



2003

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Class of 2004

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Grenz, Daryl (2003) "The Men And Women Of Gettysburg College: Class Of 1903," *The Gettysburg Historical Journal*: Vol. 2 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/ghj/vol2/iss1/4>

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# The Men And Women Of Gettysburg College: Class Of 1903

## **Abstract**

On Thursday September 7, 1899 a new school year (its sixty-eighth) began at Pennsylvania College in Gettysburg.<sup>1</sup> Many students had arrived as early as that Sunday to begin settling into their rooms. Many of the forty-three new students<sup>2</sup> had been accepted the previous June by passing a series of entrance exams in all of the applicable subject areas, especially the Classics. A number of others had waited and taken the exams as the school year started. Eighteen individuals were exempt from entrance exams because of their satisfactory work during the previous year at the attached preparatory school in Stevens Hall. These students were already familiar with the campus and with upperclassmen that they had come in contact with casually or through their attendance of and participation in various campus societies. In many ways these eighteen formed the core of the class of 1903 from entrance to graduation. Freshmen by and large came from the surrounding towns and counties in Pennsylvania and Maryland; four of the new men were from Gettysburg itself.

## **Keywords**

Pennsylvania College, Gettysburg College, Class of 1903

# The Men and Women Of Gettysburg College: Class Of 1903

*Daryl Grenz*

On Thursday September 7, 1899 a new school year (its sixty-eighth) began at Pennsylvania College in Gettysburg.<sup>1</sup> Many students had arrived as early as that Sunday to begin settling into their rooms. Many of the forty-three new students<sup>2</sup> had been accepted the previous June by passing a series of entrance exams in all of the applicable subject areas, especially the Classics. A number of others had waited and taken the exams as the school year started. Eighteen individuals were exempt from entrance exams because of their satisfactory work during the previous year at the attached preparatory school in Stevens Hall. These students were already familiar with the campus and with upperclassmen that they had come in contact with casually or through their attendance of and participation in various campus societies. In many ways these eighteen formed the core of the class of 1903 from entrance to graduation. Freshmen by and large came from the surrounding towns and counties in Pennsylvania and Maryland; four of the new men were from Gettysburg itself. Their general proximity to the campus meant that the men\* of the freshman class had largely been able to visit the campus prior to their matriculation. Edward B.

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<sup>1</sup> Officially named Pennsylvania College students and others generally referred to it as Gettysburg College so as to avoid confusion with other Pennsylvania Colleges. The name was officially changed in 1921. "Calendar, 1899-1900" *Annual Catalogue Of The Officers And Students: 1899-1900*, (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Gettysburg College, 1900).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

\* References during this period to "the men" generally reference the entire male student body and do not indicate the female members of this body though in some instances they do reference co-ed groups.

Hay of Red Hook, NY and Charles D. Speers of Pittsburgh were the exceptions to the limited geographical representation of the class.<sup>3</sup>

Among the incoming students were six women, five of Gettysburg and one of York, who made up the as yet ill defined, but still widely admired collection of class co-eds. These women were necessarily from Gettysburg and its environs because school policy did not provide for on campus accommodations for women and defined female students as “day students”<sup>4</sup> only. Despite continuing to live at home however female students appear to have participated actively in college life whenever possible joining and holding office in the campus literary societies and attending (on occasion) class banquets and sports events. Three of the class’s women had also been students at the preparatory school the previous year.

The campus weekly, *The Gettysburgian*, published every Wednesday gives some idea of the general feeling on campus at the beginning of the school year. While praising the energy and interest with which it claims students began the year it also openly laments two related issues that troubled Gettysburg students at the time.<sup>5</sup> First was a lack of money to pursue the construction and other expansion, which in many respects marked the era of Harvey W. McKnight’s presidency (1884-1903). Thus *The Gettysburgian* began the year soliciting donations from alumni. The issue of creating an endowment for the college that would permit it to expand had taken special precedence in previous

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 54-55.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Henry Glatfelter, *A Salutary Influence : Gettysburg College, 1832-1985*, 1 (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Gettysburg College, 1987), 304.

