Chapter 5

PRESIDENT SPANGLER'S ADMINISTRATION
(1893–1904)

HENRY Thomas Spangler, the third president, was born in Myerstown in 1853. He began his college work in Palatinate College, transferred to Ursinus in 1870 and was graduated as valedictorian of the first class in 1873. Two years later he was graduated from the Theological Department. After serving as an assistant editor of the Christian World he was ordained and served several pastorates in Ohio and Pennsylvania. In 1876 he married Marian E. Bomberger, daughter of the first president. After four years as pastor at Landisburg, Pa., he succeeded his father-in-law at St. Luke's Church in Trappe and was that same year (1884) elected to the Board of Directors. Two years later he became Field Secretary, serving in this position for Ursinus concurrently with his pastorate. As has already been told, he resigned his pastorate in 1890 to devote his whole energy to the College and was elected professor of psychology in 1891.

Though a dedicated clergyman President Spangler realized that the College's prosperity would have to be based on “its merits rather than on any theological position or church relation.” His influence can be discerned in the beginnings of modernization already recorded. His administration, which covered eleven years (1893–1904), was distinguished by his efforts to build a strong, university trained faculty, to enlarge the curriculum and adapt it to the changing times, to raise the standards of admission and the general level of academic achievement, and to liberalize and enrich extra-curricular life. His success in attaining these goals and the problems he encountered in these and other matters will be the burden of this chapter.

In his inaugural address delivered at his installation on September 6, 1893,
President Spangler did not present a program of objectives or announce startling innovations. He reviewed the history of higher education in America, the place of the Church in fostering the creation of colleges, the particular events and conditions that resulted in the building of Ursinus, and her achievement. While he analyzed the peculiar responsibilities of the Christian as contrasted to the secular college, he emphasized the fact that sectarianism did not limit or inhibit the College or any who might study there:

While Ursinus College thus firmly adheres to the principles and attitude of the Christian college, there is nothing in its course of study, in its government or discipline, that in the least interferes with the enjoyment of its privileges by students who have no definite faith whatever, or whose religious prepossessions are different from those of the denomination to which the College belongs. Educationally it stands upon the same platform with all other colleges. Indeed, it is among the most advanced in the liberality and freedom of its thought, and the liberty of choice in subjects of study.

Like President Bomberger twenty-three years earlier he emphasized the College’s responsibility to develop the whole person. Its mission was “to develop character, intellectual and moral; to train and direct the activities of the whole life; to educate rather than to develop scholarship.”

Scholarship was, however, the keynote of the hour. This was apparent in the policy the President initiated of recruiting faculty members trained in the new graduate schools. The role of Johns Hopkins University in developing true post-graduate study in America is well known. Before 1870 a master’s degree, often, like those awarded at Ursinus, purely honorific, was a sufficient credential for a college teacher. But now the impact of scholarly training in depth was being felt. The first Ursinus faculty member to hold a doctor of philosophy degree was Edmund Morris Hyde, who was elected adjunct professor of languages in 1887. A graduate of
Trinity College, he gained his Ph.D. at Yale in 1887 and also studied at Leipzig before coming to Ursinus. He immediately became an energizing force, as has been shown, in creating the combined library and in stimulating musical activities as well as being a demanding and exciting teacher. Unfortunately his merits were all too apparent, and within two years he was called to Lehigh. He returned to Ursinus for a year as dean and professor of Latin in 1899, but was again called to Lehigh.

Dr. Hyde's career at Ursinus has been given in full because it typifies the way the new Ph.D.s came and went. From 1893 to 1904 there were at least a dozen, some staying one year, some two or three. Several were excellent teachers and scholars who gained academic laurels for their scholarly activities in later years, for example, Raymond Dodge, professor of philosophy and psychology in 1897–8, Wilbur Marshall Urban, who succeeded Dodge in 1898 and taught here until 1902, and John Raymond Murfin, professor of biology from 1901 to 1904. A few turned out to be mistakes, one of them being dropped after a few months. The chief reason for the high rate of turnover was the low salaries paid here and the fact that these salaries, low as they were, were often in arrears. A second reason was that the College did not have the resources either in library or laboratory to support the research that these young scholars wished to pursue.

Of all this group two left a more than passing imprint on Ursinus and the students. P. Calvin Mensch '87, professor of biology and instructor in chemistry from 1893 until his death in 1901, developed the study of biology, which up to his time had been really a fringe subject, and laid the first real foundations of collegiate preparation for medical and dental school for which Ursinus has long been noted. His Ph.D. was in fact a dubious one, from Grant University (1891), but his M.D. from Bellevue Hospital Medical College was sound, and he studied before returning to Ursinus or during his tenure here at Johns Hopkins, Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory, the U.S. Fish Commission, and at the Naples Zoological Station on a Smithsonian Institute appointment. His influence will be noted in the changes in curriculum to be recorded.

The other young Ph.D. who made a mark made it twice. J. Lynn Barnard was graduated from Syracuse in 1892 and came to Ursinus in 1897 immediately after getting his doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania. During seven years he was a most stimulating teacher of history and political science, and several of his students in this time went on to win national reputations as political scientists. Red headed, affable, enthusiastic, he won the students' affection by his enthusiastic support of the football teams and his directing of the glee club. His resignation in 1904 was a real loss. No one could then have predicted that he was to finish his teaching career by returning to Ursinus in 1927 as head of the political science department to teach until his death in 1941. In the interim he was to become widely known as a writer of textbooks on political science for high schools.

