Ohio Northern University

"Creating Tomorrow From Today"

CENTENNIAL
1970 - 71
PREFACE

Tempered By Crises

The strength of steel is in the tempering!
We have watched the blacksmith temper the good metal by forging it to cherry-red heat, plunging it into hot water, and moving it out again—at just the right moment.

From the furnace heat—into hot water—and out again—for the greatest strength.

That, in simple terms, is the History of the first 100 years of Ohio Northern University. Good metal—capable smiths—sturdy tools—“hot water”—and a sense of time!

For crises are but turning points; strength comes by turning in the right direction—at the right time.

George Schertzer

Acknowledgements

All the material in this work not derived from personal knowledge and observation is taken from official documents, personal letters, and interviews. I have drawn heavily on the “Reminiscences of H. S. Lehr,” published in the Ada Herald 1901-07; however, I used a curious “book” of these writings, compiled by pasting in the newspaper columns, but omitting dates. These sources are given in the work itself, but I would like to add a word of appreciation to the scores who have so generously offered their hospitality, memories, and mementos of Ohio Northern. Without their cooperation, this work would have been impossible, and I am more grateful than I can express.

I must express my appreciation to Mr. Jerry Smith, publisher of the Ada Herald, who very generously opened the files of this most important source to me.

I must say a special word of thanks to my three “collaborators”: Mr. Monty Siekerman, Director of Public Information at Ohio Northern; Mr. Barton Snyder, longtime editor and publisher of the Ada Herald, who made available to me not only his own private files, but also his encyclopedic knowledge of the history of Ada and ONU; and Mr. George Schertzer, Director of Alumni Relations at ONU, who served nobly as good shepherd and general overseer of the whole project. No writer ever had kinder or more discerning editors, and they have saved me the embarrassment of grotesque errors.

Monty, Bart, George—my eternal gratitude.

G. Eugene Belch
May, 1971
Ada, Ohio

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The Presidents
of
Ohio Northern University

"The College President must be a superman. He must be a substantial scholar, a public relations tycoon who can create a compelling image of the institution, an indefatigable, unfailling fund raiser, a marathon speaker, a business executive who can set the tone, point the way, and achieve consent for educational advancement."

By Mary Kelly
Christian Science Monitor
INTRODUCTION

For much of its history, the course of Ohio Northern University might be compared to the journey of a highwire walker across a wind-swept canyon on a frail wire—blindfolded.

From its somewhat unpromising beginning as H. S. Lehr’s Northwestern Ohio Normal School, right up to the present, Northern has been beset by crises enough to satiate even the most devoted daytime TV soap opera addict: economic depressions, monetary inflation, wars and rumors of wars, political machinations, Methodist Church vacillation, stone-hearted boards of accreditation, and academic anemia have been at various times some of the swirling and treacherous winds sweeping about our resolute but sorely beset little wire walker, threatening to tumble him onto the rocks below.

The hardest rock has been that of financial reality. Perennially under-financed, Ohio Northern, from its days as the Northwestern Ohio Normal School, (Lehr’s name for his 1871 institution) has shared the hard lot of other private institutions trying to survive and grow without state subsidy. Virtually without endowment throughout most of its existence, Ohio Northern, like other private colleges, has relied primarily upon income from students for its financial stability. Economic squalls and those even more terrifying periods of menacing calm when absolutely no financial winds were stirring brought dismaying to the accounting offices of the institution.

For Henry Lehr the theft of a pocketbook containing tuition receipts for an entire term was a tragedy of the first water. (Lehr got his money back by a clever ruse, one that probably wouldn’t work today, which may be one reason why modern comptrollers prefer the more prosaic but safer checks and drafts to tempting gold and greenbacks.) President Albert Edwin Smith had to pledge all of his personal property in 1913 to meet a dire financial crisis; in the Great Depression of the 1930’s, professors went unpaid and buildings went untended because there was simply no money.

In the wartime 1940’s the enrollment of Ohio Northern fell perilously close to Lehr’s 1871 enrollment of 147 as the military services absorbed the young men of the country. Unpaid bills mounted menacingly upon the desk of President Robert McClure and bankers gloomily eyed ONU overdrafts.

The life of an heretic in the dungeons of the Spanish Inquisition must have been serene compared to the life of a president of Ohio Northern University (or the Northwestern Ohio Normal School, or Ohio Normal University, as the institution has at various times been called) during these periods of crisis and confusion. A hardy and courageous breed, these captains of ONU. They had to be to survive.

The financial Igerdemain practiced by these hard-pressed presidents is mind-bending and virtually defies description. A carnival showman with his shells and elusive pea would be but a psalied bumpkin compared to these jugglers of the account ledgers. Their desperate attempts to plug financial leaks, or, more accurately, to prime powder-dry financial wells, might make a strait-laced business college graduate blanch—but the institution survived.

Not only survived, but bloomed. In spite of backslides occasioned by depressions and wars, Ohio Northern’s evolution has been healthy and, in recent years, remarkably rapid and gratifying. Out of the despair of the Depression Thirties and the frenetic confusion of the post-war Forties has come a sense of present substance and hopeful confidence in the future. Enrollments have grown steadily, faculties have swelled, and, as buildings have mushroomed, year-old campus maps are as outdated as 1875 tuition fees (62 cents per week).

It has not been without pain and sacrifice that the development of Ohio Northern University has been charted. There has never been a tradition of a phalanx of deans and assistants and secretaries forming about a president to protect him from the harsh realities or the tedious minutia of life. While this open door policy may have given ONU presidents a healthy sense of active participation in the daily life of the University, it permitted, even encouraged, a burden of trivia to be imposed upon already overburdened men. It is small wonder that from Lehr to McClure physical exhaustion and strained nerves were occupational hazards. The job left its marks upon these men, but they in turn left their impress upon this University.

Just as the life and mores of a kingdom are colored by the personality and proclivity of its reigning monarch, the shape and nature of Ohio Northern University have
been molded by its various presidents. By and large, Ohio Northern has been lucky in its selection of leaders. Some were endowed with grace and eloquence; here and there we find an abrasive or arrogant personality, but virtually without exception, ONU presidents have been men of resolution, energy, and skill. Few would envy them their jobs; fewer still would question their dedication.

A trifling substitution in General Omar N. Bradley’s comment that “Generals are human. I know of none immune to error,” would make the statement appropriate for the seven gentlemen who have guided ONU during the past one hundred years. College presidents are indeed human. They have temper tantrums and the “Oh, how I pity me!” blues. They sulk and sometimes weep from exhaustion and frustration. Some ONU presidents have made hasty and unwise judgments, and some have clung grimly and stubbornly to lost causes. But, to a man, the presidents of Ohio Northern have been dedicated to the University and to its progress. For all their human failings, these leaders have been resolute and their labors fruitful. To them Ohio Northern in great measure owes its life and stature. It is to be hoped that this review of the the first 100 years will at least hint at the vast labor and love these men have poured into this institution.

This work is not intended to be a detailed, definitive history of Ohio Northern University. Both time and resources preclude such an undertaking at present. Inevitably, the reader will find incidents unrecorded that are indispensable to any comprehensive history of the institution; awesome individuals and venerable organizations will have been slighted. Unhappily, yes. The aim from the inception of this work has been to present a brief, informative, accurate, and—hopefully—readable history of the genesis, growth, and maturation of an institution—in this case, Ohio Northern University of Ada, Ohio—age one hundred.

From left: Henry S. Lehr, Harriet M. Lehr, Albina J. Lehr, Sarah L. Lehr. 1883 photo.
The Beginnings

CHAPTER 1

On October 15, 1965, Samuel Lewis Meyer was inaugurated as the seventh president of Ohio Northern University. In his inaugural address on that day, President Meyer commented that "through the endeavors of the founder, Dr. Henry Solomon Lehr, and the others who through a little more than ninety-four years have held this high post, . . . . a University of distinction has been created and brought to its present position of educational significance. Upon the strong foundation which has been built, Ohio Northern University stands ready to move into an exciting and challenging future."

The foundation of which Dr. Meyer spoke so feelingly on that October day in 1965 was actually laid on a hot August day in 1871. Professor H. S. Lehr had advertised that his new Northwestern Ohio Normal School would officially begin classes on August 14, 1871, and scores of young people were flocking into the little village of Ada to attend the first term of the new school.

Although the citizens of Ada had been anticipating this occasion for four years, they still must have been bemused on Saturday and Sunday to see wagon after slow wagon roll into the village bearing eager youngsters and their belongings. The term was to open on Monday and the students were anxious to get settled before beginning their educational adventure. Miss Mollie Schoonover was one of those excited young students. Years later, she was to record her emotions on first sighting the imposing structure that was the home of Professor Lehr's school. She recalled:

On nearing the town that Saturday forenoon of August, 1871, just outside the corporation, almost out in the country, I first saw the imposing, awe-inspiring building, destined to play so great a part in the events of ensuing years. I sometimes wonder whether the present buildings impress the new student as did that one little girl saw while sitting among bed-ticks, cooking utensils, vegetables, and what not, as her patient father drove his heavily loaded wagon up South Main street. That this same wagon attracted no special attention is due to the fact that from all directions were coming just such wagons, bringing just such
hopeful young people, from just such country homes as she had left early that summer morning.

Thus, chiefly, the new students came.1

There were no comfortable if somewhat impersonal dormitories awaiting students in 1871, nor were there to be for years to come. There was no money for such luxuries and, besides, the peppy little president didn’t believe in them. Lehr felt that his students would be much better off, morally and materially, rooming and boarding with upright families in the community than herded into dormitories with uncertain supervision. Since his school was very much a joint venture with the citizens of Ada, Lehr also wanted to involve the students with the community and to let the good ladies of the town make such meager profits as they could from furnishing room and board to the students. And profits must indeed have been slim for board and room in 1871 was advertised at $2.50 to $3.50 per week. Some students couldn’t afford even that price and materially reduced their costs by forming boarding “clubs.” They bought their own provisions and hired a woman to cook them.2 In these clubs students could get by on about $1.50 a week, a saving not to be scorned by the financially strapped student.

Although Lehr and his 147 students were ready for classes to begin on Monday, August 14, the “awe-inspiring” building that had so impressed Miss Schoonover was not. The contractor had promised the building by August 1, but here it was August 14 and it still was not ready for occupancy. (Both the building and the contractor were to give Lehr headaches for years.) Angry but undaunted, the founder scurried around and rented or commandeered every available space in Ada so that classes could begin on time. Thus it was that Ohio Northern University began, not in the imposing building designed to house it, but actually in the crude little four-room Union school building where Lehr had taught public school and conducted his private “select school.”

In addition to the Union school building, classes were held that first term of 1871 in the Presbyterian church, in public halls and private rooms, all over town. Miss Schoonover recalled that even the upstairs of the unfinished Methodist church was employed “until the cold winds of late Autumn drove [students] to warmer quarters.”4

Lehr’s announced intention was to provide any course a student wanted, when he wanted it, “the smallest number requisite for a class being one.” To live up to his promise Lehr set himself a punishing schedule. His daily program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Subject</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 to 6 A.M.</td>
<td>Elocution</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 to 7</td>
<td>Teachers’ Training Class</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:45 to 8</td>
<td>Chapel</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 to 9</td>
<td>Arithmetic (large class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 to 10</td>
<td>Grammar (large class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 to 11</td>
<td>Geography (large class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 to 12</td>
<td>Advanced Higher Algebra and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trigonometry. (Two small</td>
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<td></td>
<td>classes taught at same hour)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:45 to 1:30</td>
<td>Advanced Geometry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 to 2</td>
<td>Beginning Geometry</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>Analysis of Sentences</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 to 4</td>
<td>Two small classes in Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 to 5</td>
<td>Two small classes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[subject unspecified]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 7</td>
<td>Recreation on the woodpile or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in the garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 7:30</td>
<td>Mental Arithmetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 to 8</td>
<td>Cicero</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(As incredible as it may seem, there was in addition to the above a class in Advanced Rhetoric scheduled for 4:00 A.M., but not even Lehr and his eager students could long endure this and the class was dropped after a few weeks.)

The curriculum above hints at the kind of instruction given at the Ada school: basic courses now mostly limited to high schools, but with a levelling of college level subjects. (One wonders exactly what constituted Mental Arithmetic.) It was a curriculum designed to meet the needs of the students drawn to Ada; indeed it was in direct response to the students’ own wishes and was not the brain child of a curriculum committee with fixed ideas on what students should be permitted to take. Lehr in fact canvassed his entering class as to desired courses and fashioned his curriculum to meet the wishes of the students rather than force feeding them with required courses that would be “good for them” regardless of individual appetites. In this Lehr was far ahead of his time. Only in very recent years have college faculties and administrators given ear to the pleas of students in

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1 The University Herald (Ada, Ohio) July 17, 1896, p. 1.

2 Although Lehr firmly held out against dormitories, he was forced to modify his ideas regarding boarding of students. Other Normal schools in Ohio and Indiana had set up their own dining halls and were offering board at substantially cheaper prices, even as low as $1.25 a week. In the face of this competition, Lehr devised a plan to farm out boarding contracts to certain ladies who would agree to board students by the term or by the year at stated prices. Thus, the catalogue of 1880-81 was able to offer tuition, room and board for one inclusive price. In effect, Lehr and his partners were subsidizing the board bill of their students, for the price advertised in the catalogue was less than that charged by the landladies, and Lehr and his associates had to make up the difference.

Still later, in order to combat spiraling prices during the first World War, the university actually operated a cafeteria (located in Brown Building) where students could get meals very economically.

3 This building still stands, although since moved to West Montford Street in Ada.

4 The University Herald, July 17, 1896, p. 1.
matters of curricula. Serenely indifferent to prevailing winds, Lehr set his own course.

A schoolmaster himself, Lehr gave his most fervent interest to the teacher training courses. The basic structure of the whole institution was designed to accommodate struggling young teachers and would-be teachers. Lehr pioneered the “quarter” system to enable young people to alternate work and study as time and finances permitted. The year was divided into four terms: Fall, August 14 to November 17; Winter, November 27 to March 16; Spring, March 26 to June 15; summer school or “Normal” term, June 18 to July 27.

The first catalogue called attention to this primary interest in teacher training:

Since many of our students desire to become thorough and practical teachers, we established each term special classes for such candidates, and drill especially for that profession. We aim, not only to impart the best instruction and to have our students independent thinkers, but also to assist them in acquiring the best modes of communicating what they know to others. We strive to combine the practical with the theoretical.

It was not an unworthy declaration and generations of teachers absorbed “the practical with the theoretical” instruction at the little Ada institution.

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*Lehr continued for a time to serve as superintendent of the Ada public school, devoting two hours a day to its interests.*

*Sarah Lehr Kennedy, H. S. LEHR AND HIS SCHOOL, p. 71.*

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*Normal Building (left) and Administration Building.
1879 drawing.*
Lehr’s Policy: Mild But Firm

CHAPTER II

Although most of the students at the Northwestern Ohio Normal School came from farm and small town backgrounds and were versed in the more sophisticated varieties of campus high jinks, they were nevertheless spirited young people who devised ways to amuse themselves that did not always find favor with Professor Lehr and his associates. Perhaps because of the agricultural background of many of the students, livestock seemed to figure in the pranks the less inhibited students cooked up.

On one occasion a group of students plotted to abduct Lehr’s cow and transfer her residence to the Chapel Hall. Unfortunately for the conspirators, a late working astronomy professor overheard their plans and informed Lehr of the machinations afoot. Forearmed with this intelligence, Lehr was able to intercept the plotters and break up their game. By infiltrating the enemy lines, so to speak, Lehr was able to “capture” one student and to trail others to their rooming house. It is edifying to picture the energetic little professor pursuing the miscreants at a dead run through the Ada mid-night. The most revealing part of the incident, though, came after Lehr had tracked the young men to their rooms and caught them innocently in bed—but fully clothed down to coats and boots! All of them, Lehr included, had a good laugh about the situation; indeed, tradition has it that Lehr actually rolled on the floor with laughter.

In the matter of discipline and rules and regulations, Lehr was surprisingly enlightened for his time. There were in fact no listed rules and regulations as to conduct, although for many years the catalogue carried the statement: “The government will be mild and parental, though firm,” and the students were barred from public places which had “a tendency to waste time and money and to corrupt morals.”

Lehr placed the saloons of Ada at the very top of his list of undesirable haunts. For a village as tiny as Ada there were a surprising number of saloons—one source puts the number at ten, but surely this is an exaggeration. Whatever the actual count—and the number varies from four to ten, according to the source consulted—there was without question plentiful opportunity for any student inclined in that direction, and there were some who
abused Lehr’s trust. Although he could laugh off light-hearted pranks, Lehr could be very rigid when it came to what he considered serious moral lapses.

On one occasion he felt compelled to expel the son of a minister after the boy had persisted in frequenting the saloons of Ada. Lehr promptly wrote the father of the boy, informing him of the reasons for his action. In his reply the father sadly acknowledged that his son “admitted every charge except one. He admits having been in saloons in Ada several times to drink beer, but says he never was drunk in that town. As to playing pool and billiards and being a bummer, that all goes with the saloon element.”

Lehr was to tilt with this saloon element for many years, so vigorously, in fact, that at one time he felt his life to be in danger from his foes. (The anti-saloon forces finally won their battle in Ada, more, it should be noted, as a result of a general change in attitude than as a result of a special attack mounted in the community. Ada is now “dry” with the exception of 3.2 beer.)

On the whole Lehr’s “mild but firm” policy of discipline was successful and there were few serious cases of misconduct or defiance. However, one incident could have become ugly.

During those early years a group of Negroes gathered in a grove outside of Ada for a camp meeting. One night several students set out to harass the blacks and were belabored for their pains. These unfortunates incited a number of other students and on another night a party of angry students set out to “clean up” the camp. Fortunately, Lehr heard about the foray and quickly drove to the camp in a buggy. He found the two factions, white and black, angry and spoiling for a fight, but was able to persuade his students to follow him back to town without further trouble.

