CHAPTER TWO

Part VI: Student Life

Intellectual and Cultural Enrichment

Intellectual and cultural enrichment were central to life at ISNS in the first years of the 20th Century. Many of the students who came to the school were from rural areas and of very limited experience. Normal school faculty and administrators valued the potential of the teachers they were preparing to improve and enrich the lives of the students that they would teach, but recognized that normal school curriculum alone was not enough to prepare them for this. To provide further enrichment for their students, they sponsored lectures on social and cultural issues, as well as plays and performances.

Education of minority groups, life in the slums of major metropolitan areas, the role of women in the modern world; such topics were as timely at the turn of the century as they are today. ISNS sponsored lectures that brought nationally known educators, muckraking journalists, and social scientists to campus and wove the study of the topics they discussed into the curriculum.

Visiting lecturers include big names such as Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee Institute, then a teachers' college for blacks, Jacob Riis,

Lectures were held in the Chapel, which is now Gorell Auditorium. Notice the seating which separates male and female students.
muckraking author of *How the Other Half Lives*, Oliver Howard Civil War General, chief commissioner of the Freedmen’s Bureau and founder of Howard University, and Charles Zeublin, a University of Chicago professor who had become a resident of Jane Addams’ Hull House and founded his own settlement house.

Other opportunities for enrichment also existed. Each week a member of the faculty would take their turn offering talks on topics such as the Greeks and athletics, training schools for emigrants, and life among blacks in the south. The YMCA and YWCA groups also brought in lectures to who discussed social problems and or life among people in other cultures where missionaries might be sent.

With thriving literary societies, debating clubs, madrigal singers, and students and faculty of the new Music Conservatory, students had regular access to entertainment from musical performances, to debates and plays. Outside performers were also invited. Orchestras from Pittsburgh provided concerts and on at least one occasion a group of woodland players did a production of a Shakespeare play in the Oak Grove.

**Student Life**

In spite of other modernizing trends, the lives of normal school students, particularly female, remained strictly regulated. 1915 graduate Evelyn Still recalled that female students living in either the dorms or cottages were awoken with bells and held to
strict periods of study, dining, class work, and even bathing and going to sleep. They had some recreation though.

After dinner and before they began study hours, often someone would play the piano and they would dance, with each other—no male students were allowed! Co-ed dances were held frequently though, but they were closely supervised. Faculty would watch the dancers closely and separate them if they were dancing too close. Dances like the Boston Dip, Drop Step, Turkey Trot or Bunny Hug were strictly prohibited.

While the detailed “Association of the Sexes” rules no longer appeared in the catalogs, those publications did reassure parents that the social lives of male and female students were strictly separate. Female students met with Miss Leonard in the chapel at the beginning of the semester and whenever the need arose thereafter. The purpose was for her to explain and reinforce rules and regulations. The 1914 Instano reports that on September 16 - “Meeting of all the girls in chapel. Miss Leonard still insists that no girl shall ride in any vehicle whatsoever.”

http://www.archive.org/stream/instano1914indi#page/n5/mode/2up

Literary Societies still flourished. They met weekly and were opportunities for intellectual development, but also social interaction. More cultural entertainments included those presented by orchestras, madrigal singers, literary societies, or debating clubs or the Y’s. There were also a host of other memorable occasions including the yearly Halloween parties, senior hayrides and sleigh rides.
Graduates

Throughout this period, female graduates continued to outnumber males and many used the training they received through the normal school to launch them on to impressive careers. Leonard, who was likely an inspiration to her students, kept in touch with many of them and reported their achievements in the *Normal Herald*.

Most of her former students had found work as teachers in schools from ungraded country schools to graded high schools. Others had found more remunerative and responsible positions as principals and superintendents.

An 1893 graduate, Elizabeth Cowley, taught school in Pennsylvania after graduation and saved enough money to attend Vassar, graduating in 1901. She so distinguished herself that she was offered an appointment as instructor of mathematics at Vassar College in 1902, thought it was not generally their practice to hire their own graduates. She went on to study at Columbia University, and in 1908 she was the fourth woman to receive a Ph.D. in mathematics from that institution. [http://www.agnesscott.edu/lriddle/women/cowley.htm](http://www.agnesscott.edu/lriddle/women/cowley.htm)

Other successful graduates seemed to show the impact of having studied with Leonard. The *Normal Herald* reported in January of 1913 that a Miss Getty was an eye and ear specialist in Philadelphia, and a suffragist and “not one of the silent ones.” It continued that she “goes about making speeches, good speeches too.”

Graduates could be found far and near working with new Americans or some that weren’t Americans at all. Bess Davis went to Uniontown, PA, and was at the Slavonic Training School for Slavic Girls in Uniontown. Zanibel Douthitt graduated in 1896, and by the first years of the new century was teaching school in Nogates, Arizona, to 65 students, most of them Mexican. Other graduates were teachers in Puerto Rico, Montana, and China.

Other women took up commercial careers. Lillian Hertzenroter, graduated in 1900 and after the death of her husband took over his business. She was quite successful “a Normal girl in business for just over a year has been able to figure against men who have been in the same business for years” at the same time taking care of her little children.

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