary

\textsuperscript{38} Catalogue, 1854-5. The faculty pledged themselves faithfully
"to advance the Agricultural Department," and in 1854 reported
to the trustees that "Mr. S. S. Haldeman has accepted the Pro-
fessorship of Agriculture and Natural History, he is decidedly
popular with his students his lectures have been highly interesting
and altogether have made a very favourable impression."

\textsuperscript{39} According to figures compiled from the Enrollment Book,
the number of entering students was: 1849, 19; 1850, 27; 1851, 34;
1852, 37; 1853, 37; 1854, 53; 1855, 29; 1856, 28; 1857, 22; 1858, 8.
Societies.” Two such societies were thereupon estab-
lished. The Delta Phi Literary Society was at first
composed principally of preparatory students, and the
Athenaean of college students, but the membership of
each soon became principally collegiate, and in 1842,
after the younger students had gone to live in their own
new academy building, it was exclusively so, by faculty
ruling.

The primary object of these societies was “intellec-
tual improvement.” Their society, the Delta Phis stated
in 1843, had been organized “for the purpose of mutual
improvement, especially in extempro disputation, and
in the acquisition of a correct and forcible style of
English Composition.” As the Athenaeans expressed it
in 1849, “Our object is intellectual and literary improve-
ment, to be sought by the regular exercises of the society,
the friendly contact and collision of mind, and by a
fraternity of feeling which is anxious for the common
benefit of the whole.” The societies were soon given
quarters in the college building, and “Delta Phi Hall” in
one wing and “Athenaean Hall” in the other became the
headquarters of the two groups, which between them
included a large majority of if not the entire student
body.40

Though sponsored and fostered by the faculty, the
literary societies were conducted solely by the students
themselves. Otherwise, it is safe to say, they would not
have lasted very long. Everywhere else the student was
hounded by an Argus-eyed faculty—in the classroom, on
the campus, in town, even in his bed, for faculty members
regularly visited the students’ rooms. But in his society’s

40 It was stated in 1855 that “the Alumni” of the college
numbered 104, of whom 48 were Athenaeans and 56 Delta Phis
(W. L. Boswell, “Wisdom is better than Gold.” Anniversary Ad-
dress . . . before the Delta Phi Literary Society (Philadelphia,
1855), appendix, 27). The Delta Phi Gazette for 13 Jan. 1855,
stated that the societies numbered about 35 members each. This
was at a time when, according to the college catalogue of 1854-5,
there was a college enrollment of 81.
“Hall” he was safe from a prying world. Nobody could attend meetings in the Delta Phi Hall but members of the Delta Phi. In their societies students found vent for competitive as well as gregarious instincts. A constant rivalry existed between the two societies.

One afternoon, evening, or morning of each week was devoted to the regular meetings of the societies, which consisted of a literary program, announced and prepared in advance, in addition to other regular or special business. Opening a minute book of the Athenaean Society at random, we find that on January 25, 1851, the society met, all members present except Wootten. Prayer by “the Chaplain.” Debating followed on the question, “Will despotism retain its present sway in Europe?” After the debaters had finished, the Society rendered the decision—affirmative, in respect to both argument and merit of the question. “Declaiming followed; all performed except T. Clayton, who was excused. Johnson was fined for disorder. Composition followed all who were required read. All these exercises were sufficiently criticised.” Then “performers for next week” were appointed, four debaters, four declaimers, and four composers. A question for next week’s debate was chosen. Committee reports followed, and then the meeting was opened to miscellaneous business, during which it was moved to take money out of the treasury to pay for printing 400 invitations to the anniversary, and that “the members pay towards printing Prof. Rollin’s address.” And so on, until the session finally adjourned.

These meetings were conducted in a formal and parliamentary manner. Members were fined for absence, for disorder, for failure to carry out assignments on the programs. It is evident to anyone who peruses these old minute books that “society” was no trifling or perfunctory affair, and this impression is strengthened by various references in the weekly literary magazines or newspapers which, beginning about 1850, were read in the meetings by the editors appointed for that task. In
them editors or contributors pointed out weaknesses to be remedied. It would seem from occasional references in these periodicals that the literary features of the societies’ programs were irksome to some. One critic commented: “Declamation . . . is apparently looked upon as a pest (that is by the impatient) but it should not be so,” and he suggests that if “good order while the speaker is on the floor . . . is adhered to by all it will be interesting as well as inductive.”