Lehr himself was rather liberal for his time in his approach to racial matters, but he accommodated himself to the less hospitable attitude of the community and student body. His catalogue was silent on admissions policy for Negro students, but when queried Lehr would quietly advise blacks to apply to Oberlin or Wilberforce. Though there was no official bar to admitting Negroes, it was not until 1904 that the first black was enrolled as a student in the College of Law.

Part of the faculty of 1882-83. Front row, from left: Mrs. Eva Maglott, Miss Gertrude Fryett, Mrs. Mollie Hickernell; back row, L. M. Sniff, Frederick Maglott, Henry S. Lehr, C. B. Hickernell.
The Literary Societies

CHAPTER III

With few public places open to them and no residence halls or fraternity houses around which to center their activities, early students might have found time heavy on their hands had not Lehr organized early on the literary societies that were to be so important in the early life of the school and to remain so for more than 40 years to come. These literary societies happily wedded social and intellectual pursuits and neatly filled a gap in the architecture of the institution. In these societies students found an outlet for oratorical and literary talents and a fitting haven for that urge to identify with like-minded fellows. These societies also fostered fierce loyalties and intense competition, and they deserve a far fuller treatment than can be given in these pages, but a brief sketch of their origins and activities will hint at their importance in the life of the school.

Lehr had had previous experience with the Ciceronian Literary Society that he had formed when he first came to Ada, but he wanted two “new” and competitive societies for his school. Accordingly, he called his students together on August 18, 1871, the first Friday night after the opening of the school, and laid out his plans to them. The method of selection of members was a vital question and occasioned much discussion. As Sarah Lehr Kennedy says in her admirable book on Lehr:

Various methods were proposed and finally it was decided to call the roll and let the names of the students fall alternately under “A” and “B.” It was agreed that new students, as they entered, should continue to be divided in this manner for four weeks; after that it was to be an open field for a fair fight for members. That fight continued with unabated zeal for more than thirty years. By common consent the four weeks of alternating names was soon discontinued and competition for new members began with the student’s arrival— even before.7

The groups quickly chose names, becoming the “Franklins” and “Philomatheans” respectively. To get them started, Lehr divided his personal library between

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7 H. S. LEHR AND HIS SCHOOL, p. 92.
the societies and committees were named to draft a constitution for each society. Actually the societies had a great deal of power over student activities. As Mrs. Kennedy relates, “The relation of the societies to the school resembled somewhat the relation the states of the Union sustain to the Federal government. All rights and privileges respecting students activities which the Faculty did not reserve to themselves were to belong to the societies.”

It can be seen that this was real power and Lehr was hard put in years to come to adjudicate disputes, and there were many, between the societies when he was constitutionally powerless. There were innumerable quarrels over the validity of the membership of certain individuals in the societies. In the early days of the societies members would sometimes recant and deny that they had ever joined a certain society, and this caused much confusion and some bitterness. To avoid this problem, it was decreed that students had to sign membership cards so that there would be a written record. Not even this always worked, however; there were cases where a bemused student signed two membership cards. In those cases the Faculty had to judge the matter and they simply ruled that the card with the earliest date on it was to be honored.

The two original societies (in 1880 a third literary society, the Adelphians, was formed, which added still further to the confusion) each had a meeting hall, which was decorated as lavishly as the purse of the society permitted, and a library. In these halls the societies held their meetings and entertainments. A typical entertainment program, held every third or fourth week, was a lengthy affair of music, debate, and “papers,” which were often humorous caricatures of students and teachers, somewhat akin, one would imagine, to the skits put on by pledges of the present day fraternities and sororities.

Of even more intense interest to the members of the societies were the “pay entertainments” given during the final week of each quarter. With the admission charged at these entertainments, the literary halls were furnished and libraries expanded. The competition was intense and sometimes bitter. Although they were hotly competitive, the two original societies at least remained on speaking terms and participated together in commencement day ceremonies. However, with the introduction of the Adelphians, relations between the groups became strained to the point of acrimony. One year the groups could find no common ground whatsoever and refused to appear on the same commencement program. In spite of appeals from Lehr and his Faculty, the societies remained adamant, and each held its own commencement day program in its own hall.

Lehr and his associates spent an incredible amount of time answering complaints and allegations from the literary societies. The correspondence necessary to resolve the most trivial of disputes is voluminous, and no modern day president could possibly spare an equal amount of time in adjudicating the squabbles of campus social fraternities.

Lehr had been warned that the introduction of a third literary society would be fatal, but he could see no danger and went ahead with the formation of the Adelphians. Later he was to admit that the critics “were correct, the third society destroyed the interest in the literary contests . . .” Internecine warfare and a shift in the interests of undergraduates finally killed the literary societies, but in their heyday they were a potent force in the education and culture of, in the words of an early member, “awkward, quaintly-clad lads and lasses from the country.”

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*Ibid., p. 92.*
Becoming A University

CHAPTER IV

After a disastrous Winter term 1872-73, which saw only 40 students at the institution, the little college lived and, to a modest extent, prospered. Courses were offered in the Classical, Scientific, and Normal (Education) departments, with special attention to teacher training courses. In the spring of 1874 (on June 12) the first class was graduated by the Northwestern Ohio Normal School—eleven students. (They were not awarded degrees. Not until the institution was incorporated as a non-profit institution of learning in 1885 were degrees awarded.) According to the records of the school these first graduates were: C. W. Butler, S. P. Gray, J. W. Zeller, Sue Fogle, Mollie Schoonover, R. C. Eastman, Metta Ferrall, Annie Stayner, Sallie Lindsey, A. D. Snively, and E. L. Sinclair.

The enterprising president soon demonstrated a remarkable talent for gaining the attention of prominent persons, especially those with political ambition. Within the first four years of the school, two future presidents of the United States found a willing audience in Ada. James A. Garfield visited in 1873 as a candidate for Congress and Rutherford B. Hayes on his gubernatorial campaign of 1875.

With the steadily growing enrollment, facilities in the single building on campus were taxed and in 1878 Lehr and his associates began casting about for ways to finance a new building. After some rather complex maneuvering, the Ada Union School District agreed to finance, through a tax levy, construction of the new building. In return, the Faculty (the owners) agreed to admit all students of the Union School District free of tuition.

The contract for the new building called for the structure to be ready for the opening of school in August, 1879, but, as in the case of the first building, construction was not nearly completed by that date. The contractor had left town, workmen complained of unpaid wages, and there were disagreements between the Faculty of the Normal School and the Ada Board of Education on financial matters, but nevertheless, Lehr held chapel services in his still unfinished building on August 13 to mark the opening of the term.9 (Just the previous month a young gentleman named George Franklin Getty was graduated from the Science Department. Mr. and Mrs. Getty and their son, J. Paul Getty, were to figure large in the future of the institution; the College of Liberal Arts was to become the George Franklin and Sarah Catherine Getty College of Liberal Arts.)

With more space and encouraged by a favorable tax ruling, the institution entered a decade of remarkable expansion and growth. New “Departments” (later to become Colleges) were added, enrollments spiraled, and comfortable profits were returned to the owners.

There are conflicting dates given for the founding of the professional colleges, and there will probably never be a really accurate record. In the early years courses were offered on a demand basis or simply to test the potential demand. If the demand was strong a single course might spawn other courses in the same discipline, and a department was born, as in the case of the Commerce Department. On the other hand, things simply might not work out and a particular course or Department might be tried briefly and then abandoned. The Medical Department, for instance, was a flop and died a quiet death after a couple of years.

In just this fashion the College of Engineering evolved. As early as 1871 the catalogue noted a course in surveying, but it was not until 1882 that a “Department” of Engineering was organized. The course was not an extensive one and required only sixty weeks to complete. In his history of the school Lehr says, “This year [1882]10 we graduated J. M. DeFord in the Civil Engineering course, the first student that we graduated from that department.” Not until 1896 were the Departments of Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering established.

The year 1882 also saw the establishment of a Military Department. The Faculty purchased rifles for the military companies and were able to secure the detail of an army officer to become the military instructor. Until World War I the military companies were an important feature of the school, and there was keen competition between units for military drill honors. The annual contests were big events on campus and year after year drew visitors to Ada to watch the young student soldiers vie for company and individual drill honors.

9This was the “Administration building”; later named Hill Memorial. It was renovated most recently in 1970, and now serves 2 departments of Liberal Arts.

10The absolute accuracy of this date is questionable, as indeed are the dates for the founding of all the professional schools. Mrs. Sarah Lehr Kennedy gives 1886 (see H. S. LEHR AND HIS SCHOOL, p. 144), as the date for the establishment of the Department of Pharmacy, but this is contradicted by Lehr himself, who noted that in 1885 a “pharmaceutical” department was in operation. The official Ohio Northern University Bulletin gives the dates of the founding of the professional colleges as: Engineering, 1882; Pharmacy, 1884; Law, 1885. I have found no firm evidence to dispute these dates.

In 1884 the College of Pharmacy was established, largely in anticipation of a state law requiring the examination of pharmacists by a state board. After the proposed legislation was passed, the Pharmacy College grew rapidly and soon required larger quarters, which were provided. CEB
The year 1885 was a very important one for the school. It saw several changes that materially affected the school and its structure. Perhaps the most important of these changes was the incorporating of the institution. As has been noted earlier, no degrees of any kind had been conferred, because it was not legally possible while the school was under private ownership. Being anxious to be able to award degrees and yet maintain private control of the institution, the Faculty chose to incorporate and at the same time to change the name of the institution. As Lehr explained, "We changed the name of the school to Ohio Normal University. We changed from 'Northwestern Ohio' to 'Ohio' because our patronage now embraced the whole of Ohio and extended far beyond the borders of Ohio." Lehr conceived that it was quite legitimate to entitle the school a "university" because, "the Normal School in 1885 embraced a collection of colleges. We then had what we called the literary commercial, engineering, music, fine arts, telegraphic, stenographic, pharmaceutical, law and military departments, in all ten colleges . . ."

It was easy enough to change the name of the school but somewhat more difficult to incorporate it without risking loss of control. However, with shrewd legal advice, this too was accomplished. As Lehr somewhat gleefully noted, "We not only changed the name of the school but incorporated it May 21st, 1885, as an 'Institution of Learning not for Profit'. We then no longer owned the school as individuals but as incorporators and had to elect trustees who would hold the property in trust . . . We elected ourselves trustees and thus ate our cake and kept it."

The incorporators or former owners of the school were H. S. Lehr, J. G. Park, Frederick Maglott, Rachel Stringfellow and Warren Darst. As trustees instead of owners it was unseemly, their lawyer advised, for them to collect salaries as instructors, but it was quite customary for trustees to be paid their traveling expenses. The new trustees, therefore, simply divided up such profits as there were as "traveling expenses," the travel being between their homes and the school buildings. Lehr could say with satisfaction, "We now had the legal right to confer any degree as much so as any church or state college or university."

Their attorney was obviously a gentleman of ingenuity and would be warmly embraced today by businesses and institutions having to contend with myriad regulatory agencies, not to speak of the Internal Revenue Service.

Another notable achievement of these boom years of the 1880's was the founding of the College of Law. Various dates—1884, '85, '86—have been advanced as the beginning of the Law College. The fall of 1885 seems the more likely date, for Lehr noted that when the school was incorporated in 1885 the department of law was among the ten "colleges" of the school. Beginning modestly with a single professor, the Law College soon served as a magnet for able and ambitious young men who have had a large influence on the history of Ohio Northern and the law and politics of Ohio and the nation. At one time—in the 1920's—four alumni served in the U. S. Senate together: F. B. Willis '93 and S. D. Fess '89, of Ohio; A. R. Robinson '01, of Indiana; and J. M. Robison '96 of Kentucky.

Now with the professional colleges established and growing the University entered a period of consolidation and enrichment. There were now three buildings on campus: two rather imposing brick structures and a small frame building. The faculty had increased from the original five to twenty-eight in 1885, and the enrollment had jumped from 147 to 2,364. (Lehr had a curious system for determining enrollment. He did not break his enrollment figures down by quarters, but simply gave the total number of different students who had attended the college during the year. At no one time was the total number of students on campus.)

As students graduated and went on to make successful careers, the renown of the Ada school spread and enrollment continued to climb. Lehr and his associates were making a little money, nothing very grand, but their income provided a comfortable living. In 1875 the Northwestern Normal School of Fostoria had been merged with the Ada school, thus removing a troublesome competitor. The future seemed bright.

Aside from justifiable pride in his school, Lehr could also take some satisfaction from the fact that he had finally won his long fight against the liquor forces in Ada. In 1884 the Ada Council, on which Lehr served, voted out saloons and Lehr noted this fact proudly in his annual catalogues. However, the "wets" did not surrender meekly; soon illicit "Blind Tigers" replaced the outlawed saloons and the Council waged a bitter fight against them. That the fight was bitter in evidenced by the fact that Lehr had a barn burned on his farm, which he laid to the work of the angry saloon interests. On another occasion Lehr was tipped off that he was to be smuggled on his way home; he prudently altered his usual route and escaped attack.

A committee with Lehr at its head was named to lead the attack against the Blind Tigers. Detectives were hired to watch the places suspected of illegally selling liquor. (The work of detectives could not have been too arduous in a village the size of Ada; running an undercover saloon in Ada must have been about as difficult as concealing the Queen Mary in Hog Creek.) Subscriptions were solicited to pay the expenses of prosecution of offenders. Lehr was somewhat disappointed and a bit disillusioned by the response to the subscription drive. "What appeared so strange," he wrote, "was that many of the most radical temperance advocates subscribed such small amounts."

It had been a long and frustrating battle, but Lehr was happy that the temptation of the open saloon was at last removed from Ada.
The Greek System

CHAPTER V

In May of 1886 Lehr was approached by a committee of students seeking permission to organize a fraternity on campus. Lehr knew little about fraternities; there had been none at Mt. Union when he was a student there and he was hazy about just what a fraternity was and the implications of the Greek system. The boys assured him that a fraternity was something like the Masons and other secret orders and he rather casually gave his consent without consulting his associates. He was to regret his hasty unilateral decision. He was severely criticized by his associates and the anti-fraternity students, especially the literary societies, who saw fraternities as a threat to their very existence.

The literary societies fought hotly among themselves, but at last found common ground in their opposition to fraternities. The first fraternity was a chapter of Kappa Sigma and when the gentlemen came to chapel in a body their appearance touched off a riotous demonstration. Blissfully unaware of the hornet's nest he had stirred up, Lehr was unprepared for the reaction of the anti-fraternity element on campus. As he later wrote, "you may well imagine my surprise when one Monday morning eighteen fine students...marched into chapel wearing the insignia of the order, and to hear them hissed, hooted and insulted in various ways."

The "antis" contended that the fraternity was undemocratic and would injure the literary societies; the Greeks rejoined that their opponents were just a bunch of soreheads, jealous because they were not asked to join the fraternity. "The fight waxed hot, exceeding hot," Lehr said sadly.

Temporarily forgetting their animosities to combat a common enemy, the literary societies promptly met in joint session and added an amendment to their by-laws forever prohibiting a fraternity man from becoming a member of any of the literary groups. The fraternity was disbanded, and it was seventeen years before another surfaced at ONU.

In 1908 the Omicron Omicron chapter of Theta Nu Epsilon was installed, but the honeymoon was short lived. When Albert E. Smith became president in 1905 he again outlawed fraternities. Calling them detrimental to the welfare of the school and out of harmony with the spirit and character of the university, he made membership in a fraternity grounds for dismissal. However, not even the strong-willed president could suppress the urge for fraternal association, and very early in his administration chapters of national organizations were formed at ONU. Unable—or at least unwilling—to invoke the total ban on the Greeks, Smith tolerated them, but it was an uneasy relationship, with suspicion and mistrust on both sides.

Throughout his long reign Smith had trouble with the Greeks, principally over dancing, and newspapers spanning twenty-five years are studded with accounts of some bitter clashes between President Smith and the Greeks. At times he suspended entire fraternities for sponsoring dances. Ben Fairless, a rather unpromising student who eventually became president of U. S. Steel, remembered that in 1918 Smith kicked him and the entire Lambda Tau Delta fraternity out for giving a dance. Fairless and his brothers were allowed to return to school in a few weeks, due to alumni pressure, but others suffered even longer suspensions.

Even as early as 1910, when President Smith entertained the President of the United States, the fraternities were feeling their oats. As the University Herald of June 3, 1910 reported, "An extra feature of President Smith's luncheon, which came as a surprise to all outside parties, [emphasis mine] was the initiation into Omicron Omicron Chapter of Theta Nu Epsilon Fraternity of the O.N.U. of President Wm. Howard Taft..." It is unlikely that Smith would have approved of the invasion of his presidential luncheon if he had been privy to the plans of the Theta Nu brothers. This thinly veiled hostility marked the relations of Albert E. Smith and the social fraternities for twenty-five years.

Even before the local ban, however, the TNE fraternity had been outlawed nationally and ONU members sought refuge with the Alpha chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon, which itself was founded in 1905. (The Sig Ep house at 821 South Gilbert, constructed in 1916-17, was the first fraternity home in Ohio built exclusively for fraternity use.)

When TNE was reorganized and incorporated in New York in 1907, the ONU chapter was revived. However, it became inactive again during the depression Thirties and did not become active until 1942 when it joined Alpha Kappa Pi. In 1946 it once again changed and emerged as the Gamma Alpha chapter of Alpha Sigma Phi. In 1968, it moved into a handsome home on Fraternity Circle after many lusty years in the "Red Barn."

The Zeta chapter of Sigma Pi was installed at ONU in 1912 as successor to Phi Chi Psi, which itself had been started in 1909. The Sigma Pi's have been housed in a home on Fraternity Circle since 1965.

The Alpha Eta chapter of Delta Sigma Phi was founded at ONU in 1920 and is now housed in a new home on Fraternity Circle, which was dedicated in 1965. Over the years, Delta Sigma Phi has attracted many engineering students, and the dean of the College of Engineering, Lawrence H. Archer, was advisor for many years.

Gamma Delta chapter of Kappa Psi, a professional pharmaceutical organization, was installed here in 1920.
A new home on South Simon street was built in 1962, just across the street from the old residence which housed the Kappa Psi's for some years.

In 1924 the Kappa chapter of Alpha Epsilon Pi was installed at ONU. Once exclusively a Jewish group, AEPi now has members of various faiths and has a new brick home on Fraternity Circle, built in 1965.

