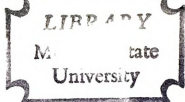


FERRIS INSTITUTE AS A PRIVATE
SCHOOL 1884-1952

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
LAWRENCE WILLIAM BYRNES
1970



This is to certify that the
thesis entitled
FERRIS INSTITUTE AS A PRIVATE SCHOOL:
1884-1952
presented by
Lawrence William Byrnes
has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for
Doctor degree in Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

FERRIS INSTITUTE AS A PRIVATE SCHOOL 1884-1952

By

Lawrence William Byrnes

The development of education in most societies involves the establishment of formal educational institutions. The functions of these institutions are governed by the needs of society and desires of persons responsible for the administration of them. In proprietary establishments the owner's philosophy often determines the ethos of the school environment. In the case of Ferris Institute the educational philosophy of Woodbridge N. Ferris was instrumental in providing guiding principles for the development of the school. As one person has said: "It is hard to say anything about Mr. Ferris and not say anything about the school. One reflected the other."¹ Mr. Ferris seemed to be the type of man Hegel was referring to when he stated: "The great man of the age is the one who can put into words the will of his age, tell his age what its will is, and accomplish it. What he does is the heart and essence of his age; he actualizes his age."²

commencement programs, reports by committees, minutes of the Board of Trustees, school advertisements, reports and letters of instructors, and annual reports of the presidents. Other source materials were found in the Michigan State Library, the Michigan Historical Collections at Ann Arbor, the Michigan State University Library, the Michigan Historical Commission, and in newspaper files throughout Michigan.

The paper is chronologically organized into five periods, each deemed significant to the fluctuating fortunes of Ferris Institute. Chapter II surveys the educational ideas of Woodbridge N. Ferris and the manifestation of them in the founding of the school. Also included are those events which directly or indirectly led to the establishment of the school in Big Rapids. The third chapter covers a twenty-nine year period during which the school became a fixture in Big Rapids. Increased enrollment, an expanded curricula and more financial resources contributed to its stability. The chapter ends in 1928 with the death of Mr. Ferris. In Chapter IV attention is given to the precarious state of affairs in administering and financing the school. With a series of presidents operating with insufficient funds, the school appeared to be heading for disaster.

Credence was given to this view when the cataclysmic effects of depression and war threatened to close the



In his determination to maintain a secondary school for all students with a desire for learning and a need for practical education, Ferris made an important contribution to the people of Michigan. The Institute admitted less fortunate men and women, some illiterate, who accepted Ferris' invitation to seek a practical education for the activities of everyday life.³ In addition, students desiring further education were encouraged to enroll in the professional program.

It is the purpose of this paper to describe events which influenced the formation of the unique characteristics of Ferris Institute. Influential in the formation process were the ideas of those persons who struggled to build a firm financial foundation for the school. Their efforts to successfully complete the task are described throughout the paper.

With few exceptions, the investigation of primary sources were confined to the historical collections at the Ferris State College Library, the Big Rapids home of Dr. Roy Newton, and the office of the President of Ferris State College. In these collections are volumes of Woodbridge N. Ferris' letters, financial records of the school, Institute catalogues, brief histories of departments, newspaper articles, scrapbooks, personal memoirs of students and faculty, teacher's manuals, lesson plans, instructional materials, report cards, diplomas,

school. Although the manpower needs of World War II stripped it of many students, the school managed to survive and enter a more prosperous post-war period. Chapter V covers this period and the administration of Merle S. Ward.

The demobilization of service men and women in 1945-1946 brought a rush of veterans into American colleges and universities. For Ferris Institute this meant a waiting list of students seeking admission. Chapter VI describes these developments and the eventual acceptance of Ferris Institute as a state school. The disastrous fire of 1950 and the recovery from it, to the entrance of Victor F. Spathelf as tenth president, comprise the remainder of the chapter. A general summary of key events in the growth of the school and an evaluation of its significance in Michigan history is provided in the final chapter.

This study is limited by the absence of some prime sources destroyed in the fire of 1950. Many letters and records were also destroyed or lost throughout the history of the school. The paucity of some types of material in the earlier years is due to sporadic and incomplete records. Fortunately, some information gaps were filled by former students and faculty and the complete record of the Big Rapids Pioneer.

Ferris Institute was studied in the context of economic, social, and political occurrences in the United States. Particular significance was given to such events in Michigan. Nevertheless, it is not the purpose of this study to provide an analysis of such events. It is to describe and interpret ideas and activities which forged the unique characteristics of Ferris Institute.

In assessing the significance of the school in Michigan educational history it is clear that Ferris Institute deserves its reputation as an opportunity school. Throughout its history, the school offered programs and courses pertinent to those seeking to meet the daily tasks of life. Providing facilities for telegraphy, business and other programs the school maintained close contact with the needs of a developing urban and industrial America. Preparing students to enter this America, Ferris stressed character development and attempted to produce the independent, hard-working and clean-living student.

Despite its financial and administrative problems the school persistently weathered the storm and has taken its place as a key educational institution determined to retain its reputation as an opportunity school.

FOOTNOTES--ABSTRACT

¹Letter, John E. Dumon to William A. Pearson, Dec. 11, 1952, Ferris letters; Folder FIFS, E171c.

²G. W. F. Hegel, Philosophy of Right (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 295.

³The first known publication of the school is an 1884 four page explication which includes the following statement. "The First Year of Big Rapids Industrial School. An Institution Which Prepares Young Men and Women for the Actual Duties of Life."



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A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
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1971



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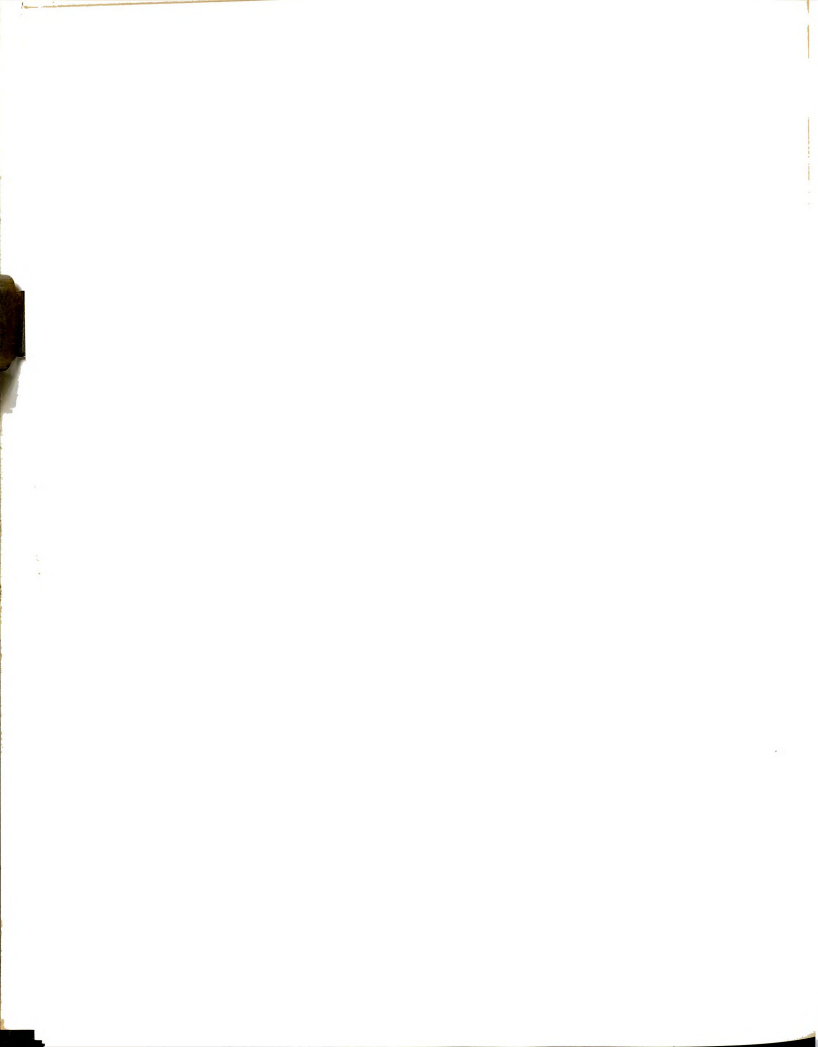
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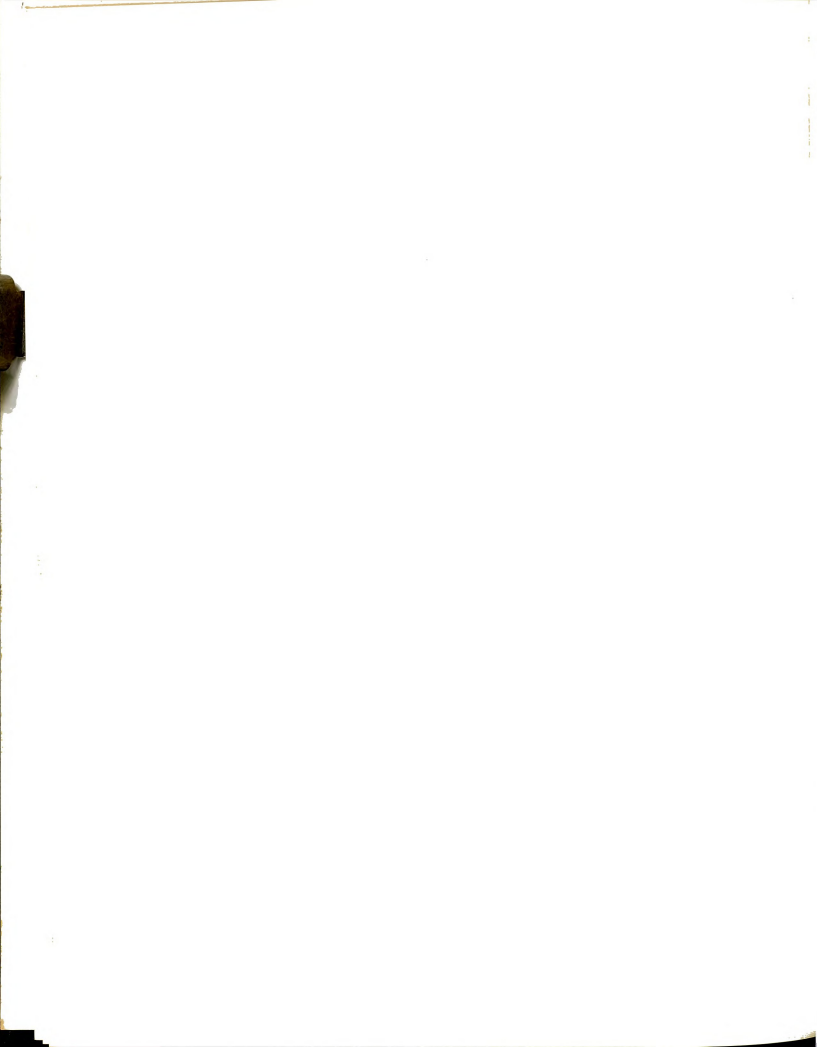
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The development of education in most societies involves the establishment of formal educational institutions. The functions of these institutions are governed by the needs of society and desires of persons responsible for the administration of them. In proprietary establishments the owner's philosophy often determined the ethos of the school environment. In the case of Ferris Institute the educational philosophy of Woodbridge N. Ferris was instrumental in providing guiding principles for the development of the school. As one person has said: "It is hard to say anything about Mr. Ferris and not say anything about the school. One reflected the other."¹ Mr. Ferris seemed to be the type of man Hegel was referring to when he stated: "The great man of the age is the one who can put into words the will of his age, tell his age what it will is, and accomplish it. What he does is the heart and essence of his age; he actualizes his age."²

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In his determination to maintain a secondary school for all students with a desire for learning and a need for practical education, Ferris made an important contribution to the people of Michigan. The Institute admitted less fortunate men and women, some illiterate, who accepted Ferris' invitation to seek a practical education for the activities of everyday life.³ In addition, students desiring further education were encouraged to enroll in the professional program.

It is the purpose of this paper to describe events which influenced the formation of the unique characteristics of Ferris Institute. Influential in the formation process were the ideas of those persons who struggled to build a firm financial foundation for the school. Their efforts to successfully complete the task are described throughout the paper.

Essentially, the history of Ferris Institute covered in this study is that of a private institution attempting to remain financially solvent in the midst of national, state and local economic influences. This being the case, both the selection of material and orientation of the study were designed to reflect the predominance of struggles to

³ The first known publication of the school is an 1884 four page explication which includes the following statement. "The First Year of Big Rapids Industrial School. An Institution Which Prepares Young Men and Women for the Actual Duties of Life."

maintain financial stability. Admittedly, other administrative, curriculum, athletic and student activities were important, but in all periods of this study they were overshadowed by deliberate attempts to procure sufficient financial resources for the maintenance of existing and development of new programs and buildings.

With few exceptions, the investigation of primary sources were confined to the historical collections at the Ferris State College Library, the Big Rapids home of Dr. Roy Newton, and the office of the President of Ferris State College. In these collections are volumes of Woodbridge N. Ferris' letters, financial records of the school, Institute catalogues, brief histories of departments, newspaper articles, scrapbooks, personal memoirs of students and faculty, teacher's manuals, lesson plans, instructional materials, report cards, diplomas, commencement programs, reports by committees, minutes of the Board of Trustees, school advertisements, reports and letters of instructors, and annual reports of the presidents. Other source materials were found in the Michigan State Library, the Michigan Historical Collections at Ann Arbor, the Michigan State University Library, the Michigan Historical Commission, and in newspaper files throughout Michigan.

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The demobilization of service men and women in 1945-1946 brought a rush of veterans into American colleges and universities. For Ferris Institute this meant a waiting list of students seeking admission. Chapter VI describes these developments and the eventual acceptance of Ferris Institute as a state school. The disastrous fire of 1950

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Ferris Institute was studied in the context of economic, social, and political occurrences in the United States, and particularly in the state of Michigan. Nevertheless, it is not the purpose of this study to provide an analysis of such events. It is to describe and interpret ideas and activities which forged the unique characteristics of Ferris Institute.



CHAPTER II

WOODBIDGE N. FERRIS: FOUNDER AND PROPRIETOR 1884-1899

The Guiding Philosophy

H. W. Fowler has said that the term unique is: "applicable only to what is in some respect the sole existing specimen, the precise like of which may be sought in vain."¹ Using this definition and considering the development of educational institutions in Michigan, one can classify Ferris Institute as unique. The institution was founded and developed by Woodbridge N. Ferris in the latter two decades of the nineteenth century. These years were characterized by a large influx of immigrants into the increasingly populated and industrialized cities of urban America.

Different in many ways from earlier immigrants these foreigners pouring into New York, Chicago, Boston and other cities brought with them non-democratic ideas of government, alien languages and customs which made it difficult for them to adjust to American society. They came from

¹H. W. Fowler, A Dictionary of Modern English Usage (2d ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 665.



southeastern Europe in such numbers that by 1900 approximately ten million people of foreign birth were living in the United States.²

Crowded into the cities these poor souls were subject to sporadic garbage and sewage removal, polluted water supplies, the machinations of local political bosses and poorly taught, irrelevant education. Children saw many discrepancies between the skills and virtues stressed in school and those that were rewarded on the streets. The three R's, the McGuffey-style sermons, the drills and punishments--all these removed the school from what the students knew as reality.

In part, reality in the cities meant population growth. Between 1880 and 1900, the percentage of people living in cities of 8,000 or more inhabitants increased from one-fifth to one-third. The extent of urbanization was especially noticeable in the North Atlantic states where in 1900 six out of ten people were living in cities of 8,000 or more. Farther west in the North Central states three out of ten people inhabited cities.³

²Harold U. Faulkner, Politics, Reform and Expansion 1890-1900 (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 4. Seven million immigrants came from southeastern Europe.

³Ibid., pp. 10-11, citing W. H. Tolman, Municipal Reform Movements in the United States (New York: 1895), pp. 27-44; and Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900 (Washington, 1901), I, IXXXii-IXXXvii.



Cities also meant industry. The economic and political changes which facilitated the rise of industrialism were most prominent in new and improved technological skills, organized production; a receptive national government which aided business expansion with protective tariffs, favorable financial policies, and subsidies of land and money.

Among many who commented on this industrialism and the American emphasis on materialism was a visiting Englishman Frederic Harrison, who in 1900 said that: "Life in the States is one perpetual whirl of telephones, telegrams, phonographs, electric bells, motors, lifts, and automatic instruments."⁴

These changes in American life represented a marked shift from the simple agrarian society to an urban mechanized nation where human relationships were influenced by impersonal forces. Old patterns of thought suitable to agrarian, rural living were of little help in coping with urban slums, depression, unemployment and large impersonal corporations. As a result, many Americans were forced to reconsider their basic assumptions concerning the nature of man and society.

Some reacted in a manner which Morton White has called The Revolt Against Formalism. Prominent among these

⁴Frederic Harrison, "Impressions of America," Current Literature, XXXI (1901), 135.

individuals were John Dewey, Thorstein Veblen, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Charles Beard, who criticized those philosophical positions which through formal logic and abstraction claimed a total, metaphysical and systematic view of the world.⁵

Old patterns of thought were especially jolted by the implications of the new scientific thought partly expressed in the theory of evolution presented by Charles Darwin. Although attempts were made to include his findings in traditional Christian thought, phrases like "struggle for existence" and "survival of the fittest" seemed for many to challenge the traditionally absolute and immutable doctrines of Christianity which claimed that man was a special creature placed in a prominent position among the creatures of the universe, and not merely a member of the animal kingdom subject to naturalistic investigation.⁶

The impact of Darwinian theory on American institutions is aptly expressed by Stow Persons who claims that by:

. . . proclaiming the sovereignty of the present [Darwinian theory] had the effect of undermining traditional intellectual authorities. These authorities had entrenched themselves--as authorities always do--in institutions, which consequently

⁵ Morton White, Social Thought in America: The Revolt Against Formalism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

⁶ An excellent discussion of the implications of social darwinism on American thought is found in Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967).



felt the Darwinian impact. Some of them, notably the churches, were weakened in their intellectual influence; others, such as the colleges, were transformed. In the place of the relatively unified and quasi-official intellectual culture of mid-nineteenth century America emerged the bewildering variety of autonomous and mutually contradictory authorities. . . . The Darwinian theory by its very nature facilitated this transformation. It emphasized variety, change, the image, of the world as a "booming, buzzing confusion."⁷

Aware of these changes and attempting to operate within them, Woodbridge N. Ferris claimed to be part of the "new education" with its attempts to re-define education, join the revolt against formalism and further many of the aims of the larger political and social movement called Progressivism. Ferris retained interest in these national developments because the school's programs were, in part, designed to prepare students for the existing world. He also made a concerted effort to know the number and kinds of business and education positions available throughout the country.

Commenting on the latter two decades of the century which he termed the progressive age, Ferris stated that: ". . . this is an age in which men plead for religious freedom, commercial freedom, and the freedom of reason, yet an age in which they not infrequently ask for the abuse of

⁷ Stow Persons, "Darwinism and American Culture," in The Impact of Darwinian Thought on American Life and Culture, pp. 1-10; quoted in Intellectual History in America from Darwin to Niebuhr, edited by Cushing Strout.



education."⁸ To Ferris, abuse of education meant development of skilled, efficient practitioners without proper emphasis on character development. Character development meant producing students who studied hard and refrained from gambling, drinking and other vices.

For Progressive reformers attempting to correct these evils of society it was an age of political corruption, restricted opportunities in a world of large organizations, slums and filthy working conditions in a land of plenty, and immigrants crammed into urban ghettos. Their answer was education to meet the needs of children in terms of these social, economic and political realities.

For them, this meant that the child's needs and interests and not those external to the child would be the first concerns of the educator. This entailed a thorough understanding of the child as a prerequisite to successful pedagogy. It also meant the use of the methods of scientific investigation and social cooperation to promote intelligent public opinion. Agreeing that new social conditions called for new methods, new subjects and new organization of the schools, progressive educators claimed that public education would need to take over training previously performed by other social agencies. But how was

⁸Address to Ferris Cooperative Association, n.d., Woodbridge N. Ferris Autobiography, Michigan Historical Collections, Ann Arbor, Michigan, p. 160. Hereafter referred to as W.N.F. Autobiography.



this to be done? Should the urban school become a carbon copy of the world of large bureaucratic organizations of industrial America, fitting each child to take his place in society as it was? Or should the school become a means of changing and regenerating that society, a prototype of the ideal community? The progressive disposition was to change and regenerate society.

Claiming to be a proponent of progressive education principles Ferris expressed some of their concerns in his remarks and written communication. However, these actually indicate his conservative disposition in some educational concerns which can be divided into six topics. (1) The study of human nature through phrenology, (2) an educational methodology based upon the use of experience and the "real world," (3) an attitude towards life which might be called the "gospel of work," (4) an emphasis on continuous education, (5) trust in the methods and findings of scientific education, and (6) emphasis on moral education and character development.

Lawrence Cremin has called phrenology: ". . . , as popular an intellectual fad as any that swept nineteenth-century America."⁹ Phrenology as a pseudo-science was used

⁹ Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education 1876-1957 (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), p. 12.

Cremin also says that phrenology was: "Behavioristic in outlook . . . [and] maintained that human characteristic can be modified, that desirable faculties can be cultivated

by Ferris in counseling young people at the Institute. He used it in a manner reminiscent of Horace Mann who earlier in the century had advocated it to cultivate those propensities of the human race which were designed to counteract the evils of an industrial, commercial society marked by capitalism. Mann thought that:

By applying the principles of phrenology, moral instruction in the classroom would nourish the propensities that expressed themselves in righteous and humane behavior, and restrain the ravenous and tyrannizing ones that led to selfishness and indifference to human suffering.¹⁰

Similarly Ferris stressed the moral character of education. Given a choice between educating for skill and character development he would have chosen the latter.

When the common school educates the heart, trains boys and girls to recognize right, trains boys and girls to do right, the legitimate uses of education will be conserved. Manner and morals are a thousand times more valuable than arithmetical skill, than skill in grammatical analysis. The new education insists upon educating the moral nature in order that the disciplined intellect may be put to the highest use.¹¹

through exercise and undesirable faculties can be inhibited through disuse," p. 12. He would seem to agree with John D. Davies that phrenology did contribute much to pedagogical reforms during part of the nineteenth century. John D. Davies, Phrenology: Fad and Science (Princeton, N.J.: Yale University Press, 1955).

¹⁰Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators (Patterson, N.J.: Adams & Co., 1961), p. 122.

¹¹W.N.F. Autobiography, p. 160.



Speaking in the same vein on another occasion, he posed the following challenge to educators. "The morals you teach in the school will be the morals of your community."¹²

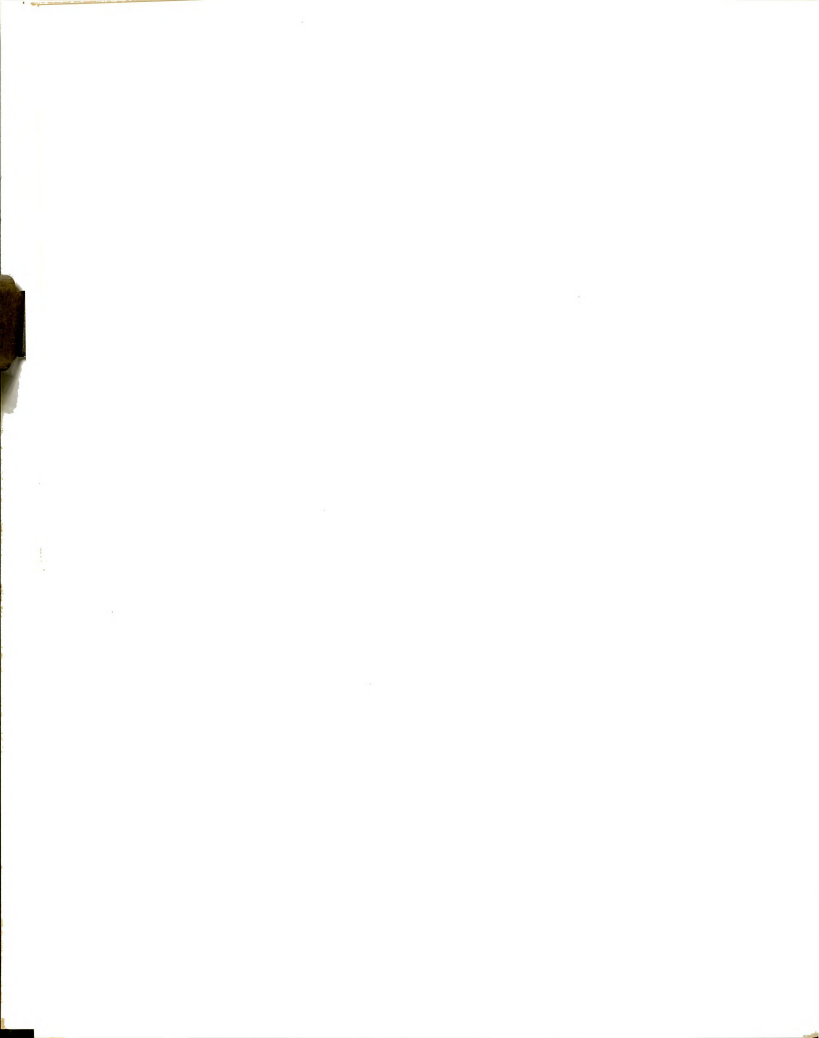
This faith in the power of formal education to produce right thinking persons was in line with much of nineteenth century educational reform thought. For example, Horace Mann in 1848 had called all doubters, disbelievers or despairers in human progress to look to the experiment of formal education to eliminate the social vices and restrain the unrestrained passions of men.

Here, then, is a new agency, whose powers are but just beginning to be understood, and whose mighty energies, hitherto, have been but feebly invoked; and yet, from our experience, limited and imperfect as it is, we do know that, far beyond any other earthly instrumentality, it is comprehensive and decisive. . . .¹³

Later in the century conservative spokesmen also claimed that moral education would help reform individuals who in turn would reform society. This educational emphasis on character to which Ferris heartily subscribed was in keeping with the persistent religious belief that the salvation of the immortal soul was significant in determining the goal and curriculum of education. Placed in the era of late nineteenth and early twentieth century reform it meant

¹² Ibid., p. 172.

¹³ Horace Mann Twelfth Annual Report 1848, quoted in The Republic and the School: Horace Mann, edited by Lawrence Cremin (New York: Teachers College Press, 1957), p. 101.



a gradual and reasoned appeal for the good life. In effect, the good life meant the acceptance of a set of permanent Christian values by which the student could guide his everyday life.¹⁴

Taking a cue from the child-centered disposition of progressive education Ferris became keenly interested in the investigation of human behavior. He was disturbed with educators and parents who disciplined youngsters without accounting for the motives underlying behavior.

Today the wise teacher and parent does not attempt to discipline the child for telling lies until the cause of the lie has been investigated. It takes but little study and observation to convince the intelligent parent that there are numerous causes for the ordinary lie.¹⁵

He was convinced that the world was entering a new era in the study of human nature and thought that it would revolutionize educational methods and affect every reform. "It puts with [in] man's reach the prospect of developing a higher type of man."¹⁶

For Ferris the higher type of man was that self-made individual who respected the dignity of work.¹⁷ Essentially

¹⁴ Curti, Social Ideas, p. 254.

¹⁵ W.N.F. Autobiography, p. 181.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ At other points in his autobiography he refutes the idea of the self-made man claiming that: "Until recently I labored under the delusion that every man is the architect



a conservative position, this idea served to inspire the ambitious young American to plunge headlong into life's work. For Ferris it verified his idea of progress, and emphasized his view that through adaptation, selection and evolution man could become a higher being.

Indeed, neglect of the principles inherent in the idea of the self-made man led to what Ferris called parasitic individuals who rejected work as fundamental to human nature.

Even today [late nineteenth and early twentieth century] parents educate their sons and daughters for the sole purpose of enabling them to live without work. More and more parasites. Work is divine. Work is a fundamental element in living a worthwhile life. Those who do not work, whether rich or poor, are social parasites.¹⁸

To prevent the development of social parasites Ferris advocated a policy of continuous education which would provide opportunities for people of all classes and all levels of intellectual sophistication. In presenting this idea he was supporting neither a class leveling or a philanthropic position. Instead he was attempting to correct the errors of some modern educators whom he thought had forgotten that

of his own fortune. . . ." "There is no such thing as a self-made man. . . ." "Man is a social being." (forward).

Actually it appears that Ferris believed in social cooperation through which came self-realization. Apparently this cooperativism did not negate the possibility of each person struggling individually to overcome the obstacles of life.

¹⁸W.N.F. Autobiography, p. 109.



muscle, bone, tendon and ligament fulfilled man's mission in the world.¹⁹ In effect, Ferris was asking that the school instill in young people the desire to continue their education by opening classes to all who wished to learn. In many of his speeches, letters and publications Ferris unmercifully criticized the public schools for setting what he termed: ". . . artificial limits to human attainment."²⁰ He claimed that this was done by preventing adults from attending public schools.

In contrast, he claimed that age was no barrier at his school. Perhaps his favorite statement was that: "Father, mother, son and daughter have been found at work in this school all at one time."²¹ Persons of all ages were to be given the opportunity to reach the upper limits of their abilities and interests. With this in mind Ferris exclaimed: "American public schools should be open for all of the people all of the time."²²

It seems that some of Ferris' views on education retained much of the traditional conservatism of American reformers who wished to develop obliging citizens for the republic. However, in advocating the use of experience and the real world, in stressing the necessity of continuous education, and in trusting the new psychology and findings

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 104.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 154.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p. 120.



of scientific education Ferris also belonged in the progressive camp.

The Road to Big Rapids

As a schoolboy Ferris admitted that his first contacts with schooling were not enjoyable. Beginning at the age of four and continuing through his teens he claimed to be: ". . . imprisoned in the rural school of my native township in New York, getting nothing so far as I can recall. I must have been affected more or less, however, by my environment although I hated school."²³ He said that the probable source of such an attitude was his being called a blockhead in a rural New York state school room.²⁴ Following his rural school experience, Ferris entered Spencer Free Academy, Spencer, New York. A short time later, he returned to the rural school only to eventually reappear at Spencer. "Awakened by that time, I made up my mind that I would like to do something in the world I did not know exactly what."²⁵

²³Address to Ferris Cooperative Association, n.d., Woodbridge N. Ferris Autobiography, Michigan Historical Collections, Ann Arbor, Michigan, p. 249.

²⁴Ibid., p. 31. This is a pertinent comment, in that, Mr. Ferris used similar language in addressing students at Ferris Institute. If the memory of his experience was so vivid, one wonders why he reacted to his students in a similar manner.

²⁵Ibid., p. 250.



From Spencer Academy young Ferris went to study at Candor Free Academy and to teach at a country school near his home. His reaction to this teaching experience was a mixture of enthusiasm and realistic recognition of economic necessity. "In opening the school I made the greatest speech of my life. Here it is: 'I have come here to help you, boys and girls, if you will let me.'"²⁶ With less commitment to education he claimed that he taught: "... not because I had any thought of becoming a teacher, not because I wanted to teach, but because I needed some money."²⁷

To that time his longest stay at any institution was three years as a student at Oswego Normal and Training School.²⁸ While a student at Oswego he was influenced by two important followers of Pestalozzi, Edward Sheldon and Hermann Krusi. As one might expect, Ferris' educational philosophy and methodology were Pestalozzian. He later expressed his indebtedness to Krusi and his disdain for the corrupting influence of contemporary education methodology. "For several years the Ferris Institute followed the Krusi method, but the demand for covering more ground in the shortest possible time has driven this school into the field of superficial training."²⁹ Pestalozzian

²⁶Ibid., p. 40.

²⁷Ibid., p. 250.

²⁸Ibid., p. 251.

²⁹Ibid., p. 63.



practice included the object method whereby the teacher attempted to develop the sense perceptions of the child.

In stressing the desirability of sense impression in education Pestalozzi asked that teachers use objects to affect the different senses of children. He suggested that the nearer the object to the child the greater the sense impression.³⁰ Essentially a theory emphasizing learning through direct experience, Pestalozzi's approach demanded a patient teacher willing to guide lengthy operations involving simple and complex learning skills. The method also required the maintenance of a continuity of experience which demanded more time and effort than many teachers were willing to give. It was to these teachers Ferris was referring when he criticized demands for the rapid development of skilled workers for the industrial plants of America.

From Oswego Ferris traveled to the University of Michigan, confident that he was a master of pedagogy. However, later classroom experience modified this confidence in his ability as a teacher.³¹ At the university he spent the year 1873 studying medicine, and receiving his credits without examinations: ". . . the same as all the others

³⁰Johann H. Pestalozzi, How Gertrude Teaches Her Children (Syracuse: Bardeen Press, 1900), p. 77.

³¹W.N.F. Autobiography, p. 121.

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did, no failures, everybody passed; no tears, just sunshine and joy."³²

Returning to southern New York he took charge of the Spencer Free Academy. Meanwhile, he married Helen Gillespie, who as his wife and partner was to prove a stalwart companion through the difficult years ahead. Their first joint educational adventure was at Freeport, Illinois where they organized a business college and academy.

Approximately eight months later they journeyed to Dixon, Illinois where they joined the Rock River University and later organized the Dixon Business College. They worked at the University and Business College for one and a half and two years respectively. Between his activities at Dixon, and the founding of Big Rapids Industrial School, Ferris spent five years administering the public schools of Pittsfield, Illinois. Apparently this venture stifled his freedom to teach and administer so he decided to establish a private school where he might operate more freely.³³

His consternation with contemporary public education led to criticisms of the lockstep system for producing teachers. Ferris thought that some educators mistakenly correlated the possession of a degree with excellent teaching.

³²Ibid., p. 248.

³³Ibid., p. 120.

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Because a teacher holds a degree does not signify that he can teach. Not infrequently the man or woman after receiving a degree unconsciously hermitically [sic] seals his "think tank" and never thereafter breaks the seal.³⁴

These remarks are significant in view of Ferris' later efforts to elevate the status of the school in the eyes of administrators of degree granting institutions. Nevertheless, the idea that one might refrain from continuous attempts to improve one's character and skills was repugnant to a man who advertised educational programs for all people and claimed that one was never too old to learn. With these principles foremost in his thoughts Ferris began searching for a suitable location for his school. As previously stated he wished to establish a private school to gain that freedom he thought lacking in public school work.³⁵

The first city mentioned for this private school project was Oswego, New York. In a letter to his parents in Spencer, New York, he stated that he was thinking of opening a private school in Oswego or some similar place.³⁶ For unknown reasons Ferris began to look elsewhere for a location.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 120.

³⁵ W.N.F. Autobiography, p. 248.

³⁶ Letter, Woodbridge and Nellie to Parents, Feb. 27, 1881, Ferris Papers, Michigan Historical Collections, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Hereafter M.H.C.

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His search began in 1883 when he and Henry Mills, a lawyer apparently looking for a law firm location, journeyed to Kalamazoo, Michigan.³⁷ From Kalamazoo, Ferris went to Big Rapids, Traverse City and then back to Pittsfield for one year. He also considered Fargo, North Dakota and Duluth, Minnesota as prospective settings for his school. At the end of the year these two cities and Big Rapids remained in contention as possible locations.³⁸

The choice was Big Rapids. What prompted Mr. Ferris to choose a small lumbering town in Michigan for the development of a private school?

I decided in favor of Big Rapids because it was sufficiently far away from colleges, normal schools, business colleges and academies to eliminate to a very large extent competition. From a business standpoint this was a foolish notion. It didn't occur to me that a man who wanted to sell shoes would refuse to locate in a South Sea Island and that a man who wanted to sell fans would refuse to locate in Greenland. I failed to ask the pertinent question: Why isn't there a private school within a radius of fifty miles from Big Rapids? It took me five years to answer this question.³⁹

Of course, these remarks were the result of hindsight. In 1884 Ferris gave a glowing report of the area. "This is a wonderful country up here - There is lumber on all sides - Land is cheap, interest is high - working men

³⁷ Letter, H. R. Mills to Woodbridge N. Ferris, May 21, 1883, Roy Newton Collection, Big Rapids, Michigan.

³⁸ W.N.F. Autobiography, p. 253.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 82.

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get big wages and everything is lively."⁴⁰ His description of Mecosta county was an accurate portrayal of much of Michigan from 1860 to 1900 when logging camps, new towns, sawmills and immigrants seemed to be prevalent in many places.⁴¹

Along with lumbering came a major rail network which reached into the northern part of the lower peninsula and into the upper peninsula. Big Rapids was served by the Pere Marquette and Grand Rapids and Indiana railroads, two lines which carried students to Ferris' school and his educational offerings.

The national movement from the farm to urban centers was also present in Michigan. For example, in 1880 there were twenty-five Michigan cities having a population of

⁴⁰Letter, Woodbridge N. Ferris to Parents, June 6, 1884, M.H.C. In another letter dated Nov. 21, 1884, Ferris lamented the poor country around Big Rapids. Apparently, the saving grace of the area was its accessibility for students who had nowhere else to go. He advised a friend to: "... select a prosperous town, not too large, because you want board at reasonable rates. Locate in a prosperous country, but not too near any other good school." Woodbridge N. Ferris to J. M. Rice, Nov. 21, 1894, Ferris Papers, M.H.C.

According to the Big Rapids Pioneer of July 28, 1894, the population of Big Rapids had increased from 3,552 in 1881 to 5,917 in 1894. The total in Mecosta County was listed at 13,973 (1880) and 20,632 (1884).

⁴¹Willis F. Dunbar, Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Co., 1965), p. 46. In 1890 there were 1,957 sawmills that sawed about 4 1/2 million board feet of lumber.

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4,000 or more.⁴² Big Rapids, however, was a rural town probably little different than other midwestern rural towns in the pre-automobile era. Characteristically they had a sawmill nearby when lumber was available, with a railroad depot, post office, opera house, a hotel and a newspaper largely devoted to gossip and advertising and paying little heed to national or foreign news. It was into this setting that Ferris came to build a private school based on what he claimed were progressive principles, but which in fact were an interesting mixture of what might be termed conservative and liberal educational positions.

A Home in Big Rapids

The arrival of Ferris, Nellie and son Carleton to their new home was acknowledged by the local newspaper, the Big Rapids Pioneer. The editors gave a favorable editorial to the proposed school project.

Mr. Ferris is a man of push and ability, and will immediately set about the task of getting things in shape. . . . It seems to us [the editors, Gay and Barrows] that this college is just what is wanted here, and that Mr. Ferris, . . . is just the man who will make a success of the enterprise.⁴³

These editorial remarks are puzzling in view of Ferris' claim that he was an unacceptable citizen for

⁴²Dunbar, Michigan, p. 587.

⁴³Editorial, Big Rapids Pioneer, May 16, 1884. (Microfilm, Big Rapids Public Library).

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reasons of politics and religion. At one point he claimed that: "I think that out of the entire city only one man had the kindness to tell me that he believed this a good place for the school. I was here to organize a school for a definite and specific purpose."⁴⁴

A Democrat, Ferris was told that since the state, county and city were Republican, his chances of succeeding in his endeavors would be greater if he changed his political affiliation.⁴⁵ The impact of these remarks is evident when one realizes that:

At 34 of the 38 biennial elections from 1854 through 1930 the Republican candidate for governor was elected. In all but two of the presidential elections held in this 76 year period, Michigan gave its entire electoral vote to the Republican candidate.⁴⁶

It has been suggested that the reasons for Republican dominance in Michigan were the relatively slow growth of cities prior to 1910, the predominately rural population and less intense agrarian and industrial unrest than in other states of the middle west.⁴⁷ In addition to being cautioned about his Democratic affiliation, Ferris was warned that his

⁴⁴W.N.F. Autobiography, p. 254.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 255.

⁴⁶Dunbar, Michigan, p. 525. During this time Ferris was the only Democrat to be elected to the United States Senate [1922].

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 526.

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Unitarian religious association was less favorable than a Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian one.⁴⁸

Attempts by Ferris to initiate a more favorable response to his presence came in the summer of 1884 when he taught two classes for the Mecosta County School examiners who arranged to have a summer school in Big Rapids. It was his intention to introduce himself to the teachers and prospective students in the area.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, these efforts proved unsuccessful in effecting the desired changes in attitude. Despite these difficulties, Ferris managed to find a home⁵⁰ and open the Big Rapids Industrial School on September 1, 1884.⁵¹ The first quarters of the school were located in two rooms on the second floor of the Vandersluis Block on North Michigan Avenue. The Pioneer reported that the fifteen students actually enrolled were active and noisy as they struggled through the first day.⁵²

⁴⁸W.N.F. Autobiography, p. 255.

⁴⁹Second Catalog (1895-1896), p. 42.

⁵⁰Big Rapids Pioneer, May 22, 1884. The paper reported that Ferris had purchased the residence of a Mr. Young nearly opposite Judge Brown's.

⁵¹This was the first name given to the school. It shortly became Ferris Industrial School and remained so until 1899 when it was renamed Ferris Institute.

⁵²Big Rapids Pioneer, Sept. 2, 1884. There were people in the vicinity of Big Rapids who failed to complete more than three or four years of public school. The Industrial provided them with a second opportunity to acquire basic reading, writing and arithmetical skills.

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The school was advertised as an institution which prepared young men and women for the actual duties of life.⁵³ Preparation for these duties came through industrial education. By industrial education Ferris meant what H. H. Straight⁵⁴ had suggested. ". . . to be industrially educated he [everyone] must be in possession of . . . an industrial disposition, industrial knowledge, . . . industrial power."⁵⁵ Ferris attempted to include these ideas in all courses offered by the school.⁵⁶

By using industrial education to prepare students for the actual duties of life Ferris demonstrated that he was part of a late nineteenth century industrial education movement. Initially, Calvin Woodward had established a manual training school in 1879 and by the nineties these schools were found in at least six other cities. The supporters of manual training distinguished their efforts at general education from the more narrowly oriented technical, trade or industrial education. However, Ferris' view of industrial education was actually closer to the ideas

⁵³Big Rapids Industrial School--A New Institution Established for the Advancement of Industrial Education--A School for both Sexes, 1884.

⁵⁴H. H. Straight was the Director of the Science and Industrial Departments of the Cook County Normal School in Chicago.

⁵⁵First Publication Big Rapids Industrial School (1884), p. 1.

⁵⁶Ibid.

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of those manual training advocates who stressed the desirability of general education. In addition, his concept of industrial education reminds one of Pestalozzi's view of vocational training.

I was no less convinced that every vocational training which did not provide the individual with a commensurate cultivation of the head and the heart would not only be inadequate but would be unworthy and would degrade him to the status of one slavishly trained merely for making a living.⁵⁷

One might wonder about the prospective success of a proponent of industrial education placed in a small town rural setting if one forgot that much support for vocational education came from agrarian protests and innovations. It might also be remembered that the demand for rural educational reform was part of the nationwide industrial education movement.

Supporters of industrial education and manual training claimed that such education and training would serve several important functions. These included the counteraction of radicalism by the working masses and the achievement of a classless society.

Many advocates of industrial schools sincerely believed that such schools would promote the well-being of the laboring class. The indictment that the schools taught a sterile culture which had served the middle class in the past,

⁵⁷ Lewis F. Anderson, ed., Pestalozzi (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1931), pp. 101-102.

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but which offered little of practical value to the rising lower classes, was heard with increasing frequency after 1915.⁵⁸

Although offering support to the elevation of the lower classes, it is unlikely that Mr. Ferris would have supported the idea of educating for a classless society.

Jacob Riis, the social reformer, thought the industrial school an important institution for offering programs of practical value for the ghetto dwellers of America. Specifically, he viewed it as an opportunity institution for those less fortunate Americans either unwilling or unable to attend public schools. He claimed that:

If it [the industrial school] does not fill it [the void between the slum home and the public school], it at least spreads itself over as much of it as it can, and in that position demonstrates that this land of lost or missing opportunities is not the barren ground once supposed but of all the soil the most fruitful, if properly tilled. Wherever the greatest and the poorest crowds are, there is also the industrial school.⁵⁹

Among other groups attempting to regain these lost opportunities for that lowest and poorest class of people was the Children's Aid Society of New York City. This society was ready to:

⁵⁸ Curti, Social Ideas, p. 240.

⁵⁹ Cordasco Francesco, Jacob Riis Revisited. Poverty and the Slum in Another Era (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1968), p. 227.

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. . . receive and educate children who cannot be accepted by the public schools, either by reason of their ragged and dirty condition, or owing to the fact that they can attend but part of the time, because they are obliged to sell papers or to stay at home to help their parents.⁶⁰

Ferris attempted to apply the principles of industrial school education to a rural setting. Although having neither urban slums or large numbers of immigrants Michigan did have many persons who lacked a public school education and fundamental communication skills. Indeed, Ferris' emphasis on his school as an opportunity institution seems to coincide with similar claims by many supporters of industrial schools.

Initial course offerings in his Industrial school included Common English, Industrial Science and Mathematics, and Commercial. The Common English course included arithmetic, English and literature, geography, United States history, civil government, penmanship and drawing, physiology and hygiene, reading and orthography.⁶¹ In keeping with Ferris' approach to teaching, work was to be conducted in compliance with the Pestalozzian theory. Upon completion of the Common English course work, some students entered the Commercial course for terminal work or preparation for teaching.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 230.

⁶¹First Publication, p. 1.

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The Commercial department⁶² offered to high school graduates or receivers of a thorough common school education an opportunity to study commercial arithmetic, book-keeping, penmanship, business correspondence and commercial law.⁶³ It seems that in offering the Business course Ferris envisioned a transfer of learning theory. "The student of to-day, if he acts wisely, enters upon a business course because he knows that it will be invaluable to him, whatever may be his calling. . . ."⁶⁴

In the Industrial Science and Mathematics program, emphasis was upon the student as an investigator rather than a spectator.⁶⁵ Ferris also claimed that physics, chemistry, political economy, algebra and geometry were to be studied in such a manner that: "Training the hand to become a cultivated servant of the mind would be the primary goal."⁶⁶

As he was to do throughout his career, Ferris stressed the need for students in all courses to work hard and to be of good moral character.

Regulations will be few, for the reason that all applicants are to be exemplary in conduct under all circumstances. Pupils who are found to

⁶²The Commercial Department was part of the Business Department.

⁶³Ibid., p. 2.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 1.

⁶⁶Big Rapids Pioneer, Aug. 13, 1884. They were advertising the advantages of Big Rapids Industrial School.

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exert an evil influence upon their associates and also those who through habitual indolence fail to do the work assigned to them will be required to withdraw from school.⁶⁷

Though expenses in Big Rapids were considered less than in larger cities many students were unable to pay them. Expenses varied from \$8.00 for a twelve week Common English course to \$25.00 for a twelve week Commercial course. Room and board with private families cost between \$3.50 and \$4.50 per week.⁶⁸

In keeping with his general educational philosophy Ferris admitted students on a coeducational basis at any time. As he so aptly phrased it: "Our experience justifies us in saying that young women are just as successful in the study of industrial science and commercial subjects as young men, therefore, they need no special provisions."⁶⁹ In admitting women to the school Ferris was following a precedent set some years before by the Michigan legislature. The legislature had requested the regents of the University of Michigan to act on a recommendation by the president of that institution. His recommendation was accepted by the regents and thereafter no person with the

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸First Publication, p. 3.

⁶⁹Ibid.

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requisite literary and moral qualifications could legitimately be excluded from the university.⁷⁰

Frederick Rudolph has suggested that the:

Readiness of the western institution to adopt coeducation unquestionably derived in part from the facts of western life, where as equality of the sexes was achieved in the ordinary work of the farm. Neither pampered nor fragile, perhaps she was not even as feminine as she might be; but she was a person in her own right who had commanded the respect of her menfolk by assuming responsibility and working hard.⁷¹

Of course Ferris' readiness to accept females at his school might have been motivated by the prospects of additional revenue or the fact that most teacher training applicants were women.

After considering the philosophy, methodology, course offerings and expenses of the school, Ferris was able to summarize the advantages of attending his school. He deemed these advantages important enough to classify his institution as unique. It was a school for slow and rapid learners, pupils who worked in the shop or laboratory, teachers on vacations, those wishing to review their studies, those desiring to select their own studies, students who attended school irregularly,⁷² people wishing to

⁷⁰ Burke A. Hinsdale, History of the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1906), p. 131.

⁷¹ Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), p. 314.

⁷² Many students would attend the school for a term, work a term and then return to school.

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become teachers, farm children, and persons pursuing a business education.⁷³ The claim of uniqueness by Ferris is substantiated by the fact that in addition to the industrial, business, and normal programs it provided high school work for adults.⁷⁴

To aid students in taking advantage of these important facets of the school Ferris thought it necessary to find more suitable accommodations for them. He therefore made arrangements for the third floor of the Northern National Bank Building, now the Central Michigan Bank and Trust, on Michigan Avenue.⁷⁵ These new accommodations were occupied in February, 1885 and remained as quarters until January, 1894. "I afterward added to my floor space, the third floor of the Roof Block and a considerable portion of the second floor and all of the third floor of the Wilcox Block."⁷⁶

By September 24, 1884, Ferris had attracted 25 students to the institution.⁷⁷ On that day the editors of the Pioneer visited the school and reported that Ferris

⁷³First Publication, p. 3.