In 1851 a Delta Phi noted that “lately . . . the debates have not been so interesting.” He had “heard that members were dissatisfied with debating,” but he assured them “that it is one of the most useful exercises a Student can take.”

Whatever the opposition to various forms of literary exercises, there were always earnest members at hand to point out the value of them to the participants, and the society in general. As J. Edward Roach expressed it, “Let us never forget that in laboring for Delta’s cause we are but benefitting ourselves; and that the harder we work for her, the greater will be our own reward.” So the literary programs were conscientiously continued; the air was filled with declamation and argument, and the pens of industrious members covered many fools' cap pages with composition in prose and verse. Students profited from all this doubtless in proportion to their individual capacities. Anthony Higgins was a student in the late fifties and upon being congratulated on his election to the United States Senate in 1889 he wrote to the Delta Phi Society: “I owe to my experience in the Society more than I can fitly express,

41 Delta Phi Gazette, 14 May 1853. Another student was “very sorry that a great many of the members view declamation in such an inferior light. They mount the rostrum and if they can exclaim My Country &c or narrate a few lines of poetry, they have accomplished all that could have been expected.” He urges members to declaim with energy and all the “attributes of oratory” at their command, and thus “elevate it to a position insurmountable and insurpassable” (Delta Phi Star, 30 Sept. 1854).

42 Delta Phi Star, 3 Jan. 1857.
of training that has been of the utmost service to me in life as well as some of the pleasantest memories that I have to look back upon.”

Aside from training in methods of effective expression, the society exercises enabled students to discuss current affairs, and they availed themselves fully of the opportunity, if their subjects for debate are a reliable indication. Arguments concerning the relative military merits of Julius Caesar and Alexander, and whether the Crusaders produced more of evil than of good, were not usual. Far oftener they debated questions of current national or local importance. For example, in 1835 to 1837: “Should the Slaves in this country be taught to read?”—affirmatively decided; “Should capital punishment be abolished?”—negative; “Should the public lands be sold only to actual settlers?”—negative; “Would it be advisable to suppress the circulation of Paper Money in the United States?”—negative. These were public questions of great interest at the time, and there were many others—Indian removal, anti-Masonry, the Texas struggle against Mexico, Lynch law, abolition of imprisonment for debt, etc. Coming closer home, the Athenaeans decided against appropriating Delaware’s “portion of the Surplus Revenue... to the Support of Common Schools,” and they thought the trustees of the college ought to “receive the money appropriated by lottery.” The question, “Will the Rail Road which is to pass near New Ark be more Beneficial than injurious to the village?” was likewise decided in the affirmative.43

These debates, the minutes record, produced oftentimes “animated” or “spirited” or “lengthy” discussions, first by the appointed debaters and then by the members themselves, after which a vote was taken on the question, in respect to both the presentation by the debaters and the general merits of the question. However sound these students’ reasoning may have been, such discussions

43 See Athenaean L. S., Minutes, 1835-1837 passim.
turned their attention to public questions in a most vivid and effective manner. 43

Another distinctive and valuable part of literary society activity was the building up of society libraries. Generous sums were spent from the societies' treasuries on books, and the numerous "honorary members" of the societies sent gifts. The college catalog of 1846-7 credits the societies with libraries of about 1000 volumes each, compared with 2500 in the college library. A complacent Delta Phi in 1854 could "safely say that our library is unrivaled and that our society has surpassed not only our worthy opponents but also our Alma Mater in purchasing standard, noble works." So far at least as "our Alma Mater" was concerned, this statement was not necessarily idle bombast, 44 for the college in the later fifties was struggling more and more desperately to keep its head above the financial waters—a situation which was not conducive to large library appropriations; while the societies were impelled by rivalry, if nothing else, to build up creditable collections. In 1855 a Delta Phi, hearing that "our rival Sister has made an addition to her Library," thought it would "never do to let her Library to be Superior to ours," and proposed an assessment of $1 a head on Delta Phi members, thus raising $40 to spend in getting Delta Phi ahead once more. 45 In 1857 "Delta" called the society's attention to the empty shelves and urged "that we go right to work to raise one thousand dollars among our old members and honorary

43 In 1857 several students conducted a public debate. The question, "Are the circumstances tending to perpetuate the Union, greater than those to dissolve it?" proved so absorbing that the discussion had to be resumed on the following Saturday night, when a decision was rendered for the affirmative. Other debates followed, and later the students formed an association "for the purpose of securing regular public debates." See the Delaware Republican, 21, 28 May 19 Nov. 1857.

