Fragments of University of Pittsburgh Alumni History.

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One of those tiresome persons, who is never satisfied until he has cramped a thought to meet the rigid form of a classic trope, has compared the University of Pittsburgh to that pyrogenous creature of fabulous ornithology, the Phoenix. The figure is not inapt when one remembers that two temples of Alma Mater were destroyed by fire, one in the great conflagration of 1845 and one in 1849. Only a university with the constitution of a phoenix or a salamander could hope to survive these ordeals, and even such a one could not but lose something in the fining process. Being a phoenix, has its disadvantages, and in our case these are apparent in the lack of reliable data from which to reconstruct a picture of the early life and history of the institution. All our records were destroyed by the flames. The only document extant is a tattered catalogue which was preserved in the corner stone of the third University building laid September 2, 1854, and brought to light on November 6, 1913. This interesting fragment bears the title, "The System of Education and Code of Discipline and the Professorships Adopted by the Trustees of the Western University of Pennsylvania, Together with the Addresses of the President of the Board to the Public and the Principal to the Students." It was published in 1822.

Little of the history of the Pittsburgh Academy, founded in 1787, has been preserved save a fragmentary list of its alumni. These men were the sons of pioneer families whose names are closely interwoven with the record of Pittsburgh. Here are a few of them which are doubtless familiar to you: Brackenridge, Brunot, Baird, Collins, Church, Craig, Denny, Darragh, Evans, Gazzam, Holdship, Irwin, Kerr, McCandless, McClintock, Mountain, Neville, O'Hara, Robinson, Rid-

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Many of these men attained eminence in the business and professional world and their names were common on the rosters of the patriotic, philanthropic, and educational organizations of Pittsburgh in their day. Morgan Neville was one of the first writers of fiction in America and some of his stories such as "The Last of the Boatman" and "Chevalier Dubac" gained for him well deserved national honor. William Tannehill was also noted as an author and was characterized by H. M. Brackenridge, a former classmate, as "one of the best writers in our country."

In these days when the study of drama is a recognized and increasingly important part of our college work, it is interesting to note that the first regular dramatic company in this city was made up of students from the Academy: Morgan Neville, William Wilkins, John McClintock, James R. Butler, Benjamin Evans, Sidney Mountain, and Duncan Walker were the leading spirits.

The organization was known as the Thespian Society and held forth in the Drury Theatre, situated near the Academy at Third avenue and Smithfield street. The society staged the first play in this the first Pittsburgh play house, their offering being "Who Wants a Guinea." This was followed by a series of the quaint British melodramas which were the popular form of stage entertainment during that era. Receipts from the performances were given to charity. The idea of play acting, however, sorted ill with the straight laced views of the Academy's puritan masters and exacting patrons, and this together with the neglect of lessons by students bent upon wooing the histrionic muse, resulted in the closing of the theatre and the disbanding of the company by order of the faculty, after a meteoric career of six months.

The Pittsburgh Academy became the Western University of Pennsylvania on the signature of the second charter by Governor William Findlay, February 18, 1819, and its first class consisting of Thomas C. Guthrie, Alexander Logan and Samuel Ferguson Smith, was graduated in 1823.
From this time until the fire of 1849 the University continued to send forth young men of training and ability, all of whom proved worthy citizens and many of whom attained to positions of honor and influence in the eyes of the world. Of the graduates in this period, one became a United States Senator, four became members of Congress, three became Chief Justices of States, two became Governors of States, one represented the United States at a foreign court, ten became Judges of the United States or State courts, eighteen served as Trustees of Colleges, five were College Presidents, thirteen held professorial chairs, three were Moderators of General Assemblies in their respective churches, five became editors and two attained national reputations as authors.