In like manner, the Catholic fraternity, Phi Kappa Theta, welcomes non-Catholic brothers. Formerly known as Theta Kappa Phi, the brotherhood was established at Northern in 1925 and now occupies the newest (1969) home on Fraternity Circle. For years the Phi Kap house at 825 South Main was an Ada landmark.

The first fraternity to build on Fraternity Circle was the Mu Beta chapter of Phi Mu Delta, organized here in 1926. When the new Phi Mu Delta home was occupied in the fall of 1964, the brothers took with them the pair of stone lions that once guarded the entrance to their old house at 508 South Main.

When it was installed in 1966, the Theta Kappa chapter of Theta Chi became the first new fraternity at Ohio Northern in 23 years. With a permanent home still in the planning stage, Theta Chi is now housed at 412 Union Street.

In March of 1923, Ohio Northern had the distinction of hosting the first national convention of Alpha Phi Gamma, national journalism fraternity, which had been founded here in 1920. James E. Fusco (OUN 1923) was president of the Alpha chapter of Alpha Phi Gamma and toastmaster for the convention. A colorful student journalist, he later became a well known Columbus newspaper columnist.

In addition to the nine social fraternities, ONU also embraces four nationally affiliated sororities: Alpha Xi Delta, Delta Zeta, Zeta Tau Alpha, and Alpha Omicron Pi.

Founded in 1904 as the Tau Kappa Kappa sorority, the Alpha Xi's are the oldest of the women's groups. Like many of the other social organizations on campus, this sorority was inactive for some years during the ban on Greek activities, but was reactivated in 1930, and in 1959 became the Gamma Tau chapter of Alpha Xi Delta.

The second oldest of the women's sororities is Zeta Tau Alpha, which succeeded the old Theta Phi Delta, originally organized in 1909. The Delta Theta chapter of Zeta Tau Alpha was installed here in 1959.

The Delta Zeta chapter evolved out of the Phi Chi sorority, which was reactivated in 1930 after languishing for years under President Smith's ban. The Zeta Kappa chapter was established here in 1959.

Newest of ONU's sororities is Alpha Omicron Pi, which was installed in October, 1966.

The sororities also have chapter houses in various parts of Ada, but the members do not reside in them; the houses are used for meetings and various functions.11

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11Much of the information on fraternities and sororities was taken from the Centennial Edition of the Ada Herald, September 24, 1970.
A Flair For Publicity

CHAPTER VI

Always alert for any opportunity to publicize his school, Lehr seized upon the Ohio gubernatorial campaign of 1891 and turned it into a publicity coup for Ohio Normal University.

An event that is now a mere footnote to the political history of Ohio generated intense excitement in Ada on October 8, 1891. This was the political debate between then Governor James Campbell (Democrat) and his Republican challenger, Major William McKinley.

Little Ada bristled with the usual trappings of American politics: bands, banners, placards, and leather-lunged partisans of the candidates. The little village was swelled to many times its usual size when crowds estimated at fifteen to twenty thousand gathered to hear the debate. Bands blared, cannon roared, crowds cheered, and politicians pontificated, all because an enterprising little schoolmaster wanted to advertise his college. Lehr not only organized the debate, he dreamed up the whole idea, put his proposal to each candidate, and jawboned the candidates and their satraps until they agreed. Lehr arranged the whole gaudy production, served as publicity chief (with heavy emphasis upon the site), and, lastly, served as host to both candidates at an elaborate dinner at his home.

Lehr had met Campbell in Washington while doing some politicking for his Ohio Normal University. Although a loyal Republican, Lehr was never one to let mere partisanship interfere with a worthy goal—and in Lehr’s eyes, no goal was more worthy than furthering the cause of the little college he had founded in 1871 and guided for twenty rocky years.

Lehr sensed opportunity knocking when Campbell, then governor of Ohio, agreed to address the class of ’91. After Campbell had been re-nominated for governor by his party, Lehr cagily proposed that instead of a simple commencement address, Campbell engage in a joint debate with his Republican opponent, William McKinley. Lehr knew this would stir up a great deal more publicity for his college than a canned commencement address.

Campbell agreed to Lehr’s proposal amiably enough,
but McKinley and his advisers were not so easily persuaded. McKinley personally didn’t care much for joint debates in the first place, and his associates were frankly hostile, on the reasonable enough grounds that Ada was too small and remote, and that the crowd wouldn’t be worth the effort. However, Lehr was insistent and persuasive, and they finally came around, reluctantly.

All this was quite a coup for Lehr, as the Columbus, Ohio, Press noted, somewhat wapsishly:

Joint debates between candidates are usually arranged between the respective party committees. That enterprising Normal School professor, who has tried to work some advertising for his school out of the matter, has done gratuitous work. As an advertiser he is a great success. Not in the history of Ohio politics has a political campaign been so successfully turned into an advertising scheme by any individual concern.

Having successfully planted his crop, Lehr was not about to have it wilt for lack of cultivation. He laid on a gala reception for the candidates, and the little village was brave with flags and bunting and arches of welcome over the main street. As they arrived, the candidates were met by bands and a military escort of cadets from the university and escorted in style to Lehr’s home, where an out-of-town caterer had laid on a luncheon for 150 guests. McKinley, Campbell, and their chief aides ate at the first table, of course, in the Lehr dining room, but Lehr didn’t forget the reporters and lesser fry, who were served an equally sumptuous meal on the lawn.

Although the weather had been threatening on the day before, the 8th was chilly but clear, and the parties left the luncheon, to adjourn to the Fair Grounds where the debate was to be held, in good spirits. As the parties passed Lehr’s university, the military companies boomed out salutes to them, and the bands of the various political clubs raised a cheerful din.

The debate was scheduled to begin at 2:00 P.M. and was to consume three hours, each candidate being allowed an hour and a half for his argument. A gratifying crowd of 15 or 20 thousand had turned out and there were thundering cheers for each speaker.

The candidates manfully addressed themselves to such topics as free silver and farm prices, each man shyly suggesting the superiority of his party on these issues. During the debate Lehr had runners recruited from his student body dashing to the railroad depot, which had been turned into a press center, with newspaper copy happily datelined “Ada.”

At the end of the speaking period, the candidates and their entourages returned to the Lehr home for an elaborate dinner of nine courses. True to his prohibitionist leanings, Lehr had declined to have wine served with the meal. However, when the caterer protested that the trout demanded a good wine sauce, Lehr did relent and permit this culinary requisite. The speakers, after a long and dry afternoon, may have had some reservations about Lehr’s choice of beverages, but at any rate, they voiced none. Their silence just could have been due to the charitable insubordination of the caterer. (Who, by the way, was so jealous of his art that he refused to have the Lehr womenfolk in the kitchen, lest they purloin his recipes.) As Lehr was to recount in later years, “The caterer served fine red lemonade instead of cider. The Major [McKinley] sat by my side and as I now remember, drank six glasses. I well remember that I drank at least three. The next morning before breakfast Mrs. Lehr said, ‘I thought you said you would not serve wine.’ My reply was that there was no wine served. She said, ‘Come and see the empty bottles.’ And there they were—two bottles and a half of claret left.”

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This is a banner, owned by The Ada Herald, used for the Campbell-McKinley debate. “American Tin and Honest Dollars” is inscribed on one side, and “O.N.U. CLUB” and a sketch of McKinley is drawn on the other.
One suspects that the caterer knew the dehydrating qualities of political speeches and took steps to rectify the matter, for surely no human being short of Diamond Jim Brady, who customarily drank gallons of orange juice with his meals, could consume six glasses of unfortified lemonade, even red lemonade.

To help his guests digest their nine course dinner, Lehr had laid in 400 cigars "for which I paid $25.00." (Lest the reader think Lehr was cutting corners a bit on the smokes, remember that the dollar in 1891 was worth at least five times the 1971 buck and that a two-bit cigar was plenty good for politicians and reporters.)

All in all, Lehr did his guests proud and as he remarked, the lunch and dinner cost "a right smart sum." For Lehr it was money well spent, for Ada and Ohio Normal University made virtually every newspaper in the state. As the Mansfield Daily Shield and Banner commented, "The University did not suffer any by the joint debate; there is a very Lehr-ned [sic] as well as shrewd man at its head."

This sort of thing was the very stuff of life to Lehr and his school.

History does not record which candidate got the better of the debate on that chilly October day in 1891. However, McKinley did win the governor's election in 1891, and from this base went on to become President of the United States. He was still in this office when he was assassinated by an anarchist in 1901.

It is not suggested that the debate in Ada had any pivotal influence on the 1891 election, but it is interesting to note that McKinley won by just over 20,000 votes that year, and that there were about 20,000 people in Ada that day to hear the debate. Perhaps, just perhaps, if McKinley had turned down Professor Lehr and not come to Ada, he might not have become governor of Ohio, and if he hadn't become governor of Ohio, he almost certainly wouldn't have become . . . but then speculation of this sort profits little—and the McKinley-Campbell debate was a red-letter event in the history of Ada and Ohio Northern University.

In his quest for good publicity, Lehr did not limit himself to luring political speakers to Ada. In 1893 he availed himself of an opportunity to have work of his students exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Mathematics instructor "Mother" Eva Maglott supervised students in the construction of an exhibit for the exposition. According to Sarah Lehr Kennedy, the entry was made up of "intricate figures in analytics from silk threads and fine steel wire . . . "12

To Lehr's great glee, the exhibit won a blue ribbon and a medal. So pleased was the president that he ran a facsimile of the ribbon on the cover of his catalogues for years, until 1900 in fact.

Almost A State School

CHAPTER VII

Even while the Normal school was enjoying relatively prosperous years with growing enrollment and favorable publicity during the 1890's, a small cloud was forming on the horizon, a portent of the winds of change that were to signal the end of Ohio Normal University as it was then constituted.

For some time the private normal school such as ONU had been under the critical eye of some Ohio state public educators. There were those, notably connected with the Ohio State University system, who thought that the small normal schools should come under more searching state scrutiny and be more formally regulated, if, indeed, they were to be permitted to exist at all. To this end, various proposals were put before the state legislature, proposals which would, in effect, have doomed not only ONU, but such other respected institutions as Ohio Wesleyan, Mt. Union, Heidelberg, Otterbein, and a number of others.

During the 1893 session of the state legislature a bill was presented which would prohibit all institutions of learning in the state from conferring any degrees whatsoever unless the institutions had an income of at least $15,000 either from the state or from a permanent endowment fund. [Emphasis mine.] Of course, ONU got no state funds and had no endowment; therefore, it, along with most of the small, private schools dotting Ohio, would have fallen under the ban. It was a critical situation for Lehr and his fellows. Lehr contacted the leaders of other private schools in the state and sallied forth to Columbus to do battle against this "unreasonable and wicked bill" as he termed it.

By rallying support from former students, influential friends, and with the aid of the presidents of other private normal schools, the bill was defeated at that session.

Lehr and his counterparts were quite right to see bills of this nature as a threat to their very existence, but the purpose behind the legislation was not quite as "unreasonable and wicked" as Lehr saw it. It was the proposal of the administration of the Ohio State University to establish several state normal schools for the training of teachers. With the resources of the state behind these normal schools, they would have been very heavy competition for the private normal schools and Lehr saw the move as vindictively engineered by power hungry state schoolmen.
Now the empire building urge is a virus from which no college president seems to be free, and doubtless President Canfield of O.S.U. was no more immune than other college chiefs, but circumstances other than a mere desire to extend a realm were working on him. State requirements, examinations, and certifications were becoming common in the professions, and there were moves in the direction of similar requirements for teachers. At this time, the early 1900’s, there was no state control over or examination of the curriculum of the myriad small private schools in the state. Quality and content of courses varied widely from institution to institution and instructor to instructor. Teacher certification itself was haphazard and, in some instances, very casual. It does not seem unduly unreasonable for efforts to be made to establish a greater degree of professionalism in the teaching profession, as was being done in the other professions, and these legislative proposals which Lehr fought so bitterly were, in part at least, a response to pressure from Ohio teachers.

As has been noted, Lehr and his colleagues were able to defeat the endowment bill introduced in the 1899 session of the state legislature. However, the bill, slightly altered, but with the same intent, was reintroduced at the next session of the legislature. It was again defeated, but by now Lehr, being the pragmatist he was, saw that the days of the privately owned institutions were numbered and began to cast about for ways to save his school.

The Ohio Normal University was undoubtedly attracting students. The enrollment in 1896-97 was over 3,000, but the school was desperately short of buildings and equipment. (Instructors in music, pharmacy, and science owned their own professional equipment and a part of the fees paid went to them for the use of this equipment.) Lehr needed money to expand and money was just what he did not have—not in the sums necessary, at least. As he wrote, “It was ever my desire to make the O.N.U., a permanent institution of learning. I lay awake hour after hour and night after night to conjure up some plan to accomplish my heart’s desire. I was well aware that as private owners we could not expect endowment, donations or state aid.”

In light of his attacks upon state supported normal schools, the plan Lehr “conjured” up to save ONU seems inconsistent, even hypocritical, but given the harsh reality of his situation, it was the only thing he could do: he turned to the state for aid. In effect, what he proposed was that the state take over ONU.

Happily, Lehr’s friend Asa S. Bushnell was serving as governor of Ohio when Lehr made his proposal in 1897. At the time, Lehr’s nephew, J. L. Hampton, was serving as the governor’s executive clerk, and it was through Hampton that the governor was approached. It was proposed that the governor name a Board of Trustees for ONU, who would of course assume all the powers enjoyed by Lehr and his partners. Lehr rather touchingly assumed that even under state control he and his partners would be retained to manage the school. “I believe, and still believe,” he wrote, “that as long as the school flourished and we did our own work well and treated all justly and honorably that we could and would have remained in control of the school . . . .”

The governor looked upon the proposal favorably and even prepared the commissions of a number of prominent men to serve on the Board of ONU. Lehr and his associates wanted to keep the whole affair quiet until the deal was consummated, but unfortunately a newspaper man happened to see some of the yet unsigned commissions and the story appeared in state newspapers. Upon reading of the matter the citizens of Ada demanded an explanation. Lehr and his faculty appeared at a giant rally in the village where speakers praised the plan. Lehr spoke enthusiastically of the buildings and equipment that the state was sure to provide, all of which would be beneficial to ONU and to Ada.

The Ada crowd was warmly enthusiastic, but there was at least one prominent citizen, whom Lehr does not name, who was adamantly opposed to the scheme. This gentleman rallied support from other Ohio schools and these institutions put great pressure upon the governor to kill the scheme.

Unfortunately, before the governor signed and dispatched the Trustees’ commissions, he was called out of Columbus to deal with a coal miners’ strike, and by the time he got back to Columbus the fat was in the fire.

In a letter from Columbus dated July 9, 1897, Lehr’s nephew wrote his uncle sadly but somewhat chidingly:

My Dear Uncle: The article from the Ada Record on your meeting has been sent here from various parties, and the newspapers are here asking if the statements made by you in that article are true.

The other institutions are all up in arms and flooding the office with letters of protest against this “state aid.”

While your speech might have been alright at the time, its reproduction in the paper has caused trouble and I think it is a safe guess that the Governor will not sign the commission at all. The whole trouble comes from trying to force the issue in time for that meeting. Such matters can not be forced and now this one is utterly ruined.

Mr. Hampton was absolutely right. The governor wilted under the pressure and the plan to make the Ohio Normal University a state school was dead. Years later the memory of the sequence of events still pained Lehr. He wrote:

Had there been no coal miners’ riot or had there been no meeting of the citizens of Ada and no Ada citizen to object to the scheme of making the O.N.U. a state school, the O.N.U. would now be a state university with a large campus, fine buildings and a State Normal school as an adjunct. But the best laid plans, etc, etc!
End of An Era

The Methodist Church Takes Over

CHAPTER VIII

With the door to state trusteeship slammed firmly in his face, Lehr was compelled to look elsewhere for a solution to his mounting problems. The small, privately owned normal schools were going under all around him, and Lehr felt a sense of urgency in seeking a means to preserve the institution. The two major buildings on campus, constructed in 1871 and 1879, and two others of frame construction were in disrepair and were out-dated, and there was no prospect of financial assistance. Also looming over the horizon was the expiration of the thirty-year contract between the Ada Union School and the Faculty of the university. In 1879 the Ada taxpayers had erected a large, imposing building and leased it to the Faculty in return for free tuition for Ada students. It had been a mutually profitable arrangement, but under the terms of the contract, the land on which the building stood would revert to the school district, and the contract had only nine more years to run. This was but yet another reason why a sponsor with money and prestige had to be found if the institution was to live.

Through intermediaries Lehr and his associates let it be known that they were willing to sell the university, or such of it as they possessed, to the Central Ohio Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The churchmen were at least interested enough to invite Lehr to the September, 1898 session of the Conference, sitting at Sidney, to present his proposition. Lehr was anxious for someone to assume the financial burdens of the school, but he was also anxious, pathetically anxious, to remain at the head of the institution he had founded. As he later wrote, “I began teaching in 1854 and it was my ambition to continue in the profession till 1904, fifty years.” It was not to be, but at least at this point in the negotiations, Lehr was optimistic. Warned by his friends that he would never be retained as head of the school because he was not a Methodist—Lehr belonged to the Disciples of Christ—he was still serenely confident. “I had faith that I would be retained if I would do good work. I was told by my Methodist friends that they would retain me at least ten years.” Perhaps the wish was father to the thought for Lehr had no such assurance from anyone in authority.

Lehr hastily wrote out his proposition on the stationery of the Wagner House of Sidney, Ohio, and read it to the Conference. Dated September 21, 1898, the proposal seems clear and simple enough on the surface. The Trustees—Lehr and his partners—were to sell to the Central Ohio Conference all of their property in the university (the small campus with four buildings) for $24,000. Payment was to be made one-third in cash, one-third in one year, and one-third in two years. According to Lehr’s proposal there was “no interest to be paid on deferred payments while the present Board of Trustees are in control . . .” [emphasis mine] This was clearly a ploy by Lehr to keep himself and his partners in control of the institution, for if they should be replaced, the unpaid balance was to draw six percent interest.

