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OCT 08 1975

a LETTER to PARENTS of moorhead state university students office of the president

A new year! A new name! And lots of
new students!

That pretty well sums up Moorhead State
University in September, 1975, four score
and seven years after the doors of this
institution first opened.

For the first time in five years, enrollments
at MSU are up. No one is certain as to the
reasons for the increase, just as no one was
quite sure of the reasons for the decline.

For all of us on the campus, reasons aren't
terribly important. We are glad that the students
are here, and we are challenged by the faith in
higher education that rising enrollments
testify to. And it is a challenge, for we are
agreed that we must deserve that trust.

Past & Present

This summer I had an experience that, like so
many of my experiences on and off the campus,
renewed my faith in higher education. Henry
Mackall, who was the quarterback on the 1900
football team, Moorhead Normal School's first
team, wrote to tell me that Elizabeth Donaldson,
who had been his Latin teacher at Moorhead,
had recently moved back to Minnesota and would
be celebrating her 100th birthday. Fortunately,
I was in Minneapolis on the weekend of her
birthday, and I drove out to the Wayzata
retirement home where she lives to present
her with flowers from MSU.

Miss Donaldson's memory of her years in
Moorhead, 1900 to 1907, is very clear. She
roomed in the home of Solomon Comstock, the
man who, as a state senator, had introduced
the bill establishing Moorhead Normal and
had given the land upon which the college was

built. The Comstock House is now an officially
designated historic site and is open to the
public. It is a big house, and there was
plenty of room for Miss Donaldson, especially
since the oldest Comstock daughter, Ada, who
had been attending Moorhead Normal, had left
home to begin the distinguished career in
education that brought her to the presidency
of Radcliffe College, a position that she held
for 25 years.

And where does my renewed faith in education
come in? Seventy-five years ago, Henry Mackall
took Latin from Miss Donaldson. On her own
time, she taught him Greek. He went on to
become a highly successful attorney and a much
respected civic leader in Minneapolis. But
over all these years the student and the
teacher have kept in touch, remembering a
time of friendship and learning. How many
dedicated teachers, how many inspired students
there have been, bound together in memories
of this campus, of the Normal School, the
State Teachers College, the State College,
and now, the State University.

The Campus

This campus! How easy it is to think of
a university as a campus! This year it is
especially easy to think of this university in
terms of the campus because so many students
are living on it. The residence halls are full;
they are, in fact, more than full. For a few
days, we thought that we had bitten off more
than we could chew, and I imagine that some
of you got letters from sons and daughters who
were sleeping in basements and lounges. It has
all worked out by now, but we look forward to
this year when a larger percentage of our
students are living on campus than in any
year in recent memory.

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September 1975

HISTORY OF MSU

Although your primary concern is present students, there have been many students, many parents. This history of the University through its good and bad times, problems and achievements, should interest you.

Beginnings

In 1885, State Senator Solomon G. Comstock introduced legislation to begin a normal school. He felt it ". . . would be a fine thing for the Red River Country and especially for Moorhead." With Crookston introducing a similar bill, Comstock understated when he wrote, "I had a most ticklish job on hand." The State Legislature chose Moorhead and Comstock's donation of six acres of land ensured it. When the next session of the legislature appropriated \$60,000 for the Main Building, Senator Comstock's "fine thing" would soon be a reality and he well deserving his title, "father of the college."

Moorhead State Normal School

The Main building complete – housing administrative offices, classrooms and a library – the five faculty members, including President Livingston Lord (1888-99), enrolled 29 students in August, 1888. There were few lines, arrange slips or wondering what to take. The basic choices were: science, music, history, algebra, Latin, English and literature.

Since many students were not high school graduates, sub-collegiate courses were an important part of the curriculum. The non-graduates were Class C students. After three years, working up to Class A, a student could complete two more years and be classified as a "professional student". If these levels sound complex, the economics of the college were not. Running expenses were \$5,000; Dr. Lord's salary \$2,500; the faculty's \$800; and tuition was free to all students promising to teach two years in Minnesota.