⁷⁴Willis F. Dunbar, The Michigan Record in Higher Education (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963), p. 263.

⁷⁵W.N.F. Autobiography, p. 84. A block referred to a single structure.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Big Rapids Pioneer, September 10, 1884.

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was going to offer night classes in penmanship, bookkeeping and business arithmetic. "As this school in no way interferes but is rather an aid to those of the districts we consider it highly beneficial."⁷⁸

The night school opened on October 20 and drew the comment from the Pioneer that: "The . . . School is winning public favor very rapidly."⁷⁹ Many people saw the night school as a second opportunity to secure skills which they had not learned in earlier years. W. A. Stillwell reported that although no diplomas were given for night school courses inspiration was high.⁸⁰

As fall turned to winter, Woodbridge and Nellie Ferris remained busy in their struggle to keep the school alive.

Nellie works a great part of the day at the school and does her other work except washing. I work all day and teach night school four evenings each week. My school is growing steadily. The first year is altogether the hardest because of not having a home reputation.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Ibid., Sept. 24, 1884.

⁷⁹ Oct. 6, 1884. On Oct. 20, the Pioneer indicated that this was the first evening school of its kind ever conducted in Big Rapids.

⁸⁰ Big Rapids Pioneer, n.d. Told by W. A. Stillwell.

⁸¹ Letter, Woodbridge N. Ferris to Parents, Oct. 26, 1884, Ferris Papers 1878-1940. M.H.C.

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Early in 1885, Ferris occupied the new facilities in the Northern National Bank Building. Recognition of the move was given by Henry R. Pattengill, editor and publisher of the Michigan School Moderator.⁸²

Throughout the year Ferris carried on with his regular classes, night school, and public lecturing. The Pioneer was able to report that as of December, 1885:

The pupils of this school appear to be very enthusiastic over the manner in which the school is conducted, and they frequently in some appropriate manner manifest their appreciation of the effort which the teachers are putting forth in their behalf.⁸³

Evidently summer school students had presented Mr. Ferris with a decanter, while winter term students gave him a complete set of Thackeray's works.⁸⁴

The 1885 version of the Big Rapids Industrial School Bulletin reiterated Ferris' claim that in the course of its mission the school would accept backward students without embarrassment.

This is really a God-send to scores of men and women who for various reasons will not attend graded schools. They are welcome here because our facilities are such that we can give them just the personal attention they so much need.⁸⁵

⁸²The Moderator advertised that it was endorsed by all the leading educators of the state (Vol. 5, No. 23, Feb. 19, 1885), Ferris had his first advertisement in the Moderator. March 17, 1885, Vol. 5, No. 27.

⁸³Big Rapids Pioneer, Dec. 19, 1885.

⁸⁴Ibid., Aug. 22, 1885; Ibid., Dec. 19, 1885.

⁸⁵Big Rapids School Bulletin, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Jan., 1885).

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Also noted in the Bulletin was the reduction of room and board rates and an advertisement informing school administrators that Ferris was ready to procure prospective teachers for them.⁸⁶ Similar advertisements were common in most school publications as well as other bulletins, newspapers or magazines.

Morning exercises were a daily task for all. At eight o'clock each morning both reluctant and eager Industrialites would gather for roll call, and a few words of wisdom from Mr. Ferris. His sermons usually emphasized the importance of civic duties and responsibilities, the development of character or the significance of success.⁸⁷ Often guest speakers would discuss similar topics. An insightful commentary on these morning activities was provided by Ferris' son Carleton.

During morning exercises he could not abide needless sound interruptions while he was reading, such as a student rattling an ink well; scraping the feet or the making of any unnecessary commotion. At such times he would stop his reading and in unmistakable terms vigorously comment on the situation. He was a master of the art of sarcasm and I have no doubt that many an old student can remember a number of caustic dressings down that he administered when he felt them justified.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Karl G. Merrill, The History of Ferris Institute, 1956.

⁸⁸W.N.F. Autobiography, p. 16.

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The purpose of these exercises was to "awaken" students by bringing them in contact with some of the most famous written works of Western thought. Ferris said it this way: "Whether you like it or not, the noble thinkers always have led mankind and will always continue to do so."⁸⁹

Ferris' demeanor at these gatherings is somewhat out of character with progressive education principles to which he claimed allegiance. Sarcasm and caustic dressings down hardly seem appropriate action for one attempting to prevent embarrassment to less educated and perhaps uninterested students.

If one took seriously the child-centered approach one might question the necessity of forcibly awakening students. Emphasis on civic duty and responsibility with stress placed on success seems to be a basically conservative position designed to provide accommodating persons for an existing system. An integral part of these morning exercises was the development of the self-made man. Such a man was able to face the realities of life with both practical, useful training, and academic study. Ferris' reaction to a purely academic program was expressed as follows:

The great mistake of education in the past, and largely in the present, is the assumption that the world of books has any value save as a truthful record of physical nature, human nature, and

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 127.

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human life. Thus beginning, continuing, and ending in letters, the majority of so-called educated men are largely disqualified for the highest manhood by the very culture achieved by years of toil.⁹⁰

Concern with facing the realities of the day and achieving "culture" through toil is reminiscent of the thought of other self-made man advocates. For example, William Graham Sumner's comments on the difference between help and charity corresponds to Ferris' ideas on the same matter.

The only help which is generally expedient, even within the limits of the private and personal relations of two persons to each other, is that which consists in helping a man to help himself. This always consists in opening the chances. A man of assured position can, by an effort which is of no appreciable importance to him, give aid which is of incalculable value to a man who is all ready to make his own career if he can only get a chance. The truest and deepest pathos in the world is not that of suffering but that of brave struggling. The truest sympathy is not compassion, but a fellow-feeling with courage and fortitude in the midst of noble effort.⁹¹

To publicize his views on the education of the self-made man and other pertinent information about the school Ferris printed Useful Education. Ferris said that he preferred such a publication rather than an annual

⁹⁰Useful Education (Jan., 1886). Quoted from the Journal of Education.

⁹¹Gerald N. Grob and Robert N. Bect, eds., American Ideas: Some Readings in the Intellectual History of the United States, Vol. III (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), p. 84.

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catalogue because: "We prefer to come before the people more frequently than once a year. . . ." ⁹²

The title of the publication is significant; in that, it depicts Ferris' philosophy of education.

Useful education is . . . at war with educational sham and pedagogical quackery. It asks teachers and schools to use fewer educational recipes and more common sense. The highest work of the school does not consist in turning out highly published educational machines. Useful education insists upon the 'harmonious' development of the whole being. It claims that every act, thought, plan, method and question should lead to character development. Useful education does not arbitrarily determine whether the means employed to assist in this development all consist largely of the sciences or mainly of the ancient classics. It does plead for a generous use of common things, for an enthusiastic presentation of the elements of the English language, for wise direction concerning how to use every man power to the best possible advantage. Such is the mission of useful education. ⁹³

As previously stated, this mission was tied to some elements of the "new education" and the contemporary emphasis on scientific method. Among other things it included recognition of the child as a key element in the educative process.

The school is for the child, for the development of the highest type of character. In order to develop this character teachers must learn to

⁹² Ibid. Ferris called the paper a live and progressive advocate of practical education. Its format included outlines of courses, articles on practical and useful education, comments from politicians, writers and educators testimonials on Ferris' ability as an educator, information on school expenses, lists of students, advertisements and editorials.

⁹³ Useful Education (Jan., 1886).

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teach, not by becoming mere imitators, not by studying books, but by studying the pupil. The science of education lies in the school-room, in the house, in the street, wherever children meet and laugh, act and talk with the freedom of childhood.⁹⁴

In addition to the school in Big Rapids, Ferris' stake in Michigan education manifested itself in the development of a business college in Muskegon, Michigan. In addition to being a physical reminder of Mr. Ferris' intent to stay in Michigan, the school in Muskegon like the one in Big Rapids, emphasized a business education.

It is safe to say that in no other branch of education is a man's ignorance of affairs so completely exposed as in his want of business correspondence; for whatever his vocation in life, he will surely have some of this kind of work to do. Too much stress cannot, therefore, be laid upon the necessity of being able to write a plain clear and concise business letter.⁹⁵

The business college endeavor of Ferris' was one among many attempts to set up business schools in Michigan. Prior to his attempt, business schools were opened in Detroit in 1848 and 1854 respectively.⁹⁶ The latter half of the decade also witnessed the establishment of a commercial college in Albion.⁹⁷ "However few were

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Instructional Guide: Business Correspondence 1887. The New Business Correspondence. In Ferris State College Library. Property of Jennie Hubert. Copyright by J. M. Mehan.

⁹⁶ Dunbar, Higher Education, p. 216.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

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incorporated under state law as educational institutions, and many were short lived."⁹⁸ Other efforts included Patrick R. Cleary's business school in Ypsilanti, Lansing Business University, Devlin Business College of Jackson and Saginaw Business College.⁹⁹ "The report of the superintendent of public instruction in 1900 also listed business schools at Bay City, Benton Harbor, Fenton, Ludington, Battle Creek and Three Rivers."¹⁰⁰

It seems that Ferris, when developing rules and regulations for his business college, was deliberately avoiding what he thought were difficulties with other business colleges.

The College [Business] is not a reformatory institution. Our facilities are not such as to enable us to conduct any species of prison or asylum. Young men who use intoxicants, who frequent gambling dens, who have no regard for social purity, who have any bias which is positively immoral are not wanted as students at this College. In fact, we will not knowingly accept such. We care not how ignorant a candidate for admission may be if he is willing to work, and really loves the principles of true manhood. We are willing to battle with anything except downright laziness, and immorality. . . . We make it our business to look after the moral and physical welfare of our students. Our ideas of education compel us to do this.¹⁰¹

This insistence upon students of good moral character was an obsession with Ferris and manifested itself in a policy

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 237-238.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ferris Business College Supplement (1888).

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of loco parentis at both the Business College and Industrial school.

In July, 1888 Ferris reported to his parents that attendance at the business school had risen to ninety-eight. Apparently his parents had interpreted the opening of a new school as an indication of financial success, because Ferris had to assure them that he was not getting rich and would: ". . . never be as happy again as I was in the old home among the hills."¹⁰²

In the meantime the Industrial expanded to include the Roof Block. The Pioneer optimistically reported that: "It means the Industrial School is a fixture here."¹⁰³ It appeared that the Pioneer had correctly assessed the situation as Ferris was considering the possibility of erecting a permanent structure for the Industrial. Initially, the site in mind was a piece of property known as the Warren estate. However, the cost was prohibitive and a more moderately priced location was sought.¹⁰⁴

The question of a site for the school developed into a guessing game between Ferris, members of the community and the editors of the Pioneer. Was the new location to

¹⁰²Letter, Woodbridge N. Ferris to Parents, July 25, 1888, Ferris Papers 1878-1940, M.H.C.

¹⁰³Big Rapids Pioneer, Oct. 26, 1888, and Oct. 29, 1888.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., July 27, 1889.

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be Reed City, Big Rapids or possibly Ludington? In a running commentary from May to August, 1889, the Pioneer speculated about the future of the school.

We understood that Mr. Ferris has consented to continue his school in the city providing our people will loan him sufficient money to erect suitable buildings and it looks very much as if a sufficient amount would be placed at his disposal. If he can secure \$5,000 he will erect his buildings here instead of in Reed City.¹⁰⁵

Perhaps a key incentive for citizens keeping the school in Big Rapids was the estimated \$25,000 annual business it brought the town.¹⁰⁶

The Pioneer claimed that Ferris had so skillfully managed his scheme to entice Reed City to accept the school that: ". . . no one outside the proprietor . . . and a few Reed City people knew anything about it until last evening when a representative of the Pioneer got 'wind' of the project."¹⁰⁷ On August 3, the Pioneer made a definite statement that the Industrial would remain in Big Rapids. They reported that Ferris had left for Saginaw to talk with an architect about the proposed building project.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵Ibid., May 14, 1889.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., May 11, 1889.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., Aug. 3, 1889. Located two or three blocks directly south of the Court House and comprised an entire block. Pioneer, June 1, 1889.

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In the midst of this situation, Ferris took the opportunity to proclaim that an educational revival was producing better teaching, and schools, happier children and teachers.¹⁰⁹ With this proclamation as a guide both schools continued their summer school programs of giving:

. . . thorough reviews and drills in reading, writing, orthography, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, civil government, elements of Bookkeeping, algebra, School Law, natural philosophy, theory and art of teaching, physiology, psychology, writing for the press, typewriting, memory training and shorthand.¹¹⁰

Ferris was especially interested in memory training and penmanship, the former to be in harmony with the view of the new psychology and the latter with the revolution in penmanship teaching. Referring to that revolution Ferris stated that: "The finger movement, the use of copy books, the 'not how much but well,' have given way to sensible devices for learning to write. . . ."

". . . , the drill will be so thorough that the teachers handwriting will be revolutionized."¹¹¹

It is doubtful whether one can substantiate Ferris' claim that memory work was in harmony with the new psychology. In fact, the emphasis on memory training and mental discipline was in agreement with the theoretical

¹⁰⁹Useful Education (May, 1890).

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Ibid.

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system of faculty psychology which called for intensive drill and practice and a cultivation of the memory.

The new psychology with William James and Edward L. Thorndike as prominent supporters rejected the idea that mind and body could be viewed as separate entities. Instead, the mind was seen as a product of evolutionary growth whereby man's experience at a point in time was a total experience. James' claimed that mental activity was a continuous flow and any subdivision of the mind into separate elements was unwarranted.¹¹²

Fall term 1890 opened with students participating in five basic courses of study. These included English, Normal, Scientific, Shorthand, and Business courses. In addition a business program designed to develop skills necessary in business practice was offered as part of the Actual Business Department. Entitled Actual Business Department No. 2, it included a freight office, commercial exchange, wholesale office, commission office, and bank where the necessary skills of business could be practiced.¹¹³

Regardless of one's course of study or abilities Ferris cautioned against too strenuous a program. He was

¹¹²William James, Principles of Psychology (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1908), pp. 224-240.

¹¹³Useful Education (Nov., 1890).

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especially concerned about the possibilities of what he called mental dissipation caused by omnivorous reading.

In every school students desire to pursue more studies than are conducive to a strong mental development. They mentally gorge themselves. The result is as in omnivorous reading - confusion, enfeebled memory, impaired judgment, lowered intellectual vitality. If we understand the true principles of education we should attempt to supply them. One of the first of these is not to teach too much, not to congest the mind, not to overtax its powers. Our effort should be to whet curiosity [sic], awaken the natural powers of the mind and leave room for imagination to work.¹¹⁴

Part of Ferris' efforts to awaken student interest in many areas of study included extra-curricular programs. Ethel Romig Fuller claimed that:

By bringing Lyceum Bureau lectures, music, monologists, et cetera winter after winter to Big Rapids, he [W.N.F.] gave a culture-starved community high class entertainment it would not have had otherwise. To a high school girl like myself those evenings at the Ferris Institute were the big events of the year, affording a glimpse of the world beyond the reach and ken of a limited horizon. I still vividly recall such speakers as William Jennings Bryan. . . .¹¹⁵

The American Lyceum was among hundreds of educational societies and associations originating during the common school movement in the first half of the nineteenth century. First established by Josiah Holbrook in Connecticut, local units designed to instruct and enlighten the

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Letter, Ethel Romig Fuller to William A. Pearson, Nov., 1952. (Ferris State College Library.) Letter in remembrance of Ferris.

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American people in the arts and sciences sprang up throughout the eastern half of the United States. In village and farming communities interested citizens collected materials and conducted forums on popular subjects. Eventually, prominent speakers such as Horace Mann, Daniel Webster and Ralph Waldo Emerson used the opportunity to speak at these gatherings, some to espouse their ideas or promote a cause. As Emerson once remarked: "My pulpit is the lyceum platform. . . ." ¹¹⁶ Merle Curti has stated that: "The lyceum was not only an important agency in the transmission of culture westward: it provided women with intellectual opportunities and helped break down the barriers the past had erected against their education." ¹¹⁷

In Michigan after the Civil War literacy societies were formed on almost all college campuses. ¹¹⁸ With names like Sherwood Rhetorical Society, Philolexian Lyceum and the Eurodelphian Society at Kalamazoo College; the Agricultural College Students Lyceum and Excelsior Lyceum at Michigan Agricultural College, these organizations generally had in mind the development of their members' mental,

¹¹⁶ Cecil B. Hayes, The American Lyceum: Its History and Contributions to Education, United States Office of Education Bulletin No. 12 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1932), p. 58.

¹¹⁷ Curti, Social Ideas of American Educators, p. 173.

¹¹⁸ Dunbar, Higher Education, p. 180.

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moral and social improvement.¹¹⁹ Similar societies flourished on the Ferris Industrial campus.

Other efforts designed to improve the school included expanded regular and summer programs, the acquisition of Charles A. Wessel as a staff member, and attempts to procure a permanent structure for the school. Both the regular and summer programs emphasized the new role of the teacher. Recognizing the changes in education Ferris adapted his program accordingly.

The teacher is no longer a taskmaster. His province is not simply to assign lessons and hear recitations. He must give method the attention it deserves. He must look at every student as an individual requiring special development. The Industrial School is the embodiment of all that can be said concerning progress in education.¹²⁰

An integral part of the teacher training program was the kindergarten course. Prior to 1891 Ferris had conducted kindergarten education in Big Rapids, but its first official connection with the Industrial program came later.¹²¹ Ferris' reaction to this program was seen in the following remark: "Its [kindergarten's] chief value lies in the development of the child's mind. The Industrial School proposes to arouse much enthusiasm along this line in the Summer Sessions of '91."¹²² This zeal to

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 180.

¹²⁰ Ferris Summer School Bulletin (April, 1891).

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

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develop what he considered a good teacher training program led Ferris to contact State normal schools asking for information on the purposes of such schools. The interest in developing teacher programs had been present among Michigan educators long before the arrival of Ferris. In 1849 the state legislature had provided for the establishment of a state normal school at Ypsilanti, and by 1860 twenty colleges and union schools had organized normal classes.¹²³ By 1903 Michigan had four normal schools, Michigan State Normal, Western State Normal, Central State Normal and Northern State Normal.

Ferris Industrial School was to play a significant role in educating the teachers of Michigan. However, before this became an established role Mr. Ferris had to secure a stable existence for his school in Big Rapids. So far he had managed to hold his ground as a Democrat and Unitarian in a Republican and non-Unitarian oriented community. He was successful in attracting sufficient numbers to begin his mission of educating the less fortunate people of Michigan according to what he claimed were principles of the "new education." Nevertheless, the future of the school remained uncertain.

¹²³Dunbar, Higher Education, pp. 193-194.

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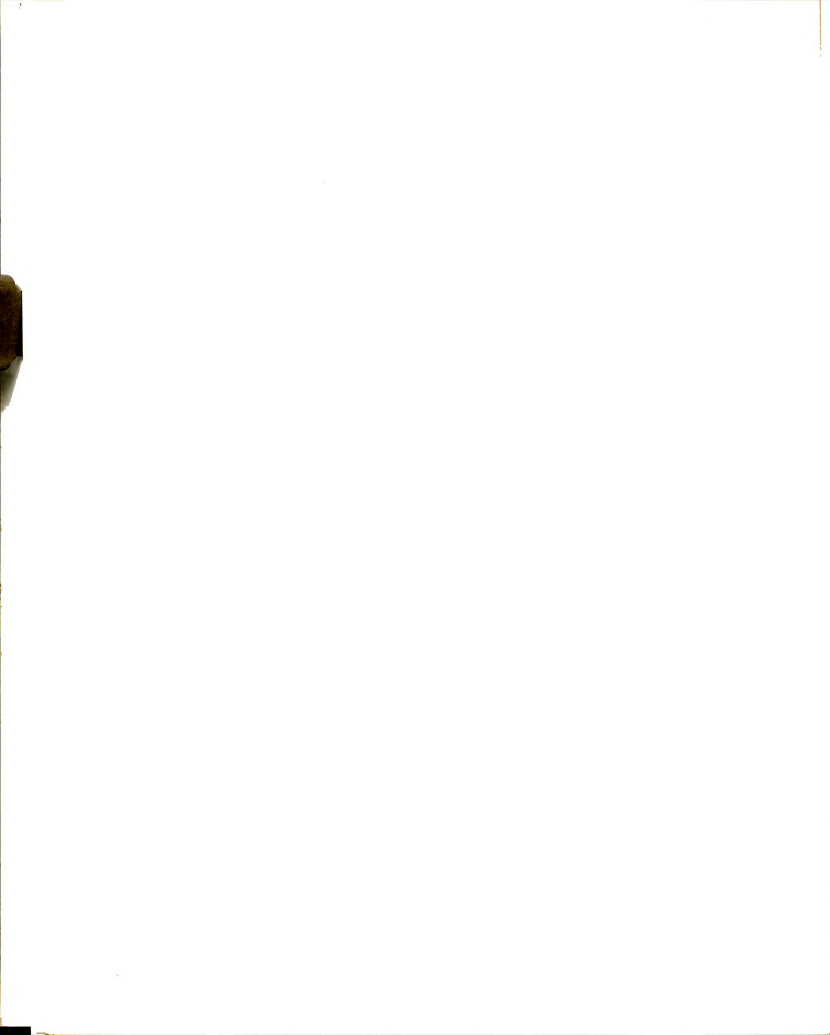
An Uncertain Future

Unanswered questions about the school's future continued to plague Ferris as fall term 1891 started with an increased enrollment.¹²⁴ The anxiety revealed in Ferris' correspondence was summarized in a letter to Charles Carlisle.

. . . , one thing is absolutely settled. The Industrial School does one of two things: ceases to exist November 1, 1892, or goes into a \$10,000 building. In order to secure the building, I have only to turn my hand over once. This does not refer to a particular city. Either of two cities will do it and be glad of the opportunity. I hope that nothing short of the stake will compel me to designate the city. My not going on with the school will be determined by two things: one you have heard me mention hundreds of times [the possibility of a building in Big Rapids], the other is the possibility of putting the school in another city. I don't like change. I belong to a family, however, that does, but I positively dread to pick up my traps and find a new home. It does not seem to me worthwhile, and I won't be a beggar in Big Rapids.¹²⁵

¹²⁴Letter, Woodbridge N. Ferris to Dear Pupil and Friend, Sept. 28, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 38, FIFS. The actual attendance was listed at 150 pupils with 200 expected early in 1892. For comments on school enrollment see Woodbridge N. Ferris to C. W. Perry, Sept. 29, 1891, vol. 1, p. 60, FIFS; Woodbridge N. Ferris to Anna Ward, Oct. 2, 1891, vol. 1, p. 92, FIFS, "Never before has the school been so prosperous."

¹²⁵Letter, Woodbridge N. Ferris to Charles Carlisle, Oct. 7, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 170, FIFS. (FIFS indicates the collections housed in the Ferris Room at the Ferris State College Library). Hereafter, W.N.F. will replace Woodbridge N. Ferris, in his correspondence.



Ferris contemplated moving the school to Ludington, Michigan. In a series of letters to D. F. Cargill, Ferris proposed such a plan. Initially, Ferris refused to make any more definite commitment than that it would cost between eight and ten thousand dollars. "The plans and specifications I now have, call for the expenditure of about \$9,000. If any men, or set of men can put up the same building for less money, so much the better for them."¹²⁶

In a letter to Charlie Taylor of Lowell, Michigan dated Oct. 13, 1891, Ferris claimed that newspaper speculation about the Industrial was just that, speculation.¹²⁷ However, he appeared positive in the hope that the institute would survive.

I am making no bids, but I have enough information to justify me in saying that the Industrial will begin next year in a substantial somewhere in this part of the state. Of course, I remain in my present quarters the remainder of the year.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Letter, W.N.F. to D. F. Cargill, Oct. 13, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 267, FIFS.

¹²⁷ Letter, W.N.F. to Charlie Taylor, Oct. 13, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 268, FIFS. In a letter to Allen Brown of Boston [Tufts College] Oct. 15, 1891, vol. 1, p. 297, FIFF. Ferris claimed that: "Newspapers seem to feel that they have a duty to perform. Their managers rarely consult me. They originate news whenever it seems to be a necessity."

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* In a letter to Fred Bong of Alanson, Michigan, Ferris said that he would either get a new building or discontinue teaching. Oct. 13, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 276, FIFS. Also see Woodbridge N. Ferris to Mrs. Irene Shields, Oct. 14, 1891, vol. 1, p. 282, FIFS, for definite statements on obtaining a new building.



Although never seriously considering leaving Michigan, Ferris did contact Allen Brown of Tufts College in Massachusetts about the advantages of the Boston area for an industrial school. After assessing the possibilities of moving, Ferris agreed with Brown that: ". . . I am doing a work in Michigan that I could not do in Boston. . . . I shall never try to live in Boston. I should have to be content to spend my life in a comparatively small city."¹²⁹ Among other locations mentioned were Tekamah, Nebraska and Cedar Rapids, Iowa.¹³⁰

Ferris lamented the reluctance of the Big Rapids citizenry to aid him in saving the school. His attitude about the relationship between the citizenry and the school was expressed as follows.

Oh, no, I cannot claim any prospect of a bonus from Big Rapids. Big Rapids knows how difficult it is for me to get away. Big Rapids will never help any man. I am quite sure that I do not want

¹²⁹ Letter, W.N.F. to Allen Brown, Nov. 11, 1891, vol. 1, p. 297, FIFS.

¹³⁰ In a letter to A. N. Palmer, Oct. 19, 1891, Ferris stated that because his reputation was not national he would have to start from the bottom up in Cedar Rapids, vol. 1, p. 329, FIFS. Also see W.N.F. to A. V. Sunderlin, Oct. 28, 1891, vol. 1, p. 329, FIFS. Ferris accepts the view that he could build a better school in the west but objects for two reasons. "I refer to your cyclones and droughts. I do not wish to be scared to death. I prefer some other way of going out of the world."

Other Michigan cities mentioned were Fenton and Reed City. Ferris rejected them. See W.N.F. to F. C. Palmer, Nov. 2, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 496, FIFS.

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Big Rapids to help me in any way. I have never assumed the role of a pauper, and think it rather late in the date to begin. I am sure now that I shall never accept a [gift] out and out from any city. I may accept the use of a building for a term of years, no more.¹³¹

Throughout November and December 1891, Ferris' correspondence revealed a man caught in a turmoil between a set of principles and the exigencies of a situation. Writing to Claud Curtiss of Petosky, Michigan about his plight, he said he refused to use the money of any corporation because it would restrain his freedom to implement change in the school.¹³² However, he did accept encouragement from a group of former students who invited him to continue the struggle.¹³³

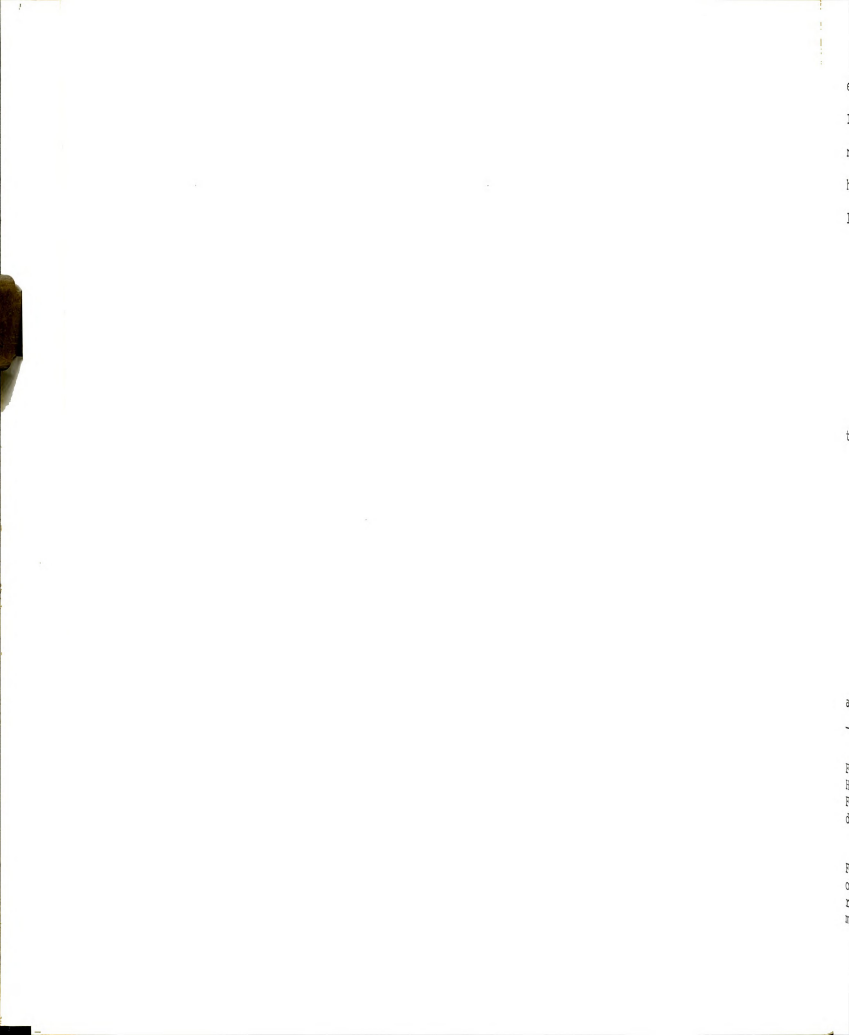
Should the school survive, changes would be made. Ferris said that he would attempt to give the school a national reputation, partly through changes in admittance policy.¹³⁴ The admittance of students without academic

¹³¹Letter, W.N.F. to Jamison, Nov. 5, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 2, p. 48, FIFS. Also see W.N.F. to D. Upston, Nov. 6, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 2, p. 54, FIFS. "Big Rapids will never give one dollar for the Industrial or any other private school."

¹³²Letter, W.N.F. to Claud Curtiss, Nov. 10, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 2, p. 107, FIFS.

¹³³Letter, W.N.F. to Brank Byam, Nov. 23, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 2, p. 274, FIFS.

¹³⁴Letter, W.N.F. to Graham, Nov. 24, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 2, p. 261, FIFS. Ferris meant changes in assessment of working capabilities of students and not necessarily academic prowess.



examination presented many difficulties in improving the Industrial's image. Ferris made several comments on the necessity of stricter discipline and improved student behavior and performance. He advised Earl Losie of Eastlake, Michigan to procure a truant officer because:

Boys ought not to be allowed to run the streets of Eastlake, who by law, ought to be in school. . . . You will find that schoolboards are exceedingly slow in the matter of doing this, for the highest interests of the children. Popularity is the one thing they desire, popularity is the one thing they will have. I get so disgusted with this feature of school work. . . .¹³⁵

These comments seem to suggest a concern with questions of authority and freedom.

I believe in freedom; I love freedom, myself, but there is something in the Industrial that is called freedom, that isn't freedom at all. It ought to be called recklessness, or possibly some other name, certainly not freedom. Students must feel that they have certain duties to perform, and perform them. They owe to the faculty and to themselves, certain duties. When human beings are not held to a certain line of action, they frequently give way to utter heedlessness.¹³⁶

Did such recklessness and irresponsibility cause absenteeism from class and neglect of studies? An

¹³⁵Letter, W.N.F. to Earl Losie, Oct. 20, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 341, FIFS. Also see W.N.F. to Homer Sly, Oct. 1, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 79, FIFS, concerning the failure of teachers to appropriately discipline youngsters.

¹³⁶Letter, W.N.F. to S. H. Place, No. 16, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 2, p. 109, FIFS. In light of contemporary polemics on conceptions of freedom and authority, rights and responsibilities of students, faculty and administrators, this is a pertinent statement.



affirmative answer was provided by Ferris when he accused shorthand students of neglecting recitations.¹³⁷ Indeed, he claimed that nineteen of twenty shorthand students amounted to nothing with the twentieth being an exception.¹³⁸

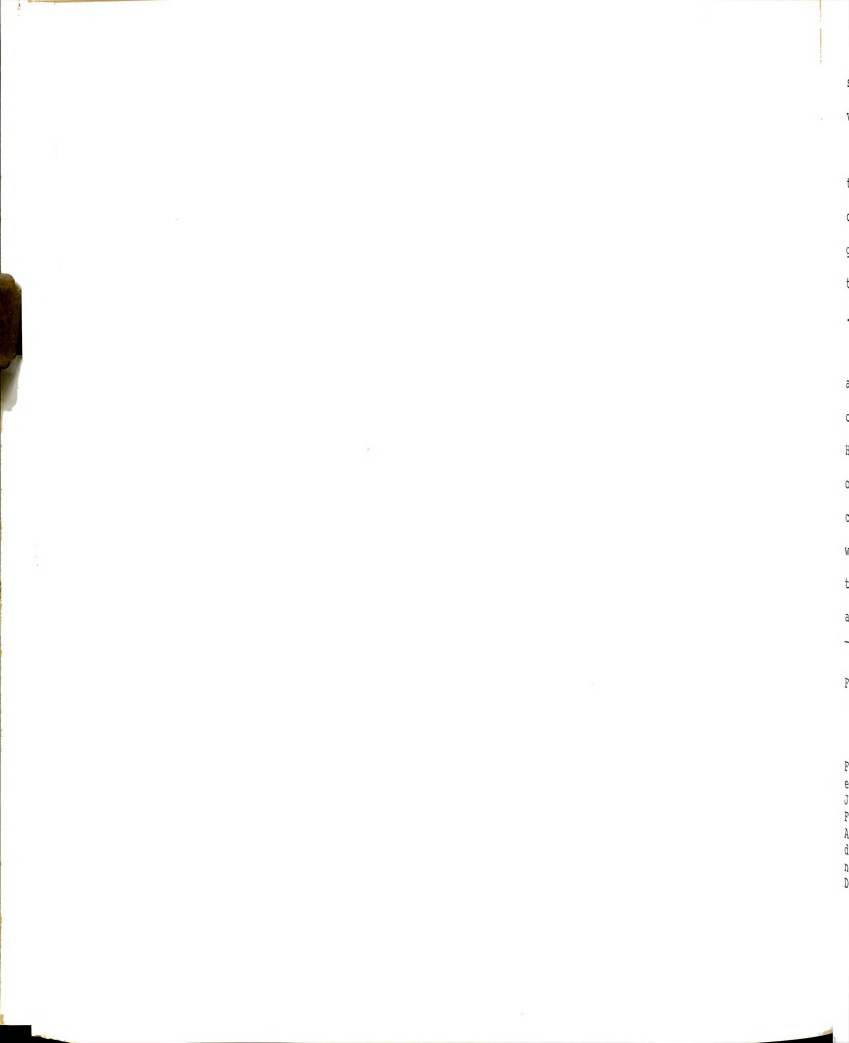
Despite his disdain for such behavior Ferris did aid students who needed assistance. In one instance he promised to refund tuition if a student was dissatisfied with the school,¹³⁹ while in another he contacted parents by telegraph when their child was ill.¹⁴⁰ At some time in a student's residence at the school, Mr. Ferris was determined to introduce him to prominent speakers and the reading program, along with lessons in voice culture. Although emphasis was placed upon rhetorical skills Ferris insisted that: "We talk no nonsense about a school of elocution, or anything of that kind. Our business is

¹³⁷Letter, W.N.F. to Earl Losie, Oct. 28, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 435, FIFS. Also see Ferris to Frank Byam, Oct. 14, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 275, FIFS.

¹³⁸Letter, W.N.F. to Frank Byam, Oct. 14, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 275, FIFS.

¹³⁹Letter, W.N.F. to Ransom H. Day, Oct. 27, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 405, FIFS. In a letter to A. V. Sunderlin, Ferris claimed that if he were a bit more rigid in his financial collections he might make some money. W.N.F. to A. V. Sunderlin, Oct. 21, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 352, FIFS.

¹⁴⁰Letter, W.N.F. to John Grund, Oct. 27, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 405, FIFS.



simply to give ease and grace, and effect to the human voice."¹⁴¹

Students also learned that English and history were taught in specific ways. All English classes learned to capitalize, punctuate, construct sentences and paragraph.¹⁴² The study of history was to be: "A study of the origin and growth of this wonderful country of ours . . . and not a study of wars."¹⁴³

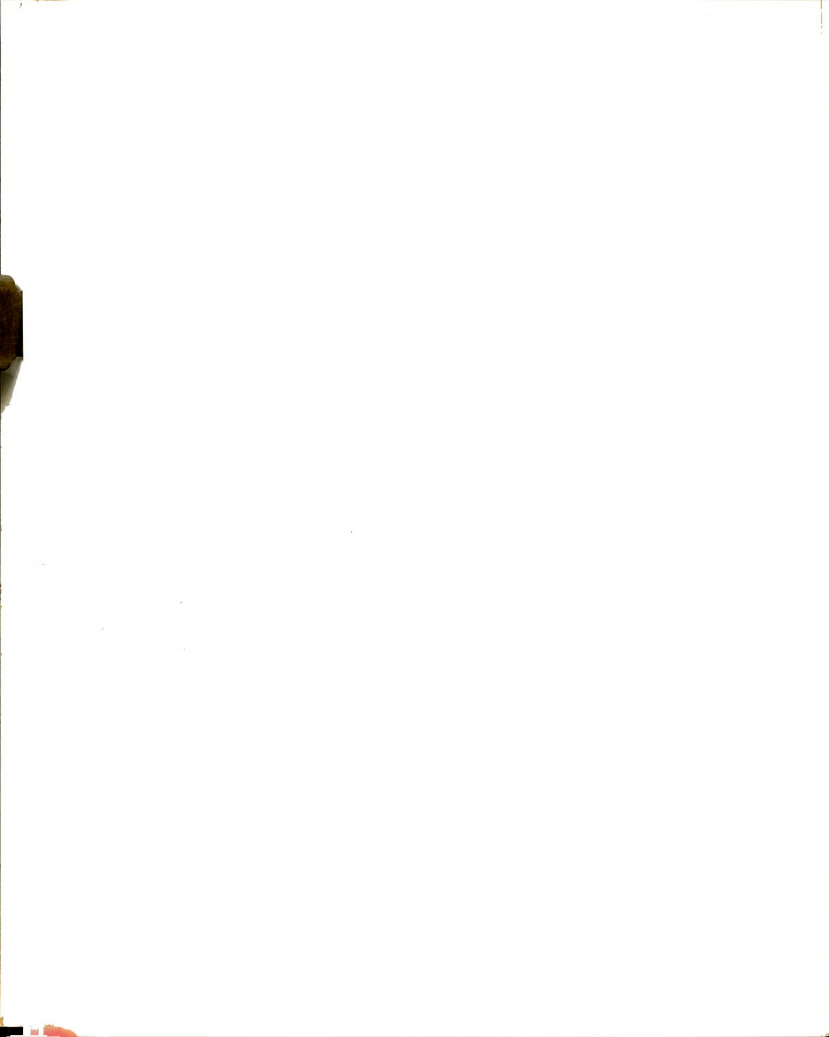
"O, how I need a building."¹⁴⁴ This was the cry of anguish from the pen of Ferris as the prospects of receiving a reasonable offer from another city seemed lost. He was deeply troubled by the following questions. Does one accept any proposal or struggle along with the Herculean task in Big Rapids? Should one abandon a life's work or gamble on the citizens of Big Rapids? Questions to ponder, to answer or forget? The depths of depression and antagonism were expressed by Ferris in a letter to

¹⁴¹Letter, W.N.F. to W. H. Sadler, Oct. 19, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 1, p. 317, FIFS.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Letter, W.N.F. to Dear Friend, Dec. 11, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 3, p. 9, FIFS. Ferris listed his enrollment and actual attendance as 267 and 250 as of Jan. 6, 1892. Also see W.N.F. to D.A.R., Jan. 13, 1892, Ferris letters, vol. 3, p. 342; and Jan. 20, 1892, FIFS. At one point Ferris thought attendance so good that students expecting to attend after Christmas had to give notice before the holidays. See W.N.F. to G. W. Abbott, Dec. 11, 1891, Ferris letters, vo. 3, p. 26, FIFS.



R. C. Stackable. ". . . , Big Rapids is the dullest town in Michigan: it is too dead to be buried. In the course of time I think it will have no more than 1600 people - hundreds are going away every year."¹⁴⁵ Those remaining residents were occupied with fence sitting and train watching.¹⁴⁶

Unfortunately, greener pastures were not beyond the horizon. Ferris' proposal which included a request for \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00 from the city accepting his offer was withdrawn on January 14.¹⁴⁷ Other conditions of the proposal included provision for a school boarding house, a \$10,000 building, \$7,500 in cash, a warranty deed on the property, and sole management of the building by Ferris.¹⁴⁸ Writing to Cargill about the withdrawal of the proposal, Ferris refuted any rumors suggesting that Big Rapids had raised the necessary money to retain the school.¹⁴⁹ Apparently similar rumors had reached Lansing

¹⁴⁵Letter, W.N.F. to R. C. Stackable, Jan. 15, 1892, Ferris letters, vol. 3, p. 378, FIFS.

¹⁴⁶Letter, W.N.F. to S. H. Place, n.d., Ferris letters, vol. 6, p. 109, FIFS.

¹⁴⁷Letter, W.N.F. to D. F. Cargill, Dec. 22, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 3, p. 148, FIFS.

¹⁴⁸Letter, W.N.F. to D. F. Cargill, Dec. 27, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 3, p. 367, FIFS.

¹⁴⁹Letter, W.N.F. to D. F. Cargill, Jan. 14, 1892, Ferris letters, vol. 3, p. 367, FIFS.

and were reported in the Michigan School Moderator. Writing to Henry R. Pattengill, Ferris claimed that:

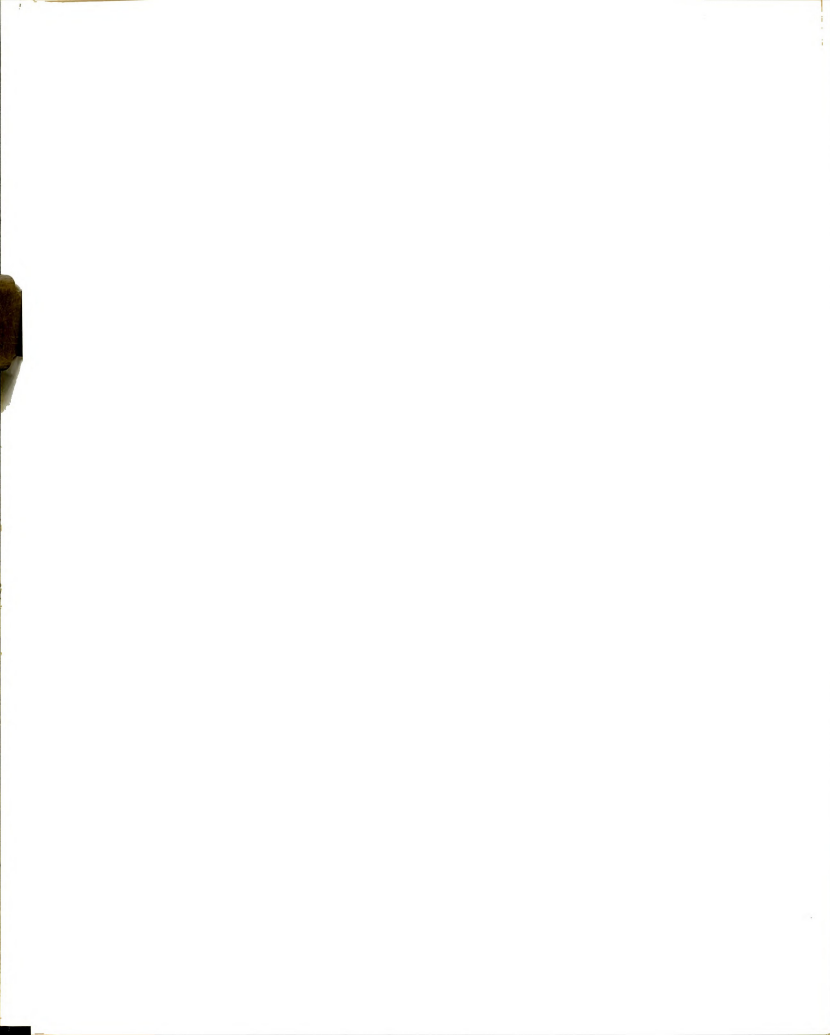
Big Rapids has never raised a dollar and probably never will. Where the Industrial School will be after this year I cannot state. If you have been misinformed, and if you have published any so-called information concerning the Industrial school as already indicated will you kindly make corrections on the basis of the facts contained in this latter.¹⁵⁰

Among many key decisions made by Ferris in his life the acquisition of Charles Carlisle as an instructor was particularly significant. Carlisle, a former student at Edna Chaffee Noble's Detroit Training School of Elocution and English Literature and a reading teacher in Ionia became an integral part of the morning exercises and the regular teaching staff. In 1929, after the death of Gerrit Masselink he became a more significant personality in the school's development.

After serving on a trial basis in the summer sessions of 1890, 1891, and 1892, Carlisle was offered a job teaching elocution and physical culture. His work was considered of such excellence that Ferris decided to make elocution and physical culture permanent elements of the program.¹⁵¹ These areas of study were designed to supplement the English course of study by: ". . . emphasizing

¹⁵⁰ Letter, W.N.F. to D. F. Cargill, Jan. 14, 1892, Ferris letters, vol. 3, p. 367, FIFS.

¹⁵¹ Useful Education, no. XIII, May, 1892.



the value of the culture which may be obtained from a study of the art of expression, and by offering instruction in all grades of reading."¹⁵² Carlisle was also influential in promoting evening entertainment programs for students.¹⁵³

At this time, Ferris made a tentative commitment to hire a music instructor,¹⁵⁴ and definite commitments to eliminate scholarships¹⁵⁵ and aid students with speech impediments.¹⁵⁶ There is no evidence to indicate the outcome of Ferris' decisions to hire the instructor or aid the students. However, Useful Education dated February, 1892, did report that scholarships were eliminated because they were unbusinesslike. Labelling scholarships

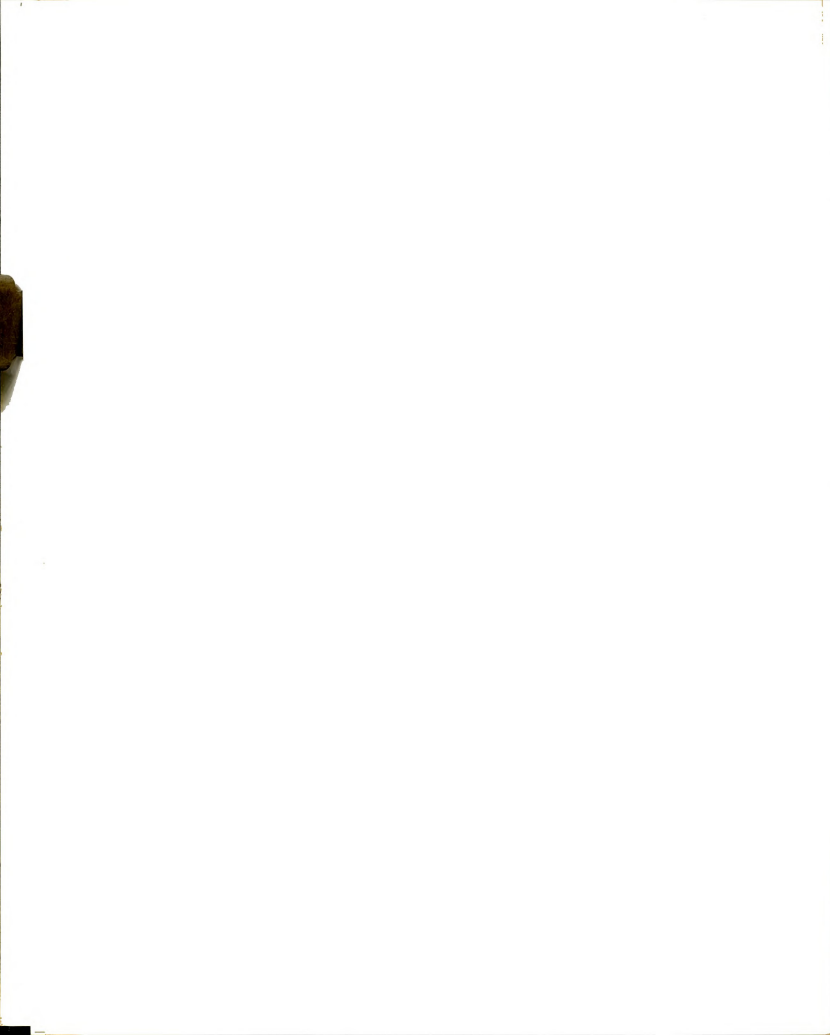
¹⁵²Ibid.