<sup>5</sup> “Greeting” *The Gettysburgian*, 4, no.1 (September 13, 1899): 1.

years as McKnight struggled to complete new building projects. Second was the feeling that the college at Gettysburg lacked “standing” in the eyes of many prospective students, mostly through a perceived failure to achieve athletic success.<sup>6</sup>

Prominent for incoming students in 1899 among McKnight’s improvements was the completion in 1898 of a second dorm building, designated South College at the time this building is now called McKnight Hall.<sup>7</sup> Many of the new students chose rooms in this new building while a nearly equal number moved into rooms in “Old Dorm” (the original campus building and the primary dormitory). The choice of rooms was generally based upon income level as the cheapest rooms (costing a student as little as 12.50\$ a year) were among Old Dorm’s 86 rooms and the South College suites, able to room fifty students total, could cost as much as 62.50\$ a year, even assuming that the room was shared.<sup>8</sup> Other additions to the campus that greeted the class of 1903 that would not have been there for their peers just over a decade earlier were the towering Glatfelter Hall (called the Recitation Hall) and the Brua Memorial Chapel (now the Kline Theater).

New buildings had greatly increased the college’s capacity for students yet the class of 1903 was smaller than the freshman classes of the preceding years. Succeeding freshman classes rebounded from this decrease and no explanation for the dip in enrollment is readily apparent. Among other things their small size

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>7</sup> Anna Jane Moyer, *The Way We Were: A History of Student Life At Gettysburg College*, Gettysburg College History Series #6, (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Gettysburg College Printing Office, 1982), 9.

<sup>8</sup> *Annual Catalogue: 1899-1900*, 35.

made the “new men” in the fall of 1899 especially open to hazing and domination by the sophomore class who according to college traditions held the incoming freshman in mocking contempt. Accounts of freshman / sophomore clashes from the year 1899-1900 are epitomized by the romanticizing words of *The Gettysburgian's* story of the “ ’02 and ’03 Rush.”<sup>9</sup> This traditional event consisted of an impromptu battle in the middle of the night between freshmen and sophomores. Each class making “a number of determined efforts to drive their opponents from the field” of the preparatory campus, until the freshmen were forced to admit defeat by giving the sophomore’s class yell.

The class yell was one of a number of distinguishing features that acted to strengthen a sense of class unity. Each class had a yell\* and official class colors (blue and white, representing loyalty and purity, for the class of 1903) that were taken to be proud symbols of their position within the campus hierarchy. Many classes purchased caps or other clothing displaying their class colors. The rush was a traditional feature of class rivalries and was initiated at the beginning of the year by one class that had become fed up with the boasts of superiority of another class (typically between sophomore and freshman classes). Other outbursts of class competition were in athletic events between class baseball, football and basketball teams. Between class teams the class of 1903 distinguished itself as fielding some of the college’s best athletes (the other area where it dominated was in providing the school’s best musicians). In the arena of the all-member rushes between classes the class of 1903 was defeated in both

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<sup>9</sup> “’02 and ’03 Rush” *The Gettysburgian*, 4, no. 3 (September 27, 1899): 26-27.

\* c/o 1903 yell: “Alle-garo-gara-garee! / Alle-garo-gara-garee! / Hi! Yi! Ki! Yi! / Nineteen Three

years in which it took part. The class of 1903 always appears to have put up a strong fight however as noted in the multiple accounts of the September 8, 1900 rush during which they were overwhelmed by the efforts of nearly 60 freshmen only after a three hour long battle that was witnessed by “probably two hundred people from town.”<sup>10</sup> This rush also marked the last class rush to occur at Gettysburg College with administrative acceptance. In the spring of that year the Board of Trustees ordered that “no student shall participate in any class rush” and that the parents of all incoming students be notified of the change. The decision to end acceptance of this traditional expression of class rivalry was in response both to concerns of student injury to themselves and the college’s property, and a feeling that such activities were incompatible with the restrained behavior appropriate to a college man.