Moreover, if Lehr and his group continued to run the college for two years, they agreed to pay the Methodist Church at Ada one thousand dollars.

This was all seemingly straightforward enough, but it was to be two frustrating years before the deal was consummated, and during those two years there was an amazing welter of confusion, disagreement, contradiction. There was a vast correspondence between the interested parties, some of it bristling with charges of bad faith and shabby dealing. Friendships of long standing were strained, and the negotiations were attended by disappointment and bitterness.

One immediate disagreement was over the vehicle for part payment for the school. The Methodist Conference was counting heavily upon Mr. Lewis Dukes, a prosperous Hancock County farmer, to assume a large portion of the financial burden of the transaction. Saying he was short of cash at the moment, Mr. Dukes insisted that the partners take a Hancock County farm as part payment for the school. Lehr at first refused to consider this method of payment and the sale seemed doomed. Lehr felt that Mr. Dukes had put a highly inflated value on the land and grumbled that it was “the poorest tract in this part of the state,” but was later persuaded by his associates to accept the farm as part payment. When the property was later sold, it brought much less than the value originally placed upon it by Mr. Dukes.

All of this was vexatious and troubling, but the land transaction was not the paramount concern of Lehr at the time. After all, mere money was involved here and Lehr’s sights were set upon something he valued far more than money—control of the school. He had initiated sale of the school to the Methodist Church because he thought the church could provide the buildings and equipment so sorely needed. He had bright visions of a school with a student enrollment of five thousand, with the buildings, equipment, and faculty to accommodate that number, with himself at the head of it. He did not really care much about who owned the institution as long as he could run it. He sincerely, if somewhat egotistically, believed that he could run the school better than anyone else and tried to devise a plan under which the church would own and “control” the school while he and his associates continued in active management of it. To this end, he, along with professors Park, Maglott, Darst, and Fess, formed a “Company of Management”
Owners of the school in the 1870's (clockwise) Frederick Maglott, Warren Davst, Henry S. Lehr, John Park.

to rent the school from the church and continue to run it, much as they had done as owners. This was an entirely agreeable arrangement to many of the new trustees appointed by the conference. However, Lehr later wrote concerning these negotiations, “There was some trouble, I might say much trouble concerning the transfer and the contract for the rental of the school.”

There was disagreement over the terms of the rental, but, as Lehr said, “After much wrangling we agreed to give them 10% of the net proceeds of the tuition, bookstore rent and money received for diplomas, laboratory fees and office fees, but they refused to give us full control of the school. In the contract they reserved the right to employ the teachers and the granting of degrees.”

Some of the new trustees appointed by the conference liked Lehr as a man and admired his accomplishments as an educator and would have been content to see him continue as head of the school, except for one towering obstacle: he was not a Methodist. It was the not unreasonable opinion of these men that since this was to be a Methodist institution, owned and controlled by the church, that its president should be a Methodist. The new trustees felt, probably quite rightly, that their fundraising activities would be handicapped if a member of another denomination continued to serve as the head of a Methodist-owned institution. They wanted Lehr, but they also wanted a Methodist.

The impasse could have been neatly resolved if Lehr had changed his church affiliation, but this he was unwilling to do. It was not so much a question of theological principles with him; indeed, he was remarkably free of denominational bias, but was more a matter of pride and self-respect. Lehr was repeatedly and strongly urged to join the Methodist church. The advantages of such an association were pointed out to him. He could, it was suggested, become a lay delegate to the General Conference of the M. E. Church and in this capacity, do much for the good of the university. It was tempting, and Lehr wavered but did not capitulate. As he later wrote, “I confess that there was a temptation, for I wanted to remain with the school till 1904, . . . but I felt that it would be detrimental to the best interest of the school and further I would have lost my self-respect and no doubt the confidence of my friends.”

Methodist or no Methodist, Lehr still wanted to be head of the school and continued to press his suit, to the point of irritation of some of the Trustees.

The actual transfer of the school to the M. E. Church was made on August 2, 1899, but at that point no president of the university had been named by the Central Ohio Conference of the church. A Board of Trustees was appointed, with Lewis Dukes as president and the Reverend Leroy A. Belt as vice president. Lehr served as president of the Board of Management, which was responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school, but there was no chief executive officer with over-all authority. It was an unhappy situation, one not recommended for harmony and efficiency of operation. Although Lehr was operations chief of the school, he did not enjoy ultimate authority, which resided with the Board of Trustees, and he shot out a constant stream of letters asking for advice or directions, sometimes on niggling matters. In response to one such letter Dr. Belt replied curtly, “You men who run the school are to run this as near as possible to fill the action of trustees. I wrote you this once before. See records and go by them is all I can say.”

It was really an untenable situation, and it is no wonder that nerves grew frayed and tempers short. Lehr repeatedly voiced his willingness to step aside for a Methodist leader, but he didn’t resign; indeed, he kept up his campaign to remain as head of the school. This persistence was irritating to some, and at one point Dr. Belt was moved to state forcefully in a trustees’ meeting that “This is now a Methodist school and we must have a Methodist president if we want to raise money.”

For his part, Lehr felt himself hampered in the running of the school by bungling educational amateurs. He later wrote, “I never worked harder in my life to make any project or undertaking a success than I did the three years I was connected with the school while it was owned and largely controlled by the conference. I was constantly trammeled by someone who volunteered advice, no matter how little the adviser knew about conducting a school without state aid or endowment.”

It was the intent of the Board of Trustees for the Reverend H. C. Jameson of Delaware, Ohio, to become president of the university in September of 1900, but Jameson kept putting off his formal acceptance of the post. He did not like the Board of Management arrangement for the running of the school and was reluctant to assume the presidency under such a plan. He continued to delay his acceptance, until, for whatever reason, his name was withdrawn and Leroy Belt was named president of the university in 1901. Lehr remained as vice-president.

After thirty years ONU had a new captain and new sailing directions.
Under New Leadership

CHAPTER IX

The chief and urgent need of ONU in 1900 was additional buildings, and Dr. Leroy A. Belt was selected to be the second president of the school, in part at least, for his background in fund-raising and finance. Dr. Belt, an able Methodist minister, had served churches in Van Wert, Ottawa, Wapakoneta, Bellefontaine, and Marion, and, most important, he also had been financial secretary of Ohio Wesleyan. His chief task was to raise the money for the needed buildings and to pay off the purchase price of the school. Belt, an imposing figure, set about his money raising vigorously. During his short but productive tenure he secured the funds for two buildings that are still landmarks on the “old” campus fronting on Main Street.

Belt had long enjoyed the friendship and support of Board of Trustees president Lewis Dukes. Dukes had been insistent that a Methodist head was what was now a Methodist-owned institution; with Belt in as president, Dukes was moved to offer financial support. His donation of twenty thousand dollars in return for an annuity made possible the erection of Dukes Memorial Building in 1901-02. Although the Dukes donation was of immense immediate benefit to the school, the interest to be paid on the annuity was a burden upon the hard-pressed school for many years. President A. E. Smith later reported that “during the first fourteen years of my administration the school had to meet the annuity on $20,000 given by Lewis Dukes—so I nearly returned it in interest.”

The Dukes Memorial Building has undergone many metamorphoses during the ensuing 65 years, having housed various departments and, for a time, the College of Pharmacy. Today it is a classroom building and shelters the departments of English and Foreign Languages, as well as the offices of the Dean and Assistant Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. The Dukes building was also the site of an heroic but ill-starred combat between the Junior and Senior classes. At the turn of the century these battles were very strenuous affairs, accompanied by blood and mayhem. The 1905 annual battle was unusually spirited. The Seniors of that year had secured the attic and roof of Dukes, but seemed on the point of being overwhelmed by a strong force of Juniors. To protect the class colors from capture, an impetuous senior named Fred Zimmerman tuck the colors under his coat and leaped from an upper storey window of the building. He was seriously injured.

Dr. Belt was also able to obtain a ten thousand dollar gift from Edwin Brown of Carey. With this money Belt constructed the Brown Memorial Building, which was dedicated July 2, 1905. Like the Dukes building, Brown has undergone many changes over the years. It now houses the departments of Education and Industrial Arts. The building was originally designed to be used as an auditorium. It is not recorded that any student has ever leaped from an upper-storey window of the building.

One other vexational problem facing the new president was the actual ownership of a part of the campus. In the late seventies Lehr and his partners had deeded to the Ada School district a part of the land of the old campus in return for a thirty thousand dollar bond issue for the construction of what is now Hill Building. This matter was resolved in 1901 when Ada voters approved the return of the land to the university for the consideration of one dollar. The land return agreement also provided that Ada high school students would continue to enjoy tuition-free admission to the college. This particular part of the contract was to cause some pain to President Smith in later years. He viewed the loss of tuition from Ada students as far greater than the value of the property. (Ohio Northern still honors this arrangement, although “tuition” is now a relatively insignificant fraction of the “General Fee” which accounts for the major portion of admissions charges.)

Dr. Belt was also astute in acquiring additional land for the university. He was able to purchase the west part of what is now Memorial Park when the land became available with the discontinuance of the Tri-County Fair. Belt bought the land to be used as a drill field for the then popular ONU military companies. It is now used as an athletic field by the university and Ada High School.

Dr. Belt had problems other than fund raising and land titles. One such problem was with his vice-president, Henry Solomon Lehr. As has been noted, Lehr had waged a tenacious campaign to retain as head of the university. He accepted the vice-presidency with the view that he would still be virtually in control of the educational program, while Dr. Belt and the trustees looked to financial matters. Lehr simply felt he knew more about running the school than these new men and feared that their “mishandling” would damage the institution. One of his chief fears was that the Methodist church would reduce the scope of the university by discontinuing the professional colleges and, in effect, make the college a mere “academy” for the funneling of students to Ohio Wesleyan, then the bellwether of Methodist higher education in Ohio.
President Belt did not share Lehr’s assumption of a limited command and there were quarrels and increasing bitterness between the two men.

Lehr’s daughter summed up the situation succinctly in her book on the history of the school: “It was unfortunate that the new president and Mr. Lehr in their personal relationships found themselves unable to work together. The magnanimity and forbearance that had been so dominant in Mr. Lehr’s life and character heretofore seemed now to have deserted him. There were bitter misunderstandings. The two men used different vocabularies and seemed unable to understand each other even in simple statements.”

After two painful years as vice-president Lehr resigned, doubtless to the relief of both men. After 1902, Lehr had no further official connection with the university, although he was later elected president emeritus and continued to welcome a stream of former students in his Ada home.

He continued in residence at 404 Union Street until his death on January 29, 1923, at age 84. His funeral service was held in the auditorium of the H. S. Lehr Memorial Building.

Dr. Belt’s administration will probably be most remembered for the name change of the university on July 28, 1903. Some students were restive under the “Normal” school label and agitated to have it changed. Engineering students under the leadership of Thomas J. Smull protested that engineering degrees granted by a Normal school would not be regarded with proper respect. The Board of Trustees reacted sympathetically and on July 28, 1903, the school became officially Ohio Northern University, thus preserving the traditional “ONU” initials and at the same time reflecting more accurately the character of the institution.

(The Thomas Smull who advocated the name change was to become a towering figure in ONU history as student leader, brilliant athlete, and later as Dean of the College of Engineering and business manager of the university. Known as the “father of intercollegiate athletics” at ONU, “Tommy” served as faculty manager of athletics from 1905 to 1942, when he retired. During those years Smull pitted ONU against the football powers of Ohio with laudable success. In 1931, the Polar Bears even took on mighty Army, with less happy results; the Cadets gave them a 60 to 0 drubbing. Army is not now on the ONU football schedule.)

Dr. Belt had not sought the presidency of Ohio Northern University, did not particularly want the job, and found the crushing duties of college leadership undermining his health. He resigned June 27, 1905, to be succeeded by the Reverend Albert Edwin Smith.

Belt lived a scant two years after his retirement. He died of a heart ailment at his home in Kenton April 22, 1907.

18H. S. LEHR AND HIS SCHOOL, p. 230.
The Courage
Of Conviction

CHAPTER X

One long-time observer of Ohio Northern has commented, "Dr. Belt was an interim president. Lehr was too hard an act to follow." No doubt there is much validity in this statement. As able as he was, Belt lacked the charisma of Lehr, and during his tenure there was a sizable drop in enrollment. For all of the construction accomplished during Dr. Belt's administration, the university was not in a flourishing condition when Dr. Albert Edwin Smith was named third ONU president.

The presidency of the struggling college was not a prize that Smith had fought for. On the contrary, he was most reluctant to take the post and only a strong sense of duty to Methodist education made him accept. Smith had had an opportunity earlier to head the college and had turned it down. Dr. Smith later recalled the difficulty of getting anyone to take on so unpromising a job. "In 1900 I became a member of the board of trustees, and we took over the management of the university and elected Henry C. Jameson president. He turned to me and said, 'Smith, I will give you $100 if you will take it.' I said, 'I don't want it.'"14

Now, five years later, whether he wanted it or not, Smith had it. On July 20, 1905 Albert E. Smith was inaugurated president of Ohio Northern University and served for twenty-five distinguished years, guiding the university through lean and perilous years.

Smith was a strong individual with a forceful personality that caused him to be regarded by some as a "controversial" president. Perhaps all strong and willful leaders tend to be so regarded, for strongly held opinions will always find challengers. Certainly Smith's notions of what constituted proper Methodist education and acceptable student conduct aroused the ire and opposition of some faculty and students. There were clashes between the outspoken president and some of his students, and he was at times roundly criticized in the student press.

Although some regarded Dr. Smith as overly demanding and unbending, there are legions of former students who revere the man for his courage and dedication to Christian higher education.

A prominent Methodist clergyman, Smith had earned his degrees at Ohio Wesleyan and had served pastorates in Toledo and Marion, as well as other Ohio cities, and gave up his pastorate in Marion to take on the ONU presidency. He was a vigorous 45 when he accepted the challenge of ONU in 1905, and he was to need all his energy and optimism in the difficult years ahead.

Smith was not only reluctant to become head of the university, but had indeed opposed even acquiring the institution. His had been one of the few negative votes when Lehr proposed selling his school to the Central Ohio Conference in 1898. If Smith could have foreseen the struggles and heartaches he was to endure in connection with this school, he would doubtless have been more vigorous in his opposition to the purchase.

Now Smith was asked to head the very school he had opposed buying, to shore up sagging enrollments, establish financial stability, and fashion Ohio Northern University into a Methodist college worthy of its sister church institutions. At the end of his long tenure, Smith recalled the bleak prospect before him: "The Conference quickly forgot its obligations, gave nothing for twenty years but high-sounding resolutions of its support—placed the load upon the shoulders of the young minority opponent, and let him, seven years after the purchase, finish paying the bill—the last seven thousand dollars of it." 18

There was not at that time a home for the president of the university, and when Smith transferred his family to Ada, he was forced to move into inadequate quarters. The inconvenience of his living quarters was a reflection of the inadequacies at the university itself. Smith was not cheered by the prospect before him. "When I entered the chapel," he wrote years later, "and faced the student body, there was no pipe organ, and never had been one in the institution. The piano on the platform had been in the possession of the school for four years, and had never been paid for. There was not a single song book in the building." 19

The new president could not tolerate the lack of song books and immediately ordered, at his own obligation, six hundred Methodist hymnals. It was not to be the last time that President Smith pledged his personal property to see the university through a crisis.

Smith also found it ludicrous that the university boasted a military department but did not even have a flag pole. He soon remedied that, too. "The first money I begged," he said, "was $100, with which we bought of the Champion Iron Works, Kenton, Ohio, the steel staff which still stands on the central campus." 20

The absence of hymnals and flag staffs were not the only deficiencies facing ONU’s third president. There were few walks between the buildings, and the campus itself was unkempt and "utterly devoid of grass or beauty." Smith had the grounds graded, walks laid, and as he said, "proceeded to give some form of outward beauty that would hint of the inward culture we desired to obtain." 21

If the grounds themselves did not present a pleasing picture, the financial ledgers of the university were even bleaker. The university was in debt, and expenses far exceeded income. As Smith recalled, "The income the first year was $85,000 and the expenses about $42,000. Sixteen thousand dollars of debts and overdrafts were held by the First National Bank against the institution." 22

The heating in the new Dukes building, which was at that time connected with the central heating plant in town, was so inadequate that students and professors shivered in their overcoats during classes.

Reasoning that students could not give proper attention to their studies with chattering teeth, Smith ordered eight new hot-air furnaces and restored a measure of comfort to the building.

It is not surprising that buildings and grounds were in less than pristine condition, for the school employed only one maintenance man who built up the fires at four o’clock in the morning and shut up the place at ten o’clock at night, all for $10.00 a month.

If the pay for custodians was modest, the salaries of professors were not a great deal better. When Smith came, the highest salary any professor earned was one hundred dollars a month. However, some professors augmented their income with fees for personally owned equipment. The professors in pharmacy, chemistry, and physics, and in the commercial and stenographic departments personally owned the equipment pertinent to their courses and pocketed the fees. This arrangement Smith found unacceptable. He struck bargains with the professors as to the value of their equipment and bought it for the school.

There were also cloudy land titles to be cleared up. The land on which the maintenance building now stands and what is now the faculty parking lot at the side of Hill building was then what Smith called "no-man’s land," because the actual ownership was uncertain. Smith finally bought it at sheriff’s sale and secured a valid title.

Back in 1891 Henry Lehr had garnered much publicity, mostly within the state, by engineering the visit of a governor and a gubernatorial candidate who later became president of the United States. It was quite a coup, but Albert E. Smith, with, as Mark Twain once said, "the calm confidence of a Christian with four aces," outdid the founder when he engaged the twenty-seventh President of the United States as his 1910 commencement speaker.

The visit of a president of the United States to any locale is bound to be an occasion of high moment, and the brief sojourn of William Howard Taft in Ada was

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18bid., p. 594.
19bid., p. 594.
20bid., p. 594.
no exception. The village and the college were understandably excited, and for weeks before Taft’s arrival on June 3, 1910, town and gown had been busy refurbishing and decorating. Fifteen thousand were on hand for the president’s address, and a great throng was on hand at the Ada station when Taft’s private train pulled in at 10:30 Friday morning.