¹⁵³Letter, W.N.F. to M. B. Beal, Jan. 21, 1892, Ferris letters, vol. 3, p. 471, FIFS. Carlisle was offered a twelve months position which included thirty entertainment programs. W.N.F. to Charles Carlisle, March 16, 1892, Ferris letters, vol. 6, p. 233, FIFS.

¹⁵⁴Letter, W.N.F. to C. H. Palmer, Dec. 29, 1891, Ferris letters, vol. 3, p. 191, FIFS.

¹⁵⁵Letter, W.N.F. to Birdeth P. Hockox, Jan. 14, 1892, Ferris letters, vol. 3, p. 357, FIFS. Ferris sold scholarships on a limited or lifetime basis. These entitled one to take a course at any convenient time. Usually the cost was cheaper if one purchased an entire year scholarship. These were discontinued on Jan. 1, 1892 because: "This so-called life scholarship plan does not rest on sound business principles." Useful Education (Feb., 1892).

¹⁵⁶Letter, W.N.F. to Bryant School for Stammerers, Jan. 21, 1892, Ferris letters, vol. 3, p. 483, FIFS. Ferris said that he had students with such impediments and asked for information so he could give them advice.



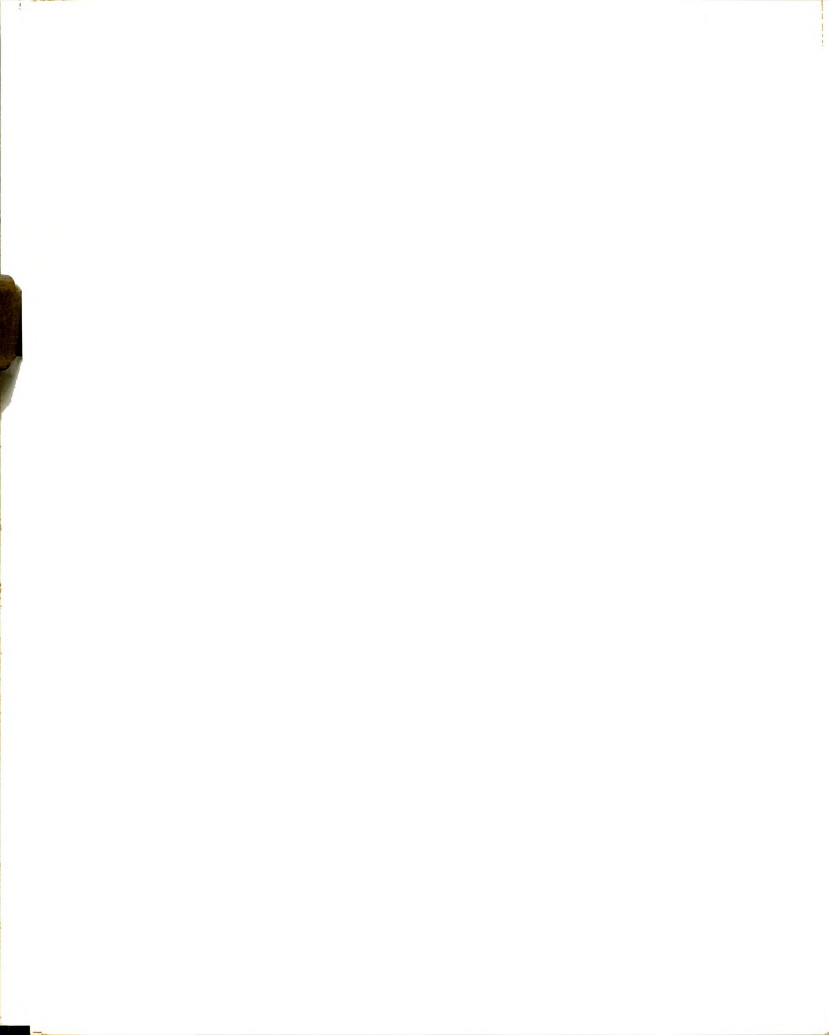
as unbusinesslike seems to partially negate the humane interest Ferris claimed he had for the plight of less fortunate students. To claim that one used the criterion of businesslike to assess the legitimacy of an educational decision is to raise serious questions about one's commitment to educating the backward and less fortunate.

Although terminating the scholarship program because of its unbusinesslike nature Ferris did develop the following organization for financially aiding students. Charles A. Wessel, secretary and treasurer of the Industrial Cooperative Fund Association, later to become the Ferris Cooperative Association outlined the purpose and operation of the organization.

Our plan is this: To call on all old students to contribute as much as they feel themselves able. In a single days soliciting, upwards of \$300 was subscribed by the students and teachers . . . , (Mr Ferris excepted [sic], in sums ranging from one dollar to twenty. Mr. Ferris agrees to add to our subscription an equal amount [to that contributed by others] until the fund reaches \$2,000.) The loans are to be made by the Executive Board of the society, at a very low rate of interest, and under such limitations as may be thought best.¹⁵⁷

It was determined that the character of the school negated the necessity of organizing a regular alumni association; consequently, the Ferris Cooperative Association met in

¹⁵⁷Letter written by Charles Wessel, June 5, 1893, FIFS. No recipient listed. Total amount gross to be loaned to a student was \$300 at 4 per cent.



Big Rapids annually, socialized and presented papers.¹⁵⁸

The idea of a loan to students seems more in keeping with Ferris' acceptance of the development of self-made man, in that, a loan offered help to those who helped themselves, whereas a scholarship not given for merit might be considered charity.

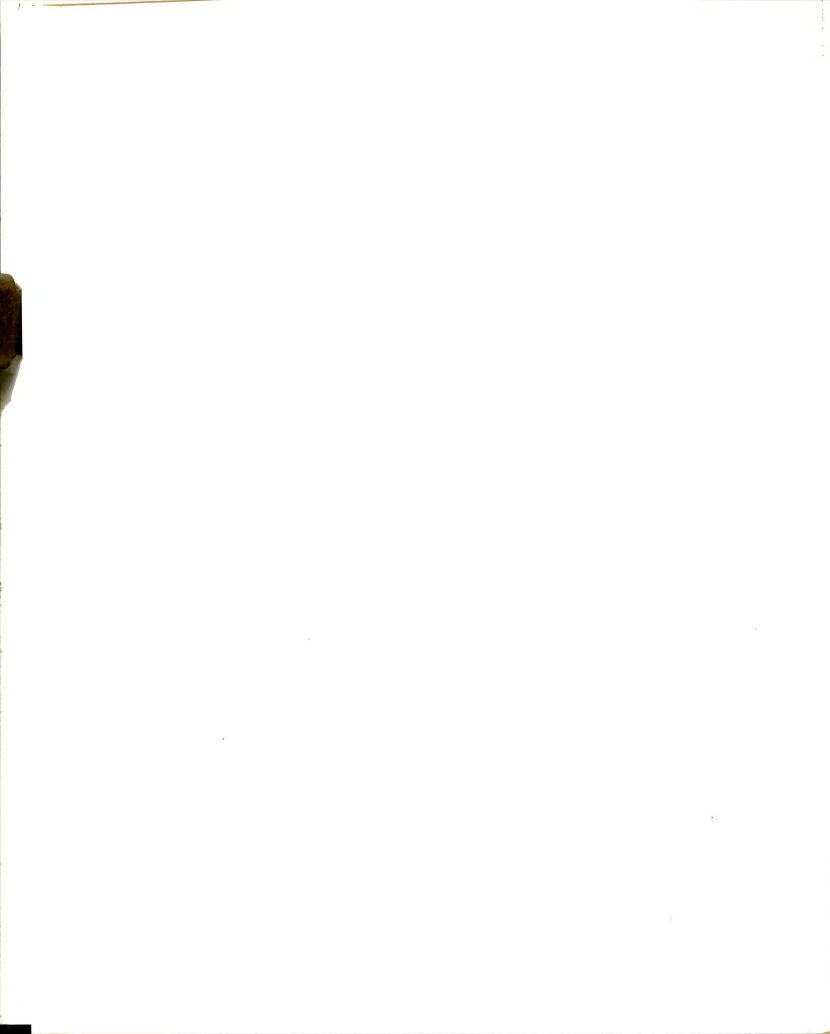
Of course the main question remained that of acquiring money to erect a building. One solution which became increasingly attractive was that of having former students render financial aid. In a letter to Frank M. Byam, Ferris suggested that about \$4,500.00 might be raised from two or three hundred students.¹⁵⁹

I should much prefer to get it from my students than getting it of any city. I think after the present storm blows over I will communicate with some of your friends as to my exact wishes. Perhaps we can devise some way by which a certain degree of secrecy may be maintained and the work pushed forward.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸First Catalog (1894-1895). The First Catalog issued quarterly in the interest of the "new education" was a converted Useful Education. It included names and locations of former students and "inspirational messages."

¹⁵⁹Letter, W.N.F. to Frank M. Byam, Jan. 28, 1892, Ferris letters, vol. 3, p. 490, FIFS.

¹⁶⁰Ibid. The storm referred to may have been the disagreement between Ferris and newspaper comments on the Ludington proposal. The lack of secrecy had irritated Ferris because rumors without a basis of fact confused the issue.

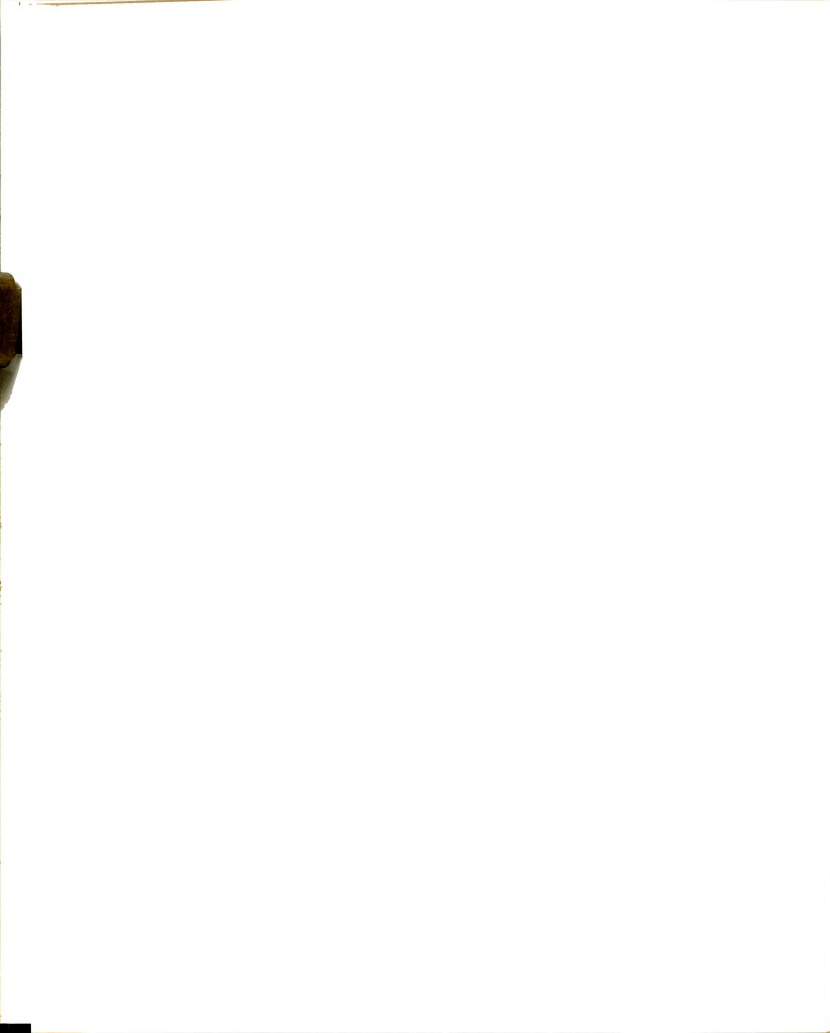


Meanwhile, the school took over the entire third floor of the Wilcox block. It was reported by the Pioneer that 225 students were in actual attendance.¹⁶¹

The next two years were decisive in the development of the institute. Decisions were made in 1893 to keep the school in Big Rapids, and form a pharmacy department. With the aid of tuition payments, private contributions and loans, construction on a building was started. Unfortunately, while construction was in process a bank failure threatened to scrap the project. The builder, a Mr. Edwards of Owosso, Michigan, who had more than \$10,000.00 worth of equipment on the grounds demanded payment in accordance with the contract.¹⁶² Attempting to deter possible bankruptcy Ferris initiated plans to borrow \$4,000 from former students with the stipulation that each certificate of tuition costing \$10.00 at 4 per cent interest would be payable in cash every six months. The face of the loan would be paid in cash on or before five years from the date of issuance. Every certificate was transferable and after one year from the date of issuance would purchase tuition at 12 1/2 per cent below regular rates. In the event of Ferris' death, all certificates

¹⁶¹Big Rapids Pioneer, June 23, 1893. Ferris had said to S. W. Hopkins of Mt. Pleasant, June 20, 1893, that he would be sacrificing many of his principles and goals if he allowed the attendance to rise to 800-1000.

¹⁶²W.N.F. Autobiography, Chapter 14. "The Ferris Institute."



would be paid within ninety days from life insurance funds.¹⁶³ By October 11, construction was progressing at a satisfactory pace with Ferris reporting that: "[A] good deal of plastering has been done, steam heating men here this week, roof all on excepting the tower."¹⁶⁴ However, bank failure was not the only barrier to completion of the building:

I have found two or three places where the pipes leak on account of imperfect couplings or joinings. One very important coupling in the lower hall is cracked. Another pipe or coupling or joining is cracked in another room. . . . We are anxious to have the building finished in every respect for our dedicatory exercises. School begins on Wednesday and it will be inconvenient to be putting on grades when the school is running in its usual way.¹⁶⁵

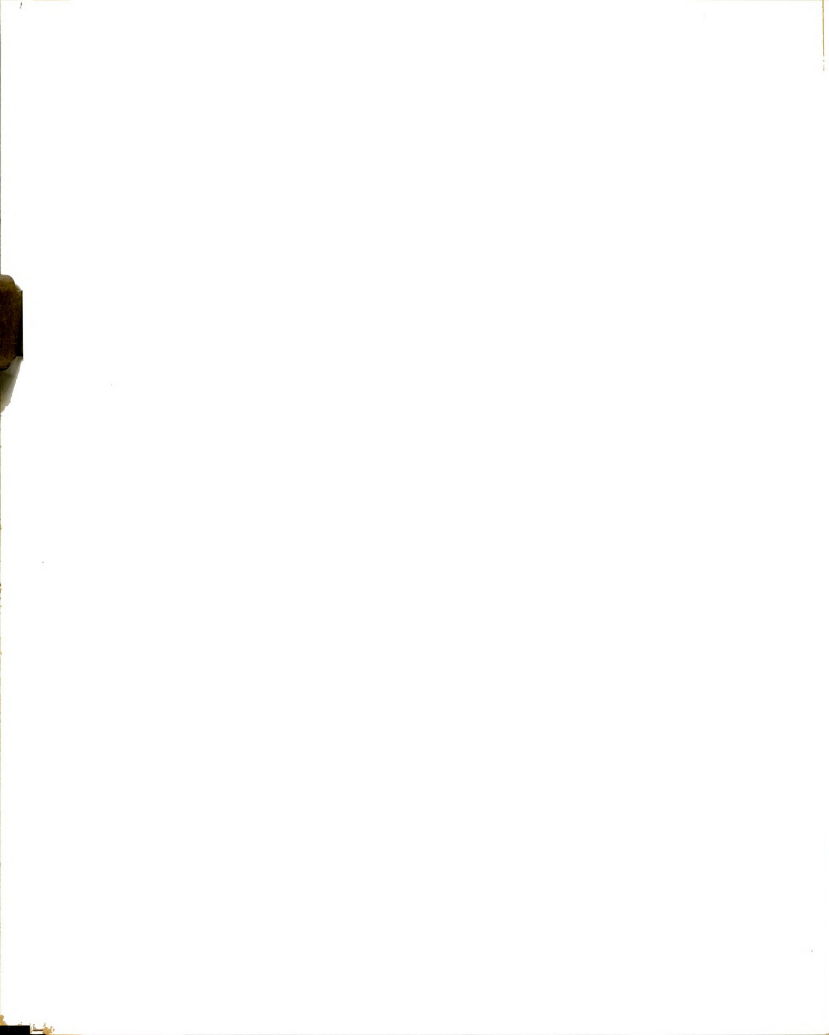
The financial panic of 1893 which affected the construction of the Ferris building project was a national phenomenon which developed into a major depression. Commenting on the situation a journal reported that:

The month of August will long remain memorable . . . in our industrial history. Never before has there been such a sudden and striking cessation of industrial activity. Nor was any section of the country exempt from the paralysis. Mills,

¹⁶³Letter, W.N.F. to Lila Kellar, July 29, 1893, Ferris letters, Aa Folder 11, FIFS. Ferris also said that students could use a certificate of \$10.00 to pay \$11.00 worth of tuition. W.N.F. to Bert Travis, Dec. 4, 1893, Ferris letters, vol. 8, p. 383, FIFS.

¹⁶⁴Letter, W.N.F. to Kate Bowker, Oct. 11, 1893, Ferris letters, vol. 7, p. 331, FIFS.

¹⁶⁵Letter, W.N.F. to Weatherly & Pulte, Dec. 20, 1893, Ferris letters, vol. 7, p. 54, FIFS.

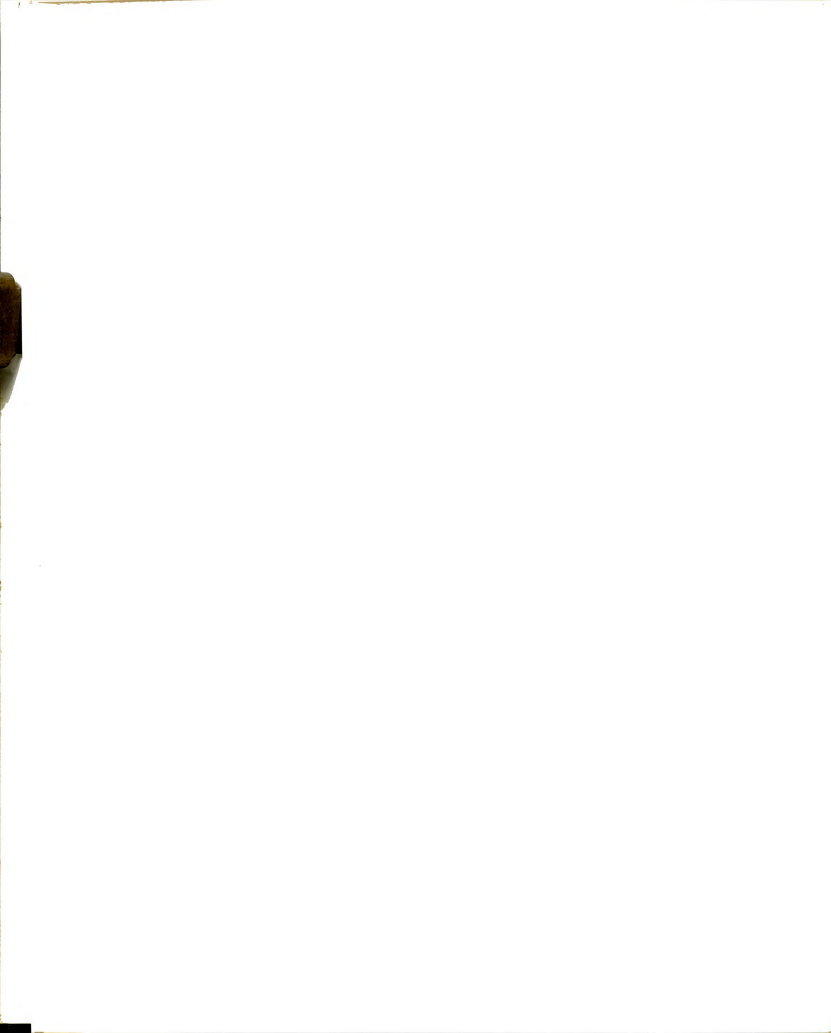


factories, furnaces, mines nearly everywhere shut down in large numbers, and commerce and enterprise were arrested in an extraordinary degree . . . and hundreds of thousands of men thrown out of employment.¹⁶⁶

Fortunately, bank failures and unemployment did not deter the establishment of a pharmacy department which was to prove a key factor in enhancing the image of the school. It is generally accepted that Marius Preysz of Barryton, Michigan in requesting help in preparing for the State Board examination, became the first pharmacy student. At that time candidates for examination as registered pharmacists were required to have at least three years actual experience in compounding drugs in a retail store under the supervision of a registered pharmacist. Applicants could, however, submit evidence of work done at an accredited school. Mr. Ferris, although not trained in pharmacy, agreed to purchase textbooks and aid Mr. Preysz.

A formal preparatory course in Pharmacy was developed in 1894 under the guidance of William D. Henderson, a former student of the Industrial who later became a well-known author and professor of physics at the University of Michigan. The aim of the one year course was to prepare a student for study at the University of Michigan provided they could pass the required examination. In fact, at the State Board of Pharmacy Meeting in Detroit, June,

¹⁶⁶Faulkner, Politics, Reform and Expansion 1890-1900, p. 141.



1894, Secretary of the Board, Stanley E. Parkhill told Ferris: "If when your students report for examination, they give good evidence of good training your school will be recognized and time will be allowed."¹⁶⁷ The University of Michigan had led the way in 1855 by being the first regular university to begin instruction in pharmacy.¹⁶⁸ With the construction of a building and the establishment of a pharmacy department Ferris Industrial school appeared to have made more secure its place in the educational system of Michigan.

The First Building is Dedicated

"The Old Order Changeth, Yielding Place to New."¹⁶⁹ So stated the invitation to the dedication of the red brick structure, roofed with Vermont purple slating.¹⁷⁰ The dedication on January 5, 1894 was enjoyed by hundreds. R. L. Nye, Mr. Ferris, Charles Carlisle and F. S. Smith were key participants in the program.¹⁷¹ Standing on a

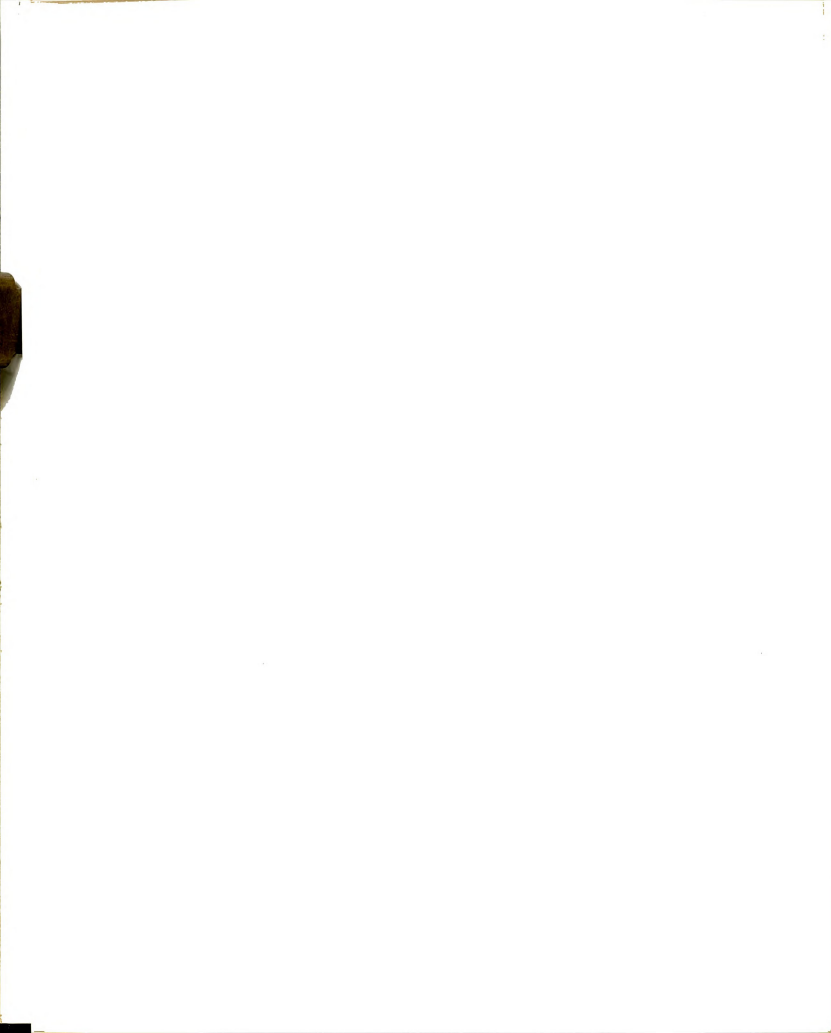
¹⁶⁷First Catalog (1894-1895).

¹⁶⁸Dunbar, Higher Education, p. 144.

¹⁶⁹First Catalog (1894-1895). Statement on an invitation in Folder E25, FIFS.

¹⁷⁰The building costs--grounds and grading equipment \$25,000-\$26,000; indebtedness against building - loan \$7,000 - certificates of tuition to citizens of Big Rapids paid in \$4,900 certificates. W.N.F. to Hills, May 22, 1894, Ferris letters, vol. II, p. 610.

¹⁷¹Big Rapids Pioneer, Jan 6, 1894.

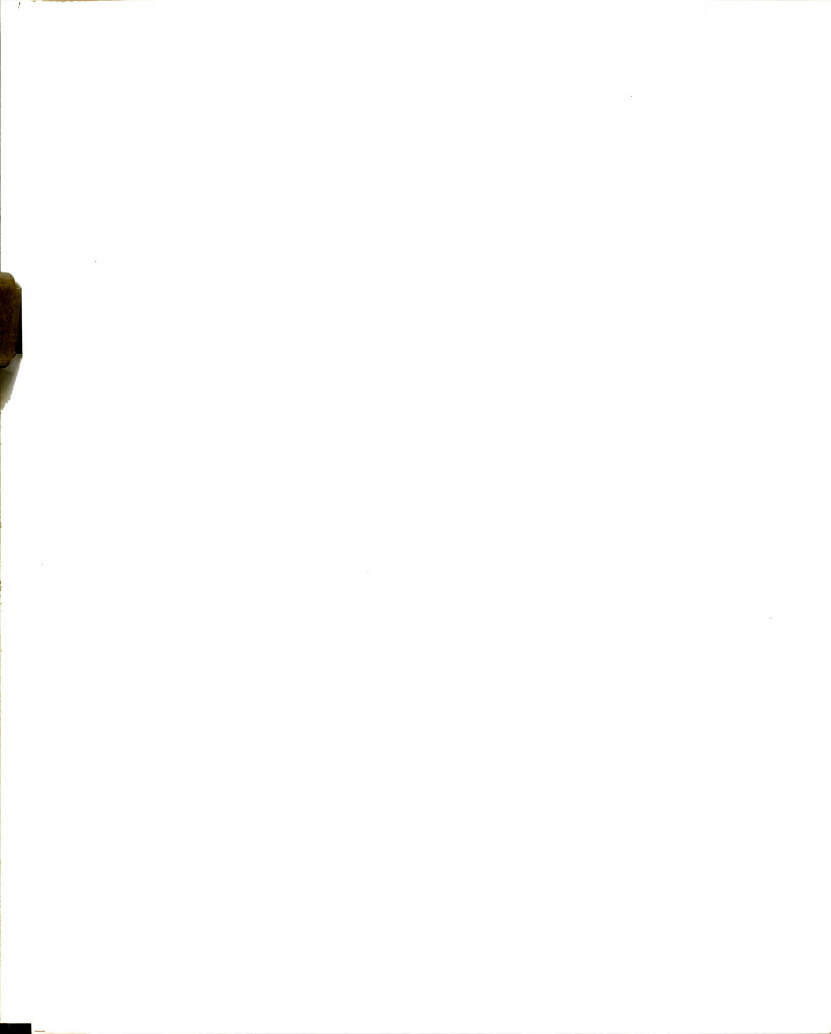


rise of ground facing north the new structure had a basement and two floors. The main floor had a main assembly room designed for the English, Normal and Scientific departments as well as morning exercises and entertainment programs. A cloak room, elocution and music room occupied the Northern division of the basement, while a boiler room, gymnasium, chemistry and physics laboratory made up the South division. The second floor included the Commercial, Shorthand and Telegraphy departments. Six hundred students were to be comfortably accommodated in these structures.¹⁷²

With the stability of the school tentatively assured, Ferris moved to incorporate the school and enhance its reputation.¹⁷³ He planned to develop an arrangement with

¹⁷²First Catalog (1894-1895).

¹⁷³Ferris sent articles of incorporation to the Michigan Secretary of State on Jan. 19, 1894, Ferris letters, vol. 9, p. 275, FIFS. "The school is incorporated under the laws of the State of Michigan [Howell's Annotated States, vol. 3, chap. 138] with a capital stock of \$50,000; \$30,000 of which is paid in said stock paid in is owned by myself. If the citizens of Big Rapids desire to interest themselves in this enterprize, and become shareholders in the school to the extent of \$10,000 to be sold at par from my present holdings of \$30,000, I am willing to enter into an agreement to said stockholders at 6% interest on the amount of said stockholders investment, during my life or connection with the school. . . . Providing the \$10,000 stock should be taken by the citizens of Big Rapids, and said citizen as stockholders will enter into an agreement to carry on the school for at least ten years after my death, I will agree to make over to such stockholders, and without further condition or consideration. . . , an equal amount of stock subscribed by said stockholders. In case the school is not carried on by said stockholders, then, and in that case, the said \$10,000 stock issued as last above provided, shall resort to my heirs. The said stock



the University of Michigan whereby the Industrial would serve as a preparatory school for the University.¹⁷⁴

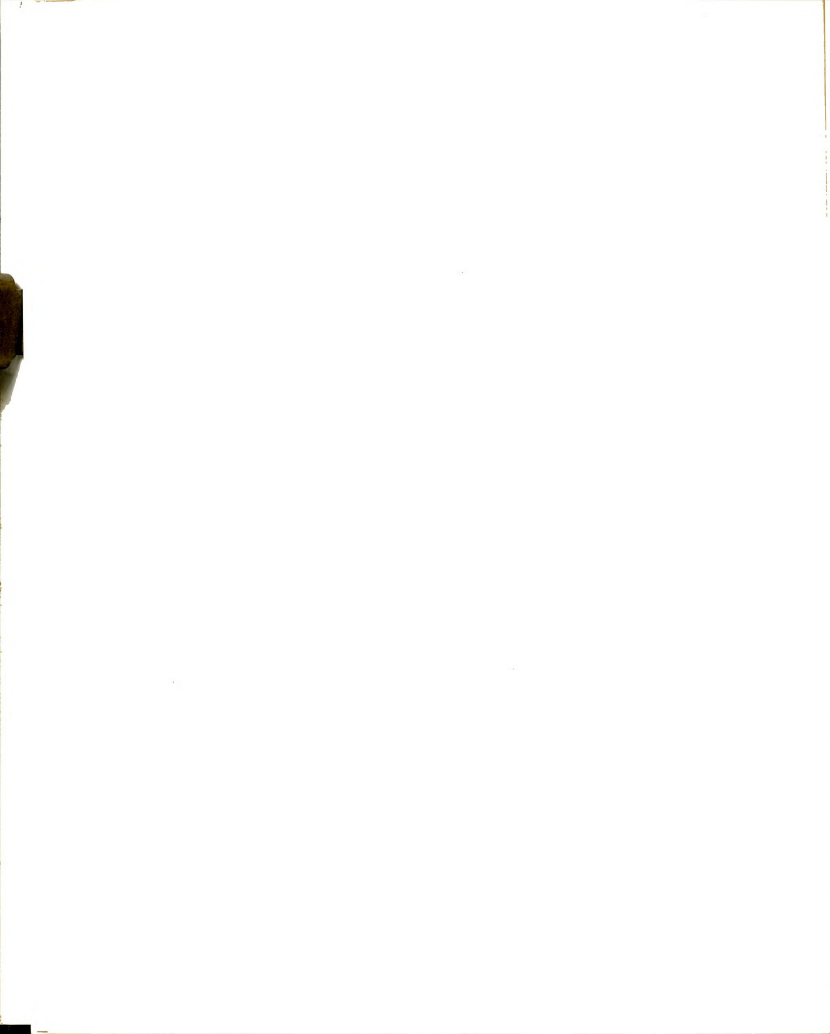
Communicating with President Angell of the university Ferris stated that: "I now believe that this school is worthy of your kind consideration."¹⁷⁵ He asked that representatives of the university look over the First Catalog and perhaps visit the school in the fall or early winter. There is no evidence to verify whether University of Michigan officials visited the Industrial or looked at the First Catalog. We do know that Industrialites were eventually admitted to the university as transfer students.¹⁷⁶

if subscribed, is to be paid for and issued on the first day of September, 1900, previous to which time, the mortgage indebtedness of the school [3500 and interest] will be paid by me." Letter, W.N.F. to Dr. W. T. Dodge, President, Board of Trade, Big Rapids, Michigan, F b.16, 1900, Nisbett Papers, Folder Jan. 1, 1900-April 30, 1900, M.H.C.

¹⁷⁴Letter, W.N.F. to W. D. Henderson, Oct. 24, 1894, Ferris letters, vol. 13, p. 256, FIFS.

¹⁷⁵Letter, W.N.F. to President Angell, Sept. 29, 1894, Ferris letters, vol. 12, p. 950, FIFS.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., see p. 49. In a letter to E. J. Combs of Elmira, Michigan, Ferris said that the Industrial could be placed on the University of Michigan's diploma list if they desired. Jan. 4, 1894, Ferris letters, vol. 9, p. 48, FIFS. In order to meet the needs of those preparing for higher education Ferris employed some courses of study recommended by the Committee of Ten. This group with Charles W. Eliot of Harvard as its chairman met to consider the place of certain academic disciplines in high school programs. They recommended four basic courses; a Classical, Latin-Scientific, Modern language and English courses.



If the institute was to prepare students for the university as well as accept backward students Ferris thought he had to implement stricter admittance policies to eliminate the incompetent and unfit element which he felt was inhibiting the progress of the school.¹⁷⁷ As he had done previously, Ferris lambasted the shorthand department which seemed to accept students unprepared to study. "I will close my doors or turn out more and better stenographers."¹⁷⁸

This increased emphasis on the institution as a preparatory school with stricter admittance policies was in part a reaction to more stringent policies developed during President Angell's stay at the University of Michigan. Nevertheless, those students unfit for the preparatory program were still welcome to attend the Industrial and have access to those rudiments of learning they had missed. It seems that Ferris' interpretation of unfit and incompetent referred to those unambitious and lethargic students rather than those less intellectually competent but still ambitious and interested persons.

One element inhibiting progress of the school were those students who failed to pay for services rendered. One such case concerned a young lady from Paw Paw, Michigan

¹⁷⁷ Letter, W.N.F. to W. F. Baker, June 25, 1894, Ferris letters, Folder Aa 1b, FIFS.

¹⁷⁸ Letter, W.N.F. to B. P. Hickox, Oct. 10, 1894, Ferris letters, Folder Aa 1hi, FIFS.



whose parents refused to pay her tuition. Although cautious about his accusations Ferris let it be known that he was determined to protect his interests.

Now then, I do not wish to annoy you in the least. You cannot deny but what I earned my money. . . . In fact, that you may understand my position; I simply state to you that if the bill is not paid in ten days, I will put it into the hands of an attorney to collect.¹⁷⁹

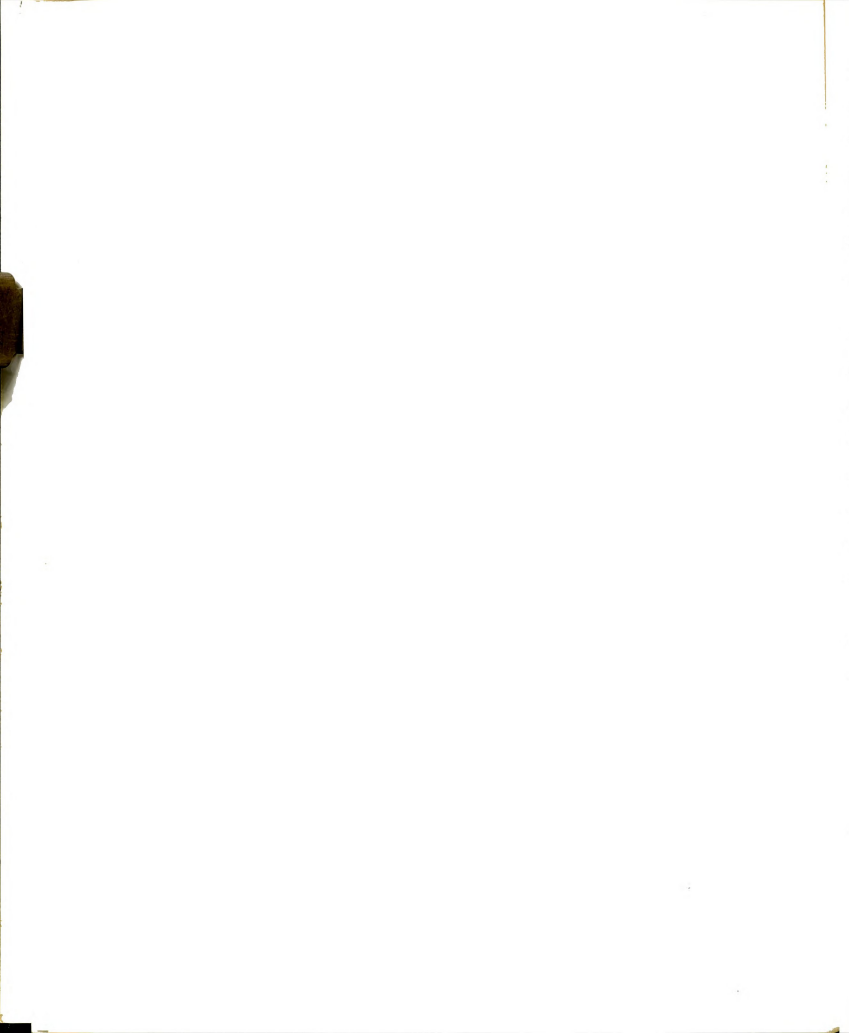
Another problem confronted by Ferris was that of student consumption of alcoholic beverages. As a prohibitionist, Ferris reacted negatively to both student consumption of such beverages and the selling of it by local merchants. In a satirical letter to E. E. Gilbert of Indian River, Michigan, Ferris claimed: "We have had no rain lately, and being a strict prohibition town it makes it very difficult to get along. Students now go to the river to get a drink, especially if they go in the evening."¹⁸⁰ Ferris' popularity with some citizens was lessened when he, Fitch Phelps, and a Mr. Trussell initiated the arrest of a few saloon keepers for violating liquor laws on the July 4 holiday.¹⁸¹

The temperance battles in Michigan led to a state prohibition law in 1855, but difficulties in enforcing it

¹⁷⁹Letter, W.N.F. to Mr. M. Beebe, Dec. 7, 1894, Ferris letters, Folder Aa ld, FIFS.

¹⁸⁰Letter, W.N.F. to E. E. Gilbert, Jan. 16, 1894, Ferris letters, Folder Aa lg, FIFS.

¹⁸¹Letter, W.N.F. to Flyod Thomson, April 3, 1894, Ferris letters, vol. 10, p. 439, FIFS.



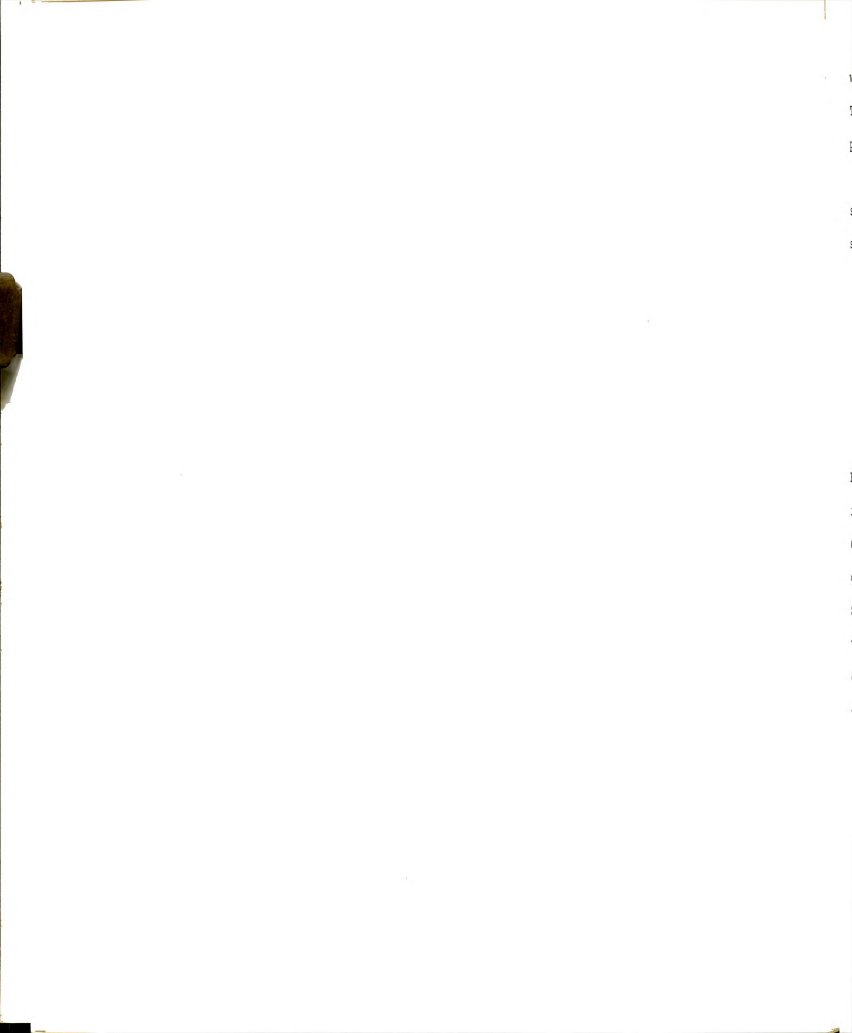
led to its repeal in 1875.¹⁸² From then on the temperance crusaders formed organizations to further their plans. These included the Prohibition Party, the Christian Temperance Union, and the Anti-Saloon League. The crusade eventually led to a state wide prohibition regulation on May 1, 1918 over a year before national prohibition was declared in the eighteenth amendment.

While tackling these non-academic problems Ferris took time to carry on the regular work of the school. The common English course still attempted to prepare students for a business life, the scientific and normal courses aided those persons headed towards a professional school, the business courses urged independent, assiduous work by students, and elocution taught by Carlisle held its own as a permanent part of the program. An important addition to the course work was art for public school teachers. After being taught in summer school, drawing and modeling were also made integral parts of the regular program.

The 1894-95 summer session enrolled 660 persons representing almost every county in Michigan. A significant course addition was the study of human nature, taught from the standpoint of modern science.¹⁸³ Other courses

¹⁸²Dunbar, Michigan History, p. 684.

¹⁸³First Catalog.



were offered by the Commercial, Shorthand and Typewriting, Telegraphy, English, Scientific, Normal and Elocution departments.¹⁸⁴

Despite the acknowledged success of the summer sessions by most participants, one problem threatened further success.

One thing has hurt my Institution. Hundreds have come here during this summer for four or five weeks. They have gormandized, stuffed themselves, digested little, and left untouched the most precious things we have had to offer. They have gone forth telling school boards that they have attended the Industrial. This has hurt - I will put an end to this soon. I am doing everything I can to hunt up those who came here for the name simply.¹⁸⁵

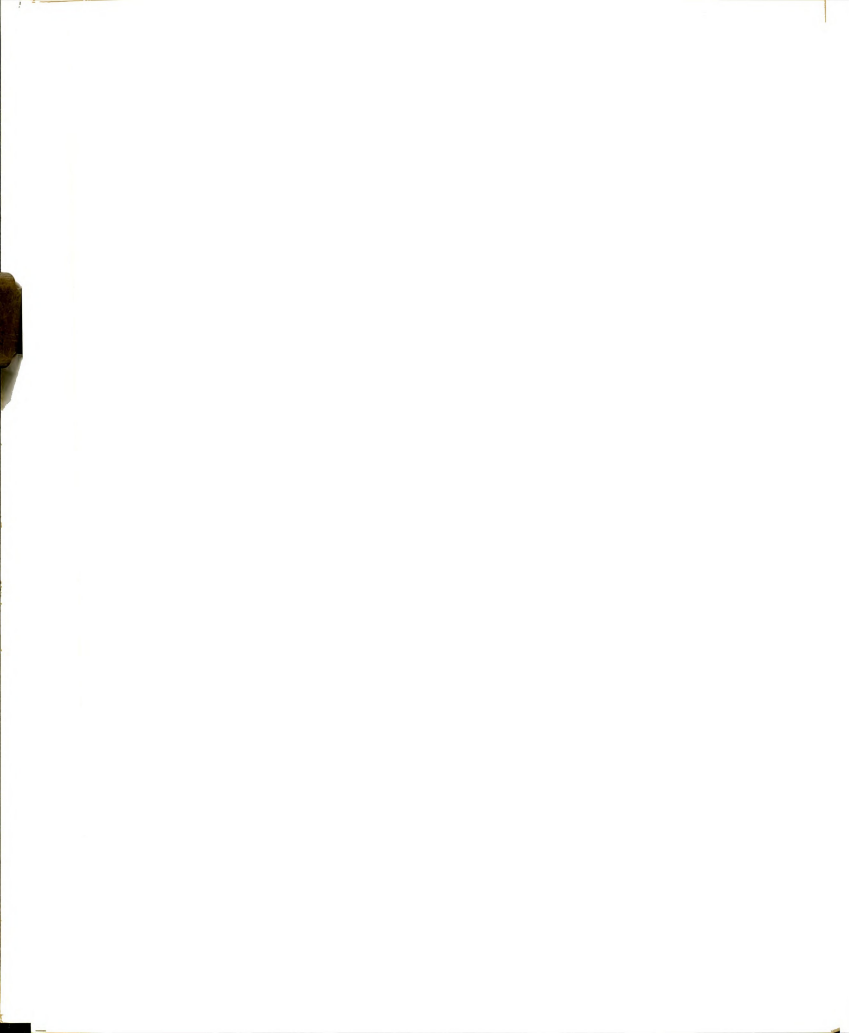
Unrelated to these problems but still of concern to Ferris was a question of religious discrimination. A case in point was that of a Miss Mulvey, a teacher of Roman Catholic faith attempting to secure a position in Michigan. Ferris became aware of the situation through B. F. Slingulend and Henry R. Pattengill.¹⁸⁶ When asked for his view Ferris claimed that Miss Mulvey would not let her church affiliation interfere with her work.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴Michigan School Moderator, XIV (April 15, 1894).

¹⁸⁵Letter, W.N.F. to A. D. Chisholm, Nov. 20, 1894, Ferris letters, Folder Aa 1, FIFS.

¹⁸⁶Letter, W.N.F. to B. F. Slingulend, Aug. 27, 1894, Ferris letters, Folder Aa 1n2, FIFS.

¹⁸⁷Ibid.



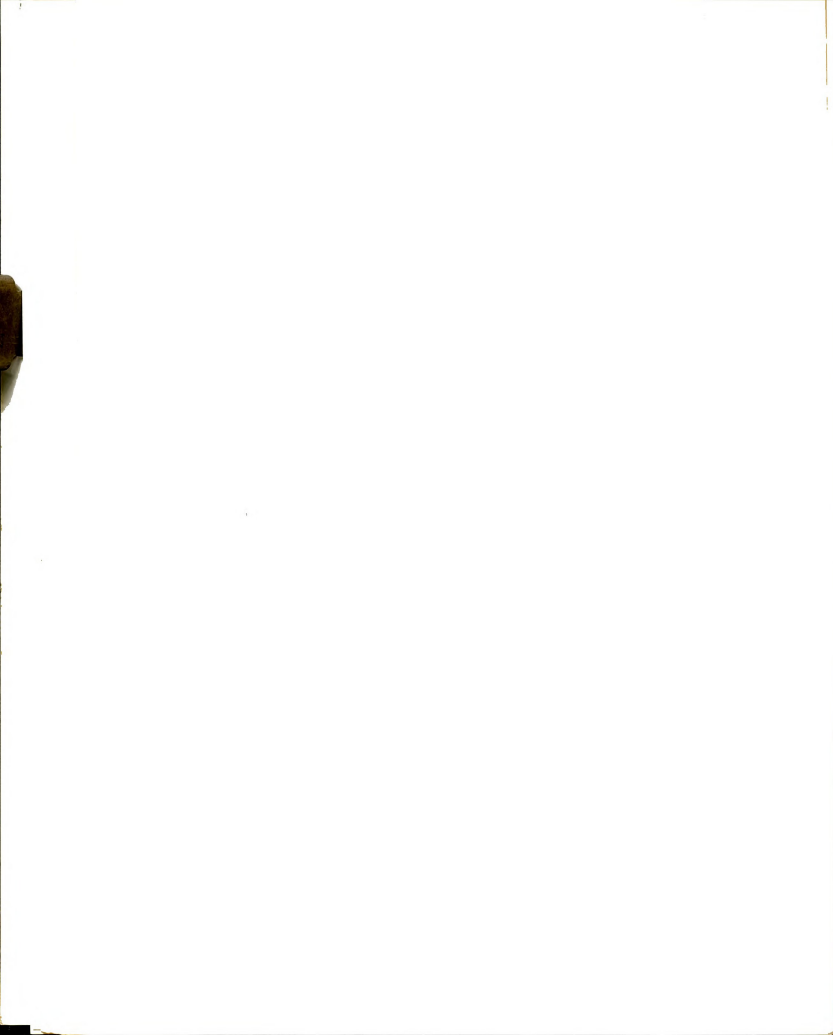
A similar situation arose in the case of Cecile Schlick, also attempting to secure a teaching position in Michigan. Ferris candidly told her that if she was Catholic it was a waste of time to contact C. M. McLean, the Superintendent of Education in Holland, Michigan.¹⁸⁸ Instead, Ferris inquired about the possibility of a Catholic, teaching in that school system. Two days later he informed Miss Schlick that: "Under no circumstances could a Catholic secure a position in the Holland Schools."¹⁸⁹

These policies were significant to Mr. Ferris and the school because of the number of teachers trained at Ferris Industrial who eventually applied for teaching positions in Michigan. Whether Catholic, Protestant or Jew, Mr. Ferris insisted that teachers cooperate with the parents in student character development.