The particular incident leading to the college’s decision was an attack by the freshmen (the class of 1904) upon the preparatory students of Stevens Hall on the night of October 17, 1900. The incident followed “inconsiderate action” on the part of some prep students that the men of 1904 took as an invitation to battle.<sup>11</sup> The prep students sought refuge in their dorm and the frustrated freshmen resorted to breaking the windows of the building. The entire freshmen class was implicated in the destruction at Stevens Hall and each was fined .25\$, placed on probation and required to pledge “more discreet behavior for the future.”<sup>12</sup> The faculty’s attempt at a balanced response to what *The*

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<sup>10</sup> “Collegiana” *The Gettysburgian*, 5, no. 14 (September 12, 1900): 168.

<sup>11</sup> Correspondence from President McKnight to J.V. Wentz dated Oct. 24, 1900. Abdel Ross Wentz Library Archives, Lutheran Seminary of Gettysburg.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

*Gettysburgian* termed “malicious mischief” that “should be stamped out of our midst”<sup>13</sup> is clear in the cool and understanding tone of President McKinley’s letter of notification to the parents of the offending students, his primary lament being that such actions damage the college’s reputation in the community. Such a response was necessary in light of the fact that many rowdy activities were partaken in by all members of a class and were felt by the men to be legitimate expressions of class rivalry and school spirit.

The primary fear of the faculty was that rowdiness was in “defiance of and insubordination to college authority.”<sup>14</sup> An example of particularly disconcerting behavior in this respect was the burning of an effigy of their German professor (Professor Brede) by the members of the junior class on the night of May 9, 1900 that resulted first in the suspension of the entire class and then in the penalties being cut to the awarding of 25 demerits [which required that a student’s parents be notified] and probation once the faculty gained a better understanding of the circumstances. 50 demerits were necessary for the suspension of a student. This episode resulted in Professor Brede not returning the following year because of the intense dislike that he evoked among the student body and appears to be an anomaly in generally genial relations between students and faculty. In *The Spectrum* student comment typifies the professors as rigid and overly difficult, but that is to be expected.

Other types of rowdy public behavior were even less justifiable in the eyes of college authority. The primary examples of such behavior are the use of

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<sup>13</sup> *The Gettysburgian*, 5, no. 20 (October 24, 1900): 232.

<sup>14</sup> *The Gettysburgian*, 5, no. 10 (May 23, 1900): 112.



alcohol and the often associated vandalism. Alcohol violations tended to result in demerits and probation and offenders were often required to pledge that they would not use “intoxicating beverages” and would report any observed use to the faculty.<sup>15</sup> In addition the faculty required that all approved class and fraternity banquets occur only with an accompanying pledge that alcohol would not be served.<sup>16</sup> Students were discouraged from frequenting or boarding in area hotels that served alcohol and generally a hard propaganda line was taken toward alcohol, yet a group of six students found guilty of drinking in 1900 were given demerits, but assured that the faculty’s desire “was not to punish anyone, but rather “to crush out the evil of using intoxicants.”<sup>17</sup>

The administration’s prohibitions in this respect were generally meant to maintain the dignity of the institution and to uphold its students’ morality. An example of interventions in this vein was the decision at the June 13-14, 1899 meeting of the Board of Trustees “that public entertainments that include dancing shall not be given by students.”<sup>18</sup> These restrictions on student activities were meant to preserve the dignity of the students and protect them from lewdness. Of special concern were improper activities between men and women students, reflected in the dancing prohibition. This attitude also played a role in the faculty’s response to the women’s request to have access to the gymnasium for exercise. The faculty rejected that specific request<sup>19</sup>, but came up with an

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<sup>15</sup> Faculty Minutes, Gettysburg College: December 7, 1900.

<sup>16</sup> Faculty Minutes, GCSC: February 21, 1900.

<sup>17</sup> Glatfelter, 326.

<sup>18</sup> Faculty Minutes, Gettysburg College Special Collections: inserted report of the Board of Trustees meeting of June 13-14, 1899.

