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Purdue at 150: A Visual History of Student Life

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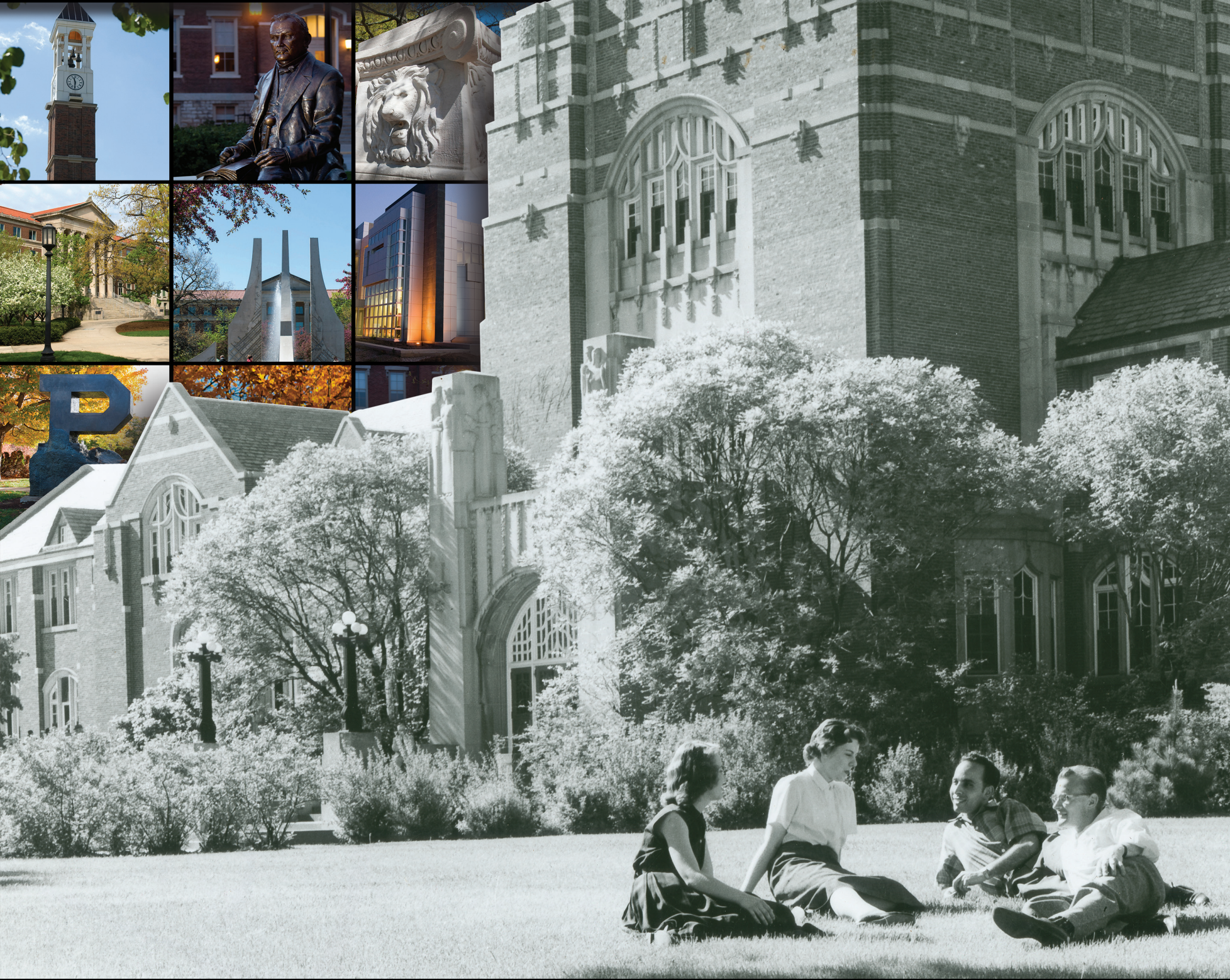
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PURDUE^A_T150

**A Visual History of
Student Life**



David M. Hovde, Adriana Harmeyer, Neal Harmeyer, and Sammie L. Morris

Foreword by Drew and Brittany Brees

PURDUE^A_T150

A Visual History of Student Life

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Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are from the Archives and Special
Collections, 1869–2018, at the Purdue University Libraries, West Lafayette,
Indiana. Specific collection and creator are specified in image captions.

