

1873 Catalog Shows Difficult Requirements

By HAYWOOD ELLIS

In the Seneca library is a copy of the Mercer University catalog for the school year 1873. It has a thin paper cover and 30 pages.

At this time, the Rev. Archibald J. Battle, D.D., was president. The catalog listed accounts, honorary degrees, undergraduates, law students and candidates for the ministry, as well as the usual information.

Reading this publication provides fascinating glimpses into college life at Mercer in the early 1800's. Some of the most interesting facts discovered are given here, with quotes from the catalog.

ORGANIZATION

"The University embraces, at present, three Departments:

- I. The College of Liberal Arts.
- II. The Department of Theology.
- III. The School of Law.

CLASSICS PREFERRED

I.—The College of Liberal Arts

"The scheme of instruction includes two courses of study, viz: The Classical and the Scientific. Each of these courses is a carefully arranged Curriculum, between which applicants have an election. It is, however, eminently desirable that students should, so far as practicable, choose the Classical course, as, in the opinion of the Faculty, this not only affords a much more thorough intellectual equipment and discipline, but gives a more adequate preparation for the practical affairs of life."

COURSES STUDIED

Freshman students during their first term studied Grammar, composition, four courses in Latin, three in Greek and another in mathematics. During the second freshman term, students were required to take Modern History, two Latin courses, two Greek courses and algebra and geometry.

The sophomore class studied, during their first term, composition and elocution, three Latin literature courses, three Greek literature courses and solid and spherical geometry.

The second term consisted of another course in composition and elocution, two literature courses and one composition course in Latin, the same for Greek and a mathematics course that included "Logarithms, Plane and Spherical Trigonometry; Surveying; Leveling and Heights and Distances."

Here is how the upper division courses were listed:

JUNIOR CLASS—FIRST TERM

English-Rhetoric (Day's Art of) and Lectures, Greek-Alcestis of Euripides; Lectures on the Greek Drama, Mathematics-Conic Sections, Natural Philosophy-Mechanics.

SECOND TERM

Philosophy-Political Economy, Latin-Select Roman Comedy; Lectures on Dramatic Literature, Greek-Select Greek Tragedy, Mathematics-Civil Engineering, Natural Philosophy-Physics, Modern Languages-French Grammar.

SENIOR CLASS—FIRST TERM

Philosophy-Lectures on Mental Philosophy, Mathematics-Astronomy, Physical Science-Chemistry (Roscoe and Letturs), Modern Languages-French Reader.

SECOND TERM

Philosophy-Lectures on Moral Philosophy; Logic (McCosh), Physical Science-Natural History; Geology, Modern Languages-French Classic, Law-International and Constitutional Law.

The scientific course took three years to complete and, according to the catalog, "... the students

recite, so far as the studies com-
pense, with those in the Classical
course, using the same textbooks.
This was the scientific course.

FIRST YEAR

Algebra; Geometry; Trigonometry (Plane and Spherical); Surveying; Navigation, Leveling and Heights and Distances; English Grammar; English Composition; Modern History; Arithmetic, reviewed.

SECOND YEAR

Natural Philosophy; Analytical Geometry; Civil Engineering; Chemistry; Rhetoric; Logic; Ancient History.

THIRD YEAR

Astronomy; Botany and Geology; Agricultural Chemistry; Mental Philosophy; Moral Philosophy.

Optional Studies—Political Economy; International and Constitutional Law.

Admission requirements were somewhat stiff, by today's standards:

"Applicants for admission to the Freshman Class must have an adequate knowledge of Arithmetic and Geography; English, Latin and Greek grammars; Caesar's Commentaries, four books; Virgil's Aeneid, four books; Cicero's Orations, four books; and the Greek Reader.

"The foregoing, or their equivalent, are requisites to which candidates for this class are earnestly urged to give careful attention, as there is too often a lamentable deficiency in elementary knowledge.

"Less importance, however, is attached to the terms of admission to the lower classes than to qualification for advancing from one class to another. The conditions of rising become more rigorous as the student progresses in the course; but candidates for matriculation in the advanced classes are subjected to a rigid examination upon the studies of preceding classes.

"No one can be admitted to the Freshman Class who has not completed his fourteenth year, or to an advanced standing without a corresponding advance in age.

All candidates for matriculation are expected to report themselves to the president, or to some officer of the Faculty, within twenty-four hours after arrival in the city, and are required to present satisfactory testimonials of good moral character.

"Applicants for admission to the Scientific Course ... must be at least sixteen years of age."

The officers of the school then invited the co-operation of parents and guardians in maintaining discipline, and, to this end, "exact accounts" were kept of each student's attendance, conduct and recitations which were placed in the school's permanent records, and a summary of these accounts was "transmitted to his friends at the close of each period of six weeks."