<sup>19</sup> Faculty Minutes, GCSC: December 12, 1901.

alternate system by which women could have an exercise class two nights a week in Recitation Hall, under the care of a chaperone, and that a changing room be set aside, but that no young men be permitted in the building during this time.<sup>20</sup>

*The Gettysburgian* often positioned itself as a defender of administration attitudes and concerns making it difficult to determine the majority positions of the student body itself. In some cases the newspapers admonitions, such as the following warning against Halloween mischief, were likely reflective of the fact that students regularly engaged in activities disturbing to the proper sensibilities of the college.

Custom has also given this special night over to the small boy in which he may play his mischievous pranks more freely than at other times. Sometimes we 'more grown up small boys' have taken to ourselves these privileges and raised 'cain' as they say. It is not fitting however that we should continue doing so and so to-night let us leave to the witches and smaller boys the proper celebration of Hallowe'en.<sup>21</sup>

Conversely the newspaper's subsequent report that Halloween night was free of disturbances may well indicate that the students were responsive to President McKnight's policy of encouraging student self-control, allowing them the freedom worthy of their status, yet still maintaining rigid order (what may be loosely considered "modern college discipline").<sup>22</sup> This tone can also be found in a *Gettysburgian* article reporting Halloween vandalism committed the following year upon the laboratory building, which concluded that

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<sup>20</sup> Faculty Minutes, GCSC: December 19, 1901.

<sup>21</sup> "Collegiana" *The Gettysburgian*, 5, no. 21 (October 31, 1900): 251.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel Gring Hefelbower, *The History Of Gettysburg College, 1832-1932* (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Gettysburg College, 1932), 277.

Such acts are due to a cowardly, malicious spirit of mischief which ought to meet with the hearty disapproval of every self-respecting student, and, happily, the great majority of our students are of this class. We ought to feel a common interest in the property of the college and unite to a man in its preservation.<sup>23</sup>

The breaking of windows in campus buildings and the uprooting of shrubbery is clearly not what might be called an above-board student pastime and it seems likely that in this instance *The Gettysburgian* is correct in assuming that most students rejected such behavior as unthinkable. Once a year each class was expected to assist the groundskeeper and janitor Adam Foutz (referred to as “Jan” or “Guv”) who served the college from 1876-1906, which would seem to indicate their general interest in keeping up the school (though not everyone participated).<sup>24</sup>

Opportunities for school-wide recreation outside of sports events were limited though the two most visible were the annual Washington’s Day Parade on February 22 and the campus parties of May 1902 and 1903. The Washington’s Day Parade also provided an opportunity for class rivalry in a civilized arena through costume competitions while providing expression of the “hearty good feeling existing between the college students... and residents of town”<sup>25</sup> on such communal occasions. The spring party was initiated by *The Gettysburgian* as a means to pay off its debts through the sale of candies, cakes and ice cream to students, faculty and townspeople.<sup>26</sup> The snack sales were accompanied by

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<sup>23</sup> *The Gettysburgian*, 6, no. 22 (November 6, 1901): 160.

<sup>24</sup> Glatfelter, 266.

<sup>25</sup> “Washington’s Birthday Parade” *The Gettysburgian*, 6, no. 34 (February 26, 1902): 401.

<sup>26</sup> “Campus Party” *The Gettysburgian*, 7, no. 9 (May 14, 1902): 97.

music by various campus musical groups that combined to provide enjoyable and profitable evenings for both the attendees and *The Gettysburgian*.<sup>27</sup>

