

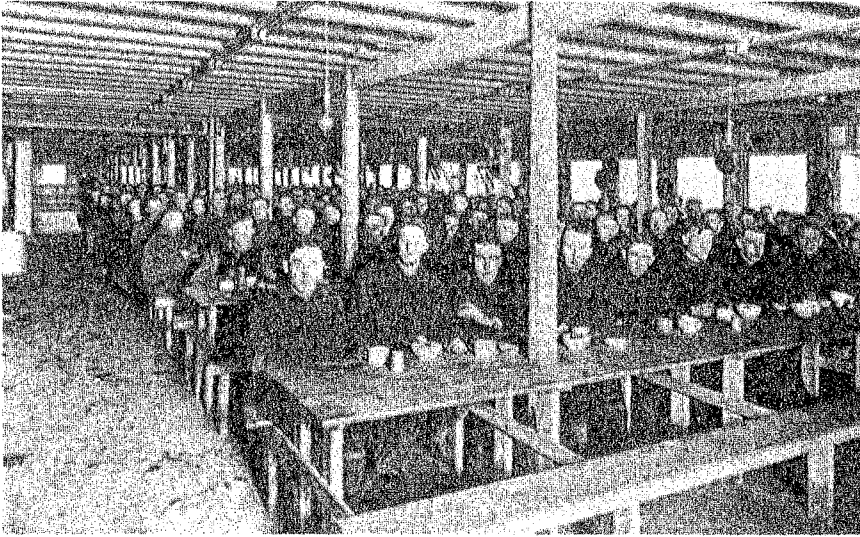
## CHAPTER IV

### The College for Teachers in Wars and Depression 1915 to 1945

Just as the death of President Milne marked the end of one era, so the assumption of office by Abraham Brubacher in February of 1915 marked the beginning of another. During his twenty-four-year tenure, Brubacher presided over a College which was substantially larger than in previous decades. Its size was dictated by the market for secondary school teachers, and that in turn was affected by external conditions such as war, prosperity, and depression. After 1909, enrollments at the College rose rapidly to a pre-war peak of 1,081 in 1916. They fell after World War I to a 1921 low of 611, but then increased during the flush times of the 1920s to a peak of 1,424 in 1932. When the Great Depression began to reduce the demand for teachers, undergraduate enrollment was capped at 1,200 in 1933. College enrollments hovered around 1,300 for the rest of the decade although graduates faced greater difficulties in finding positions.

The College carried out its mission of preparing secondary school teachers while increasingly reflecting the standards and practices of smaller

(Opposite) The faculty in 1919. President Abram Brubacher is seated in the front row, center, seat on right. Front row (left to right): David Hutchinson (government), Leonard Wood Richardson (Greek and Latin), Dean Anna E. Pierce, Dean Harland Hoyt Horner, President Abram Brubacher, John Sayles (principal of Milne), Adna Wood Risley (history), Clifford Ambrose Woodward (biology). (Gift from the library of the late Dr. David Hutchinson.)



The First World War comes to the College: a Student Army Training Corps unit trained on the College campus in 1918. Chow in the mess hall was served by the Home Economics Department. After the war the department continued to serve meals, originating the school's food service.



Gertrude C. Valentine, an instructor in Greek and Latin, died in an automobile accident in France in 1919 while working for the YWCA.

American liberal arts colleges. The College sought and cherished national recognition of its new status. It was proud of being placed on the approved list of its graduates the Association of American Universities in 1921 and, a decade later, of being approved by the Association of American University Women, the first state teachers' college to be so recognized. Albany failed in its attempts to get a Phi Beta Kappa chapter, however; that organization viewed the College as a professional school rather than a liberal arts college.

Only two years after Brubacher took over the reins at Albany, the U.S. entered World War I. The College saw thirty-four graduates, 117 students, and two faculty go off to war in the armed services.

Six students and one faculty member died or were killed in service (four from pneumonia, one in an aircraft accident). Three other male faculty members took leaves of absence to engage in war-related research with General Electric, the War Department, and the Emergency Shipbuilding Corporation. A number of women—students, alumnae, and one faculty—worked in canteens for the A.E.F. in France. One, Gertrude Valentine, an instructor in Greek and Latin, worked in England and France for the YWCA and lost her life there in 1919 in an automobile accident. In 1920 the College dead were remembered when alumni(ae) planted seven oaks on the campus and erected a bronze tablet in Draper Hall. Other casualties of the war were more subtle. Brubacher reported major enrollment declines in German, and he himself quietly changed his first name from "Abraham" to "Abram," doubtless in response to the pervasive anti-German sentiments of the day.

On campus a Student Army Training Corps unit operated from June to December of 1918. Twelve officers and 648 men served in the units, including over forty College students and more than sixty students

from the Albany Law School. Barracks were erected on land adjacent to the College, and for a while the College cafeteria became an army mess hall. The usual military drill was supplemented by work in such subjects as auto mechanics, carpentry, pipe fitting, radio signal work, topographical drawing and "war aims."

Students at the College greeted the Armistice with the same kind of enthusiasm as Americans at large. The celebrations included a parade with "Dean Annie" Pierce riding "regally" in the front seat of an army truck and art instructor Eunice Perine "perched perilously" on the hood.

The College had always been a state-supported institution, beholden to the Legislature for funding and subject to state supervision. The nature of that supervision began to change in these decades. In the 19th Century the Executive Committee exercised a good deal of "hands on" supervision over the Normal School, sometimes overshadowing the President. Renamed the Board of Trustees in 1909 and the Board of Visitors in 1929, its powers remained unchanged. By the late 1930s, however, it fell into disuse; minutes of only two board meetings between 1940 and 1948 remain extant.

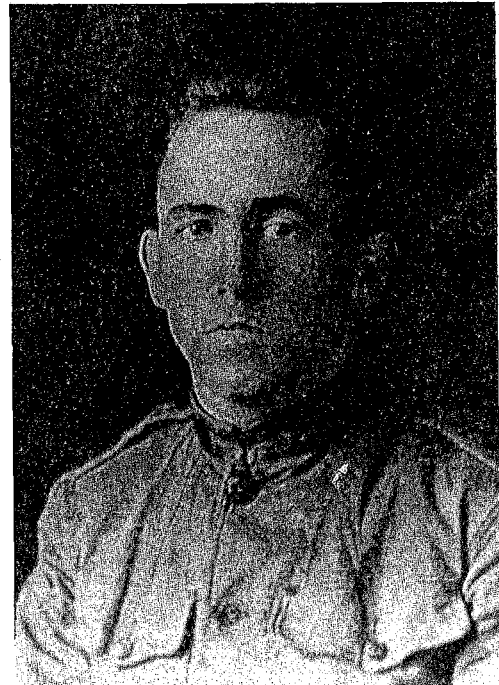
What had happened? The minutes of the board meetings during Brubacher's tenure demonstrate how he began to dominate the proceedings; the board became reactive rather than proactive. Equally important it lost much of its energy when the Commissioner of Education left it in the late 1930s. Effective supervision of Albany and New York's other teachers' colleges fell into the hands of the Department of Education's Assistant Commissioner for Teacher Education and Certification, Hermann Cooper.

For three decades, beginning in the mid-1930s, Albany's presidents turned to Cooper rather than the Board of Visitors for counsel and support.

Brubacher in his annual report in 1922 observed that "It is generally accepted theory that subject matter is relatively more important than the method of presentation in high school

(Top) Edward Eldred Potter, '18, a member of the Army Air Corps, was another of the College's wartime casualties. He later gave his name to a prominent local fraternity.

(Bottom) Students engaged in Red Cross war work.



