

HUNTER COLLEGE

1870-1920



NEW YORK CITY

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Hunter College of the City of New York, a public college for women maintaining a four year's course and conferring the A. B. degree, is an outgrowth of an earlier and less advanced institution. The Normal College of the City of New York, in reality a normal and high school, was established by the Board of Education in 1870. No daily high schools were at that time in existence, though supplementary classes were conducted in some of the grammar schools. The only normal instruction given by the city was in the Saturday Normal School, attended by teachers in the public schools.

The interests of the new institution were enthusiastically forwarded by Mr. Isaac Bell, chairman of the Committee on Normal College, and Mr. William Wood, who subsequently filled that office and later became President of the Board of Education.

The Normal College was opened on February 14th, 1870, in a building at 694 Broadway, at the corner of Fourth Street. Thomas Hunter, Principal of Grammar School 35, had been appointed President, and Lydia F. Wadleigh, Principal of Grammar School 47, Lady Superintendent. The first professors were Arthur H. Dundon, Vice-President, Joseph A. Gillet, Charles A. Schlegel, and Philip M. W. Redfield. The first commencement was held at the Academy of Music, July 12, 1870.

In March, 1872, the cornerstone of the college building at 68th Street and Park Avenue was laid; and the building was opened to students in September, 1873. The course of study, originally covering three years only, was extended to four years, after experiment with voluntary classes, in 1882. In 1888 the college received from the State of New York a charter granting power to confer the degree of A. B. after a course of five years. This led to the separation of the students into two groups, the "Normals," who pursued a four years' course, and the "Academics," whose course extended over five years. The "Normal" or four-years' course was abolished in 1902. (A course in Education has continued to be part of the

curriculum, and graduates who have pursued this course may enter the city examination for License No. 1.)

In 1903 a definite separation was made between preparatory and college years, and since that time the High School has existed as a distinct organization under the control of the college trustees, with the usual high-school course of four years. (It may be mentioned that since the beginning in 1870, an elementary school, the Model School, has been maintained under the control of the college authorities. It is used for observation and practice teaching by the students who pursue, as part of their regular college work, courses in education.)

The college proper, supplied not only from its own High School but from all the girls' high schools of Greater New York, has continued to extend its course, proceeding experimentally with voluntary classes. In 1909 a compulsory four-years' college course was established. The degree of the college had been finally registered by the Board of Regents in December, 1908. Since that time the institution has ranked as a college of the first class.

Dr. Hunter retired in September, 1906, and was made President Emeritus. Professor Gillet acted as President until his death in January, 1908. George Samler Davis, LL.D., was installed as President in May, 1908.

In 1912 the first section of the new building, fronting on Lexington Avenue, was completed. It is the intention to carry out the accepted plan by the erection of two more sections on the site of the old college building. The principal entrance will be on Park Avenue.

Through the efforts of President Davis and the Associate Alumnae, the corporate name of the college was changed on April 4, 1914, by act of the Legislature of New York, from "The Normal College of the City of New York" to "Hunter College of the City of New York." The change was made in honor of the first president, Dr. Thomas Hunter. The new name had been suggested by President Davis in his first commencement address.

In the early years of the Normal College, the institution was governed by the Board of Education. In 1888 it was placed under the control of a Board of

Trustees, composed of the members of the Board of Education and the President of the College. In the spring of 1915 an important change was made by an amendment to the College Charter, placing its government in the hands of a Board of Trustees consisting of eleven members, nine of whom are appointed by the Mayor, the remaining members being the President of the Board of Education and the President of the College.

In February, 1917, evening sessions were opened at the college. One hundred and six students registered at the time. In September, 1919, 2,020 students were enrolled. Commercial and academic courses leading to the degree of A. B. and B. S. are offered. Extension courses in pedagogy have been lately introduced for New York City teachers.

Since 1916, similiar courses have regularly been given during a six-weeks summer session. From 208 students in the first year, the registration grew, in the summer of 1910, to 594, of which number 369 students were not on the rolls of the regular sessions of Hunter College. The students of the college are enabled to complete their course in less than four years by attending the summer sessions. The extension courses for New York City teachers are especially well attended.

On application of the Phi Beta Kappa members of the teaching staff, permission was granted to the college in September, 1919, to establish a Phi Beta Kappa Chapter at Hunter. The chapter will be installed and the charter formally presented on February 11, 1920.

The students of the college are united in a Student Self-Government Association, established in 1912. The Student Council legislates for the welfare of the student body, and all secondary activities are carried on under the direction of the association. The college is a member of the Intercollegiate Student Self-Government Association.

Three publications, *The Echo*, a literary periodical; *The Bulletin*, the college weekly newspaper, and *The Wistarion*, the year book, are supported by the students. The last-named publication takes its name from the college flower, the wistaria.

Hunter College to-day ranks as the largest free women's college in the United States. Of all the colleges in the country, both public and private, it stands third on the list, being surpassed, in the number of students registered, by Smith and Wellesley only.

HUNTER'S WAR WORK

A history of the college, no matter how brief, would not be complete without a record of Hunter's work in the Great War.

When the military census of June, 1917, was taken, 1,000 students of the college and a number of the members of the teaching staff served in four assembly districts at 90 stations for two weeks. Again, in September, 1918, about 1,000 students worked at the local Exemption and Legal Advisory Boards for three weeks and assisted drafted men in answering questionnaires.

Nineteen War Saving Societies were formed in the college. The total number of stamps sold was:

War Savings Stamps	7,364
Thrift Stamps	38,840
Value	\$46,530

The students visited forty private schools for the purpose of organizing War Savings Societies. The Hunter College Minute Men were especially active in delivering public lectures.

During the summer of 1918, fifty-two students became members of the Women's Land Army. The girls were scattered through Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and New Hampshire.

Four Red Cross ambulances, completely outfitted, were sent to Europe at a cost of \$12,000, which sum was raised by the college.

From the various work-rooms maintained at the college, 48,747 surgical dressings, 299 sewn garments, and 2,493 knitted garments were sent abroad. The Hunter College Red Cross Auxiliary, No. 408, contributed \$981.81 to the Red Cross. In addition, the college donated \$10,000.

During the United War Work Campaign, the college, together with the High School and the Model School, raised \$16,447.04. Other funds contributed for war service were:

\$236.65 to the Italian Red Cross, raised by Il Circolo Italiano.

\$168.35 for the Jewish War Relief, raised by the Menorah Society.

\$1,009.56 for the general fund, the proceeds of the Varsity Play of 1918.

In December, 1918, 573 packages were sent as Christmas gifts to convalescent soldiers stationed in and near New York.

The students of the college also participated actively in the A. L. A. Book Drives, the Smileage Book Campaign, and the Red Cross Membership Drives.

The "enlisted men's" dances, held every Saturday night at the college, were attended by the students under the chaperonage of members of the teaching staff and the alumnae. The "officers'" dances, occurring on Tuesday evenings from February, 1918, through October, 1919, were also attended by the students.

Finally, the record of the sums raised by the college during the Liberty Loan Drives is perhaps most conclusive of the strength of Hunter's war work.

First Liberty Loan.....	\$34,550
Second " "	85,800
Third " "	253,550
Fourth " "	349,200
Fifth " "	182,300

Total in the five loans.....\$905,400

The High School raised \$775,350, the Model School, \$204,550, thus bringing the total for the five loans to \$1,885,300.