Student rowdiness must otherwise not obscure what was a very academic atmosphere of study and intellectual stimulation at the college. This was the result of the heavy course load required of students who could participate in either the Classical or Scientific Courses (leading respectively to a BA and a BS) with options in the junior and senior years among modern languages (normally German and French) and various specific sciences as electives. The Scientific Course was generally considered the easier of the two engendering the following comment “If you want the laziest set of daredevils in the college, go to the class of 1903; but if you want the laziest set of devils in the class, go to the Scientifs.”<sup>28</sup> The number of “Scientifs” had risen continually in the preceding years with a third\* of the class of 1903’s graduates holding a BS. The detailed scheduling of a student’s time contributed to the atmosphere and left most students with little leisure time. Throughout the years that the class of 1903 worked at Gettysburg College they would have had classes “on the hour, except at noon, from 8 A.M. through 3 P.M.” during the week with additional class times at 8 and 9 A.M. on Saturdays.<sup>29</sup> The studious atmosphere was encouraged by the college’s close association with the nearby Lutheran Seminary (which five of the graduates of 1903 attended the following year) and by the continued presence at the college

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<sup>27</sup> “Campus Festival” *The Gettysburgian*, 8, no. 11 (May 20, 1903): 128-129.

<sup>28</sup> “Junior Yarns” *The Spectrum: 1903* (Gettysburg, PA: GC, 1902), 151.

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<sup>29</sup> Glatfelter, 304.

of a graduate program (officially ended in 1905).<sup>30</sup> In addition the college permitted students freetime in the week from 6:45 to 7:45 AM, 12 to 1 PM and 5 to 8 PM.<sup>31</sup> During this time they could freely leave campus, though they were supposed to remain in town. In order to miss classes or leave town students were required to have an excuse from their parents or approval from the faculty, and unexcused absences could be punished by the awarding of demerits. Some school-sponsored events could also excuse a student from classes, especially important sports events against major rivals such as Franklin and Marshall or Dickinson. In addition many years the sophomore class took trips around the countryside for their botany class. In 1899 the faculty had agreed to permit limited absenteeism from class, but trips out of town still required permission and most students still found it best to get pre-approval before absenting themselves from class, as evidenced by the continual entries of approved excuses in the faculty minutes.

Colleges across the country were still struggling at this juncture with the level of support to be given to student athletic programs through questions of whether to hire full-time coaches or assign professors to coach and the appropriateness of providing outstanding athletes with scholarships to encourage their attendance. The two primary sports at Gettysburg were football and baseball, though tennis and track (begun in earnest in the spring of 1899) teams also played intercollegiately, as did basketball (for the first time during the 1900-1901 season). Without question football evoked the greatest student interest and

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 294.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 322.

support. The primary difficulty for the creation of a successful football squad lay in the inability to hold onto a coach with a different coach leading the team each year from 1899-1902. The 1899 team went through its first two games without a coach, but Coach “Doc” Ritchie succeeded in leading the team to a 4-5 record for the year.<sup>32</sup> A new coach the following year, Coach Byron “By” Dickson, who despite renewed hopes also failed to lead the team to a winning season, victorious in only its first and last games of the year the team ended with a rather awful 2-6-1 record.<sup>33</sup> A much more gratifying record of 6-3 closed out the 1901 season despite the formidable setbacks of again adjusting to a new coach (Livingston Smith) and losing their Captain Charles Speer '03 mid-way through the season, to be replaced by Howard B. Young '03. The 1902 season saw a return of Gettysburg’s poor luck with Coach Smith leaving after only one game and the team finishing out the year with a hopeful 4-7 season. Student and town interest was evidenced by the fact that on a number of occasions when important away games were being played individuals or groups would buy up the telegraph time and receive play-by-play reports that were then read out loud to the gathered crowd.<sup>34</sup> The creation of a basketball squad was intended in part to keep athletes in shape between football and baseball seasons but quickly gained a following among the student body. Student interest was not dampened by the squads early setbacks, with a 1-5 record in its first season and the 1-4 record of its second, the team’s 6-5 record of the 1902-1903 season marked a huge

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<sup>32</sup> Robert L Bloom, *Intercollegiate Athletics At Gettysburg College, 1879-1919* (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Gettysburg College, 1976), 14.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

success that seemed to justify the faithfulness of the many students who had enjoyed the home games through the losing winters many of them anteing up the .25\$ game fee. Not all students paid however, Abdel R. Wentz '04 wrote his brother that when he attended games he got in for free because, at the team manager's request, he assisted in setting up chairs for spectators.<sup>35</sup> The result of greater student participation and interest in the school's sports programs was the regulation for the first time in October 1900 of the "privilege of wearing distinguishing initials and numbers"<sup>36</sup>