Information about individuals, organizations, places, and events in photographs
has been provided to the extent that it is known.

The text of this book is set in the Centaur typeface, designed by Bruce Rogers,
Purdue Class of 1890.

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“Here’s to our School
Dear old Purdue,
And may we ne’er forsake her.
Here’s to the Spirit
That never quits,
And here’s to the Boilermaker.”

November, 1909.

An “Ode to Purdue” from the pages of Loretta Mae Wallace’s scrapbook, 1909. (Loretta Mae Wallace scrapbook)

[Preface]

STUDENT LIFE

Each semester, Purdue students arrive in West Lafayette shortly before classes begin. They find their rooms, introduce themselves to their roommates, and learn where on campus their classes will meet. Students purchase textbooks, notebooks, and supplies and determine which places have the best food. In the subsequent evenings, they join organizations and explore the areas around campus.

Some students carried slide rules while others carried laptops. Some worked on the campus farm for agriculture credits while others developed code for computer science classes. Aspects of student life have changed over time, yet much of the student experience has remained the same for 150 years.

In this book, we hope to show you how student life has changed over time yet remained undeniably true to Purdue. Through photographs, documents, and artifacts, you will experience the lives of students throughout Purdue's history. Note the similarities that tie together all Purdue alumni while recognizing the people, places, and events that have made each era of Purdue's history unique.

The full story of Purdue would fill countless volumes. This book is limited in scope to focus on the student experience through the lens of materials in the Purdue University Archives and Special Collections. Like a student filling the pages of a scrapbook, we have surrounded ourselves with the artifacts of Purdue history and selected a small sampling of representative images to affix to these pages.

“In presenting thus in formal phrase a record . . . so unavoidably condensed, the editors are sufficiently aware that the shell is here but not the life. The victories, nay even the defeats, of bygone years still live in memories of onlookers and participants.”

—*William Hepburn and Louis Martin Sears*¹



DAUCH ALUMNI CENTER
PURDUE UNIVERSITY

[Acknowledgments]

This book would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of several individuals who contributed their time and expertise. First, the authors wish to thank Bryan Shaffer, Katherine Purple, and their colleagues within the Purdue University Press for their support for this project; their professionalism and commitment to their craft cannot be overstated. Our thanks to Cliff Harrison and Allen Bol, who spent hours carefully digitizing many of the photographs, postcards, documents, and artifacts found in these pages. Many staff members within Purdue University Archives and Special Collections (ASC) contributed short essays and feedback. Heartfelt thanks to our ASC colleagues Carly Dearborn, Gene Ann Fausett, Tracy Grimm, Stephanie Schmitz, Mary Segó, and graduate assistants Virginia Pleasant and Jennifer Sdunzik. In addition, a contingent of ASC student employees aided in our quest. Many thanks to Amanda Burdick, Meghan Diamond, Jon Hathaway, Sarah Kenny, Elizabeth Kriebel, Bhavika Lakhani, Molly Lynch, Heidi Shaw, Evalyn Stow, Tatum Theaman, Claire Werner, Tabitha Wyant, and Michelle Zhang. We have been thrilled to have so many current Purdue students be able to contribute their time, work, and enthusiasm toward this publication.

We must also thank William Hepburn, Louis Martin Sears, George Munro, John Norberg, Robert Topping, and all who have devoted their energies to researching and documenting the history of Purdue University. Our work would not have been possible without theirs.

