

THE HUNTER COLLEGE ALUMNI NEWS

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No. 9

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

Although my goal of 10,000 members in our Alumni Association is not yet in sight, I am glad to report that membership is moving ahead. We have over 300 new members as of this writing. If the 1,000 members who have not yet sent in their dues would do so promptly, we would have a paid-up membership of 3,000 or more before the end of 1957.

My thanks to all our members who have been sending to the Alumni office the names and addresses of graduates they know. If each member of the Alumni would send additional names and addresses of Hunter classmates, and if class presidents would activate the committees that work on bringing class lists up-to-date, we could possibly double the 12,000 or more corrected names and addresses which we now have. Thus we would be able, on Hunter's 90th Birthday in 1960, to present to the College a directory of all known graduates. Such a directory, which would also list known occupation, would be of invaluable assistance in uniting the Hunter family and in fostering a sense of kinship among all members of that family.

May I extend my warmest greetings for the coming holidays.

FRANCES ROTH ABRAMS, President

COLLEGE BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

In response to the many requests of Alumni who claim they never get sufficient opportunity to talk to old friends, the committee has arranged the program for the 88th Birthday Party and Luncheon of the College, to be held on February 15, 1958, to provide ample time for that purpose.

The Grand Ballroom of the Sheraton-Astor Hotel, where the luncheon is to be held, has a very large reception area, in which milestone classes may hold pre-luncheon meetings, from twelve to one o'clock. (Class presidents or representatives are urged to communicate with the chairman, Mrs. Florence S. Strenger, without delay, to reserve space.)

The program, which will feature a short address by a prominent Hunter graduate, will terminate at 3:30. The remaining time—until 5 P.M.—will be allocated to visiting friends at class and chapter tables, which will be clearly marked.

Please use the form below to make your reservation NOW.

FLORENCE S. STRENGER, Chairman

Enclosed is my check for reservations at \$5.50 per person.

Miss, Mrs., Mr.

Maiden name Class.....

Address

Please seat me with.....

Make checks payable to Alumni Association of Hunter College and send to 49 E. 65 St.

ANNIE E. HICKINBOTTOM MILLS

Born Aug. 22, 1864.

Graduated from Normal College, June 1884.

Taught in Veltin School for Girls, Sept. 1886-June 1887.

Became Tutor at Normal College, Sept. 1889.

Served as Head of French Dept., Normal College H.S., 1903-6.

Named Superintendent of Normal College, Sept. 1, 1906

Received rank of Professor, Jan. 9, 1907.

Received title of Dean, April 26, 1911.

Retired Sept. 1, 1934, as Dean Emeritus.

Died Sept. 25, 1957.



Harry Farlow's Painting of Dean Mills in the North Lounge of Hunter College
Gift of the Sister Classes of June '20 and June '22
(Photograph by Helen H. Taffel, '35)

Miss Hickinbottom the French Teacher Dear Adelaide,

You ask me to tell of my early memories of the one who deeply influenced my choice of a career, my first teacher of French, Miss Annie E. Hickinbottom. It was she whom I so loved and admired when I was an "Introductory", the name given to the incoming class of Normal College, that my sole ambition was to imitate her in acquiring the French language in order to teach it.

Miss Hickinbottom was appointed to the Staff of Normal College as Instructor in Mathematics. She taught Ancient History and Astronomy as well as Algebra and French to my class when I entered the College. With her natural charm, vigor, and warmth of personality, her stately bearing, sunny golden hair, and bright blue eyes, she brought joy into the class-room. She communicated to us her students her enthusiasm and love of her chosen subject, French, so that the hours with "Miss Annie" were the happiest of the day. They flew by and there was always regret when the gong sounded to end the period. With her remarkable skill in teaching, she covered the ground of her program so thoroughly and rapidly that in two years she took us far beyond the limit of work prescribed.

The ambition which I had conceived in my

first year was in due time realized. Taking Miss Hickinbottom as a model I followed her during her steps of advancement. As a tutor in the French Department under Professor Aubert, I became her colleague. When the division into High School and College was made in 1903, Miss Hickinbottom was named Head of the High School Department of French, of which I also became a member. Once again I was under her direction, and was able to benefit by her guidance. On the retirement of Miss Laura E. Leal, Lady Superintendent, Miss Hickinbottom was named her successor; the title was later changed to that of "Dean". She was a loss to our French Department but her eminent qualifications for her new position are well known.

I am pleased to pay this humble tribute to the memory of our beloved Dean Hickinbottom Mills, to whom I owe so largely the inspiration of my life-work.