44 The catalogues of 1854-5 and 1855-6 state rather vaguely: "The different Libraries in the Institution, contain about Seven Thousand Volumes."

45 Delta Phi Gazette, 6 Jan. 1855. And see Delta Phi Star, 16 Sept. 1854, for a letter calling upon an immediate expenditure of $75 from the treasury for new books and binding of old ones.
members as a permanent fund for the increasing of our library annually." Not only student members but graduates and townspople availed themselves freely of the society libraries' resources, adding to the empty shelves but certainly showing that the books were read.46

The "intellectual struggle" which was waged ceaselessly between the two societies extended to public anniversaries and exhibitions. As early as 1839 the Delta Phis were "permitted to hold an exhibition in the Oratory on the evening of the 22nd of Feb." In 1853 at commencement time the same society held an exhibition similar to the usual Junior exhibition but with the novel feature, as the twelfth and final number, of a scene from Henry the Fourth, which was given, as the printed program announces, "By Request." The societies celebrated their anniversaries at first in January or February, and with an address by the ablest orator they could secure.47 These addresses were often printed in pamphlet form by the society before which they were delivered.

In 1853 the anniversaries of the two societies were definitely fixed on succeeding days at commencement time, a more favorable time for reunions of old members than the winter season.48 Numerous programs of these occasions have survived, but the modern reader will catch less of the spirit of the event by poring over a dozen gilded programs than by reading an imaginative scene described in anticipation by a student of the time:49

"The coming 4th July. . . On the evening of that day we may expect an eloquent address, which (with the consent of the speaker) will be published. . . That evening

46 "Our town ladies and gentlemen must return our volumes in due time" (Delta Phi Gazette, 16 Sept. 1854). "Some of the graduate members of the Society are to blame for at least some empty shelves" (ibid., 10 Jan. 1857).
47 "We have yet no speaker and prospects seem sad and unfavorable" (Delta Phi Gazette, 10 May 1856).
48 Faculty Minutes, 6 June 1853.
49 Condensed from the Delta Phi Gazette, 19 May 1855. The writer was John G. McCullough, valedictorian of the graduating class of 1855.
will be the last opportunity that a number will have to partake as active members in any of the jubilees of their association. . . . But let us inspect closer the scene of that evening. The oratory is crowded. All the beauty of Newark (which is unsurpassable) is present. The vicinity and neighboring cities and villages also have their full share of representation. The fair faces are turned toward the stage, while the smiles of happy innocence are playing on their brows. . . . There too is dignified intelligence patiently waiting the expected spectacle. You see the venerable Trustees of the institution; and excellent and worthy Professors. Opening manhood and blossoming womanhood light up the scene. The little round-faced boy and the old man white [with] the frost of many winters are there mingled together. Survey the sight—but hark a rustling sound is heard—no sooner have all the faces turned towards the oratory doors, than they swing open and the honored speaker and chairman, followed by Delta's glorious ranks greet the upturned countenances and proceed onward to their respective places, the speaker and chairman on the stage, the remainder on the seats in front, while the band rings its notes above all the uproar of applause. . . . After the introduction of the Chairman, the orator comes forward and gradually rivets all eyes upon himself and soon you hear naught save the voice of one; all the bustle of the hearers ceases and they hang on the words of the speaker. . . . After he takes his seat stillness for a brief moment reigns, then deafening applause resounds through the room and vies to drown the blasts of the band. Then follows conferring of degrees and the farewell addresses. To close the act the chairman tenders our thanks to the ladies for the newly made star and to the audience for the attention they gave and just as the curtain falls, you may see each student protecting his beau-ideal and whispering nobody knows what into her ear, while they vanish down the steps. Remembering the colors of the foregoing picture to be far too tame, who can say but that the whole will be a happy realization? Delta will honor both herself and the sons she thus and then gives farewell to."

