Commencement at ONU

1874 - 2014
The first commencement at Ohio Northern was held in 1874. The graduating class that year had 11 students!
Anthem—"Gloria" (from Mozart's Twelfth Mass)—Choir
Glee—"We Hail the Glad Springtime"—Choir
Salutatory—"For What Shall We Live"—R.C. Eastman
Music—by Ada Silver Cornet Band
Essay—"As the Day, So Shall Thy Strength Be"—Sue Fogle
Essay—"Mental Beauty"—Metta Ferrall
Music—by Ada Silver Cornet Band
Oration—"Visions of the Mysterious"—S.P. Gray
Essay—"Act Well Your Part, There All the Honor Lies"—Sallie Lindsay

Instrumental Music—Mrs. Rowley
Oration—"Make Use of the Keys"—A.D. Sniveley
Oration—"Intellect and Genius"—E.L. Sinclair
Music—by Ada Silver Cornet Band

Anthem—"The Angel's Herald"—Choir
Essay—"The Roughest Stone May Be A Diamond"—Anna Stayner

Essay—"Social Growth"—Mollie Schoonover
Music—"Hunter's Chorus"—Choir
Valedictory—"Nature and Power of Science"—J.W. Zeller
Presentation of Diplomas—H.S. Lehr
Address to Senior Class—Rev. R.B. Pope, Delaware

Farewell Class Song, written by Metta Ferrall
"By Heaven's rich blessings are we brought
To see the present day;
And reap rewards by labor sought
In years now passed away.
Our star of future hope is bright,
With joy our fond hearts swell;
Yet sorrow's tears may dim our sight
When we must say farewell.
'Tis here we've toiled to knowledge gain,
And thus spent happy hours
That in our mem'ry will remain;
Be cherished there as flowers.
We've had our petty trials, too,
That were thought sad to tell;
But if our future knows as few
We shall in truth fare well.
By the 1880's, commencement had grown to a week long celebration involving student orations, musical performances and outside speakers.
Other activities took place during the week such as the Military Dept's. annual inspection. Note Pres. Lehr in top hat.
Classes would write their own songs.
The first honorary degrees were awarded at Northern in 1904.

The recipients were:

- C.R. Havinghorst, D.D.
  - Trustee 1904-07
- Thomas S. Linscott, D.D.
The zenith of early commencements came in 1910 when President Wm. Howard Taft was the speaker.

From President Taft To President Smith

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

FEBRUARY 25, 1910.

MY DEAR SIR:
I HAVE YOUR LETTER OF FEBRUARY 23D AND SHALL BE GLAD TO BE PRESENT AT ADA ON FRIDAY, JUNE 3D, AT THE FORTIETH ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT OF YOUR UNIVERSITY. IT WILL GIVE ME GREAT PLEASURE TO LUNCH WITH YOU AT HALF PAST TWELVE ON THAT DAY.

SINCERELY YOURS,

W.M. H. TAFT.

PRESIDENT ALBERT EDWIN SMITH,
OHIO NORTHERN UNIVERSITY,
ADA, OHIO
After leaving train – on N. Johnson St.
Speakers Platform as Seen From Dukes – Building to Left is Brown Hall, Demolished 1976
Pres. Taft Speaking
Pres. Smith and Lehr to Right
Commencement Format

• During the Lehr era, each part of the curriculum hosted their own events. Commencement could last an entire week.

• Under President Smith, the curriculum was simplified, and the entire Commencement program was streamlined.

• By 1911, there were recitals one week for music students, but the actual Commencement had been compressed to one day.
Commencement Format

This consolidation of events has been reversed.

• By 1997, the College of Law was given permission to hold its own Commencement separate from the four undergraduate colleges.

• In 2014, the College of Pharmacy was permitted to have a Commencement separate from that of the College of Arts & Sciences and College of Engineering.
Several seals have appeared on ONU diplomas over the years.

Pre-1968

1968 - 1978

1979 - present
The location for graduation ceremonies has also changed.

- Under Pres. Lehr, the literary society halls on the third floor of Hill Bldg. were used.
- Brown hall was used between 1905 and 1915.
- Ceremonies were held in Lehr auditorium after 1915, however various outside venues like War Memorial Park, the campus front lawn and Taft Gym were also employed.
Sliding dividers between the Franklin and Philomaethian Societies in Hill could be opened to create one large hall.
Brown Hall
After Lehr Memorial was opened in 1915, it was frequently used for graduations.
Procession to Lehr Memorial, S. Main in Background
Entering Lehr Memorial
Leaving Lehr in pre-air conditioning days – a sigh of relief?
Recessional from Lehr Mem. – 1950's
1960 – Graduation in War Memorial Park
1965 – Looking toward S. Main St. from Lehr Memorial
1965 – Campus Front Lawn and a View of the East Side of S. Main St.
1965 – Platform with Hill Bldg. in Background
1965 – Looking East Across Platform
1965 – Pres. McIntosh (L)
In Taft, Before 1976 - When Building was a Gymnasium
King-Horn Center – site of commencement 1975-1992
West campus in 1970's – Faculty Proceeding to King-Horn
1971 – Practice for Ceremony in North Gym
1992 – present, Field House
Commencement – 2008 – Courtesy of Public information
And now its your turn. Congratulations!