(Top) Organized student life flourished during these decades. Helping organize and lead student government was Myskania, pictured in 1918. Myskania founded the Student Association in 1921, and continued to exist as the Student Judiciary until the 1970s. (Photo from *Pedagogue*.)

(Bottom) The Class of '18 at Moving-Up Day in 1917. (Gift of Edward L. Long, '17, Alumni Memorabilia Collection.)



teaching . . ." That principle underlay Albany's academic programs until the 1960s. Academic work—the major, minor and general education requirements—made up 85 percent of undergraduate requirements; professional courses accounted for the remaining 15 percent. That distribution differentiated Albany from the normal schools of the day, where the relationship between academic and professional work was more like 50/50.

Program changes in the 1920s and 1930s reflected shifting faculty

interests and external influences, particularly the changing demand for secondary school teachers. In the 1920s, for example, the College became involved in immigrant education. Philosophy disappeared from the curriculum in 1935 when the College chose not to replace a retiring faculty member. Some of the special programs developed shortly before World War I also disappeared; industrial arts with its costly equipment was dropped in 1920, and home economics met a similar fate in 1930-31. By contrast the undergraduate program in commerce, begun in 1913, flourished as secondary schools began offering such courses. Commerce enrollments at the College began to expand in the mid 1920s, and by the late 1930s one-fifth of Albany's students were enrolled in the



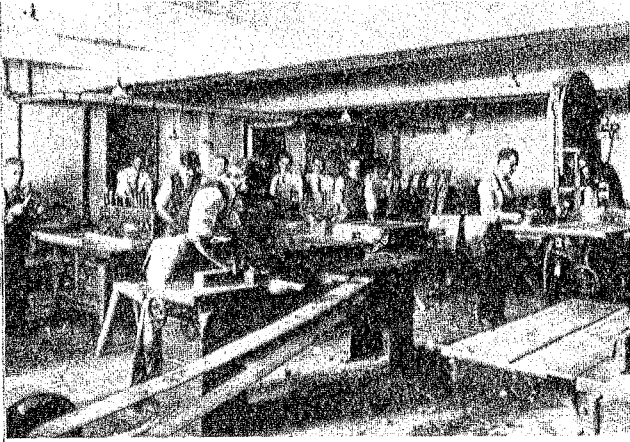
program. Even in the depressed job market of the 1930s, 90 percent of Albany's commerce graduates found positions. Such curricular changes, however, left unchanged the relative importance of academic work and professional studies.

The model school grew with increased College enrollments. It received a new building in 1929 and was named in honor of President Milne. Under the leadership of John Sayles, the Milne School developed a full six-year secondary school program, annually admitted a class of seventy students, and trained some 300 student teachers each year. For about four decades the Milne School was an important educational element in the Capital District and generated several thousand loyal alumni(ae).

Albany had begun offering graduate work early in the century, but it became a significant factor at the College only in the 1930s; between 1930 and 1939 the College granted 719 master's degrees. Graduate students came for different reasons. Some were administrators seeking certification. Others were secondary school teachers looking for the higher salaries that came with additional course work. Still others were Albany graduates hoping to enhance their ability to find a teaching position. By 1937,



Most students continued to live in boarding houses. A group of women have a "Freshman Party at '25" according to the scrapbook notes of Dorothy Graninger, '16. She recorded that she "played 500, had 'Salmon Wiggle' and fudge." A group of men students, including Jay Ellis and Joe Sproule on the left and Neil Quackenbush on the right, are seated on the steps of their boarding house about 1917. (Gift of Edward Long, '17.) (Photos from Alumni Memorabilia Collection.)



Students in industrial arts in 1915. Begun in 1910, the program, with its costly equipment, was dropped in 1920. Physical education and athletics in 1915 were hampered by the limited facilities in the basement of the auditorium/gymnasium building, now Hawley.

Brubacher and the faculty systematically began to prepare for the day in 1943 when the State Education Department would require a "fifth year" of study for permanent certification.

The development of a program in librarianship also reflected changing demand. A Department of Librarianship was established in 1921 to offer an undergraduate program. It became a school in 1926, and within a few years began offering a master's degree. It was one of the first such departments to specialize in training secondary school librarians and by the early 1940s had become the College's first exclusively graduate program.

Extension and summer programs were added to serve new clientele. The Normal School in the 19th Century had sent its principal and many of its students to the teachers' institutes common in those years. But extension programs in the modern sense began at the College in 1911 and expanded steadily in the next three decades, reaching enrollments of 500 to 600 per year in the 1930s. The largest group of students was elementary school teachers without baccalaureate degrees, but graduate enrollments also increased until they represented about 40 percent of the total by the late 1930s. The College's first summer session was held in 1917 and by the 1930s annually enrolled 1,300 to 1,600 students, 85 percent of them graduate students. Summer sessions and extension courses were expected to be financially self-sustaining. Tuition was charged and faculty members were paid out of the proceeds. For students it meant the first erosion of the notion that an education at the New York State College for Teachers was tuition-free. For faculty it meant a source of supplemental income, although at the uncertain cost of time for intellectual growth and scholarship.

Larger enrollments meant a larger faculty. Its size increased by fits and starts from forty-five in 1915 to 105 in 1940. Brubacher's long tenure as President meant that by his death in 1939 he had appointed ninety-two of the 103 faculty. His appointments were conventionally academic; the percentage of faculty holding earned doctorates rose from about 10 percent in 1915 to about 35 percent in 1939. Some were hired with the doctorate, others earned theirs while teaching. Both the pursuit of the doctorate and scholarly research were encouraged by a liberal policy of leave without pay as well as sabbaticals, introduced in 1922.

Brubacher fought hard, although not always successfully, for better

salaries. The state in 1916 introduced a system of ranks and salary increments that governed faculty pay until the 1960s. In 1916 the salary schedule called for a minimum of \$1,200 for instructors and a maximum of \$4,000 for full professors; nine years later the comparable figures were \$2,000 and \$5,000. The sharp deflation of the 1930s meant rising real income for faculty members even though all those earning more than \$2,000 were forced to take a 10 percent pay cut. The system was inflexible, however; the percentage of faculty in each rank was fixed by law. The result was a high rate of turnover in the lower ranks as ambitious young faculty, faced by the prospect of slow promotion and salary increases, went elsewhere.

Still, there was no lack of continuity in the faculty. A considerable number devoted most of their professional lives to the College. Some, although by no means a majority, were held to the College by alumni(ae) ties, but clearly a good many found the College an attractive place to teach. Many of Brubacher's appointments in the 1930s stayed to form the core of the faculty in the next two decades, and three—Edith Wallace, Ralph Beaver, and Luther Andrews—played leadership roles in the transition to university status in the 1960s.

During these years the College also entered the mainstream of American academic life in the area of academic administration. Between 1906 and 1913, William Aspinwall as Assistant to the President began to perform some of the functions of a dean. His successors, Leonard Blue (1914-1917) and Harlan Hoyt Horner (1917-1923) were the first officially to be bestowed the title. Mathematician

(Top) Leonard Anderson Blue, first Dean of the College, in 1916. (*Pedagogue*, 1916.)

(Bottom) Edna Merrit, '18, left rear, was one of many Albany graduates who became missionaries. She is pictured here in 1936 with the junior high graduating class at Sienyu in Fukien, China. (*Alumni Quarterly*, Fall, 1936.)



History Professor Adna Wood Risley in class circa 1922. Professor Risley is said to have owned the first automobile in Albany. (Gift of Dr. Edith O. Wallace, '17.)