The class of 1903's junior year was marked from its beginning by the discovery upon students return that one of their classmates Theodore F. McAllister had died during the summer break (on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July) from typhoid fever.<sup>37</sup> Theodore had been an active member and officer in class government, the Philo Literary Society and the YMCA among other things and appears to have been widely admired for his dedication and spirit. If the literary and intellectual circles of students were directly touched by the death of Theodore, then the athletic and fraternity crowd felt the blow the class received on October 24, 1901 in the death of Charles D. Speer of appendicitis. Charles' "wonderful physique made him a leader in all lines of athletics"<sup>38</sup> and was leading the college football team as captain in a successful season at the time of his death.

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<sup>34</sup> Correspondence from A.R. Wentz to his brother Luther S. Wentz dated October 18, 1902. Abdel Ross Wentz Library Archives, Lutheran Seminary of Gettysburg.

<sup>35</sup> Correspondence from A.R. Wentz to his brother Luther S. Wentz dated January 27, 1902.

<sup>36</sup> "Athletic Association Meeting" *The Gettysburgian*, 5, no. 20 (October 17, 1900), 218.

<sup>37</sup> "In Memoriam. Theodore Frank McAllister" *The Spectrum: 1903* (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Gettysburg College, 1902), 5.

<sup>38</sup> "In Memoriam. Charles David Speer" *The Spectrum: 1903* (Gettysburg, PA: GC, 1902), 7.

As college athletics grew in importance during this period the issue of balancing athletics with education quickly showed its face with Charles as an early case who was removed by order of the faculty from the football team in 1900. Charles was permitted back onto the team in the spring upon the request of the team manager, after making improvements in the quality of his scholarship and promising to maintain the level of his work.<sup>39</sup> In addition to his athletic prowess Charles was a brother in the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, one of the six active fraternities (four of which had their own fraternity halls) of this period. The other five were Phi Kappa Psi, Sigma Chi, Phi Gamma Delta, Phi Delta Theta and Sigma Alpha Epsilon (the newest having been opened just the previous year). Fraternity membership made up over a third of the student body with 68 brothers among the student body of 182 in 1899-1900 and 73 of the 178-member student body of 1902-1903 being active members. The fraternities' growth also decreased student participation in other traditional societies, especially the two literary ones. Though Philo and Phrena declined some groups such as The Pen and Sword (composed of upperclassmen who had been active in organizations of academic or athletic prowess) continued to thrive.

Charles Speer and Theodore McAllister occupied opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of intellectual versus athletic achievements, a separation that perhaps was necessary in light of limits on a student's time, but remains of note. In *The Spectrum: 1903* the pursuits of each member of the class are listed and provide insight into the typical combination of extracurricular activities that adherents to one path or the other might enjoy. Members of the college football

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<sup>39</sup> Faculty Minutes, Gettysburg College: April 18, 1901.



or baseball teams are also generally members of the macho “Sons of Hercules” and are more likely to have served as a class officer and to have membership in a fraternity. A prime example of such a man and of the good-natured ribbing that accompanied the competition between the two camps is Uriah Francis White, a member of Phi Kappa Psi and a football, baseball, and basketball player at both the class and inter-collegiate levels<sup>40</sup> who’s senior quote is “I rarely read any Latin, Greek or French book in the original, which I can procure in a good version.”<sup>41</sup> This refers to the ever more popular, and controversial, trick of avoiding the reading of required Classical texts by procuring “horses” or translations (assailed by professors as a sign of mental sloth among students).

