



248336

A BRIEF HISTORY OF STUDENT LITERARY PUBLICATIONS IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

One of the results of group organization is a tendency to put into permanent form the ideas and thoughts of such a group, and since the group is made up of individuals, this record really becomes the expression of individual conceptions. This leads to the conclusion that, since writing is the usual method of giving greater permanency to thoughts and ideas, when conceptions are put in the printed or written form, also, the verbal expression of a thought is more susceptible to misinterpretation by continued repetition and therefore not as reliable as are printed records. Thus it is apparent that one of the causes of which publications is the effect, is this effort to make more permanent and accurate thoughts and ideas.

By

Rex Putnam

The remarkable thing about the situation with reference to the student population of the University of Oregon is that this tendency was so long delayed in the Summer Session of 1924. For fifteen years there was no student publication in the University. Student literary organizations flourished during this time, but apparently no effort was made to foster a publication. Two of the most active and important literary organizations of this period were responsible for the first publication ever fostered by the students. The Loewen society was made up of a group of young men and the Helian society was composed of young ladies. These two societies or clubs formed a "corporation" for the purpose of producing a student publication.

The "Reflector" was first presented to the world some time in 1891. It is necessary to say "some time" because no date appears on the magazine, but the year is fixed by certain happenings which took place

A BRIEF HISTORY OF STUDENT LITERARY PUBLICATIONS IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

26 Dec 33 11 40 A.M. Student Literary Publications
at that time. The first dated issue bore the date December, 1891.
One of the results of group organization is a tendency
to put into permanent form the ideas and thoughts of such a group,
and since the group is made up of individuals, this record really
becomes the expression of individual reactions. This leads to the
conclusion that, since writing is the usual method of giving greater
permanency to thoughts and ideas, such reactions are put in the printed
or written form. Also, the verbal expression of a thought is more
susceptible to misinterpretation by continued repetition and therefore
not as reliable as are printed records. Thus it is apparent that one
of the causes of which publications is the effect, is this effort to make
more permanent and accurate thoughts and ideas.

The remarkable thing about the situation with reference to the
student population of the University of Oregon is that this tendency
was so long delayed in its culmination. For over fifteen years there
was no student publication in the University. Student literary organi-
zations flourished during this time, but apparently no effort was made
to foster a publication. Two of the most active and important literary
organizations of this period were responsible for the first publication
ever fostered by the students. The Laurean society was made up of a
group of young men and the Eutaxian club was composed of young ladies.
These two societies or clubs formed a "corporation" for the purpose of
producing a student publication.

The "Reflector" was first presented to the world some time in
1891. It is necessary to say "some time" because no date appears on the
magazine, but the year is fixed by certain happenings which took place

248336

A.E.Reames edited the first three issues; J.E. Bronaugh was responsible for three; Cary F. Martin, one issue. These are all of the editors that can be positively identified as the third issue listed no editor, and the issues from December, 1892 listed none.

Nothing more was attempted until the appearance of the University of Oregon Monthly in March 1897. This publication followed the idea of that in the "Reflector" in that it was a combination news and literary magazine. It was directly fostered by the entire student body which had been organized by that time. The first editor was D. V. Kuykendall, and its stated purpose was: "For the students, to keep them informed and interested in what is happening at the University of Oregon, and to point out to them every opportunity for advancement. For the patrons and friends of the University, to let them know what the University and its students are doing, what kind of an institution they are sending their sons and daughters to, and what kind of influences are thrown around them here." (Editorial, Mar.1897).

According to the twenty first annual catalogue of the University of Oregon (1896-7) there were 478 students enrolled in the University at the time the Monthly appeared. It is not difficult to understand the new venture, then, because nearly five hundred people who had perfected an organization were seeking an opportunity to make their ideas, thoughts and activities of a permanent nature.

As stated above, the organization of the material in the Monthly was similar to that of the Reflector in that the news section covered happenings in general, and a great deal of space was devoted

at that time. The first dated issue bore the date December, 1892. There were in all thirteen issues without dates. Full tables of contents were given and authors indicated in those issues which were without dates, but the dated issues are without tables of contents or any indications as to authors. It is of interest to note, however, that in all of those issues in which tables of contents do appear, the students themselves were responsible for practically all of the material. This, indeed, is not surprising because in 1891 the faculty of the University consisted of only seven professors and three "tutors", while there were over two hundred students enrolled (U. of O. Catalogue 1891-2).