It is difficult in this sophisticated age to appreciate the warm attachment of old Delaware College students for their societies, but the sentiment is none the less real. In 1884 an alumnus, returning after a quarter of a
century for Delaware’s semi-centennial anniversary, wrote:50

The old hall of the Delta Phi Society has undergone some changes that we wished to effect in our college days. No member loved that hall more devotedly than the writer, and none received richer rewards as a return for his devotion. We were among the first to enter and the last to leave on the days of our assembling. Every office in her gift we have filled, and every part in her performance we have taken, and every honor she had to bestow we have received. Several times we have taken part in her anniversaries. . . .

The place of the literary societies in student interest and affection has of course been partly assumed by the fraternities, but with the important difference that whereas the fraternities are primarily social in outlook, the societies’ raison d’etre was intellectual, and their rivalries, however violent at times, were looked upon as an “intellectual struggle.” In this atmosphere a charge by a Delta Phi “that the Athenaeans did not study” was an insult not to be passed over lightly.51

Blame for lack of study on part of the Athenaeans or their rivals cannot be laid at the door of the college administration. As has been noted above, regular study hours were prescribed, and it was the duty of the faculty to see that they were observed. In 1842 the students had to “be reminded that in warm weather, as well as in winter, they are required by the Laws to keep to their rooms in the strictest sense, during study hours.” Music during study hours was prohibited, and card playing seems to have been taboo at any time.52 Students were

50 Rev. Robert H. Williams, writing to The Delaware Ledger (Newark), 21 June 1884.
51 “The Athenaeans hearing this sent their great fighter Mitchell to inquire into the matter.” This was during “the war of Sept. 1850” between the two societies. See Delta Phi Gazette, 25 Sept. 1852.
52 In 1854 several students caught playing cards in their rooms were required to promise “never again to play cards while in connection with the college.” The four concerned admitted having played “repeatedly here,” and two of them had “learned to play cards at home.” See Faculty Minutes, 15 Feb. 1854.
not allowed to be out in the evenings without permission. The maintenance of order, and especially the exercise of "vigilance over the students at night," absorbed a goodly share of professorial time. At first certain members of the faculty lived in the building. Later they took turns spending evenings there.

Though the authorities frowned upon card playing, they rather encouraged such athletic activities as existed in a period long before the rise of organized intercollegiate sports. They could not permit "playing ball in the entry" and "before the college during study hours," but in 1844 they allowed "some twenty students . . . to construct a Gymnasium in the 'old Academy Room'." Student interest in gymnastics must have continued, for in 1857 President Newlin "had a Gymnasium put up back of the College, at a cost of more than $40," half of which expense, he told the trustees, came out of his own pocket.

At such times as they were allowed off the college grounds, students, not being permitted to leave town, sought diversion in Newark, which was then commonly referred to as a "village." "From the small number and the character of the population in Newark [says the catalogue of 1838-9] there are few temptations to vice or extravagance." A critic of the college in 1847 considered Newark a suitable situation for "a monastery, a friary, or a nunnery, but not for a college."

"Serenading" by the "band" in the evenings was a

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53 For example, in 1852 a student "on account of absences from the premises at night without permission" was restricted to one night a week out, and later, not having mended his ways, was suspended for the rest of the term (ibid., 23 Sept. 15, 23 Nov. 1852).

54 Ibid., 1 Dec. 1835, 10 Sept. 1855.

55 Ibid., 27 July 1835, 1 Feb. 1841.

56 Ibid., 22 Jan. 1844. Powell (p. 109) says the gymnasium was fitted up through the efforts of Professor Horsford.

57 Except by permission, which was doubtless freely granted during holidays. E.g., Delta Phi Gazette, 18 Feb. 1854: "On the 22nd of this month there will be no recitations in College . . . many of our members will probably visit either Wilmington or Phila."
custom then common but now rare.\textsuperscript{58} Perhaps the glee club, which is referred to in 1854, went serenading too.\textsuperscript{59} If feminine society filled the thoughts of students' minds to the extent that it occupied the columns of the Delta Phi weekly journals,\textsuperscript{60} women-haters must have been rare among the student body. Though the population of Newark was small its age distribution seems to have been eminently satisfactory to the student who exclaimed, "Oh! what a lot of pretty girls New-Ark can turn out."\textsuperscript{61} Another student, returning reluctantly from vacation consoled himself with the thought that "Those fair and alluring creatures that decorate our town and make merry our life, still move in majestic beauty around us."\textsuperscript{62}