President Smith entered the presidential car to greet Taft and escort him to his carriage for the drive to the campus. As the (Ada) University Herald reported the event:

The line of carriages and autos carrying the distinguished guests and attendants led north to Montford, east to Main, and then amid solid walls of humanity, preceded by the O.N.U. Band, the O.N.U. Battalion, and followed by companies of the Ohio National Guard, cheered and applauded as they passed, the party drove south to the campus where a capacious grandstand had been erected facing west and thus facing all the college buildings.

Here professional decorators had been at work a week transforming the buildings and campus into a fairyland of beauty. All the buildings were radiant in the college and national colors and from the steel flagstaff in the center of the campus ran strings of streamers, banners and bunting to every corner of the campus. Nothing like it in the school’s history was ever seen before.20

When President Taft and President Smith and the official party appeared on the platform, the class of 1910 arose en masse and gave the distinguished visitors a respectful and cheerful salute. As the Herald reported, “Acres of white handkerchiefs fluttered in the air, and was it providential or only coincident that at this very moment the bright sun broke thru the lowering clouds of the morning and glorified the scene.

The Herald clearly implies that one could hardly expect less from providence on the visit of so imposing a president as William Howard Taft—and a Republican to boot.

Lehr had been especially solicitous as to the comfort and convenience of the newspapermen at the McKinley-Campbell debate, and President Smith was equally aware of the importance of the gentlemen of the fourth estate. Press headquarters was set up in the I.O.O.F. dining hall, complete with lunch and cigars, but the battalions of reporters covering the event were so busy that many of them did not even visit the hall, leaving lunches uneaten and cigars unsmoked. The life of a newsman is a hard one, entailing many sacrifices.

Taft’s address to the fortieth graduating class of O.N.U. was a model of rather restrained inspirational rhetoric. He noted that there was concern about the disappearance of opportunities for individual effort in a complex economy. Not so, said the president, if only a young man would work hard and make his employer’s business prosper. He spoke feelingly of the satisfactions to be found in the various fields open to young men of “pluck and determination”: medicine (money and opportunities for discovery and glory); law (as a lawyer himself, he thought this a great field, but chastised those lawyers who “bring to bear all the devices and machinations of intrigue to save their guilty clients”); the ministry (sadly, not enough young men attracted); teaching (poor pay, but great satisfaction in “directing youth in the ways of knowledge”); journalism (sad decline in the integrity of the press. He took a back-handed swipe at the muckrakers who persisted in finding pot holes in America’s yellow-brick road to Oz. He complained that “some newspapers seek to control the opinions of the people by misrepresentations,” (an opinion that has been voiced by other Chief Executives); farming, (“a field,” he said, “in which there will likely be great progress in the future,” implying that the present was not so rosy.)

At one point in his commencement address President Taft proved that he was alive to a spectre that has become all too real and disquieting in our time: the flow of population to already overcrowded cities. Taft spoke hopefully of the improvement in the lot of the rural dweller, noting that “the changes in electric roads, telephones, free delivery makes [sic] him while in the country a sharer of city conditions. I sincerely hope that these conditions may produce a diminution of the movement of our population to the crowded city.”

The president concluded his address to the 250 graduates (he was surprised to find so many girls among the happy scholars) and the assembled thousands by endorsing capitalism, but deploiring “the greed of corporate wealth.”21

After his address, President Taft and his party were feted with a luncheon at the ONU president’s home. (Doubtless Taft, a notable trencherman, did full justice to the comestibles.) An honored guest at the luncheon was Dr. J. Wesley Hill of New York, who was principally responsible for persuading President Taft to make the commencement address. Also among those breaking bread with the President were President Emeritus H. S. Lehr, President W. O. Thompson of Ohio State University, and President Herbert Welch of Ohio Wesleyan. One has the impression that, aside from purely professional courtesy, President Smith was delighted to show his collegiate counterparts that Ohio Northern was an institution to be reckoned with.

20 Among those who received diplomas from the hands of the President was Class Prophet A. A. Stambaugh, who was to know something about corporate wealth himself as vice-president of Standard Oil. Even before graduation, young Stambaugh had achieved a measure of distinction as the editor of the first edition of The Comet, the ONU yearbook. He was later to serve as a trustee of his alma mater for many years.

Other officers and honor members of the class of 1910 were: W. E. Davidson, President; Edward Gruetzn, Vice-president; Helen Pond, Historian; H. W. Bunston, Secretary; D. D. Emsberger, Treasurer; Mayble Coyer, Poet; W. O. Dow, Orator; and William Fleming, Valedictorian.
After the luncheon Taft rode back to the station to board his special train. As he stepped from his carriage Frank B. Willis, Republican candidate for congress and ONU grad, proposed three cheers for the President of the United States. For his efforts Willis got a free ride in the presidential car as far as Dunkirk and a brief conversation with Taft. (He also won his election.)

All-in-all the day had been a grand one for Ohio Northern and the Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch of June 4, 1910, rather neatly summed up the significance of the Taft visit with a cartoon. Headlined ADA HAS A CALLER, the cartoon shows a massive Taft seated on a small sofa beside a coy and diminutive lass. Taft is saying, "Ada is a pretty name!" while in the background several catty young ladies are gossiping over this impossible romance. The cutline under the cartoon goes:

Wail of the other girls:
Mi-Amy—"She's such a little snip."
Della-Ware—"Well, I can't understand what he sees in her."
Mary-Etta—"They say she flirts. Won't she have her nose in the air."

Indeed she did have her nose in the air for years to come—and with some justification!22

22Robert A. Taft, Jr. was a guest on the ONU campus in 1970, just prior to his election to the U. S. Senate, sixty years after his grandfather's memorable visit.

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*President Taft exits train.*

*The President speaks on campus.*

24
When Rioting
Was Fun

CHAPTER XI

President Smith's problems were not limited to inadequate income and faulty heating. He also had a lively and sometimes boisterous student body to contend with. For all of his ability and dedication, Smith seems not to have had a talent for dealing with recalcitrant and irreverent youths. He had a very low flash point and was inclined to magnify rather trifling indiscretions so that they became matters of public concern and notoriety. His sense of humor over student pranks was limited and as a result he was embroiled in some epic confrontations with his student body. Although he was wont to take punitive action against those he considered "disloyal" to the university, on occasion he exercised commendable restraint. One such occasion was when a student newspaper correspondent dreamed up a story that Dr. Smith considered unfavorable to the university. Many years after the little incident Reade Marshall, who graduated in law in 1910, wrote his friend Dr. Thomas Smull about his flights of imagination:

I corresponded for the Cleveland Press and one day they called up long distance and told me to give them a story on the liquor situation at Northern. Rather than make Northern look bad I wrote a story of a whiskey spring that was discovered north of Ada. They illustrated it showing students rolling on the ground soused and others filling bottles and buckets. That made a wide circulation. I got a clipping from an Oregon paper.

In chapel Prexy commented on it by saying that a buzzard was hovering over the school watching for licentious bunk.28

Marshall got off lightly that time. On another occasion, inaccurate reporting raised the president's ire and Smith threatened to expel student-reporter Marshall, but calmer heads prevailed and Marshall was spared and became a distinguished Lima citizen.

Almost simultaneously with the founding of the schools of pharmacy and engineering there arose great rivalry between these two professional schools. The

28From a letter to Dr. Smull from Mr. Marshall, now in the possession of the author.
battles between the students of the two schools were spirited, physical, and sometimes bloody. A poster printed and circulated in 1905 reveals something of the flavor and spirit of this rivalry:

SUBJECTED PHARMICS

We the rulers of the CAMPUS DOMAIN, the pacifiers, the eradicators, the looked up to, who shape the destiny of your college life are at the Helm, and noticing that the finger’s growth that you call brain is becoming of such a consistancy that it wouldn’t soil the finest fabric, while your egotism has a biceps muscle on it like a loaf of Vienna bread, and also that many of you are attempting to walk on your hind feet, we deem it necessary to call your attention to the following facts:

As a power in the O.N.V. [sic] you are about as effective as a stump-tailed bull in fly time. As an attempt at human beings you are a wart on the face of nature and a stench to the nostrils. In other words, you are an inmitigated [sic] nuisance and can only be tolerated on condition that you keep your insignificant pusillanimous, putridous, low, villainous, mean, antique, fossiferous carcasses out of sight of decent men.

The windows in your building look like a spittoon in a Bowery saloon and smell like a rancid nightmare.

Remember he who sitteth down on a hot seat shall rise again.

You have succeeded in corning up such a record that you will be entitled to free passports to the red hot streets of Perdition with glowing prospects of promotion.

In conclusion; keep off the streets when your superiors are out, don’t go out in your nighties, don’t take a donkey out for a walk unless you are able to bring her back, and above all things be respectful to every one and then the world of your superiors will use you well.

Signed ENGINEERS—“IT”—

It should be noted that the pharmics were equally facile with pen and thesaurus and yearly exchanged insulting broadsides with their schoolmates. Nor did they limit their contest to placards and posters. They clashed physically as well as verbally. That man-about-campus, Reade Marshall, remembered one pharmacist-engineer battle in which he was personally involved, although as a law student he was supposedly neutral. In a letter to Dr. Smull, Marshall reminisces:

You remember the engineers’ night shirt parade I broke up one night? The town girls were giving a dance and party in the TNE hall over Rothrock’s hardware. The engineers were on a rampage rolling the pharmics in the mud and so on. They yelled they were going to break up the dance. I gave them notice that the first bastard that showed his head at the door would be clobbered. That brought them up the narrow stairway and I met them with an Indian club in each hand. Biff, bang down went two engineers and the rest beat a hasty retreat. We dragged the first victim into the hall and found it was John Winn, a very good friend of mine. He was bleeding like a stuck hog. We quickly hustled him out the door and I took him [to] the water trough at the city hall and after removing his night shirt I took him to Dr. Ames office and had his head patched up. I had whanged him a dandy and Johnny was woozy for several days. Dr. Ames told me later I might have fractured his skull. John and I ate Thanksgiving dinner at my expense. We had roast suckling pig.

Marshall’s sprightly letter reveals several things about this time-honored rivalry. It was traditional for the rivals to wear night shirts and to attempt to dump opponents in mud holes. These spirited battles continued for many years. Just before World War I there was a series of “hatchet buryings” with appropriate ceremonies. The hatchet burying did little actually to quell the combat, but the ceremonies were at least amusing and gave employment to student orators and grave diggers. One veteran of the pharmacist-engineer wars, John R. Loyd, recalled an oration that he gave at one of the hatchet burying ceremonies.

To the best of his memory the oration went something like this:

Three score and thirteen years ago, our maker God Almighty put forth in this great State of Ohio a man destined to become a great factor in the educational world and a leader among men. This man, Dr. H. S. Lehr, was born poor, yet he became rich in the education field and his work is that of which you are now all a part of, namely the founding of Ohio Northern University. As the wheels of time turned onward it brought to him the most marvelous event of his life, the founding of the pharmaceutic [sic] and engineering departments. Enmity and combat have been frequent, resulting in many black eyes, bloody noses and water trough battles, thus we have been engaging in a great civil war testing whether that group pharmaceutics or this group engineers could long endure, till at last we have met on the old battlefield for a different purpose. We have met to so interweave and consolidate our ranks that the bonds of friendship shall remain unbroken and now as the battle scarred and blood-stained hatchet is lowered into a fiery grave that betokens everlasting friendship between pharmacist and engineer, may God who looks down from above love, cherish and destine this combined group so that
the old school never have need to be ashamed of them.\textsuperscript{24}

The inspiration for peacemaker Cloyd's oration is obvious. In spite of such ringing declarations, these battles continued until the greater and much more senseless violence of World War I rendered them less attractive. Some future archaeologist excavating the lawn of the old campus in front of Lehr Memorial building may be puzzled when he turns up caskets containing ceremonial hatchets, but a great number of former students still remember with nostalgia the burials themselves. Mr. George Hindall of Ada still possesses one of the caskets so ritually interred.

Pharmics and engineers were not the only groups at the university doing battle. There was also hot and violent rivalry between the Junior and Senior classes. One case has already been cited in which a young man was seriously injured evading capture by pursuing juniors.

Like the pharmics and engineers, the juniors and seniors exchanged verbal bombast. A brief quote from one such missle of the early years of the century is sufficient to establish that the juniors and seniors were just as adept at scurrilous adjectives as the pharmics and engineers. A poster, circa 1905, declares:

We, the prudent, brave and cultured Juniors of Ohio Northern University, in order to teach the puny, insignificant and debased Seniors how to be manly and upright little fellows, establish a model for the undeserving graduates this year, insure to the respectable ladies and gentlemen of this institution honorable treatment at the hands of these loathsome creatures, provide for the common defense against these poisonous vipers, promote the respectability of the community in general, and secure the blessings of superiority to ourselves and the Juniors in the years to come, do set forth and enforce the following Rules and Admonitions:

There follows on the broadside a long list of insulting and humiliating rules that the seniors were enjoined to obey.

Needless to say, the seniors gave as good as they got. Consequences could be unpleasant for students captured by rival factions. One reminiscence shows to what lengths students would go to avoid capture and humiliation. Mr. H. W. Mountz wrote of a desperate flight he and classmate Harvey Huber took to escape pursuing seniors. The Huber referred to in the letter later became a distinguished and much beloved professor at ONU and served as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. Mr. Mountz relates:

The story dates back to the late spring or early summer of 1907. The dean, Huber, and I were officers of our class and also leaders in an attempt to keep from getting "the barrel" which was on the campus filled with muddy water. When the class flag of the 1907 class was up the pole, every member of the class of 1908 was forced to salute it and do other menial jobs for the class of 1907. If he didn't, he went into the barrel head first. We determined to escape this treatment.

So, during the fight for supremacy, we left town and slept for two nights in a farmer's barn in a hay mow about a mile and a half west of Ada. Finally some of our adversaries found out where we were and decided to take us in an early morning raid on the barn... one of our emissaries reported that we were to be captured early the next day and ducked at 8 o'clock before all the members of the 1907 class. Huber and I got up early on the eventful day about five o'clock in the morning, slipped out of the barn to a hay stack about a half mile from the barn. The barn was soon surrounded by these upper classmen and when we saw them enter it, we started to run from the hay stack. A few had remained outside the barn and spied us trying to get back to the campus. They took after us on foot. Some of the track men were gaining on us. Finally we jumped over a fence and ran down through a hay field—the grass in the field was timothy about two and one-half feet high. The grass had a heavy dew on it and before we reached the road on the other side we were wet almost to our necks. Just as we reached the road, a farmer in a two-horse wagon came along. We gave him a dollar to haul us the mile or so to the town of Ada. We hid for about an hour and then went to class, with the wet clothes on, since we could not get back to our rooms.

When we got back to class Prof. Kreglow gave us "hell" for being late to the geology class and finished his lecture by telling us never to come into his class again with clothes in such a condition.

Flight was common in escaping punishment by rivals. One young ministerial student later told of being warned that he was to be the victim of the class rivalry. "I took to the swamp land and lived out among my black dirt farmers for two days," he related.

This same gentleman was involved in yet another escape attempt that did not end quite so innocently. In a sort of verbal shorthand he wrote of his harrowing experience:

Juniors still angered drove a bunch of us seniors to roof of Administration building. From roof Youken, a law student, cussed the Juniors out in non-Sunday School language. They offered to compromise if they would give me up to their ministering affectionate punishment (?). Finally Prof. Willis and Jesse Beer... arranged an armistice. We were to get 10 minutes head start

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\textsuperscript{24}From a letter written by John R. Cloyd to Dr. Thomas Smull, dated April 6, 1954, now in possession of the author.
and make a run for it. We started out west and south-west, and found the Juniors waiting for us. In our flight we ran a horse into a fence and pierced with fence rail it had to be killed. A few days after, an Ada constable ... served summons for all Junior and Senior class officers to appear June 5, 1908, at 9 A.M. before the local squire's court. THIS WAS THE HOUR OF COMMENCEMENT GATHERING! WHIEH! !

Junior and Seniors met in Brown for a hurried meeting. Took a collection to help pay for horse owned by a Runner. Price of horse set at $180.00 which was a bloody outrage. But we were cornered and commencement frozen by a court summons. Faculty and Trustees met and made up the difference between our collection which amounted to about $60.00 and the $180 so that the Commencement could continue.

President Smith's comments on this particular incident are not recorded, but he could not have been happy at having to bail out his erring seniors so that commencement services could be held.

On one occasion he did react angrily to a bit of undergraduate vandalism. The University Herald of December 8, 1905 reported:

On Wednesday night the Skull and Crossbones, emblem of the College of Pharmacy at ONU, was placed above the Transit of the Engineering College on the roof of Brown Auditorium . . . President Albert Edwin Smith ordered the roof repainted and threatened to expel any student caught scaling it.

On Thursday night students of the two colleges staged a noisy parade . . . and assembled on the campus. Several cords of wood were set ablaze. Flames lit up the scene for blocks around. Then someone turned in a false alarm.

It is obvious that the students at ONU during the young years of the century were lively, imaginative, and muscular. Given the circumstances of their lives at that period, it is no wonder that they worked off youthful energy in fights and pranks. Ada was a tiny village with few resources for acceptable amusement, and travel was difficult and uncomfortable. President Smith banned fraternities from the campus and forbade dancing. A careful reader will have noted that the dance defended by student-reporter Marshall was given by town girls. Any group of university students who organized a dance would have been subject to swift retribution. Very early in his administration, Smith made clear his policy on dancing. At chapel in 1906 the president sternly announced, "If anyone dances or any fraternity holds a dance, it will mean immediate expulsion."