These popular and athletic individuals were also likely to play not only on the college team for their respective sport, but also to have been part of their class’s teams in nearly every sport. While nearly all students are listed as being members of either the Philomathean or Phrenakosmian literary societies those who at some point held officer’s posts or memberships in the society’s debating club were not on any of the inter-collegiate sports teams though several played on their class baseball or football teams. In addition these men were more likely to record leadership positions in organizations such as the YMCA or have worked on the staff of *The Gettysburgian* or *The Mercury* (the college’s literary publication). Men of this leaning also laid themselves open to jokes of prudish or snobbish behavior as in a reference to the appearance of harmless forms of strong words “for the sake of Y.M.C.A. men, so that they can swear without

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<sup>40</sup> “Junior Statistics” *The Spectrum: 1903* (Gettysburg, PA: GC, 1902), 30.

<sup>41</sup> “Seniors Under The X-Rays” *The Spectrum: 1904* (Gettysburg, PA: GC, 1903), 268.

'cussing'."<sup>42</sup> Such men as Curtis Edward "Elizabeth" Cook, who in his junior year was vice president of Philo and the Deutsche Gesellschaft, president of the Philo Debating Club and assistant manager of *The Mercury*<sup>43</sup>, of whom one was told "talk to him of Jacob's ladder and he would ask the number of steps."<sup>44</sup>

Organizations that enjoyed active participation from members of both the athletic and the intellectual student groups tended to be those, such as the Mandolin and Guitar club, the Class Glee club and the college Orchestra, which provided more leisurely activity than the strenuous physical or mental workouts of other groups.

In addition to outlining their activities and achievements this catalog of the junior class also provides information as to the party allegiances and denominational backgrounds of the class members. Of those for whom party information is provided (all of the men) 20 are Republicans, 8 Democrats and 3 Prohibitionists. Denominational representation consisted of 29 Lutherans, 1 Presbyterian (though strangely enough both of the deceased, Speers and McAllister, were Presbyterian), and three men for which no denomination is listed. Clearly then the student body is very much what would be expected for a college in Pennsylvania (at the heart of the Republican north) with a close affiliation with the Lutheran Seminary of Gettysburg. Student interest in politics is also evidenced by the many political debates taken up in Philo and Phrena and the fact that early November always brought an exodus of students who went home to vote.

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<sup>42</sup> "Dictionary of College Words and Slang Expressions" *The Spectrum: 1901* (Gettysburg, PA: GC, 1900), 219.

<sup>43</sup> "Junior Statistics" *The Spectrum: 1903* (Gettysburg, PA: GC, 1902), 23.

<sup>44</sup> "Seniors Under The X-Rays" *The Spectrum: 1904* (Gettysburg, PA: GC, 1903), 265.

Racial diversity among the student body was generally non-existent though interestingly enough a Japanese student, S. Koidzumi, did enter the preparatory school in 1902 without particular note being taken though he appears to be the only international student at the school during this period.<sup>45</sup> Another source of distinct diversity were the several Pennsylvania Dutch men who were subject to ribbing for their speech though they also received praise as that lavished by Abdel Wentz (following the victory of Phrena over Philo in the spring 1903 society competition) when he noted “oh the dutch can do almost anything if they really want to. It was a dutchman, too, Eyster\* by name, who won the debate for us. Oh yes, the dutch are all right.”<sup>46</sup>

The literary societies were declining during this period but they were far from defeated. Besides openly debating the issue of their own value to the school and complaining regularly over their own delinquent members<sup>47</sup> they also sought to encourage interest with new programs. Phrena revived the tradition of mock trials with that of “Moses Johnson (colored), on the charge of chicken stealing” in 1900<sup>48</sup> which was accompanied by orchestral music to produce an engaging night. The fact that this and other societal activities were held on Friday nights (in conflict with student preferences) also contributed heavily to their unattractiveness though the increased appearance of music at their

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<sup>45</sup> “Collegiana” *The Gettysburgian*, 7, no. 15 (September 17, 1902): 180.

\* Paul W. Eyster of the c/o 1903 noted in *The Spectrum* as speaking neither English or Dutch but rather his own language, “Eysterism”.

<sup>46</sup> Correspondence from A.R. Wentz to his brother Luther S. Wentz dated March 22, 1903.