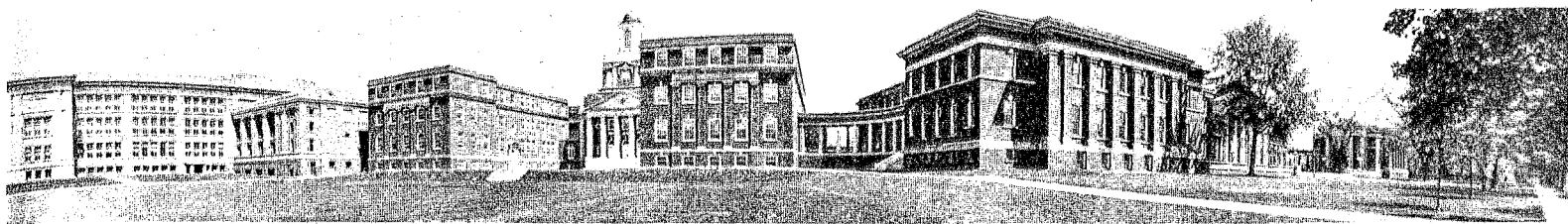
William Henry Metzler, earlier dean of the graduate school and of the college of liberal arts at Syracuse, served from 1923 to his retirement in 1933. Milton Nelson, a 1924 graduate of Albany with a Cornell Ph.D., returned to Albany as an assistant professor of education and became dean in 1933, serving until his retirement in 1950. The dean and the President were the most influential figures in the academic life of the College, but they were also assisted by nine or ten faculty committees with responsibilities in areas such as appointments, curriculum, scheduling, examinations, and student activities.

Surging enrollments in the 1920s made the chronic problem of physical facilities ever more urgent, but progress was slow. Only in 1922 did the state enlarge the campus by paying \$70,000 for an additional two acres of land between the science building and Albany High School. It was another seven years before three additional buildings—Richardson Hall, Page Hall, and the new Milne School—were completed. The \$868,000 project was characterized by a combination of disagreements with the architect, construction delays, and financial problems. A 1936 addition to the Milne School rounded out the expansion of physical facilities during this period.

The new facilities eased but did not eliminate the space problem. The 1929 construction permitted the College to convert the former auditorium and gymnasium into Hawley Library, which opened in 1933. Inadequate though it was, it was far better than anything the College had enjoyed before, and the library looked even better when in 1934-35 Works Progress Administration artists decorated it with a set of murals. The basement of Page Hall contained the first real gymnasium the College had ever had, but it provided only for an undersized basketball court (the size of the space unobstructed by pillars had been a source of fierce conflict with the architect), and it had to be shared with the Milne students.

By 1937 expansion of the library and provision of a health and recreational center were at the top of Brubacher's list of priorities, but the underlying problem of additional construction was land; the campus was hemmed in by the city. The state declined to purchase the aging buildings of Albany High School adjoining the campus both to the east and the west. Brubacher looked longingly to the south side of





Western Avenue but to no avail; the Depression made further construction impossible.

During these years the College continued to have a statewide student body (virtually every county was represented each year) although as many as a third of the students came from the five-county area around Albany. Both the number of applications and admission standards fluctuated. Qualifications other than high school graduation virtually disappeared during World War I, and the attrition rate for first-year students zoomed to 36 percent in 1915-16. Brubacher was very dissatisfied.

(Top) Richardson, Page, and Milne (center left) were built in 1929 following financial problems and construction delays.

(Bottom) In the 1920s the school was still small enough (611 students in 1921) for all-college events to fit into the gymnasium in the basement of Hawley. Pictured are the Classes of 1920 and 1922 at a Halloween party. (Photo by Marshall Studio, Alumni Memorabilia Collection.)



Athletics in the 1920s: (above) women's horseback riding; (opposite page) a short-lived intercollegiate football program in 1922; and the 1929 tennis team. Tennis at the college dates from 1898. (Photos from *Pedagogue*, 1923 and 1929.)

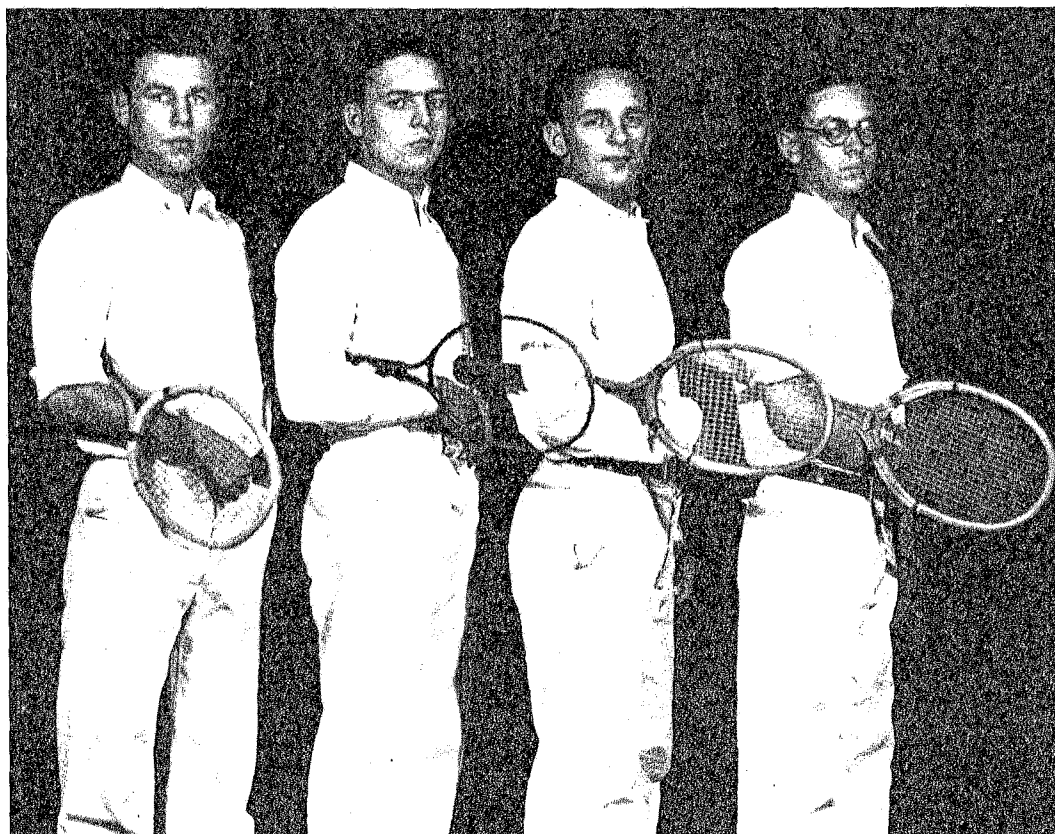
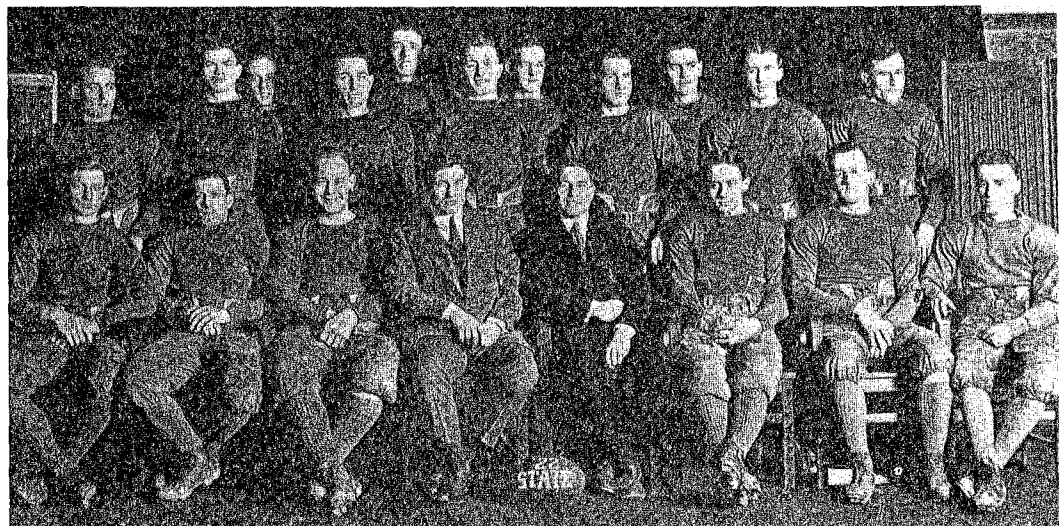
A college training teachers, he observed, "must insist upon educational virility." To achieve that, the College steadily raised the minimum high school average needed for admission. To deal with the attrition problem, the College in 1917 began a system of freshmen faculty advisers and a form of freshmen orientation. During the 1930s, when demand for admission was very high, admission standards rose further. Nearly half of the entering class in the Fall of 1933 had high school averages of 90 percent or higher, and no one had an average of less than 85 percent. During the 1930s the College attracted nearly 10 percent of all the Regents' Scholarship winners in the state.