Not strictly in the group of teachers treated here but worthy of memory was George Stibitz. Valedictorian in the two man class of 1881, he gained his Ph.D. at Yale in 1887 and returned to Ursinus the next year to be, first, professor of Latin in
the College and second, professor of Hebrew and Old Testament literature in the Theological Department from 1890 to 1896.

Other instructors, without the accolade of the doctorate, served during these years. The historian, hampered by lack of knowledge and space, must do them the injustice of omission. "These were honored in their generations, and were the glory of their times." Perhaps more cynically one must say, "And some there be, which have no memorial."

The major academic innovation in the years during which these professors taught was the Group System. It was not given that name when it was instituted in 1894. Then it was described as

a regulated elective system, giving to students of different natural gifts and seeking preparations for different callings in life, opportunity to pursue studies adapted to their individual tastes and aims.

Each course, as the group was then first called, included

(1) dominant subjects, which adapt the courses to the needs of particular classes of students and which afford special preparation for future professional study; (2) related subjects, to give the breadth and symmetry requisite in a liberal education; (3) studies common to all the courses and required of all students.

Four courses (groups) were offered—the Classical, the Latin-Mathematical, the Chemical-Biological, or Preparatory Medical, and the Modern Language. The degrees of Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Literature were eliminated, except for students already in the process of earning those degrees. Under the group system all courses led to the Bachelor of Arts (this was later changed and the Bachelor of Science degree reinstated).

A comparison of the four curricula shows that at first the amount of differentiation or specialization was not great. The freshman year was the same for all, with one common choice between physics or physiography. In the sophomore year all studied mathematics, history, and English (specified courses in those departments). In the two upper years all studied English, logic, Bible study, Theistic philosophy and apologetics, and a modern language (in which there was a choice). The electives were not free electives but choices between pre-determined alternates; e.g., a Chemical-Biological major could choose in the senior year between History of Philosophy and German 4 or French 3. Thus at the outset the group system was a far cry from the elective system devised by President Eliot of Harvard, but it was a mechanism which could expand and alter as the ability of the College to provide instruction in more subjects increased and as the needs of the students for varying preparation changed.

Change was not long in coming. In 1895 the Latin-Mathematical Course became the Mathematical-Physics Course, a more logical grouping, and the next year a new group, the Historical-Political, was created. In this year the alternate choice
pattern was largely eliminated, and genuine, though still somewhat limited, election was allowed in each group. For example, a senior in the Modern Language Course had a choice of seven elective subjects.

It is quite noticeable in these years that proliferation of courses in given subjects depended largely on the personnel of the faculty. For example, even after the occupation of Bomberger Hall, which provided laboratories for the three major sciences taught here, chemistry had only two courses but biology because of the coming of Professor P. Calvin Mensch had six. Similarly history, though required for all students, had only three courses until the advent of Professor J. Lynn Barnard, when it too increased to six. Two years later it shrank back to three as the number of courses in political science, Dr. Barnard's real interest, increased. These changes meant that the College was using as best it could the talents of new teachers recruited by President Spangler in his continuing effort to upgrade the professional qualifications of the faculty.

Adjustments continued in the light of experience. In 1903 the Latin-Mathematical Group was re-established, and in 1905 (to look for a moment beyond the period under consideration) the Mathematical-Physics Group was abolished, though oddly enough the number of students enrolled in it a year earlier was the third largest. In 1906 it was re-activated, but for a time had a bare handful of students. Such shifts at times reflected the skill or popularity of a given professor, for the faculty was still so small that most departments consisted of only one teacher. In 1899–1900, for example, English was the only department with two instructors.

Other changes strengthening the academic program occurred. In 1897 experimental work in psychology was begun and a laboratory equipped under the direction of Professor Dodge and after under Professor Urban, though no description of the laboratory appears in the catalog until two years later. A note in the Bulletin for April 15, 1899 states that "The Senior seminar work, introduced by Dr. Urban in Philosophy and Dr. Barnard in History, is very interesting to the class." The catalogs of these years describe no seminar in history and the seminar in philosophy not until 1900. In 1899–1900 Dr. Hyde during his brief second stint on the Ursinus faculty gave a lecture course on "Roman Private Life", referred to in the Bulletin as the course in "Archaeology", illustrated by slides, maps and other "visual aids." Still another change, or rather innovation, was the creation of department honors. In the beginning these were awarded simply on the basis of grades; to qualify a student had to get an A in all the courses in his department designated as honor courses. In President Spangler's last year the nature of department honors was changed to what it has been ever since, an award for a project of individual research embodied in a thesis.

Still another change not in itself academic but affecting the whole academic pattern was the adoption of the two semester calendar in 1895–6. From the opening of the College in 1876 Ursinus had operated on a three term calendar, the fall term of sixteen weeks and the winter and spring terms of twelve weeks each. The difference in length was paralleled by the tuition charge of $20 for the fall term and $12
for each of the other two. In the change to the two semesters of equal length beginning and ending approximately at the same time as today, the College was adjusting to the national practice. The change also tended to stabilize the classes, for under the old calendar a student could enter in any term, and there was much coming and going term by term. Now most students began in September and continued throughout the college year.

The third major change in President Spangler’s administration was the raising of the standards of admission. During the years up to 1893 the requirements had changed little from the original ones set in 1870, except the recognition of the fact that candidates were now appearing, especially to enter the Scientific and Literary Courses, who did not have a thorough grounding in Latin and Greek and who had little desire to study classical languages. In 1892–3, the last year of President Super’s administration, the entrance requirements were stated thus:

Applicants for admission to the Freshman Class in any of the Courses of Study must first satisfy the Examining Committee that they are well grounded in the fundamental branches of knowledge. Among these are Orthography, Reading, English Grammar and Composition, Arithmetic, Geography and the History of the United States.