Since most of the students were as light of heart as they were light of pocket, dances were held, and there were expulsions throughout Dr. Smith's regime, sometimes wholesale expulsions. Smith certainly had the courage of his convictions and was ready to strip the university of any number of fee-paying students rather than relax his rules. His unbending attitude toward dancing and fraternities was to cost him dearly in good will and popularity through the years. At times the students came close to open revolt against the stern president.25

Dr. Smith liked drinking as little as he did dancing and warred against the use of liquor by his students as vigorously as he did against dancing. National prohibition no doubt assisted Dr. Smith, but it by no means won the war for him, especially among the young veterans returning to campus after World War I. These young men had adapted themselves to a freer life style while in the service, and were restive under the rather rigid rules of the university. Although automobiles were rarities for students in the twenties, there was good train service to Lima and scores availed themselves of it. As one student of those years has observed, Dr. Smith liked to be at the station on Saturday and Sunday nights to greet his students. Some of these students were not eager to greet their president after their Lima revels. To avoid the unwelcome encounter, the F. Scott Fitzgerald types would persuade the brakeman to let them off the train far up the track, thus escaping the scrutiny of the watchful president.

Some of ONU's Jazz Age students seemed more interested in harassing the trains than riding them. It was the inspiration of some prankish students, especially engineers, to grease the tracks of the railway. Denied purchase on the slippery tracks, the wheels of the train spun helplessly until the tracks could be sanded or the grease removed. This practice was not well received by the trainmen.26

Jim Fusco remembered an incident that virtually typifies a certain aspect of student life during the Twenties. As Fusco wrote:

About 30 years ago [ca 1924] one of the boys on the campus lost his dairy which promptly

25Smith mellowed little over the years. According to the Denver Post of September 27, 1924, "Prexy" Smith provoked a near riot with his strong denunciation of dancing. According to the story, datelined Ada, O., Sept. 26:

Dr. Albert Edmundson [sic] Smith, president, took the rostrum for chapel services Thursday and delivered a strong denunciation for frequenting public dance halls near Ada and in Lima. His remarks were received with hisses, groans and stomping of feet.

"You are cowards," cried Dr. Smith. "I dare any of you to stand up on your feet and hiss. Stand up, I repeat, and I will expel you."

No one accepted the challenge but the disturbance continued until chapel exercises were over.

26I had heard this tale repeatedly in talks with former ONU students, but had classed it with other delightful but baseless legends of college life, such as the bell clapper that allegedly was mailed to President Smith in California. That is, I so classed it until I visited with an alumni group in Buffalo, New York. There I met a gentleman who not only confirmed the tale, but even described the type and consistency of grease employed. That is the sort of useful information that an investigator treasures. The gentleman, a distinguished retired engineer, will remain anonymous. GEB
found its way to the desk of the University President. [Smith] In the book was listed a series of penny-ante poker games in which the writer had engaged, listing the names of the participating culprits.

All of the players were called into the President's office and threatened with expulsion. It was up to one Thomas Smull to intercede for these men and to allow them to continue in college.

That Tommy's judgment was vindicated is shown by the fact that everyone of those so-called culprits has made a great success in life. One of the men is a judge, two others are eminent lawyers, one is a prominent Public Relations Director. Also . . . members of the Board of Trustees of the University and another is a former president of the Alumni Association.

The moral of this story is: Don't play poker in college, but if you do, don't keep a diary. If you do keep a diary, don't lose it; and if you do lose it, your future success in life is assured.27

27 Letter dated March 30, 1954, from Mr. James E. Fusco to Dr. Thomas J. Smull, now in possession of the author.
Intercollegiate Athletics

CHAPTER XII

From early in its history Ohio Northern has been notably sports minded, and over the years, has fielded competitive teams in a variety of sports. Football and basketball have been the major sports at Northern, but squads have also been fielded in baseball, track, golf, wrestling, and, at one time, fencing.

At the turn of the century, ONU was playing hard-nosed football, but in a much less "professional" way than is customary today. In those early years there was no well-staffed athletic department, and teams were coached by sports-minded faculty members who doubled in brass, or by student players themselves. For all of their lack of professional guidance, the Northern men were rugged and took on some formidable opponents on both gridiron and diamond. The 1901 football season, for instance, pitted the squad against such diverse institutions as the Deaf and Dumb School in Columbus, Heidelberg, and Otterbein. (Just how the gridmen from the Deaf and Dumb School called signals remains a mystery to this writer.)

The early owners of the school, Lehr and his partners, were not enthusiastic about football; indeed some actively opposed the game. Professor Warren Darst was especially vocal in his opposition, even to the point of giving a very chilly reception in his classes to any football players.

With this inhospitable attitude on the part of the faculty, it is little wonder that Northern football had a rocky and inauspicious beginning. Official records are non-existent, but one source gives 1897 as the date when Northern first fielded a team. In a letter to Professor Thomas Smull one of the organizers of that first squad, A. J. McColly, remembered the difficulties they had to contend with. McColly and his co-organizer, Vernon Bohler, were the only two boys who had even played the game before, but neither inexperience nor faculty opposition daunted them. The faculty refused to aid the squad in any way and uniforms and equipment were purchased by small contributions from Ada townspeople, with the team itself making up the balance.

Another source sets the date of the first football game at ONU as 1889. An article by Clayton Pryor in the Springfield, Ohio Sun dated December 14, 1924, attributes the organization of the first ONU grid team to students J. E. Furry and William Tecumseh Sherman.
O'Hara. In relating the story to reporter Pryor, Dr. Furry, a former mayor of Springfield, could not recall the opponent of his pick-up team, but did remember that the ONU eleven won the game.

Very possibly both McColly's and Furry's stories are accurate. It is quite likely that alter Furry ('91) and O'Hara ('92) graduated, the sport lapsed until revived by McColly and Bohler, who were probably unaware that ONU had ever fielded a team.

With no fiddling rules about eligibility, players were recruited where they could be found, whether students or non-students. In those very early years the team took some hard punishment from more polished opponents, but the young squad did have a few sweet triumphs, notably a victory over Heidelberg.

In spite of sound thumping, the Northern men—or at least men playing under the Northern banner—continued to field teams and, as the interest of students and townspeople increased, the hostility of the faculty decreased.

By the early 1900's, the team was better organized and was scheduling some very formidable opponents indeed. In 1903, captained by a hard muscled young athlete named Tommy Smull, the Northern eleven took on Michigan. They went down to a 65 to 0 defeat, but this only whetted their appetite, for they played Michigan again the following two years. The Northern squad was never able to push over the Michigan goal line, but in 1905 they did have the score down to 23 to 0.

Something of the rather free-wheeling approach to ONU football during those years is revealed in a letter quoted by columnist Johnny Jones in the Columbus Dispatch of December 4, 1956. Reminiscing about those exciting years, former ONU footballer Bill Crooks wrote:

But what I really wanted to tell you about is our 1905 ONU football team. Sonny Price played but got suspended from school (but not from the team) for using tobacco on the campus. Tommy Smull was our coach, he was dean of engineering and played regularly. Pawnee Bill West played center. He had a handle bar moustache, was bigger than Jim Parker. Never did know what department he was enrolled in but he heaved coal at the Municipal Light plant.

Ever hear of a guy named Yost and a point a minute machine—some little school up in Michigan? Well, we played 'em. We took a terrible beating.

Apparently the clobberings at the hands of Michigan merely made the Northern grid men more hercious to more ordinary opponents. Certainly the 1903 Wittenberg squad was unnerved by the ONU eleven, for, after only seventeen minutes of play and unable to get the ball out of their own territory, the Wittenberg team simply quit the field and refused to play any more. This action nearly touched off a riot by the partisan Ada crowd and led to a brouhaha that was still being recalled thirty years later.

These early gridiron gladiators had no patent on toughness, however. The 1924 Polar Bears (the Polar Bear had become the official ONU mascot in 1923) played their scheduled game against Denison University even though every member of the squad was suffering from high temperatures and aching bodies.

The week before the game a case of smallpox at the college had prompted the state board of health to vaccinate the whole football squad, as well as some other students. By game time the squad was suffering miserably from the attendant discomforts of the vaccination, but refused to cancel or forfeit the game. In spite of their weakened condition, the Polar Bears, with the aid of ice packs and grit, managed to hold Denison scoreless the first half, but fever and ruptured vaccinations told on them during the second half, and they ended up with a 14-0 loss, but with honor upheld.

Sometimes even roughness and determination proved unavailing against foes, and guile had to be brought to bear. All-round athlete (football, baseball, track) Von Spellman, who was active in ONU sports during the early Twenties, recalls a play he sometimes employed against an opponent who was giving him undue trouble.

When the Polar Bears were in desperate need of yardage, lineman Spellman would take a generous chew of tobacco, and after lubricating it thoroughly, spit a fraternal gob on the hand of the opposing lineman just a split second before the play developed.

Before lining up for the next play, Spellman would, with hurt innocence, observe to the referee that he was being abused by his counterpart on the other squad. "Watch that guy," Spellman would plead, "he's slugging me when you're not looking." Quite naturally, the foe, being allergic both to Spellman and liquid Nicotina, would line up with blood in his eye and almost immediately uncork a correction to Spellman's nose. The official, cued to the mayhem, would whistle a penalty and ONU would have some welcome yardage.

Spellman also played baseball and his imagination was equally fertile in this field. In moments of stress, or sometimes out of simply an antic desire to create confusion and contention, he would introduce a variant of the old hidden ball technique calculated to bring on apoplexy among the opposition and utter bewilderment to the officials.

Spellman, who tells the story without a blush of shame, would supply the ONU catcher with a potato, fresh, white, and as round as possible. This tuber the catcher would secrete until the Northern nine found itself in dire straits. With an enemy batsman on third base, Spellman would signal for the catcher to throw the potato over the head of the third baseman. The runner would break for home, the catcher would serenely uncup the real ball from his mitt and tag the runner out. Thereupon the opposing coach would come vaulting out of his dugout, frothing and footstamping in rage, but as Spellman has said, "There was nothing in the rule book about
potatoes.” Even though bemused officials might rule against him, by the time the heated and often hysterical discussions between officials and coaches had subsided, the edge had been taken off the opposition charge and ONU was in a more confident position.

Although baseball antedated football in ONU annals (there is no certain date as to the innovation of baseball at Northern) it has not enjoyed the publicity and acclaim of the gridiron. Football founder McGolly commented that the only reason he organized the football squad was because an injured arm prevented him from playing baseball. Many athletes, including Smull, Spellman, and many others, starred in both fields, the narrow specialization of today not being in vogue during those halycon days.

Although ONU athletics had been popular for many years, the sports field did not get its really official encouragement until 1921 when the trustees voted out the Military Department and resolved to expand the Physical Education Department to take its place. Mock soldiering had become unappetizing to ONU boys following the disillusionment of World War I, and, reacting to a vote of the student body which revealed the lack of popularity of ROTC, the trustees abolished the Military Department of ONU in May, 1921. Thereafter, an increased emphasis was placed upon competitive sports.

In 1929 ONU got an athletic shot-in-the-arm unequaled since Tommy Smull was mowing down linemen in 1905. Two talented brothers, Harris and Clyde Lamb, were plucked out of Iowa to head the ONU physical education program. As the Ada Herald of July 19, 1929, noted, “Clyde and Harris Lamb, brothers of Boone, Iowa, are new members of the physical education staff. Clyde will have charge of professional courses in physical education and will coach freshmen; Harris will be head football coach.”

Harris did not long outshine his brother, and Clyde soon became the man in Ohio Northern athletics for four decades. Toughing it out through the very lean Depression years of the Thirties and the sportless years of World War II, “the Chief,” as he was known to thousands of ONU grads, made ONU a name in athletic circles. His coaching, teaching, counseling made Northern a lode-stone for hopeful young athletes, and today his products staff schools and colleges across the nation.

The Chief had announced his retirement plans for June of 1969 when he was cut down by a heart attack April 30. Hundreds of his players and students attended his services, in fitting tribute to the man who had given so much direction to their lives.

One of the mourners at that service was the man destined to pick up the Chief’s baton, Marv English.

Professor English has headed the Department of Physical Education since 1965 and continues to train young athletes and coaches who fan out over the country and continue to keep alive Northern’s reputation as a mid-western “cradle of coaches.”
President Smith-A Builder

CHAPTER XIII

While his students were running about the countryside scaring horses and hiding in hay stacks, President Smith was wrestling with the financial and educational problems of the school.

Within a few years the alarming drop in enrollment was reversed, and the income of the school was increased. Smith devoted his energies to securing endowment funds and upgrading the curriculum of the colleges. One dream that he carried in his head for the first seven years of his tenure was the construction of a fine new building to replace the inadequate and time-worn Administration building. Smith envisioned a building large enough for administrative offices, chapel auditorium, and Christian Association rooms. By 1912 he felt that the university was in a position to make this dream a reality. He gave orders for the razing of the old Normal building, and excavation had already begun for the construction of the new building when a stunning disaster struck the university. On Nov. 4, 1913, fire gutted the three story Administration building that had been constructed by the village for Lehr in 1879. Destroyed in the blaze were the literary halls, offices, classrooms, records, and the libraries of the literary societies. The building was virtually totally destroyed, with only the walls and clock tower left standing. The flames also leaped to nearby Brown building and damaged the chapel and pipe organ. It was a disaster for the university and as Smith observed sadly, “it laid us low in ashes and ruin.”

Heartsick but undefeated, the president stubbornly set about rebuilding. Students, faculty, alumni, and townspeople rallied to the support of the hard beset institution, and Smith immediately ordered the rebuilding of the structure, at a cost of fifty thousand dollars. Repairs to Brown ran another twenty thousand. The insurance on the ruined building was pitifully inadequate and what there was went to satisfy a previous loan. Broke but determined, Smith set out to raise some money. As he later wrote,

To keep the work going, I pledged all I was worth in the world and gave my personal note for $15,000. One man in New York I had visited, and he had said to me, “Sometime when things are
better, I will help you some.” I went in my extremity to see this man and told him my troubles. He said, “I will give you $5,000 this morning.” I said, “Sir, my honor, my word, and my work demand $15,000.” He said, “I will make it $15,000,” and I came home too happy to sleep on the train . . .”

Work continued on the two structures and by 1915 they were ready to be dedicated. A contractor’s bill was settled by a $50,000 loan arranged through the good offices of Mr. Walter Sousley.

Both Lehr Memorial and Hill Building were dedicated in that year, giving the university two very badly needed new structures. The clock tower of the reconstructed Hill building remains the most familiar landmark on the Ada campus.

As if a disastrous fire were not enough, during those years President Smith also had to contend with bitter opposition to him and his administration. In 1913, and again in 1914, strong representations were made to the Board of Trustees and to the West Ohio Conference of the Methodist Church, seeking the removal of Dr. Smith as president of the university. The president was charged with being tyrannical, capricious, and intolerant of any opinion other than his own. Further, there was dissatisfaction with the no-dancing rule and agitation to have the ban lifted. One long time faculty mem’rer who enjoyed warm relations with both the president and the students, contended that the complaints against Smith were largely the “ravings” of “crack pots,” but conceded that “some were justified.”

The president stood firm in his expulsion of various students he regarded as trouble makers, and the Board of Trustees stood firmly behind their man. He was not removed.

Ohio Northern was jolted, as was the world, by World War I. As war time prices shot up the boarding house operators were no longer able to feed hungry students for as little as $1.50 per week. Ohio Northern had to go into the restaurant business in self defense. A basement was dug under Brown building and a cafeteria installed, one that President Smith termed “one of the best cafeterias in the State.”

Throughout his often stormy reign, President Smith vigorously continued to solicit funds for building and for endowment. The tangible results of his success are the many buildings still being used that were constructed during Smith’s presidency. Some of these have been moved, altered, or torn down, but Lehr Memorial (1915), Hill (re-built in 1915), the Law College building (1923), Presser Hall (1928), and Taft gymnasium (1929) remain as evidence of the man’s tenacity and energy. He paved the way for the future West Campus development with the purchase of the fields west of Union Street.

In his annual report to the Board of Trustees in 1929, the retiring president could point with justifiable pride to the accomplishments of his administration over the past quarter century. As he noted, the $35,000 income of his first year, which was not sufficient to cover expenses, had grown to over $324,000. Endowment had gone from the zero which Smith inherited to a gratifying half million. As proud as he was of these achievements, Smith could also point with satisfaction to the up-grading of the academic program of the school. As he noted in his report to the board in 1929, much improvement had been made in this area. He reported happily:

Today we have a real college. Our work is standard, our name is respected, our diplomas have a genuine value. Not so twenty-five years ago. Then our Liberal Arts courses were little more than high school requirements. No preparatory standing was necessary or demanded. One could study law, pharmacy, or engineering without previous literary foundations. All this has been remedied.

Our preparatory department itself has vanished. All the colleges of the university are held in high esteem by educational authorities, and we are fully qualified for the best company.

Having sketched his record, Smith then went on to hope that for his successor, the Board would find, “a young, vigorous, undaunted leader, who shall bear the banner of Northern higher and further than we have been able to advance it.”

President-Emeritus Smith died at his home in Findlay August 26, 1941, at the age of 80. At his funeral service, Dr. Robert O. McClure, who was soon to head the university Smith had guided so long, said of Dr. Smith, “He was a man of great convictions, and never compromised with evil. Religion was to him a great and living reality.”

\[\text{THE WESTERN CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE, June 13, 1929, p. 595.}\]
Depression And War

CHAPTER XIV

In his message to Ohio Methodists in June of 1929, president-elect Robert Williams was confident and cheerful. He pointed out the past record of Ohio Northern in the Christian training of young people and acknowledged the support of such benefactors as John H. Taft and Theodore Presser. He was confident that “other friends will come forward, and with gifts for endowment, for chairs in the various colleges, for scholarships, for buildings and equipment, will make the future of Ohio Northern both secure and great.”

When he made that statement in June of 1929, Yorkshireman Williams had every reason to be hopeful and optimistic. The country was enjoying a heady prosperity, and famous bankers were pointing out how absurd it was for anyone to be poor when it was so easy to get rich through investment in the business and industry of the nation. To be sure, there were a few economists who pointed doubtfully to the absurdly inflated prices of common stocks and to the woes of the American farmer, but who had time to listen to these gloomy Guses? America was on an economic bender and disinclined to listen to the admonitions of sober sides, but the agonizing hangover was not to be long in coming.

