

Papers From the History Seminar of

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"Reflections of College Life as seen Through

The Kalamazoo College Index"

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The first issue of the Kalamazoo College Index was published in November, 1877. This was in newspaper form, consisting of eight pages. It was at first published quarterly and its subscription price was fifty cents a year. The purpose was--

The Index so far as its present editors can make it will be all that its name implies. It will in its literary department strive to reflect some, at least, on the culture a college should give. The articles contributed will be almost entirely by those who are now students in the college, and will be as far as possible, on subjects of general interest.

In its news columns it will give full information of the conditions, progress, and needs of Kalamazoo College. To the students it will be what each of them will wish as a memorial in after life of his college days. To outside friends it will be a complete record of the college.

In the editorial columns we shall endeavor to discuss candidly and impartially all topics of interest relating to the college, its needs, management, and progress, nor shall we omit those topics which are of interest to the student. In short, whatever relates to the college and its students will be considered proper material for our columns. ¹.

Originally the Index was very similar to the present-day catalogue, as it published the list of faculty members,

1. Kalamazoo College Index, November, 1877

terms of admission, the ~~c~~urriculum and expenses. However, we the see the evolution of this college paper, changing to a literary magazine and eventually to a combination of literary and news.

The changes in the college life--~~c~~urriculum--standards of the students, etc., are reflected throughout the entire history of the college paper. Since these changes are difficult to detect in reviewing all the history I have arbitrarily chosen two decades to discuss and contrast. In choosing these decades I have attempted to choose two with the least national crisis', so that we may have a truer picture of the college life itself.

1890--1900

In this decade the Index is still very definitely a literary magazine--containing at least twelve pages and in some years more. It was published monthly by the Students Publishing Board for a fee of one dollar an academic year or ten cents per copy.

Their purpose, according to the editor of the year 1891, was as follows:

No other one thing perhaps serves so many useful purposes in a college as the college paper, if properly conducted. It is a band uniting alumnus to his alma mater, a responsibility of the students best literary productions, a storehouse of wit and wisdom and the college's best advertisement. It is the thermometer of the college which it represents....It should represent the whole college and be the tool of no clique,....No disparaging remark or criticism against the faculty will be allowed in our columns and no student will be made the butt of ridicule. 1.

The Table of Contents was more or less standard throughout this decade and would read something like this:

Literary
Exchanges
Editorials
Locals
Personals
Michigan
Advertisements 2.

Other issues in this period would also carry columns on Alumni Notes, Christian Associations, Literary Societies, and Athletics. 3.

1. Kalamazoo College Index, Nov. 1891
2. Kalamazoo College Index, Nov. 1891
3. Kalamazoo College Index, Nov. 1891

The Index still carried a list of the faculty and occasionally a list of the courses offered at the College, however they had discontinued the printing of expenses and by the end of the decade had also discontinued printing the college curriculum--although we occasionally find the curriculum printed in later issues.

In discussing the Index let us first look at the Editorial page to see what the sentiments of the editor and staff are.

We find that in this period the editorials are concerned with the welfare of the students, constantly reminding them of the importance of developing favorable study habits and of how to become a better person.

For example, poor spellers are reminded to keep dictionaries at hand and the editors express a great concern for fixing study habits--but they warn the students they should also set aside sufficient time for physical exercise. Occasionally we find an editorial on political or world affairs; for example, the race problem, but for the most part the editor restricts himself to either lauding the faculty, or handing out bits of wisdom and advice to the students. For example, "Cigarette smoking is deliberate, daily murder,"^{2.} -- or criticism of those students who are consistently late.

If the Index is a true representative of the college life in this decade, and I believe that it is, the college social life must have been very limited.

1. Kalamazoo College Index, 1892

The Washington Banquet which seemed to be the largest and most talked about social affair of the season was described as follows:

The Washington Banquet of 1898 for which some anxious ones find dates six months before hand, and which college students; in general, from the dignified senior down to the nervous freshman have anxiously anticipated, has passed into college history....¹

This social event was a lengthy affair, lasting until 11:00 PM., and consisted of eating and giving toasts, no other entertainment appeared to be needed or desired.

The program for the 1898 Banquet which consisted of seven courses was as follows:

- "The College Women".....A.W. Chamberlain, '99
- "The College Men,".....S. Elden, '98
- "The True American,".....Dr. E.A. Read
- Music, vocal solo, Neidlinger's Boat Song,
Miss L. Tourette
- "Our Freshman,".....G.D. Smith, '98
- "Our Seniors,".....A.N. DeLong, '01
- Music, selection from opera "Paul Jones"
Mr. Elhany's Orchestra
- "Choosing a Vocation,".....Dr. A.G. Slocum
- Music, male quartet, "Evening"
Messrs, Dichy, Curdy,
Lienan, DeLong
- "Realities,".....S.P. Allis, '99
- "Dreams,".....C.S. Hayne, '99 ².