The teacher is powerless to change the students in any very great extent, but he can put himself in right relation to them and lead them to see that their hearty cooperation means not only their own success but the success of others. The individual . . . who would contribute much to character development; the parents, were neglecting their job. Before the schools of this country can approximate to any ideal, the parents must work with the teacher for the highest results in educating the child. The parent knows the child; knows its environment and ought to know its nature. Teachers are frequently responsible in the parents taking so little

¹⁸⁸Letter, W.N.F. to Cecile Schlick, July 16, 1894, Ferris letters, vol. 12, p. 253, FIFS.

¹⁸⁹Letter, W.N.F. to Cecile Schlick, July 18, 1894, Ferris letters, vol. 12, p. 267, FIFS.



interest. When the parents as well as the teacher is interested in the welfare of the children, the fact is that they too will become interested.¹⁹⁰

The twelfth summer school session opened along familiar lines with increased enrollment in the advanced courses due to a state provision limiting the number of third grade certificates granted to teachers. Visitors to the summer school included Byron W. King, an elocutionist from King's School of Oratory, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Lucretion M. Treat who lectured on the kindergarten, and Henry W. Blake who commented on the life and philosophy of Frederick Froebel.¹⁹¹

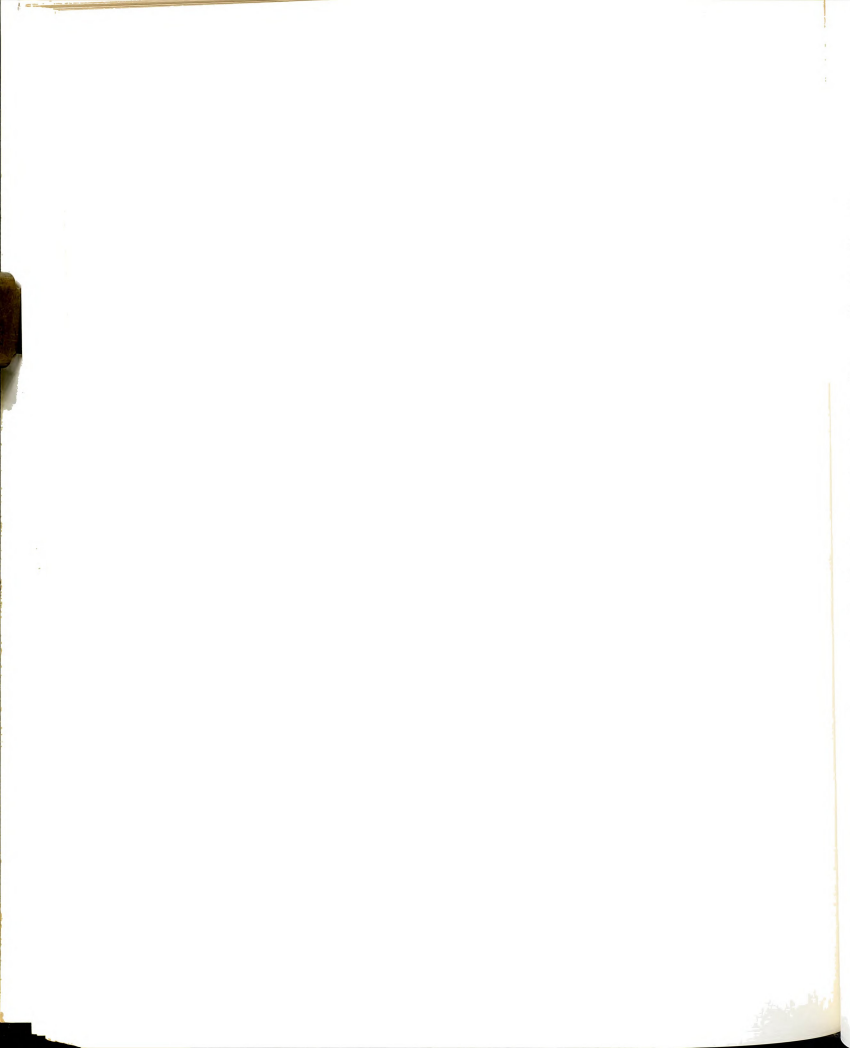
Other summer visitors included fifty members of the Ferris Cooperative Association who met to conduct their fourth annual meeting.¹⁹² They expressed concern about qualifications of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. J. A. White, in a paper entitled "How to Improve Our Educational System by State and National Legislation" provoked members into formulating a declaration whereby:

The Association . . . believing that the educational interests of the . . . state . . . demand that the best talent and highest educational

¹⁹⁰ Letter, W.N.F. to L. T. Herman, Nov. 6, 1895, Ferris letters, vol. 19, pp. 183-184, FIFS.

¹⁹¹ Useful Education, VIII (July, 1895).

¹⁹² President--Bert Travis, Secretary--Carrie Bruce, Treasurer--George Downs. Useful Education, VII (July, 1895).



qualifications and proven integrity should be possessed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and commending the noble work of our present Superintendent, Henry R. Pattengill, believe it to be the duty of the State Legislature to define the qualifications of any person who may aspire to the office, . . .¹⁹³

These qualifications included a degree from literary or scientific courses at the University of Michigan, a state certificate, a professorship in a reputable college, and supervision of a city school for at least five years.¹⁹⁴

Among Ferris' most arduous, yet enjoyable tasks was his annual lecture tour designed to advertise the school, gain additional money, and promulgate his educational philosophy. Other members of the staff also used the lecture tour to gain additional money. Ferris' plan for 1895-96 included lectures on Making the World Better, Success, Human Nature, Education: the Old and the New, Memory, Thought and Expression, The Educational Philosophy of George Combe, Nature and Nurture, and Education on the Farm.

The long struggle to build a permanent structure was over. For Ferris and his colleagues it meant more than a red brick building which housed the basic elements in the educational process. It was a symbol of success signifying the growth of roots in the community of Big

¹⁹³Useful Education, VIII (July, 1895).

¹⁹⁴Ibid.



Rapids and in the Michigan educational system. Still, the struggle to secure financial stability was to be a perennial one for supporters of the school.

Continued Uncertainties

A bank failure, a severe storm and recognition by the University of Michigan influenced the Industrial's development in 1896.

In 1896 I decided to build a special heating plant. This plant was nearing completion when the Mecosta County Savings Bank failed. This blow was severe because the money was on deposit in this bank. Furthermore, hundreds of students had money on deposit, and everyone had previously received my personal guarantee of its payment. Every student except J. H. Wilson received one hundred per cent of his deposit. He refused to accept a larger percentage than regular creditors had received.¹⁹⁵

Apparently, the effort to place the burden of proof on the bank was more difficult than anticipated. Ferris wrote to State Bank Examiner D. B. Ainger complaining about the lack of response from the Mecosta County Savings Bank and the Michigan Trust Company.¹⁹⁶

Despite these hardships the faculty agreed to accept whatever pay Ferris could afford to give them. Bert S. Travis reported that this was the most critical day in the history of the school. "Had the faculty faltered in their

¹⁹⁵W.N.F. Autobiography, p. 45.

¹⁹⁶Letter, W.N.F. to D. B. Ainger, Dec. 7, 1896, Ferris letters, vol. 23, p. 601, FIFS.



loyalty, the school would probably have been closed that morning permanently."¹⁹⁷

Storm after storm seemed to test the pugnacity of Ferris and his staff. Damage to the commercial room occurred when two chimneys broke through the roof and narrowly missed a janitor.¹⁹⁸ Still, Ferris was able to report to his mother that all would be rebuilt and the school would continue as usual.¹⁹⁹ Was this to assure a worried mother that her son's lifelong ambition was still alive? Was this assurance mere pretense? Evidently, Ferris did retain doubts as to whether the school could survive. He wrote C. E. Tuck of L'Anse, Michigan claiming that he would sell and vacate at an hour's notice. "The greatest mistake of my ~~w~~ife was beginning a school in Big Rapids. Putting up this building was my second great mistake. I am probably as good as an example of a Michigan fool as can be found. . . ."²⁰⁰

A bright spot in an otherwise bleak picture was the acceptance of Industrialites by President Angell of the

¹⁹⁷Bert S. Travis, *The Institute, Past and Present*, Big Rapids Pioneer, May 16, 1929.

¹⁹⁸Letter, W.N.F. to Martha Gillespie, Aug. 10, 1896, Ferris letters, Folder Aa 2e, FIFS.

¹⁹⁹Letter, W.N.F. to Mrs. John Ferris, Aug. 10, 1896, Ferris letters, Folder Aa 2b, FIFS.

²⁰⁰Letter, W.N.F. to C. E. Tuck, Mar. 25, 1896, Ferris letters, Folder Aa 10, FIFS.

University of Michigan. By this time Albion, Olivet and Purdue had also accepted Industrial students.²⁰¹

Amidst those problems of finances and building construction, student-teacher relationships posed some difficulties. The case of Clarence Dowland offers a glimpse at a traditional student-teacher confrontation. Apparently Mr. Dowland had been "escaping" school by choosing to attend half of the school day. In a letter to Clarence, Ferris suggested that: "If you are able to be in school, and you cannot do any better than you have been doing, it is better for you to be at home. Therefore, I am unwilling to have you attend school in the way that you are doing."²⁰² Fortunately, many students did attend regularly in 1896, as increased enrollments in both the regular and summer sessions seemed to indicate.²⁰³

As one looks back at these difficult years, with bank failures, storm damage, image problems, recognition by the University of Michigan and increased student

²⁰¹Letter, W.N.F. to President Angell, April 20, 1896, Ferris letters, vol. 21, p. 468, FIFS. Angell suggested that Ferris add additional terms of French or German, English, History, and Chemistry. W.N.F. to James Angell, June 1, 1896, Ferris letters, vol. 21, p. 972, FIFS. On June 1, 1897 Ferris acknowledged the University of Michigan's decision to admit Industrial graduates to all courses for the year.

²⁰²Letter, W.N.F. to Clarence Dowland, Jan. 21, 1896, Ferris letters, vol. 19, p. 933, FIFS.

²⁰³Letter, W.N.F. to The School Record, Jan 29, 1896, Ferris letters, vol. 19, p. 910, FIFS.

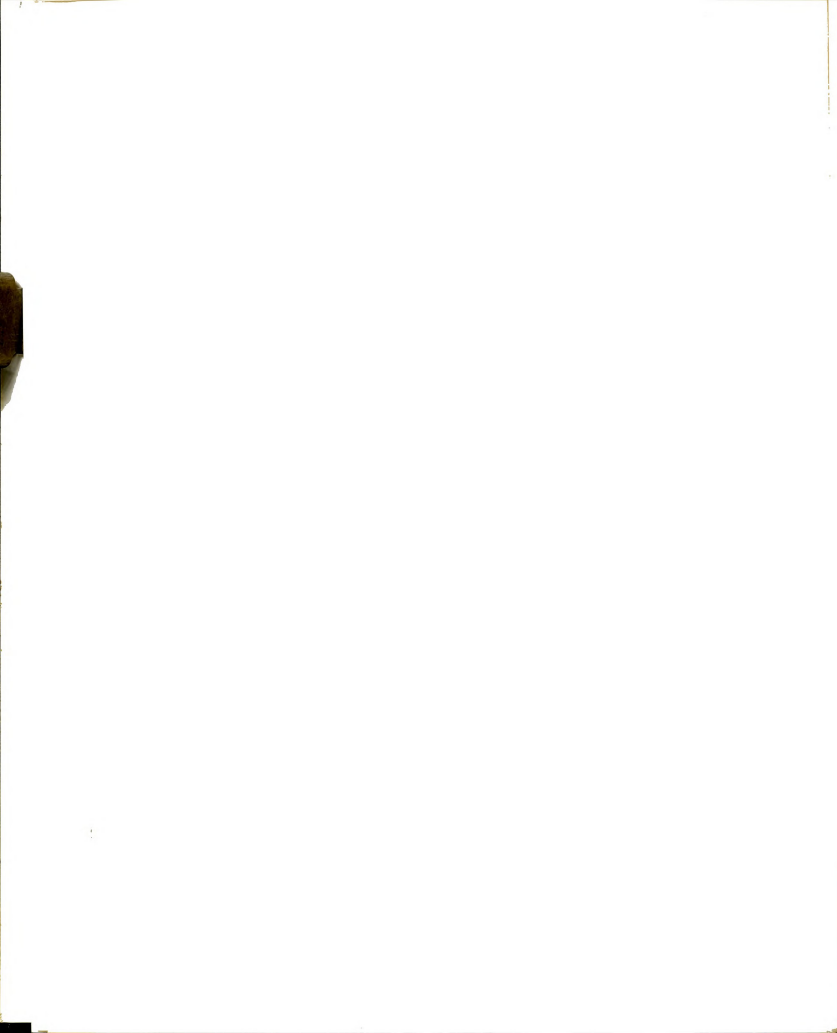
enrollment one still arrives at the key question; Could the Industrial survive? This question continued to plague Ferris the remainder of the nineteenth century. Indeed, it was a thorn in his side throughout his life.

The year 1897 ushered in the first reports of athletics at Ferris Industrial. The Literary Voice²⁰⁴ reported that Professor Barrows²⁰⁵ along with the team captain organized a football team. Plans were also made for organizing an 1898 squad with Ross Stockwell as captain and E. W. Minier as manager.

The institute's interest in athletics paralleled a national and state movement to encourage intercollegiate, interclass and interfraternity competition. Nationally, differences in attitudes toward football were seen in

²⁰⁴The Literary Voice was a publication of the Ferris Industrial Literary Society. It contained information about school activities. The Industrial played Reed City and Cadillac Agricultural Colleges, Big Rapids High School and Whitehall.

²⁰⁵H. H. Barrows was hired by Ferris in the summer of 1896. He was to teach a six weeks summer session in history, geography, and black board drawing. If he was satisfactory he would be offered a twelve month's position (48 weeks of actual service) at \$65 per month. Barrows proved satisfactory and was hired. At this date other instructors included, Mrs. Ferris--Geometry, W. D. Henderson--Science; Rose Henderson--Latin, Greek and Algebra; Charles Carlisle--Elocution, Physical Culture, and English Grammar; R. L. Nye--Geography, Civil government, General history, and United States History; W. R. Smith--Shorthand, Telegraphy and Typewriting; C. A. Wessel--Principal of Commerce Department; Emma O'Neal--Kindergarten Department; Ella Ramsdell--German; Mary Breen--French.



remarks by President Andrew D. White of Cornell who rejected the game, and President Arthur Twining Hadley of Yale who saw it as an activity to reduce class distinctions among college students. White had responded to a challenge from the University of Michigan with: "I will not permit thirty men to travel four hundred miles merely to agitate a bag of wind."²⁰⁶ In contrast, President Hadley of Yale in 1906 claimed that football had taken: ". . . hold of the emotions of the student body in such a way as to make class distinctions relatively unimportant [and had made] the students get together in the old-fashioned democratic way."²⁰⁷

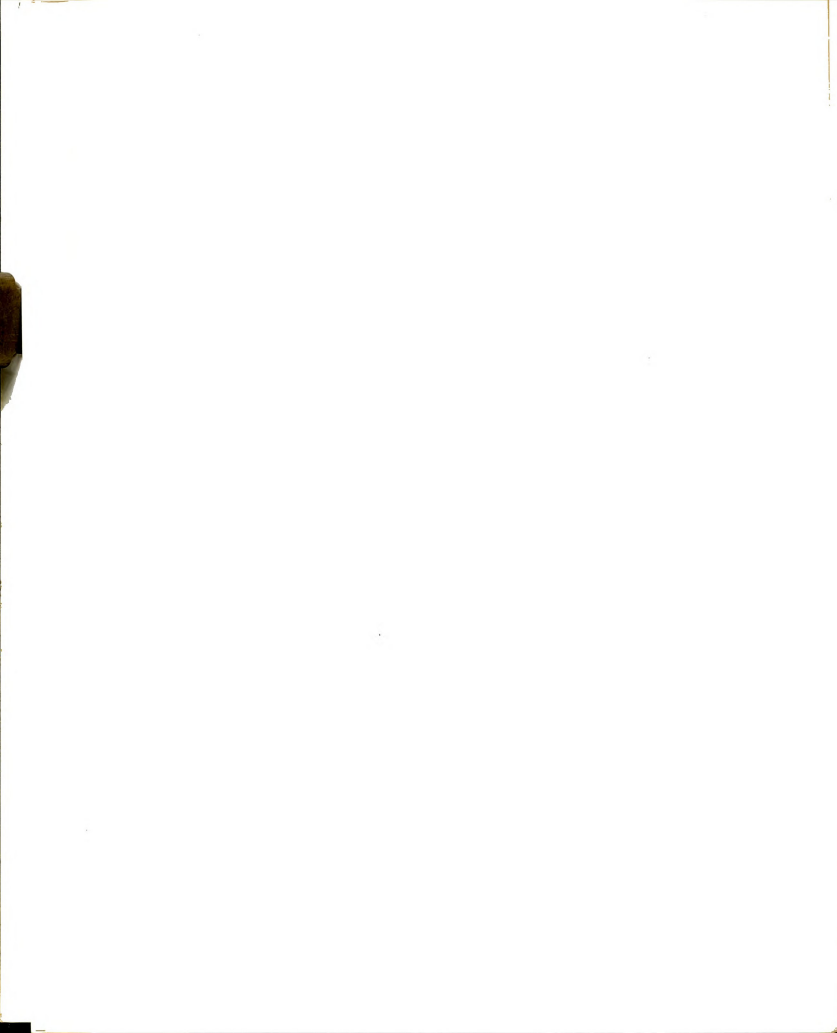
With the University of Michigan setting the precedent for the state schools, sports activities appeared on most small college campuses in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The entrance of baseball, football, track and field sports and later basketball indicated the important place intercollegiate athletics would have in changing the college campus scene.²⁰⁸

If athletics was assured a permanent place in Michigan higher education, Ferris Industrial school was not. In

²⁰⁶Kent Sagendorph, Michigan: The Story of the University (New York: 1948), p. 150.

²⁰⁷Arthur T. Hadley, "Wealth and Democracy in American Colleges," Harpers, CXIII (1906), 452.

²⁰⁸Dunbar, Higher Education, pp. 185-187.



terms of uncertainty about the school's survival the closing years of the decade proved little different than the preceding thirteen. Once again, Ferris reported that he would make a crucial decision about the school. Would he close the Industrial permanently; enlarge the facilities in Big Rapids or move to another city?²⁰⁹ The answer was to be provided on August 15, 1898. "This announcement has been made to the faculty and the faculty will act accordingly. At this time it is impossible to predict which one of the courses I will pursue, although just now it looks as if I would remain."²¹⁰

The School Survives the 19th Century

Although the school remained, many of the 800 students enrolled fall term, 1898, left to enlist for the Spanish-American conflict. "Nearly all of the Ferris Institute boys who were eligible enlisted. It was useless to even advise the unfit to remain at home. Everybody was determined to have a hand in the conflict."²¹¹

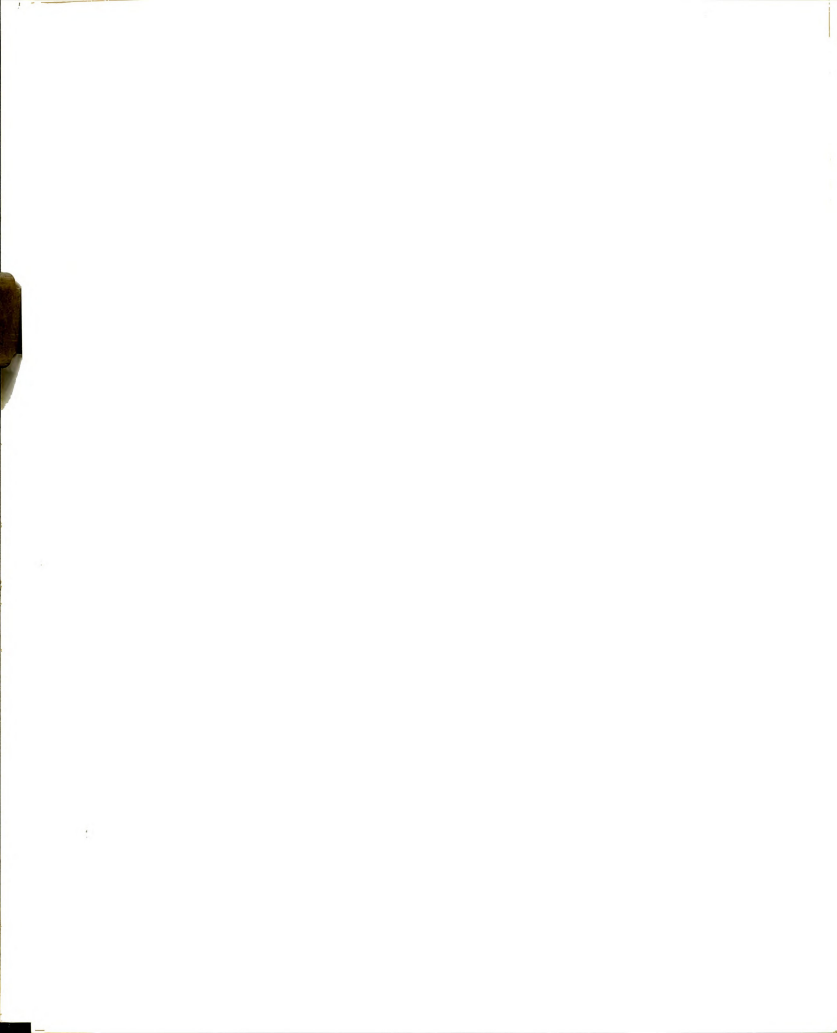
Meanwhile, classes continued with the addition of Froebelian teaching methods to the Kindergarten Program and Qualitative Analysis to the science course.²¹² The

²⁰⁹Letter, W.N.F. to P. S. Hose, Oct. 27, 1897, Ferris letters, Folder Aa 1m, FIFS.

²¹⁰Ibid.

²¹¹W.N.F. Autobiography, p. 109.

²¹²Ibid.



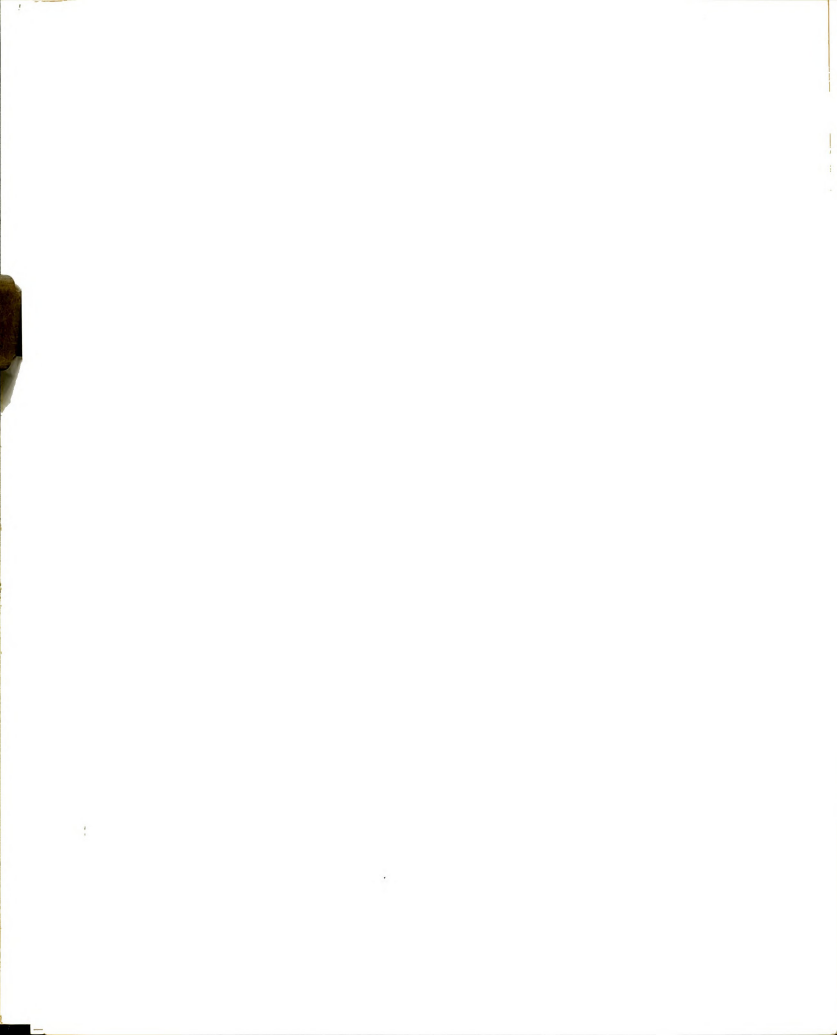
new teaching techniques were used by Ferris students to encourage the physical and emotional development of the children in their care. For example, "All Gone" was a verse and game to exercise the wrist joints by waving goodbye, while "Pat-a-Cake," "When I was a Shoemaker," and "Here I Brew and Here I Bake," introduced activities of the common people and the dignity of human labor. After the child was introduced to these games he was encouraged to express his own ideas.

During this period the length of time required to complete the kindergarten course was doubled from forty to eighty weeks to keep pace with programs in Detroit and Chicago schools.²¹³ Also, keeping with their adherence to Froebelian thought the kindergarten class took as their motto Froebel's statement that: "The divine spark is ever present to be kindled if loving hearts can be found to breathe upon it."²¹⁴

Although Ferris, Carlisle and others dominated the Industrial school scene for the first few years, the entrance of Gerrit Masselink in 1898 proved to be of key importance in later years. Masselink's educational experience included a year's teaching in a country school, four

²¹³Letter, W.N.F. to Clara Ferrand, Feb. 21, 1898, Ferris letters, vol. 25, p. 913, FIFS.

²¹⁴Program, Kindergarten Training Class, Third Annual Commencement, June 13, 1898. Folder E3-1, FIFS.



years at Michigan Agricultural College, and three years as Superintendent of Schools at Cass City, Michigan.²¹⁵ His political activities included nomination for Superintendent of Public Instruction. Upon its demise he became a Democrat.²¹⁶

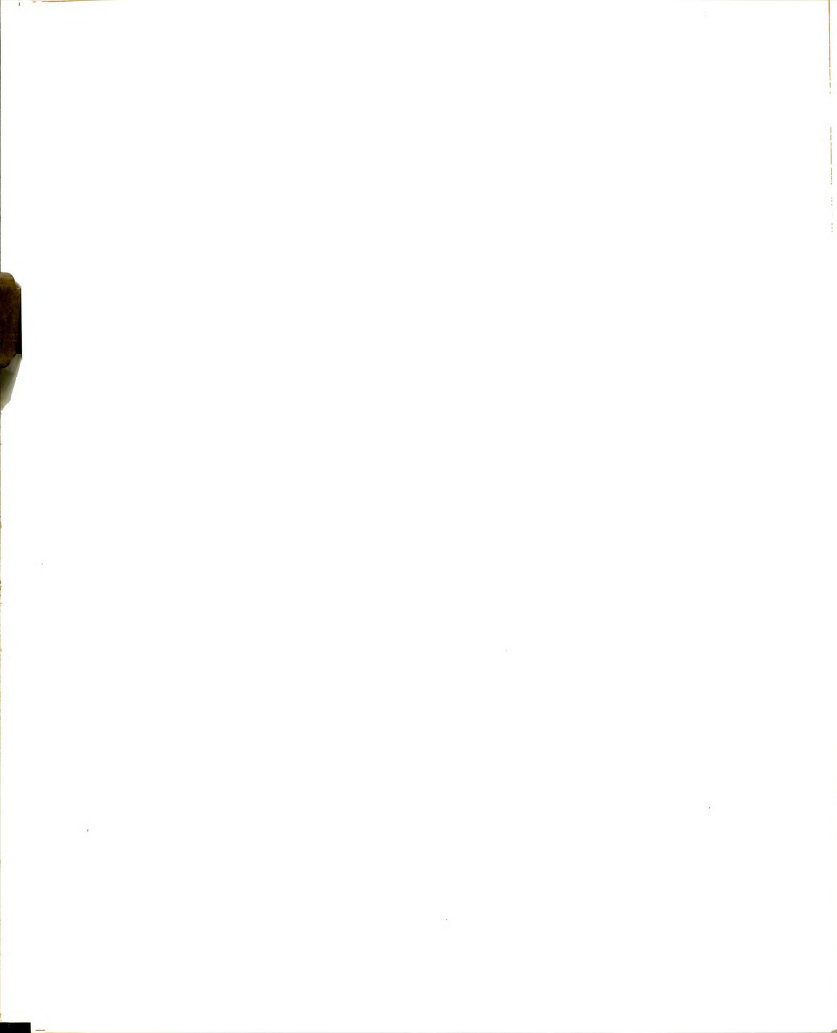
Masselink took over the reins of the school after Ferris' death in 1928 and probably would have remained at the helm except for his untimely death in 1929. In 1898, Masselink was offered a summer school position teaching geometry and science. He performed satisfactorily and was given a verbal contract consisting of \$70.00 per month on a ten month basis.²¹⁷

W. D. Henderson and the Pharmacy Program received a severe blow in 1898 when the Michigan Pharmacy Board questioned their accepted practice of crediting Industrial school pharmacy graduates. To Ferris' consternation, the University of Michigan which had accepted Ferris students was still credited by the Board. In letters to R. B. Perry, and S. E. Parkill he complained that a Mr. Gundrum had taken these privileges from his students and that he was concerned about it. Presenting his case in a forthright manner he claimed that W. D. Henderson, a former

²¹⁵Note, Folder 26a-4, E25, FIFS.

²¹⁶Ibid.

²¹⁷Letter, W.N.F. to Gerrit Masselink, April 5, 1898, Ferris letters, vol. 29, p. 812, FIFS.



student at the University of Michigan had developed the Ferris department into a respectable one.²¹⁸ The case was eventually resolved and the Industrial remained on the accredited list.

The annual report for the 1898 academic year showed the Industrial with a staff of eleven, a student body of about 1200, a library with 600 volumes, \$35,000 worth of buildings, and material; annual expenses of \$12,000 and liabilities of \$5,500.²¹⁹

For many years Ferris insisted that his school was a respectable institution accepting only students of good moral character. He emphatically denied that his school conformed to the commonly accepted view of the industrial school. Was his reaction justified? The Michigan School Moderator reported that: "There are 160 inmates at the Industrial School for girls at Adrian."²²⁰ In 1855 the legislature established at Lansing "a house of correction for juvenile offenders," later called the "Michigan Reform School," and subsequently the "Boys Industrial School."²²¹

²¹⁸ Parkhill was the former and Gundriem present secretary of the Pharmacy Board.

²¹⁹ Annual Report for the Academic Year, Ending June 30, 1898. Folder B3-3, FIFS. (Typewritten).

²²⁰ Michigan School Moderator, V (April 30, 1885).

²²¹ Dunbar, Michigan History, p. 667.



In light of the existence of these institutions and Ferris' determination to deter from entering his school those of unfit character, it is understandable why he claimed that: "The name Industrial is misleading,"²²² and changed the name to Ferris Institute.²²³

Other changes included program alterations designed to accommodate what Ferris thought were value orientations of Americans.

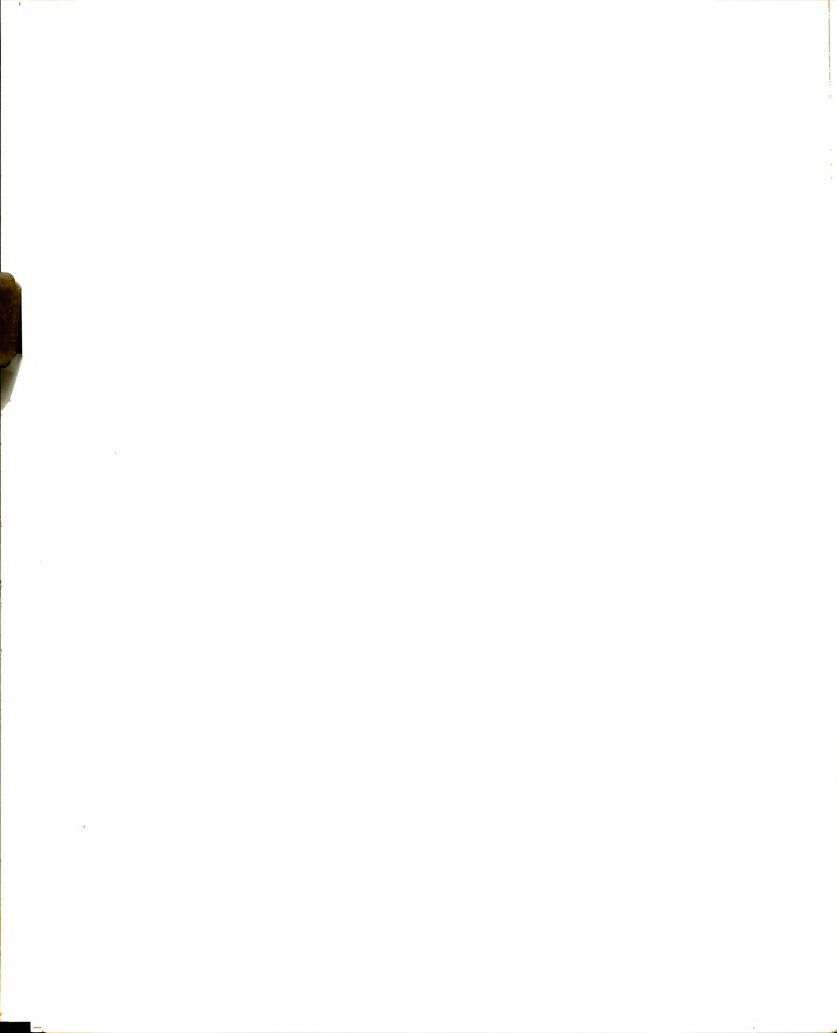
When I organized the institution I had some fond notion similar to those entertained by Professor Straight of Oswego. It required only a few months to convince me that America was loth [sic] to recognize the value of manual training. Today this institution is a thorough-going preparatory school, also a first class business and shorthand department, does excellent work in elocution, good work in kindergarten, and above all pushes its hobby, common English.²²⁴

Had the Industrial image been eliminated forever? The Benzonia College case suggested to Ferris that it still hovered over the school. Apparently, Benzonia College, a congregational church project initiated in 1867 was given the authority to issue life teaching certificates

²²²Letter, W.N.F. to William Windsor, n.d., Ferris letters, vol. 7, p. 15, FIFS.

²²³Timely Topics, a newspaper edited by Henry R. Pattengill referred to the school as Ferris Institute on Sept. 22, 1899. An advertisement claimed that the Institute had fifteen departments, and offered four types of certificates.

²²⁴Letter, W.N.F. to Emma Hutchins, Feb. 6, 1895, Ferris letters, vol. 14, p. 684, FIFS.



while the Industrial was denied the privilege.²²⁵ Ferris reacted indignantly to such a sham.

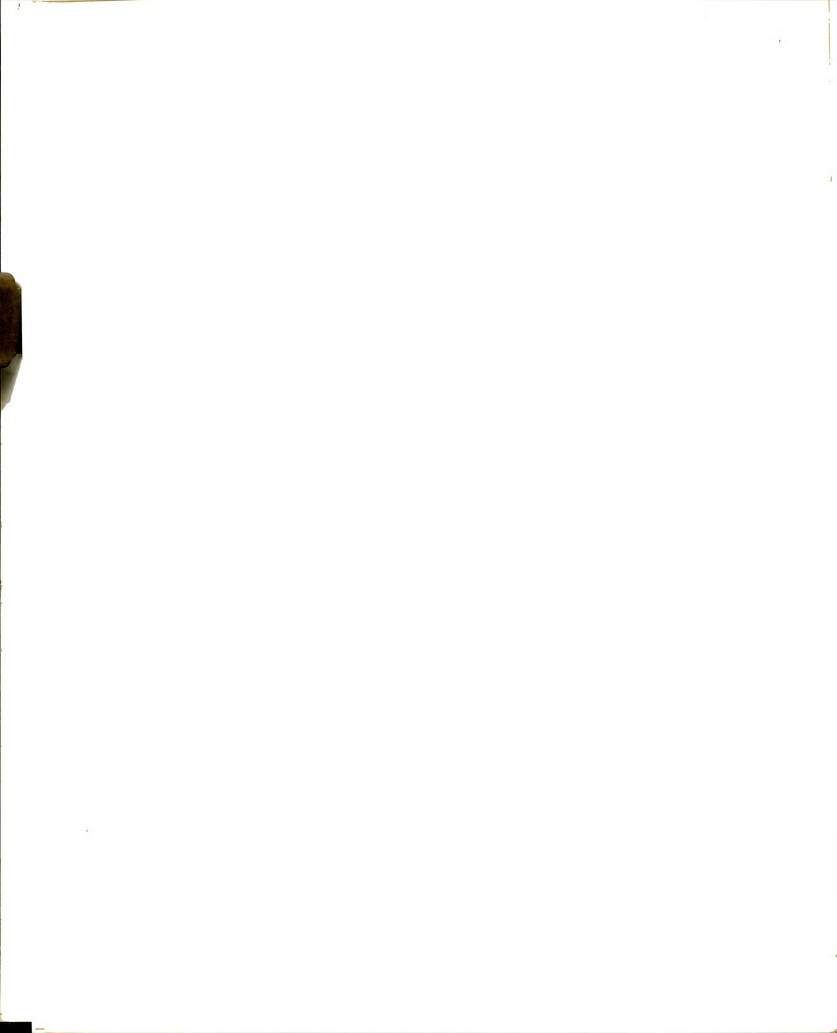
It seems to me if it is true, I will pay the expenses of any Committee that will take the trouble to visit Benzonia College and the Ferris Institute and if they say that the work done at Benzonia College bears any comparison to the work done at the . . . Institute, I will contribute \$1,000 to some benevolent purpose in the State of Michigan.²²⁶

Apparently, Mr. Ferris won his case because by 1899 many Ferris students had acquired life teaching certificates.

As one surveys this era in the history of Ferris Institute one is impressed with the pugnacity of Ferris and his colleagues. Their efforts to construct a building, entice students to attend the school and develop a sound financial base for the institute, set a precedent for future administrators.

²²⁵ Benzonia College was located southwest of Traverse City in the northwestern section of Michigan's lower peninsula. At one time it had an endowment of \$20,000.00 and 2,500 acres of land. It never carried work beyond sophomore year of college, most classes being of high school grade. It prepared many teachers for public school. The school was called Grand Traverse College until 1891 when the name was changed to Benzonia College. Dunbar, Higher Education, pp. 118-119.

²²⁶ Letter, W.N.F. to Hammond, Feb. 6, 1899, Ferris letters, vol. 32, p. 55, FIFS.



CHAPTER III

A NEW CENTURY AND A NEW NAME 1899-1928

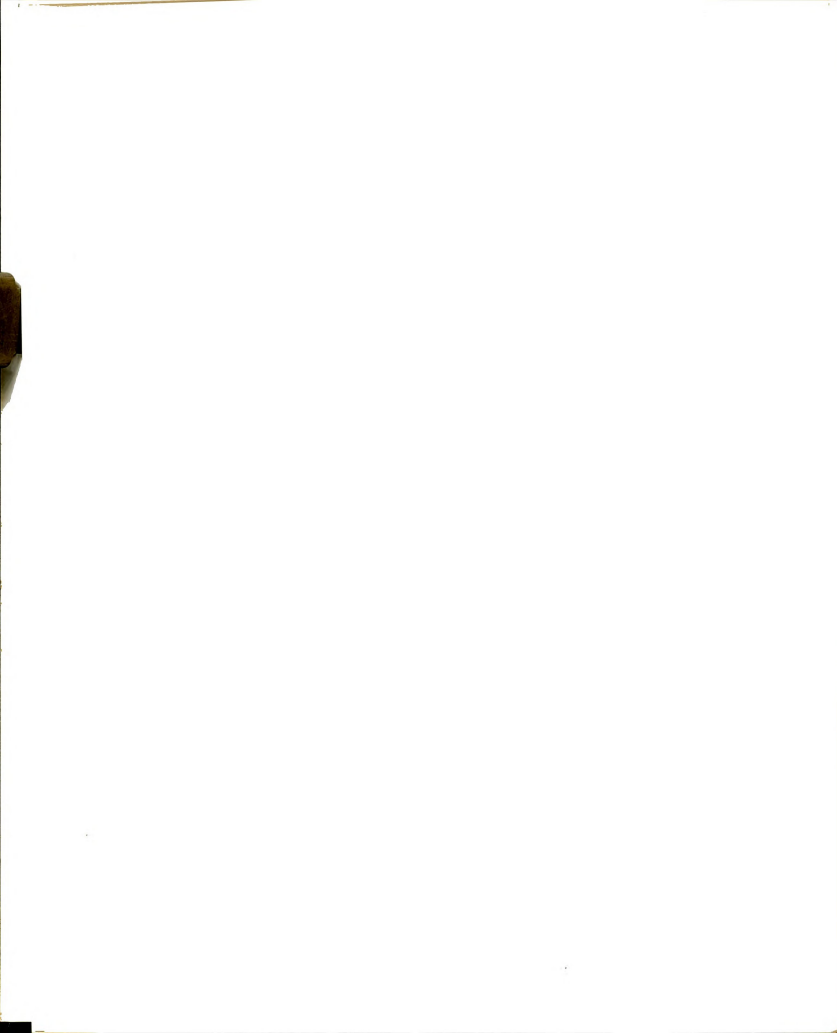
Urbanization and Industrialization

Ferris Institute entered a twentieth century America that had become both urban and industrialized. It was an America which during the first three decades of the century was to become increasingly involved in world politics, experience changes in population patterns, economy, and social relations. In addition, signs of a new America were evident in the form of big business, federal centralization and reform.

Facing the new age with confidence many Americans could point to the victory over Spain, territorial acquisitions, and the material growth of the country as signs of a powerful America. What many did not envision was the ensuing international role for America exemplified by her participation in World War I.

Within urban centers, the business practice of finance capitalism was reducing competition by encouraging industrial combinations designed to lower wages, raise prices and profits and possibly eliminate competitors.

By 1909, 1 per cent of the total of industrial firms in the country was producing 44 per cent of the nation's manufactured goods. In many areas the



American industrial world was rapidly becoming highly differentiated, with a few extremely large and powerful national concerns looming over a great many small and relatively impotent local competitors.¹

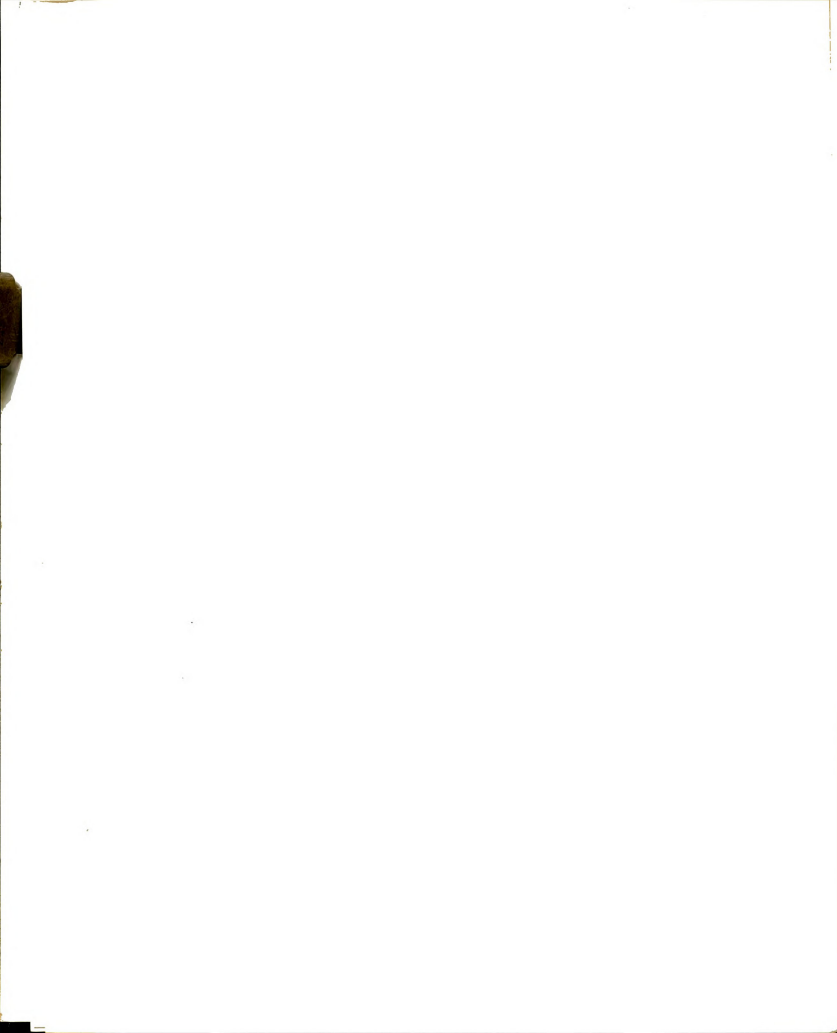
Reacting to these changes in business practice, and responding to political corruption progressive reformers used political protest and action to destroy economic privilege at municipal levels and give the public more direct control over the government. These efforts eventually resulted in legislation which included the initiative, referendum, recall and the direct election of senators as political tools for the people. Commenting on these events and particularly the newly acquired power of the United States Brooks Adams, after a trip to the west coast said:

. . . It is no use for the world to kick, the stream is far too strong, nothing can resist it. No movement can keep pace with the demand; no power can be found vast enough. . . . No one who has watched that torrent from its source on the Divide to its discharges in New York Bay can I think, help feeling the hour of the old world has struck.²

In Michigan, urbanization, industrialization and reform were more recognizable in the early twentieth than in the late nineteenth century. Most of the growth in Michigan could be attributed to the development of the

¹George E. Mowry, Era of Theodore Roosevelt and the Birth of Modern America 1900-1912 (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 7, citing Thirteenth Census of the United States, 8, Manufactures, p. 180.

²Daniel Aaron, Men of Good Hope: A Story of American Progressives (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951).



automobile industry which in Detroit, Pontiac, Lansing and Muskegon aided both the urbanization and industrialization processes. For example, the population of Flint between 1900 and 1930 increased from 13,103 to 156,492 while in 1910 there were three Michigan cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants and six with populations ranging from 25,000 to 50,000.³

However, the Detroit boom in population and industrial growth outstripped that of other Michigan cities. This growth led one author to exclaim that:

In the same fashion as the embodied fossils give the age of a stratum of rock, Detroit is dated and placed by its products. It is the Twentieth Century. It belongs to a period of democratized luxuries, with gas stations on every corner, chain stores, glittering automats, broadcast symphonies. It stands for the present phase of industrialism as distinct from that of the Nineteenth Century, exemplified by Manchester, Pittsburgh, and the Ruhr Valley.

In a way Detroit is the birthplace of that civilization. It is as truly a world capital as any city on earth, more fascinating to the outlander than New York, more influential than Washington, or even Hollywood. Paris dictates a seasons silhouette, but Detroit manufactures a pattern of life, bolder than Moscow in transforming human habits and communizing the output of the machine.⁴

Progressive reformers in Michigan also attempted to initiate legislation to redress political and social

³Willis F. Dunbar, Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1965), pp. 589-592.

