

1856
History
1920

Old M. A. C. Thru the Fire

1905--1912

By Dean Thomas H. Spence

ABOUT 1906 the Maryland Agricultural College, better known as M. A. C., may be said to have gotten upon a working basis as a going concern. While the capacity of the buildings was not adequate, the facilities for instruction were far more efficient than had been the case a decade before, and the College administration, the State officials and the people of the State felt just cause for gratification.



COMMENCEMENT

In March, 1905, was celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the College. This occasion was one of keen interest and attraction throughout the State.

At this time the Administration Building had just been finished and the Old Barracks completely made over and re-furnished. These two buildings supplied accommodations for two hundred students, and there was not a vacant room. Besides these and the group of Experiment Station Build-

ings, the campus contained the west wing of the Engineering Building, the Chemistry Building, the Library and Gymnasium, the Hospital and Morrill Hall.

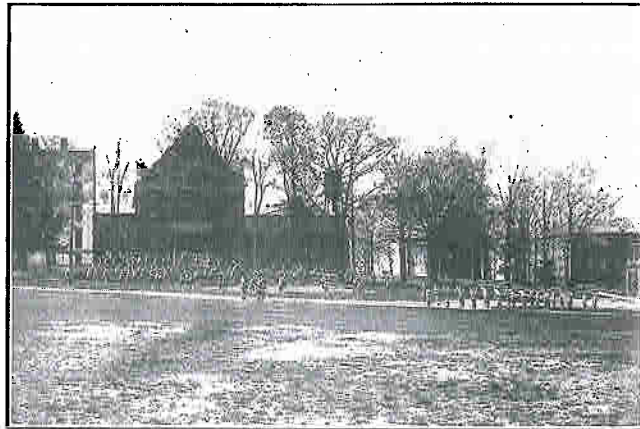
The new Administration Building contained the executive offices, the Chapel and Auditorium, and had dormitories on the second, third and fourth floors.

The College barracks was a five-story brick building, containing student quarters and the domestic department. The dormitories were large, well ventilated, and provided with fire-escapes, bath and water rooms. All the buildings were lighted with gas and electricity and heated with steam from central plants on the college grounds.

The mechanical engineering department was located in a two-story brick building, completed in 1896, and in 1906 thoroughly equipped. It contained workshops for woodwork, machinery-room well filled with modern equipment, a drawing-room, library and office, together with a large annex, designed to afford additional facilities in forging and foundry work, which was erected and equipped during 1904.

The chemical building was completed in 1897, and in 1906 was thoroughly equipped. It contained several lecture-rooms, laboratories for practical work, and for the analyzing of fertilizers and feeding materials for domestic animals. This work was assigned to the professor of chemistry at this College by an act of the General Assembly. He was the State Chemist.

In 1893 the present library building was erected. For a time it served for both gymnasium and library, but the second floor proved too small



1908

for library purposes, and the gymnasium floor was converted into a library and equipped with library files.

Morrill Hall provided ample accommodations for the departments of agriculture, horticulture, physics, entomology, vegetable pathology and veterinary science, thus relieving the pressure of close quarters from which these departments have suffered and greatly extending their opportunities for the development of high-grade scientific work. A greenhouse for work in entomology and vegetable pathology has just been added.



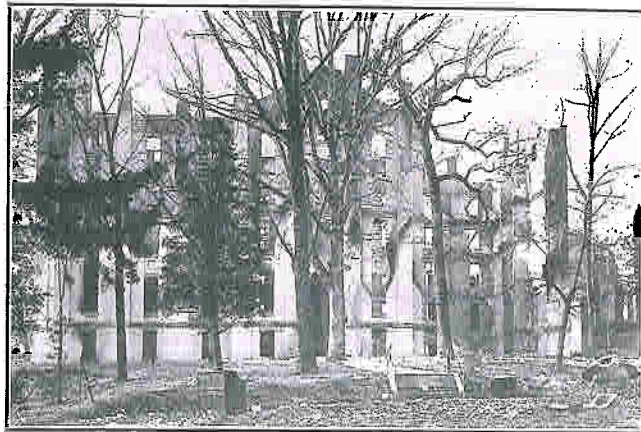
THE DANCE

The College infirmary, completed in 1901, has proved a most efficient means of isolating infectious diseases which might otherwise have become epidemic, thus seriously embarrassing College work. It contained ample room for all emergencies and was furnished with modern hospital facilities.

