

**PIONEERS FOUND
NEW UNIVERSITY
TO HOLD GRANTS**

(Continued from Page 3.)

pure and divine light. There were many advanced spirits in Nebraska even at that early day. They realized that culture was something desirable for its own sake. Prairies indeed had to be subdued, but other interests besides that of the dollar were most desirable, and among these culture in distinction from mere knowledge, technical or general, was regarded as most important. There was another class more limited than the former in influence and numbers that desired a university solely because of the advertisement which it would give the state abroad.

**UNIVERSITY TO ATTRACT
COMMONWEALTH SETTLERS**

They held, and that truthfully, that an institution of learning of high grade would attract the cultivated emigrants within our borders, and be the most powerful factor in securing the settlement of this commonwealth. Others believed differently and this was still a smaller class, a class that had received a one-sided impulse, by a narrow range of reading and study, could see no good in a university unless its professors devoted themselves wholly to studies in natural history and physics. They pointed to the unused resources of the state to its comparatively unknown botany, zoology, and geology, and claimed that the making known what the state was and could be made into these particulars was itself justification enough for the establishment of a university.

The fact that the infancy of nations is often a literary creative period was not overlooked during these discussions. Nothing is better known than that the most illustrious Greek classics were produced during the youth of the Hellenic people. The experience of many another nation is parallel to that of Greece. The literary ripeness of a nation devotes itself more to criticism, when its youth was spent in founding institutions and in the creation of literary masterpieces. It was through the dominance of such ideas as those recorded above that a public sentiment was created that justified, amid some opposition, the establishment of this university.

**YOUNG MEN CREATE
FAVORABLE SENTIMENT.**

It should also be remembered that the public sentiment that established the university was mainly created by young or comparatively young men. The early legislatures of the state were principally made up of such. These young men were exceptionally able and enterprising, and came here to help create a commonwealth when the effort meant personal risk, sacrifice and toil of unusual severity. To reach Nebraska nearly eighty years ago involved the crossing of Iowa in stage coaches through a sparsely settled region for half the distance, or a longer and more tortuous journey from St. Louis by boats. Many of the young men who came here at that early day possessed great fame and distinction in the professions, in business, or in politics. Honorable J. M. Woolworth, A. J. Poppleton, E. S. Dundy of the United States court, C. Briggs, O. P. Mason, T. M. Marquette and others who won great distinction at the bar, on the bench or both. Dr. George L. Miller, Julius Sterling Morton of Nebraska City and founder of Arbor Day April 10, 1872, who passed away April 27, 1902; Governor Robert W. Furnas, who served as governor from 1873 to 1875, born May 5, 1824, and died June 1, 1905; J. M. McMurphy, Bishop Talbot, Lieut. Isaac Webster and brother and Professor Dake came at the first organization of the territory. These young men possessed ability and character to make them marked in any state. They are the men who moulded this commonwealth. The men who passed the bill in the legislature, establishing the University of Nebraska, Feb. 15, 1869, demonstrated the truth of what has just been said.

**STATE SENATE
ORIGINATES BILL.**

The bill originated in the senate and was known as Senate File No. 85. It was introduced by Ebenezer E. Cunningham, then of Richardson county and afterwards surveyor general of Nebraska and a protégé of Judge Archibald Weaver, father of Gov. Arthur J. Weaver. It was referred to the educational committee of which C. H. Gere, who founded the Commonwealth, Sept. 7, 1867, which later became the State Journal, and who published the first issue of the Daily State Journal July 20, 1870, was chairman. They reported favorably, and its final passage in the senate, on Feb. 15, 1869,

every member, democrat and republican, voting for the bill. Besides the above the following individuals were members of that senate, namely: C. J. Myers, Isham Reavis, T. Ashton, T. B. Stevenson, W. F. Chapin, J. W. Frost, William F. Goodwill and Guy C. Barnum. Those familiar with our state history will remember the conspicuous part that many of these men took in the affairs in the state. In the house the university fared equally well. On the final passage of the bill Feb. 15, 1869—sixty-nine years ago—it received the vote of every member.

Any statements concerning the early history of this university would be defective without acknowledgements of indebtedness to the patriotic public spirits and noble characters of the founders of the state and this institution. Many of the original ones have passed away. With our present magnificent population 1,377,126 and resources, the people are apt to forget the early intellectual and social workers in the state. No political, sectorial, or other feeling of interest, however, should prevent us from giving honor to whom so much and so great honor is due. **GEN. PERSHING GRADUATED IN 1893.**

One of the outstanding and distinguished graduates of the University of Nebraska who scintillates all over the world is General John Joseph Pershing who graduated in 1893, while the world's fair was in session in Chicago. He was a student under Chancellor Bessey and Chancellor Canfield. Col. Frank D. Eager, well known in Lincoln, was his classmate.