Finally, thank you to every individual who has contributed to Purdue University Archives and Special Collections. Without your donations of collections and financial support we would not have been able to tell the story of Purdue through the perspectives of students past and present. The documents, photographs, and related memorabilia you have donated to the Archives have allowed us to preserve and share Purdue's history with current and future generations.

Sincerely,

**David M. Hovde, Adriana Harmeyer,
Neal Harmeyer, and Sammie L. Morris**

[Introduction]

A LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY

On July 2, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln changed the face of higher education in America by signing the Morrill Act into law. This act, introduced by Senator Justin Morrill of Vermont, spurred the development of a new form of publicly funded educational institution, one in each state, known as land-grant colleges. These were colleges for the children of the working classes, meant to improve the lives of each state's citizens, bring modern methods of industry and agriculture to the states, and improve the social and economic fabric of the nation.

The legislation required each state to sell thirty thousand acres of public lands and invest the proceeds in government or other safe stocks to create a perpetual fund for "the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanical arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life."¹

On March 6, 1865, Indiana formally accepted the federal grant, and later that year the trustees of the newly established Indiana Agricultural College met for the first time. Counties, towns, and existing colleges from across the state submitted proposals to host the new institution. In May of 1869, the Indiana House and Senate accepted an offer from Tippecanoe County, largely due to an additional \$100,000 pledged by local businessman John Purdue.² The next five years were spent constructing a university by establishing policies, hiring staff, and building a campus on Indiana farmland. Classes commenced in 1874. Purdue University became the fifteenth higher education institution in the state of Indiana.³



Portrait of John Purdue, circa 1870s, which hung in the Library in University Hall and for many years in the Office of the President before being transferred to the Purdue University Archives and Special Collections for display.
(Purdue University Archives and Special Collections)

[The 1880s]

PURDUE ^A_T 20

“Wednesday Mar. 2nd 1881

A.M. I arose at 6-O'clock. Attended classes as follows: Drawing from 9 to 10 o'clock—Geometry from 10 to 11—Trigonometry from 11 to 12. Had good lessons.

P.M. Taught Book Keeping class from 1½ to 2½. recited Latin from 2½ to 3½.

Under Prof. Maxwell. I do not think he has as much vim as a teacher ought to have.”

—From the journal of E. C. White,
*Purdue student and instructor at the Academy*²

Purdue's first Agricultural
Experiment Station.
(Purdue University photographs)



In 1880, nearly every student enrolled at Purdue was from Indiana. Only five did not call Indiana home, and among those, the furthest traveler was Charles C. Georgeson from College Station, Texas. Fortunately for these students, tuition was free, but the university did charge fees for room and board, heating, light, and laundry. Those students who wished to live off campus did so in boarding houses within walking distance of class.³

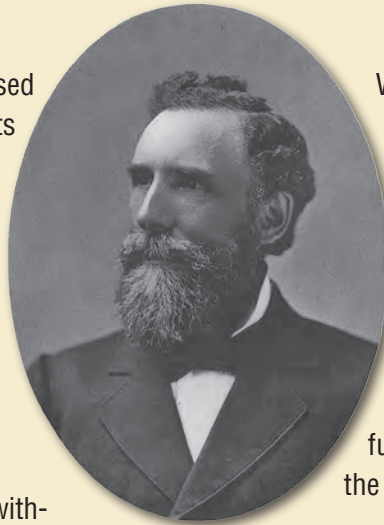
Purdue's School of Agriculture introduced winter short courses in 1886, which meant that Purdue students became not just young men and women who lived on campus but farmers from across the state of Indiana who looked for educational opportunities outside the growing seasons. In 1888, Purdue created its own experiment station and expanded the experimental crop-testing fields on campus, again expanding its role in agricultural education across the state.