The students appeared to have taken advantage of Mirror Lake, which they used for skating parties. They also sponsored out-of-doors activites such as sleigh rides--each class sponsoring a separate sleigh ride, and snowshoeing

Receptions, lectures and speeches appeared to be the constant entertainment for the college life as a whole, while the three literary societies--Euro's, Sherwoods, and Philos--

1. Kalamazoo College Index, March, 1898
2. Kalamazoo College Index, March, 1898

met on Friday evenings to afford entertainment for their members.

Their meetings consisted of literary information--each member being responsible for a specific report or else being called on to speak extemporaneously. Time and time again we find the Index regretting the fact that Society meetings had to be cancelled because of lectures downtown or in surrounding churches. As four-fifths of the student body belonged to Societies the Index felt that a more suitable arrangement should be worked out.

Only in one instance in this decade do the editors refer unfavorably to a social activity downtown. The reference was made to the 1899 street fairs and I quote:

The street Fair has come and gone. Thinking people are asking was it a success? If we are to measure success by the number of curious people humbugged, by the amount of imorality sown, by the golden and silver harvest of the saloon, we must pronounce it a grand achievement. The poltry sum which is returned to the association in charge, the temporary stimulus given to local trade and the possible advantages of the vegetable stock and art exhibits can vever obliterate the evil, done and the still worse influence left....¹.

We have not overlooked certain good and beneficial elements in our last fair, but we believe that such objectionable features as we have named, stamp the whole affair a baneful curse.¹.

Thus we see that in this decade the Index feels that lectures, Y.M.C.A. meetings and receptions are the accepted social activities for Kalamazoo College students.

1. Kalamazoo College Index, 1899

The Editors have much to say concerning athletics and a good portion of the paper is devoted to this department.

Monday, October 24, our football team played with the Olivet College Team at Olivet and were defeated by the score of 20-4. Only one of the Kalamazoo Team had ever played football before against another team and only two or three of them had ever seen a game played. Considering these facts and that Olivet has had one of the best teams in the State, the smallness of the score reflects great on our team. 1.

It is almost necessary for the success that there should be a live interest in Athletics. Kalamazoo College is beginning to awaken to this fact. Last year for the first time in many years, our college boys met the men of another college in an athletic contest. 2.

In June, 1894, we see that the Index rejoices over the following news:

At last the ladies have taken up the question of college sports. The Buro's spent the last evening of last term discussing the various matters pertaining to football, baseball and tennis. We hardly know to just what conclusion they came and yet, if we were to hazard a guess it would be that after all tennis is the best game. 3.

However in 1893 the Editors also put these limitations on athletics. They urged all to participate in physical activity but not necessarily such violent sports as baseball and football, suggesting the Y.M.C.A. ^Uymnasium as the proper place for physical activity.

In 1900, the college was recognized as the athletic center of the Michigan Institution's of learning.

1. Kalamazoo College Index, Oct., 1892
2. Kalamazoo College Index, Nov., 1893
3. Kalamazoo College Index, June, 1900

We are indeed proud of the record our athletes have made, but we are also glad that events this year have shown that Kalamazoo is also worthy of a place in the front ranks because of her orators. 1.

So we see that by the end of the decade athletics are beginning to play an important role in the college, but the college still retains a pride in the scholastic aspect of student life.

The Index also clearly shows that there was a great deal of interest connected with the religious aspect of college life. "College prayer meetings have been intensely profitable and thus far largely attended." 2. "The sittings in chapel are nearly all occupied." 3.

The last part of 1893 is marked by a decrease in Religion or should I say a decrease in the amount of space afforded to religious activities.

In 1895-96, however, the Index devotes considerable space to reports of religious meetings.

We think the present interest in such things (religion) warrants detailed accounts of such meetings so that all may obtain some of the benefit derived from the meetings. The report of the Albion Bible Institution is especially helpful and the work therein outlined will be of benefit to all interested in Bible Study. 4.

It is very gratifying to see the unity and spirit which characterizes all movements in connection with the college. The Christian growth of the students during the last two years has been marked. All meetings have been well attended and much good has been accomplished. 5.

1. Kalamazoo College Index, June, 1900
2. Kalamazoo College Index, ~~June~~, 1892
3. Kalamazoo College Index, ~~June~~, 1892
4. Kalamazoo College Index, Nov., 1895
5. Kalamazoo College Index, April, 1897

The work of the Y.M.C.A. group was very credible to all concerned with this organization. It appears to have been a religious group and does not sponsor the diverse activities common to a present-day Y.M.C.A.