⁴Ibid., p. 596, citing Anne Hare McCormick; N. Y. Times, Nov. 11, 1934, quoted in A. Pound, Detroit: Dynamic City, pp. 367-368.



grievances. Agitation for reform in the 1908 state constitutional convention resulted in cities being given the right of home rule and juvenile offenders being placed under the jurisdiction of the probate court. In contrast, women's suffrage was turned down and initiative and referendum rejected. The legislature was eventually given the power to pass laws limiting the hours and conditions of labor in factories as well as the authority to place taxes on telegraph companies with receipts added to the primary school fund.⁵

New Programs for a New America

The new age signified by America's rise to power, increased urbanization and industrialization, changing concepts of business and government significantly influenced program developments at Ferris Institute. During the first three decades of the twentieth century Mr. Ferris increasingly adapted his educational offerings to the requests and demands of the American business community.

Nevertheless, these conditions were not sufficient to dispel the past nor to immediately enhance the status of the school as an institution of higher learning. Reminders of the institution's traditional role and contributions to Big Rapids were given on Educational Day,

⁵Ibid., pp. 536-541.

Sept. 12, 1899.⁶ Amidst the festivities of the Grand Reunion of Soldiers and Sailors, time was taken to thank Mr. Ferris and his colleagues for accepting students unable or unwilling to attend other schools and for contributing to the town's economy.⁷

The school's increasing involvement in higher education did manifest itself in classical, Latin, scientific, English and college preparatory courses.⁸ Apparently, the course requirements in each category were identical with those of the University of Michigan; ". . . it being assumed that the requirements of this institution [University of Michigan] do not differ materially from those of similar institutions of learning."⁹

The normal department maintained its policy of offering classes in preparation for certification

⁶ (Postcard), Grand Reunion - Soldiers and Sailors Association of Michigan - Both Wars; Folder FIFS, Aa4a. Held at Camp Alger, Big Rapids, Michigan, September 11-16, 1899.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ferris Institute Journal (1899-1900), p. 1; Folder FIFS, Cl2. This journal replaced Useful Education. "The policy of this paper concerns the interests of popular education, the education of the masses. It says to every young person who is ambitious, who is hungry for knowledge, that there is a royal road to self-improvement. No person of ordinary intelligence need remain at the foot of the ladder." Ibid., p. 14. The journal was published January, April, July, and October.

⁹ Ibid.

examinations. One could take these classes separately or simultaneously.

. . . a student may begin in the third grade [teaching certificate program] and take each succeeding study in its order, or he may pursue a second grade, first grade and State certification [life certificate], and at the same time review any or all of the lower studies.¹⁰

Beginning in 1893, the school had by this time, produced thirty graduates with life certificates.¹¹ Among them were William D. Henderson and Bert S. Travis.¹²

The success of the teacher training program was recognized by Mr. Ferris when he claimed that teacher candidates from Ferris Institute comprised 90 per cent of all Michigan candidates for the first grade certificate.¹³ These candidates were to enter the classrooms of the world as evangelists with the kindergarten graduates assigned special evangelical tasks based upon their love for children, teaching and humanity.¹⁴ Given this assignment it seems that the kindergarten department was still attuned to: "Every principle of Froebel's beautiful philosophy

¹⁰ Ibid. Requirements for life certification included examinations in orthography, reading, penmanship, arithmetic, geometry, grammar, biology, rhetoric, and the school law of Michigan among others.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ferris Institute Journal, IX (July, 1906), p. 14; Folder FIFS, C15. No data was available either to substantiate or refute this claim made by Mr. Ferris.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 4.



[as] is illustrated in the live kindergarten."¹⁵ Using these principles every student in the program experienced direct contact with young children.

Other kindergarten candidates had enrolled in a program designed to meet the contemporary needs of America. They studied for twenty-five weeks preparing for civil service positions in the United States Indian Service. It is surprising that this instruction did not offer any work in United States history.¹⁶

In 1903 Michigan had established four state normal schools each of which enjoyed substantial growth from 1904 to 1928.

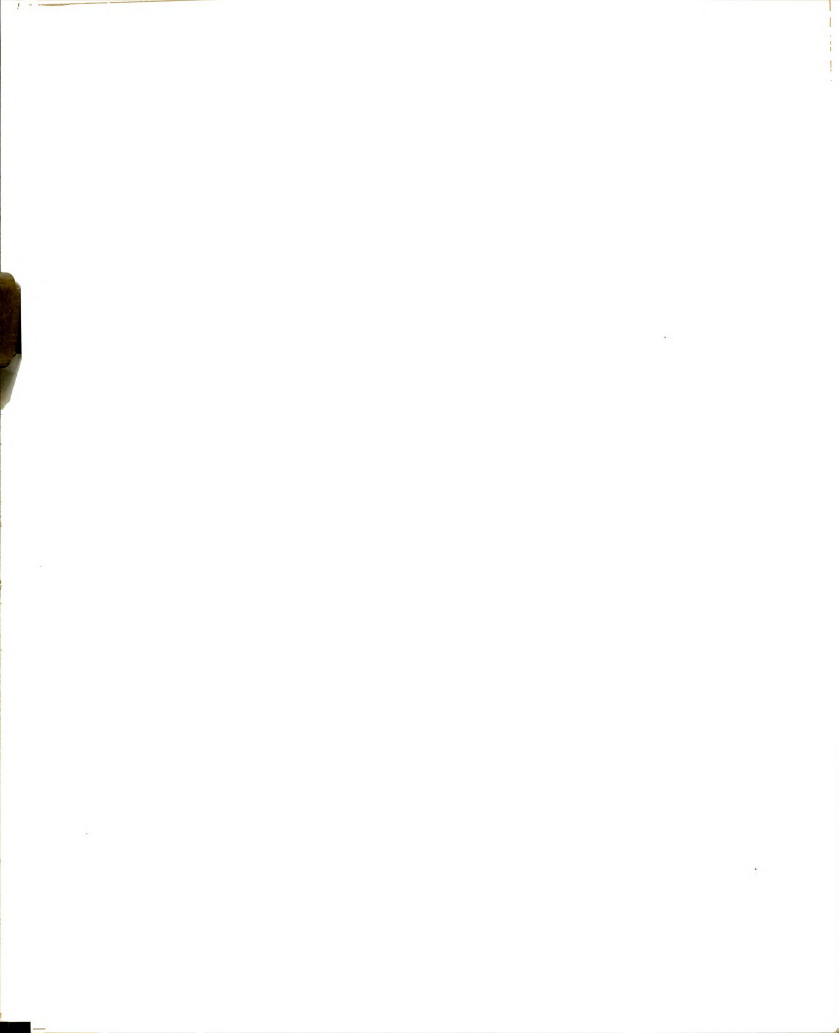
Michigan State Normal College about doubled in size, Central grew from 790 students to 1,300; Northern, . . . more than tripled the size of its student body, from 198 students in 1903-1904 to 748 in 1927-28; Western grew from nothing to the point where it had almost the same number of students as Michigan State College. . . .¹⁷

For many years the pride of the school was the pharmacy department. Evidence of its achievements was shown in the successful performances of its graduates on the state board examinations. The length of the preparation

¹⁵Ferris Institute Journal (1897-1900), p. 5, Folder FIFS, C12.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁷Willis F. Dunbar, The Michigan Record in Higher Education (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963), p. 205.



period for these examinations ranged from six months classroom experience for those persons who already had store experience, to eighteen months, with two hours a day in the classroom and three in the laboratory, for those without the required experience.¹⁸ For most courses of study in the program there was a common methodological approach. The student received

. . . a judicious combination of text-book work and laboratory exercises. In his text, the student finds a guide; at his case, he puts into actual practice the theories of the recitation room. One method is not emphasized at the expense of the other, the idea being to secure all that is good from both.¹⁹

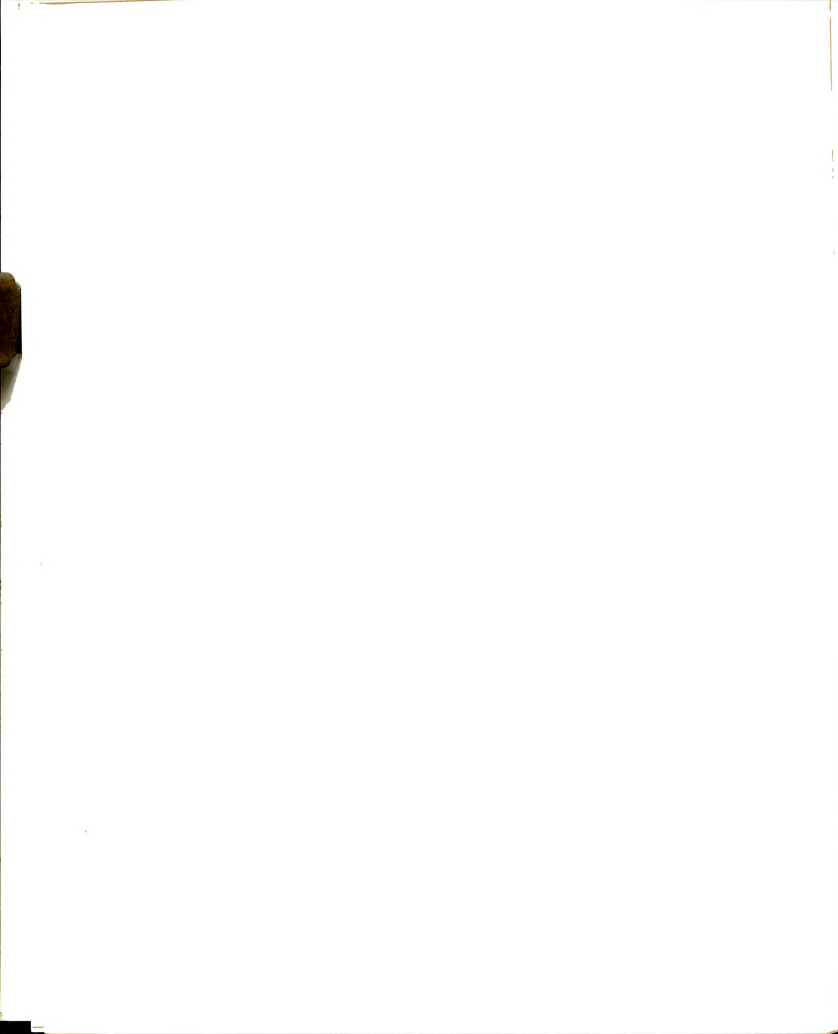
Hopefully prepared for the state board examinations the class of 1904 was greeted to a farewell by fellow students. With colorful banners decorating their train they left Big Rapids amidst the singing of the pharmic song.²⁰

Boom-a lack-a, boom-a lack-a
Bow-wow-wow!
Ching-a lack-a, ching-a lack-a,
Chow-chow-chow
Hear us, hear us, hear us, roar!
This is the class for Ann Arbor,
Of F.I. pharmics 1904.
Wakoo

¹⁸Ferris Institute Journal (1899-1900), p. 5. Folder FIFS, C12. Required courses in the program were foreign language, mathematics, anatomy and physiology, botany, physics, chemistry, and pharmacy.

¹⁹Ibid, p. 6.

²⁰Big Rapids Herald, March 4, 1904, Newton Collection; Folder 1903-1904.



Lead, silver, mercurous,
 What do you think's the matter with us?
 We make syrups and pills galore,
 In the pharmic class of 1904.²¹

With the graduating pharmics safely on their way, remaining students in the department went back to the laboratories manufacturing syrups and pills in the "beehive."²²

Among the pharmacy graduates were regular and short course students.²³ These two courses were necessary to accommodate prospective pharmacists with differing academic and practical experiences. All 1906 pharmacy candidates were subject to new state regulations, one which demanded that they have the equivalent of a tenth grade education.

This change has seriously embarrassed young people, who, with only an eighth [sic] or ninth grade training, have worked three or four years in a drugstore. There is only one thing for these clerks to do - make the necessary English preparation. To a limited extent, the English can be carried with the Pharmacy.²⁴

Meanwhile, physical culturalists in Charles "Tommy" Carlisle's Department of Elocution, Physical Culture and

²¹Ibid.

²²Ferris Institute Journal (Oct., 1905), Newton Collection; Folder 1905-1906. The term "beehive" was apparently indicative of the rapidity with which the pharmics worked in their laboratory.

²³The regular course was two years in length while the short course was for those candidates preparing for the state examinations.

²⁴Ferris Institute Journal, IX (July, 1906), p. 2; Folder FIFS, C15.



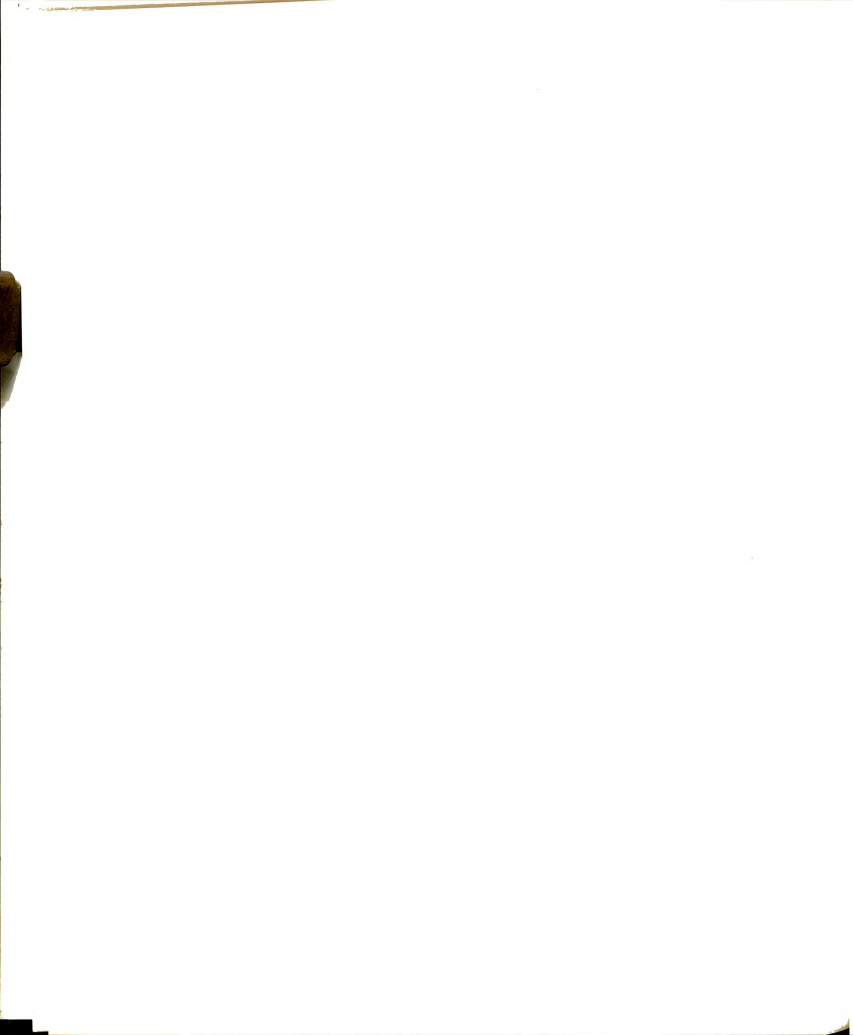
and Vocal Music learned to value regular use of the muscular system, the importance of proper nutrition, and the beauty of a gracefully moving body.²⁵ Other members of the department studied public school music, took vocal lessons or attempted to play the violin and mandolin.²⁶

These programs combined with the telegraphy and civil service offerings, provided a diverse curriculum for Ferris students. Many of these programs were developed in response to changing political, economic and social conditions in America. For example, Mr. Ferris responded to requests from railroad and telegraph companies for telegraphers with skills in spelling, writing, mental arithmetic, typewriting, and bookkeeping.²⁷ He also reacted favorably to requests from the federal government by developing a civil service department. Its responsibility was to prepare persons for civil service

²⁵Ferris Institute Journal (1899-1900), p. 4; Folder FIFS, C12. In this program emphasis was upon relaxation, freedom of movement and poise. Clubs and balls were used to facilitate successful completion of these goals. At this time diplomas were granted in college preparatory, normal, kindergarten, elocution, pharmacy, business and shorthand departments. Ibid.

²⁶Ferris Institute Catalog (1907-1908), p. 77. The course in piano began in 1905. Ferris reported that no attempt was made to organize a conservatory. Provision was made, however, for study in public school music, advanced vocal and violin lessons, and mandolin training. Ferris Institute Journal, IX (July, 1906), p. 4; Folder FIFS, C15.

²⁷Ferris Institute Journal (1899-1900), p. 13; Folder FIFS, C12.



examinations in mail service, bookkeeping, stenography, and typewriting.²⁸

Apparently, Mr. Ferris was basing the survival of these programs on remarks made by President William McKinley. "It is reasonable to suppose that appointments must be made by the hundreds, and possibly by the thousands, as soon as this country has fairly taken hold of Cuba, Porto [sic] Rico, the Philippines, Hawaii, etc. . . ."²⁹ "Even without the acquisition of new territory the appointments would be increased to 8,500 for 1899."³⁰

The new century had begun. With it came increased urbanization and industrialization and the reform spirit of the nineties. With it came hope of a better economic and political future for more Americans. With it came the hope and despair of World War I. With it came Ferris Institute accompanied by hopes and fears of the future.

Woodbridge N. Ferris "Big Chief"

Among other names reserved for Mr. Ferris, "Big Chief" seemed most appropriate for his powerful position at the school. All students, regardless of department or interests, still trudged to the main room to watch the

²⁸Ibid. The first pre-medical class, law and chemistry departments were organized in 1915.

²⁹Ibid. He was referring to civil service positions.

³⁰Ibid.

"Big Chief" operate; ". . . with energy and vehemence as his heavy gray hair [was] repeatedly pushed back over his forehead. . . ." ³¹ These physical behavior patterns were often accompanied by verbal assaults on students and in typical style one morning he began the program by proclaiming that:

You students all waste too much time doing nothing. Why don't you read Tolstoy's works when you are coming up here, or when you are riding on a train. Most of you just set and stare out the window of a train; no wonder you don't know much. I just bet you don't even know the color of the leaves on the trees on Ives Avenue this morning. ³²

Another example of Ferris' disposition and undisputed position as the main character in the early history of the institute was given by a student who personally experienced an encounter with Mr. Ferris.

Each morning assembly, Mr. Ferris would read off a number of names of students for what he termed, Private Interviews. One morning my name was read, and I went in to [sic] his office with some twenty or more students, and when he came to me he asked what I was in for, and I told him that was what I wanted to know, and knowing me personally he humorously replied: "Get to hell out of here." ³³

³¹Letter, Mrs. L. M. Keen to William A. Pearson, Dec. 30, 1952; Folder FIFS, E171C.

³²Letter, Selma A. Bacheller to Roy Newton, Sept. 23, 1953; Folder FIFS, E171e. At times it is difficult to ascertain whether Mr. Ferris' remarks were deliberate attempts to provoke students into action or were real concerns about their incompetencies in academic and other matters.

³³Letter, H. J. Heydenburg to William A. Pearson, Nov. 25, 1952; Folder FIFS, E171B. It seems that Mr.



Along with this forthright approach to human relations went a determination to awaken students to their real potentialities.

The chief thing in educating a human being lies in arousing in him a desire to do something and to be something. When this is accomplished no ordinary obstacles can hinder his achieving success. Few men and women ever realize their possibilities because they have allowed their powers to lie dormant. Every man and woman is a genius potentially. Almost every man and woman needs to be awakened, needs to be born again. It is the function of education to bring about the new birth.³⁴

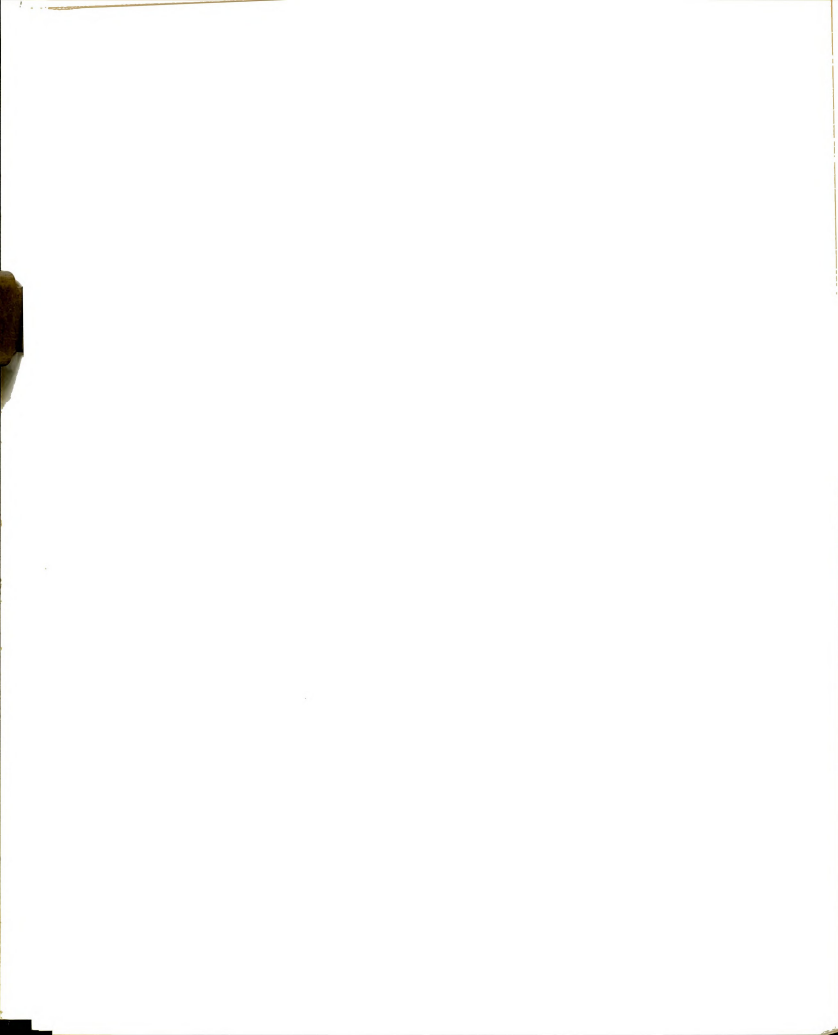
The awakening of students to their potentialities was supposedly accomplished by various means, among which were speeches at the school by important contemporary figures. Two of these were the social reformer Jacob Riis and the educator, Booker T. Washington.³⁵

Also contributing to the process of character development were the religion training sessions held twice

Heydenburg was told to leave the office and not the school. There is no evidence to indicate the reason for these interviews. However, on the basis of Mr. Ferris' past performances one could speculate that these students had violated a school rule or policy.

³⁴Ferris Institute Journal (Oct., 1902); Folder FIFS, C15.

³⁵Ibid. Booker T. Washington was brought by the F.C.A. as part of their eleventh annual meeting held July 17-18, 1902. It was claimed that there was a 20 per cent increase in enrollment at the school, thereby, making it the most prosperous, in terms of enrollment and tuition collected, in the history of the school. Ferris Institute Journal (Oct., 1902); Folder FIFS, E171B. Enrollment from Sept. 1, 1902 through Sept. 1, 1903 was 1,812.



daily at various locations in Big Rapids. Advertised as non-denominational and nonsectarian they still provided: ". . . definite and aggressive Christian work along lines compatible with the teachings of the Master."³⁶ Also part of this process were assessments of student character by Mr. Ferris who: ". . . studies every student, advises every student and when he finds that he is powerless to do him good, he informs the parent or guardian."³⁷

A large, fraternal organization like the Ferris Cooperative Association also contributed its services in facilitating the development of character among Ferris students. It was founded in 1891: "To weave more closely the bonds of fellowship and love, so natural to pupils of the same school; to uphold the New Education, and to raise its members to a higher plane of usefulness."³⁸ Later, it assisted students in obtaining jobs. To become a member one needed a statement from Mr. Ferris verifying one's attendance at the institute, recommendations from three F.C.A. members, and one dollar for initiation.³⁹

These bonds of fellowship and love which the Ferris Cooperative Association encouraged were not entirely evident in town-gown relations. One situation in particular

³⁶Ferris Institute Journal (1899-1900), p. 7; Folder FIFS, C12.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

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aroused antagonisms between county officials and Ferris students. This case involved a group of protesting students attempting to refute drunk and disorderly charges against a fellow student.⁴⁰ Led by Don Harrington and W. A. Conrad, the students claimed that the accused W. E. Richards was neither rowdy nor a frequenter of saloons.⁴¹ The prosecuting attorney retaliated by stating: "If you do not convict this man you might as well say to the five hundred students on the hill. Raise all the disturbance you please, let rowdyism loose, the town is yours."⁴² Although no evidence could be found to suggest that the students were victorious in their quest to free their friend, they did assist Richards in his circuit court fight.⁴³ This episode is significant in light of a 1912 local prohibition regulation which was praised by the townspeople as a protector of traditional morals. As a 1912 edition of What School proclaimed: "Big Rapids is Dry."⁴⁴ This was the first time in the history of the school that the city had voted in prohibition legislation. According to What School this legislation would not only

⁴⁰ Ferris Institute News (March, 1903); Folder FIFS, F3gl.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ What School (1912), Newton Collection; Folder 1911-1912. This regulation predated the 1918 state prohibition law.



maintain the traditional moral standards of the institute, but would also lessen the occasional hazing and rowdyism by students.⁴⁵ Furthermore; "Parents and guardians can rest assured that their boys are in a city where one of the greatest evils does not exist. Big Rapids is a model city."⁴⁶

Confidence in this legislation was so strong that the school was closed for one half day for the July 4 celebration. Mr. Ferris stated the rationale for the decision in the following manner. ". . . inasmuch as the town went dry we [the administration] could afford it."⁴⁷

Unfortunately for the administration, this confidence was shattered in the twenties; years viewed by Mr. Ferris as ones of loose morality. Repeating his claim that the school was not a reformatory institution he verbally assaulted those students who played pool and billiards, and danced in public.⁴⁸ He reserved his most irate remarks for those females who used the school as a marriage bureau. The Ferris Institute does not conduct a marriage bureau. The school makes ample provision for wholesome

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Letter, W.N.F. to Floyd Barr, July 8, 1912, Ferris letters; Folder FIFS, Aa3A. In affording it, Mr. Ferris was referring to previous July 4 festivities when the consumption of alcoholic beverages added to the festival spirit. Apparently, he did not appreciate such means to an end.

⁴⁸ Catalog (1921-1922), p. 12.

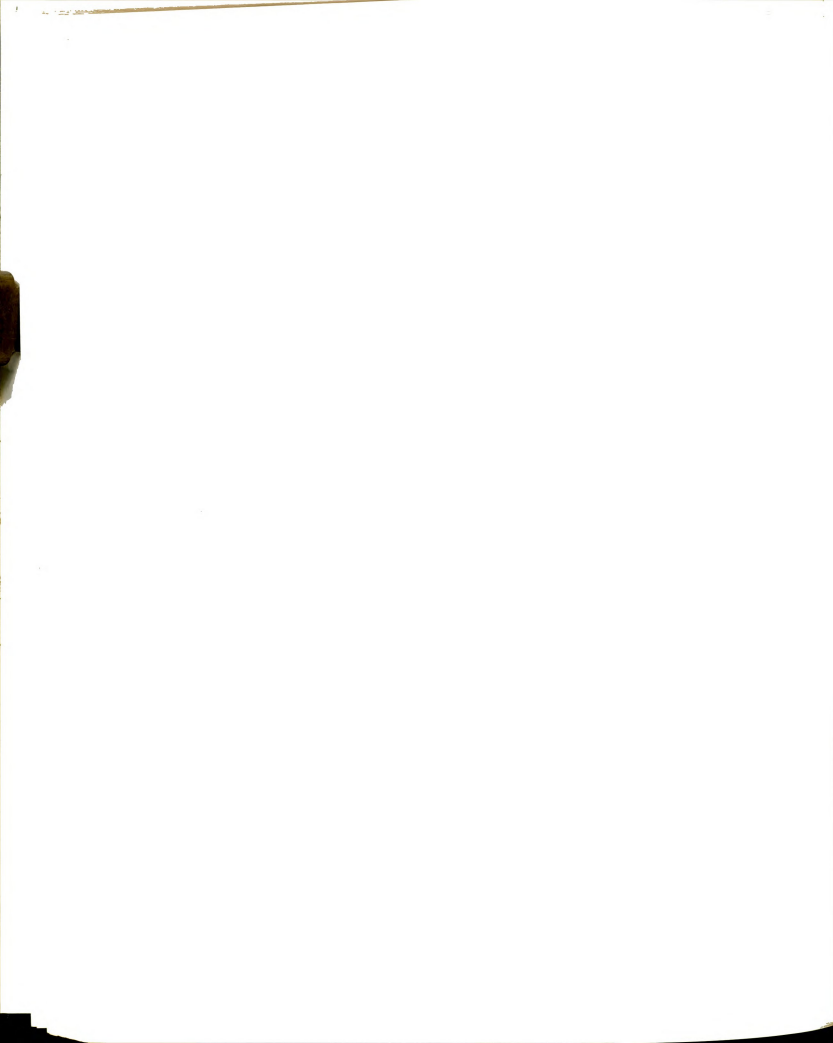
amusements."⁴⁹ Apparently, some students were dissatisfied with the amusements provided by the school and searched elsewhere for different activities. In a prepared speech given to students on January 1, 1921, W.N.F. let it be known that he would not tolerate pool and billiard players or frequenters of Hadden's place.⁵⁰ He set the mood with a few remarks about the 322 unexcused absences, the twenty-five unexcused tardies and the total 1392 class absences accumulated within a two week period.⁵¹ Gradually, working up to his main point, he announced a forthcoming faculty meeting in which those students who had defied him would be reprimanded. Specifically, he referred to three drunken young men who had attempted to sell liquor on a train, knowing that Ferris was traveling on the same train. "They are not fit for any place. I FORMALLY EXPEL [them] THIS MORNING-- Now do not appear at my office or bother Mr. Masselink. -- Go to an attorney if you want to."⁵²

⁴⁹ Ibid. The various school clubs did have dances and other social activities. There were lectures and concerts as well as athletic programs.

⁵⁰ It seems that a Mr. Hadden owned a local establishment which catered to pool and billiard players, and dancers.

⁵¹ W.N.F. "Speech on Discipline." Given in the Main Assembly Room at Ferris Institute, Jan. 1, 1921; Folder FIFS, Aa14.

⁵² Ibid.



Having reached a fever pitch he reprimanded those young girls in the audience who he had seen at Haddens.

That place is regarded by the officers of this city as a tough joint. If he [Hadden] conducts [a] decent place and you are ladies and gentlemen, there might be no objection to your going in there for a dish of ice cream but the first fling of the foot on the floor--- [sic].⁵³

Especially disturbing to Mr. Ferris was the presence of the piano teacher, Miss King, at Hadden's establishment.

According to W.N.F. she had been dancing cheek to cheek and otherwise conducting herself in an indecent manner.⁵⁴

Immediately, Ferris attempted to hire another piano teacher. "I might say that I have tried five sources for a piano teacher. . . . I am going to try to get a real woman that has moral sense. Of course when a member of my faculty falls in love with a student, all efficiency is gone."⁵⁵

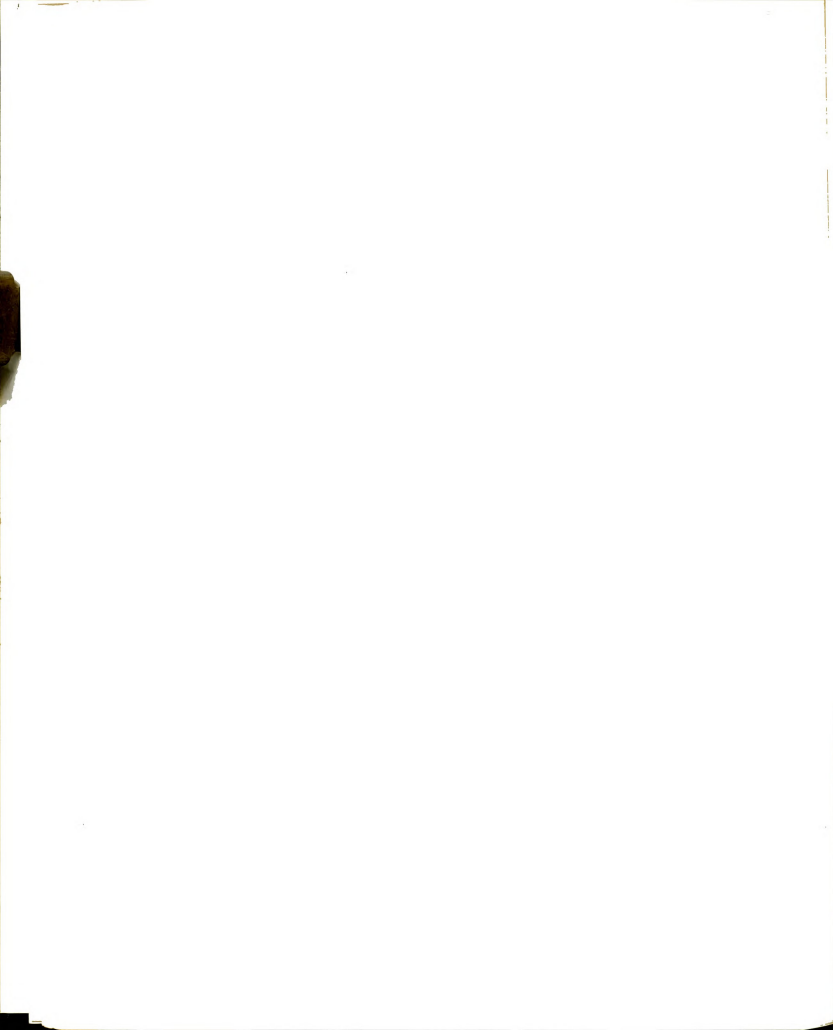
Carrying his attack to the mothers of America he accused them of not controlling their sons and daughters. He proclaimed that: "The mothers of America are cowards."⁵⁶

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid. There is no available evidence to indicate whether Miss King was immediately fired or retained until a new teacher was found.

⁵⁵Ibid. There is no evidence to suggest that Miss King had been dating a student at Haddens or, indeed, if Mr. Ferris was referring to Miss King in these remarks about a faculty member falling in love with a student.

⁵⁶Ibid. He invited any discontented students to see him and receive a tuition refund.



Other evidence of Ferris' control at the school and efforts at maintaining traditional discipline was displayed in cases of student tardiness and absenteeism.

Though valiant attempts were made to maintain accurate up-to-date records it proved to be a difficult task. Available records do indicate that overburdening assignments, slow clocks, and general carelessness were common reasons given for tardiness and absenteeism by students.⁵⁷

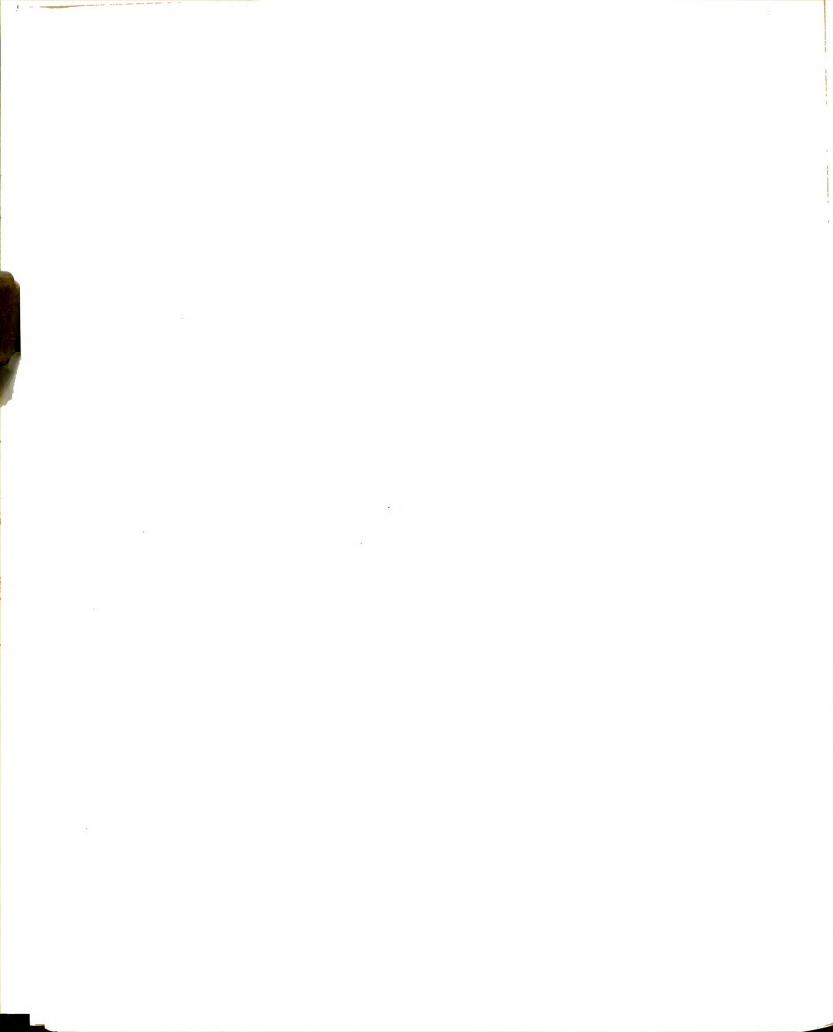
One student, apparently an imaginative fellow, had the following record of excuses dating from October 17 through March 15, 1910. He claimed that his clock was slow three times, that he slept in once, that the clock had stopped once, and that he had been to the dentist one time.⁵⁸ On March 15, Mr. Ferris told him to leave the school.

Those students who attempted to leave study-hall before the scheduled lunch period also felt the wrath of Ferris. When he would enter the main assembly room, observe these delinquent students and exclaim: "Trough, trough, trough! Some of you think about it trough."⁵⁹ Whatever their explanations about tardiness or absenteeism, most students were present at roll call, given twice a day in each

⁵⁷ Student Attendance and Athletic Book 1909-1931, pp. 2-3. It seems that more students than faculty thought assignments overburdening.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 279.

⁵⁹ Letter, Edward H. Thompson to William A. Pearson, March 17, 1952; Folder FIFS, E171A.



Department and once in each class. Class attendance was recorded to provide: ". . . little chance for the lazy student to escape. Irregularity is not tolerated."⁶⁰ The stringency of attendance rules is seen in the demand that students be in the building between 8:00 and 11:30 a.m., and 1:10 to 4:00 p.m., during which time they were under the constant supervision of some faculty member.

In keeping with the autonomous authority of Ferris and his faculty, parents were requested to refrain from interfering with the regular work of the school.⁶¹ They were also told to respect the acquisition of skills and character development as the primary goals of the school.⁶² This was to be in contrast to those schools which ground out a certain number of graduates regardless of the quality of student.⁶³

Despite these rules and requests, Ferris seemed disappointed in the 1911-1912 student crop.

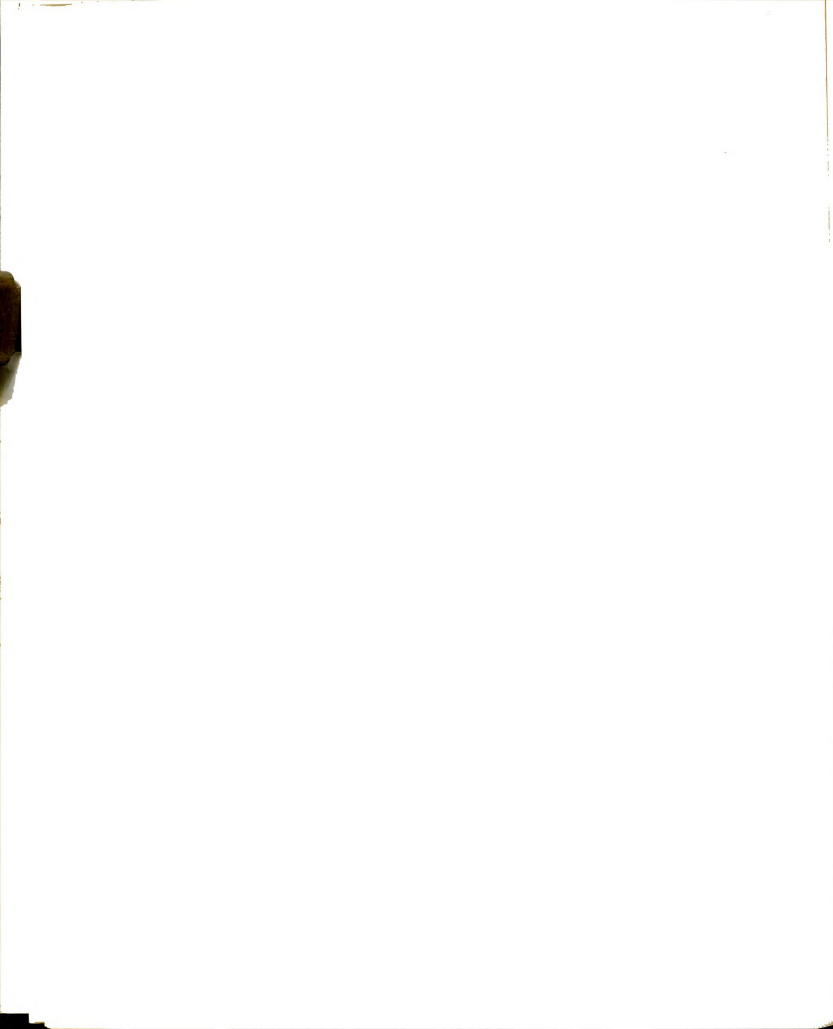
We have had during January, February, and March twelve hundred students on daily attendance, but they were below the standard, the poorest bunch, we have ever had in the history of the school. Why the Ferris Institute should draw this kind of

⁶⁰What School (1912), Newton Collection; Folder 911-1912.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Catalog (1911-1912), p. 451.

⁶³Ibid.



material is more than I can tell, unless they think I have a machine for changing punk into hickory. I have sent a good many home.⁶⁴

For those students serious about their studies and their future place in the world, Ferris organized a course in the selection of a vocation. "Every higher educational institution needs an efficient vocational director, quite as much as it needs a president."⁶⁵ The course consisted of two or three recitations per week with instruction based upon Frank Parson's book Choosing a Vocation.⁶⁶ There was no questioning the power of Mr. Ferris. He had definite ideas about how freedom and discipline were to be harmonized and if one chose to disagree with this view one could expect expulsion from school.

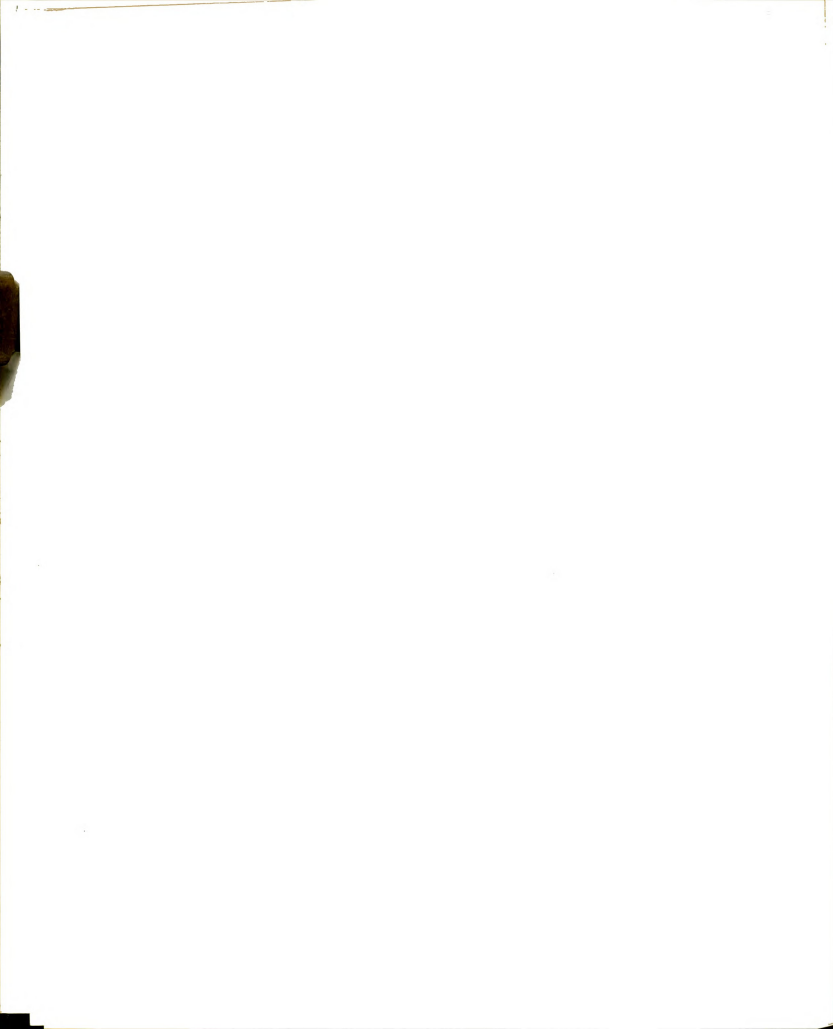
Increased Enrollment and Student Activity

Enrollment figures for the first two years of the new century verified Mr. Ferris' previous requests for additional buildings. For example, the total number of students enrolled from February 1, 1900 to February 1, 1902

⁶⁴Letter, W.N.F. to Floyd Barr, March 28, 1912, Ferris letters; Folder FIFS, Aa3A. These 1200 students were distributed among twenty-seven faculty members. "Teachers Old and New at the Institute," Bid Rapids Pioneer, May, 1929.

⁶⁵What School (1912), Newton Collection; Folder 1911-1912.

⁶⁶Ibid.



was 2840.⁶⁷ The breakdown according to departments was as follows:⁶⁸

1. Combined total in English, normal, and college preparatory classes	1868
2. Commercial	630
3. Shorthand	424
4. Kindergarten	64
5. Telegraphy	64
6. Civil Service	56
7. Elocution	14

The faculty totaled fourteen persons with Charles A.

Wessel, W. R. Smith, Charles Carlisle, H. H. Barrows, Bert

S. Travis, Rose Anderson, Gerrit Masselink, and S. B.

Norcross providing a stable teaching core for the school.⁶⁹

Many of these faculty members were hired according to the

traditional policy of Mr. Ferris which basically was:

"never to hire a teacher until there is a demand for his services."⁷⁰

In order to accommodate the expanded enrollment the "silver eagle"⁷¹ decided to reorganize and expand the

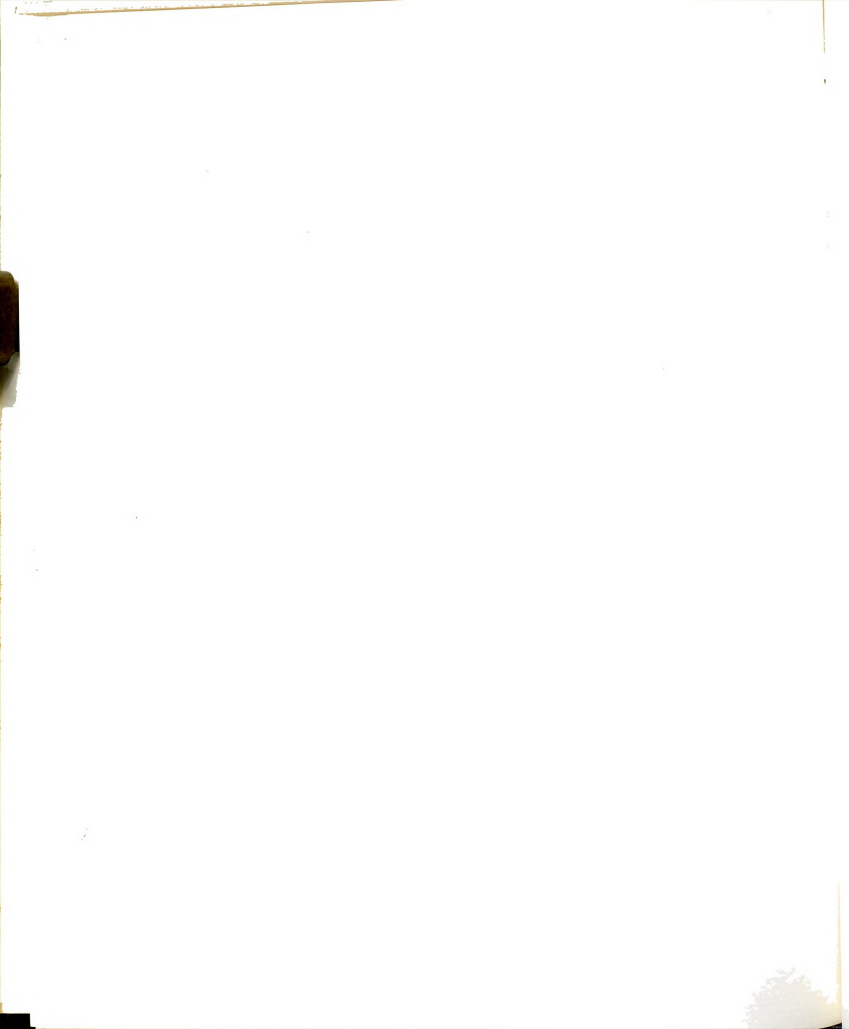
⁶⁷Ferris Institute Catalog (1902-1903), p. 68.