CLAUDINE GRAY, '97

Professor Emeritus of Romance Languages

Dean Hickinbottom

She was not yet the Dean (that came a little later), she was still the "Lady Superintendent", when I first got to know her, in September 1907, just fifty years before her death. The circumstances of my getting to know her must be related, for they throw light on the kind of person that she was. The impression she made on me then has never changed.

I had graduated the previous June from old TDNC (Training Department of the Normal College), later to be known as the Hunter College Model School, and still later as the Hunter College Elementary School. For some reason the higher-ranking pupils in that class had been exempted (much to my disappointment) from taking the regular entrance examinations to Hunter College High School; and apparently no record was kept of us, for we did not receive notification as to the date when we were to report to what we fondly called "college". (The separation of the College and the High School had taken place four years earlier, but was far from clear-cut; for instance, when the College girls assembled in Chapel, as at that time they did daily, marching in to music in long, decorously silent lines, and taking their seats in strict unison, all the High School girls who were in the main building assembled with them.)

Learning by chance from a neighbor with a daughter at College that sessions had begun, that the girls had all gathered in Chapel that very morning, I rushed off to 69th Street in the greatest of anguish. I was a conscientious, and—believe it or not—a rather timid child; and the thought that I had missed the first assembly, and perhaps classes as well, was utter agony to me. ("Hang yourself, brave Crillon; we have fought at Arques and you were not there.")

Arrived at the dear old Gothic building, I sought information, and was directed to that haven for the troubled, the Lady Superintendent's Office. I can still hear her voice, warm,

kind, reassuring: "So you're one of those poor young ones that didn't get notified. Now I'll tell you what to do." Somehow all misery went. Here was sympathy, here was understanding, here was help. From that moment, she was my friend—and I was her humble adorer.

After that I saw her often. Mrs. Horgan says I used to go into the office every day and say, "Good-morning, Miss Hickinbottom." That I don't remember; but I do know that I was one of those worshippers at the twin shrines of Miss Hickinbottom and Miss Mattison who spent many hours toiling as joyous volunteers at tasks that are today performed by a large office-staff. What a privilege it was to alphabetize or sort countless cards at the behest of that fair-haired queen of my heart!

Imagine my excitement when my classmate and close friend, Jean Toeplitz (now Professor Wilde of the German Department), told me that her father, who was a physician, had treated Miss Hickinbottom. Picture the awe, and, I fear, the envy, with which I regarded the daughter of the doctor of the Dean!

But I had my contact too. My dearly beloved first Latin teacher was Mrs. Dundon, widow of Normal College's first Professor of Latin (who had been my mother's teacher). And Mrs. Dundon was Miss Hickinbottom's sister. Oh, the joyous day when Mrs. Dundon invited me to her home! And there I actually was within the doubly hallowed walls that harbored not only Mrs. Dundon but also Miss Hickinbottom. There I sat at her side on a couch where doubtless Miss Hickinbottom also sat, and heard about their father, who had called Annie "Cornie" (I suppose because of her blonde hair) and Eva "Brownie"; and I heard about Jack, who I think was Professor Dundon's nephew, and who lived with them (Jack was John Horgan, whom Miss Mattison was later to marry). Oh, what a marvelous tale I had to relate to my mother that night!

All my High School semesters except two were spent at annexes. Hunter College High School was not to have its own home till many years later, when the College moved out of the Lexington Avenue building. And in those days there was not even the Lexington Avenue building; the Model School still occupied that site, in the little red-brick Gothic structure that matched the towered and towering Old Building of the College fronting on Park Avenue. But when I came back to enter the College in 1911, I was destined to be there permanently. And I still visited, and still cherished, the Dean.

Our assemblies now were weekly, no longer daily, affairs. And at the "informal" assemblies the Dean presided. How patiently she read aloud the notices that we brought up to her lectern: the Bulletin staff would meet that day; the Classical Club would meet on Friday; etc., etc. Many a bit of advice and admonishment we cherished as my mother's generation had cherished those from President Hunter. "The girl who sits down at a teacher's desk is very

impertinent." The girls sit freely, in empty class-rooms, at the teacher's desk today (and indeed that desk is merely an impersonal table, and the real teachers' desks are off in offices.) But I think we would not have dreamed of doing so.—And then at formal assemblies, when we marched in, the seniors in caps and gowns, she stood in front of the platform to receive us, gazing benignly at her children—the very embodiment of the Alma Mater.

Never shall I forget, at the end of my Junior year, those heart-warming words. "This morning I found a slip of paper on my desk, giving me the names of the new Council President and Vice-President, and I'm just as pleased as I can be: Isabel McLaughlin and Adelaide Hahn." The formal installation of new Council officers did not start till the following year, when I as chairman of the committee in charge, being a lover of pomp and circumstance, organized a stately academic ceremony that endured for many years. But those simple words from the Dean were thrilling enough for me at the moment. And I made my first speech in Chapel, scared almost to death (I was never scared again).