Examination in these subjects is called “preliminary”, and the catalog then states that applicants for admission to the Classical Course must pass a “Matriculation Examination” in English, Science, Mathematics, Latin, and Greek. Science is particularized as Physical Geography and Elementary Physics. In Greek the examination covered “Grammar, particularly the conjugation of verbs, and in syntax the cases, moods, and tenses; Greek Lessons; Xenophon’s Anabasis, book I.” Candidates for the Scientific Course were not required to take the matriculation examination in Greek, and candidates for the Literary Course were required to take only the matriculation examination in English, which consisted of “Analysis of Sentences from selected authors” and punctuation.

In 1893 the requirements for admission were made much stiffer and were spelled out in detail. For the sake of comparison only Greek and Physics will be cited, to show the change characteristic in all subjects. The requirements in Greek now read:

1. Grammar; pronunciation as recommended on page VII of Preface to Goodwin’s Greek Grammar.
2. Xenophon, four books of the Anabasis.
3. Translation at sight of average passages in Attic prose.
4. Prose Composition, the translation into Greek of simple English sentences. White’s Beginner’s Greek Book, complete, or Jones’s Exercises in Greek Prose, twenty-six exercises, is recommended.
5. History of Greece, Oman’s History of Greece, Mahaffy’s Old Greek Life, or Fyffe’s Primer of Greek History, indicates the amount required.
6. Ancient Geography.
In Physics the requirement now read:

As contained in the elementary treatises of Kiddle, Gage, or Avery. Schools preparing students for Ursinus College will please take notice that laboratory work in Physics will be required in addition to the class-work, beginning September, 1895; and candidates must present their laboratory notebooks, showing that they have satisfactorily performed at least 30 experiments in elementary Physics.

By 1895–6 the number of experiments was increased to 40.

Almost every year some change, usually raising a requirement, was made. As one last example, beginning in 1895 candidates had to be prepared (1) to write short essays on the substance of certain English and American classics and (2) to pass an examination in detail on four of them, all prescribed and changed year by year. The set books for 1897 for (1) were Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*, Defoe’s *History of the Plague in London*, Irving’s *Tales of a Traveller*, Hawthorne’s *Twice Told Tales*, Longfellow’s *Evangeline*, and George Eliot’s *Silas Marner*, and for (2) Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, Burke’s *Speech on Conciliation with America*, Scott’s *Marmion*, and Macaulay’s *Life of Samuel Johnson*. The effect of entrance requirements like these set by Ursinus and her sister colleges in the ’90’s could be seen in the prescribed readings of high schools in Pennsylvania for three decades in the twentieth century.

Admission examinations were held in a two day session during commencement week and on the Monday and Tuesday preceding the opening of college in September. Students in the Academy who passed satisfactory finals in the subjects required for admission were admitted to the freshman class without examination, an inducement to attend the Academy since a formidable hurdle could thus be avoided. The effect of the new standards was a much more ably prepared student body and a general raising of the quality of work done in college. But it had a dampening effect on the growth of the College, for many high school students could not meet the standards or were afraid to try. Thus the enrollment for 1892–3 was 54, increasing year by year to 1896–7, when it reached a high of 91 only to drop back to a low of 58 in 1900–01, and climb back to 85 by 1903–4. Of course, fluctuations in size then as always were also affected by other factors such as the state of the national economy.

Students were also admitted without examination from high schools and academies which the Ursinus faculty had approved. There are no records left to show what these schools were or how many students were admitted upon examination or upon certificates from approved secondary schools. Considering how much of the College student body was made up of graduates of the Ursinus Academy, the number entering by examination was probably small.

An extension of the College’s educational program was regularized at the beginning of President Spangler’s administration. In March of 1891 the Board authorized Dr. Stibitz, then professor of Hebrew and Old Testament literature, and Nathan M. Balliet, professor of Latin, to conduct a summer school of languages. Oddly enough, this seems to have been an ex post facto decision, for the catalog of
1889-90 lists in the calendar for 1890 the opening of the Summer School of Languages on June 30. No description of summer school appears in the catalog. The summer school continued for a few years on this semi-official basis, until in 1893 it appeared in the catalog with a listing of the courses to be offered (in mathematics, Latin, and Greek) and a statement of its purposes. Apart from offering courses for those who wanted learning for its own sake, the Summer School provided an opportunity for those who lacked some credits for admission to remove conditions and for those who had failed courses to repeat them and make up deficiencies. And, of course, it afforded a chance for acceleration, long before that term had been thought of. In its earliest sessions the Summer School was small, and it continued small through the years until it was abandoned in 1924, only to be revived in the emergency conditions in World War II and then to continue to the present. In 1968, for the first time, summer evening courses were offered.

The decade of the nineties was a busy and exciting time. Innovations seemed to turn up every year. Occasionally these were abortive or even still-born, like the Department of Commerce announced in 1896 to “train young men and women for active business.” It lasted only one year. More sturdy were the Departments of Music and Art, established in 1895. The first offered “thorough instruction in Piano, Grand Organ, Violin, Cornet, Theory, Voice Culture, and Chorus Singing,” all taught by a faculty of three. The Art Department taught freehand drawing, painting in oil of flowers, landscapes and still life, and china decoration, at a charge of seventy-five cents for a three hour lesson. This venture did not take a firm hold and eventually died, but it is interesting to note that in its first year a member of the “visiting committee” was Robert Henri, who was to become a celebrated artist. The Department of Music was harder, and with periods of expansion and contraction has continued to the present day.