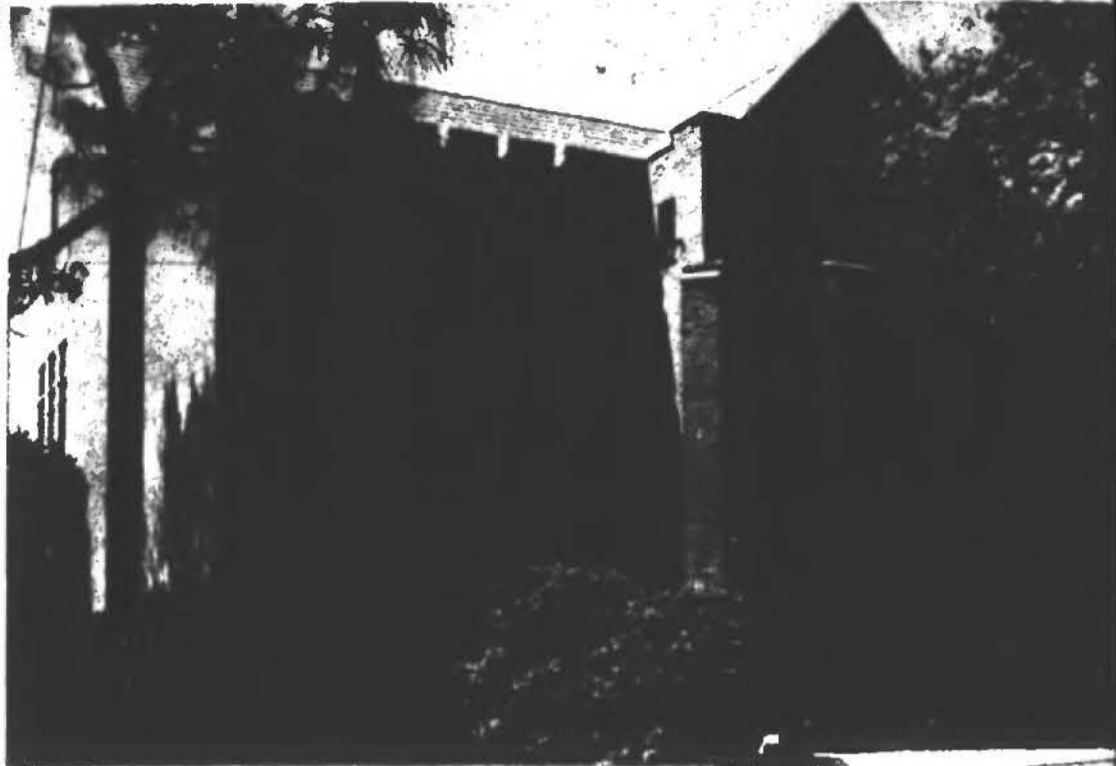
"... Disgraceful punishments are, if possible, avoided; but no young man who indulges in card playing, intemperance, or other vice ... can be allowed to remain in the University."

RELIGIOUS EXERCISES

"All the students of the college are required to attend prayer in the University Chapel at nine o'clock every morning; also public worship every Sabbath."

II. Department of Theology.

"This Department of the University is not at present in full operation. The universal desire among our ministerial students for a classical education, as a foundation for theological studies, has, for the time being, seemed to render



RYALS LAW BUILDING

Home of Mercer's Walter F. George School of Law

the separate Department of Theology unnecessary. Meanwhile, the President lectures regularly, to those who desire such instruction, on Systematic Theology, Ecclesiastical Policy and Homiletics."

III.—Law School.

The course in the University's law school at that time consisted of two terms, junior and senior — one extending from Oct. 1 to Feb. 15, and the other from Feb. 15 to July 1.

TUITION

Tuition for the year was \$60, payable in two installments. The somewhat financially embarrassed student could pay \$20 on the first collegiate day of the year, and the remaining \$40 on Jan. 1. Advance payments were rigidly required. Law school tuition was \$40 per term, or \$80 for the full course.

BOARD

"The experience of two years on our mess plan shows the practicability of cheap boarding ... A building, containing a dining-hall, kitchen and sleeping rooms, has been erected quite near the campus. The sleeping rooms are offered free of rent ... The ex-

pense of living (including food, fuel, lights and washing) is about \$15 per month ...

"Board in private families may be had at from \$20.00 to \$25.00 per month.

LOCALITY AND BUILDINGS

"The University premises, covering about ten acres, occupy a commanding eminence, one mile and a half from the river, in the southwestern part of the city, adjacent to the new Park, known as Tatnall Square. The situation is elevated, open, dry, and remote from any source of malaria. It is rendered conveniently accessible by the street railroad, whose terminus is immediately in front of the central edifice.

"The design of the University buildings contemplates three separate edifices, yet so related that the three will appear as one harmonious structure. The Trustees have wisely secured the best architectural genius on the continent to furnish a plan ...

"The central edifice (present administration building), now nearly completed, is ... ornamented with three towers, surmounted with imposing spires

and domes, and is a model of architectural beauty ..."

PERPETUAL CALENDAR

First term begins first Wednesday in October; second Term begins first day of January; commencement occurs first Wednesday in July."

Inside the back cover is an advertisement by JAS. P. HARRISON & CO. of Atlanta, operator of the Franklin Steam Printing House, who printed the catalog. Included in the advertisement is a plea for new subscribers to The Christian Index, which the firm also published, expressing their anxiety that this paper be distributed into every family circle in Georgia.

It said that "The circulation of The Index is short of the expectations of its friends, and does not justify the heavy cash outlay at present made by the proprietors."

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