Scandals, Scalawags, and (Un)Savory Stories from MSU History

Cynthia Ghering
Portia Vescio
June 3, 2011
University Archives

- Official repository for the historical archives of Michigan State University.
- Established by mandate of the Board of Trustees in 1969.
- 33,000 cubic feet of records.
- Subjects: administration, athletics, campus buildings and grounds, student groups and activities, student memorabilia, faculty papers and research.
Historical Collections

- 700+ collections related to Michigan and the Great Lakes region.
- Topics include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Michigan in Civil War</th>
<th>4-H in Michigan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural and Dairy</td>
<td>Automobile Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumber Industry</td>
<td>Environmentalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life in rural Michigan</td>
<td>W.K. Kellogg Sanatorium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Lansing</td>
<td>Warren Featherbone Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Papers (R.E. Olds)</td>
<td>Historic photographs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using Archival Material

- Collections are unique and one-of-kind
  - All materials are reading room use only
    - *No overnight circulation*
  - Pencils and laptops allowed – no pens
  - Collection-level inventories
  - Reference archivists always available
  - Request material, archivist brings to you
  - Some materials require gloves to handle
Open Hours to Public

- Monday: 8:30-12, 1-4:30
- Tuesday: 8:30-12, 1-4:30
- Wednesday: 1-4:30
- Thursday: 8:30-12, 1-4:30
- Friday: 8:30-12, 1-4:30
Online Resources
THE SAMUEL JOHNSON AFFAİR
Students – Mandatory Labor Requirement
Samuel Johnson
Johnson at MAC – Replaced a very popular professor

Prof. Ingersoll
Resentment about Manual Labor
Open Rebellion
Conflict with
E.J. MacEwan
Johnson goes on Offensive

Beard Brigade: Beal, Kedzie (white beards center front); Cook (back row 2nd from left); Johnson (behind Kedzie); MacEwan (to right of Kedzie)
Aftermath

- Three professors fired/resigned
- Lost a host of friends who concluded that the institution was repudiating its agricultural past in order to become a school of science and engineering
- State Senate in 1891 slashed $7000 from the college’s appropriation
Sources

- *History of the Michigan Agricultural College and Biographical Sketches of Trustees and Professors* by W. J. Beal

- *Michigan Farmer* (farmers’ opinions)
  - Available online through the library catalog

- MSU Photograph collection
Sources, cont.

- Perry Holden papers – one student’s perspective
- Madison Kuhn papers – campus historian – newspaper clippings
CLASS STRIKE OF 1902
Class Rivalry: Freshmen v Sophomores
It’s all fun and games until . . .
President Snyder forbids the games
Students will be Students
Strike Day 1: Other Students Rally
Strike Day 2: Students Stand Firm
Strike Day 2: Word Gets Out

THERE ARE NO CLASSES AT THE COLLEGE TODAY

Student Body Stands Firm in Its Boycott, Members of All Classes Agreeing to Stay Away

President Snyder and Faculty Have Nothing to Add or Take Away From Their Announcement
Strike Day 3: Trying to Maintain Order
Strike Day 4: The End?

Elwyn T. Gardner
And in the end . . .

- The State Board of Agriculture upheld all suspensions – nothing changed

- Chester Brewer revises the “rules” of class rivalry, so they do continue
Sources

- Madison Kuhn papers – campus historian – newspaper clippings

- Jonathon Snyder papers – MAC president – notes about class activities

- Faculty minutes – notes about faculty decision to review suspensions
Sources, cont.

- MSU Broadside collection - class rivalry posters
- MSU Photograph collection
1909 PINKERTON INVESTIGATION
Banned by the College: Drinking
Students Leave Campus to Drink Openly

Yes Professor.
"There is a light in the window for thee,
I'm down town, but you think I'm here,
Long as this light you can see.
Banned by the College: Gambling
College’s solution: Hire a Pinkerton agent
Wells Hall (2\textsuperscript{nd} one)
Spencer’s findings
Spencer’s findings, cont.
Spencer’s findings, cont.
Results of investigation

- Eleven students expelled from school
- Cost of investigation: $284.39
Sources

- Jonathon Snyder papers – Spencer’s daily reports
- Madison Kuhn papers – temperance movement, cartoons
- MSU Photograph collection
HAZING AND PRANKS
THE BUBBLE.

