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UA68/6/2 The Development of Western Since 1906

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The Development of Western Since 1906 by
Orbra Traylor.

It is a human tendency to look back and reflect; to look forward and prophesy. Looking backward one gains a perspective and a readjustment of values; looking forward one becomes enthusiastic and full of hope. Age looking forward becomes irritated with the enthusiasm of youth; youth looking backward becomes bored with the reflections and experiences of old age. Being neither old nor extremely young, we can look today both ways without becoming bored or irritated. Looking into the past and prophesizing for the future should give us a happy medium of controlled enthusiasm and a progressive conservatism.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, an educational renaissance took place ~~in~~ in the civilized world which had its effect in Kentucky. Under the leadership of the K. K. A., a whirlwind campaign for State Normal Schools was carried on in the State. Their propaganda was so convincing that when the Legislature voted there was only one dissenting vote. This act of 1906 authorized the establishment of two Normal Schools, one at Richmond and one here at Bowling Green.

By a special agreement entered into between the owners of the old Southern Normal and the State, the Southern Normal which had been operated in Bowling Green since 1884 as a private school became a state institution, dedicated to the teachers of Western Kentucky. On January 1, 1907, the transfer was formally made and Pres. H. H. Cherry of the old Southern Normal School became Pres. of the Western Kentucky Normal School without any solicitation upon his part. Before the convening of the 1908 Assembly, it became apparent that the reach of the

school had far exceeded its grasp. The legislature was invited to observe the crowded condition of the school which resulted in an increased appropriation and the casting about for a new permanent location. In 1909 Potter College, a girls school, located since 1899 on this hill, was purchased for a new site. The state bought additional 152 acres of land and began the construction of this building which was finished the following year. In 1911 Potter College closed its doors and Western Normal students and faculty gathering up their books and schools equipment moved to their new home from what is now known as the Bowling Green Business University in one day, named the new building and grounds Normal Heights and went on with their work. In 1922 the state legislature changed the name of the institution to that of Western Kentucky Normal and Teachers College, which enabled the school to confer four year degrees. Previous to this time the school had been granting a certificate for two years of work which was little more than the equivalent of high school work today. That date marked a new birth for our school. In 1924 the legislature removed the boundaries between the districts so that students anywhere throughout Kentucky are eligible to entrance. Formerly, we were confined to 51 counties in Western Kentucky. This year the scope of the school has been broadened and further liberalized more than ever. The term Normal School was dropped and the school was given the authority to grant both professional and non-professional degrees of any rank. For the first the function of the school was defined as giving primary, secondary, vocational and professional education.

The growth of the school since its inception as a

state institution has been phenomenal. In 1907 we had a student body of 762 and an annual appropriation for current expenses of \$20,000.00. Since then our annual enrollment has increased to 3,754 different students exclusive of the 13 classes of the Training school, those in the Model Rural school and the 2,000 students enrolled in the extension courses. Our annual appropriation today for current expenses is \$456,333.00. In addition to this there was a special appropriation of \$250,000.00 for capital outlays. In 1907 only a few people were high school graduates. Last year there were 246 people who received the Life Certificate and 184 who received the College degree. This year it is estimated that there will be 250 applicants for the Life Certificate and between 200 and 240 for the degrees. No longer can it be said that Kentucky's educational standards are not being raised.

In 1907 there was only one building upon this hill. Today we have a school plant valued at \$1,469,000.00 in addition to \$224,000.00 of equipment. Where you now see shrubbery, trees and green sod, then there was only a hill of barren rock. Not even a tri-colored dude ran loose upon the campus, for as someone has said there was no campus and the dude department had not been established. In 1922 a ~~xxxxxxxx~~ beautification program was started which has as its purpose to make the hill one of the beauty spots of the state. In 1928 Ogden College, a private school for over 50 years leased its campus, buildings, equipment and a 140 acre farm to the State that has greatly increased our facilities.

Whereas, Prof. A. W. Nell served as President, dean, chaplain, private secretary, registrar, librarian, carpenter

and janitor in the early days of the Old Normal School, we now have a regularly employed faculty of 101 splendidly trained men and women. Of this number 7 have the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 43 the master's degree and the remainder the Bachelor's degree.

Because of the school's accredited relations, one is assured of the quality of work that is done and is permitted to obtain a master's degree at any of the higher institutions of learning with 36 weeks more of training.

In 1924, we became a member of the American Association of Teachers Colleges, the next year a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities, and in 1926 the Association of Kentucky colleges and Universities.

This gives you some idea of the development of W. K. T. C. and its predecessors, the Southern Normal School and the Bowling Green Business University. None except those who have been continually connected with the school can know the sacrifices, the poverty and the travail of its early history. Its path has seemed to lie thru the valley of the shadow of death yet at all times the school has struggled against terrific odds to get glimpses of a bigger educational day. Such successful effort has been begotten of an indomitable faith and spirit superior to any asset of material wealth we may have. The growth of Western has been marvelous. It seems as if the proposed plant has become reality. There have been many ups and downs but mostly ups. Yet with all this material growth the potentialities of the future have only been tapped and the surface scratched. We are now in a position to render a greater

service because for the first time in our history, there are not any great economic clouds darkening our vision. Willing to advance, the world is also ready for our development. The future lies out before us. Our challenge is to grasp our opportunities and realize a dividend.