Beyond academics, the College continued to be concerned about the physical health and psychological qualifications of incoming students. World War I created concerns about the health of the American population. The College used federal funds in 1919 to establish a Department of Hygiene, which offered courses required of all students, conducted physical exams of every matriculated student (grading the students on an "A" to "D" scale!), and prescribed corrective gymnastic training. In the Fall of 1921, students had assessed themselves an annual "infirmary" fee, which provided room and routine nursing care in Albany hospitals for short-term illnesses. By the 1930s, incoming students had to bring a personal health record from their physicians.

In addition, students were subjected to I.Q. testing and were evaluated on a "Trait Index" designed to weed out candidates unsuitable for

teaching. In his final report in 1939, Brubacher noted that the College consciously evaluated students on the basis of "scholastic achievement, emotional stability, character, forcefulness, purposefulness, resourcefulness, voice, speech, health . . . The strength of the selective effort," he observed, "lies in the fact that weak personalities are excluded or, having been admitted, are identified and eliminated." By whatever criteria, the College by the 1930s had become and was to remain one of the most highly selective public undergraduate institutions in the nation.

The College continued to give attention to the moral and physical welfare of and to stand *in loco parentis* to its would-be teachers. That relationship had been formalized with Anna Pierce's appointment as Dean of Women in 1914. The Dean of Women, she asserted in her 1928 book, *Deans and Advisors of Women and Girls*, should be responsible for "The strengthening of the student's moral fiber and imparting to her the knowledge of essentials in life . . ." In Dean Pierce's view, achieving those goals involved among other things attention to a female student's religious life, her manner of dress and personal appearance, and her social activities. No activities "called questionable by any large portion of the parents





The first dormitory for women, Syddum Hall in its second location in Englewood Place, was founded by Marion Syddum Van Liew, head of the home economics department in 1918.

funds to establish dormitories for at least 700 women students. By the early 1920s it became clear that the dormitories could be provided only through private effort and financing. Hence Brubacher supported the formation of a committee headed by Dean Pierce and John Sayles, then Director of Training, to initiate a drive for funds to construct dormitories. Alumni(ae) and local benefactors gave their support, and by the early 1930s the Alumni Association's committee (eventually chartered as the State College Benevolent Association) had raised \$293,000 in pledges. Property between Partridge and Ontario streets was acquired and, in the Fall of 1935, Residence Hall Number 1 (renamed Pierce Hall in 1941) opened to provide accommodations for 162 women. Under Sayles' leadership, the Benevolent Association proceeded to build a

. . . of the students should be planned or encouraged."

Dean Pierce was concerned with providing female students with housing of a kind that would foster the virtues she thought so important. The College from its founding had insisted that students live only in College-approved homes and boarding houses, but by World War I they were both in short supply and difficult to supervise. Brubacher reported that in 1919-20 nearly half of the students lived in approved boarding houses. A 1933 study showed that about a third of both men and women lived in private homes while another third of the women lived in group or sorority houses.

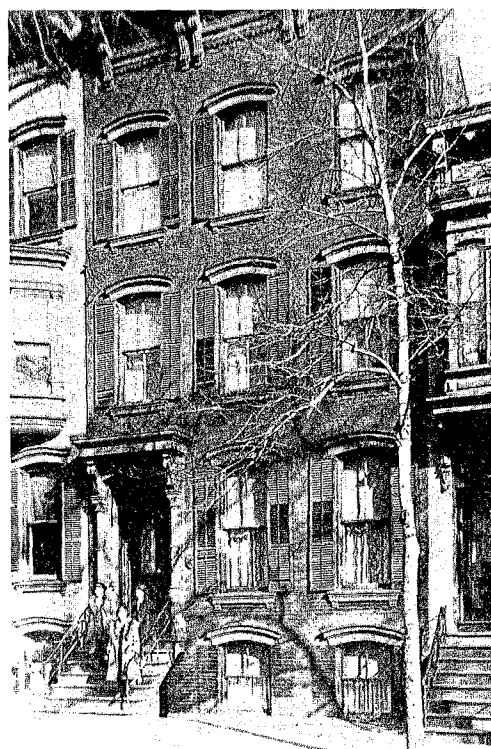
Between 1917 and 1921 the President annually appealed, unsuccessfully, through the Board of Trustees to the Legislature for

dormitory, this one for men, which opened in 1941 as Sayles Hall. Students seemed pleased by the new accommodations. The dormitories provided not only good living conditions but also opportunities for special interest housing: in 1942 "La Maison Francaise," consisting of thirteen French majors and a French-speaking chaperone, was housed in a section of Pierce Hall.

The enterprise of the alumni(ae) and the College had significant reverberations. It doubtless influenced the organization in 1944 of the State Dormitory Authority, which first provided state funding for college and university dormitories in New York. And for another two decades the Alumni Association operated smaller houses for groups of Albany students.

The student culture which had sprung up around the turn of the century flowered during these decades. For the four decades after World War I that culture was characterized by two things: an astonishingly high level of extra-curricular activity and a phenomenal degree of organization. Albany students often seemed to spend more time out of the classroom than in it, and they often seemed incapable of doing anything without formal organization. Still, the extra-curricular activity generally received faculty and administrative support, for both faculty and students were bound together by the common goal of preparing first-rate secondary school teachers. Extra-curricular activities played an important role in achieving that goal.

The student body became highly organized. Milne in 1914 had rejected a student overture for permission to organize, but a year later Brubacher proved more receptive. He appointed a faculty committee headed by English Professor Harry Hastings which reported in April of 1917. The committee recommended the appointment of an all-senior student council and chose eleven seniors on the basis of scholarship and leadership to begin student government. The group of students, whatever their scholarly qualifications, quickly demonstrated an abundance



(Top) Women dancing in the parlor of Newman Hall, a group home sponsored by the Roman Catholics. Newman Hall was founded in 1922 with the purchase of the large red brick mansion at 741 Madison Avenue—its location until 1956. (Gift of Helen Krizka Wright, '42, Alumni Memorabilia Collection.)

(Bottom) Sororities and fraternities quickly followed suit and bought their own houses. This is Chi Sigma Theta House on State Street.

of leadership. They called themselves "Myskania" (the meaning of the term was known only to members), decided that half of the ten members should be chosen by the faculty and half by the outgoing members, and selected their successors.