In a modest way Ohio Northern shared in the national prosperity. Endowment was healthy and growing, enrollment was satisfactory, and there seemed every reason to suppose that the university would continue to enjoy the favor of wealthy patrons. There were, of course, debts incurred by President Smith to finance his enthusiastic building program, but they could be taken care of by expanding income and donor generosity. The future seemed as rosy as Dr. Williams pictured it, but in a bewilderingly short time, the fourth president of Ohio Northern must have felt that he had secured a last-minute sailing on the Titanic.

The tragedy of the depression of the Thirties is still too vivid in the minds of thousands of ONU alumni to need much retelling here. It is painful indeed to scan the newspapers of the 1930’s and to witness the business and industry of a great nation grinding down to a virtual standstill. The record is agonizingly clear in the curt bankruptcy notices, the going-out-of-business sales, and the almost hysterical appeals of bankers and government officials for “confidence.” It is easy, but depressing, to chart the worsening of the economy through a study of the advertising columns of the press. Merchants slashed prices in a desperate attempt to move goods. By November of 1931, an Ada gentleman who wanted to spruce up a bit could buy a pair of dress shoes for $2.98 and an all wool overcoat for $14.75. And if he happened to be in a car-buying humor, he could pick up a nice new little Ford roadster for $430. If he couldn’t even afford these modest luxuries, our shopper could at least buy three pounds of coffee for fifty cents and a carton of cigarettes for $1.43 to steady his nerves.

Ohio Northern was of course shaken by the economic crisis. Enrollments steadily declined during the early years of the depression, dropping to 450 in the fall of 1932. Friends of the university who had counted themselves wealthy found themselves unable to meet their pledges to the university, and donations dwindled to a trickle. The hard-pressed president had to largely abandon any ambitious plans for building during the thirties, although he was able to secure a residence for freshmen girls. This house, Turner Hall, destroyed by fire on Feb. 3, 1949, stood on the present site of Stambaugh Hall.

Thanks to the loyalty of his teachers who worked for miniscule salaries, Dr. Williams was at least able to keep the doors of the university open. He faced academic as well as financial problems. Accrediting agencies which had been lenient during the Twenties demanded higher standards, and this time the university was not able to meet them. The fire that destroyed the hall that bitter February night in 1949 elicited at least one demonstration of self-sacrifice and devotion to duty. At the time of the fire, Katie Lou Craft (now Mrs. Eugene Hanson), was acting as head resident and was completing work on her doctoral dissertation. When she discovered the blaze, Miss Craft quickly roused the seventeen girls then living in the house and hustled them to safety without giving them time to gather up their belongings. College boys were quickly attracted to the blaze, and some even darted into the burning building to save what they could for the girls, who were woefully bemoaning the loss of treasured possessions.

The dissertation, the product of two years’ work, lay on her desk, readily accessible to quick rescue. The fire had not reached the area of her apartment, and she could have saved her manuscript in safety, but she forebore to do so, rather than set an example which might encourage the boys to attempt even more hazardous forays into the building. She stoically watched as her manuscript and her clothes were destroyed. She replaced her wardrobe (she had saved only a fur coat), and took a leave of absence to rewrite her dissertation. Surely this was an example of uncommon devotion to duty at vast personal sacrifice.

30The Western Christian Advocate, June 13, 1929, p. 590.
academic standards. To meet these demands, the College of Liberal Arts was reorganized and certain departments discontinued. There were also course changes in the professional colleges.

If things were gloomy on the financial side, there was a bit of cheer on the social scene. The December 18, 1931, issue of the Ada Herald reported that informal dances had been approved for fraternities and sororities. The boys and girls were to be permitted to dance, on Friday and Saturday evenings, to music provided by radio or phonograph. Orchestra music was to be permitted at one formal dance each winter. At last long the ban on dancing at ONU was lifted.

Sororities for girls were recognized in 1930 and lively sorority activities added much flavor to the ONU social scene.

During these difficult years, President Williams struggled manfully with his many problems and by the late thirties seemed to be enjoying a measure of success. Williams was given valuable assistance by Dr. Thomas J. Smull, who served as executive secretary, and by board member and former law dean Jay P. Taggart.

By 1937 enrollment had crawled back to 750, and the university bills were being paid, but not much attention could be afforded for maintenance and upkeep. Just as the country and ONU seemed to be shaking off the worst effects of the depression, an even greater crisis was approaching.

War clouds were gathering, and as the nation girded for a vast global conflict, the faith of the supporters of Ohio Northern University was to be tested as never before.

As the services absorbed the young men, enrollments plummeted at ONU, as at other colleges and universities across the land. Dependent as it was upon tuition income, Ohio Northern was in desperate financial straits during the wartime forties. Dr. Williams had grappled with the problems of the depression and the war, and the battle had sapped his strength. Declaring that “Ohio Northern has survived wars, depressions and panics. But the university needs new leadership and a full understanding of its needs in order to survive,” he resigned in February of 1943, the resignation to become effective in June.

President Williams had given of himself unstintingly in the fight to save ONU, and his effort had undermined his health. He died of pneumonia on June 18, 1944, a scant year after his resignation, at his home in Van Wert, in his 60th year.
The Fight To Survive

CHAPTER XV

Few college presidents could have faced a more discouraging task than did Dr. Robert McClure when he took over as the fifth president of Ohio Northern in June of 1943. Enrollment was low, debts were mounting, the future uncertain. When the term opened in September only 156 students were enrolled, and there were many who considered the situation at Northern not just grave, but hopeless. There were proposals to discontinue the professional colleges and turn Northern into a liberal arts college. Others felt that not even the most Draconian measures could save the institution, and advocated simply closing the doors.

President McClure was of another mind. He went on record in favor of continuing the professional colleges, but he was not blind to the bleak state of the university. After taking over as acting president, he immediately called his faculty together. He told them just how serious the situation was. Enrollment was uncertain, there would be little or no money for salaries. Did they want to continue, he asked, or did they want to give it up as a bad job and simply close the university?

The faculty at the time included such distinguished professors as R. H. Raabe, C. W. Pettit, C. H. Freeman, F. L. Berger, W. E. Binkley, A. R. Webb, J. A. Needy, R. A. Dobbins, H. E. Huber, F. L. Loy, Clyde Lamb, Cliffe Deming, W. P. Lamele, E. Vergon Smith, and others of like caliber, men of standing and reputation in their fields, and all deeply devoted to Ohio Northern. They told their new president that they wanted to save the university and accepted deep salary cuts.

McClure matched their sacrifice by accepting no salary during his first year as president. He continued to serve as the Lima district superintendent, adding the administrative duties of ONU to that responsibility.

Encouraged by the support of the faculty, McClure was further cheered by additional support from Ada townspeople and businessmen. In a drive headed by Harry J. Sosley the Ada Business Association raised over $11,000 for the emergency, and that sum was almost matched by area Methodists. The Methodist drive, led by the Reverend Marion Tinsler, pastor of the Ada church, netted $10,000, and alumni contributed another $9,983 in a drive headed by L. H. Gardner. It was enough to keep the university open and it was a demonstration of loyalty to Ohio Northern.
McClure was no stranger to college administration. Following World War I he had served as president of Belle City College in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Now, faced with a wartime emergency, he set about trimming Northern’s program to fit the situation. Operating expenses were pared to the bone, and special courses were organized to train war workers. The College of Pharmacy developed an accelerated two-year course to train pharmics for duty in the pharmacy corps of the army.

Intercollegiate sports were dropped. There were few men left on campus, and the coach would have had difficulty fielding a team, so this was not much of a sacrifice.

If 1943 had been a bad year, then 1944 was a horror. There were fewer students than Lehr had when he opened the school 73 years before. There was one lone student in the College of Law and only 15 aspiring engineering students. The austerity program was continued and faculty and friends of the university maintained their loyalty and support. The university continued under its streamlined operation until the end of the war brought a flood of veterans back to the campus. By 1947 enrollment for the first time in years topped 1,000. The continuing flood of students reversed the problems faced by Dr. McClure.

Instead of retrenchment, what was now demanded was expansion. Housing for the new students was needed, and buildings that had been left largely to deteriorate required repair. (There had been only a single maintenance man during the emergency years.) Classroom facilities were taxed to the utmost, and faculty members carried crushing teaching loads until new faculty could be recruited. One veteran faculty member of those years remembers that he carried a “half-time” teaching load of 18 hours in addition to administrative duties.

Dr. McClure devoted himself strenuously to improving facilities and up-grading the academic program, but ill health dogged him, and he went to his Florida home to recover. He attempted to handle the affairs of the university from his Winter Park retreat, but this remote control administration was unsatisfactory, and he resigned April 10, 1949. He died of a heart ailment at his Florida home on June 1, 1952, at age 62.

Robert McClure still has many warm admirers in Ada. These friends regard him as the “unsung hero” of Ohio Northern’s darkest days, and he most certainly must be given signal credit for guiding the university through a painfully difficult period.

May Day clean up during President McClure Administration in 1940’s.
Accreditation
And Growth

CHAPTER XVI

When Dr. McClure was ill in Florida and ONU was left leaderless and confused, some concerned alumni and university trustees asked the noted historian and political scientist Dr. Wilfred E. Binkley to use his considerable influence to straighten out a most unsatisfactory situation. Binkley had joined the Ohio Northern faculty in 1921 and had an international reputation as lecturer and writer. He also enjoyed a wide acquaintance among influential alumni, and it was felt that any views of his would be listened to with respect and attention.

Binkley agreed to do what he could, but before he had a chance to act further, he learned that Dr. F. Bringle McIntosh had been designated to succeed McClure.

Feeling relieved that someone was at the helm of Northern, Binkley went to England to lecture at Oxford for a year without having become acquainted with the new president. It was only on his return from England that Binkley learned what manner of man his new chief really was.

Dr. Binkley was working on a history of Ohio Northern at the time of his death, and some of his notes survive. In a portion of those notes he wrote of his first impression of Dr. McIntosh:

I observed that something like a revolution in administration had come to pass in my absence. We had a President who made prompt decisions that represented mature judgment. In faculty meeting I observed that whenever a faculty member raised a question he was familiar with almost every part of the university in a way no predecessor had been. There were faculty crises when his proficiency in parliamentary law served him well.

Binkley, who was noted for his grading of presidents of the United States on the traditional academic letter grade scale, would most probably have given the new leader an "A" for administrative efficiency.

When tapped to be ONU's sixth president in April of 1949, Dr. McIntosh was serving as Methodist district superintendent in Toledo. Prior to that he had held pastorates at New Concord, Granville, Westerville, Find-
lay and Columbus all, appropriately enough, college towns. McIntosh brought to his new post not only the parliamentary expertise of which Dr. Binkley spoke, but a wide acquaintance among Ohio Methodists and the respect of his fellow churchmen.

After being inaugurated on October 9, 1949, “Doctor Mac,” as he was affectionately known, turned with his usual briskness to the most pressing of Ohio Northern’s problems. Housing for the flood of post-war students was urgently needed, and Dr. McIntosh responded to the situation by authorizing the construction of a residence hall for 110 women. That facility, known as Clark Hall, in honor of John H. Clark of Marion, O., longtime ONU board chairman, was opened in the fall of 1951. It in 1964 it was enlarged to a capacity of 164.

A fund raising campaign led by ONU executive vice-president C. E. Wintringham netted $325,000, which was used in the development program of the university. The cherished hope of the president was that the development program would lead to full accreditation of the university by the North Central Association. He studied the documents of previous unsuccessful attempts to gain approval, in order to discover just why these attempts had been unsuccessful. Armed with this knowledge, he very carefully and thoroughly prepared for a further attempt to win the approval of the examining agency. So thorough in fact were his preparations that some alumni accused him of foot dragging on this vital matter. In reply, McIntosh simply dug out all his papers, documents, and records of his activity pertinent to his drive for accreditation, turned the whole mass of material over to the alumni committee, and let them take over his office while they examined his preparations and efforts. After a lengthy study, the committee conceded that the president had done all that could possibly be done and gave him their thanks and their blessings.

In spite of his careful preparation, accreditation was not granted on this 1955 application. As Dr. McIntosh wrote to Professor Eugene Belch:

It was a bitter disappointment to all of us. There were those in the faculty who were convinced that our second attempt would also be unsuccessful . . . And there was a real concerted effort to have us close down all the professional colleges and make our application as a College of Liberal Arts only. But we persisted in our program of improvement of the four colleges and our determination to make application as a complex little university.

Disappointed but not daunted, McIntosh and his faculty prepared for a second assault on North Central. This time the application was approved and on March 28, 1958, Ohio Northern was accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. As Dr. McIntosh wrote, “It was a significant victory and faculty, students, trustees, the church, and many of our sister institutions joined in the celebration of our victory.”

With one cherished goal realized, Dr. McIntosh set about expanding the university to accommodate a maximum of 2,700 students. Ralph W. Booker, 1923 engineering alumnus and University trustee, headed the development drive during much of this time.

Contracts were let for a new residence hall for women, later named Stambaugh Hall in honor of Avanell C. Stambaugh, of Ada, long a benefactor of ONU—and Lima Hall, a residence for men, the first in the history of the university. These facilities were opened in September of 1958.

In March of 1959 the initial unit of McIntosh Center was in operation. Additions to this splendid student union were completed in 1963 and 1967. The McIntosh administration also saw the construction of Founders Hall for men in 1964, an addition to Clark Hall for women in 1964, and wings added to Lima Hall, Founders Hall and Stambaugh Hall in 1962 and 1966. In just eight years, residence halls for more than 1400 students were built.

In 1965, the $200,000 Student Personnel Center was completed and construction begun on the new building for Pharmacy, the first unit of the Science Center. Dedicated Oct. 22, 1966, it has been named the Robertson Evans Memorial building and houses the Rudolph H. Raabe College of Pharmacy.

Such an ambitious building program was costly and Dr. McIntosh devoted much time to fund raising activities, with Dr. Eugene Eakin, Academic Vice President, handling an increased share of administrative duties.

A decisive and outspoken man, Dr. McIntosh was regarded by some as aloof and unapproachable, when in fact, just the opposite is true. He is warm and friendly and, when president of the university, ran an “open door office.” It was seldom difficult for faculty or students to get in to see him to air their problems, which always received courteous and attentive consideration. He could be blunt at times, but he was deeply appreciative of loyalty and devotion to the welfare of the university. An extra effort or a notable bit of work invariably prompted a “well done” from the president’s office.

When he retired in 1965, “Dr. Mac” could look back with some satisfaction at the results of his 16 years of work at Ohio Northern. As Hugh A. Staley, president of the ONU Alumni Association, said in a farewell salute to the retiring president, “Tradition will remember Dr. F. Bringle McIntosh as the person most responsible for leading the University to accreditation and recognition.”

Today Dr. McIntosh makes his home in Fort Jervis, New York, but as a lifetime trustee of the university, he keeps in close contact with Ohio Northern and its leaders.

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32It is of interest to note that professional accreditation had been received from the Engineers Council for Professional Development in 1953; by the American Bar Association in 1953 and by the American Council on Pharmaceutical Education in 1956.
With Roots And Wings

CHAPTER XVII

When Dr. Samuel Lewis Meyer was inaugurated as the seventh president of Ohio Northern University on October 15, 1965, he became the first layman to hold the post since Henry S. Lehr. A joint faculty-trustee committee had conducted a lengthy and careful search for a suitable president to lead Ohio Northern into its second century. Meyer was the unanimous first choice of the committee.

A man of impeccable academic background, Dr. Meyer was then academic vice president of the University of the Pacific at Stockton, California, and was known as a distinguished teacher of biology. He was just the scholar-administrator the committee sought. As J. Otis Young, chairman of the Board of Trustees, observed in announcing the appointment of Dr. Meyer: “We have a man who is an outstanding churchman, a distinguished scholar and a seasoned college administrator.”

In his inaugural address, the new president clearly stated his own philosophy of education and charted the course he intended to follow in piloting Ohio Northern. Entitling his address “Two Bequests: Roots and Wings,” he dedicated his administration to providing the firm roots of sound learning and the wings of spiritual values.

In his speech he elaborated on this concept. He said, in part:

As Ohio Northern University moves into the concluding years of its first century of service to education and to the Methodist Church, it has defined its place and charted its course. It must now take a stand and that stand must be in support of excellence in every phase of its academic program. By so doing, it will bequeath to all future generations of students the strong roots of sound learning through which the future of this country and the world may be sustained.

But what of the second of the two bequests—the wings?

The educational system is incomplete that ignores man’s spiritual development. A man cannot live by reason alone. The development of the mind is not all that is involved in education. The whole man, wisely directed and committed to the permanent values, is really our concern. Those values constitute the wings we bequeath our youth.

Excellence and spiritual values. These then were to be the guidons of Ohio Northern University under the leadership of Samuel L. Meyer.

Having stated his goals, Dr. Meyer immediately turned his considerable talents to achieving them. He gave priority to a Great Teacher program and to the construction of badly needed facilities. Although major funds for a new library had been secured prior to 1965, it was left to Dr. Meyer to superintend the construction of the new $1,700,000 Heterick Memorial Library, and to secure the additional funds necessary for its completion.33

February 14, 1968, was a proud day for Dr. Meyer and for Ohio Northern when the president led a “book brigade” to transfer the holdings from the old library to the handsome new facility that is now a showpiece of the campus. It was dedicated October 5, 1968.

The departments of biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics were scattered about the campus in unsuitable quarters, and it was the fond goal of biologist Meyer to provide them with proper facilities. This goal was realized when the $3,200,000 Basic Sciences Building, the second unit of the Science Center, was opened in September, and dedicated October 3, 1970.

Of special satisfaction to Dr. Meyer and the ONU community was the completion of the striking new Religious Center, located near the new Heterick Library. Dr. Meyer sees the proximity of these two symbols of the purpose of Ohio Northern entirely appropriate for a church-related university. On the mall mid-way between the two buildings there is a metal sculpture representing the Flame of Unity, the wedding of Knowledge and Piety.

Wesley Center houses a chapel, offices of the campus minister, and offices and classrooms for the Department of Philosophy and Religion. It was completed in the summer of 1970 and dedicated on Founder’s Day—April 17, 1971.

In the fall of 1970 a final “grace note” was added to the chapel with the installation of a 50 bell carillon, the gift of Trustee and Mrs. Walter English. For many, the music of the bells as it floats out over the campus arouses feelings of serenity and dignity that are deeply satisfying.

