CHAPTER TWO

Part II: Campus Renewal and a Progressive Curriculum

Part of the attraction of young women in the school may have been the relatively luxurious living arrangements available to in the new dormitories. Ament’s improvements did not end with the dorms though. Under his administration the campus received what at least one observer argued was a much needed facelift.

Dr. James Ament, Indiana’s principal during most of this period, was an active administrator with a deep interest in art and architecture who believed that normal school should be culturally elevating. He made it a priority adds to the cultural experience of students by enriching the environment and culture of the campus. As the 1913 yearbook declared:

“Realizing that our education does not all come from text books, he has made the school beautiful by adorning the halls with pictures and statuary, and has wrought many changes which add to the students' comfort and enjoyment. http://www.archive.org/stream/instano1913indi#page/n22/mode/1up

A sample of the sorts of improvements Ament oversaw is recorded in an article written by faculty member Dorothy Cogswell. According to Cogswell, Ament made extensive changes in the appearance of John Sutton Hall, taking the much used central building from one showing much wear and tear, to an elegant showplace.
While maintaining its structure and some well-loved features, he oversaw the redecoration adding new plaster, paint, and wall coverings, modern light fixtures, improved flooring, including that of the recreation room improving its suitability as a surface for dancing. He chose paintings and classical statuary including one of Venus Di Milo, Ajax, Julius Cesar and Hebe, the cupbearer to the gods and a symbol associated with the Temperance movement (which faced Temperance advocate Ms. Leonard’s office). Faculty and students appreciated the changes, though some of the less worldly may have been dumbfounded by some of the art - Ms. Cogswell noted that when regarding the Venus de Milo statue someone remarked ‘couldn’t they find a statue with arms?’

There were expanded student enrollment, progressive curriculum development, a new model school building and recitation hall, more and improved dorm rooms, enlarged and elegant dining facilities, a new library, and improved class facilities for many new and existing programs. The feeling on campus was that it was one of the finest, if not the finest, of any normal school in the state. A central element to the interest of young women in Indiana might also have been the “progressive” curricular programs offered by the school. It was the policy of the school to “prepare teachers for every grade and kind of teaching of wide demand.” During this period the courses were added and developed which kept pace with the changing curriculum of the public schools and new progressive trends in educational thought and practice.

Music

Music had been taught at Indiana since 1875, but the department was slow to develop. The first Music degree was not granted until 1894, and even by 1906 it only had three instructors and few majors. In that year Hamlin Cogswell, a music
educator with a national reputation, was hired to begin a music conservatory that would enhance the curriculum of the Normal School and greatly increase the size and quality of the music department.

Cogswell came with his wife Dorothy and daughter Edna. Dorothy, who had taught music in other schools, also served on the faculty, teaching her own students and filling in for him during his professional travel and performances. She made a lasting contribution to the school by writing its Alma Mater, “Our Homage and Our Love” which is still sung at some IUP assemblies. Their daughter Edna also taught in the Department.

In addition to the Cogswells, the Conservatory brought to the school many female instructors with impressive training and experience, many having trained abroad. Under his direction the enrollment in music expanded dramatically and drew students from across the country. When the Cogswells departed, the music conservatory was well established and the music department had a much improved curriculum which incorporated modern methods of teaching music, had developed an impressive faculty, and had established a music department with a national reputation.
Art

In 1906, the Art Department was organized by Jane R. McElhaney, an ISNS graduate. McElhaney had grown up on what would be the campus. She was born in Fern Cottage, located near the present day student union with the historic “Old Indian Spring” or “Shaver’s Spring” in its backyard.

Her father was a Civil War veteran who made his living as a carpenter and who contributed to the construction of some of the finest buildings in Indiana. Hired to teach drawing as a part of more general program, she volunteered to offer additional art instruction to interested students after regular classes had finished for the day.

She formally began the Art program in 1906. McElhaney shared her love of art with both her normal school students and the children of the training school. Her belief that “art was uplifting” was in keeping with Ament’s vision that art and culture should be a part of the experience of the ISNS students. Under her direction, the department flourished. The work of McElhaney and that of her gifted students would grace the school’s catalogs, yearbooks, and other publications during this era.

The Model school

A Model or Training School was a primary school with the best students (chosen by the standards of the day), with the best supervising (or critic) teachers, utilizing the best methods of instruction. It was an essential part of ISNS from the beginning.

During this period, the school could boast of that it offered its students programs offered by the “most progressive
schools,” including instruction in manual and domestic science, art, music, and physical education.

Belief in the force of education as a factor in improving society was alive at the school. At one point, they offered “mothers’ meetings” for its students’ mothers. These meetings were actually classes for the mothers, expanding the influence of teachers by sharing what educators felt were the best ways to raise and care for their children based on the latest scientific and professional theories. In charge of the school was Jeannie M. Ackerman. Ackerman had been principal of the training school at East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania from 1897-1901. She came to ISNS in 1901 as a critic teacher at the Model School, then taught Geography and History at the Normal School. She became principal of the Model School in 1903 and remained in that position for thirty-four years.