In the June issue of 1900 we find this said about the organization:

Meetings have been held during the past month as usual on Sunday mornings in the room at the Dormitory and a fine spirit of prayer and devotions has been present. The attendance has been somewhat small owing to the coming of the summer weather. Yet not by attendance upon prayer meeting alone but on the baseball diamond, in their closets, and in their daily lives is the Lord Christ glorified. 1.

Many of the students assisted the local churches and ministers by filling the pulpit for them on Sunday thus giving the students practical experience.

Throughout this decade we find editorials written on various problems or concerns of the students and the college. Hazing is one problem that is discussed frequently, although the attitude changes from year to year. In 1893 the paper issued a statement to the freshmen concerning what their general conduct should be.

All freshmen must conduct themselves very circumspectly while on the public highways. They should avoid quarreling with the other children or stopping to play marbles unless invited. 2.

However in 1894 this humorous tone is dropped and we find a more serious concern about hazing.

1. Kalamazoo College Index, June 1900
2. Kalamazoo College Index, Oct., 1893

Hazing is surely becoming an institution of modern times and should be abolished. Far better is it that college reforms should originate among its students than with the faculty. 1.

The students also seem to spend a great amount of time worrying about the conditions of Mirror Lake and where they could find five hundred dollars to help restore it and to beautify it. Mirror Lake certainly played an important role in campus life. It was the scene of the opening social event of the school year--the annual Sophomore-Freshman tug of war--and was always bustling with activity during the Christmas season.

One very noticeable trend of this decade is the great part that oration and debate played in the college's life. almost every campus event had a debate as the means of entertainment and certainly the paper wrote many articles stressing the great gain that one receives from debating.

There is also a large amount of news concerning the alumnus and faculty as to where they spent their summers and what their plans for vacations were.

One could say that the Index in this period also served the same purpose as our present Alumnus Directory.

1. Kalamazoo College Index, Nov., 1894

1930-1940

One of the more striking changes in the Index in the 1930's is that of the attitude and position of the editor. In the earlier decade the editor would never have thought of criticizing the administration; however, in 1931 we find this statement by the editor.

Kalamazoo College will never be a complete fellowship in learning until some of the minor administration autocratical actions are done away with. 1.

The Editor goes on to enumerate the faults:

1. The bookstore is a profit making organization.
2. The library fines are outrageous
3. The college dining room is run on a profit.
4. Trowbridge rules are ridiculous 2.

In the next issue we see the results of this editorial among the student organizations. "The student senate planned a meeting to discuss definite action to be taken concerning the preceding editorial." 3.

The following week the paper gives a report of a meeting of three administrators and the Index editor, presenting an answer to the previous charges against the so-called administration mistakes. 4.

Following this episode the Index states that its platform is as follows:

1. To cast a critical eye on life about it.
2. To act as a voice for the opinions of the students.
3. To aid underclassman writers. 5.

1. Kalamazoo College Index, Oct., 2, 1931
2. Kalamazoo College Index, Oct., 2, 1931
3. Kalamazoo College Index, Oct., 9, 1931
4. Kalamazoo College Index, Oct., 9, 1931
5. Kalamazoo College Index, Oct., 23, 1931

What a reverse from the earlier decade which we have covered, for in that period the primary purpose was to aid underclassman writers rather than to cast a critical eye on life about it.

The entire makeup and appearance have also changed, along with the purpose and practices. The Index is now published every week and contains little if any literary material. This has been replaced by fiction and numerous columns such as "Scrutinizing the Cinema." It is now published in newspaper form rather than the book form of the earlier period.

The evolution of the societies--now numbering six is also shown and the change from a literary to a social intention is obvious but not totally complete. The bidding system seems to be considered dishonest by some of the students and we find many letters to the editor concerning the way that the bidding is handled.

Let us now look at the social activities of the college. We see by the social calender that many new clubs have been added--Spanish Club, Chemistry Club, Drama Club--and social functions are now in great prominence.

An example of the Social Calender is as follows:

Friday	October 30.
	Glee Club Rehersal
	Football
Saturday	
	Football
	Cross-country Meet
	Philo Party
Monday	
	Band Rehersal
	Drama Club
	Physical Science Club

Wednesday
Orchestra Rehearsal
Bids to Women's Societies issued
Society meetings
Thursday
Band Rehearsal
Gaynor Club 1.

Although the Washington Banquet is still considered an important social function it is by no means the only one, as homecoming weekend and May fete are also now in existence ,

The student government has also quite firmly entrenched itself in college life, with the Senate playing a major role in problems that were of concern to the whole campus, such as:

- 1) establishing a social committee.
- 2) excessive noise in the library.
- 3) aiding in starting the yearbook tradition again. 2.

