

Shortlidge Term Short, Troubled

Joseph Shortlidge, sixth president of the University, served for only nine months, but he faced as serious problems as any of the presidents who served for longer terms.

A few months before Shortlidge took over in July, 1920, a legislative investigating committee turned in an adverse report on the University (then College). A resolution for the state to stop payment of money to the College had barely failed to pass the General Assembly.

Programs Under Fire
The institution's training programs in agriculture and the mechanic arts were under fire from State groups. "We are the laughing-stock of the State," a faculty member wrote to the president of the Board of Trustees.

Shortlidge's experiences had not been of a type to fit him for the presidency. He had been a high school teacher and head of a small school he had founded, but he had never been forced to resolve the conflicting interest of politicians, farmers, industrialists, and newspapers.

At the time he took office, the College's curriculum differed little from that of the liberal arts schools of the day. Shortlidge, in his sole report to the trustees, said the College had to introduce courses in engineering and related subjects to make its program conform with the goals of the Morrill Act.

Criticizes Investigation
He also criticized the legislative investigation of the College.

At the same time, members of the faculty initiated a reform movement. Their program was accepted in principle by the trustees. It provided for two general courses, the scientific and the classical, and four technical courses in agriculture, natural history, chemistry and physics, and civil engineering.

Shortlidge felt the faculty members, by presenting their program to individual trustees before the meeting, were guilty of insubordination. Therefore, he submitted his resignation to the trustees and it was accepted.

Trouble with Students
The president didn't get along well with students, either. Having dealt with younger students all his life, he attempted to enforce the same type of discipline at the College that he had enforced at his own school, the Maplewood Institute at Concordville.

Thus, he was plagued with what should have been mere minor disciplinary problems.

After resigning, he returned to Maplewood Institute and remained its head until his death in 1911.

McElwain Hall Honors Early Lady Principal

By GINNY PHILIPS
McElwain Hall, a womens residence building constructed in 1949, was named in honor of Harriet Aurelia McElwain, former lady principal and professor at the University.

Born in Becket, Mass., Miss McElwain was graduated from Mt. Holyoke Seminary in 1881 and received her master of arts degree at the University in 1895. Before coming to the University (then College) in 1893, she taught and served as principal for two years at a West Springfield, Mass., grammar school.

Besides being lady principal and professor of history, Miss McElwain's duties included teaching Latin and mathematics. She served as secretary of the faculty, registrar, and in later years was the confidential secretary to Dr. George W. Atherton, president of the University.

It was through Miss McElwain's efforts that women students were taken from their unattractive quarters in a portion of the west wing in Old Main. She personally visited the legislature and secured appropriations for the Ladies Cottage, or Woman's Building as it is now called.

McElwain resigned in 1901 to come to care for her aging parents.

Poster Night Precedes Customs

A lively aspect of freshman-sophomore rivalry and a forerunner of today's customs in Penn State's middle years was Poster Night.

The posters were printed proclamations about 3 feet by 5 feet giving rules for the conduct of freshmen. They were written in the most flowery language at the command of the sophomores and carried drawings showing the dire things that would happen to a freshman who violated the rules.

Know Your Masters
A 1914 poster addressed the first-year students: "Freshmen, know your masters by the sign of the four." The "sign of the four" consisted of drawings of a paddle, a bowl of molasses, a paste bucket, and a pair of hair clippers.

Then the rules in impressive language were given:

"Be not wise in your own conceits, for now that you have become a near man, put away childish things, such as prep school pins and flaring adornments for on thy breast, and let them not

adorn thy persons, for now though ye see clearly, yet shall ye see through molasses and feathers darkly.

'Into the Dust'
"Also, dig not thy digits into thy jeans, lest the sophomores encompass thee round about and drag thy frame down into the dust.

"Let it not be noised abroad throughout the land that thou hast defiled the greenward by trespassing thereon. For should this come to pass, the sophomore will arise in their wrath, gird up their loins, and go forth and smite thee hip and thigh. Yea, even unto the nether part thereof; and thou shalt partake of thy daily substance from the mantle-piece."

Frosh in Nightshirts
Poster Night began with the sophomores, bearing class numerals, routing freshmen from their rooms. The oppressed, in early years wearing nightshirts and later pajamas, were marched lock-step through town, calling cadence at the top of their voices.

Along the line of march, individuals were called upon to dance, sing, recite, and perform other feats of entertainment. Then at midnight a huge bonfire was built and the freshmen were given paste and brushes and ordered to plaster town buildings and barns for miles around with the posters.

1925 First Move-up Day
The first Move-up Day in the history of the University was observed May 15, 1925. The seniors blossomed out in white lion jackets, the juniors in blazers, and sophomores and freshmen staged their big step up in customs after the underclass tug-of-war.

In the 1890's the number of women students ranged between six and 16 each year.

Earlier 'Hub' Sold

Men's Apparel in 1928

The Hetzel Union Building isn't the only "HUB" to be known by University students.

The Hub, in 1928, was a men's apparel shop in the Independent Order of Odd Fellows building on E. College avenue.

Prices listed in an ad in the Penn State Collegian at the time

Freshmen 9 O'clocks

At the turn of the century, freshmen were not allowed to be out after 9 p.m. unless accompanied by an upperclassman.

were: new tuxedos, \$22.50; men's trench coats, \$9.86; men's sawyer-slickers, \$5.45; men's 16-inch "hi-top" shoes, \$7.45; and oxford cloth shirts, \$1.95.

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