By 1921 Myskania had established the Student Association, had written its constitution, which provided for student officers, and had become both the creator and guardian of student traditions. Early Myskanias established weekly assemblies, organized class rivalry, came to the support of the infant student newspaper begun in 1916, and enlarged the activities of Moving-Up Day, initially begun in 1913. Selection to Myskania soon became the highest honor extended to students for their leadership and extra-class activities.

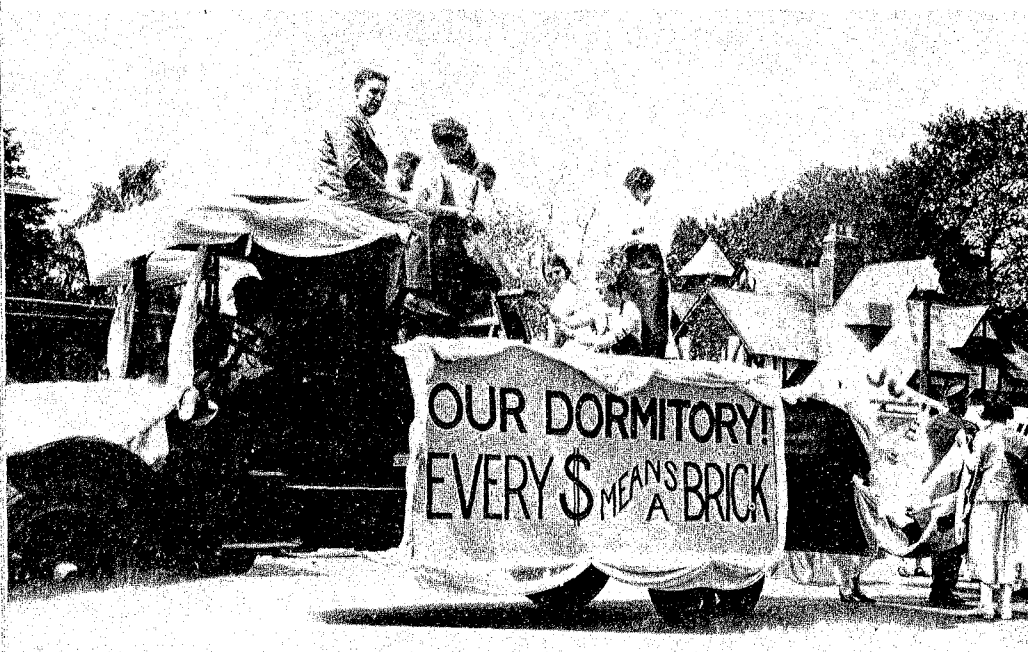
College traditions became firmly established in this era. Frosh were inducted into the College with the rituals of freshman week, advanced with the activities of Moving-Up Day, left the institution with Commencement, and moved into the ranks of the alumni(ae) with Torch Night (begun in 1930 or 1931), where they sang the *alma mater*, "College of the Empire State," chosen in 1916 in an alumni(ae)-sponsored contest. Student leaders promoted College "spirit" so successfully that it sometimes got out of hand. Freshman hazing was limited to one week in the Fall of 1929, and in 1934 Myskania had to suspend part of sophomore-freshman "rivalry" when student enthusiasm spilled over

into vandalism. In 1944 Pierce's successor, Dean Ellen Stokes, was forced to clamp down on "unorganized rivalry" which had involved "scalping" the president of the freshman class and inter-dorm raids resulting in jam-smear hair, clothes marked with lipstick, and pails of water thrown in rooms and corridors.

Students soon discovered that student government, like all governments, was only as strong as its financial resources. The Student

(Top) Religious groups played a significant role in student life. The Menorah Society was founded in 1923.

(Bottom) In the early 1920s faculty and alumni(ae), led by Anna Pierce and John Sayles, mounted a drive to raise money to build dormitories. Here students urge contributions. The fund-raising drive came to fruition with the opening of Pierce Hall in 1935. (Alumni Memorabilia Collection.)



## Anna Eloise Pierce

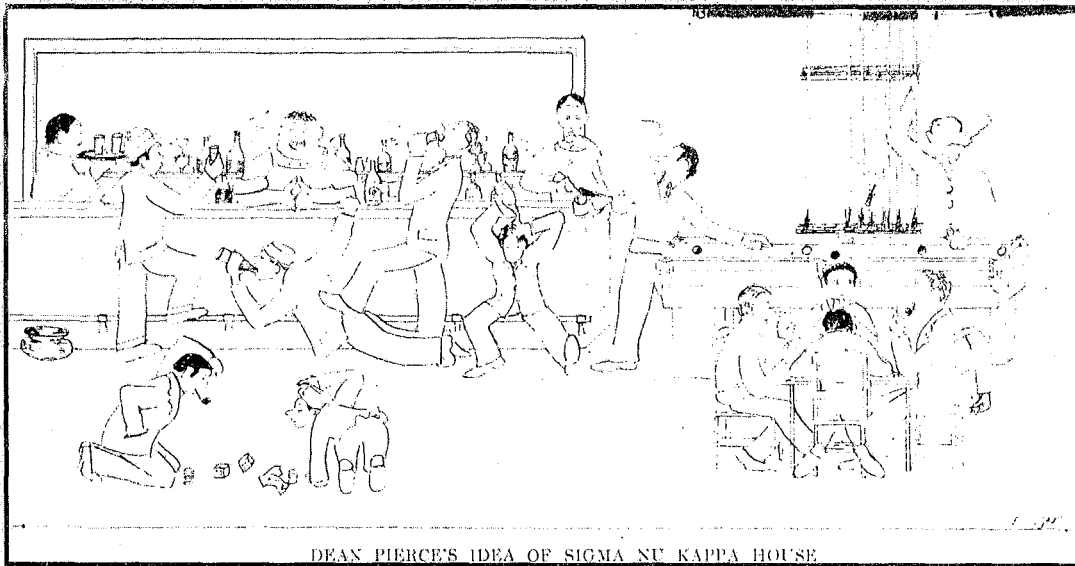


Beginning her career as a fifteen-year-old schoolmistress in a one-room log cabin, Anna Eloise Pierce, '84, arrived at the Normal College in 1883 as a student, later became a secretary to the president, then a substitute and finally a full-time teacher. As her duties grew over forty-nine years, so did her role as mother figure to female students. When the school became the New York State College for Teachers, Pierce was in place as the first Dean of Women.

Pierce held a formal tea for first-year female students and also conducted a series of lectures as a required course on etiquette, proper classroom conduct, dress, and proper relations with young men. In her annual published "greetings" to each new class of females, she said she would always be ready to do whatever a loving mother would do, and urged them to talk to her whenever they were "in doubt about anything, or are lonely and want sympathy . . . I am in my office every morning and the latchstring is always out."

The dean, author of the pioneer book *Deans and Advisors of Women and Girls*, made herself available because she felt students could not achieve their best if they were afraid or worried. The "all important thing," she said, "is to have at your command all of your powers of body, mind and heart."