Short stories and poems in the "Reflector" are notable for their absence. Not more than three short stories and seven poems were published during the entire life of the magazine. Articles with such captions as "Refining Influence of Art", "Absolutism, the Weakness of Russia", "The Literary Style of Charles Dickens", and "Leonardo Da Vinci", made up the bulk of the literary efforts of the student contributors, and they were handled in a remarkably able way in most cases. Also, many orations were used as copy. This was a natural result as oratory and debate were in great demand at that time, and orators and debaters received the same hero-worship that athletes do at the present time. The publication followed the prevailing interests of the time in a perfectly natural way.

With no stated indication of its demise, the "Reflector" passed out of existence in 1894, the last issue bearing the date April, 1894. No doubt lack of funds was the immediate cause, as the country at that time was passing through a serious financial crisis.

to the activities of the literary societies. Athletics received very little attention in the earlier issues, and thus the literary activities were dominant. The magazine passed through several periods with respect to its material of a literary nature. The period between 1897 and 1899 shows a fair balance between the number of stories, poetry and various types of literary discussions published. The poetry was of the conventional form as to content and style, and the stories dealt in the main with adventure and love in their simplest forms. By this I mean that few complications interrupted the trend of the story, and they usually got married and lived happy ever after. Perhaps Mary J. Holmes, E. P. Roe and even Horatio Alger had had their influence upon the authors. The descriptive story was also quite popular. One of special interest to the motoring public at the present time is one with the title "From Eugene to Baker City by Wheel" written by G. W. Gilbert. It describes in an interesting way the experiences of three University boys who made the trip across the McKenzie Pass on wheels. It was published in the June-July, 1897 issue. The faculty contributed to a limited extent to the literary department during this period, but the contributions were of a scientific nature. That is, the study of literature was approached from a scientific standpoint, as also were other topics. From 1900 to 1904 poetry received the greatest attention. As many as twelve poems were published in a single issue during this time. Practically all of it was the result of student effort, and

was of a good type. There was some exchange poetry printed as well as some from current literature, but for the most part the students were responsible for this trend. By 1905 stories had gained equal importance with the poetry, but the proportion of miscellaneous discussions of a literary nature remained about the same.

In 1905 the Monthly ceased publication because of lack of funds, but by 1906 this difficulty was overcome again, and the magazine was revived. But from 1906 to 1909 no particular tendency asserted itself, the state of balance being similar to that indicated between 1897 and 1899.

Stories were dominant from 1909 to 1911. Prizes had been offered for productions of this kind, and there seems to have been a perfect frenzy of story writing, as many as fifteen stories appeared in a single issue. The types of stories had not changed appreciably from those in the earlier issues, however. They were out-and-out adventure or love stories in which the authors did not attempt to produce the emotional background of the psychic and sex mysteries indicated in present efforts. The poetry was of the conventional type, although it had shown improvement over that produced up to that time.

It was during this period that the editors seem to begin to realize that the Monthly was slipping from its foundations and brave attempts were made to prevent it. Prizes were offered, appeals to loyalty made and every effort was made by those interested in the publication to keep it afloat. From 1909 one may easily follow the desperate efforts put forth to save the life of the magazine.

Student productions of all kinds were featured in order to interest as many as possible, and the issues of the last year or two were much larger and better than any of the preceding publications. This artificial respiration was futile, however, and merely prolonged the struggle of the doomed magazine. By the fall of 1912 the Monthly had been reduced to a Quarterly, and in December of the same year the last issue was printed.

Following is the list of editors of the Monthly, showing the year each editor acted:

Year	Editor
1897	D. V. Kuykendall
97-98	Clyde V. Fogel
98-99	Bertha E. Slater
99-00	Homer D. Angell
1900-01	Walter Whittlesey
01-02	Geo. O. Goodall
02-03	Margaret Bannard
03-04	J. F. Staver
04-05	J. F. McArthur
05-06	no publication
06-07	Harry L. Raffety
07-08	Miriam Van Waters
08-09	Ruth Hansen
09-10	Jennie Lilly
10-11	Dean Collins
11-12	Carin H. Degermark
12-to Dec.	Flora A. Dunham

The failure of the Monthly is due to a number of things operating together to detract the interests of the students. In February 1900 the Oregon Weekly was launched, and although it stated editorially that "The Oregon Weekly is in no wise antagonistic to the University of Oregon Monthly, and we do not wish to be regarded as such", the effect upon the Monthly was apparent to any who wished to seriously study the matter. Certainly the editor of the Weekly had

no desire to cripple the Monthly, and the result was not premeditated, but it was a fact. The Weekly absorbed the attention of the students because it provided more frequent news service and less effort was involved in reading it. Also, about this time (1900-1901) the Fraternities began their development. These organizations tended to disintegrate the old literary societies which contributed most heavily to the life of the Monthly. As the years went on and the Fraternities became a dominating influence and the Weekly had developed into a tri-weekly, the student population of the University ceased to be interested in a publication of a literary nature. Athletics developed along with these other factors until the sport sheet is the dominant part of the press at the University.