President White and Sigma Chi

President Emerson White was strongly opposed to fraternities. Beginning in 1877, students were required to sign a written pledge to not join a Greek or secret society. All violations were severely punished and could lead to dismissal from the university. Rather than disband, members of the nascent Sigma Chi fraternity went underground. When found out, many of its members were expelled in the ensuing years.

Thomas Hawley, a Purdue student who had withdrawn from classes, joined Sigma Chi and had his application for readmission rejected when he refused to sign the pledge against Greek societies. Hawley's case went to the Tippecanoe County Circuit Court and lost, but an appeal to the Indiana Supreme Court ruled in part in favor of the students.



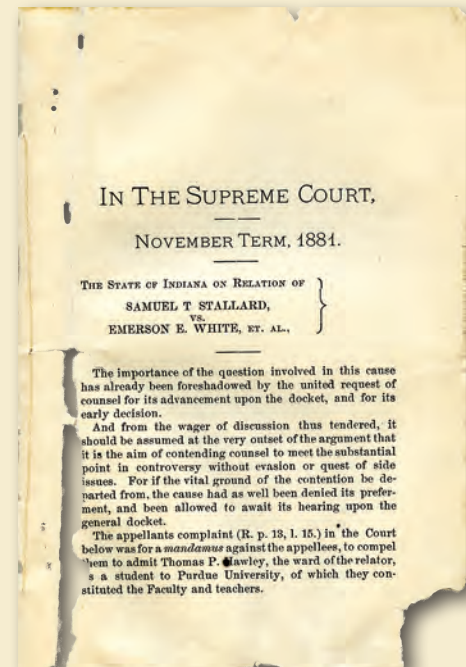
President Emerson E. White.
(Purdue University photographs)

White continued his opposition following the Supreme Court verdict. The students and their supporters moved their fight to the state legislature, where in 1883 amendments were brought forward to require Purdue to remove its rules against fraternities. The new legislation tied state funding to the university's acceptance of student organizations. The legislature adjourned before passing a funding bill and Purdue received no money from the state that year.

In September of 1885, after the resolution of the court cases and White's resignation from office, six students received permission from the faculty to join Sigma Chi. Kappa Sigma fraternity was established on campus that same year and fraternities became a permanent part of student life at Purdue.



Members of the Delta Delta Chapter of Sigma Chi, May 1886. Standing (left to right): Bennett Taylor, James F. Bruff, Shrewsbury B. Milles, Worth Reed. Seated: George Ade, Charles A. Marsteller, Colfax E. Earl, Ernest V. Claypool, Henry H. Vinton. (George Ade papers)



Record of the Indiana Supreme Court, November Term 1881, regarding the Sigma Chi case. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the students.
(Collection of Sigma Chi Fraternity Court Case materials)

Left: President Smart in his University Hall office. (*William Chester Halstead photos*)

Below: Military cadets marching through Purdue's main gates. (*Josiah H. Andrews scrapbook*)

The volunteer military cadet company met three times per week for exercises. In 1883, Lieutenant W. R. Hamilton, a U.S. Army regular, took on the role of instructor of engineering in addition to teaching military tactics.⁴ Hamilton was popular with the students but left Purdue due to disagreements with the administration. When a replacement was not immediately appointed, the military science unit became a student organization under the Faculty Committee on Athletics. Drill was suspended from the spring of 1887 until West Point graduate Lieutenant Abner Pickering was hired in 1888. Beginning in the 1889–1890 academic year, all freshman male students at Purdue were required to join the military science program for a minimum of two years. Pickering organized the students into a battalion of infantry, a battalion of artillery, a drum corps, and a signal corps. The drum corps would become known as the Military Band, a precursor to the Purdue Marching Band.



President White's administration began to unravel in 1881. White had worked to increase Purdue's entrance requirement standards and as a result, enrollment declined. The drop in numbers led to criticism from a state legislature focused on growth. Furthermore, most of the students were from Tippecanoe County, and the state demanded a state institution, not a county institute.⁵ President White resigned in March 1883 due to these pressures and the circumstances surrounding the Sigma Chi court cases. The Board of Trustees subsequently hired James H. Smart as the fourth president of Purdue.



