

26/20/12

Alumni Association

Alumni

Rolfe Family Papers, 1885, 1892-1895, 1907-1972

Log of Tape recorded interview of Mary Rolfe by Jennifer Johnson, (tape in Box 3), November 17, 1967

1-39 Athletics--Bleachers for baseball at Illinois Field; Shelter for eyes from sun. Wanted bigger one, so burned old one down. Baseball--Jake Stahl, baseball and football, good student; Wisconsin game, show of bad temper; Fair athletics prompted by G. Huff; Played game over; Emphasis on honesty; Before athletes just thought themselves smart.

41-54 Appearance of Illinois Field; Style for great big hats to avoid sun; Don't recall any cheers;

55-62 Field Day! If you knew a student who was performing you went.

63-136 Jake Stahl; Miss Rolfe finds and reads entry in Alum Directory; Most students came from other places.

137-158 Most students from here went to Eastern colleges; Children of many faculty members went here; Group spirit of faculty members and children; Faculty was small enough to all belong together; Meet faculty informally in our houses a lot.

159-182 Most girls lived in private homes, some in boarding houses; Later had ruling that must have room to entertain date; Friend had to use Rolfe's house for entertaining date because had no parlor.

183-200 Dean of Women's control; Approval of rooms' toilet and wash basin facilities by YWCA.

201-219 Most students lived in west Champaign, because nothing built between University and the Illinois Central; Built up small houses on University Avenue, and larger houses between John Street and the fairgrounds on First Street; West Champaign dwellers got to campus by Streetcar and horse car; Get across Illinois Central before trains came in, or bus might have to wait. Students who were late might be checked for his address by teacher; There was no underpass, not till later; In Urbana, also far distance, houses were east of Lincoln Avenue and students had to walk.

237-251 Grass behind Union. When the University started, there was only one tree (sycamore), still there now. Still standing (to right when walk from Auditorium to the Library); Students paid ten cents an hour to plant trees. Raised vegetables.

252-284 Old Dorm was on University Avenue; Freshmen roomed on top floor; Carried own coal, water, ashes, and slops everyday. Most batched and cooked their own meals; Father had a close friend (Raymond) who lived near Savoy, and his mother provided a home-cooked meal for the two.

285-306 My father came here because his mother told him to; He didn't go to Beloit with a close friend. Went to University of Illinois because they taught the new science; He was in the first class to graduate; They were all older than father.

307-312 Most were from farm families; Most all came back at Commencement time; Alumni day for them.

313-385 When living in Taft's house, we had anniversary meeting of alumni; 50th anniversary; Father would take others as his class went. Had the Gregorians come back; Often had 150 guests for dinner; My graduation day, father told her no guests available; She marched down to ceremony in cap and gown (first time for this), and her path was strewn with cyclone-downed trees; Exercises in the Armory; Father told her that there would be guests after all, so she ran home in wool robe, and made it back to ceremony just in time.

386-408 Before they wore regular clothes; We began wearing caps and gowns first of May. We had to buy own caps and gowns; Gave mine to a student who couldn't afford the price, and didn't know if going to graduate because mother sick.

409-445 Professor Burrill was my teacher in botany; No matter where he was, he was reserved and dignified. He wasn't bubbling, but eyes and expression told you he was interested; Standoff dignity; Never heard of any misbehaving in his classes.

446-522 He was popular as a teacher, but not popular with students though; Religious controversy; He came into botany class and discussed evolution; For one week, he taught evolution, before he returned to botany; Religion as a scientist sees it; Nothing in Bible was wrong, just misinterpreted; No opposition of other faculty members; They all took an interest in his ideas.

523-552 Story of Agassiz--story about a student who looked at a fish for weeks; Beginning of zoology and scientific approach; Forbes started you that way in zoology.

553-569 Early faculty members taught many subjects; Father taught physiology and geology; He took the latter.

570-702 Thomas A. Clark--I knew him well; Class of '90, graduated; He helped the president; He tutored Education; Never been anyone like him, and never will be. Did things different from anyone else. Didn't follow normal use of silverware at dinners; He would come out with a different utensil; Dressed like a student and went out into the crowd to "spy" on students; T. A. was in on operations of students; Everyone adored T. A.; He knew every student by name; One student threatened to commit suicide, T. A. told him to go ahead.

703-757 He had the funniest way of approaching things; He taught my rhetoric class; He corrected me when I called to ask about students coming over; He told me that he had real fight to keep an "undignified dean"--some opposed his methods later on. He had to work it out himself. There had never been a Dean of Men.