Construction was begun July, 1970, on the new $1,- 800,000 Engineering building (now scheduled to be dedicated Feb. 26, 1972). The new home for the College of Law is the only other structure of the Centennial De-

33Robert and Frances Felker Heterick were long-time patrons of ONU. Mrs. Heterick, class of 1907, and her husband were deeply interested in Ohio Northern, especially in its library facilities, and over the years made generous contributions for library expansion. When Mrs. Heterick died in 1964, (Dr. Heterick died in 1957), a total bequest of approximately $1.5 million, earmarked for the ONU library, became available. Today the ashes of these two benefactors repose in the wall of the striking new Heterick Memorial Library.
velopment Program which has not yet reached the construction stage. It is hoped by university authorities that sufficient funding will be secured so that erection of the Law building can begin in the near future.

The construction of these new facilities has been so rapid and has so profoundly altered the appearance of the campus that even very recent graduates are startled when they visit their alma mater. And alumni who have not seen the campus for a decade or more are utterly bewildered when they contemplate the scope of the development. What they remember as a corn field is now the handsome and tailored West Campus with its glittering new buildings, fraternity houses, and residence halls encircling an attractive mall.

If Dr. Albert E. Smith were permitted to return to the campus he ruled for so long, he would have little cause to complain about it looking ugly and unkempt. A sizable maintenance force keeps the campus trim, neat and attractive. Beautification has kept pace with building and the physical appearance is impressive.

However, the realization of virtually all of the ambitious Centennial Development Program has not come easily. The success of the program attests to the ability and efforts of many individuals. With Vice President for Development Louis S. Gibb heading the funding drive, and trustee William O. Elzay as campaign chairman, the $6,910,000 goal for the Centennial Program has almost been reached, a signal success.

However, due credit must be given to the efforts of President Meyer. Eloquent and seemingly indefatigable, he has been Ohio Northern's most articulate ambassador. During the past five years he has traveled extensively on behalf of the university and has made hundreds of speeches before a wide variety of groups. His enthusiasm and ambition for Northern have been infectious and have kindled the interest of alumni in the doings of their university. This heightened interest has found expression in increased donations to the development program.

In his reports Dr. Meyer can point out changes and innovations at Northern other than architectural and physical. The new buildings and facilities, impressive as they are, are after all, only the outward manifestations of the academic interests and ambitions they represent. It is pointless to speculate whether the academic fervor triggered the construction program or the facilities the enthusiasm. The point is that the interest is here, and it is manifest among both students and faculty.

Many curriculum changes have been made in all four colleges, and in some of the colleges the changes have been sweeping and unprecedented. All have been made with the president's inaugural objective in mind—excellence in all phases of the academic program.

Ohio Northern has been exceedingly fortunate in having able leaders in all four colleges during this period of change and development. The deans of the colleges have been largely responsible for initiating and implementing these curriculum changes.

Dean Lawrence H. Archer heads the College of Engineering. Building upon the foundations of such illustrious predecessors as Thomas Smull, Guy Elbin, John Needy, Alexander Webb, and Carroll Alden, Dean Archer has made that college a widely respected engineering school, fully accredited by the Engineers' Council for Professional Development.

A sharp increase in enrollment in the College of Pharmacy reflects the determination of Dean LeRoy D. Beltz to make this college second to none in pharmacy education. Recent curriculum revisions have been made in response to the changing role of the pharmacist in health service. Hundreds of pharmacy graduates remember fondly Dr. Rudolph H. Raabe, who served as professor and dean of the College of Pharmacy for 45 years without leave of absence, a record in the history of the university. Other noted deans of the college include B. S. Young, David Mohler, Albert C. Smith, C. O. Lee and Robert Fischelis. More than one-third of the registered pharmacists in Ohio are graduates of ONU's College of Pharmacy. The college is accredited by the American Council on Pharmaceutical Education, and in this Centennial Year has been named the "Rudolph H. Raabe College of Pharmacy."

When Eugene N. Hanson became dean of the College of Law in 1958, he donned the mantle worn by such judicial lights as William H. Henderson and Claude W. Pettit. Judge Pettit served as dean for 22 years, and, during World War II, commuted from his law activities in Lima to instruct the single student then enrolled in the College of Law. Other well known deans included S. P. Axline, Jay P. Taggart, Herman Weber and Stephen Curtis.

With over 1,400 living graduates, the College of Law is highly regarded among the legal fraternity of the state. Plans are now being completed for a new $810,000 law facility.

The College of Law is accredited by the American Bar Association and holds membership in the League of Ohio Law Schools and the Association of American Law Schools.

Since the untimely death of Dean Donald J. Maxwell, in September of 1970, Dr. Bernard L. Linger, then assistant dean, served as acting Dean of the College of Liberal Arts until promoted to Dean on April 1, 1971. In no other college have curriculum revisions been more sweeping or fundamental. A graduate of only four years ago would scarcely recognize the courses now being offered in Liberal Arts. Designed to give flexibility and breadth to the student's program of study, the new curriculum gives the student an unprecedented freedom in selection of courses. With able department heads who are alive to the changing demands on their respective disciplines, the College of Liberal Arts is in a strong position for leadership and development. Liberal Arts graduates have fond memories of such well known former deans as Harvey Evert Huber, Marion Tinsler and Oscar Darlington.
During this period of development and change, Ohio Northern has been fortunate in having a very able and hard working Board of Trustees. With J. Otis Young as chairman, the 42-member board has given President Meyer strong support in his efforts to put Ohio Northern in the van of church-related colleges and universities. This support has been especially significant during the Centennial Development Program. Individual board members have been gratifyingly generous in their own contributions and have successfully solicited other large contributions from business and industry as well as from private individuals. Never in its history has ONU had a Board of Trustees more fully informed about the workings of the university, nor one more alive to the responsibilities as well as the possibilities of Northern.

With an active and efficient board, an able and energetic president, and a competent faculty, much has been accomplished during the past five years, more probably than anyone really thought could be accomplished. However, one segment of the university community has not been noted, and without it, nothing could have been done. That, of course, is the student body. During these past few years, had the student body been indifferent and apathetic, or, on the other hand, insubordinate and riotous, this progress would have been impossible. Happily, Northern students were neither. Instead, the student body is bright, academically qualified, and socially responsible. Students have voiced criticism of certain programs and rules, but not in an unruly manner. Officials at the university attribute ONU’s freedom from tumult to the good character of the students admitted to Northern and to the fact that good personal contacts are maintained between students, faculty, and administration.

Even during the very tense days following the tragic slaying of four students by National Guardsmen at Kent State University, Northern students remained calm and composed in the face of outside efforts to agitate them. Instead of destructive riots there were orderly discussion meetings, held, it might be noted, with the assistance and cooperation of university authorities. These meetings were attended by all segments of the university community—students, faculty, administrative officers, and by the president.

Dr. Meyer dislikes disorder and chaos, and he has told friends that the month of May, 1970 was the most trying in his 30 years of experience in education. He was deeply gratified by the conduct of ONU students, who, in his words, “behaved with dignity, poise, and concern.”

To show their concern, students collected more than $1,000 to pay for an advertisement published in the Washington (D.C.) Post: “Civilization is the Victory of Persuasion over Force.” This advertisement was widely noted throughout the country and elicited many commendations for Ohio Northern’s students.

As he guided the university into its Centennial Year, Meyer had some reason for pride in its condition. With buildings mushrooming on the campus, the value of the physical plant now totaled $16 million. Endowment, once the most anemic of ONU’s supports, reached a gratifying $3.5 million. And encouragingly, gift income was up, way up. It has exceeded $1.5 million per year for the past six years, a whopping 600% over the past decade, gilt-edged evidence of alumni and business interest in the university.

President Meyer could also find comfort in the team he had employed to help in the development of the institution. Vice-president for Financial Affairs George Hassell has furthered order and efficiency in fiscal concerns and, moreover, guided an astute and forward-looking investment program. Louis Gibb, Vice-president for Development, and his associates interested hundreds of patrons in the ONU program, while George Schertzer, long-time Alumni Director, sparked alumni concern.

Academic vice-president Eugene Eakin headed an ever-expanding and academically sound faculty; 43% of the teaching faculty hold the earned doctorate and many more are finishing work toward this degree. Dr. Thomas G. Hoffman, Campus Minister, and A. Chester Burns, Dean of Students, ably carry out their important duties.

Such gains and such accomplishments are not to be despised, but as President Meyer has had occasion to point out, the future of Ohio Northern and all private colleges is not unclouded.

McIntosh Center, named in honor of President Emeritus F. Bringle McIntosh, is the student union. It houses the dining and recreational facilities, bookstore, conference rooms and guest rooms.
CHAPTER XVIII

In an address to the faculty on January 5, 1971, Dr. Meyer made a forthright statement of ONU's present situation and what must be done to safeguard the University's future. In this address, he pointed out that Northern is not an isolated case by any means. Many colleges and universities, old and prestigious though they may be, are also experiencing grave financial problems. Throughout the country there is a general downward trend in enrollment at private colleges and universities. This downward trend in enrollment is not alone responsible for the financial plight of the private colleges and universities. Coupled with it is the general business recession the economy is experiencing. Gifts to colleges from individuals, from businesses, and from industry are being reduced as the donors themselves face reduced incomes. With income from two sources reduced, institutions of higher learning are being forced to cut their expenditures sharply.

As President Meyer pointed out, Northern too is "in a position of greatly curtailed financial resources." The president went on to emphasize that, in order to assure future stability, the university would have to utilize its resources—faculty and facilities alike—in the most efficient and economical manner possible. He gave specific and detailed guidelines to reduce expenditures, or at least to hold the line at the present level. None was unreasonable or out of line with the financial facts of life at this moment.

The plain talk of the president was well received by a faculty that is fully aware of the troubled economy of the nation and the financial strain on the university. As a matter of fact, there are those on the faculty who feel such a program of frugality and retrenchment overdue. Dr. Meyer concluded his remarks by saying that we at Northern "have felt the pangs of inflation and the waver ing of our financial support . . . we have no other choice—we have to cut the cloth to fit the pattern made by the times in which we live."

During its century of service to education, Ohio Northern University has faced many crises, survived, and gone on to notable accomplishments. Her successes are measured by the lives and careers of more than 20,000 alumni. The future of private colleges and universities does not seem to be particularly bright, but the vital role of these institutions in the educational edifice of the nation makes it imperative that every effort be made to assure their continuing existence as viable, adventurous institutions. Ohio Northern has had a checkered history; there is no assurance that its second century will be any easier, but with dedicated and intelligent tailors to cut the cloth to fit the pattern of the years ahead, it will survive and prosper in service to education and youth.
Significant Events Of ONU, 1866-1971

April 9, 1866—Henry Solomon Lehr began teaching in the public school of Ada; and conducted his "select school" during the winter season (when the public school was not in session).

August 14, 1871—The first classes began in the Northwestern Ohio Normal School; Henry Solomon Lehr, president. 117 students were enrolled; six instructors were employed. A new normal School Building, not quite completed.

1871—The first literary societies (Franklin and Philomathean) were organized.

1874—First graduation, 11 alumni.

1875—Northwestern Normal School of Fostoria merged with school.

1879—The new "Administration Building" built.

1880—Adelphian literary society organized.


1882—The College of Engineering established.

The third building, "The Sheepshed" was built, with four classrooms (two story); later Kappa Psi fraternity.

Military Department established.

1884—The College of Pharmacy established.

1885—Incorporated, and name changed to Ohio Normal University.

The College of Law established.

1886—The first fraternity organized, soon disbanded.

October 8, 1891—Major William McKinley—Gov. James Campbell debate.

1893—ONU won the blue ribbon for best exhibit at the Columbian Exhibition in Chicago.

1894—The fourth building (2 story frame) for the College of Pharmacy.
1895—William Jennings Bryan addressed the graduating Class.
1897—ONU first played football.
1899—The University sold to the Central Ohio Conference of the M. E. Church.
1900—Dr. Leroy Belt became the second president of O.N.U.; Dr. Lehr vice-president.
1901-02—Building of “The Dukes Memorial”.
Building of “The Brown Auditorium”.
1902—Dr. Lehr retired at age of 64.
July 28, 1903—The name changed to “Ohio Northern University”.
July 20, 1905—Dr. Albert Edwin Smith inaugurated as third president of O.N.U.
1910—The first college annual THE COMET, was published.
June 5, 1910—U. S. President William Howard Taft speaks at Commencement.
1913—The old Normal building removed.
November 4, 1913—The Administration Building almost destroyed by fire.
1914—The Pharmacy building moved to the corner of University and Gilbert.
1915—Dedication of the H. S. Lehr Memorial Building—
the new administration building.
Dedication of the rebuilt “old administration building,” renamed The Hill Memorial.
1916—Sigma Phi Epsilon built the first fraternity house
in Ohio.
O.N.U. joined Ohio Conference, (withdrew in 1919)
1920—Alpha Phi Gamma, national honor society in journalism, founded at Ohio Northern University.
1920—“The Northern Review” first published, succeeding the “University Herald” and “Northern Light.”
1921—Sororities were banned.
1922—The Central heating plant and Power House was built.
January 29, 1923—Dr. Lehr died at his home in Ada.
1923—The new building for the College of Law.
The Polar Bear Mascot first appeared.
The first Ohio Conference Championship—in baseball.
1927—The first issue of the OHIO NORTHERN ALUMNUS
May 25, 1929—Presser Hall dedicated.
May 26, 1929—Taft Gymnasium dedicated.
1930—Sororities were re-established.
Dr. Robert Williams installed as the fourth President of O.N.U.
1931—The first approved college dance was held.
1932—Turner Hall acquired as a residence for freshman women.
1943—Dr. Robert O. McClure installed as the fifth president of O.N.U.
Declining enrollment, some intercollegiate athletics suspended.
1945—Three “trailer villages” established as temporary housing for war veteran students. Enrollment, which had dropped below 200, started to climb again.
1949—Dr. F. Bringle McIntosh installed as the sixth president of O.N.U.
Withdraw from Ohio Conference; joined the Mid-Ohio Conference.
1951—Clark Hall opened.
1952—The College of Engineering moved to the renovated public school building on N. Main Street.
1953—Professional accreditation received from the Engineers’ Council for Professional Development.
1955—Professional accreditation received from the American Bar Association.
1956—Professional accreditation received from the American Council on Pharmaceutical Education.
March 28, 1958—Ohio Northern University accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.
1958—First issue of “Polaris” literary magazine is published.
September 1958—Opening of Lima Hall and Stambaugh Hall.
March 1959—The opening of the dining section of McIntosh Center.
1962—West Hall added to Lima Hall; Stambaugh Hall addition completed.
1963—An addition to McIntosh Center.
1964—The opening of Founders Hall (with west wing) :
an addition to Clark Hall.
Phi Mu Delta occupied first new fraternity house on West Campus.
1965—The Student Personnel Center completed.
Installation of Dr. Samuel L. Meyer as the seventh president of ONU.
Sigma Pi and Delta Sigma Phi fraternities completed houses on West Campus.
1966—Completion of the Robertson-Evans Memorial building for Pharmacy.
Addition of the east wings to Lima Hall (Brookhart Hall) and Founders Hall.
Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity house completed on West Campus.
1967—New University Seal and Banner adopted.
McIntosh Center second addition completed.
1968—Completion of the Heterick Memorial Library.
N Men’s Association began ONU Athletic Hall of Fame at Homecoming.
Alpha Sigma Phi and Phi Kappa Theta fraternities build on the West Campus.
Innovative Liberal Arts curriculum went into effect.
CENTENNIAL YEAR

Spring, 1970—“Creating Tomorrow from Today,” selected as the Centennial Year theme, written by Robert Cupp, a freshman from Columbus Grove.
August 7, 1970—President Richard Nixon sent his greetings in a letter to the University.
August 14, 1970—Centennial year officially began with a program of morning prayers on the lawn in front of Lehr Memorial.
August 14, 1970—Postage meter marks announcing the Centennial Year were first used by Ada Post Office and ONU Mail Room.
September 25, 1970—Gigantic birthday cake cut at picnic in Ada Memorial Park, attended by 2,000 students and faculty.
September 26, 1970—Joanne Griffith, a junior from Salem, Ohio, crowned Centennial Queen.
October 2, 1970—Dr. Robert Biggs, '30, Cleveland businessman, spoke at Fellows Dinner attended by 250 persons.
October 3, 1970—Basic sciences building dedicated.
October 4, 1970—50-bell Walter and Marian English Carillon dedicated.

Centennial Queen Joanne Griffith of Salem, Ohio.

October 24, 1970—At 36th annual Homecoming, ONU defeated Ashland College on the gridiron before record-breaking crowd.
January 8, 1971—Don Hurless Band provided music for Centennial Ball at which the Centennial Queen reigned.
January, 1971—3,000 silver and bronze Centennial medals went on sale.
February 16, 1971—Century Day, a day of no classes to hold old-time events including spelling bee, taffy pull, faculty-student basketball game and horror movies.
March 8, 1971—Observance of Dr. Lehr's birthday held in Wesley Center.
ONU invited to re-join the Ohio Conference.
April 17, 1971—Dedication of Wesley Center with Bishop Gerald Kennedy the speaker.
June 5, 1971—Premiere of Centennial Pageant written and directed by Prof. Ronald V. Ladwig.
June 12, 1971—Alumni Day and second showing of pageant.
June 13, 1971—Centennial Commencement with Bishop F. Gerald Ensley as speaker.
August, 1971—“Tempered by Crises,” the ONU centennial history written by Prof. Eugene Belch, published.
Fall, 1971—Engineering building completed.
August 13, 1971—Centennial Year officially closed with a program of evening prayers in Wesley Center.
May Pole Dance, about 1915.

Above: Hatchet burying, about 1912; below, Battery B of 1908.

President Smith (right) bore a strong resemblance to presidential hopeful William Jennings Bryan (left). Conscious of this resemblance, Smith emulated the politician in bearing and manner. Bryan visited campus several times.

The campus from 1903-13. Buildings (from left): Dukes, "Sheep Shed," Pharmacy, Normal, Administration. (Brown, not shown.)