Many of Purdue's oldest and most enduring traditions began in the 1880s, including the selection of old gold and black as the official Purdue colors, the band, the *Debris* yearbook, and the *Purdue Exponent* student newspaper.

In 1887 the student athletic association voted to have a football team. Only two members of the team had ever seen a game. The team paid for its own uniforms, the coach's salary, and transportation. An athletic field did not exist on campus, and the team chose to practice in front of the Men's Dormitory. They had one week of practice before the first and only game of the season against the more experienced team from Butler University. The day before the big event, a self-appointed committee of faculty and students met in University Hall after the team members realized that Purdue did

not have distinctive team colors. Football captain John Breckenridge Burris suggested using orange and black, the colors worn by Princeton's successful teams, but in the interest of being distinctive, old gold was substituted for orange. The university had chosen its iconic colors. The game against Butler ended in an unceremonious 48–6 defeat; the results telegraphed to President Smart simply stated, "It's a Waterloo."⁶ No team formed for the 1888 season.

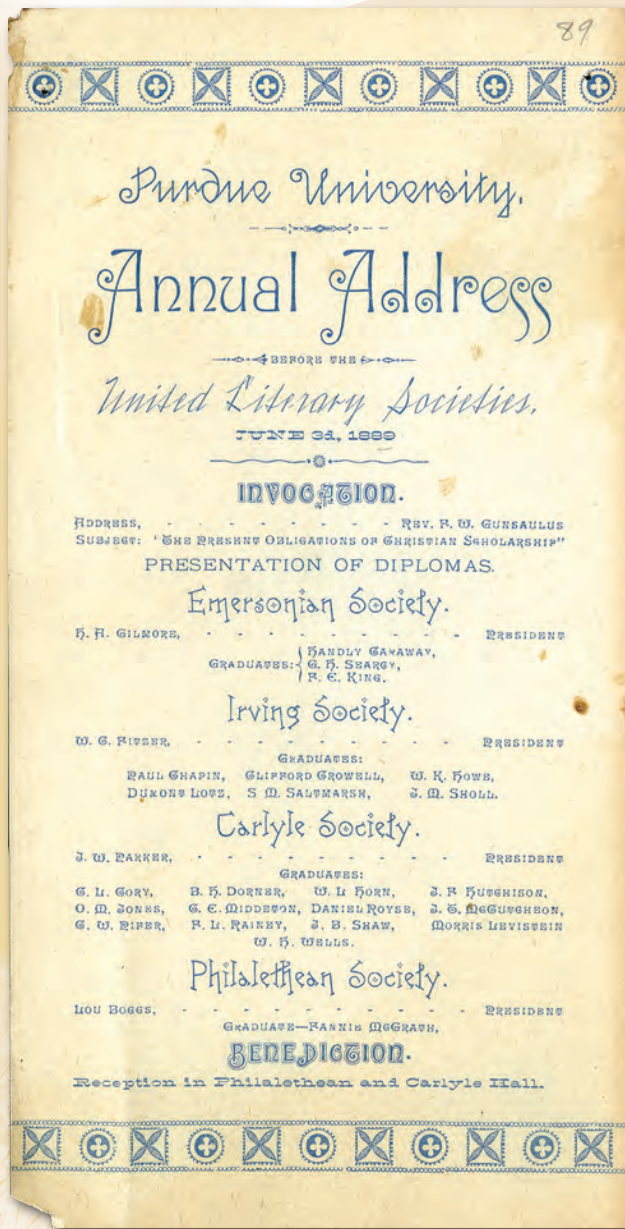
On June 8, 1887, Purdue held its first interclass athletic Field Day on the Parade Ground, or Oval, an area that later became known as Memorial Mall. For many years, the four undergraduate classes formed their own teams in baseball, football, and other sports. With limited opportunities to play intercollegiate sports, these rivalries were often just as important as contests against other schools.