Students of course went beyond the confines of New-Ark in search of diversion, with or without faculty permission. Camp meetings were an irresistible attraction in the summer time, and perhaps influenced the decision of the college authorities to abandon the long summer session.\textsuperscript{63} In 1846 college exercises were suspended for an afternoon, on petition of the students, so that they might attend "The Agricultural Fair" in Wilmington. Camp meetings and fairs attracted large crowds, and their social and even convivial aspects were doubtless

\textsuperscript{58} "In consequence of some abuse of the privilege granted to the 'band' to go out for the purpose of serenading, Resolved—That the 'Band' shall not have permission to be out of College on Saturday night—nor till after [sic] eleven o'clock on any other night—and never without permission" (Faculty Minutes, 7 Aug. 1837). See \textit{ibid.}, 1 March, 1856, for another reference to serenading.

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Delta Phi Star}, 28 Oct. 1854: "There is a glee club in college."

\textsuperscript{60} Such comments ranged from teasing of girl-struck brothers to solemn dissertations such as one entitled "Woman," which began: "Woman in whatever consideration we hold her, whether in that of a mother, sister, or wife, is an object worthy of our contemplation, and if accomplished, of our highest admiration . . . ." The writer valued external beauty less than "the internal qualities of the heart . . . virtue and modesty—the brightest ornaments of woman." \textit{Delta Phi Gazette}, 30 Sept. 1864.

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Delta Phi Gazette}, 15 Jan. 1859.

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Delaware Weekly Republican}, 1 Oct. 1857.

\textsuperscript{63} Powell, 93. See Faculty Minutes, 27 Aug. 1840, concerning several students "absent without permission, several miles from college at a camp-meeting the night previous."
just as highly appreciated by the Delaware College boys as their religious or educational character. The occasional circus was a major event; as a student wrote in 1855, "nearly every student in Coll. was planning to go," long before its scheduled arrival. Between such outstanding events, every recreational opportunity was turned to account, and students fared forth to picnics at Strickersville, and even to church at Iron Hill, and doubtless enjoyed life as fully as students do today.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The following materials have been drawn upon for this article:

1. Faculty minutes, beginning 1834. A volume between 1847 and 1852 is missing.

2. Trustees minutes, beginning 1833.

3. An enrollment book, containing information regarding entering students. It contains only a few names for 1838-1840, but seems to be complete from 1841 on.

4. Printed catalogues. The earliest in the University's collections is for 1837-8; the latest, 1855-6.

5. "Laws" of the college, as enacted and published by the trustees, in 1841 and again in 1857.

6. Literary Society records, comprising bound volumes of minutes and other society proceedings, as well as loose papers, and in particular a file of manuscript Delta Phi literary magazines or newspapers, 1850-1859—Gazette, Star, and other titles.

7. Printed programs of commencements, exhibitions, etc., and pamphlets containing addresses, lists of members, and historical material, issued by the literary societies.

64 Delta Phi Gazette, 24 Sept. 1853: "College Etiquette. A company of students consisting chiefly of Regular & Scientific Seniors took their departure from Del. Col. on Friday Evening last; for the purpose of visiting a Pic Nic in the vicinity of Strickersville, that they might make a bright display of their beauty and learning. They proved themselves perfect Tom-Asses. They were as awkward as any greenhorns you ever saw..."

65 Faculty Minutes, 13 Dec. 1852: "A complaint having been made by a committee from the Baptist Church of Iron Hill, of Improper conduct in the grave yard & in the church”—students to be warned "against a repetition of the offense."
8. Transcripts of manuscript material concerning the College, from the Public Archives at Dover.

9. Transcripts of newspaper items concerning the College.


11. History Department, University of Delaware, Readings in Delaware History (Newark, 1934, mimeographed). For the economic background.

In order to keep footnotes within manageable bounds, specific references to the above sources have usually been omitted, except where they explain or illustrate the text. Sources other than those listed have been cited in the usual way.