Still another change for the better was the upgrading of the master’s degree. As has been told, it had been awarded to any graduate who had been engaged in some profession for three years and who paid the requisite fee. Beginning in September, 1895, the degree of Master of Arts was awarded to Ursinus alumni or those of other colleges “only after they have satisfactorily completed a definite course of graduate or professional study and have submitted an approved thesis, related to some subject of study pursued, and containing not less than three thousand words.” The thesis could be a by-product of study in graduate school, so the new requirement was not very onerous, but as a result the number of master’s degrees awarded declined. In 1896 but one was conferred, in 1897 none.

President Spangler tried various measures to improve still further the intellectual life of the College and the raising of standards, including the creation of visiting committees to advise and stimulate the work of all parts of the educational operation. This effort, too, was short-lived, for all such programs cost money, however little, and with a student body that was not increasing in size while the faculty was and with costs of operation outrunning the modest increases made in tuition and boarding fees (in 1901 total costs for a year ran from a minimum of $200
to $235, compared with $195 twenty years earlier), any new venture could very well entail an increase in the current and long-term deficits.

Another major effort of this administration was directed toward the liberalization and enrichment of extra-curricular life. It is not always easy in a college to determine whether change comes through the administration's and faculty's pulling or the undergraduates' pushing, and in what follows there will often be no effort made to assign credit for what happened. In athletics there is no uncertainty. The pressure came from the students. Despite the initial loss to P.M.C. in the fall of 1893 they were enthusiastic. "The football craze has struck Ursinus now that our students have actually seen a game played." There was no coach "since none of the Alumni have played football and there is no money to hire one." The year 1894 was not much better despite the engagement of a coach and the purchase of sweaters adorned with a large gold U. But in 1895, though Ursinus won only one of its five games, four of its opponents were college teams: Swarthmore, Temple, Lafayette, and Haverford.

Leadership was provided by the enthusiasm and drive of Edwin W. Lentz '95, whom the Ruby of 1903 dubbed the "Father of Football at Ursinus." While a student in the School of Theology and Dean of the Academy he directed and energized the students interested in football. Immediate results were not encouraging. In 1896 the team won one game, tied one, and lost six (a record not unlike that of seventy years later). 1897 saw improvement and 1898 brought a successful season; Ursinus won seven games out of nine and held her opponents scoreless in six. A wooden grandstand was built for the cheering section and a training table started for the squad. 1899 and 1900 did not repeat the triumph of 1898, partly because of inexperienced players and partly because of some lack of harmony in the squad. However, athletic relations were pretty firmly established with sister colleges that Ursinus has been meeting throughout the years since—Lafayette, Muhlenburg, Swarthmore, Lebanon Valley, Rutgers, Franklin and Marshall, Delaware, Haverford.

Real prestige came with the success of the football team in 1901. Edward E. A. Kelley '01 was named coach and graduate manager. Under his leadership and that of the captain, John Lentz '02, the team won six of its nine games, defeating among others Rutgers, P.M.C., and Haverford, and losing by only one point to what was to become the traditional rival, Franklin and Marshall. Impressive as this record was, it was eclipsed by the next season, for the 1902 team won all nine games to become the first undefeated team in our history. Apparently success brought complacency and a slackening of efforts, for the 1903 record (five victories to four defeats) was called by the manager, E. A. Kelley '01, "one of her greatest failures." And the period under consideration ended in an indifferent record in 1904.

Baseball continued to grow in popularity. The will to win is always strong, and apparently in the days before the need to police college athletics was seen, "ringers" were brought in on occasion to strengthen the chances of victory. In May, 1895 the
“services of a pitcher were obtained for the Reading and Allentown games, as it was thought advisable to keep our pitchers in reserve for teams of our own class.” Apparently this sort of thing recurred, for the 1903 Ruby states that through the “firm, persistent efforts of Dr. Barnard with the co-operation of Professor Gum­mere, baneful elements have been thoroughly stamped out, and a standard for pure, bona fide athletics has been fixed and maintained for the student body.” But the price of athletic purity, like that of liberty, is eternal vigilance, and there are some hints that in succeeding years an occasional “ringer” did play for the Red, Old Gold, and Black.

In the last years of the century baseball flourished, the '98 team winning nine out of fourteen games. All proceeded prosperously until 1904 when bad weather and a poor new field (the College had had to give up the field on Dr. Hamer's property) combined with other factors to make an indifferent season (seven won, seven lost). “The new field was everything but new. A Peking wall of earth bordered it on the east; a succession of hills and valleys undulated down to a lowest point in center field, from which the unfortunate fielder has to stand on boxes to see 'home plate.'” On Price Field the center fielder still has to stand tall to see home plate.

Women were not supposed to participate in athletics except of the more ornamental sort such as croquet and archery. Nevertheless, we learn that in 1894 “Some of the lady students boarding at the hall have purchased a bat and ball and are practicing the game for the purpose of showing the regulars.” Baseball didn't have a vogue with the coeds, but tennis did, and there was some complaint that the girls had to share a court with the faculty and their wives. The really notable novelty in sports for women was the appearance of basketball in 1900. How the coeds managed to play it in the long skirts then worn must remain a mystery. Perhaps the garb accounted for the low scores (11-10, 8-7) in the first season's play. Then the sport disappeared, to be revived in 1905-6. Apparently the chief impetus for girls' basketball came from President Spangler’s daughters, Marian '03 and Sara '06, both of whom captained the team.