The 1887 football team, the originators of old gold and black. (Purdue University photographs)

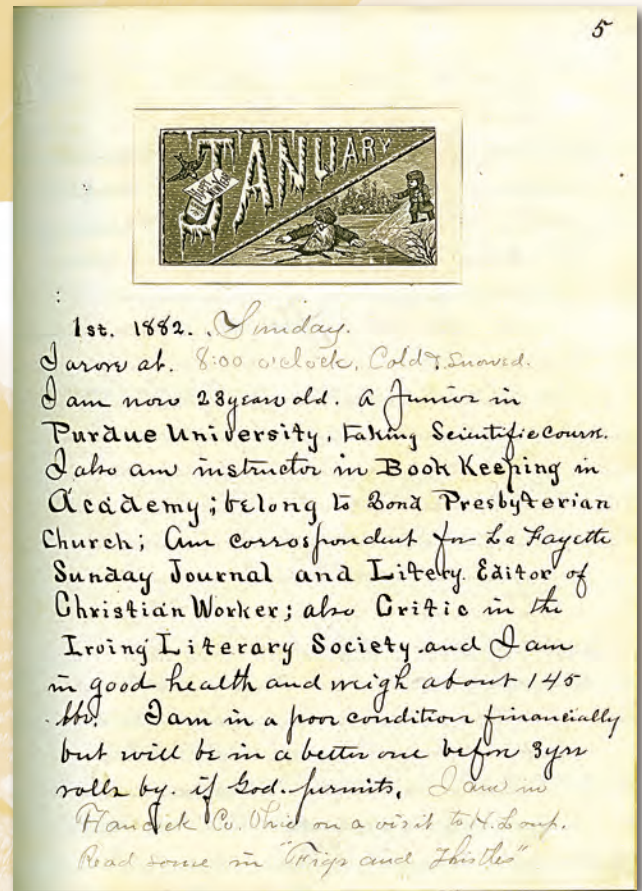


Left: Program for the Annual Address before the United Literary Societies, June 31, 1889. (*Philalethean Literary Society records*)

Right: Cover of John S. Wright's history notebook, 1889. (*John S. Wright papers*)



Woodworking class in a room with electric lights. (*Purdue University photographs*)



E. C. White, class of 1883, documented his Purdue experience in a daily journal. His entry on January 1, 1882, provides an overview of his situation, stating, "I am now 23 years old. A Junior in Purdue University. Taking Scientific course. I also am instructor in Book Keeping in Academy; belong to Bond Presbyterian Church; Am correspondent for La Fayette Sunday Journal and Literary Editor of Christian Worker; also Critic in Irving Literary Society and I am in good health and weight about 145 lbs. I am in a poor condition financially but will be in a better one before 3 yrs rolls by, if God permits." (*E. C. White papers*)

The original student newspaper of the 1870s, *The Purdue*, had a short life but was revived in the fall of 1882 as a monthly publication. *The New Purdue* was a combined effort of the Irving, Philaethan, and Carlyle literary societies. The content involved short literary, scientific, and engineering pieces; poems; and campus news from departments, clubs, and literary societies. The publication continued until the spring of 1888, when tensions between the faculty and student staff led to its demise.⁷



First edition of the *Purdue Exponent*, December 15, 1889. (Purdue Exponent)

The *Purdue Exponent* followed in December 1889 as a monthly publication. Much like the earlier student news publications, the first issue contained features concerning news, sports, the literary societies, and departmental activities, as well as essays.⁸

Another enduring publication that began in 1889 was the *Debris* yearbook, produced annually by the senior class until 2008. Funding for the

yearbook came from subscriptions, student organizations, and advertising. Throughout its existence, the *Debris* shared class histories, personal stories, cartoons, school rivalries, and social activities. Pulitzer Prize winners Booth Tarkington and John T. McCutcheon contributed regularly during its formative years. The yearbooks document otherwise unrecorded histories of the university from the student perspective.