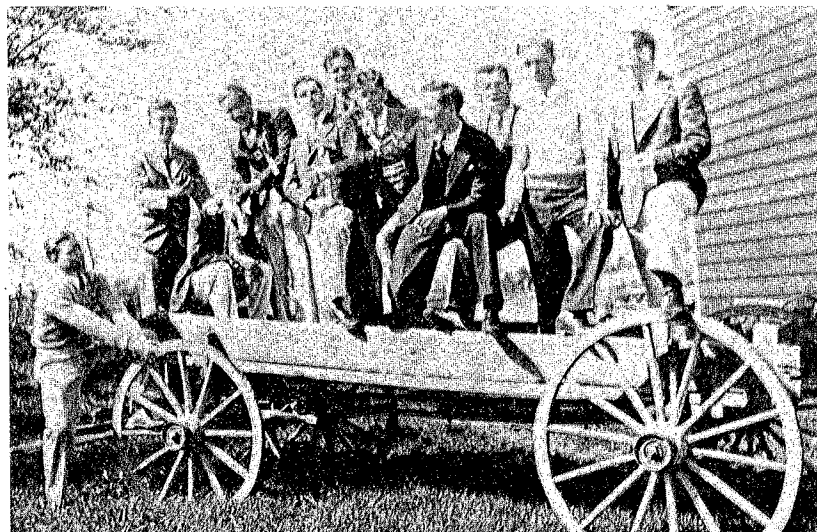
An advocate of dorms as a place for quality conditions, social support, and unified college spirit, Pierce was remembered when a dorm was built on the downtown campus in 1935, two years after she retired, and later named after her. The *State College News*, commenting on the unveiling of her official portrait in 1927, noted the accurate representation of "her capable hands which have grasped each task with courage and sincerity."



DEAN PIERCE'S IDEA OF SIGMA NU KAPPA HOUSE

(Top) Anna Pierce, (Portrait by David Lithgow, photo by Mark Schmidt.)

(Bottom) *The Pretzel*, a publication of Psi Gamma sorority, pokes good-natured fun at Dean Pierce.



(Top) The Class of 1931 in their freshman year. (From the Class of '31 scrapbook, Alumni Memorabilia Collection.)

(Bottom) "A Day at Ken Miller's farm, during which the Potter Club may or may not have been born." Art Jones, Larry Newcomb, Al Basch, Andy Heitz, Sam Dransky, Ken Miller, Gren Rand, Bernie Kerbel, Babe Kaplan, Russ Ludlum, and Walt Driscoll. (From the Class of '31 scrapbook, Alumni Memorabilia Collection.)

Board of Finance (supervised by a faculty member) appeared in 1920 to oversee the expenditure of an annual student tax of \$5.00, first imposed in 1917. The size of the assessment and its collection inevitably became matters of controversy. Since the tax was voluntary, many students refused to pay it, particularly in the hard times of the 1930s. Peer pressures were applied; at various times the names of students who had not paid the tax appeared in the *State College News*. Ultimately, the students sought

the assistance of the administration; in 1937, seniors had to pay the tax before the College would recommend them for a teaching position.

Helen Krizka, '42, thought a half century later that "This fee surely was a bargain!" Perhaps it was, for the students used the funds, which ran as high as \$12,000 in the 1930s and 1940s, to support a wide variety of activities. Some funding went to student publications. The most important was the *State College News*, which began publication in 1916 and has had a continuous existence to the present. The College yearbook, *The Pedagogue*, begun in 1913, conscientiously recorded College life. While the older literary societies had mostly disappeared by the beginning of this period, magazines such as the *State Lion* and



the *State College Quarterly* attested to continuing student interest in creative writing, ranging from humor to more serious literary enterprises.

Student organizations and activities proliferated. Some were academic honoraries. The College, having been rejected by Phi Beta Kappa earlier, in 1930 established Signum Laudis, a general academic honorary. Herodotus, a history honorary affiliated with the national Pi Gamma Mu, was formed in 1927. Kappa Phi Kappa, a professional education fraternity, appeared in 1927, and Pi Omega Pi, a national honor fraternity for business education teachers, was begun in 1943. An almost endless array of clubs serving special student academic interests sprang up.

Religious groups, so prominent in the first decade of the century, clearly played a lesser role in the life of the College than they had earlier. Still, they maintained a significant presence. The YWCA, so significant in the earlier period, was transformed into the Student Christian Movement and sponsored a wide variety of programs and speakers including Professor Croasdale's annual talks on marriage. Canterbury Club and the Lutheran Club served other Protestants. The Newman Club was joined in 1916 by Chi Sigma Theta, a Roman Catholic sorority; in 1941 the Albany Catholic Diocese was operating Thomas More House, which provided housing for students from State

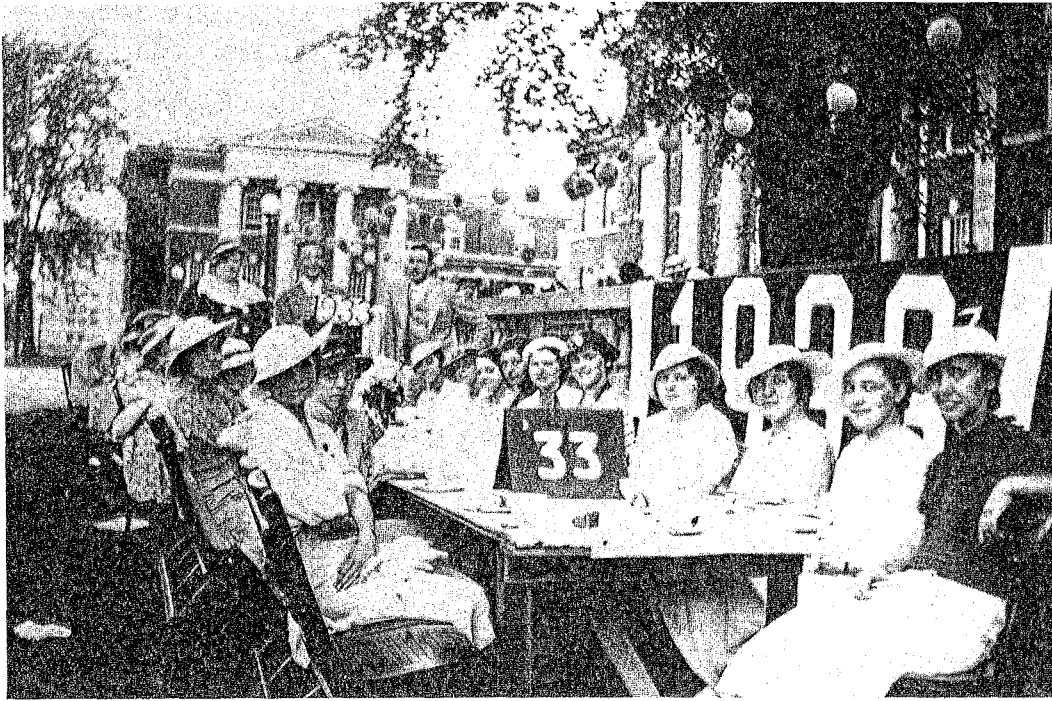


(Above) Gladys Newell, '30, was a dedicated social studies teacher for 40 years and served as president of the New York State Teachers' Association in 1966.

(Right) Paul Bulger, '36, became a distinguished educator, serving as an Assistant Commissioner of Education in New York and as president of the State University College at Buffalo.

(Below) Arvid Burke, '28, served for years as director of studies for the New York State Teachers' Association and completed his career as a faculty member from 1960 to 1971 in Albany's School of Education.





Members of the Class of '33 at their first reunion June 16, 1934. Alumni(ae) were fiercely loyal during these years. (From the Class of '33 scrapbook maintained by Alvina Rich Lewis, Alumni Memorabilia Collection.)

College, Albany Pharmacy, Albany Law School, and Christian Brothers Academy. Jewish students, long represented by Menorah, transformed themselves into Hillel in 1942.

Several student organizations appealed to College-wide interests. Debate Council, organized in 1927, debated not only Hamilton, Rutgers, Cornell and Syracuse but also a visiting team from Scottish universities. The

long-standing student interest in music was mobilized with the formation of the Music Association, which sponsored both student musical performances and campus appearances by professional groups.