In 1902 the University of Oregon Student Body printed an annual, which was called the Webfoot. While this book chronicled the events of the year in picture form to a great extent, it did carry a literary section. The literary section absorbed a certain amount of literary effort in the form of stories and poetry, and this department was continued in all of the annuals up until 1912. Since that time no such department appears in the publication, although a few poems may be scattered among materials of other kinds. The "Webfoot" failed to appear in 1904 and 1906, but became the Bulletin in 1907, the Beaver in 1909 and has continued as the Oregana since 1910. At the time of the failure of the University of Oregon Monthly the Emerald (the Weekly had changed its name to the Emerald) carried an editorial (Dec. 19, 1912) to the effect that the newspaper and the Monthly staff would work in harmony in an attempt to handle the

literary interests of the University in a section of the Emerald. Nothing came of this, however, and no more was attempted until 1913 when the Emerald Staff again attempted to revive the Monthly. (Editorial, Jan. 28, 1913). This also failed, and nothing more has been done to inject life into Oregon's dead literary publication since that time. The Emerald editors and managers have, however, been very much interested year after year in trying to devise some scheme to handle the literary interests of the students and thus foster literary taste in the University. February 17, 1917 under the guidance of DeWitte Gilbert as editor, the "Oregon Spirit" was published as a supplement to the Emerald. This little sheet featured ten or twelve poems and two short stories, but the first was the last issue, and the situation again became static until 1922. Because October 8, 1922 the first issue of the Oregon Sunday Emerald was published. It carried an editorial stating that "The theme, the poem, the essay, the letter of grievance - these, when well written - will find a place with us." The paper was edited by Ernest Haycox, and featured for the most part book reviews and poetry. There were very few stories published because of lack of space, but the few that did appear were good. By 1923 the Sunday Emerald had begun to copy the feature tendency of the large daily papers and the strictly literary value had decreased appreciably. On the whole, however, the Sunday Emerald had done a great service to the University students in its efforts to absorb literary productions. Literary "Green Ink" the only issue of which was released in June 1922 is probably the only strictly literary publication ever produced by students of the University. An organization called the Pot and the

Quill composed of a group of both faculty and student women was responsible for its appearance. All except one production, however, is a student creation. It is strictly a literary publication, carrying neither news nor advertising. The contents consist of ten poems and six stories along with a one-act play. The greater number of the productions indicate real ability. No editor is listed, and apparently no personal fame is sought, but the result is certainly pleasing.

After looking over the field of failures one is led to wonder just exactly why the students of the University do not foster a literary publication. The Sunday Emerald is the only instrument at present that attempts to care for the literary activities, and this can be done by it only in superficial and unsatisfactory manner because of the very nature of the paper. The answer to the above observation involves a number of things, some of which have already been discussed with reference to the failure of the Monthly. Besides these factors one must also take into consideration the competition of the popular magazines. These magazines have a tremendous advantage in their ability to command advertising in order to furnish the means to make them a paying proposition, and also to take up and use the best productions of the students themselves. This ability to pay for material is a great handicap to a publication that necessarily would have to depend upon donations for its material. The above economic handicap along with the prevailing apathetic taste for literary activities among the students makes it practically impossible to keep alive a literary publication for any length of time. Those

interested must make up their minds to one thing: That whatever is accomplished must be done by means of a financial subsidy from some source other than the financial possibilities of the publication. The writer is well informed that in 1924-25 there will be another venture along this line which will probably be subsidized by the Emerald. The Emerald has so far done some excellent work in its attempts to foster literary accomplishments, and if it succeeds in putting a publication of this kind upon a firm foundation it will have done an inestimable service to the University of Oregon.

Sources of Material for This Paper

All "Reflectors" extant.
 A complete collection of University of Oregon Monthlies.
 A complete collection of University year books.
 A complete collection of Oregon Sunday Emeralds.
 A complete collection of the Oregon Weekly and Emerald.
 University of Oregon catalogues for 1891-92 and 1896-97.
 A copy of "Green Ink".

Also, valuable information was received from Professor Thatcher.