The university having been founded at the time indicated, it will be interesting to consider some of the men to whom the first board of regents entrusted the destiny of the new school. Foremost among these stands the first chancellor of the university, Dr. A. R. Benton. He was in many respects a most remarkable character. The circumstances connected with his election to the chancellorship illustrate alike his modesty and his high sense of personal honor. Rev. O. R. Dunan, then a regent of the university, of his own accord, first opened a correspondence with him on the subject, and suggested to him the advisability of being a candidate for the office of chancellor. He consented, but took no steps to secure the position, save a reference of Mr. Dungan to his friends in Indiana who were cognizant of his educational work. Among these friends were Hon. O. P. Morton, Hon. A. J. Porter, first comptroller of the treasury; E. B. Martinsdale, trustee of the Purdue university, and many others. So little, however, did the matter weigh with him that he in the meantime accepted the presidency of the Northwestern Christian university, over which he had before presided for seven years, after having long been a professor in the college. He was therefore taken by surprise when, in the beginning of 1871, he was notified of his election to the chancellorship of the University of Nebraska. He was invited to meet the regents Feb. 7, 1871, for mutual acquaintance and consultation, and to decide as far as possible as to the opening of the university. He was also invited to deliver a popular address, and he accepted.

**BENTON DOUBTS
LEADERSHIP ABILITY.**

Meeting the regents at the appointed time, he frankly told them he regarded his election as a great compliment, but that he gave them perfect liberty to rescind their action in his case, or choose another for the position. He wished them to have perfect liberty, after personal acquaintance, to do what seemed to them best for the university. He also gave advice as to salaries, especially that of chancellor, which he considered, under the circumstances of a new state like Nebraska, altogether too high. He wished them to retrieve any false step which they might have made in the election of a chancellor. In other words, he was willing to sacrifice his own interests for those of the university, if, in the opinion of any of the regents, the two interests were in conflict. At this February meeting the time for opening the university was not fixed; this was done at a meeting in the following April, when it was resolved to commence operations on the 7th of the following September. Dr. Benton returned to Indianapolis and succeeded in cancelling his engagement with the Northwestern university. He removed to Nebraska in May, and at once set about the work of the

university, which consisted then in remodeling the rooms, estimating purchases, arranging courses of study, and advertising the opening and the advantages of the university by lectures.

The long looked for and anxiously expected 7th of September finally arrived. About 70 students made their first appearance that morning. After chapel exercises the first faculty meeting was held in this hall. Five members, the total number of instructors, were present, namely: Chancellor Benton, Professors O. C. Dake, Manly, Church and Aughey. That was the beginning of the "faculty love feasts" that are still held with more or less regularity. That first year was an extremely hard one. The teachers were overworked. Aughey, for example, taught six hours a day besides having the care of the chemical department and the founding of a museum.

**CHANCELLOR NEVER
WOUNDED FEELINGS.**

The chancellor and Professors Dake and Church worked equally hard. Chancellor Benton was remarkably considerate of his associates feelings. He made an effort never to wound the feelings of a professor intentionally under any provocation. He meant to be exactly just and never was more happy than when he could help or confer a favor on his fellow workers. He was always careful

to preserve their good names. He was exceedingly cautious and careful and watched with a most vigilant eye all the interests of the university. He had financial abilities of a high order, and never ran himself into debts, and discouraged the contracting of them by faculty and students. He carried this spirit to such an extent that some of the friends of the university imagined that he was lacking in public spirit.

Amid all the trials which his work brought upon him he always found time to prosecute the studies of his life. His scholarship was accurate and broad. Familiar with the classics, the amenities of literature occupied much of his attention. He was well posted on the progress of science, and familiar with the biological and philosophical discussions which distinguish our epoch. He shone in the recitation room, and especially in those departments that represented the different chairs that he had filled. In fact, so varied was his scholarship that he was equally at home in almost every department of college work. He made every object luminous by the clearness of his analysis. In popular address, when using a manuscript, he rarely did justice to himself; but his productions uniformly read remarkably well. When he, however, dispensed with his manuscript, he spoke with rare eloquence and poise. Chan-

cellor Benton never exaggerated. No fact or statement was ever colored by him. Neat in person, pure in thought, clear in intellect, studious in life, courteous to a remarkable degree, the charm of the school circle, he was a model Christian, scholar and gentleman.

The university at that time could consider itself exceedingly fortunate in its first head. With a less cautious, careful, well balanced and able head, it might have failed. Under his administration there was a regular and constant growth of the university, and his last year here was the most successful, up to that time, in its history. Unfortunately no catalogue was published at the close of his last year of the university management, as had been previously done, and from these circumstances the credit due to him at that time was not made known to the public. This failure to publish the final results of his labors for the university was an injustice to him which he felt much less keenly than his friends.

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