⁶⁸Ibid. There is a discrepancy in the total enrollment listed at 2840 and the sum total of the figures listed below it. There is no evidence to substantiate the accuracy of either figure.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ferris Institute Journal (Oct., 1902); Folder 1902-1903, Newton Collection. The demand usually came from what Ferris considered to be the needs of American society at a given period of time. However, he did react to general requests from industry or government for specific programs.

⁷¹Letter, Richard H. Wernette to Roy Newton, Sept. 25, 1953; Folder FIFS, E171E.



building facilities of the school.⁷² The new building was to be a three story structure designed to accommodate a commercial department, a biological laboratory, chemical and pharmaceutical laboratories, a lecture room and supply room.⁷³ By 1906, however, the more than 2,000 students enrolled at the school necessitated additional buildings. To alleviate the situation, Ferris suggested that a forty by eighty wing be added to the original building.⁷⁴

This will furnish larger facilities for the Kindergarten Training School, will double the capacity of the Business Dept., . . . increase the capacity of the Shorthand Department one-half, and will make the auditorium much larger and at the same [time] give an additional entrance to the third floor.⁷⁵

In the same statement he speculated that: "In all probability, the number of students permitted to attend the Institute at any one time will be limited to 1200."⁷⁶ Later enrollment figures indicate that student population exceeded 1200, thereby verifying the claim by Ferris that the school would always accept backward and intellectually

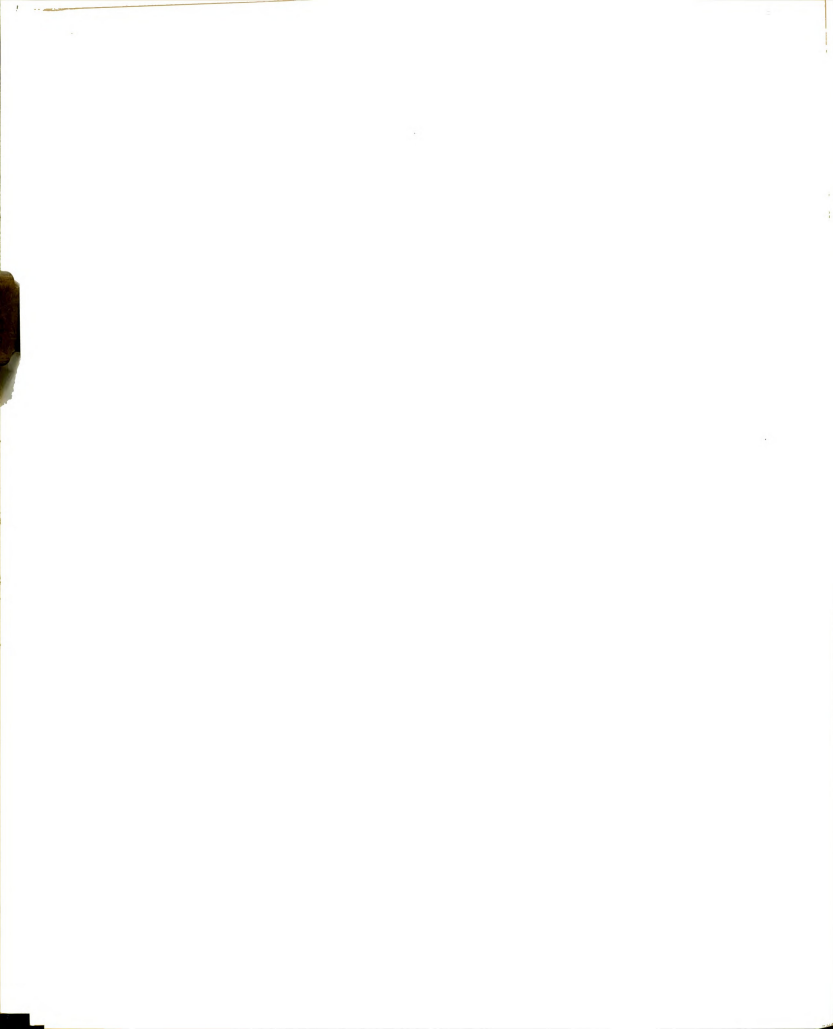
⁷²Letter, W.N.F. to Marie Larson, March 27, 1900, Ferris letters; Folder FIFS, 1j.

⁷³Ferris Institute Journal (April, 1901); Folder FIFS, Cl5.

⁷⁴Ferris Institute Journal, IX (July, 1906), p. 1; Folder FIFS, Cl5.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.



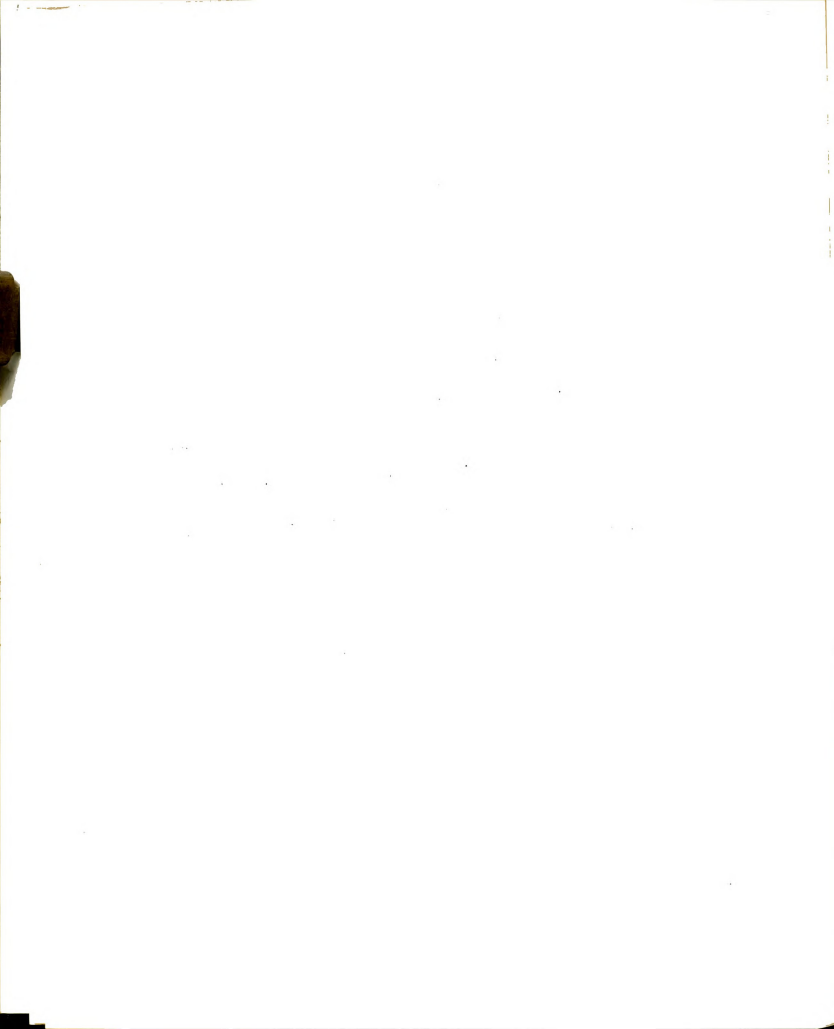
hungry students.⁷⁷ The new \$20,000.00 three story addition was located west of the main building.⁷⁸ It was to be completed by October 29, in time for the beginning of winter term.

Throughout the winter and spring terms, students continued to follow both the traditional and new courses of study at the institute. The culminating event for the 1905-1906 school year was the commencement program. It was held on three successive days with commercial, shorthand, telegraphy, pharmacy, kindergarten, and music department ceremonies on June 27; college preparatory, elocution and physical culture on June 28. The third day was given to the Ferris Cooperative Association, and was culminated by an evening banquet at the Big Rapids Armory.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ However, there is an inconsistency in these statements. If this limit of 1200 students was to be enforced it seems that some less intellectually hungry students would be refused admittance. It is inconsistent to claim that one will limit enrollment to 1200 students and then assert that doors are open to all backward, intellectually hungry students. Suppose the number of interested, backward, and intellectually hungry candidates for admission exceeded 1200? By what criteria does one determine whether or not a student is intellectually hungry?

⁷⁸ Ferris Institute Journal, IX (July, 1906), p. 1; Folder FIFS, C15.

⁷⁹ Ibid. Also a booklet entitled The Water Power City 1906. Newton Collection. Nearly 100 graduates are listed in this booklet. Ferris claimed that over eighty Ferris Institute students attended the University of Michigan the previous year. Ferris Institute Journal, X (Oct., 1906); Folder FIFS, C15.



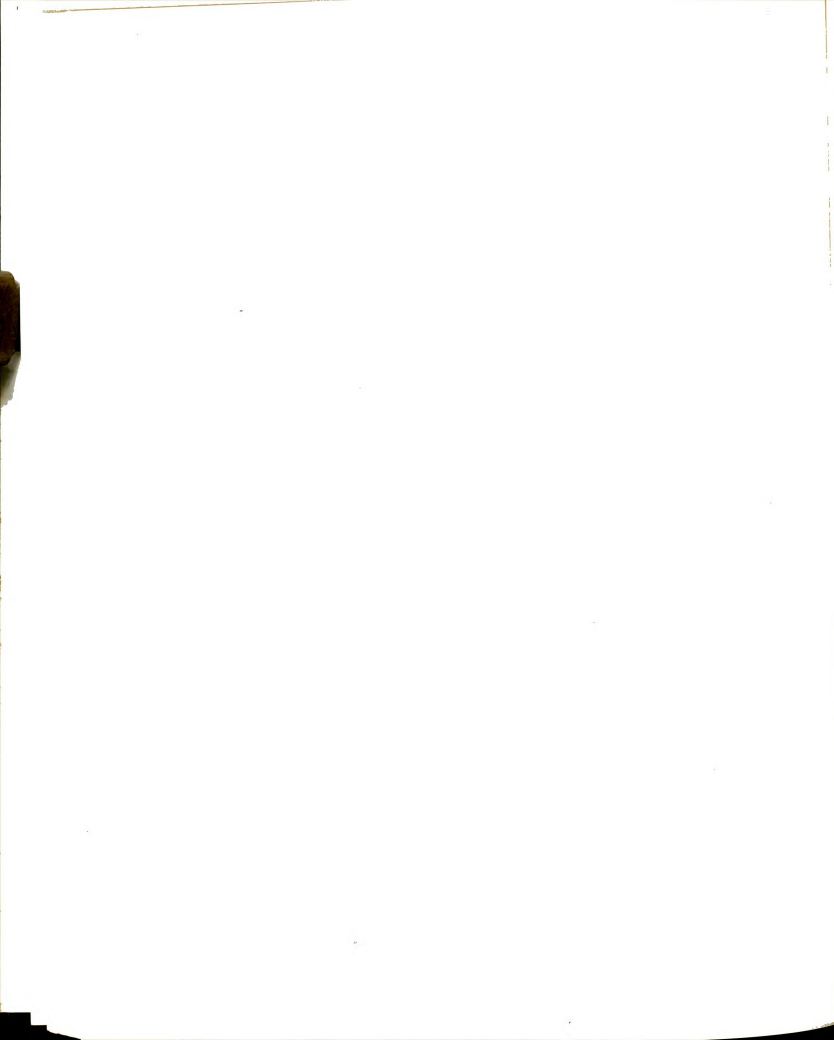
Meanwhile, in the classroom, some students were struggling to learn within adverse physical conditions, while others were receiving new facilities. For example, the railway mail clerk students were contending with room twenty-two and its broken windows, wire bound chairs and old tables.⁸⁰ Adding to their difficulties was a decision by Ferris to discontinue their program because of the reported uncertainty of government examination times. Apparently, this made it difficult to govern the length of the course.⁸¹

Those of the 2,000 students enrolled in 1906 who came from non-approved schools, both public and otherwise, were accepted at Ferris Institute, if they substantiated with evidence an acceptable academic record from their previous school.⁸² Some enrollees, regardless of their previous schooling were unable to pay the full tuition in a lump sum. To accommodate these students, the school developed a gradual payment plan, whereby the students could pay small sums over a period of time. In addition, provision was made for students to terminate their stay at the school and receive a tuition refund, if after six

⁸⁰Crimson and Gold, 1908.

⁸¹Ferris Institute Journal, X (July, 1910), p. 2.

⁸²Ferris Institute Journal, IX (July, 1906), p. 1; Folder FIFS, C15. The acceptable standard was 85 per cent. Basically, it applied to the higher education and teacher training programs.



weeks of study, they decided the school was not suitable for them.⁸³ However, Ferris did make it clear that the Institute would not pay railroad fare or hotel bills. As he explained it: "Loyal Americans do not want something for nothing, but they do want what they pay for."⁸⁴

After arriving at the school, new students were directed to their living quarters by student guides. Care was taken by school officials to closely inspect the admittance credentials of these new arrivals so classification could proceed smoothly and rapidly. In addition, students were urged to be prepared to do their best and:

Make study your business. Devote from one to two hours per day to healthful recreation. On Sunday, attend church and Sunday school or read some good book. Break bad habits by forming good ones. This is the end of education. If you wish to dissipate, don't come here. Cigarette fiends and those addicted to the liquor habit should enter a sanitarium instead of a college.⁸⁵

The continuity of Ferris' conservative educational thought is evident from these remarks. Had he not said earlier that manners and morals were more important educational goals than the acquisition of arithmetical skills?⁸⁶ Had he not agreed with Horace Mann's claim that formal

⁸³ Ibid. Of course, it could be the case that the student was not suitable for the school.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ See Chapter I, p. .



education could eliminate social vices and control the irrational propensities of man?

On the lighter side, the school revised and enlarged the music and drawing department with Louis Gerin as the first director of music helping students gain admittance to the senior class at Eastern State normal school.⁸⁷

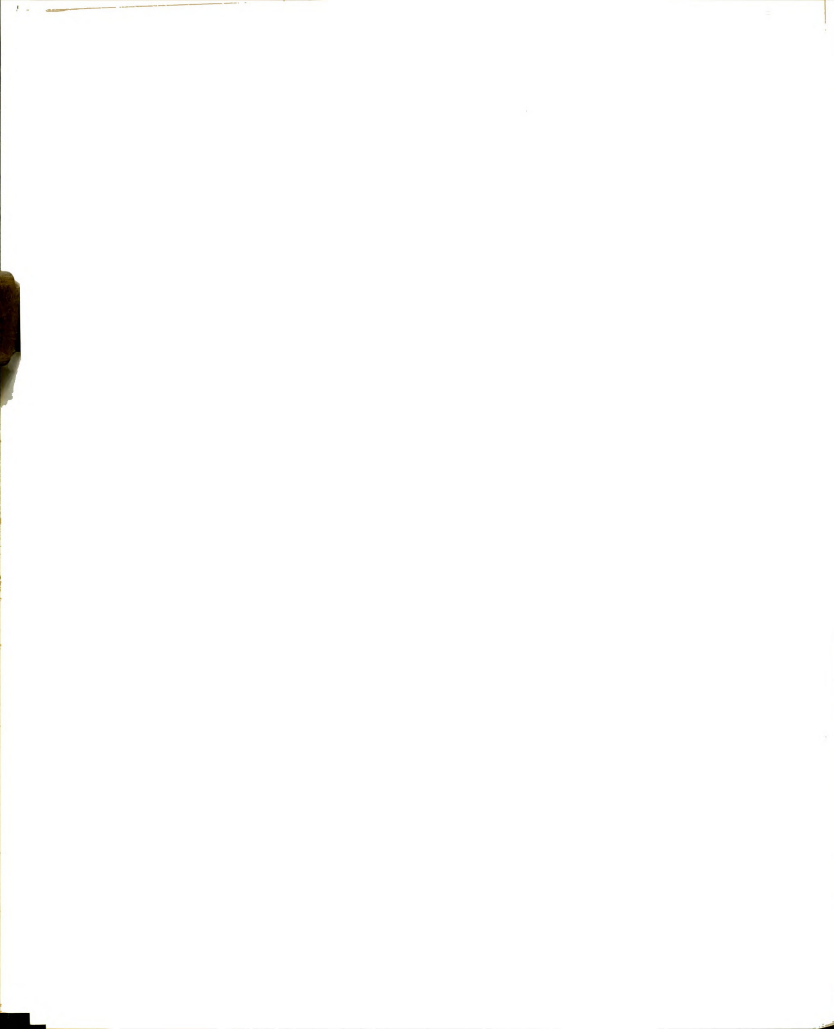
The hiring of Gerin also aided in giving direction to and unifying many school activities. "Under his able leadership began a flourishing music activities program encompassing a band, orchestra, chorus and several smaller groups, including a mandolin club."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Catalog (1907-1908), p. 13. The Michigan State Normal School was at Ypsilanti, Michigan. It is now Eastern Michigan University.

The faculty at Ferris Institute has increased from 22 in the 1906-07 school year to 27 in the 1907-08 school year. Big Rapids Pioneer, May, 1929.

⁸⁸ Dacho Dackoff, Michigan Music Educator (Feb., 1964). Folder FIFS D125. Dr. Dackoff was the director of music at Ferris State College in 1964. He claims that: "It was uncommon at the turn of the 20th century to identify proprietary schools, such as Ferris, with an organized music program. Woodbridge N. Ferris may be included among the pioneers in American education who maintained a music activities program under the guidance of full-time music teachers in a school which was not preparing music teachers. This practice still prevails." Ibid.

A new music hall was opened fall term, 1908. It adjoined the physical culture hall. Crimson and Gold, 1909. With the new music facilities Gerin was able to expand his program to include preparation of musicians for the morning exercises and to allow student selection of a normal or college preparatory subject each day. See Ferris Institute Journal, X (July, 1910), pp. 2, 4.



To report these various events and activities to students and faculty the Crimson and Gold⁸⁹ was founded. The editors of this first yearbook of the school dedicated their first issue to the "old man" and "Big Chief" as follows:

On the banks of the swift-flowing Muskegon,
Back from the noise of the town,
At the crest of one hill among many
Our own Ferris Institute's found.

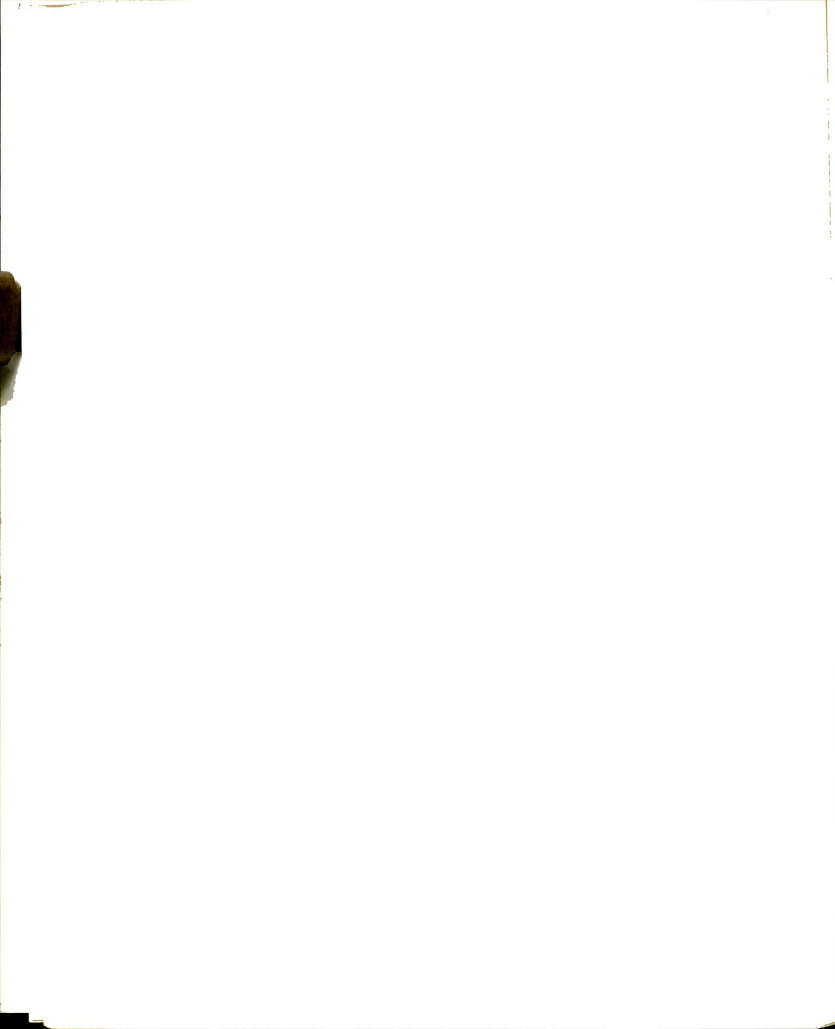
She is blessed by the one who begot her,
Who has guarded through many a strife,
He who urged you to come and who's led you,
To gain a new pathway to life.

Tis to these with their stores undiminished
And to you as you go from the fold,
With pleasure and very best wishes,
We dedicate Crimson and Gold.⁹⁰

Starting slowly, but moving persistently, the Crimson and Gold staff expanded its coverage of school activities and organizations. Organizational activities reported included those of the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. both of which grew out of weekly religious meetings held between 1902 and 1907. Early in 1907 interest was sufficiently strong to

⁸⁹ Apparently, the seniors had written a constitution for their class and then: ". . . deemed it their duty to look after the welfare of the school, and to this end proposed and formulated a plan for the publication of the Annual of which this brief history forms a part." Crimson and Gold, 1908.

⁹⁰ Crimson and Gold, 1908.



reserve a 4:40 p.m. time slot on Wednesday afternoon for religious services for interested students.⁹¹

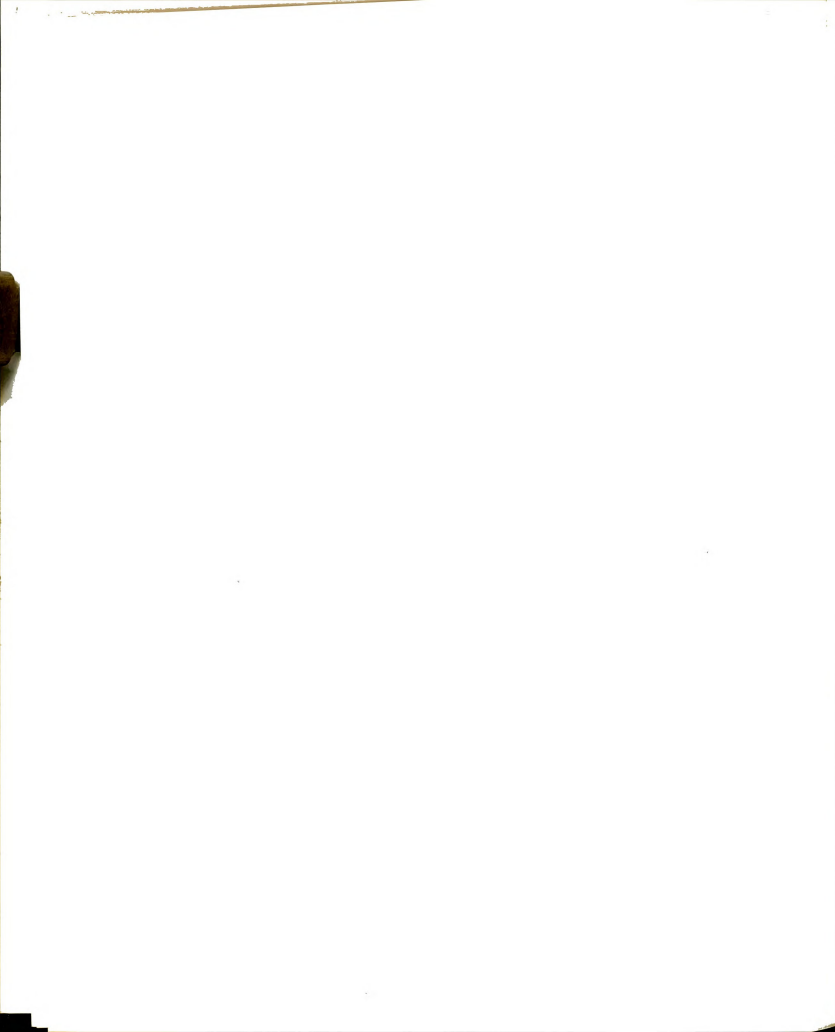
Founded in 1890, the Wednesday Night Debating Club was reported to be the oldest organization at the school. Mr. Ferris conducted its meetings until 1904 when Gerrit Masselink took over.⁹² The Monday Night Debating Club apparently resulted from the interests of former Webster Club members.⁹³ Offsprings of the Enlightenment, debating and literary societies served a need by stimulating intellectual life at the college. However, by 1913 there was increased public criticism of collegiate debating. Journals such as The Nation and The New Republic criticized such debate because it focused on the discussion of evidence to support a claim rather than argument over belief.⁹⁴

⁹¹Ibid. The Y.M.C.A. group was organized on March 5, 1907 with a charter membership of twenty-five. H. E. Rice is credited for its founding. Organized by Hallie Landers the Y.W.C.A. was devoted to: "... helping girls form desirable acquaintances, in visiting the sick, and in giving the clergy word to the discouraged and homesick, thus aiding all to do more earnest, practical and effective work and to attain a higher plane of Christian living."

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid. The Webster Club was an oratorical club dedicated to the memory of Daniel Webster.

⁹⁴Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 451.



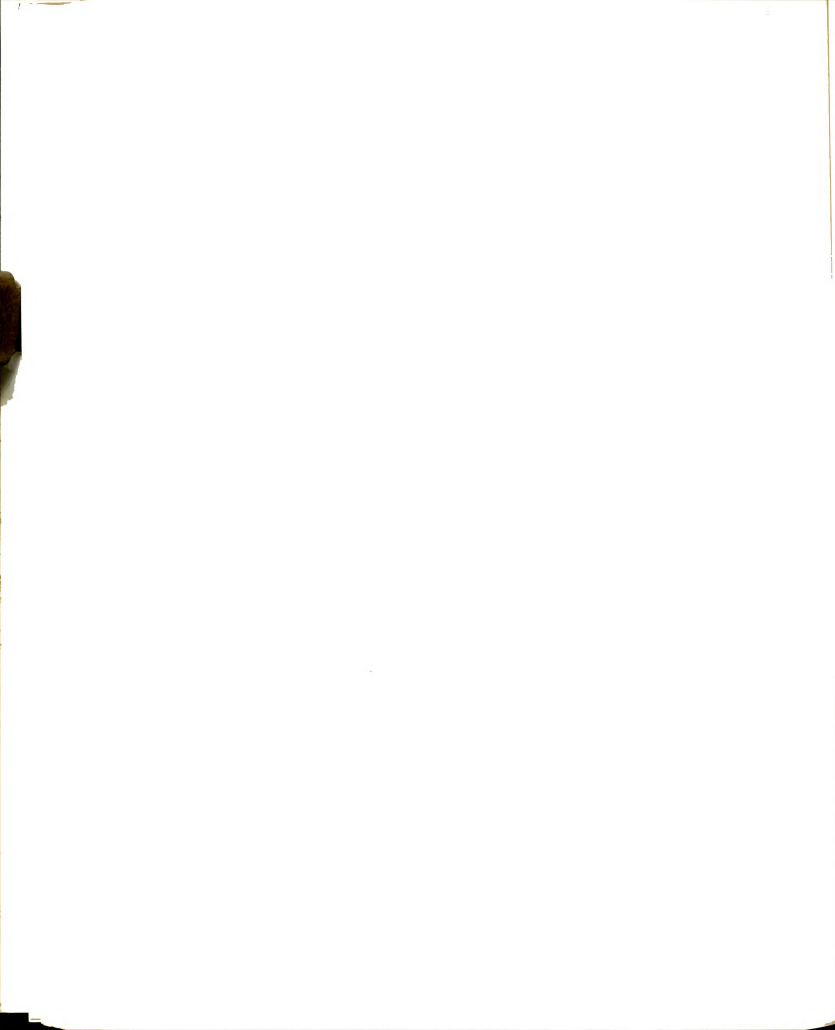
At Ferris Institute intellectual life outside the classroom was mostly confined to debating and literary societies while sociability was a key aim of certain clubs, fraternities and sororities. For example, members of the Upper Peninsula Club were both students and teachers from Michigan's upper peninsula who had as their object: ". . . to welcome new students from the Upper Peninsula, help them to become located, and increase the sociability of its members."⁹⁵ Fraternities included Phi Epsilon Alpha which was organized in 1921 with seven charter members and whose purpose was to promote: ". . . brotherly love and friendship more closely than is possible at the school alone, where all is business [and] to create a higher standing in studies. . . ."⁹⁶ Gamma Phi Sigma had been founded four years earlier for the purpose of creating: ". . . a closer band of fellowship among its members."⁹⁷ A literary fraternity, Sigma Alpha Beta reported that its primary objective: ". . . [was] to give every member ample opportunity to learn and discuss the questions of local and national importance that can not be conveniently studied in the classroom."⁹⁸ For the coeds there was Sigma Alpha Phi, formerly considered as a good

⁹⁵ Crimson and Gold, 1908.

⁹⁶ Crimson and Gold, 1923, p. 92.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 96.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 94.



time club but now reorganized: ". . . and a standard scholarship . . . required [of each member]." ⁹⁹

The organization of fraternities and sororities at Ferris Institute was preceded or paralleled by similar events at the University of Michigan, Michigan Agricultural College and several other schools in Michigan. By 1900 there were Greek organizations at Albion, Hillsdale, Adrian and Michigan State Normal College while at the University of Detroit and Michigan College of Mining and Technology social fraternities were established in 1917 and 1921 respectively. ¹⁰⁰

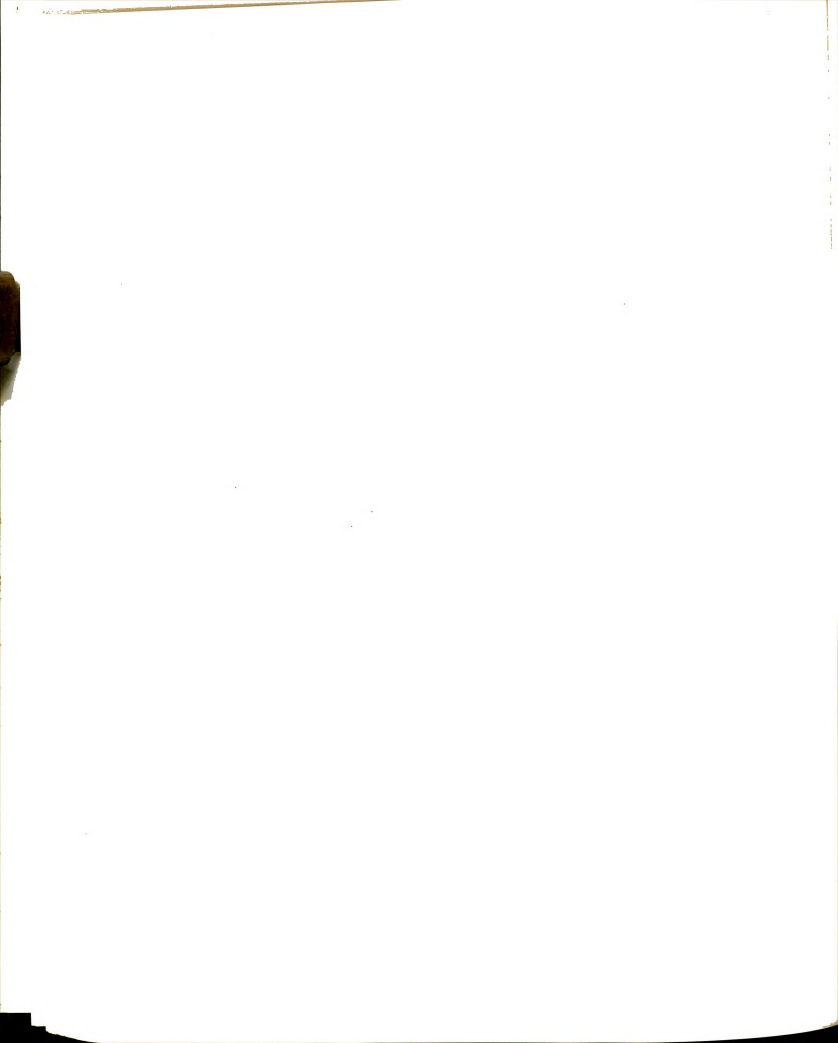
Added to debating and literary societies, fraternity and sororities were the rifle club, the show card class, the Kollege club and the Ferris Institute Lutheran League, all designed to add variety to the school's formal and informal programs. ¹⁰¹ The show card class was organized by R. R. Reed and during its eight weeks existence devoted itself to: ". . . learning various alphabets with the Speed Ball pins. Later, use of the brush was employed." ¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Crimson and Gold, 1924, p. 86.

¹⁰⁰ Dunbar, Higher Education, p. 181, citing Harold J. Bailly, ed., Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities (Menaska, Wisconsin: 1949).

¹⁰¹ Crimson and Gold, 1926, p. 27.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 81. This class learned to write and print with these instruments. For example, they would print in small capitals, large capitals, old English style and so forth.



The Kollege Club proposed to create bonds of friendship among its classmates,¹⁰³ while the Lutheran League was organized for the purpose of: ". . . studying the Scriptures, keeping in touch with church, fostering christian fellowship and sociability among students."¹⁰⁴ All of these activities paralleled similar events across the nation thus keeping Ferris students within the mainstream of American college activity throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century.

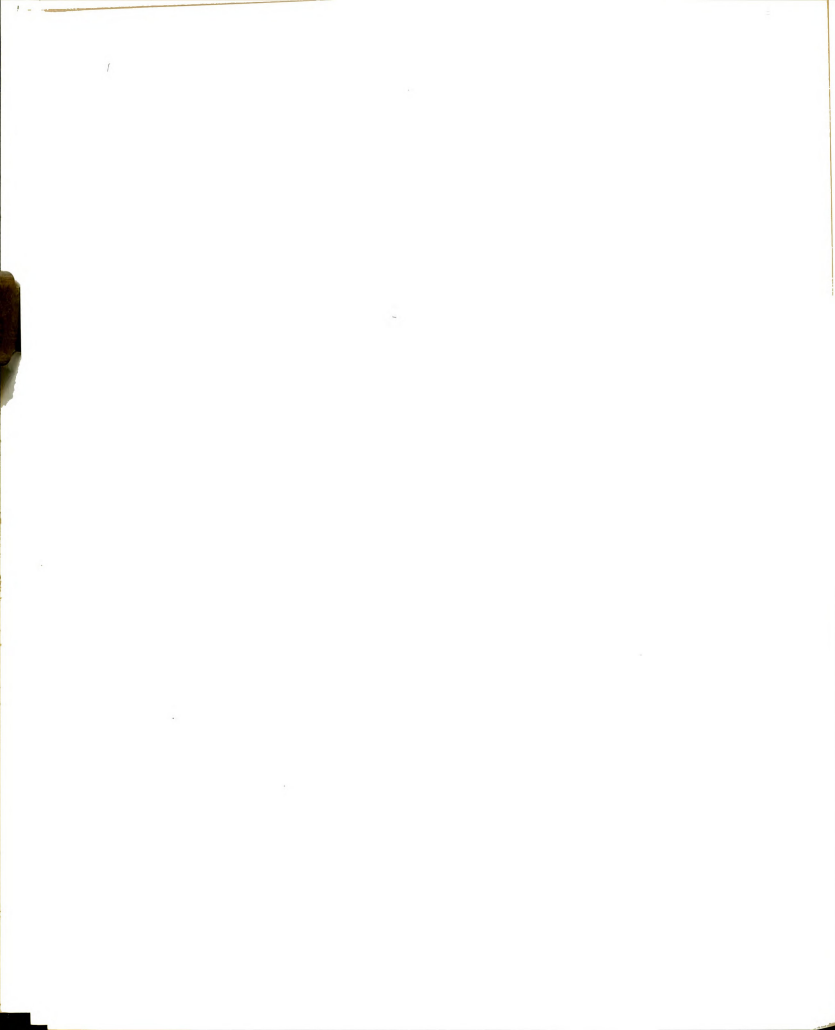
An Expanded Athletic Program

From its meager beginnings in 1898 the athletic program at Ferris Institute gained increasing importance during the first three decades of the new century. Nevertheless, the varsity athletic program remained in the shadow of other school activities; mainly due to Mr. Ferris' reluctance to endorse intercollegiate competition. The existing program was explained as follows:

It [the school administration] believes that athletics should assist the student but should not dominate his entire interests. During the spring there are usually three or four department baseball teams as well as a school team. The team this spring lost three games and won five. In the fall there will be football teams in the various departments. These usually

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁰⁴Crimson and Gold, 1925, p. 122.



produce friendly rivalry and give opportunity for diversion as well as recreation.¹⁰⁵

The place of varsity athletic competition in college life was a much debated late nineteenth and early twentieth century phenomenon. Indicative of the controversy were the contrasting remarks of President Charles Eliot of Harvard in 1893 and Theodore Roosevelt Jr. in 1905. Eliot reported that:

At these universities [those spending large sums of money on athletic programs] there must be constant economy and inadequacy in expenditure for intellectual objects; how repulsive, then must be foolish and pernicious expenditures on sports.¹⁰⁶

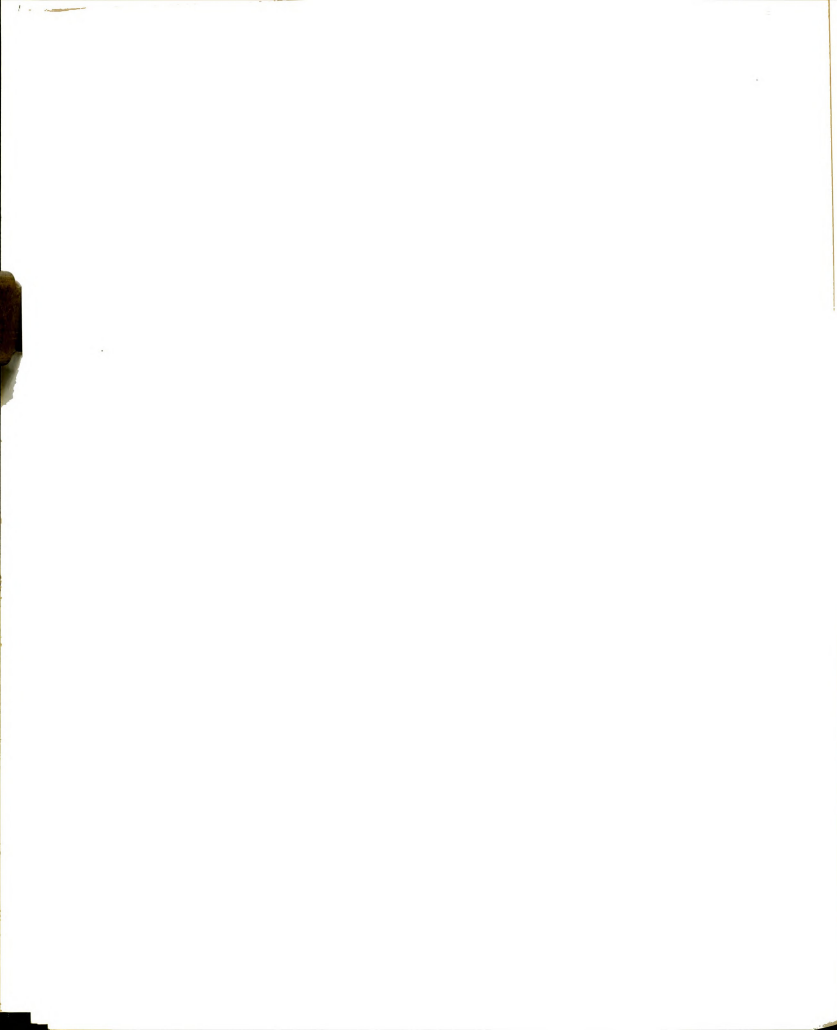
Young Roosevelt claimed: "I feel so large in my black sweater with the numerals on. Saturday's game was a hard one, as I knew it was bound to be. I was not seriously hurt at all. Just shaken up and bruised. I broke my nose."¹⁰⁷

Perhaps the most successful athletic program was the girls' basketball group consisting of fifty young damsels battling each other for the interdepartmental

¹⁰⁵ Ferris Institute Journal, X (July, 1910), p. 7; Folder FIFS, C15.

¹⁰⁶ Rudolph, The American College and University, p. 390, citing Henry D. Sheldon, The History of American Student Societies, p. 238.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., citing Samuel Morison, ed., The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, V, 94.



championship.¹⁰⁸ Some girls formed another group and played interschool rivals like Greenville High School. Unfortunately, these adventures were not always successful. "The F.I. girls played excellent ball but were handicapped by the fact that basketball to them was a side issue, while to the Greenville girls it was part of their school work."¹⁰⁹

To provide added spirit for social and athletic festivities, Louis Gerin and Charles Carlisle combined to write the Crimson and Gold.¹¹⁰ The spirit of this song along with "W.N. Big Chief" and the "Water Power City March," ". . . [typified] the GRIT that started the Ferris Institute and kept it going and also the determination of thousands of young folks who here have worked their way upwards and gone out to do battle in life."¹¹¹ This enthusiasm is expressed in the following words.

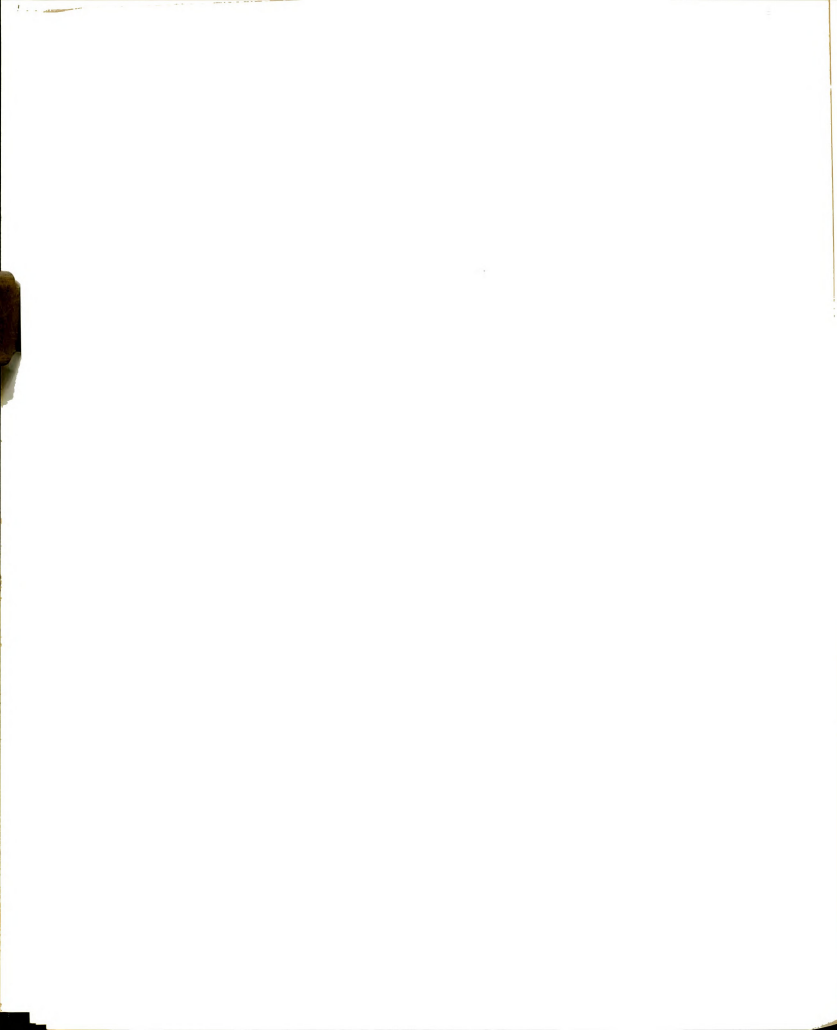
Three cheers for old F.I.
 Three cheers for the Crimson and Gold!
 May her colors fair, brighter radiance wear.
 As the years her worth unfold
 May her sons and daughters true

¹⁰⁸ Ferris Institute Advertiser, III (March, 1915), p. 22; Folder FIFS C17a.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ The Crimson and Gold was the official school song. Ibid., p. 12.

¹¹¹ Ibid.



Each with the other vie
 To make the world better for having known,
 And loved thee, dear old F.I.¹¹²

Along with other schools Ferris Institute lost many prospective athletes to the military during World War I. Unfortunately, the return of veterans failed to immediately alleviate the difficulty of fielding teams. Indicative of postwar problems was the football squad's two defeats in successive nights and a student rebuke of the coach.¹¹³ Complaining that the coach sacrificed the first game while anticipating the second the student asked if it wouldn't have been better to have kept the score down rather than play two games in as many days. "The responsibility for the outrage rests high. Lets have no more like it."¹¹⁴

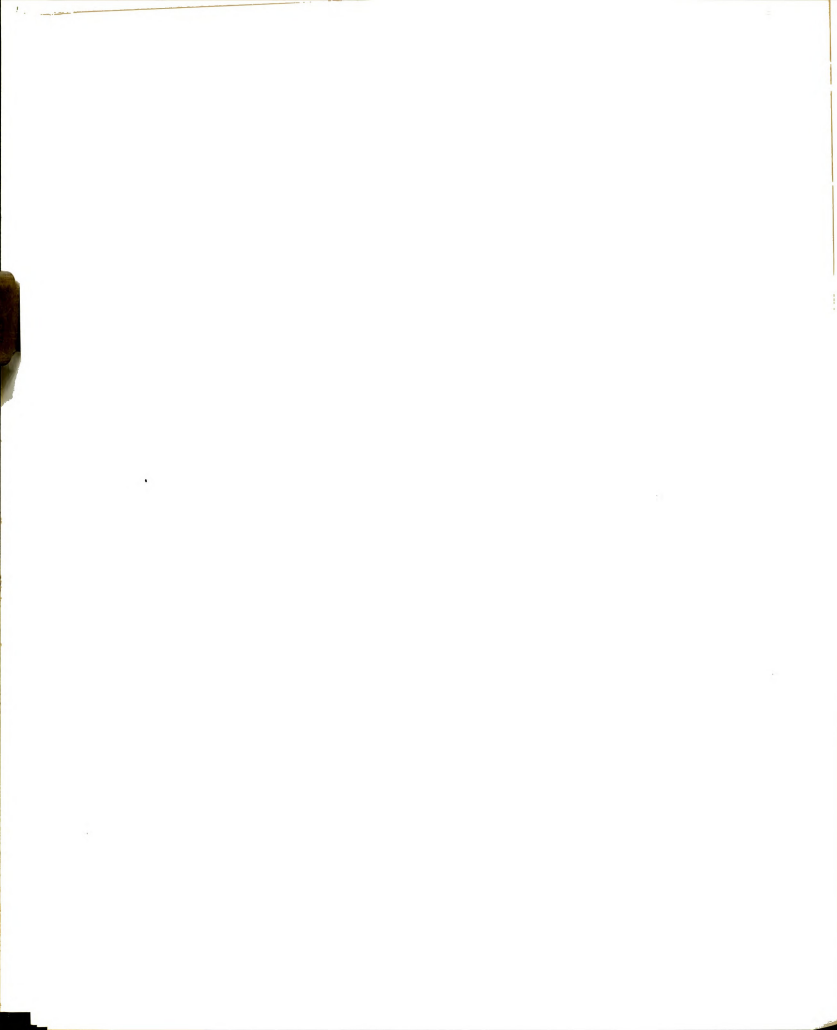
The postwar period brought the first paid basketball coach in the school's history when the Institute News reported that: "W. N. Ferris . . . commended him [Hein] for his good work . . . and for his clean athletic ideals and told him not to sign any outside contracts until he had notified him."¹¹⁵

¹¹²Ibid. The words to the two parts of the Crimson and Gold March. Jesse W. Crandell became the new music department head at the institute in Sept., 1916. Crimson and Gold, 1916, p. 115.

¹¹³Ferris Institute News (Nov. 4, 1920), p. 1; Folder FIFS, F3g1. Also see Folder FIFS, F3g2b for the first printed notice of a team name change from Bulldogs to Spartans.

¹¹⁴Ferris Institute News (Nov. 4, 1920), p. 1; Folder FIFS, G3g1.

¹¹⁵Ibid.



By 1925 Emmanuel M. Clark and Walter T. Hein had made the football, basketball and baseball programs integral parts of the school's recreational activities.¹¹⁶ Unfortunately, Hein's basketball team was hindered by the absense of proper playing facilities.¹¹⁷

Of equal importance to the majority of students was the development of an intramural program of speedball, basketball, tennis, fowl shooting, horseshoes and cross country running.¹¹⁸ This program was described and explained by intramural coordinator, Grover C. Baker on April 16, 1925. His views were similar to those of W.N.F.'s as expressed at the Executives Club in Chicago.