As has been said, the students in these years pressed for more and better athletics. They did not, however, as in President Bomberger's day, find the administration “decidedly neutral, and more often repressive.” From 1893 on a “broader and more liberal policy began to characterize every department of the institution.” The operative change in athletics came in the creation in 1895 of the Athletic Committee, composed of a faculty member, a member of the Board, an alumni representative, and two students. The Committee was hampered by lack of funds, for the College had no resources available for this purpose, so that it had to depend on voluntary contributions. But these were forthcoming in a modest way and progress was made. The administration did recognize the importance of physical fitness by the appointment of a “Physical Director” in 1897, Warren Parker, who was succeeded in the next year by William H. Klase. This position was abolished in 1901 when Edward Kelley was named Graduate Director of Athletics. Required work in
“physical culture” for students in all groups except Modern Languages (primarily a coed group) was prescribed from 1897 on.

Extra-curricular activities other than athletics continued to center in the literary societies. Their programs reported in the Bulletin show an irregular progress towards a lighter vein, though oration and debate still remained the solid staples of the meetings. Various clubs sprang into existence, lived their short lives, and died, like the Republican and Democratic Clubs organized in 1896. More remarkable was the presentation at the “Young Ladies Entertainment” on December 5, 1896 of “A Doubtful Case”, a farce in three acts. This was the first dramatic performance of any sort on campus, and was followed by a comedy, “Mr. Bob”, presented in an Athletic Association program the next May. In the severe moral tradition of Ursinus, drama, like dancing and card playing, had been looked upon as deadly sin. Now change was in the air. A “Dramatic Association” was formed in the spring of 1898, which presented on May 21 a dramatized version of Dickens’ “The Cricket on the Hearth.” The Association did not follow up its initial success, and the next play to be presented was “Julius Caesar” (whether Shakespeare’s or not is unrevealed), given as a dramatic entertainment in Commencement Week of 1899. The Bulletin’s only comment was that it was “rendered in an admirable manner, the cast having special costumes for the occasion.” In 1900 the second “annual Junior play” was rendered, “Ingamar, the Barbarian”, and the following year a double bill was presented, consisting of “Alcestis of Euripides” and “Pyramus and Thisby” from Midsummer Night’s Dream. In the new century drama was to take a prominent place.

Music was an important part of student life. The Mandolin Club organized in 1893 by W. U. Helfrich ’93 combined forces with the Glee Club which was given new vigor by the enthusiastic leadership of Dr. J. Lynn Barnard from 1897 on. Anticipating the Men’s Glee Club under Jeanette Douglas Hartenstine in the 1920’s and the Meistersingers under Dr. William F. Philip today, they made a five-day tour in 1900, singing at churches in Reading, New Oxford, Hanover, York, and Lebanon. Another highlight of this time was the writing of the Campus Song. Editors of the Bulletin in both ’97 and ’98 regretted the lack of Ursinus songs. “Ursinus students have no musical literature by which to give vent to their enthusiasm and at the same time sing the traditions of the College.” In fact, songs to and about Ursinus had been written in earlier years, among other authors by Minerva Weinberger ’84 and Augustus W. Bomberger ’88, but most of these had been less than inspired and none really caught on. Now there was a usable Ursinus song. Tradition has it that Carl G. Petri ’90 wrote the “Campus Song” as an impromptu to fill up a gap in one of Zwing’s weekly programs. But in fact it was written by Petri at the suggestion of Dr. Barnard, who selected the tune of “The Orange and the Black”, a Princeton song. It was printed in the Bulletin in June, 1899, it met with approval, and for many years every campus event closed with a rousing rendition of it.

Social life centered largely on the activities of the classes, with the inevitable friction and rivalry between freshmen and sophomores, and after 1902 of the Groups, each of which then organized as a sort of club, holding monthly meetings,
picnics, parties, even upon occasion sleigh or hay rides. Inevitably the barriers to social intermingling of the sexes began to fall. There had always been ways for the enterprising to evade the strict rules and the careful chaperonage. Now both sexes wished to meet more freely than in the confines of class or chapel. The girls protested that the Olevian Society was too small, that unlike Zwing and Schaff it had not been given its own room, and insisted that "if ladies were permitted to associate with the gentlemen in society work the end result could be an elevation in tone and bearing." In 1898 Zwing and Schaff were opened to the coeds, and the Olevian Society died.

Even before this occurred there were opportunities for the coeds to put themselves forward in an attractive light. One such occasion was an entertainment in 1895:

The young ladies, assisted by the celebrated "Automatic Warblers," gave a very successful entertainment on Tuesday evening, November 19. The auditorium of Bomberger Hall was filled with an appreciative audience. The Automatic Warblers called forth much applause. Clad in pink and blue, wearing white kid slippers and carrying crooks in their hands, the young ladies were very attractive, altho we hardly believe that the ancient shepherdesses wore white kid slippers."
The program included among other choice items recitations entitled “The Frontier Wedding,” “The Old Actor’s Story,” and “The Child Martyr,” and closed with a “Shepherds’ Drill” by “Sixteen Young Ladies.” Thus did our forebears entertain themselves.

In a speech delivered before he became president Dr. Spangler had asserted that “The larger the number of points at which the professors and students touch, the more continuously they are kept in contact with each other, the better it will be for both.” To implement this in a social way, when president he instituted monthly faculty receptions to which the whole student body was welcome. They were not a complete or immediate success. The chronic complainers about the lack of social life did not attend and those who were shy found the formality of facing the faculty en masse a torture. Later the receptions included entertainment and refreshments and became more popular, a means of civilizing the young barbarians.