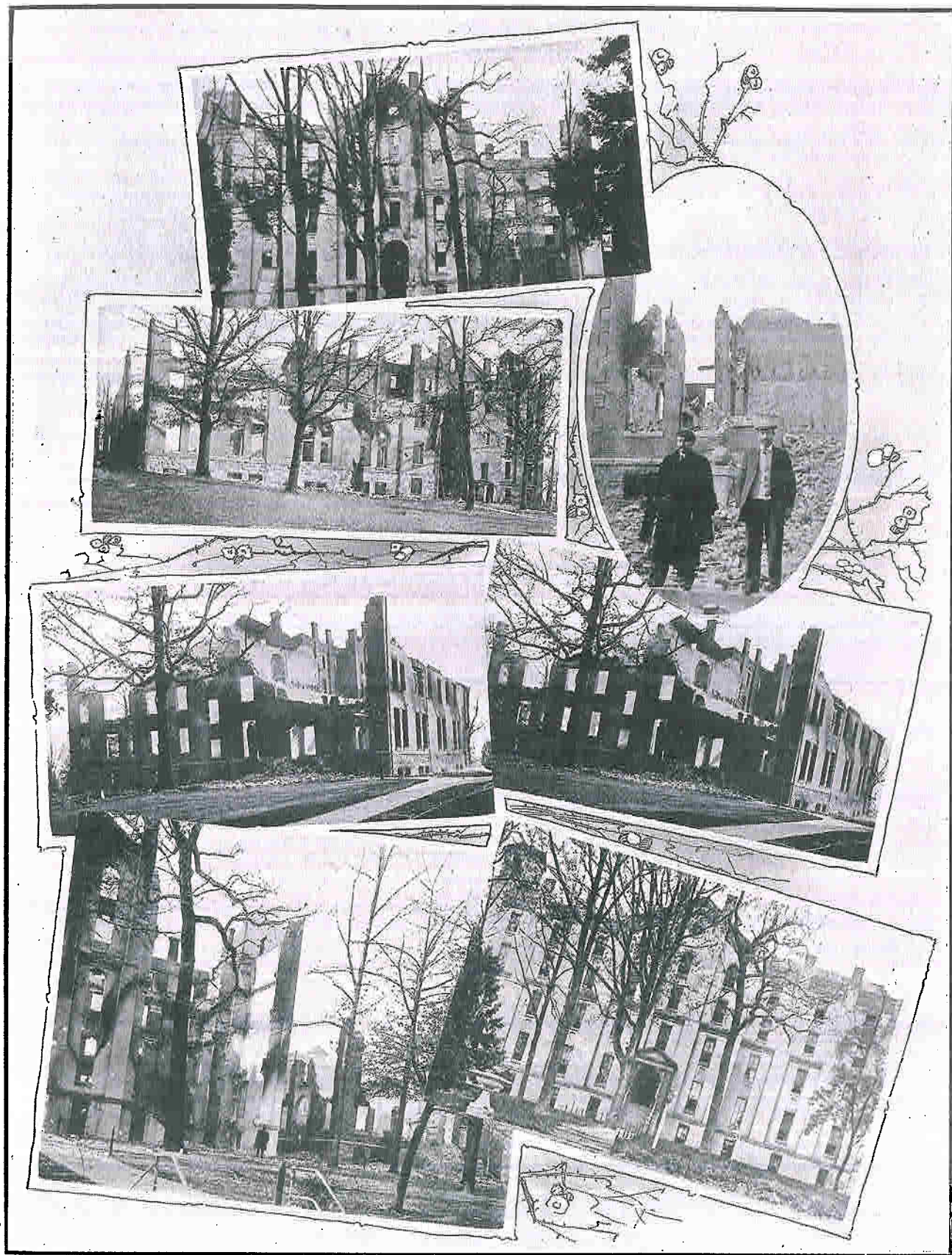
On the night of November 29, 1912, occurred the disastrous fire which destroyed the two large dormitories with the dining-rooms, business offices, and the classrooms for Mathematics and Languages. The usual Thanksgiving Dance was in progress when fire was discovered darting forth from the ceiling of a room on the top floor of the Administration Building. Every effort was made to control the fire, but the water supply failed, and in a short time there was nothing left except the grim, gloomy ruins. Worst of all, the College records extending over a period of more than fifty years were utterly destroyed. It looked for a time as though the College would have to suspend operations indefinitely, but the students saved the day. Four days after the fire every student save one reported for duty, resolved to keep the College going. Our neighbors in the nearby towns co-operated most generously, opening their homes to the boys of the homeless College, and for nearly two years they kept them, and kept them well.