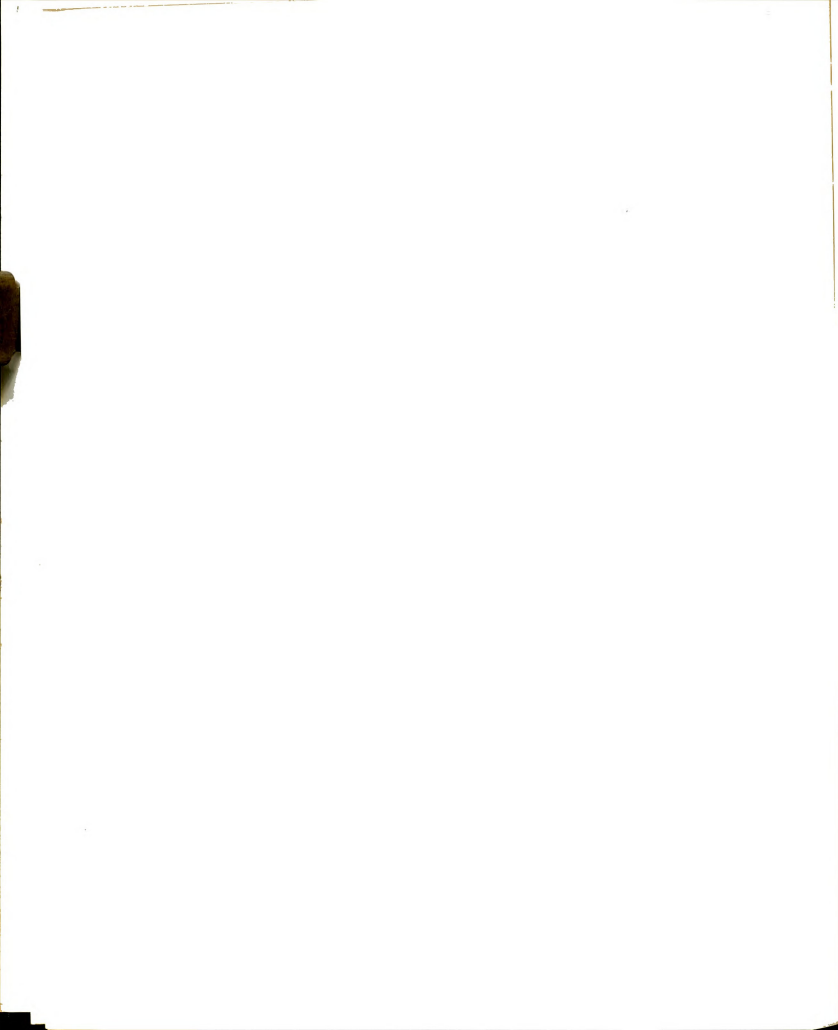
I object to the plan of substitution of a winning football game for the winning of intelligence. I am not against athletics but I believe that athletics should be participated in by a greater proportion of the students.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Crimson and Gold, 1924, p. 107. Hein had received some coaching instruction from Fielding H. Yost at the University of Michigan. The school did organize a hockey team and played games above the north dam on the Muskegon river.

¹¹⁷ Hein's football team did have a winning season with a 4-2-1 record. This 1924 team scored 115 points against their opponents 15. Folder FIFS, C2014. The basketball team was playing at the National Guard Armory in Big Rapids.

¹¹⁸ Crimson and Gold, 1925, p. 106. This program was developed by the Board of Control at the school.

¹¹⁹ Detroit News, Oct. 16, 1926, Folder FIFS, E2526a 4.



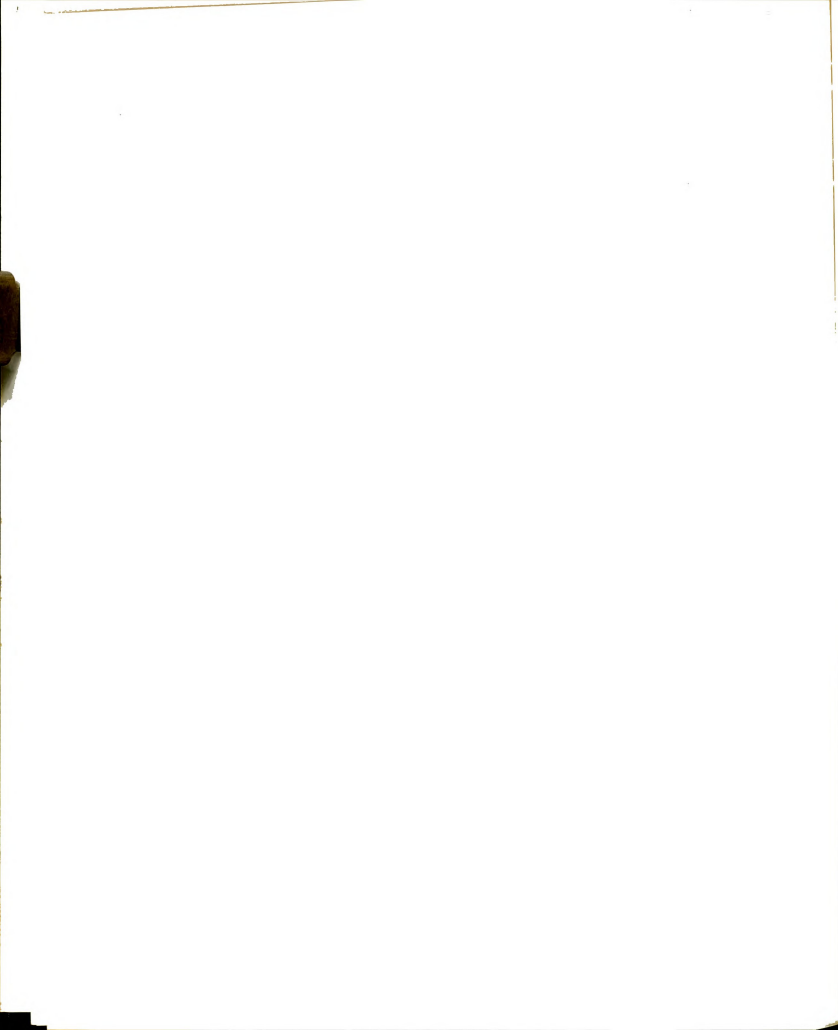
Intramural athletics had been a nineteenth century answer for those students not disposed to participate in varsity competition but who still desired physical exercise. For those students displaying exceptional skill an offer to try varsity athletics became increasingly common while their fellow intramural participants participated in greater numbers in non-varsity activities. Students with the necessary skill for varsity teams gained an exalted status at many colleges and the "Big Man on Campus" was no longer necessarily the scholar or the orator.¹²⁰

The Good Grey Governor

Previous mention has been made of Mr. Ferris' Democratic party affiliation in a basically Republican state. As a Democrat he was nominated and elected governor of Michigan in 1912.¹²¹ During the two terms he served in this position [1912-1916] Gerrit Masselink took over as acting president of the school.

¹²⁰Rudolph, The American College and University, p. 388.

¹²¹During his two terms as governor, Mr. Ferris frequently returned to the school to address morning exercises and preside at special events. The daily administrative details were left to Mr. Masselink, although, the governor did maintain as much contact with the school as possible. The Institute News, VII (April 25, 1929), p. 3; Folder F1F5, F3g2b, reported that when Ferris was elected governor in 1912 and chose Masselink to head the school he [Masselink] ". . . caused no hitch in the curriculum, and although burdened with a great amount of work and responsibility, he continued to teach classes and in no way did he slight his outside activities. He was, as a rule, working fifteen hours a day."



Campus campaigning for Mr. Ferris was vigorous. On November 4, 1912 he addressed over 1,000 students who subsequently paraded through the streets of Big Rapids playing music and lighting fireworks.¹²² Four days later hundreds of students attended a reception for Mr. and Mrs. Ferris at the Colonial theatre in Big Rapids.¹²³

The extent of political feeling on the campus was indicated by the formation of Progressive and Democratic clubs who publicly debated each other.¹²⁴ The Crimson and Gold provided commentary on the results of these debates in the following manner.

. . . the Democrats had fought their fight in an orderly and logical manner while the Progressives had shot wild and were at times disconnected, and therefore, the decision was rendered in favor of the Democrats by a vote two to one.¹²⁵

Remembering that Mr. Ferris was a Democrat provides one with a base from which to judge the objectivity of these remarks. These campus political activities continued throughout the 1913-1914 school year.¹²⁶ In addition, the

¹²² Crimson and Gold, 1913.

¹²³ Ibid. A material gain of the campaign was a new Chalmers automobile which Mr. Ferris purchased after apparently withstanding the temptation for years. Big Rapids Pioneer, Aug. 30, 1912, Newton Collection; Folder 1911-1912.

¹²⁴ Crimson and Gold, 1913, p. 82.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ferris Institute Advertiser, III (Dec., 1914), p. 23; Folder FIFS C17. The F. I. Advertiser was a school publication under the leadership of W. W. Knisley. It



campaign trail for W.N.F. led to copper country talks, and the development of Ferris Booster Clubs throughout Michigan. The Booster Clubs represented Ferris alumni who renewed their support for the good grey governor they had helped elect in 1912.¹²⁷ One of the largest and most active clubs was the Detroit group who expressed their feelings towards W.N.F. in the following manner.

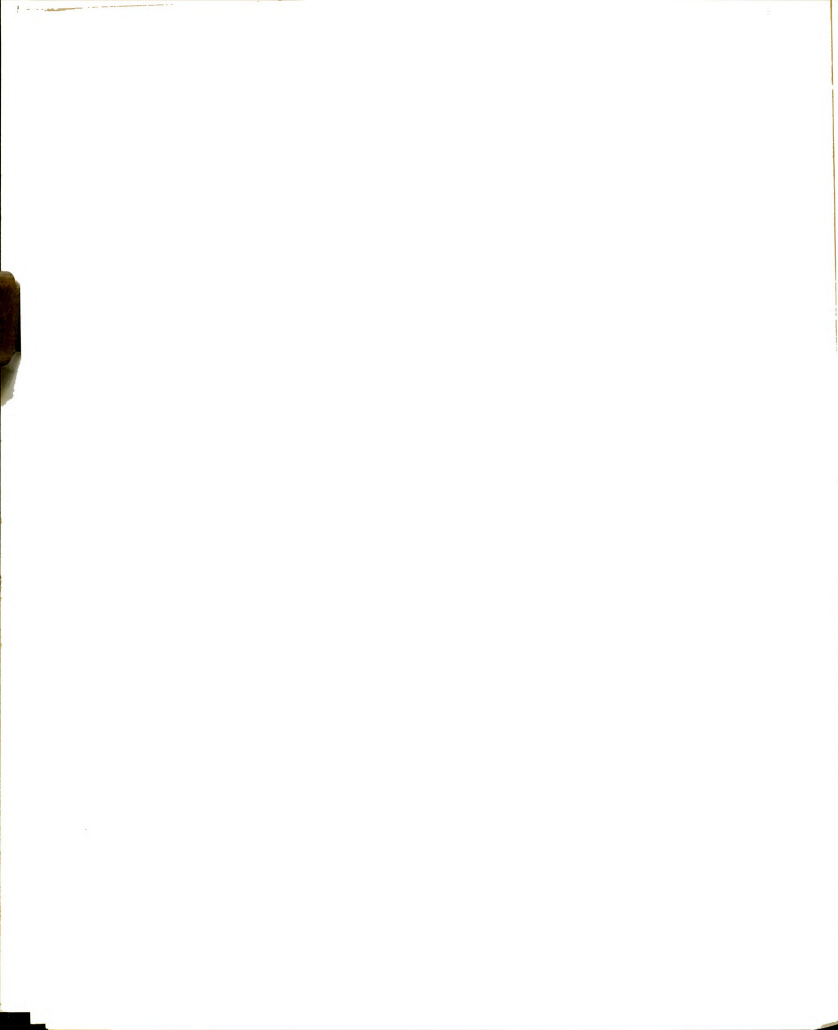
Fair, Fair, Ferris
 Free and Fearless!
 Three cheers, now, three hearty cheers!
 While we greet our Governor
 Whom we'll honor evermore
 With the right good will he's earned and
 kept for years.¹²⁸

contained information for students on school policy, regulations, requirements, social activities and athletic events. At this time the school appeared solvent with a surplus of \$65,972.19. From a typed sheet found in the School Records Aug. 1910-July 1914. The total school budget was listed at \$108,612.19 which included \$87,000 for buildings and improvements, and \$44,102.73 for salaries. Ibid. Cash on hand reported at \$17,914.14. Dividends of \$2,558.40 were recorded, with W.N.F. receiving \$1,800.00 and George Fairman \$44.00. These figures indicate that financial control of the school was still with Mr. Ferris. Dividend totals in the School and Student Records May, 1913-Aug., 1915, are \$2,510.40 as of Aug. 28, 1914. Figures in the School Records Aug. 1910-July 1914 show dividend totals to be \$2,558.40 also as of Aug. 28, 1914.

Total Assets	\$108,612.19
Total Liabilities	42,640.00
	<u>\$165,972.19</u>

¹²⁷Ibid. (Nov., 1914), pp. 14, 21-28; Folder FIFS, C17.

¹²⁸Ferris Institute Advertiser, III (Dec., 1914), P. 5; Folder FIFS, C17.



Apparently, there were other opinions about Mr. Ferris, Mr. Masselink and school activities. The following commentary was written during W.N.F.'s two terms as governor.

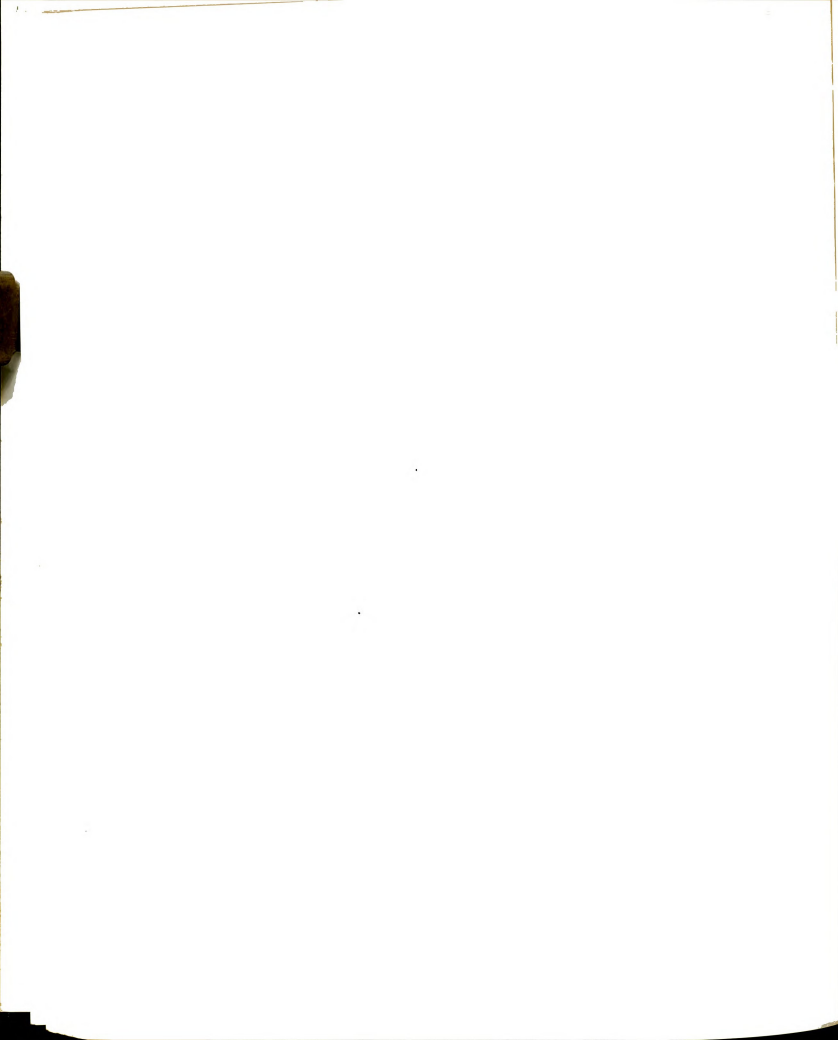
Holy God, but what a crew
Magoon, Knisley and Ferris too,
What a bunch of dizzy Janes
It's enough to turn one's brains,
Sop heads, pin heads, heads galore,
Bobbing in and out of every door,
Talking, laughing, swearing some
Red-head mollies chewing gum.

Every one has got a book
In which they seldom look,
Yet they say the school is punk,
If by chance they hap to flunk,
Then up to Rapid Cal we go
Where Branes displays what he doesn't know.
Another hour gone to Hell
Before some Lobster rings that bell.

In the Morn at eight o'clock
W.N. begins to talk
No, by Gosh, talk is not the word
Since for a mile he can be heard,
For half an hour or more he raves
And from the platform he widely waves
A book of manners at us Yaps,
And tells of the dirty Japs.

And then by all the God's above
He even criticizes love
And stamps around and paws the air
And finally sinks down in a chair,
It's ten o'clock all be weep
For into the typewriting room we must creep
And bang on the worst machines
The United States has ever seen.

Centuries have passed since it has been made,
I pitty [sic] the crowd that on it have played,
But God help the sinners that are yet
To fall into the hands of the Suffragets
That reigns supreme in the Hall of Doom
Sarcastically called the Typewriting Room.



At eleven o'clock I staggered about
 Completely wilted down and out
 Then off I drift to an eating place
 And vainly try to feed my face,
 And for an hour to ease my brain
 And smoke my peace pipe again.¹²⁹

The development of Progressive and Democratic groups on campus paralleled a similar move in Michigan politics. Ferris received the nod for governor thanks to a split within the Republican ranks.¹³⁰ It is claimed that:

The progressive movement in Michigan reached its height during the Ferris administration. The initiative, referendum, and recall were added to the constitution by amendment. During Ferris' second term a prohibition amendment was added to the constitution.¹³¹

While Mr. Ferris was carrying the progressive banner in Lansing Ferris Institute among other things was adding to its program. Additions included an advertising and salesmanship course, a Thursday evening literary club, a round table discussion group and a railway office training department.¹³²

The War to End All War

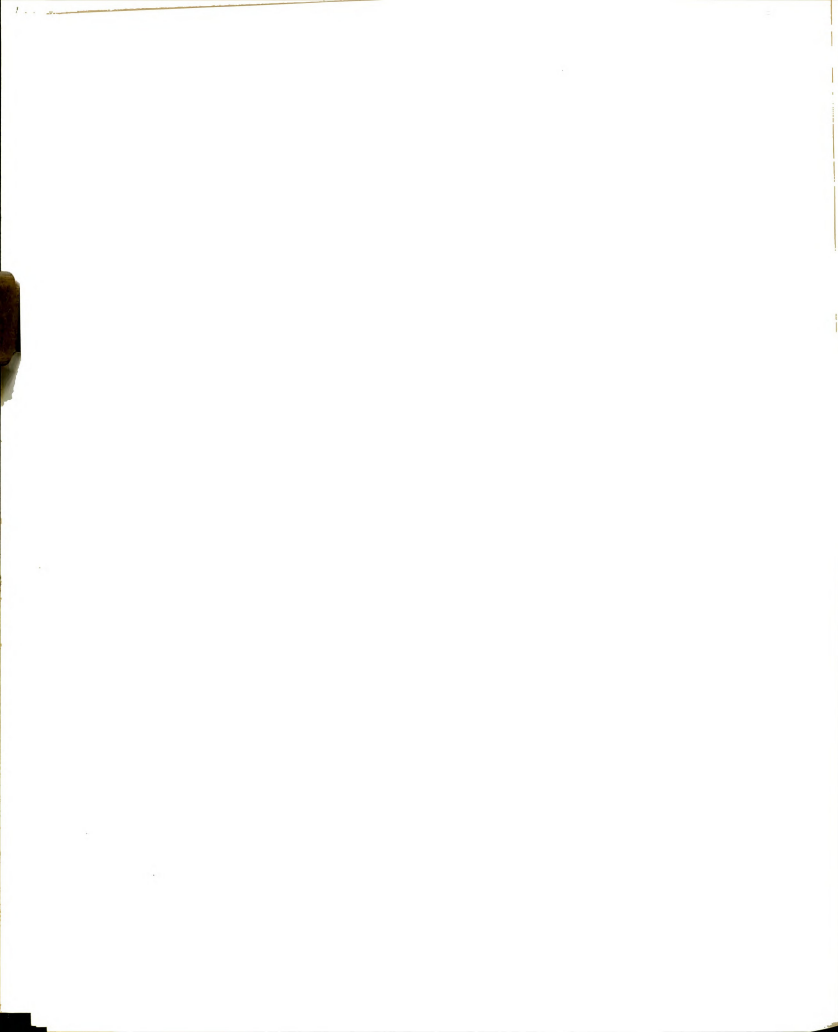
All activities at Ferris Institute were in some way transformed or altered by the war in Europe. The war to

¹²⁹ Glen Taylor, "High Life at the Old F.I.," Folder FIFS, F3jlg.

¹³⁰ Dunbar, Michigan History, p. 543.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Crimson and Gold, 1914, p. 50. Also see pp. 19, 89, 99.



end all war was developing and eventually would take its toll at the school; both in human lives and modified programs.

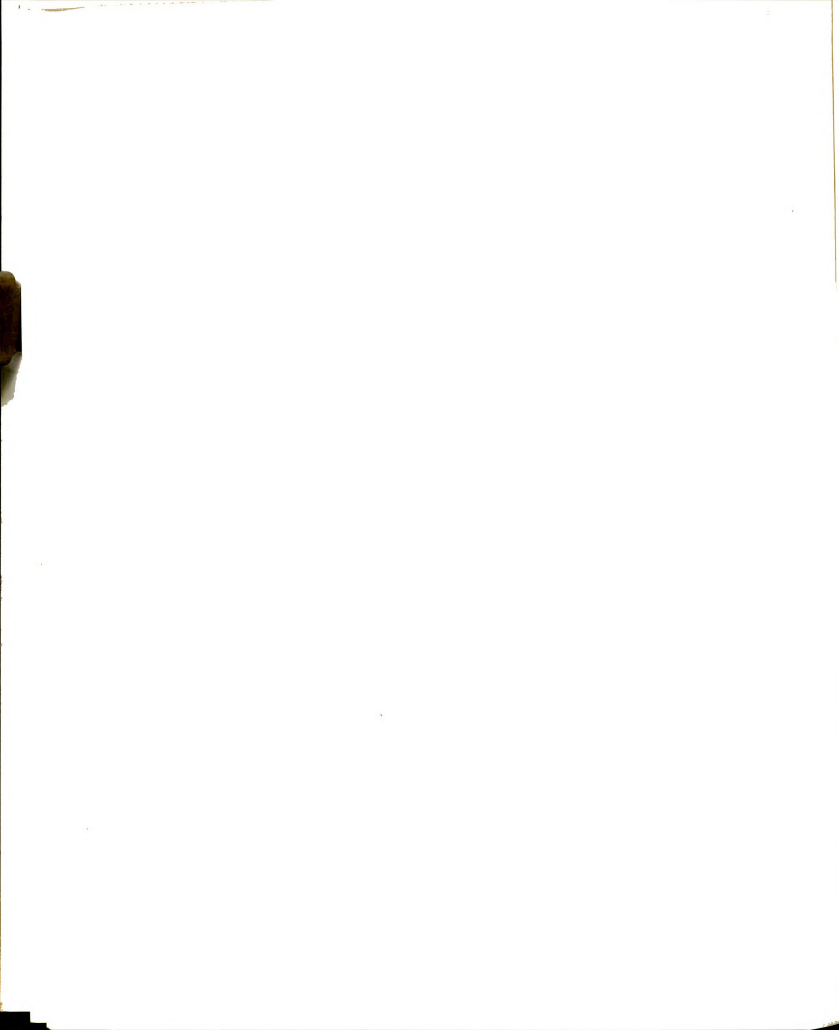
The institute became a center of activity as war related programs and organizations were developed to aid in the struggle. Some students joined the local Red Cross, and under the leadership of Miss McNerney and Mrs. Ford made surgical dressings and other medical necessities. Every Wednesday evening nearly 100 girls walked to Red Cross headquarters to be of whatever assistance possible. Many students also contributed to the War Friendship fund by surpassing their \$500.00 goal and collecting \$1,275.00 in one hour.¹³³

Some faculty members joined the Michigan State Troops known as the Home Guards, while others traveled throughout Mecosta county advertising liberty loans, war savings stamps, food conservation, and the Red Cross.¹³⁴ Often the school band would accompany the faculty to various campaign locations to arouse enthusiasm for the cause of the United States and the democratic system of government.¹³⁵

¹³³Crimson and Gold, 1918, p. 113.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 101. Thirteen of fourteen Y.M.C.A. officers elected in the spring of 1918 failed to return to school in the fall. All thirteen entered the United States military services.



The "patriotic school"¹³⁶ could boast of 700 students, both past and present who had entered the armed forces of the United States. Other effects of the war included urgent appeals by Ferris to teachers, civil service workers, and shorthand specialists to renew their certificates, requests for female pharmacists to replace absent men, and advice to high school dropouts about completing their eleventh and twelfth grades at the institute.¹³⁷

With these appeals to prospective students to fill the gaps in enrollment left by service men, the school was once again fighting for survival. Mr. Ferris showed his discouragement over the situation in June, 1918 when he said that:

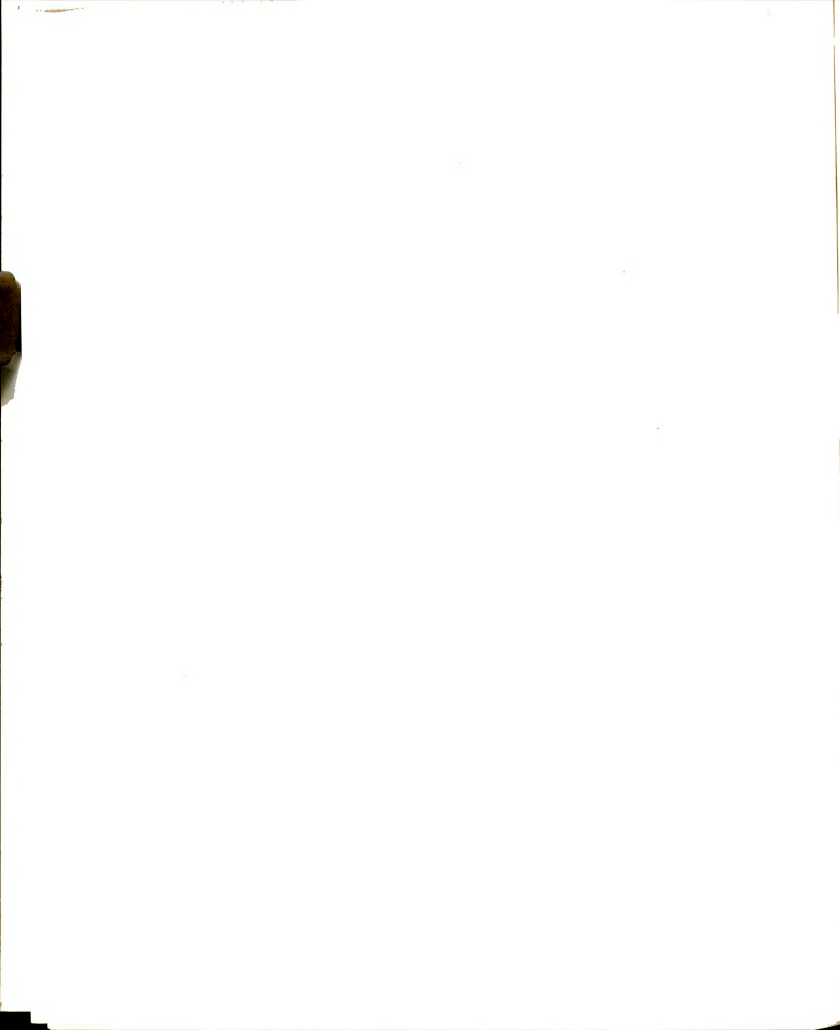
. . . I shall lose money this year, but not next year. I shall use fewer teachers - cut down expenses and prepare for several years of stringency. The war threatens to ruin the whole world. I do not like to talk about it or think about it.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ The editors of the Crimson and Gold put this label on the school. Ferris and Masselink joined their colleagues in supporting the war effort by working on the county war board. Crimson and Gold, 1918, p. 93.

¹³⁷ What School (1918), p. 8; Folder FIFS, Cl6a. Both the music and art departments were discontinued. What School (1918), Newton Collection.

¹³⁸ Letter, W.N.F. to Mother and Sister, June 16, 1918, AA Aa; Michigan Historical Collections, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Nineteen graduates were in the army and many others hindered from graduating by the military draft. Letter, W.N.F. to Mother and Sister, July 4, 1918; Folder FIFS, Aa 2b.

It was reported in the Big Rapids Pioneer, May 14, 1929, that 26 instructors were at the institute during the 1917-1918 school year while 23 taught during the 1918-1919 school year.



Bert Travis had commented on the plight of the school in 1917 when he reported that hardly a day passed without some young man receiving a notice to report for military duty.¹³⁹ He speculated that the school would have been in more difficulty had the war lasted another year and more young men left the institute.¹⁴⁰

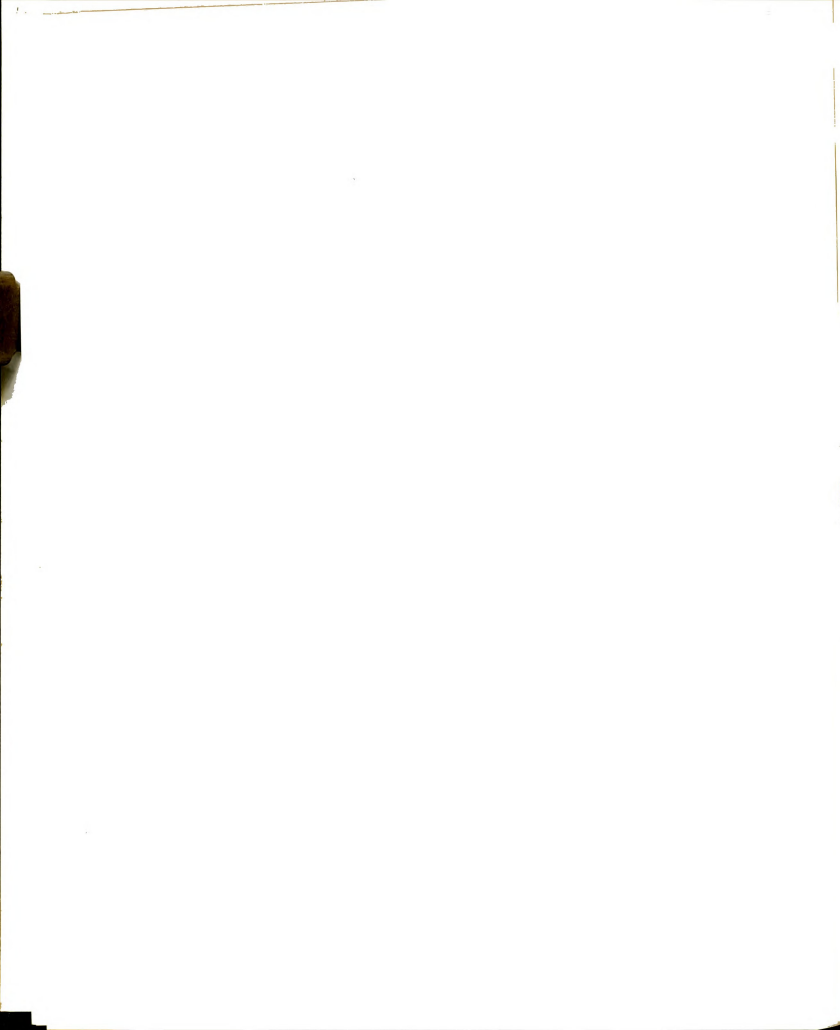
When the war ended, Mr. Ferris had been back in his traditional position as president of Ferris Institute for approximately two years and conducting his program for analyzing student character. By this time, however, he had doubts about phrenology and was following vocational guidance and intelligence tests used by the United States Army. Along with O. O. Bishop¹⁴¹ Ferris continued to interview students in attempts to determine their fitness for pursuing certain courses of study.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Bert S. Travis, "The Institute, Past, Present," Big Rapids Pioneer, May 14, 1929; Folder FIFS, D17.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ What School (1918), Folder FIFS, C16a. This skill was often termed a scientific one.

¹⁴² Catalog (1920-1921), p. 21. Typical questions asked by Ferris in an interview are listed as follows:
 1. What ancestor do you resemble most? 2. What grade of education do you have? 3. At what have you worked for a wage? 4. Have you ever been discharged from a position? 5. Do you plan on attending an institution of higher learning? 6. Have you the reading habit? 7. What is your chief amusement? 8. Do you attend church? 9. Are you a church member? 10. Are you timid or bold? 11. Are you determined or yielding? 12. Are you a leader or conformer? 13. Do you ever have the blues? 14. Do



Ferris' prediction that the end of the war would be a turning point in the history of the school was partially verified when 300 disabled veterans enrolled for rehabilitation training.¹⁴³ Other signs of growth included the addition of a cafeteria¹⁴⁴ and expansion of the curriculum to twenty-six regular and seven special courses of study.¹⁴⁵

Of particular importance to the regular curriculum was the addition of a chemistry department.¹⁴⁶ Another important event was the construction of a fifteen bed hospital equipped to handle those students who contracted

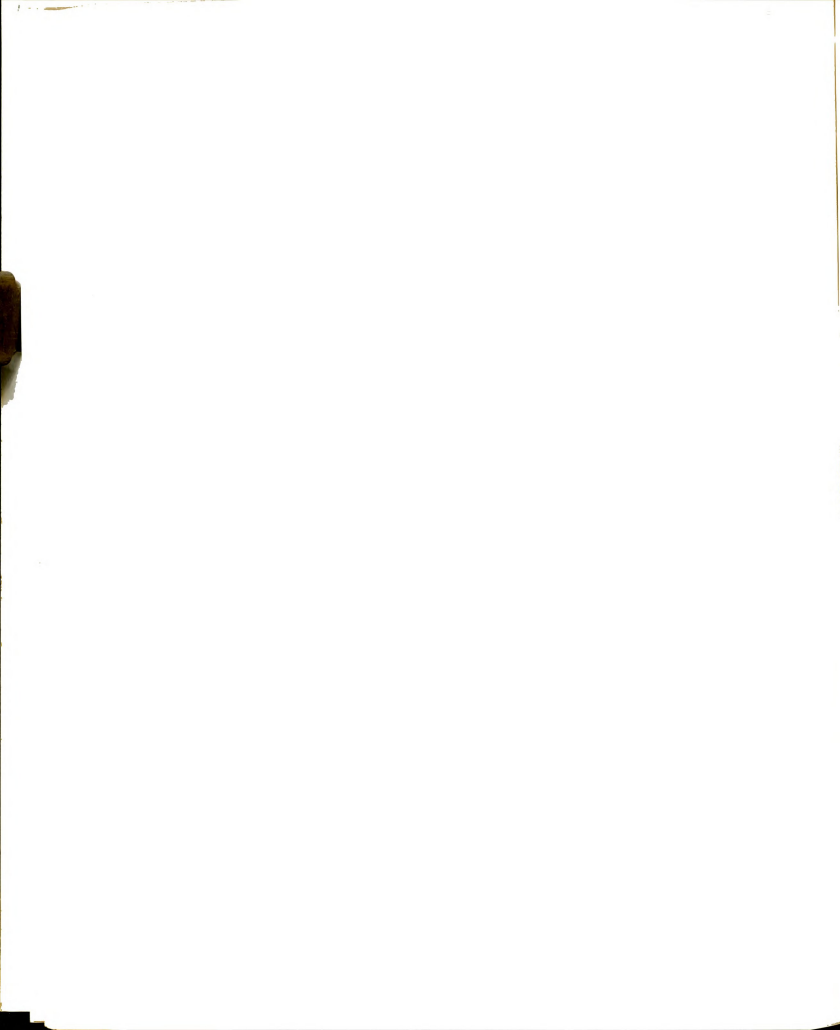
you plan whatever you have to do? 15. What are your worst and best habits? 16. Can you concentrate? 17. What occupation would you like to follow? 18. What occupation do you expect to follow? 19. Are you physically strong? 20. What American, living or dead, do you most admire?

¹⁴³Bert S. Travis, "The Institute, Past, Present" Big Rapids Pioneer, May 14, 1929; Folder FIFS, D17.

¹⁴⁴The cost of living had increased since World War I. "In order to assist this worthy-class of students [those desiring to attend but unable to afford the cost] we opened a cafeteria at the Institute. We have provided meals (self-served) to an average daily total of 450 students. This has been done with an average saving of one dollar per week for each student. We have tried to eliminate all profit for the Institute. Catalog (1920-1921), p. 18. It had a seating capacity of 100 and served meals between 6:17 a.m. and 7:30 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and 12:45 p.m., 5:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. What School (1919), Folder FIFS, C16a.

¹⁴⁵What School (1919), Folder, C16a. The special courses were military training for students going to Annapolis or West Point, debating, secretarial work, civil service, teacher certification and vocational guidance.

¹⁴⁶Crimson and Gold, 1920, p. 53. There were fourteen members of this department.

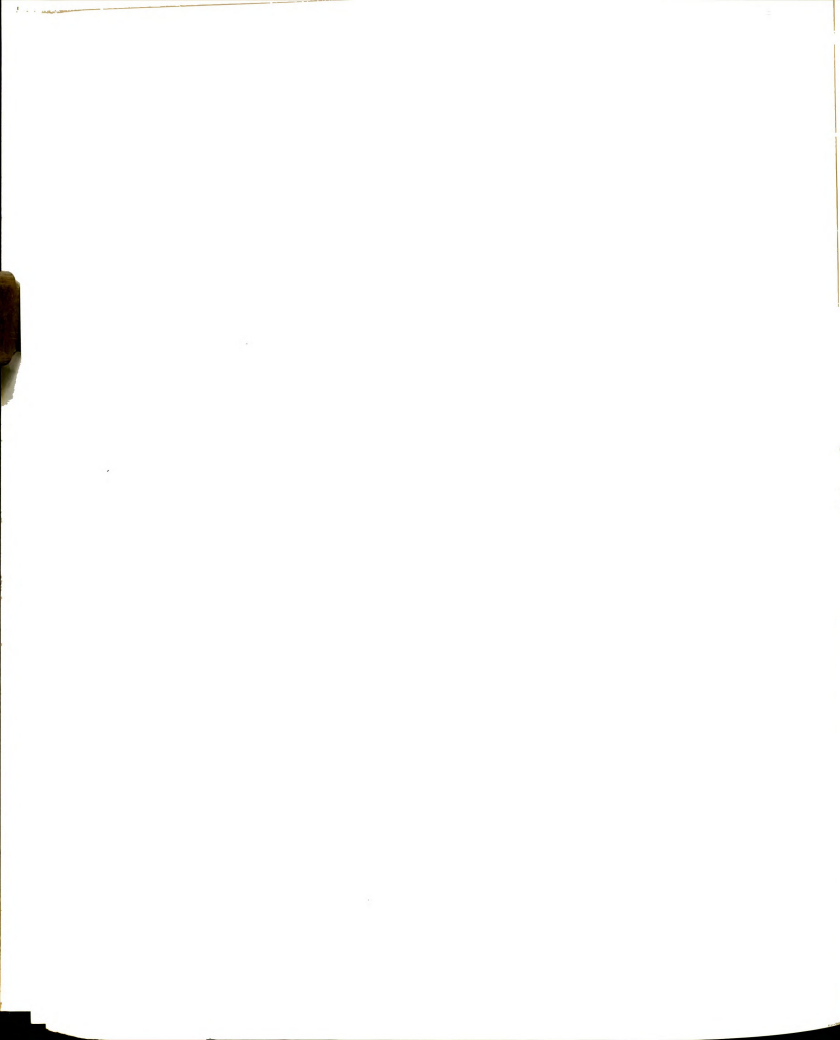


smallpox, scarlet fever, diptheria or other contagious diseases.¹⁴⁷ Students were also aided by newly acquired access to the Big Rapids City library. For Ferris students, this was their best equipped facility containing current newspapers and magazines.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Catalog (1920-1921), p. 19. Miss Nancy Wive was in charge of the hospital. Crimson and Gold, 1920, p. 68. There was an influenza scare in the winter of 1920. "Influenza is running riot in the school and in the city. Most of the cases are light, although succeeding cases are getting more severe." Letter, W.N.F. to Sister Sarah, Feb. 15, 1920, AAAa, M.H.C. No indication was made as to whether the hospital took in students. The student population as reported in the 1920-1921 edition of the Catalog, p. 52 was as follows:

College Preparatory	900
Normal	753
English	219
Commercial	853
Shorthand	707
Pharmacy	272
Telegraphy	136
Kindergarten	66
Civil Service	324
Penmanship, Drawing and Typing	42
Music	308
Total	4288
Repeated Names	568
Revised Total	3720

¹⁴⁸ Catalog (1920-1921), p. 13. Apparently, the younger citizens of Big Rapids had supplied the library with these materials. Ibid., p. 18. Pharmacy graduates were also pleased when the State Board of Pharmacy gave permission for them to write the registered druggist examination without prior school experience. Catalog (1920-1921), p. 29. The pharmacy department had grown to include a 125 seat lecture room, along with a refurbished and enlarged laboratory designed to accommodate sixty students. There was also a qualitative analysis laboratory designed to take 100 students. Ibid., p. 30. Students wishing to take credits acceptable by the Board of Pharmacy had to enter the school in September, and work for nine continuous months. Short course students were scheduled for September - November 15, and January 1 - March 15. Ibid., p. 32.



Armistice Day 1920 was celebrated by students and faculty with a parade, a speech by Ferris and sporting events in the afternoon.¹⁴⁹ Sporting activities included a football game at the Reunion grounds, a trench raid by the veterans,¹⁵⁰ and boxing matches.¹⁵¹

The trench raid by veterans and the development of a Regular Officers Training Corp at Ferris Institute were reminders that the war to end all war was unsuccessful. World political tensions and military activity give further credence to this view. Nevertheless, W.N.F. made it clear that the ROTC group also participated in non-military activities.¹⁵² An example of this non-military activity was the aid given by the group to patients of Mercy Hospital caught in a fire. For these actions they received a commendation from the War Department and the Big Rapids City Commission.¹⁵³

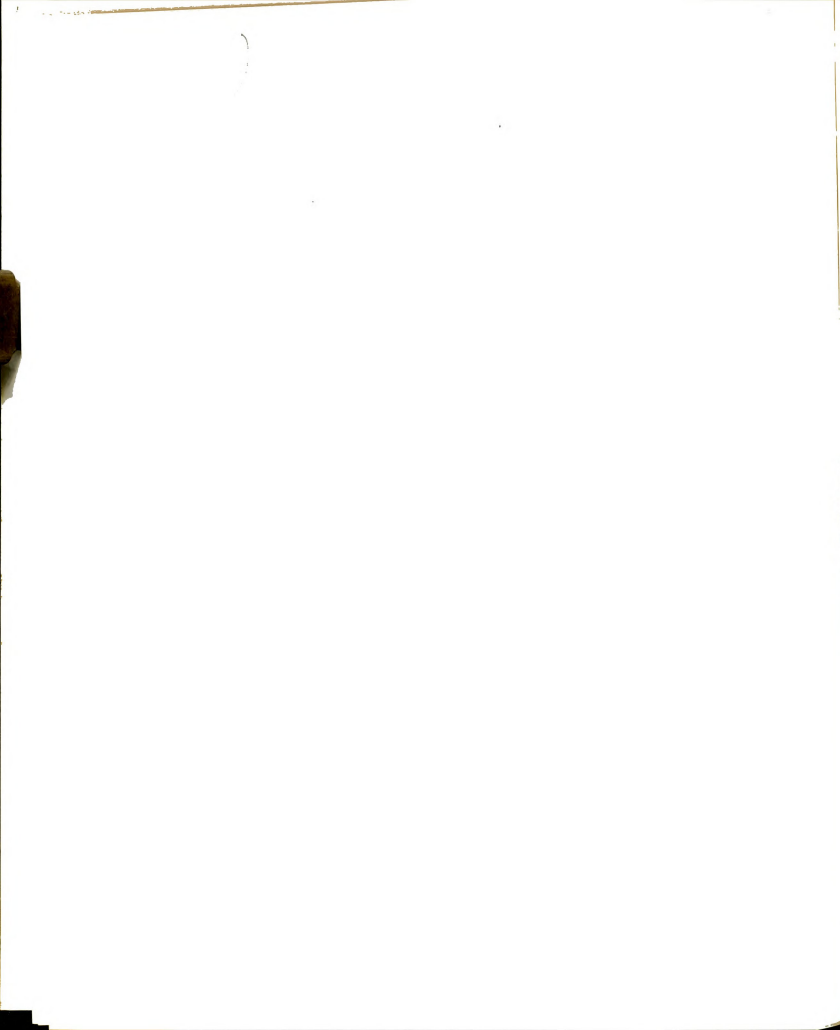
¹⁴⁹The Crimson and Gold, 1920; reported a 10 a.m. school dismissal while the Ferris Institute News (Nov. 4, 1920); Folder FIFS, F3g1, said it closed at noon.

¹⁵⁰Ferris Institute News (Nov. 4, 1920); Folder FIFS, F3g1. Those veterans familiar with trench warfare displayed their skills.

¹⁵¹Crimson and Gold, 1920, p. 86.

¹⁵²Ibid., p. 100. The program included (1) training in health habits and personal hygiene, (2) military training and instruction, (3) utilization of natural competitive instincts, (4) teaching a sense of duty to one's country by preparing one for active citizenship. Ibid., p. 84.

¹⁵³Crimson and Gold, 1920, p. 100. Another group organized by former soldiers was the Federal Board Club. It



With the war years over the institute braced itself for an uncertain yet hopeful future. Now twenty years into the new century the school had survived what could have been disastrous financial difficulties only to face reorganization in the twenties.

Reorganization of the School

Financially, the 1919-1920 school year proved more successful than the war years.¹⁵⁴ With salaries and dividends rising, it appeared that the school was going to enter the "ballyhoo years"¹⁵⁵ as a financially stable institution. The following comparison of dividends are indicative of the improved financial condition of the school (Table 1).

Important additions to the Ferris family¹⁵⁶ included Mary Ethel McCloud, Ferris' new wife, and R. R. Reed. W.N.F. had met Miss McCloud at a teachers meeting in

consisted of wounded veterans who enrolled at Ferris Institute for vocational and commercial training. Ibid., p. 108.

¹⁵⁴Ferris Institute News (Nov. 4, 1920), p. 1; Folder FIFS, F3gl.

¹⁵⁵Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920's (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 155. Allen uses this term to refer to an era when many people were turning to a heavyweight boxing match, a murder trial, a new automobile or a transatlantic flight for enjoyment in life.

¹⁵⁶The Ferris family is an inclusive phrase for both its actual family and school family. Nellie died on March 3, 1917.