The fact was that many of the men students were a coltish lot, with animal spirits that could not be completely repressed. One example from a “diary” in the 1904 Ruby will suffice.

Sophs posted their rules for the guidance of Freshmen last night. Freshies tore them down this morning. In defiance of the rules Keasey wears his Class colors in the dining room. “Trex” and “Whitey” attempt to secure them but are “sat on” by the Faculty. At the mail hour Keasey appears with colors, and about ten Sophs go for him, and after a hard struggle relieve him of his colors. Sophs cut off Wagner’s moustache, who threatens their arrest. Later some Freshies are rushed, but when “Trex” tried to go to Senior Hall, he is captured by the Freshmen and thrown down the stairway. In revenge the Sophs give Foltz a cold shower-bath. President of the College sends for the President of the Sophs. All quiet at 11:15 P.M.

October 15, 1902

Trouble between Freshmen and Sophs starts anew. Sophs find “06” painted on the grandstand and around Olevian Hall. Sophs compel Freshies to scrub up the paint. Some Freshies refuse and are given the “water-cure.” Efforts made by higher classmen to end the trouble. Decided that Freshmen must obey the Sophs’ rules. About 8:30 P.M. Sophs attempt to make the Freshies erase the numerals on the grandstand. Rough and tumble fight follows. Members of Faculty interfere and affair is settled.

And there were the legendary exploits of putting a cow in the chapel and of relocating some nearby privy on the porch roof of College House (Shreiner) at Halloween, though this did not happen until after it became a dormitory.

History suggests the reflection that student behavior, both good and bad, is a constant. The bad is always more conspicuous, but what follows is to suggest the truth of the initial assertion and not that Ursilians of the turn of the century were a reprobate lot. An editorial in the Bulletin for December, 1893 says,

It is to be regretted that some of our students indulge in cheating whenever the opportunity is afforded. How many constitute the “some” we are not able to say, but we are sometimes led to believe that “most” would be a better and truer word.
An editorial a year later suggests that many of the students are doing more knocking than supporting of campus activities, a complaint heard in each generation. And after the hours of the library were increased, its convenient location in Bomberger made it a natural gathering place:

Anyone who has gone into the reading room of late for the purpose of reading will agree with us that, if not altogether defeated in his purpose, he was at least very much annoyed. To be plain, the cause of this annoyance lies in the fact that the place has come to be regarded by many of the students as a sort of lobby where they may meet their friends and have a social chat, rather than as a reading-room where there are always persons who want to read. It is simply impossible for one to sit at the magazine table and read with a continual hum of conversation all about him.

This complaint too has been made, with justice, in each generation.

By and large the students in the early decades were amenable to the rules of the College and the faculty, busy in their appointed round of classes and laboratory, content, despite some grumblings about dearth of social activity, with athletics, the literary societies, clubs, the Y.M.C.A., the publications. In view of the small size of the student body they must have been active indeed to sustain the combined demands of academic and extra-curricular life.

As had been true in the first decades, in President Spangler's time the high point of the college year was Commencement Week. More memorable than most commencements was that of 1895, for it was called the Quarto-Centennial Commencement, incorrectly because it was in fact the twenty-fourth, the first having been held in 1872. It was, however, the completion of a quarter century of collegiate existence and therefore a time for celebration.

The ceremonies began with the preaching of a Quarto-Centennial sermon by the Rev. D. E. Klopp on Sunday morning, June 16, and the baccalaureate sermon by the President, the traditional preacher for this event, in the evening. On Monday the Junior Oratorical Contest was held, nine orations being delivered on such subjects as "The Puritan in Art and Literature," "The Wages System," "The Saloon in our Nation," and "An Ideal Government." On Tuesday afternoon there was an intra-mural trackmeet and in the evening the Address before the Literary Societies, on this occasion "The Scholar in Modern Society" by Professor Edmund Morris Hyde of Lehigh University, who had been a member of the Ursinus faculty from 1887 to 1889. Wednesday, June 19, was devoted chiefly to the alumni, with the business meeting of the Association in the morning, the banquet in the afternoon, and the Alumni Oration in the evening. The orator was the Rev. James W. Meminger '84, who spoke on "Twenty-Five Eventful Years." The oration, sad to say, has little historical information.

At the commencement proper on Thursday there were two addresses, by Daniel H. Hastings, Governor of Pennsylvania, and by Charles Emory Smith, former U.S. Minister to Russia. In the afternoon the Quarto-Centennial Exercises comprised a historical address by President Spangler, of which no copy seems to exist,
and greetings from other institutions. The festivities were concluded by the President's Reception that evening, to which all interested persons were invited. Except for the special anniversary features, this was the pattern of commencement week for many years.

The most dramatic event of the next year was the death of Professor Samuel Vernon Ruby, who was stricken as he was entering Bomberger Hall on the morning of March 12, 1896 and died in the chapel "surrounded by members of the Faculty and the students who had gathered for morning prayers." Professor Ruby had been one of the stalwarts of the faculty since 1872 and had played a particularly influential role in the life of the students because he had lived in the dormitories as a proctor until after his marriage in 1886. A teacher of the traditional nineteenth century pattern he was feared and revered for his strict and thorough teaching of the mysteries of rhetoric and the delights of literature. He had lost an eye in earlier life, and the students said that his glass eye showed more mercy than his natural one. An alumnus of the eighties once told the present writer that one time he and some others were in Professor Ruby's classroom but not in the class he was teaching. Mr. Ruby dictated to his class the sentence, "Other sheep have I which are not of my fold." One of the interloping students nervously asked, "Professor, do you mean me?" to which the dry answer was "If the shoe fits, put it on." He had a place in the hearts of students and alumni equalled only by that of President Bomberger and Dean Weinberger.