The Ancient Order of Dormitory Devils formed as a secret society on campus and soon became legendary for its members' pranks, which ranged from placing animals and wagons on the roof of the Men's Dormitory to pouring buckets of water on unsuspecting pedestrians walking beneath open windows. On one occasion, the Devils captured a victim to douse in the water pump only to be met

with cries of "I'm President Smart, I'm President Smart!" None of the Devils were punished for the indiscretion. In perhaps their biggest stunt, the Devils climbed the tower of the Boiler and Gas House on a very cold night, intent on silencing the bell that woke them in the morning and signaled class times. They turned the bell upside down, filled it with water, and waited for it to freeze solid. When the morning arrived, no bell rang to wake them.⁹

Below: Views of student life illustrated by John T. McCutcheon in the *Debris* yearbook, 1889. Activities include late-night card games, sneaking cider from the cider mill, Dormitory Devils escapades, and painting the class year at the top of the Agricultural Experiment Station, a precursor to the Tank Scrap. (*Debris yearbook*)

Bottom: Daniel Royse, Samuel Saltmarsh, Dumont Lotz, Clifford Crowell, Oliver Jones, Handy Caraway, and John McCutcheon, editors of the first *Debris* yearbook. (*Debris yearbook*)





Above: Blacksmithing class.
(Purdue University photographs)

Right: A Class of 1888 picnic invitation includes a penciled note at the top: "Get a Girl and let's go!"
(Paul Million papers)

Get a Girl and let's go!
Class of '88
will Picnic at Jewettsport,
May 22d, 1886.
Boat leaves at 8 a.m. sharp. See list for company.
Invitation Committee:
Jas. S. Shortle. Miss Jessie Born. J. C. Ross.



In the oldest known photograph of students on campus, a man pours water from a third-floor window of the Men's Dormitory onto a group of students below.
(Purdue University photographs)



PREPARATORY CLASS
—OF—
Purdue University

LaFayette, Ind. Dec. 20 1888
Report of Charles E. Thompson
for the Term ending Dec 19 1888

BRANCHES OF STUDY.	Recitations.	EXAMINATION.	AVERAGE 2 R + E 3
Algebra,	76	71	71
Arithmetic,	88	54	74
Agriculture,			
Shop Work,	75		
Mechanical Drawing,	65	82	71
English,	87		
History, U. S.	88		
Industrial Drawing,			
Physiology,			
Physical Geography,			
Elocution,	98		
Natural Philosophy,			

Excused Absences..... Unexcused Absences.....

Tardiness Unexcused, - - - - -

Remarks:

100 is the standard of perfection; and 70 is the standard of lowest approved attainment. Parents will please compare the pupils' mark with the standard.

Erastus Test Principal.

Far left: Program for the Emersonian Society First Annual event, April 2, 1888. Student George Ade made notes about the speakers, ranging from "good" to "rotten," and assigned them grades. (George Ade papers)

Left: December 1888 report card for Charles E. Thompson, student of the Preparatory Academy. (Charles E. Thompson collection)

Below: Female students working in the greenhouse with Professor James Troop. (Purdue University photographs)

Wie die Arbeit, so die Belohnung.

Music. Invocation. Music.

President's Address. J. D. Hoffman.

Essay, *good* Wanted, A Man. Perry C. Kirtley *85*

MUSIC. *to read that except to*

Oration, *Wanderlip* *87*

Declamation, The Modern Cain. Handy Caraway *88*

Essay, Demagogism. *(copy)* Alva L. Hillis *80*

MUSIC. *good*

Oration, Beautiful Doctrine. C. Ross Richards *90*

Declamation, Death of the Old Squire. Harry A. Gilmor *83*

Music, Benediction. Music.

rotten

RECEPTION.