Agnes Futterer, '16, helped organize the Dramatic and Art Association, governed by an elected council of six students, in 1919. D&A Council sponsored speakers and performances by outside theater groups but more importantly forged links between classroom instruction and student initiative in theater. Albany was only the third American college to offer formal classes in drama, and most theater productions at the College were products of Futterer's Elementary and Advanced Dramatics classes. Productions of *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *The Electra* in the 1920s and *Death Takes a Holiday* and *Hedda Gabler* in the 1930s were characteristic examples of quality College theater during those decades. Futterer and the D&A Councils established a tradition of superior theater at Albany. Theater alumni(ae) were a remarkably loyal group, and some went on to distinguished teaching and professional careers in theater.

Albany students shared the common collegiate enthusiasm for athletics in these years. Intramural sports flourished, but intercollegiate athletics fared less well. The men's basketball team begun in 1909 continued, but attempts to field teams in football, baseball, swimming, and hockey were soon aborted. Part of the problem was inadequate facilities. The

## Agnes Futterer

Today's theater students, when they are relaxing between classes and productions, can often be found sitting around the Agnes Futterer Memorial Lounge in the Performing Arts Center. If they haven't already heard of Futterer, for whom the lounge was named, they can see her likeness above them on the wall in a rich portrait of a graceful and dynamic woman.

A 1916 graduate of the College, Futterer studied at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts at Columbia University for advanced training before she began teaching at Albany in 1917. For forty-one years she taught classes, directed performances, gave solo recitals, and traveled throughout New England for readings of twenty-seven plays she had memorized.

Described by students as "formidable" and both "inspirational" and "inspired," nicknamed "The Dutchess," "The Queen," or just "Aggie," she even had a reputation as a mischievous matchmaker. Tall, with reddish brown hair, magnificent posture and grace of movement, she always included in her attire a string of beads to match her dresses—muted tones in the winter, bright colors for spring.

But "Aggie" was more than style. She developed courses like Elementary and Advanced Dramatics, Modern Drama, and Playwriting that made Albany only the third college in the nation to offer such an extensive drama program. Later she taught classes in oral interpretation of literature. Her students included future movie and television star Harold Gould '47 and Broadway's *The Sound of Music* director, Vincent Donehue.

In 1955 a group of 300 students established the Theater Alumni Association, which later commissioned the Futterer portrait and also set up the Agnes Futterer Award, given annually to a senior who has made the most significant contribution to theater.

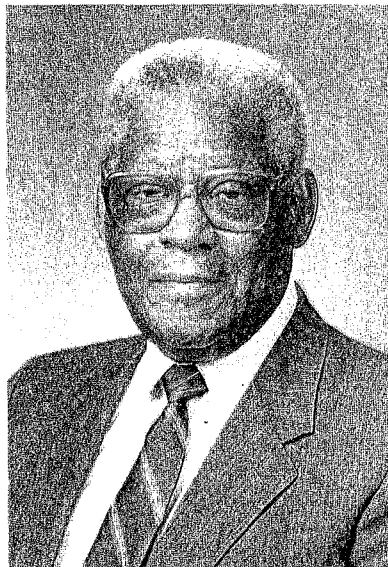
This influential and highly involved teacher continued to do readings and to take classes at the college after her retirement, and she also enjoyed gardening. She died in 1973, and the lounge was dedicated to her the following year.



gymnasia available were at best inadequate, there were no swimming pools or hockey rinks, and even the available playing fields produced chronic criticism from Albany's athletes. The state provided no funds for intercollegiate athletics apart from the salaries of physical education instructors, and intercollegiate sports at Albany's level produced little revenue. The Student Association budget for athletics (only \$3,365 in 1934-35) was simply inadequate. Still, the interest was there. The annual alumni banquet in 1932 produced a resolution urging that College teams "play more difficult and better known opponents" for the "advantageous publicity" that would accrue to the College.

Social activities played an important role in student culture. Formal and informal dances, teas, receptions, dinners, outings, and parties abounded. There was great interest in the annual choice of a Campus Queen, and in 1931 the *State College News* was keeping track of the hair color of the winners: six blondes, three brunettes, and one redhead between 1922 and 1931.

The Greek societies played a vital role in this social life. Five sororities founded between 1890 and 1909 were still active during these decades, and at least six more appeared. The growth in the number of men produced at least five new fraternities between 1913 and 1938 to join the one founded in 1907. The Greeks in turn organized themselves into an Intersorority Council (1920) and an Interfraternity Council (1937), in part to oversee rushing and hazing. Most, although not all, had group houses.

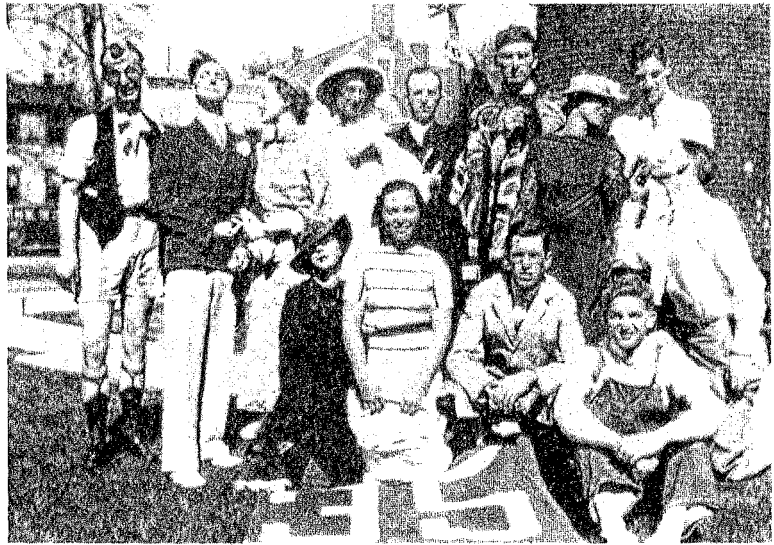


(Above) K. Leroy Irvis, '38, became Democratic leader and speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. He received an honorary degree from Albany in 1986 for his achievements. African-American students attended Albany from the late 1850s onward.



(Right) Dorothy Griffin Griffin, '34, became a businesswoman and president of the Varflex Corporation in Rome, New York.

The administration occasionally had qualms about all of this extra-curricular activity. In 1925 Brubacher observed that there were too many dances and too much movie-going among the students; the College needed to awaken the serious interests of students. An alumna recalled that when she enthusiastically described to her family the parties and receptions extended frosh in her first year in the Fall of 1938, her father sternly reminded her that "you are in college to study, not to socialize."



Yet Brubacher and other administrators remained generally supportive of these experiences as an essential part of the process of "socializing" students to their future status as secondary school teachers. An editorial in the *State College News* in 1930 drove home the point. Commenting on the discourteous behavior of students who accepted invitations from faculty for social gatherings and did not attend, the writer asserted that "such flagrant violations of ordinary courtesy are more becoming to grammar school children than to prospective teachers who are expected to transfer culture and knowledge to others."

Members of the Class of '35 clowning around for the camera.

The campaign to properly "socialize" College students was continuous. Formal orientation programs such as "freshman camp," introduced for men in 1930 and for women the following year, were supplemented by advice from Dean Pierce and teas and receptions hosted by faculty. Rules of conduct for women in group houses and the appropriateness of smoking on campus were debated, and students were condemned for discourteous behavior at theater productions or lectures. As Brubacher had pointed out in his book, the public expected a secondary school teacher to be a certain kind of person as well as to know what and how to teach.