If it was a time more simple, it was not a time less adventuresome. Old Main towered on the outskirts of Moorhead as a "fine and commodious building," but also a distant and isolated one. With inadequate housing, girl students roomed across the cemetery in Bishop Whipple Hall, later purchased by Concordia College (1891), and trudged through slush, seven foot snow drifts and Red River gumbo to attend classes. Charles Loring, later Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court, rode his pony five miles each day to his classes. The trudgings, the pony rides, the simple curriculum resulted in the normal school's first graduating class of 10 students in 1890.

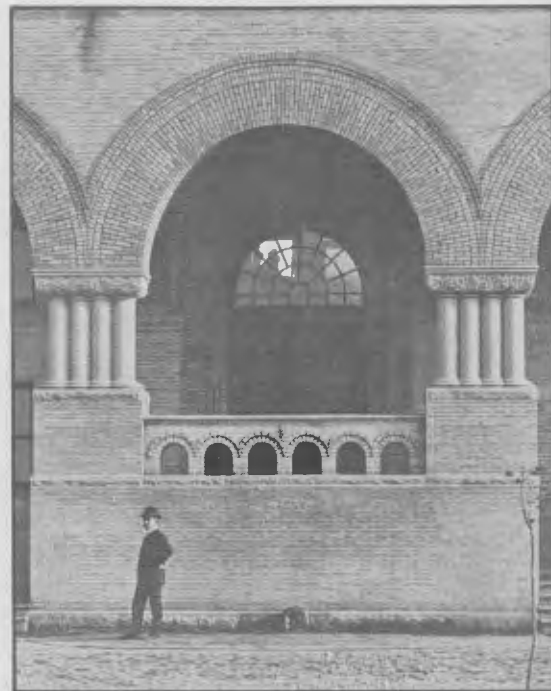
More students came: 102 by 1890; 285 by 1900; 349 by 1904. Old Main expanded in 1908 to provide space for a gymnasium and model school for student teaching. Wheeler and Comstock Hall (1893, 1910), the first dormitories, housed incoming students. Twelve acres were purchased for the school's expansion. Trained as an actor, President Frank Weld (1899-1919) enthusiastically promoted a building for the arts and music. Named for him, Weld Hall was ready in 1915 with an auditorium, laboratories and classrooms for the sciences and industrial arts. This building completed the "great circle". During Weld's tenure not only were buildings and students added, but also the faculty increased from 15 to 40 members.

The world beyond the great circle also changed. As a normal school the great demand was for elementary teachers to serve a basically rural, small town world. As cities increased, as more high schools rapidly appeared, the normal school needed change.

Moorhead State Teachers College

In 1921, the need for high school teachers led the state legislature to authorize the awarding of a bachelor's degree equipped for the education of teachers from kindergarten through high school. And so the school became Moorhead State Teachers College under President Oliver M. Dickerson (1920-23).

As change, expansion, progress beckoned the whole of society during the 20's, so did it affect MSTC. Enrollment increased to a peak of 530 in 1930. Sub-collegiate courses were dropped in 1924. Land was purchased for Memorial Field in 1925. The first students were graduated from the four year curriculum in 1928. Presiding over the changing times was President Ray MacLean (1923-1941).



The nation was struck by the Depression in 1929; MSTC was struck by fire in 1930. On February 9, Old Main burned. Student records destroyed, 25,000 books in ashes and a stark shell were all that remained. President MacLean addressed faculty and students the next day. Classes were to resume within a week. They did. Huddled in Weld Hall, the dormitory and Moorhead Armory, classes began anew. The school paper went to press as usual, play practice continued and the band played on. New construction plans began quickly. By 1932, a new administration building, named in honor of President MacLean, a model school, power plant and gymnasium were complete. The fire was not then a death, but from its ashes arose the "Birth of the greater MSTC."

Although the Depression did not halt MSTC, the effect was felt in a curtailed building program. Not until 1948 with the construction of Ballard Hall, a men's dormitory, did a new building appear. Enrollment also declined and reached its nadir in 1943-44 with only 429 students.