Of course it was during my Senior year that I got to know her best. Nearly always after the weekly Council meeting, Isabel and I (do you still remember, Isabel?) would go rushing into her office to tell her what had happened. And she always listened with the utmost interest and understanding. Always we turned to her: when things went well, to share our good news; if things went badly, to seek her sympathy and advice and encouragement. I know that the girls of today sought Dean Anthony, and seek Dean Hopwood, with just the same free and friendly spirit as we sought Dean Hickinbottom. But we had the benefit of a smaller, simpler organization. Today, there is, and there must be, an outer office to pass through, a secretary to see, an appointment to make. We just dashed unheralded into Dean Hickinbottom's office; and there she was.

She took the deepest interest in all our doings, and was always the intercessor in our behalf vis-a-vis a sometimes uncomprehending faculty. I remember the sad day when she called in Isabel and me, and told us of a grave danger facing student activities. The faculty was probably going to vote away our lunch-hour. Now-a-days there is no lunch hour, and, once again, there probably can't be: undue crowding in the cafeteria must be avoided, maximum use of the sorely-needed class-rooms must be assured. Of course there are club-periods now instead of lunch-hours. But we were horrified at the thought of losing our lunch-hours: that would work havoc in our whole schedule of student meetings of every sort. What were we to do? "Go to the faculty members as quickly as you can, the two of you, and tell them how much you girls need the lunch-period." Fortunately, there weren't so many faculty members in those days; I think only the Department Heads and

the other administrators belonged. At all events, we saw them all, though it meant, much to my distress, cutting a couple of classes. And our lunch-hour was saved.

It was not only on Council matters that I sought her. There was the weekly paper, the *Bulletin*. I as Editor was completely in control; we had no faculty supervision. But I believed, as I still believe, that side-by-side with student authority must go student responsibility; and I was aware that sometimes an editorial that seemed perfectly innocent to me might really endanger the well-being of my beloved Hunter. So many and many a time I would telephone her to ask her opinion or her advice; I had her permission to call her even at midnight if it seemed necessary. And how helpful and understanding I always found her! We were two friends working together for the good of Hunter.

And so we always were. To me, she was always my beloved counsellor and co-worker. I did not see her in her very last years; she did not want her friends to see her then, she wanted them to think of her as she was in the days of her strength. But I had messages now and then; sometimes as Editor of the NEWS, I heard from her as I had once heard from her as Editor of the *Bulletin*. And I was deeply touched when, after her death, I heard from both President Shuster and Mrs. Horgan that she wanted me to write of her in the NEWS. "I want Adelaide to do it," she told Mrs. Horgan; "Adelaide was always my friend." And she was always mine.

E. ADELAIDE HAHN, '15

Dean Emeritus Mills

Dean Hickinbottom was married to Mr. William H. Mills in 1933, and they bought a country house in Redding, Connecticut, where they lived until his death in 1941. She then moved back to her old home in Stamford, which she kept until the death of her sister, Mrs. Eva Dundon Lobb. In 1949 she moved to an apartment in Scarsdale to be near her nephew, John G. Horgan.

On her eightieth birthday, in August, 1944, President and Mrs. Shuster gave a surprise party in her honor, and many of her old associates who were in town attended. This affair was a great success and made her very happy.

Hers was for many years a quiet but pleasant life. She retained her strength for a long while, and drove her car until she was eighty-seven. But in September 1955 she broke her hip, and after that was hospitalized for three months. When she returned home from the hospital in December, I found a friend of mine, Miss Kay Roberts, who came to live with her. She was a practical nurse, and gave the Dean the most loving and devoted care until her death. I relieved her once a week, and toward the end I went in every morning and afternoon to be of help. She kept her sense of humor until the end.

She made plans for what was to be done after her death. She said a number of times that she wanted Adelaide Hahn to write an

account of her for the NEWS. She herself prepared the notice of her death for the obituary column in the newspapers, and it was at her expressed wish that this notice did not appear until after the funeral services. She thought that if the notice was published in advance, many would feel in duty bound to travel up to Westchester for the last rites, and, characteristically, she wished to spare them the trouble. I followed her directions, for I have always throughout the many years of our friendship tried to carry out her wishes.

I worked in the office with her for twenty-seven years, and during the entire time there was never one cross word or misunderstanding. The close intimacy there begun continued throughout the twenty-three years of her retirement.

KATHERINE MATTISON HORGAN