The yearbook had been cancelled during the years of the depression due to the lack of money and at this time there appears to be little interest in publishing an annual. However the Senate hoped to arouse sufficient interest to commence work on one.^{2.}

While the Senate is busy discussing these more important problems the Index editor prefers to worry about why the girls in Trowbridge can not have a smoking room, although the girls themselves do not appear disturbed about the situation.^{3.}

However, we do see that the College was faced with the same problems that harass us today. For example, the parking problem, Chapel attendance, and society bidding.

1. Kalamazoo College Index Oct., 5, 1934
2. Kalamazoo College Index Sept., 21, 1934
3. Kalamazoo College Index March 8, 1935

Athletics continue to play an important role in the life of the college, although not as much space is devoted to it in the editorials as formerly. At least one page out of four is devoted to the activities concerning our athletic teams.

There is also a great change in the manner that religious activities are written up. There are reports on religious conferences but they give only the where and when information in place of the content of the meetings that we find prevalent in the earlier decade. There is ample discussion on chapel--hoping for better chapel speakers and better student attendance--but little of the optimistic attitude of the earlier decade, "when sittings in the chapel were full."

There is also a great amount of space devoted to political and national issues such as "Hearst and Nationalism"^{1.} and sponsorship of mock national nominating conventions to be held on the college campus.^{2.}

In the December 14, 1934 issue of the Index we find an interesting editorial on "Students Appraise Index" when the "suggestion's range from 'Commit Suicide' to Plans for Revival of Student Opinion Column."

"As indicated by a cross section of the College population, students and faculty consider that on the whole the Index is satisfactory."

1. Kalamazoo College Index, Nov., 9, 1934
2. Kalamazoo College Index, Feb., 5, 1932

In a poll taken of fifty-two students and faculty members the results were as follows:

Satisfaction with the <u>Index</u>3811
General News Coverage45 3
Sports Coverage42 5
Editorial appealed to40	
Humor pleased27	

and things in general were liked by 36 to 4.

Concerning the literary aspect of the paper, poetry was encouraged by 22, book reviews seemed to be a good idea with 31, and contemporary comment received 37 notes of approval.

Conclusion

In comparing these two decades one can make the following statements.

As far as athletics are concerned the College continued to grow and it retained its high academic standard as well as winning a great many championships. There was also added a large Intra-mural Program in the second decade which allowed everyone to participate no matter how little skill he possessed .

We find a smaller portion of the paper devoted to religion , although they still continued to play a prominent part in college life.

The two decades are similar in that both printed the class schedules(appeared occasionally in second decade) although the earlier decade gave a more complete description and devoted more space to it. However there is no similarity in the composition of the paper, as those of the latter decade are of the newspaper style while those of the earlier decade are more of a literary periodical style--leaning more toward the intellectual.

Another change which can be gathered from comparing these two decades is the apparent change in the values as well as the interests of the students and the college as a whole. In the earlier period we find a great interest almost a sole interest in the so-called higher things of life and higher education, whereas in the second decade their appears to be a more practical outlook on life and more diversified interests.

Also the change of the relationship with the people is apparent. In the earlier decade there are constant reminders of the close ties with townspeople, whereas the editors of the latter period are constantly attempting to persuade the student body to take a greater interest in the city and not to spend their entire life on campus--"do not live your four years on just campus grounds."^{1.}

Perhaps the most remarkable and noticeable difference is the attitude and policies of the editors and the paper as a whole. No longer do we have the policy of not criticizing the administration and faculty. I do not feel that this was due to dictatorship by the administration in the earlier period but would attribute it to the attitude of the students and the change in the thinking of the students. For example, in the latter decade there is a greater freedom between the student and faculty and there is not that great margin between the two. Perhaps, and I personally feel that this is true, it is due to the greater degree of student government that has been entrusted to the student body, for with this greater amount of self-government comes a greater freedom of criticism, constructive or otherwise, depending on the editor. I do not feel that there is any greater feeling of concern for the College shown, where we find this feeling of concern, than were we do not. For in the earlier decade

1. Kalamazoo College Index, Nov., 23, 1934

we find a great love and interest for this comparatively new educational institution that is sometimes sadly lacking in the later decade.

Perhaps one of the greatest factors in the change of pace different years' ^{is the} thinking of the editor himself. By this I mean the editor's opinion of what part a college paper should play in the life of a college. This is reflected time and time again in each opening issue of the year, for seldom do we find two editors that completely agree on the role that they, their staff, or the paper as a whole should play in the college life. Thus we find years where only one side of the campus life is stressed--the rest being ignored or lightly touched--and other years where the reverse is true.

In conclusion I should like to say that I do feel that on the whole the Index gives a true picture of Kalamazoo College as well as a picture of the evolution of college students themselves.

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