Then there was war. MS did not become a girl's school even though many of the college men were serving in the military. In 1943, President O.W. Snarr (1941-55) announced that the college had entered into a contract with the Army Air Corps "for the academic and physical training, feeding, housing and general care of a quota of aviation students. . ." So the college became the 346th Training Detachment. The training was for a 22-week period. From March 1943, to June 1944, 1,650 aircrew men were trained at MSTC.

With war's end, greater changes occurred. Returning G.I.'s swelled the enrollment. Housing was extremely scarce. Increasing numbers of students did not wish to be teachers and the curriculum expanded to provide their needs. In 1946, this curricular change led the State Teachers College Board to grant a bachelor of arts degree in addition to the bachelor of science.

Further events under President Snarr included the acceptance of MSTC into membership in the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools; the initiation of general education courses during the first two years; the beginning of off-campus courses (now continuing education); and approval to grant a Master of Science in Education degree.

Moorhead State College

During the 50's, the school diversified and broadened. Strong development in the liberal arts and professional curricula attracted students. The Speech/Theatre & Music Departments began to offer public dramas and concerts. Because of this increasing diversity and breadth of purpose, the institution's name was changed to Moorhead State College in 1957 under President A. L. Knoblauch (1955-58).

The late 50's and the 60's were paradoxical times. Enrollment grew quickly. Faculty increased. A vast building program began under President John Neumaier (1958-68) with the construction of 11 buildings. It was not for lack of space or scarcity of faculty that students changed. Reflecting the general unrest of the Civil Rights, Viet Nam, counter-culture years, student dissatisfaction led to their increasing involvement in educational affairs.

Cooperation rather than growth became new goals. In 1968 under President Roland Dille (1968-present), Project E-Quality (now Minority Student Affairs) began making the college one of the first in the region to have such a plan. It was financed by faculty, community and federal funds.

Further cooperation among colleges was emphasized in 1969 with the creation of the Tri-College University - Concordia College, North Dakota State University and Moorhead State.

The proximity of the schools makes possible cross-registration and campus exchange, and has led to the development of the TCU Humanities Forum, intercampus transportation, as well as full use of the three libraries by a registered student. TCU has grown tenfold since its inception with over 5,000 students participating in 1974-75.

Although 1971 brought the closing of the Campus Laboratory School, Moorhead State continued to pioneer in educational practice, initiating its Professional Fourth Year program for Elementary Education majors that same year. A program in External Studies was begun in 1973 allowing those who are working to complete a college education. Partial credit is given for work experience under the plan.

Moorhead State University

With the growth from 29 students in 1888 to 4,600 in 1975, the increase of faculty from 5 to over 300, the choice of programs and majors raised from one to more than 90, it is appropriate that on August 1, 1975, state legislation permitted the institution's name to become Moorhead State University.



...and Beyond

If, this year, it is tempting to think of the university as a campus, it is also easy, this year, to think of it in very different terms, for, this year, as never before, our teaching mission extends far beyond the boundaries of the campus. For a great many years, MSU has offered off-campus classes. In the last few years off-campus programs, sometimes called adult education, and now usually called continuing education, has attracted an increasing number of students. There are many reasons for this: in the counties for which we have responsibility, there are nearly 15,000 people above the age of 25 who have had some college but who have not graduated; there are many people who need new knowledge to cope with jobs that are more and more complicated; there are those who want to change jobs, and there are a great number who find in course work many kinds of personal enrichment.

That is why you find teachers from MSU in many of the towns and cities of the region.

As parents of on-campus students, these programs may not seem relevant to your sons and daughters, although they do mean that if

your children stop-out, as many now do, they will not have to stop-out completely. But those of you who live in this region may find continuing education classes of interest to you. There are a great many opportunities for you to join your children as students at Moorhead State University. Announcements of courses are carried in local newspapers, or you can get any information you need by writing to Dr. Larry Jones, Director of Continuing Education, Moorhead State University.

The Future

If we do not see you in our classes, we hope to see you on campus. There are a great many things going on on the campus that might be of interest to you. One good excuse for visiting your sons and daughters is Homecoming, which, this year, will be on Saturday, October 25. Your children are the best source of information on particular events, if you can get it out of them.

If you do come, for Homecoming, or for any other reason, I hope that I will have a chance to see you.

Roland Dille

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