NO. 2. Single Copy, 5 Cts.
LANSING, JUNE 20, 1859.
Heman H. Soilensyle, Editor.

ADVERTISEMENTS.
We will insert a few advertisements, of ten lines each, at three cents per line for each insertion.

EDITORIAL.

Once more we make our appearance among you, our dear readers, hoping we are a welcome visitor, but altering our course not at all, be it ever so much otherwise.

When we sent out our first Bubble we were but experimenting. We scarce knew how great was the magnitude of the age, hence we were not prepared to estimate aright the tone of our paper was too grave. We were rather pleased than otherwise to hear this objection urged, as we feared somewhat lest, in spite of all our vigilance, the younger members of the Society, whose lightness has been elsewhere alluded to, might introduce something into the paper inconsistent both with our dignity and the best interests of the cause we advocate. That tone of sober earnestness, amounting in some places almost to sadness, that runs through our two papers, is much as we wished it to be.

But some one came up and objected that we were not grave enough. When we first heard this proposition advanced, we ran hurriedly to our audience and read the Bubble carefully through again, to ascertain whether or not such an objection had grounds which before escaped our notice. But we could discover none, and at last we came to the conclusion that people would grumble anyhow. We have been confiding in this belief as we have since listened to the many minor complaints made against us. One advises us to put advertisements in our paper in order to

STUDENT'S EXCUSEME SONG.

Our books we may have cast aside,
And smart our wits with them abled;
And launched are we on pleasant tides;
What thoughts have we of sorrow?
For we are students, bold and gay.
We care not what outsiders say,
We'll have our sport while 'tis today,
And reck not of the morrow.

Oh, human life is short at best;
We need not fear our cost.
Nor will we trouble borrow.
For we are students, bold and gay.
We care not what outsiders say,
We'll have our sport while 'tis today,
And reck not of the morrow.

We deem a happy, smiling face,
And merry voices no disguise,
And we are bound to give no place
Not to a useless sorrow;
For we are students, bold and gay.
We care not what outsiders say,
We'll have our sport while 'tis today,
And reck not of the morrow.

Our student-life will soon be o'er,
Those merry times will come no more.
Then cheer us louder than before,
Warily press on and overcome sorrow.
Oh, we are students, bold and gay.
We care not what outsiders say,
We'll have our sport while 'tis today,
And reck not of the morrow.
Publications – The Green Onion
Publications – The Eczema

An Irritating Sheet... PRINTED BETWEEN ITCHES

THREE STUDENTS HANG FOR BEING INTELLECTUAL

Highbrows Are Found in Lower Depths Only

Orgy of Forbidden Intelligence Found
Pranks in the Dorms
Stacking Rooms
Pranks at J-Hop
Hazing

UNION LITS SOLVE PROBLEM

GRRR! TRY 'N FIND OUT!

WHERE'S YOUR POT FROSH?

UNION LITS

ARMOUR!!

JUST A SUGGESTION IN CASE ANY SOPH SHOULD FEEL SO INCLINED TO START ANOTHER "M-VESTIGATION"!

The Union Lits will think twice before they "go into action" again!!
Akers as a child
Arrived
MAC 1905
Akers as Athlete
Akers as Prankster
Akers Asked to Leave MAC

April 3rd - 08.

Mr. G. V. Akers,
Williamston, Mich.

My dear Sir:

I herewith enclose the report of your son's work for the term which has just closed.

Our doubtful case committee has gone over his record very carefully and have instructed me to request you to withdraw him from college for the present. The quality of his work has been so poor during the past term they feel that it would be impossible for him to do acceptable work during the coming term.

Very truly yours,
Akers to make it on his own
Dodge and the Board of Trustees
Akers Gives Back to MSU
Sources

- Forest Akers papers
- Jonathon Snyder papers
- Yearbooks
THE END