Time will permit the personal mention of but a few of these men: Hon. Daniel Agnew, class of 1825, was for fourteen years presiding judge of 17th Judicial District and Justice of Supreme Court of Pennsylvania for fifteen years; Hon. Walter H. Lowrie, class of 1826, was Judge of the Allegheny County District Court and Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court; Hon. Cornelius Darragh, class of 1826, was Attorney General of Pennsylvania, State Senator, member of Congress, and a noted Abolitionist. He, together with his classmate, Hon. Wilson McCandless, secured from Governor Francis R. Shunk the $50,000 fund for the relief of the city after the fire of April 10, 1845. Mr. McCandless was judge of the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania and failed by one vote to secure the Democratic nomination for the Presidency in the strongly Democratic year which placed his rival, Franklin Pierce, in the White House. Hon. Thomas Mellon, class of 1837, was an attorney, business man and pioneer banker. Samuel W. Black, class of 1834, was the Associate Justice and later the Governor of Nebraska Territory. He served in the Mexican war, espoused the anti-slavery and the Union cause and died at the head of his regiment, the 62nd Pennsylvania Volunteers, at the battle of Gaines's Mill, June 27, 1862. William D. Moore, class of 1841, was a popular minister and eloquent
publicist, who served through the war as Chaplain of the 6th Pennsylvania Artillery. As an amateur scientist he did much to awaken local interest in the study of chemistry, anatomy and biology. James D. Layng, C. E. LL.D., 1900, class of 1849, our first graduate in engineering, was a builder and manager of railroads. He began as a rodman on the old Ohio and Pennsylvania survey and mounted through the service, to the vice-presidency of the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis Railroad. The death on March 10, 1914, of Col. Algenon Sidney Mountain Morgan, class of 1849, who made the initial survey for the Ohio & Pennsylvania, now the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad, and who was the father of the coke industry in Pittsburgh, leaves but two survivors of the two hundred and two who received their degrees prior to 1850. They are Andrew Watson Pentland, class of 1849, long in the service of the national government at Washington, and the venerable Rev. Joseph Horner, class of 1849, A. M., D. D., who has been prominent in the councils of the Methodist Episcopal Church for many years and who is now our oldest living alumnus.

The period from 1849 to 1855 was one of disaster and interregnum, during which no classes were graduated. Among the students of those days who were prevented from completing their course were Rev. Mathew Brown Riddle, D. D., the only survivor of the British and American Committee for the Revision and Translation of the New Testament; General A. C. McClurg, at one time the leading publisher in Chicago, and Washington Roebling, constructor of the Brooklyn Bridge.

An interesting chapter in the University's history, yet to be written, will record the part which its alumni, students and faculty had in the soul-trying years of romance and national convulsion from 1860 to 1865. Almost every University man of those days saw service in the army or shared in the equally patriotic and necessary labor of the Subsistence Committee and the Christian Commission. We can give here but a partial list of the more prominent officers. Major
General Frank Herron distinguished himself at Pea Ridge and in other trans-Mississippi battles; D. Keller Leck served on the staff of General Grant with the rank of Major and was later promoted; James A. Lowrie became a major; Samuel T. Lowrie and Mathew Brown Riddle were chaplains; Alexander C. McClurg was breveted Brigadier General for gallantry in action; Algernon S. M. Morgan, Washington Roebling, and James H. Childs were colonels of volunteers and Thomas Williams of a regular service regiment; and Leopold Sahl, Jr., one of the first officers to die for the Union, was a lieutenant of the cavalry. Joseph Albree was perhaps the most useful and efficient member of the Pittsburgh Subsistence Committee and of the Christian Commission.

Concerning the alumni of later years I shall say little. Most of them are still living and are doing splendid work in the world. To mention Guthrie, Carnahan, Clapp, Kornhauser, Patterson, Thaw, Coffin, Scovel, Woods, Logan, Johnson, Taylor, McKnight, and Trees, is to prove the statement. But it would not be proper to close a record of Pitt Alumni, however brief, without paying a tribute to the memory of two members of the class of 1883. One of them has a secure place in the hearts of patriotic Americans. He died at his post of duty, true to that tradition of loyalty which we call "the Pitt Spirit," on that fateful night in February 1898 when the battleship Maine was destroyed in the Harbor of Havana. His name was Lieutenant Friend William Jenkins. The other man was a soldier in a different cause. His service and his victories were upon the dim battlefields of imagination and creative art. The composer of "The Rosary," "Narcissus," and the "Day in Venice" was a son of Pitt and wherever music is heard, wherever human hearts beat faster to the magic of golden song, the name of Ethelbert Nevin is honored and loved.

The sons of Pitt have had a large and honorable part in the making of this city but much of their labor can have no other chronicle than their work itself. Truly may we write for them the legend which marks the resting place of Sir Christopher Wren, the master architect of Saint Paul's Cathedral, "Si Monumentum requiris, circumspice."