After the fire serious efforts were made to transplant the College to a different part of the State, but, fortunately, they did not prevail. The hallowed sentiment of two generations that had been born for the old "College on the Hill" was too strong to be denied, and all interests ultimately united to raise a greater and a better College upon the cinders of the old M. A. C.

In 1905 the College Faculty was composed as follows: R. W. Silvester, President and Professor of Mathematics; Thomas H. Spence, Vice-President and Professor of Languages; H. B. McDonnell, State Chemist and Professor of Chemistry; J. S. Robinson, State Horticulturist and Professor of Horticulture; J. B.



THE RUINS



BEFORE AND AFTER

S. Norton, State Pathologist and Professor of Botany; T. B. Symons, State Entomologist and Professor of Zoology; Edward Lloyd, Commandant and Professor of Military Science; W. T. L. Taliaferro, Professor of Agriculture; S. S. Buckley, Professor of Veterinary Science; F. B. Bomberger, Professor of English, History and Civics; H. Lanahan, Professor of Physics; C. S. Richardson, Professor of Public Speaking and Physical Culture; H. Gwinner, Professor of Mechanical Engineering; H. T. Harrison, Principal of the Preparatory Department.

About 1909 the present Engineering Building was completed. Dr. T. H. Taliaferro had succeeded Professor Lanahan, and Professor Creese had come to teach Electrical Engineering.

Changes and expansions ensued in several departments. Professor Hutt, then Professor Close, with Professor Novick in turn, had charge of Horticulture; State Forester Besley inaugurated his lectures in Forestry, and there were added to the teaching force from among the graduates: Professor Cory, Zoology; Professor Ruffner, Animal Husbandry; Professor Broughton, Chemistry; Professor Byrd, Physical Culture. Professor Crisp, now the efficient chief of our General Service, came to supplement the staff in Engineering.

The year 1909 marked the death of Dr. Joseph R. Owens, the Nestor of the Administration, he having assumed the office of Registrar and Treasurer in 1890. Dr. Owens was a gentleman of the old school, affable and lovable, and withal a talented financier.

The College curriculum was kept abreast of the times and entrance requirements were advanced as steadily as the progress of the high schools would permit.

Short winter courses in agricultural and domestic sciences were inaugurated, and the benefits of the College thus greatly widened in scope.

The College more than maintained its standing in the Intercollegiate Oratorical Association, and though the A. B. course had been discontinued, our representatives won more than their share of honors against colleges whose principal course was classical.

In Military Training an entirely new spirit was aroused with the detail in 1908 of Captain E. T. Conley to be Commandant of Cadets. Under his aggressive administration the campus became a modified West Point; a College Band was organized for the first time; the battalion of cadets was given a week off for target practice at the army range down the Potomac; a week was spent in camp each year, and so to be awarded an officers' commission on Commencement Day was no mere formality.

In 1910, and again in 1911, M. A. C. was rated as having one of the ten best-trained cadet battalions in the United States, and consequently entitled to name a graduate for a commission in the regular army. Cadet Major O. H. Saunders, now Major, U. S. A., was named in 1910, and in 1911 the honor was won by Cadet Captain L. M. Silvester, also at present Major, U. S. A. In 1908 the battalion, under Major Edward Lloyd, with Cadet Major Cooper, accepted an invitation to spend a week at the Jamestown Exposition, where its drills excited marked approbation.

Captain J. S. Upham succeeded Captain Conley in 1911. He made an excellent Commandant and was notable as a marksman. He was recalled to his regiment just after the fire in 1912.

The Cadet Majors during the period covered by this sketch were L. F. Zerkel, H. D. Williar, C. F. Mayer, O. H. Saunders, E. A. Mudd, W. M. Kemp and H. H. Koehler.

The value of the training of cadets has been vindicated on the field of battle. Captain Basil Spalding, '09, was the first American officer to lead a detachment "over the top." Among others who won distinction in Europe I mention with honor: Williar, '07; Allison and Dryden, '09; Cole, Saunders and Tydings, '10; Silvester, Mudd and Warthen, '12.

Athletics during this period were marked by triumphs and reverses. Funds adequate to employ a full-time coach were not available, and Professor Richardson was fain to resort to such volunteer and underpaid talent as he might be able to secure. However, the spirit of old M. A. C. never faltered, and by sheer pluck and despite obstacles the college more than held its own on gridiron and diamond.