A lasting memorial to Professor Ruby was created when the class of 1897, which was projecting the first class yearbook at Ursinus, decided to name its publication in his memory, not, as many later Ursinians have surmised, because someone liked the red gem. The Ruby in its first volume concentrated on the personalities, history, and achievements of the class of '97, but was a record of the entire college and its life in the year chronicled. The illustrations of faculty, students and campus scenes formed a vivid, if at times posed, portrait of the Ursinus family. The pattern set in this volume was imitated in succeeding years, some later classes improving on it by innovations such as the historical articles in the Ruby of 1901 and the alumni reminiscences in that of 1904. Those interested in undergraduate facetiae can assess the degree of student sophistication from volume to volume in the humor sections so prominent for many years.

The change from junior class to senior class publication came in World War I. The class of 1919 decided not to publish because war conditions created prohibitive difficulties and costs. In the last decades the Ruby has appeared later, as it seems, each year and most recently, after its class has been graduated. For many years the record of campus activities, play productions, and athletic seasons overlapped two years, never covering the senior year in full. Now the Ruby may include pictures of Commencement day.

A full and, as class finances and the ambitions of editors increased, lavish volume, profusely illustrated and in recent years filled with candid shots, the Ruby is an accurate record of the tenor if not always of the facts of life on campus. In
browsing through its volumes a curious reader can find interesting items such as the President’s Dream (1918), in which an artist’s representation embodies the future development of the campus as President Omwake planned it, with remarkable foresight, and the first aerial photographs of the College (1921) taken by President Helfferich, the editor that year, who to get them had to lean out of the open cockpit of a Curtiss biplane (vintage of the Sopwith Camel) and fight the slipstream to hold the camera steady as pilot Lloyd O. Yost ’17 banked toward Bomberger.

In 1897, to return to the period under survey, the Board appointed a committee to investigate the feasibility of moving the School of Theology to Philadelphia. The decision to move it was made in February of the following year, “for the greater convenience and advantage of students and Professors.” The reasons for the change can be surmised. The School of Theology faculty (Professors Good, Peters and Sechler) had now no duties in the College, the dormitory rooms occupied by the theological students in the North Wing (Divinity Hall, or the “dog house”) were needed for college and academy students, and there were obvious advantages in locating near the University of Pennsylvania with its large library, to say nothing of other advantages a large city offered to postgraduate students. Doubtless Dean Good had a large part in this decision, for he contributed the lion’s share of the School of Theology’s budget ($2,500 in 1899 contrasted to $1,500 from the College), up until the School was merged with Heidelberg Theological School in 1907.
The specific location was first 3252 and subsequently 3260–2 Chestnut Street. The actual move to Philadelphia was made in 1899.

In this move financial considerations were probably influential. Although the College was advancing in academic program and standards, its material development was not keeping pace. As a part of the Quarto-Centennial celebration in 1895 a committee had been authorized to raise a $100,000 fund for endowment and equipment, including a gymnasium. A committee to plan the proposed gymnasium at a total cost of $10,000 was authorized two months later. But these plans died aborning. Another sign of financial stringency was the institution of fees for use of the library and gymnasium. These were small, a dollar each per term for the college students, but they aroused some protest as being arbitrary and unreasonable. In 1897 the deficit for the year’s operations was $5,888, an alarming figure in view of the modest annual budget. The Board authorized a bond issue of $70,000 at 4%, secured by the College property and the income from the Patterson Fund, to liquidate the accumulated debt and pay off various short-term creditors. By June of 1899 this issue had been sold. In the meantime detailed plans for pulling in the financial belt in all parts of the operation were made; the proposed budget of 1899–1900 allowed only $9,400 for instruction (faculty salaries) in the College and Academy.

The reductions planned proved too drastic, for in March, 1901, the Board resolved that “after this year the amount paid for salaries and wages in College,
Seminary, and Academy, not including the Bibighaus income, be limited to $14,000 until the cash receipts from students for all purposes, except board and athletics, exceed $8,000 annually.” This statement reveals the continuing causes of difficulty—inadequate endowment, excessive scholarship aid (In 1894 the Board offered a free tuition scholarship to one graduate from every high school in the state who had an average of 75 and of 85 in his examinations for admission. In the same meeting the Board voted to give free tuition to children of Reformed Church ministers and half tuition to children of ministers of other denominations.), and a too low scale of tuition fees and charges.

The situation worsened almost day by day. By June of 1901 there were $12,000 in loans outstanding (after the bond issue of 1898) and “at least $8,000” in unpaid salaries and bills. Aside from various schemes to get money from churches and individual donors, it was recommended that the President give up his $1,800 salary from college funds and live on the Bibighaus income ($750), that salaries and wages for the College and Academy be fixed at $12,000 (not $14,000 as in March), that no purchases of furniture or equipment be made until funds were available, that the faculty be paid one half of their salaries each month and get the rest during the year as cash came in. President Spangler, who made all these recommendations, submitted his resignation to go into effect “at the pleasure of the Board” any time after September 1.