<sup>47</sup> Philomathean meeting minutes from the Gettysburg College Special Collection’s MS-006 document collection: “Papers of the Philomathean and Phrenakosmian Societies.” Series I, Box 4: minutes dated November 10, 1899.

<sup>48</sup> “Phrena’s Mock Trial” *The Gettysburgian*, 5, no. 27 (December 12, 1900): 321.

presentations, with extensive recitals by co-ed members, in addition to more interesting debate topics stemmed the tide of student apathy for a time.

Religious instruction remained an integral part of student obligation while the class of 1903 was at Gettysburg College with students who resided on campus required to attend daily chapel (at 7:45 AM)<sup>49</sup> and all students required to attend weekly Sunday services at Christ Lutheran Church.<sup>50</sup> Those students of other denominations could receive an exemption with a letter from their parents, though they were still required to attend the services of their own church.<sup>51</sup> An absence from church normally led to the accrual of 10 demerits making suspension a real threat to students who neglected their religious duties.<sup>52</sup> This system was under criticism by some students at the time as evidenced by the decision of Philo to debate the question of whether “compulsory attendance at chapel in our colleges should be abandoned.”<sup>53</sup> Many Gettysburg students however were quite pious, intending to join the ministry, and were strongly religious regardless as evidenced by the fact that they were already attending school through synod scholarships (such as that of 35.00\$ received by A.R. Wentz for each of the school year’s three terms). Religious activities that were voluntarily and still widely participated in included class bible studies, the YMCA, the annual week of prayer every mid-November, the annual “Day of Prayer for Colleges” in late January, and numerous speeches by visiting

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<sup>49</sup> *Annual Catalogue: 1899-1900*, 9.

<sup>50</sup> Glatfelter, 268.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>53</sup> Philomathean meeting minutes dated April 17, 1903.

reverends throughout the year. Representatives of the Anti-Saloon League<sup>54</sup> or various other “anti-profanity”<sup>55</sup> or prohibition leagues and clubs made many of these orations, in advocacy of deeply held religious condemnations of those students who offended the faculty’s (and some other students) sensibilities.

The spring of 1903 was marked by a scare of smallpox infection on campus that led to a mass exodus of students from campus who wished to avoid quarantine. In the end the original diagnosis was proven to be false, but all students were required to provide evidence of vaccination. This incident was recorded by Abdel Wentz in a letter where he explained his decision to stay saying “I’d rather be quarantined and stay right here in this room for several months, than carry smallpox home.”<sup>56</sup> The return of normalcy to campus brought with it the announcement by Pres. McKnight that he would not be returning the following fall at a dinner reception that he held for the senior class on February 24<sup>th</sup>.

After eighteen years of service as president, McKnight’s announcement was met with mixed feelings though Abdel R. Wentz may well be representative of students when he noted that “so far as I have been able to learn there have been no tears shed. I know I did not shed any, - far from it. Don’t know who will be chosen to fill his place, but I do hope we will get a live, up-to-date, active, energetic president.”<sup>57</sup> The thirty-one undergraduate students who crossed the platform on the afternoon of Tuesday, June 2 to the “strains of ‘College Days’

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<sup>54</sup> “Collegiana” *The Gettysburgian*, 6, no. 30 (January 29, 1902): 364.

<sup>55</sup> *The Gettysburgian*, 7, no.2 (March 26, 1902): 5.

<sup>56</sup> Correspondence from A.R. Wentz to his brother Luther S. Wentz dated January 22, 1903.

<sup>57</sup> Correspondence from A.R. Wentz to his brother Luther S. Wentz dated February 28, 1903.

from the orchestra”<sup>58</sup> would however not be directly effected by this change. Eleven of the graduating were among the prep students in the original class of 1903, of whose total twenty-four members graduated with their class. The week was marked by a number of readings and speeches and the ceremonial passing on of the caps and gowns to the junior class that accompanied the college’s seventy-first Commencement. Thus passed the class of 1903 into the historical annals of Gettysburg College.

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<sup>58</sup> “Exercises Of Seventy-First Commencement” *The Gettysburgian*, 8, no. 13 (June 3, 1903): 153.