Among the athletes developed "from the ground up," so to speak, may be mentioned: "Pete" Bassett, "Dick" Dixon, Mayer brothers, "Chief" Bowland, Guy Firor, "Curley" Byrd, "Barney" Cooper, Urah Long, "Rat" Mackell the second, "Bill" Crone, Water Reeder, "Ches" Adams, "Bill" Cole, A. B. Duckett, O. H. Saunders, Fred Ward, "Sus" Grason, "Bill" Kemp, Ralph and "Pete" Lednum, Kostka Mudd, "Bob" Tolson, "Pete" Goeltz, Lawrence Wilson.

Student "activities" during this time were various. The Rossbourg dances held in the new auditorium were very popular; the Junior-Senior german marked the opening of "June Week"; Commencement Ball closed the festivities of the year.

In 1912 Commencement exercises were held out of doors in the College Grove for the first time.

While the percentage of drones was normal, the scholastic work of the student body as a whole was unusually good.

The pranks that go, or used to go, with college life were sufficient to banish ennui for the most indifferent: Raids on the College pantry (Charlie Dory's health resort); "attacks in force" upon defenseless (?) Hyattsville, with remorse the morning after when Captain Silvester bailed a score or more of woe-begone cadets out of the "hoosgow"; girding "Commy's" sword upon the Holstein Bull

and haltering him to the steam engine in the Mechanical Engineering Building, this (be it said) to properly blend agriculture, military science and the mechanic arts—these and other light forms of fun kept all the boys "on their toes."

We must doff our mortarboards to the class of '09. Those boys must have been endowed with more than normal class pride. There is a certain cornerstone on the campus that, besides the usual current college content, has



EX-GOVERNOR WARFIELD AND TRUSTEES

sealed within it the autographed roll of the class of '09, placed therein by whom, now or when, the Lord only knows, but the writer will wager that the trowel was wielded by his friend "Bad John" Holloway.

Some statistics relating to the activities of the graduates of M. A. C., 1906-1913, may prove of interest. Present employment: Engineering and Chemistry, 59; Teaching and County Agent Work, 34; Commerce, 15; Farming, 13; Government Service, 7; U. S. Army, 6; Law, 4; Clergy, 2; Medicine, 2; Unknown, 5; Deceased, 7. Total, 154.

Old M. A. C. has yielded seven score men in seven years who are utilizing the training secured at their Alma Mater to make this world a better place to live in. They may not all shine with dazzling achievements, but each is doing his share in his own efficient way. He has the hallmark of M. A. C. engraved upon him; it stands for grit, perseverance and success.

The Period of Reconstruction

1913--1920

By The Editors

MAKING up the history of the Maryland State College in 1913, attention should be called to the fact that from the time of the fire up to June of that year Professor Thomas H. Spence was acting President of the College, owing to the illness and subsequent resignation of President Silvester. The administration of Professor Spence was characterized by marked executive ability, and the College continued to thrive under his supervision. It was during his administration that the temporary dining-hall and auditorium were constructed and the President's house converted into a dormitory for the students.

In June of this year Dr. Harry J. Patterson, who for many years had been Director of the Experiment Station, was elected President of the College.

Dr. Patterson took up the affairs of the institution with great energy and ability and began work on comprehensive plans for the future development of the College. He at once reorganized the college work by dividing it into five divisions and appointing a dean of each division. These divisions were as follows: Agricultural Education, Prof. J. E. Metzger, dean; Agriculture, Dr. W. J. Taliaferro, dean; Engineering, Dr. T. H. Taliaferro, dean; Sociology, Prof. F. B. Bomberger, Dean; Applied Science, Dr. H. B. McDonnell, dean.

Dr. Patterson organized the Young Men's Christian Association and employed Mr. B. H. Darrow as the director of this association. The President also gave permission for Greek-letter fraternities to be organized among the College students, and Gamma Pi, now Sigma Nu, was the first fraternity organized. The other frats formed during Dr. Patterson's administration were Alpha Phi, now Kappa Alpha; Iota Sigma, now Sigma Phi, Sigma, and Nu Sigma Omricon.

It must be admitted that the College work flourished under Dr. Patterson's administration, which ran until his resignation in 1917, and that the College materially improved and advanced in every respect during his presidency.

The year 1914 marks an effort on the part of the College authorities and of the alumni to secure an appropriation from the State Legislature adequate for the immediate needs of the institution, and to procure such legislation as would effect beneficial changes in the administration and organization of the College. The private stockholders in the institution generously surrendered their holdings to the State, and through the offer of the College for sale and other legal proceedings, the State finally came into full legal ownership of the entire College plant.

Unfortunately, through some mix-up or miscarriage in the Legislature, the different bills passed in the interest of the College by the 1914 session, including