The focus on training teachers and the high level of extra-curricular activities suggest that the College community during these decades tended to look inward. Indeed, there is relatively little evidence of concern for events in the larger world, and such evidence as there is

## Abram Brubacher

Abram Brubacher was named president of the College in 1915, and he used his strong work and educational credentials to bolster the level of excellence of both students and faculty for twenty-four years. When he began his long tenure, his professional roles already included teacher, high school principal in Gloversville and Schenectady, and superintendent of schools in Schenectady from 1908 to 1914. His educational achievements included a Ph.D. in Greek from Yale University.

Brubacher was also a well-published author, and his 1927 book, *Teaching: Profession and Practice*, deals with every aspect of a teacher's life from good grooming to professional training "to their broader social and political roles."

His writing was inspirational in tone, and his aspirations for the college were no less vaunted. In looking to improve standards, he focused on both teachers and students. Concerned about the high failure rate of the freshman class, he steadily raised the minimum high school average needed for admittance. He also emphasized graduate programs, and during his tenure the number of master's degrees awarded rose dramatically. Brubacher's hiring of more faculty enabled more courses to be offered; from 1915 to 1940 the number nearly doubled, to 260. He promoted scholarly research, hired many more holders of Ph.D.s, introduced sabbatical leaves, and expanded the campus by three new academic halls and one dormitory, all part of his fervid quest to raise the College to a more prestigious rank among post-secondary institutions. His efforts were dramatically successful.



suggests that both faculty and students held views that were relatively more conservative than those of the state or nation in the late 1920s and 1930s. In straw ballots, students preferred Albert Otlinger to Franklin Roosevelt by a two to one margin in the 1928 New York gubernatorial race; four years later they preferred Herbert Hoover to FDR for the presidency by a similar margin. The straw votes were closer in 1940 and 1944, but Wendell Willkie and Thomas E. Dewey were still the winners. The Great Depression of the 1930s appeared to be a matter of concern chiefly because of the economic hardships it imposed on students. Still, by the end of the 1930s, students were protesting budget cuts at the College to the State Legislature. (They were scolded by legislators who thought the students had no business jamming the Assembly chamber and protesting *the legislators'* budget.)

The Fall of 1939 marked important changes at the College. President Abram Brubacher died in August of that year, leaving behind an important and much admired legacy, for he was the individual most responsible for the transformation of the State College for Teachers into a genuine collegiate institution. His successor was John Sayles, a 1902 alumnus, who had served on the Albany faculty since 1905. President for eight years until forced to resign for reasons of ill-health, Sayles was deeply committed to and thoroughly familiar with the College and its mission; he pursued a straight course through difficult times.

Just a few days after Brubacher's death, Germany invaded Poland. World War II affected the College in many ways. Enrollment fell by more than a third, from 1,379 in 1939 to 865 in 1943. Military service denuded the College of males; they had constituted about a third of the student body in the late 1930s but only a twelfth in 1944 and 1945. The faculty shrank from 105 in 1939 to



seventy-one in 1945. Graduate students virtually disappeared, and admission requirements for entering undergraduates were lowered.

There are no accurate figures for the number of alumni and faculty in service in World War II. Between fifteen and twenty faculty were involved in the armed forces or such supporting agencies as the American Red Cross; more than 625 students and alumni(ae) similarly served. Available records suggest that at the end of the conflict seventeen had given their lives and one was still listed as missing; several had been prisoners-of-war.

Characteristically, the campus organized itself enthusiastically for the war effort. The War Activities Council sought to coordinate student war work on campus; by the Fall of 1942 some 60 percent of the students reportedly had signed up. Activities ranged from sewing and a salvage campaign to air raid precautions and blood donations. More than seventy female students reportedly worked as nurses' aides in area hospitals. A "Memorial Presentation" in 1944 included the bestowing of a \$2,500 War Bond. The WAC made a serious attempt to keep in contact with students and alumni serving in the armed forces. The State

(Clockwise from top left) Dean Milton Nelson; faculty members Ruth Hutchins (art); Harry Birchenough (math); Mattie Green (physician); Robert Frederick (education).



A "field trip" in the Pine Bush with Dr. Gertrude Douglas of the biology department (1919 to 48). Jean Cady, '41, is in the center with the sample case. (Gift of Jean Cady Sroka, Alumni Memorabilia Collection.)

*College News* ran a weekly column entitled "Jargon in G.I." devoted to keeping in touch with College G.I.s, and faculty members Donnal Smith and Louis Jones put together a newsletter for servicemen. Other aspects of campus life changed. A conference on campus in the Summer of 1942 suggested that education had to be adapted to the changing technologies of the "air age." Both fraternities and sororities toned down their initiation rituals; the former virtually disappeared from the campus. Night activities on campus were limited. By 1943, intercollegiate athletics had disappeared to be replaced by intramural sports and other physical training designed to keep men "physically fit in preparation for joining the various armed services of Uncle Sam."

In the midst of the conflict the College observed its Centennial. On May 5 and 6, 1944, members of the College community gathered to hear speeches by appropriate dignitaries: Commissioner of Education George Stoddard, author John Erskine, Hermann Cooper, and Dean Charles F. Russell of Teachers College, Columbia. Looking backward, the College sponsored the publication of a history: *College of the Empire State: A Centennial History of the New York State College for Teachers at Albany* by William Marshall French and Florence Smith French. Looking forward, attendees at the celebration watched the first showing of a film, "Tomorrow's Teachers," shot in color and produced by faculty and students. The Centennial observance was a satisfying if subdued recognition of the achievements of the institution over a century.

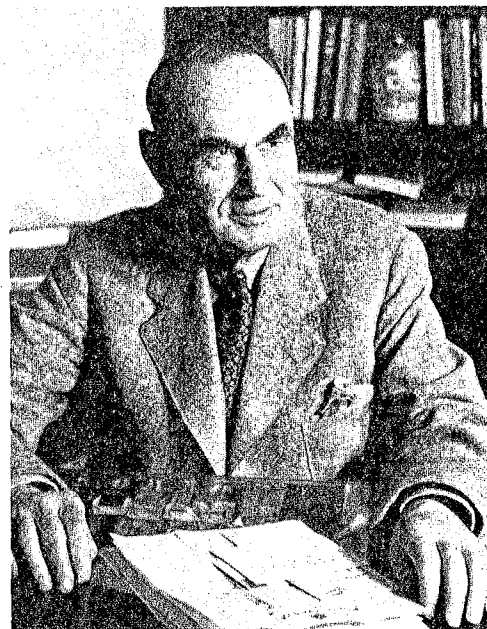
Two issues of the *State College News* reported stories that in different



ways reflected the College response to the war years. The second issue of the paper after Pearl Harbor featured an article on the program for student war service; on the next page an article advised female students how to get ready for a prom—what gown to wear, the proper *coiffure*, how to wear flowers, etc. Almost four years later the paper carried an article reporting that Jack Smith '43 (and later long-time professor of physics at the College and University), had witnessed the explosion of the first atomic bomb in New Mexico. The College had struggled through World War II into the nuclear age.



In 1944 the College was one of nine campuses nationwide to participate in a nationally funded study of intergroup relations, leading to a student-run conference on the topic. Led by Shirley Passow, '46, a few students decided to continue the spirit of the study and conference by forming the Inter-Group Council to promote understanding among all races and nationalities in the community. The charter members were, first row left-to-right, Kathryn Hagerty, professor of education Mary E. Conklin, and Marian Carter, '46; and back row, professor of social studies Watt Stewart, Celina Axlerod, '47, founder and president Passow, Edna M. Marsh, '45, and Louis Jones, professor of English.



John Sayles succeeded Brubacher as Acting President in 1939, and President in 1941. (*Pedagogue*, 1944.)