Things did not get better. In December eight members of the faculty sent a letter to the Executive Committee demanding regular and full payment of salaries. To relieve the situation the Committee authorized a bond issue of $25,000 at 5%, in effect a second mortgage on all the College’s assets. The bonds were sold to various directors, alumni and friends, and apparently the crisis was for the time alleviated. The Board in June refused unanimously to accept the President’s resignation and raised his salary to $2,000. At the same time it eliminated one of the professorships by not electing a successor when Professor Alexander Crawford resigned. The Senior and Junior classes protested this decision and asked the Board to restore the professorship and department, but the courses were parcelled out among three other teachers.

In April of 1903 a “Committee of Conference”, consisting of Henry W. Kratz, president of the Board, Freeland G. Hobson, treasurer, and Rev. J. H. Sechler, was appointed to “consider the Deanship.” In fact the whole administrative leadership was being appraised, for at the June meeting of the Board the minority report of this committee recommended accepting the proposal of President Spangler that he be relieved of his duties and receive no salary, retaining only the use of the President’s house, and that he should “earn his living by engaging in other work.” He suggested the election of Edward S. Bromer ’90 as dean, to be in effect the administrative head of the College. The faculty proposed that George L. Omwake be elected dean. The Board accepted this proposal but rejected the idea of an inactive president.
At no time in the history of the College was there so much needed the strong guiding hand of a President as at this time. The Institution without a real head will deteriorate in every direction. The financial question is a serious one to be considered, and is, in fact, paramount.

And it added this conclusion: “If the present President is not willing to assume his duties, then a new President should be selected at this present meeting of the Board.”

Professor Omwake in replying to the notice of his election as dean withheld “for the time his acceptance or non-acceptance of said office, under present conditions.” The uncertainty of the “present conditions” was underscored by a communication from seven faculty members stating that they would resign on July 1 unless given assurance that their salaries would be paid each month in the coming year. They were given this assurance. Professor Omwake accepted the deanship on July 7 and immediately began active cooperation with William W. Chandler, principal of the Academy, to organize an effective recruitment of new students.

As if the Board did not have enough problems on its mind, it was given another when the student body asked for the privilege of putting up an athletic field house. Plans for the building and a report of the monies thus far subscribed to the project were submitted. The Board, without nearly enough money at hand to meet its current obligations, authorized the field house project on the understanding that it would incur no financial responsibility. The field house campaign was primarily a student enterprise, spearheaded by John B. Price ‘05, then a junior and a member of every varsity team.

Not all of the Board’s problems were so difficult. In October of 1899 the Faculty informed it that the students could not use the library since there was no librarian, Professor Peters having gone to Philadelphia in the removal of the School of Theology. The Board elected Miss Frances Moser assistant librarian at $20 a month. And in the next spring it capitulated to the seniors who had been agitating for some time for the use of academic regalia at commencement, leaving the matter to the “wishes of the graduating class, both now and hereafter.” In a lighter vein, if not odor, as an economy measure the Executive Committee authorized the selling of the College’s horses and hogs in November of 1903, but ten months later gave permission to Jerome Bordner, the superintendent of buildings and grounds, to purchase six shoats for the College with the “explicit understanding that the keeping of swine shall not become a menace to sanitary conditions, or an offense to the sensitive olfactories of a cultured community.”

All the while student life, some facets of which have been touched on, continued with its occupations and pre-occupations, its alarms and excursions. Many small signs indicate that Ursinus was becoming “collegiate” as that term was understood at the turn of the century. The coeds dressed like the ideal women of Charles Dana Gibson and Howard Chandler Christie, the men adopted the turtleneck sweater and the bulldog pants popular on other campuses. Football was king, and
the charms of extra-curricular life in the spirit of Stover at Yale were felt here. It is true that a debate in Zwing on the subject “Resolved, That Ursinus College is justified in its opposition to fraternities” was decided in favor of the affirmative (this in March of 1898), but the desire for secret societies was to become a live issue in a few years. The class of ’98 planted an ivy to adorn the walls of Bomberger, an innovation that did not catch on as it had at the University of Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

Occasionally a note appears so contemporary that it seems startling. A debate of Schaff on January 16, 1903 on the topic “Resolved, That the Negro should be admitted to all educational institutions on equal terms with the white” was decided for the affirmative. And another Schaff debate, in October, on “Resolved, That the negro’s training should be primarily industrial,” decided in the negative evoked the comment that “There are few problems before the American people today more weighty than the race problem.” But for the most part campus problems loomed largest. A few weeks later the students were commended for doing little betting on our football games. Perhaps they were just being smart. It was a poor season.

The items just recorded appeared in the Ursinus Weekly. Since 1885 the Bulletin had been the all-college publication, recording official statements, campus events, alumni news, the speeches of officers, visiting speakers and students. At first edited and written by alumni, it had from 1893 on been edited and written by the under-graduates. A monthly during most of its eighteen years (bi-weekly publication was tried from 1897 to 1900), it is a valuable record of its era. The last volume (XVIII, covering the year of 1901–2) is the least informative, as if it was dwindling to its close before the appearance of the Weekly, which was to supplant it. Its last editor was Mary E. Markley ’03, the first coed to hold an editorship.

Although not recorded in the minutes of the Alumni Association on June 11, 1902, the question of the relationship of the Association and the student newspaper soon to be launched (it began publication on September 26, 1902) was apparently discussed, and at the next annual meeting (June 9, 1903) the Alumni Association assumed the proprietorship of the Weekly and held it until June 6, 1931, when under a revision of its constitution the Association relinquished the ownership to the College. In the intervening years the Alumni Association retained partial control through its representatives elected annually to the Board of Control of the Weekly. It also made an annual contribution of from $25 to $100 to the Weekly treasury, though in fact as time went on this appropriation was insufficient to cover growing annual deficits, which were paid by the College.