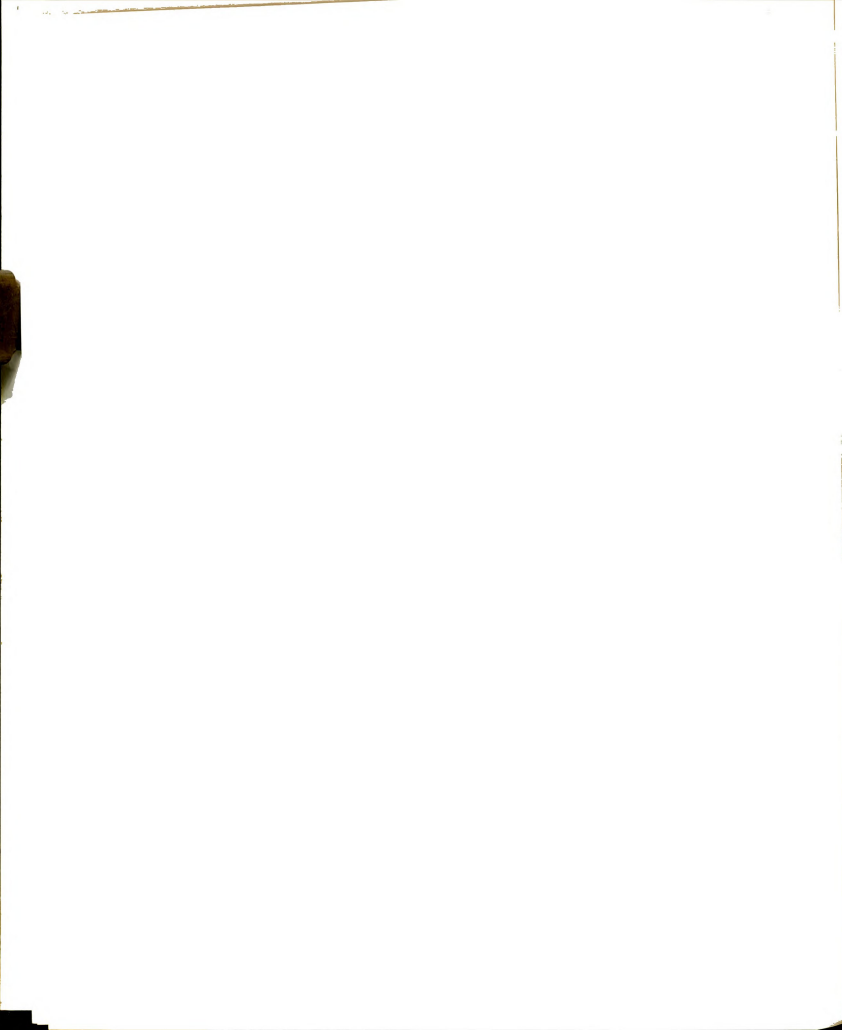
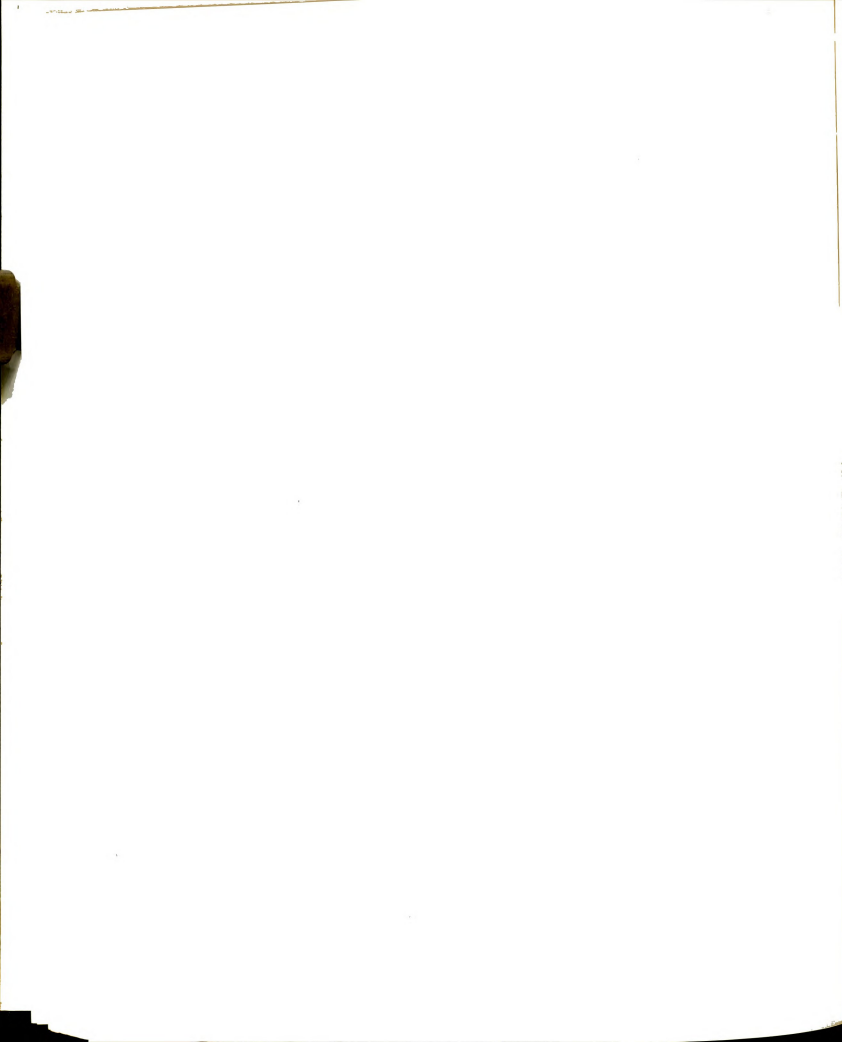


TABLE 1.--Stock dividends on Ferris Institute 1919-1920.

	9/9/19 ^a	9/1/20 ^b	9/9/19 ^a	9/1/20 ^b
W. N. Ferris	\$1326.00	\$1989.00	\$22.00	\$33.00
Carleton Ferris	44.00	66.00	12.00	16.50
Phelps Ferris	44.00	66.00	4.00	5.25
G. Masselink	40.00	60.00	10.00	15.00
Mrs. G. Masselink	12.00	18.00	12.00	15.75
F. M. Ward	10.00	13.13	12.00	15.75
Darragh Co.	10.00	15.00	8.00	10.50
W. H. Hanchett	25.60	38.40	4.00	6.00

^aSchool and Financial Records (1909-1928), 150, FIFS.^bSchool and Student Records (May 1919-April 1922), 128, FIFS.



Indiana where he was lecturing and she was singing.¹⁵⁷
 R. R. Reed was a penmanship specialist from Oskaloosa
 College, Iowa.¹⁵⁸ He remained at the school through the
 1926-27 school year.

Thus far, Woodbridge N. Ferris had been the key
 personality in all of the institute's activities. Finan-
 cially, he retained the controlling stock interest until
 1923 when the stockholders reorganized the school. At
 that time the institute was incorporated under the gen-
 eral educational law of Michigan. Its stock thus became
 non-dividend bearing. "The change was made in order to
 make the Ferris Institute of a more permanent character
 and to ensure its future expansion."¹⁵⁹

Indicative of this change in financial control of
 the institution were the transfers of stock made in 1923
 (Table 2).

With Mr. Ferris releasing most of his stock to
 Masselink and Travis, as well as residing in Washington
 as the newly elected senator from Michigan, the school
 entered a period of six years which would see the death

¹⁵⁷ Folder FIFS, E2526a4. It was reported that they
 reluctantly held an open house to introduce Mary to Big
 Rapids citizenry. Apparently, the second Mrs. Ferris was
 not as popular as the first. This remark is based upon
 discussions with various people who knew both wives.

¹⁵⁸ What School (1922); Folder FIFS, C16a.

¹⁵⁹ Catalog (1925-1926), p. 11.

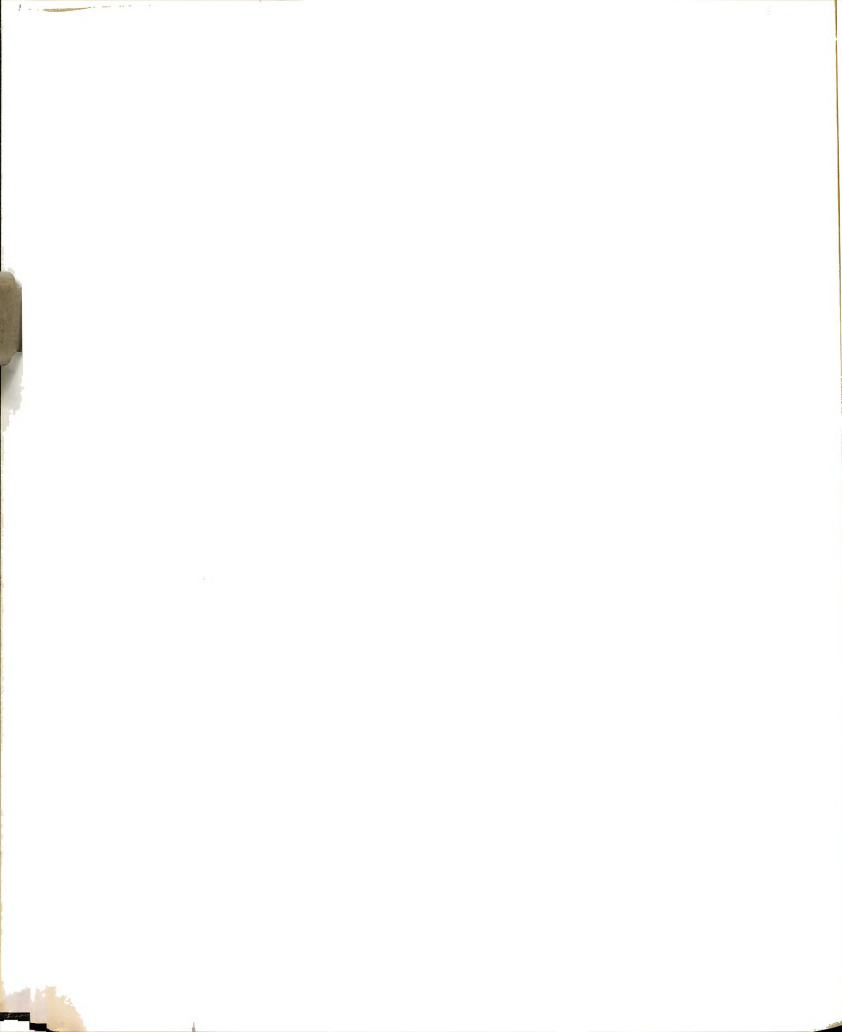
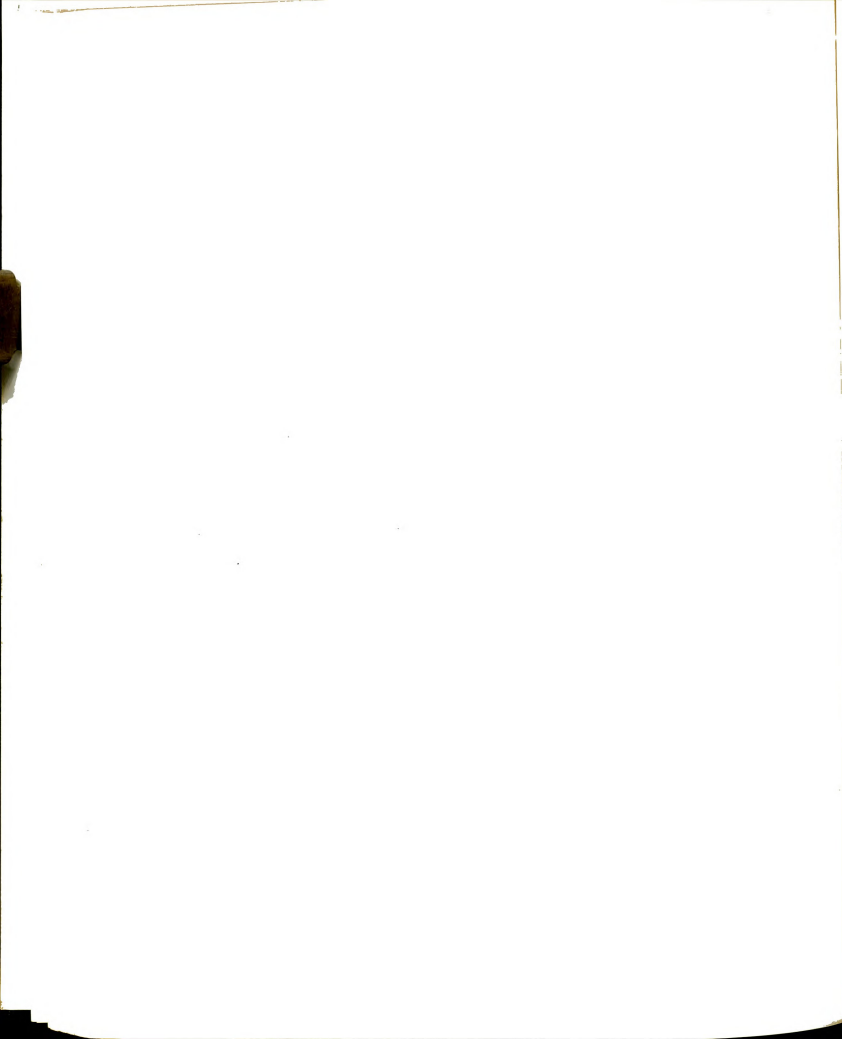


TABLE 2.--Dividends--Ferris Institute 1921 and 1923.

	Dividends 1921 ^a	Dividends 1923 ^b
V. N. Ferris	\$1989.00	\$ 30.00
Mrs. W. N. Ferris		30.00
G. Masselink	60.00	900.00
B. S. Travis	33.00	900.00
Mrs. G. Masselink	18.00	150.00
Mrs. B. S. Travis		650.00
E. M. Clark	15.00	21.00
C. Carlisle	6.00	
V. H. Hanchett	38.40	
C. S. Ferris	66.00	
D. F. Ferris	66.00	

244. ^aSchool and Student Records (May 1919-April 1922),

26. ^bSchool and Student Records (April 1922-Sept. 1925),



of both Mr. Ferris and Mr. Masselink.¹⁶⁰ Masselink and Travis took over the reins of the school while Ferris was in Washington.

The organization of the Ferris Institute Benefit Association brought additional change and perspective to the school.¹⁶¹ This organization was founded for the purpose of collecting building and equipment funds. Plans to erect a \$100,000 alumni building were part of this expansion plan. Appeals for financial contributions were made to: ". . . all former students and to men and women who are interested in the development of character and the training for efficiency."¹⁶²

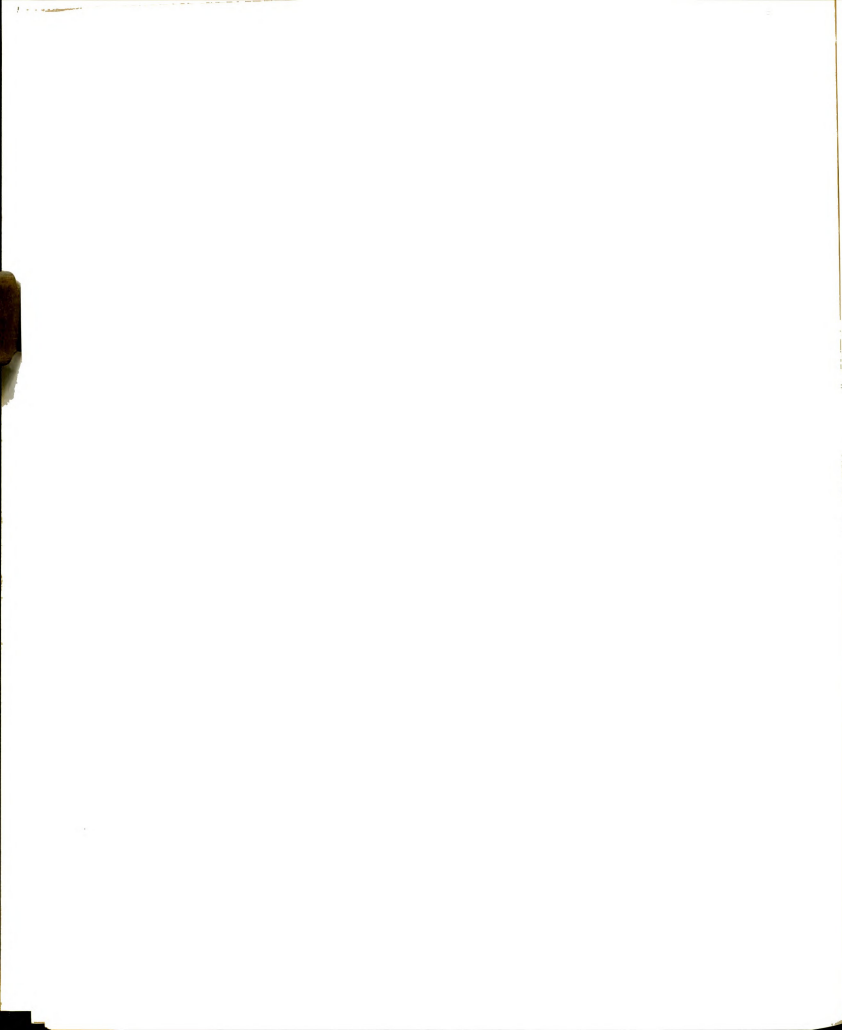
With the dim prospects of the Ferris era continuing, the question of leadership became a significant one for those persons planning the institute's future. The editors of the Catalog phrased the question in the following manner. "Is it ever possible to build up a strong educational institution without a big man at the head."¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Another event indicative of the changing scene at the institute was the election of W.N.F. as the United States senator from Michigan. This was a position he would hold until his death in 1928.

¹⁶¹ Catalog (1925-1926). Members of the Benefit Association were: Dr. W. T. Dodge (Pres.), C. P. Judson (Vice-Pres.), D. C. Morrill (secretary), and J. E. Bergelin (Treasurer). The Alumni building was dedicated in 1929.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Catalog (1925-1926), p. 100. Mr. Ferris was approaching an age where the length of time he would live was questionable.



They answered their own question quickly and deliberately.

With Ferris is another man, just as virile in his way, as Ferris in his, namely Gerritt [sic] Masselink. Ferris and Masselink make a great team. You might paraphrase the saying of Garfield about Mark Hopkins, that a log with the students on one end and Ferris and Masselink at the other is a true college.¹⁶⁴

Whether one considered this a true college or not, with its financial resources, it was having difficulty meeting the needs of 1926. This condition was a persuasive factor in more frequent requests for money and an expanded campaign.

They [Ferris Institute campaign officials] ask money from the public for only one thing, and that is in order that its field of service may be extended and that it may continue to develop in a greater degree the womanhood and manhood of tomorrow and thus become the most important agents in the upholding of the standards of true Americanism.¹⁶⁵

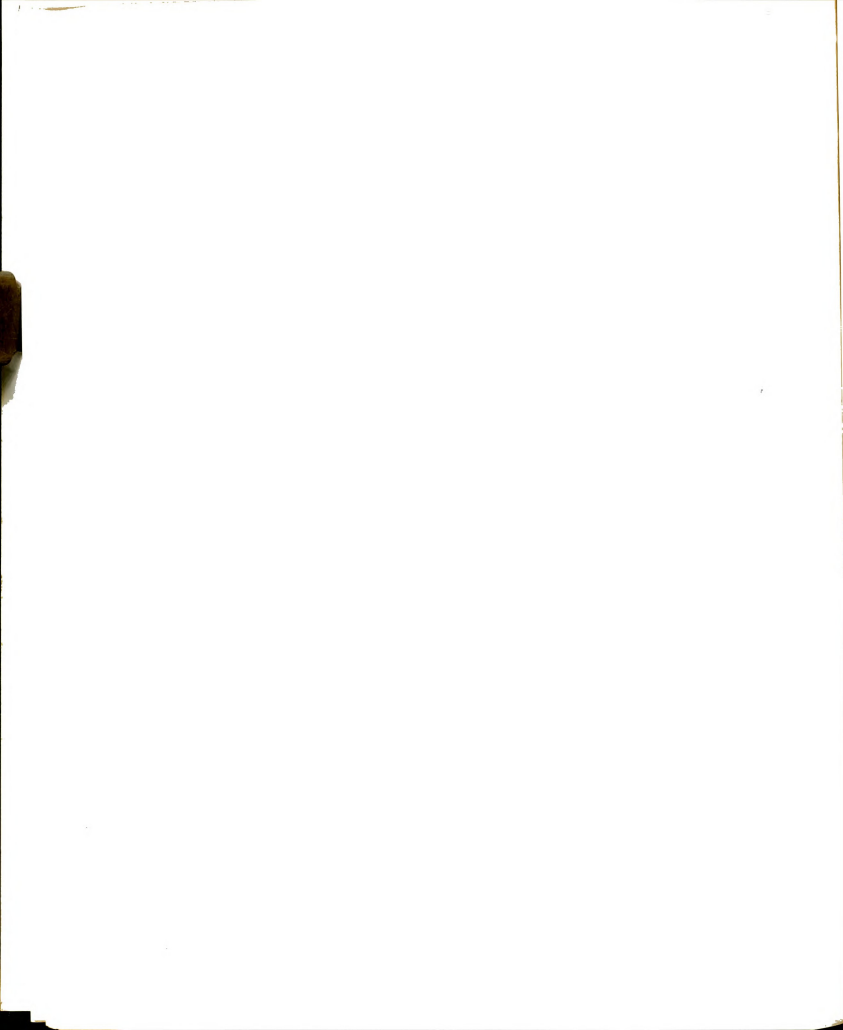
Plans were made to perpetuate these standards at a Board of Trustee's meeting. Present at this gathering were Ferris, Clark, Masselink, and Travis, all of whom agreed that W.N.F. be elected president with Masselink as vice-president, and Travis as secretary-treasurer.¹⁶⁶

Although the expansion campaign was in its initial stages of development, school officials still dared to

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. Taken from the East Lansing Community Life.

¹⁶⁵ Big Rapids Pioneer, 1926, n.d.; Folder FIFS, 2526a 3.

¹⁶⁶ Expansion Campaign, 1926.



expand their curriculum, athletic programs and social activities. The departments at Ferris Institute now included: business, pharmacy, telegraphy, normal, college preparatory, mathematics, civil service, sciences, history, English, languages, and music.¹⁶⁷ The entire program is outlined in the diagram on page 142.

Meanwhile, the expansion campaign increased in intensity with the choosing of zone committees, development of training conferences, and the organization of advertising meetings. With the Olds Hotel in Lansing serving as headquarters for many conferences, the campaigners tried salesmanship techniques to create enthusiasm for their cause.¹⁶⁸ Mr. Ferris took part in these activities by speaking to alumni, faculty, and students on methods of newspaper campaigning, inspiring communities and organizations, the use of psychology in campaign leadership and the steps in salesmanship.¹⁶⁹

Hopefully, these attempts at creating enthusiasm for the expansion campaign would lead to a financial commitment to support the school's building program. This commitment was expressed as follows:

¹⁶⁷ Catalog (1925-1926).

¹⁶⁸ Expansion Campaign, 1927.

¹⁶⁹ Expansion Campaign, 1927. A highlight of the campaign was the tour of Major Lawrence Wallern Dodgson, a world traveler and soldier, who toured Michigan to advertise the campaign.

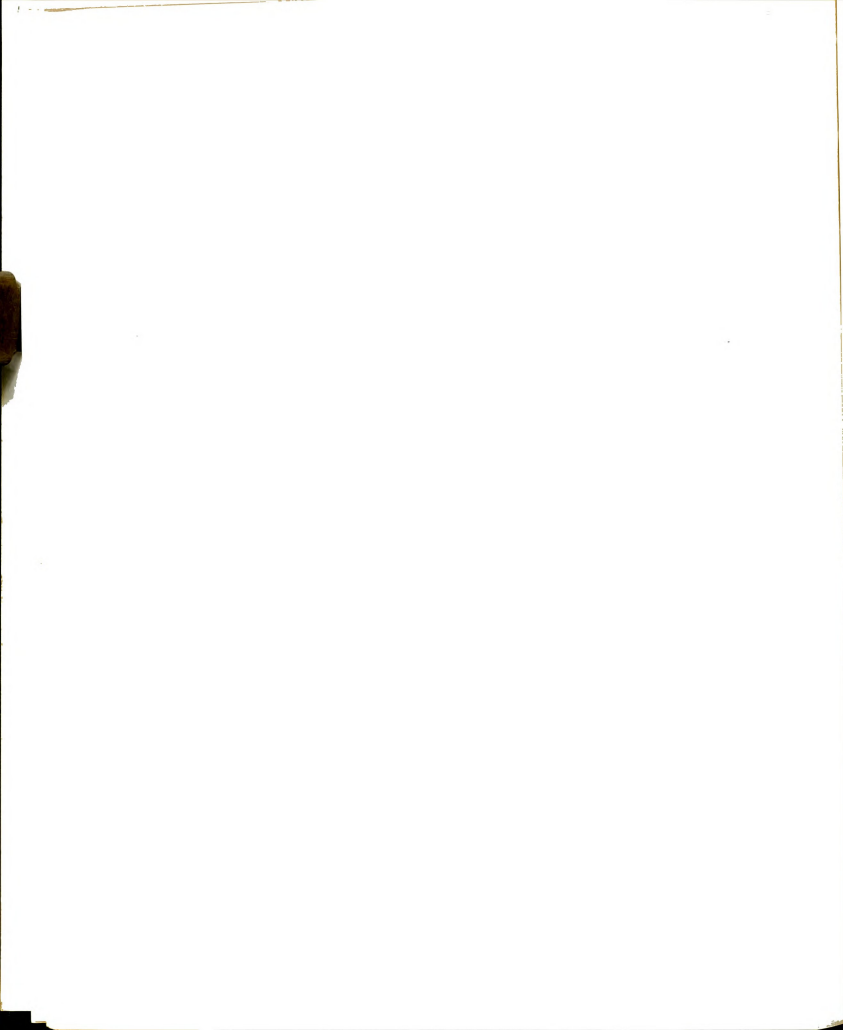
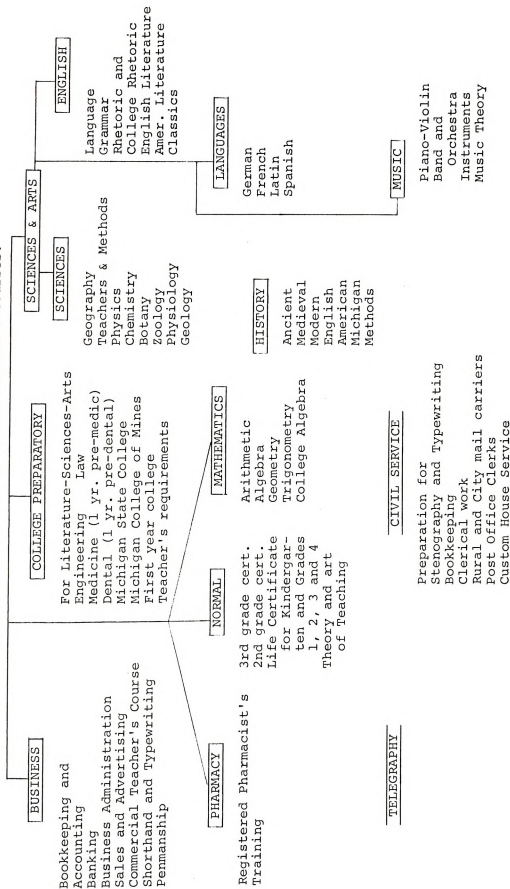
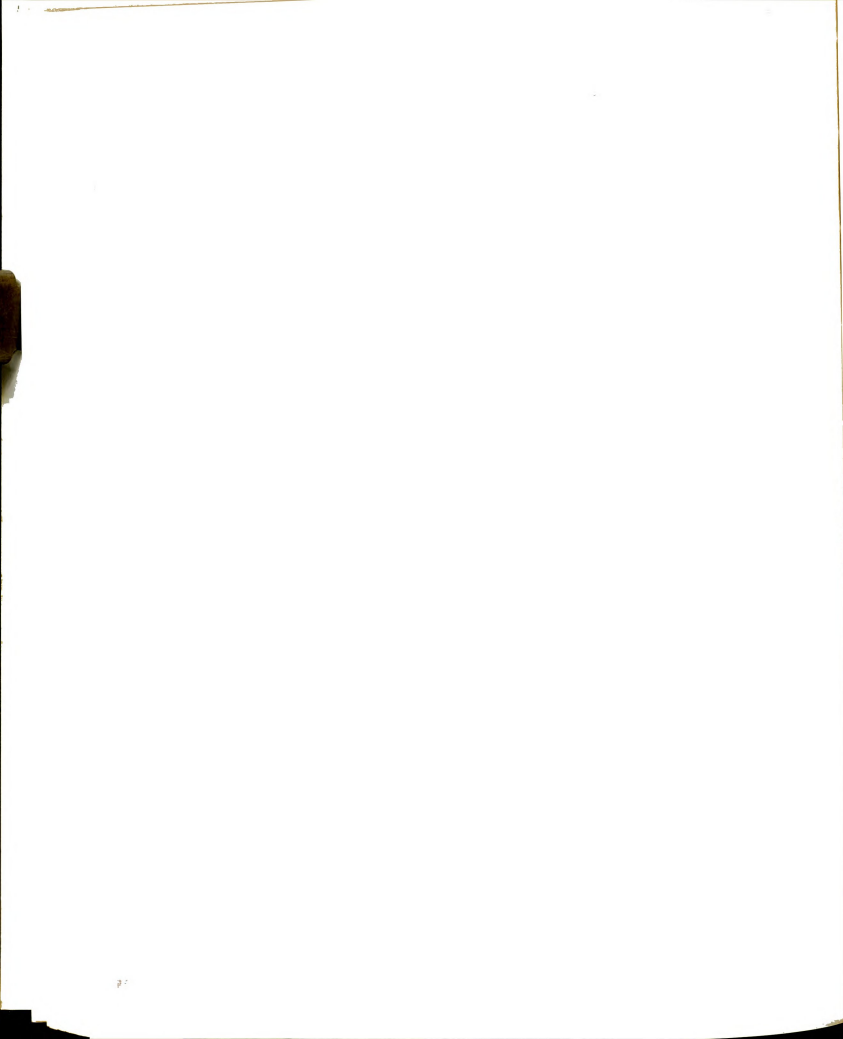


DIAGRAM 1.--Outline of Ferris Institute courses.



Source: Catalog (1925-1926).



I believe, as one of the former 75,00 former students, that the human policy of Ferris Institute deserves to be perpetuated. I believe you [Mr. Ferris] should tell me and all the rest of the 75,000 just what F.I. needs. I believe that each of us should have meetings if possible, and talk over the whole matter. I believe that each and every former student should cooperate in helping you to do the right thing for Our School which has helped¹⁷⁰ so many thousands to get a good life start.

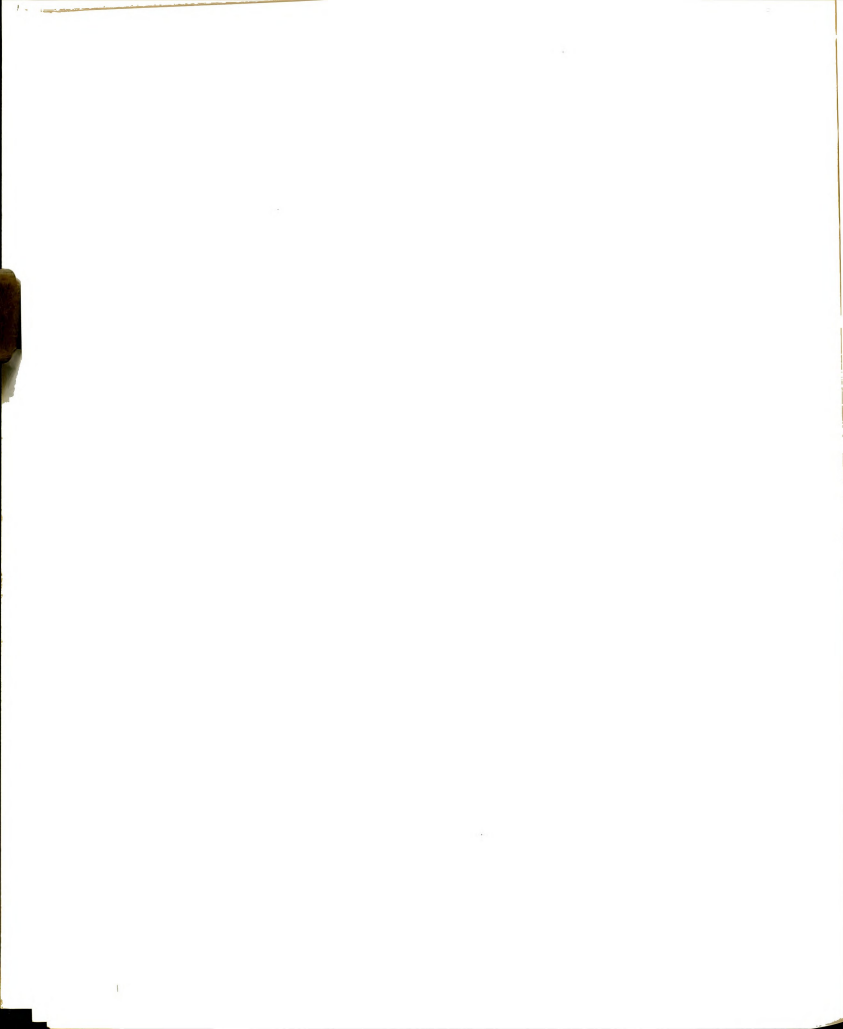
Helping others to get this good start would require improvement of and additions to the four buildings and thirty-five classrooms then available to students.¹⁷¹ The new plan called for a total of \$500,000.00,¹⁷² with the present property held in trust by a Board of Trustees while the organization of former students occurred throughout the state. The term of the present board was to terminate with the completion of the expansion campaign. They would then be replaced by a permanent board selected by

¹⁷⁰ Expansion Campaign, 1927. Subscription could be extended over ten payments, paying every other month for eighteen months. The staff for each campaign zone was as follows:

Bay City	24 men	6	team chairman
Saginaw	36 "	9	" "
Lansing	36 "	9	" "
Pontiac	36 "	9	" "
Flint	48 "	12	" "
Big Rapids	100 "	25	" "
Detroit	100 "	25	" "

¹⁷¹ Commencement Program, July 1, 1927. A graduating class of 224 was indicative of increased enrollment. Folder FIFS, E31.

¹⁷² One-half of the \$500,000 was to be used for building construction and the other half for an endowment fund.



the rules of a new charter.¹⁷³ Additional buildings and a new board were to be part of Ferris Institute, but not without the financial struggles so common throughout the history of the school.

Woodbridge N. Ferris Dies

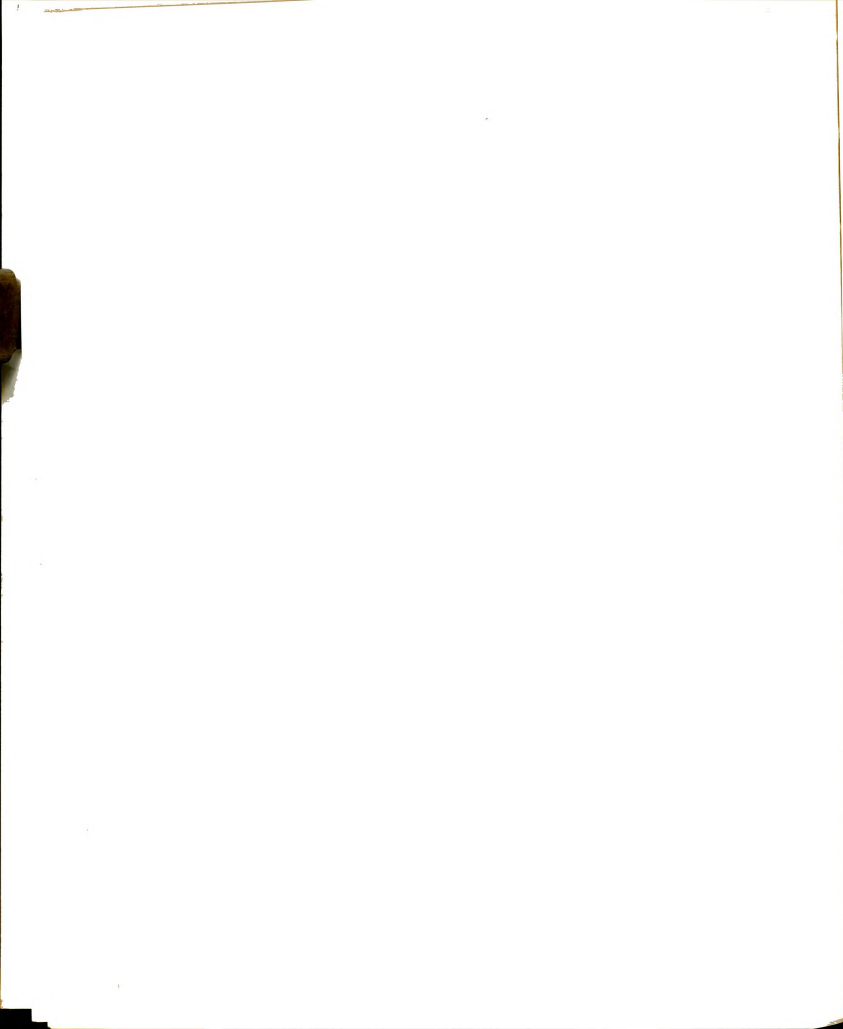
The expansion campaign eventually ended, but not before the death of Woodbridge N. Ferris. On March 23, 1928, the "silver eagle" passed away in Washington, D.C., the victim of old age and pneumonia. Those at the school decided that W.N.F. would want them to continue as scheduled; consequently, the school remained open and examinations were given.¹⁷⁴ But these activities were respectfully modified. As one person observed:

I sat in the old assembly room . . . that morning, and the usual hurry and flurry of commercial and pharmacy students stamping down the wooden stairs to attend the 7:55 am., feeling the loss of the school founder, forgot the horseplay and racket usually attending their descent, and came into the huge old room with quieted steps.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Expansion Campaign, 1927. (Typed Article). In a special meeting on Nov. 1, 1927 the Board of Trustees passed a resolution authorizing Gerrit Masselink and Bert S. Travis to sell and assign any United States bonds registered on the books of the Treasury Department in the name of Ferris Institute. Expansion Campaign, 1926.

¹⁷⁴ Grand Rapids Herald, March 24, 1928; Folder FIFS, E2526a6.

¹⁷⁵ Big Rapids Pioneer, March 23, 1968; Folder FIFS, E2526a6. One old friend walked fourteen miles through frozen drifts to Big Rapids to mourn Ferris. Grand Rapids Herald, March 23, 1928; Folder FIFS, E2526a6.

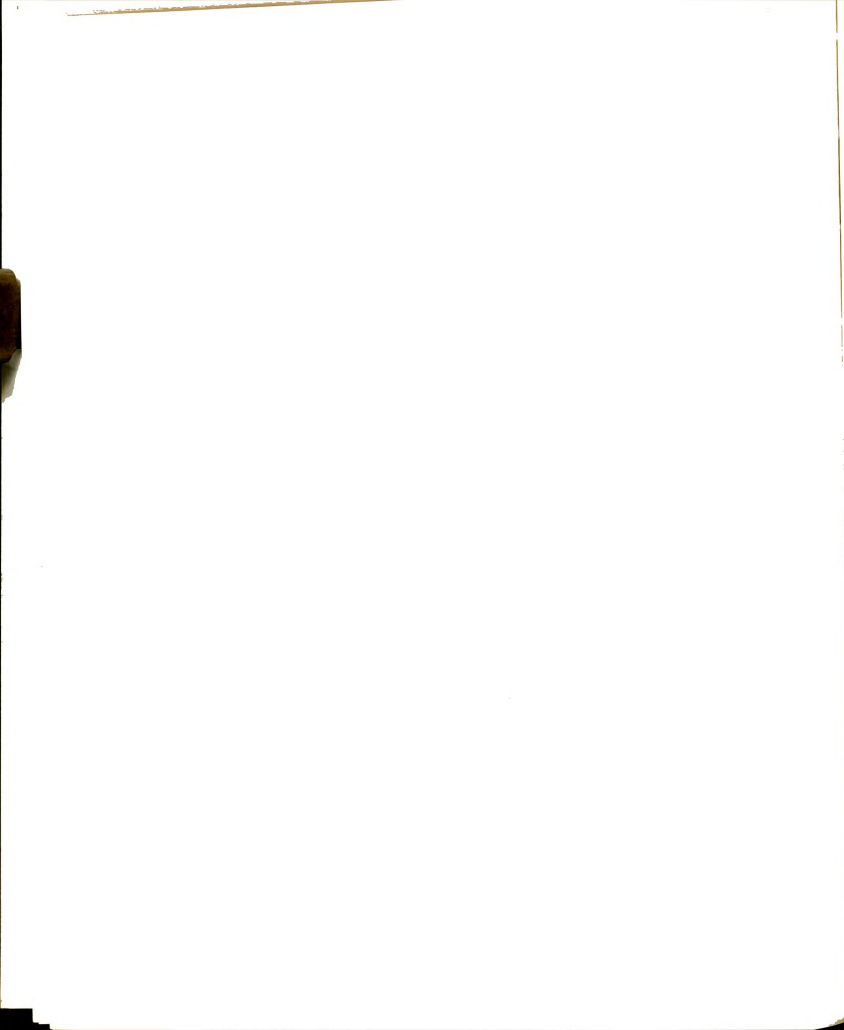


The body of the late senator arrived in Big Rapids at the Pennsylvania station with members of the immediate family present. Escorted to the Ferris residence by the local militia, the family kept an all night vigil. Seemingly endless lines of mourners streamed pass the coffin including distinguished visitors from the federal and state governments. At 2:30 p.m. the following day, a procession left the home and proceeded to the armory where tributes and prayers were read. From the armory the group went to Highland View cemetery where companies of militia, bandsmen, and others stood in the snow covered valley waiting for the remains to be deposited in the mausoleum erected by Ferris in 1911.

Still, the death of the founder did not dampen the spirit of those remaining at the school. As the epitaph for Ferris stated: "Living - not dead - this spirit - so fine; Progressing - ever - through endless time."¹⁷⁶

Leadership of the school was now in the hands of Masselink and Travis. Unfortunately, Masselink's death in 1929 forced a change in the administrative plans for the school. However, in his short term as president of the institution he was to have a great impact on school policy.

¹⁷⁶ Big Rapids Pioneer, n.d.; Folder FIFS, E2526a6.



CHAPTER IV

THE NEW GUARD REPLACES THE OLD

1928-1936

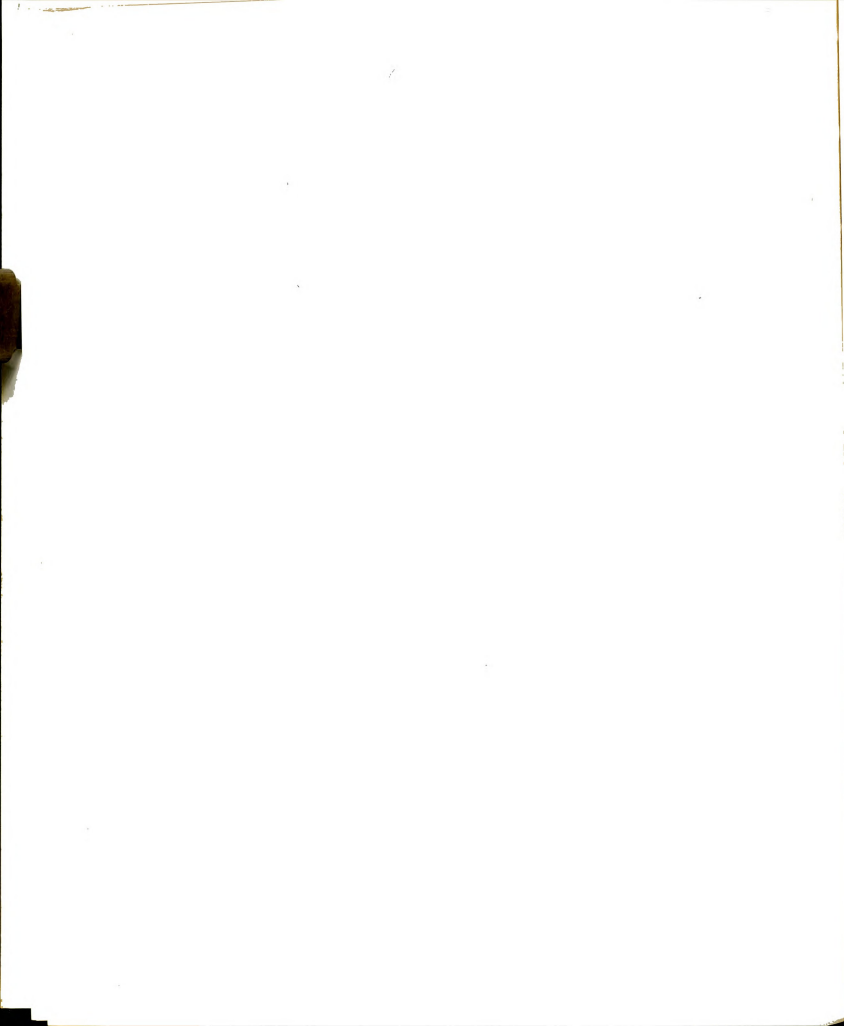
The New Guard Enters

When Gerrit Masselink assumed the responsibilities of president at Ferris Institute, changes were occurring in the school's curriculum and enrollment. Previously designated by Mr. Ferris as basically an industrial school, the institute now offered a number of programs in many areas of study. Formerly composed of what Mr. Ferris called backward students from country schools and lumber camps,¹ the school now attracted persons from urban areas who often enrolled in the college preparatory program and newly formed junior college department.

The immediate task for Masselink was replacement of the school's nearly depleted financial sources. With zeal and persistence he organized an expansion campaign designed to collect enough money to build a memorial to his friend and associate, Woodbridge N. Ferris. Masselink expressed his thoughts in the following manner:

A school that has been in existence for forty-three years should make a lasting impression.

¹By 1928 the lumber mills and woods had been considerably reduced in both numbers and size.



Ferris Institute has done so. As we [the campaigners] meet the men and women in various walks of life and get their history and feeling in regard to Ferris Institute we get some notion of what our School has meant to them all these years. I believe that Ferris Institute has a mission in the world. We have reached thousands of students who never went anywhere else. We believe that Ferris Institute is worthy to be endowed.²

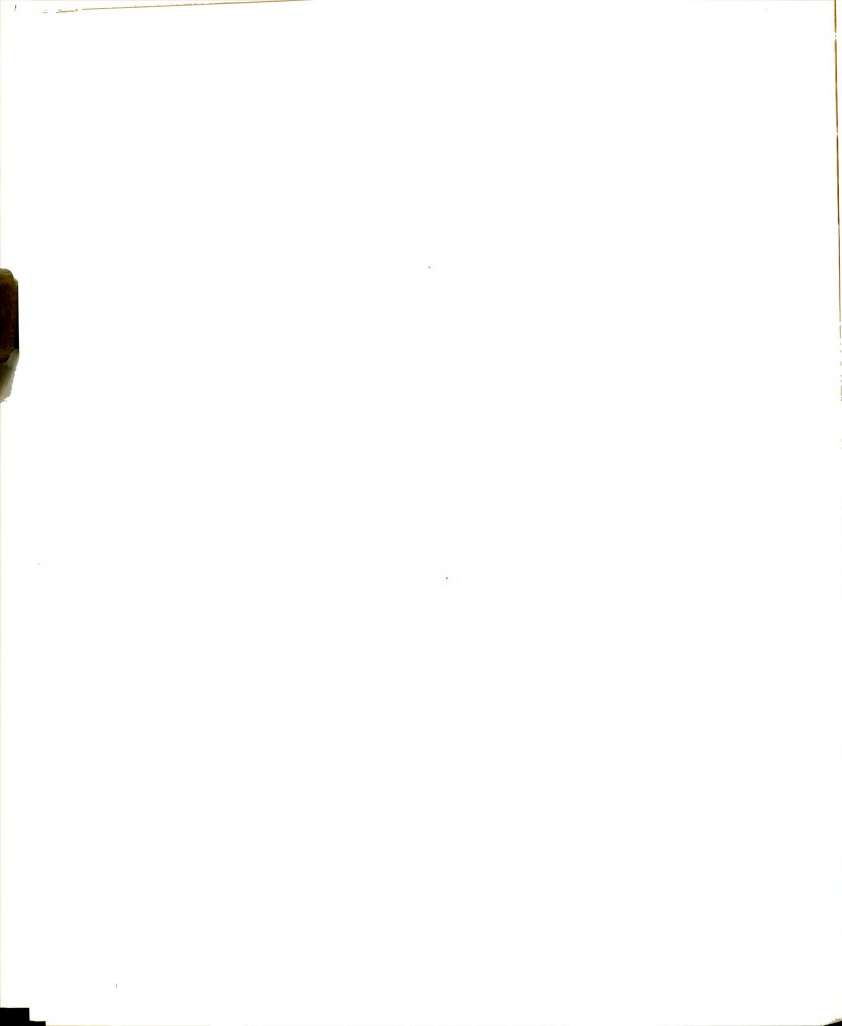
The campaigners, led by Masselink, estimated that \$1,500,000.00 would be needed to perpetuate the mission of the school and continue its activities. The funds would be divided equally between new buildings,³ building

²Expansion Campaign, 1929. FIFS.

³Ibid.

VII. New Buildings and Improvements under Serious Consideration

- a. Building to cost \$125,000.00 - for: -
 1. Two Years' course in Business Administration
 2. Two Years' course in C.P.A.
 3. Course in Banking
 4. Two Years' course in Commercial Teaching
 5. Course in General Business
 6. Two Years' course in Salesmanship and Advertising
 7. Civil Service Course
 8. Photography
- b. Building to cost \$75,000.00 - for: -
 1. Domestic Science - dietetics
 2. Domestic Art - sewing
 3. Domestic Art - millinery
 4. Cafeteria
 5. Laundry
- c. Building to cost \$150,000.00 - for: -
 1. Machine Shop
 2. Forge Shop
 3. Wood Shop
 4. Repair Shop
 5. Drawing
 6. Surveying
 7. Testing
 8. Physical Laboratory

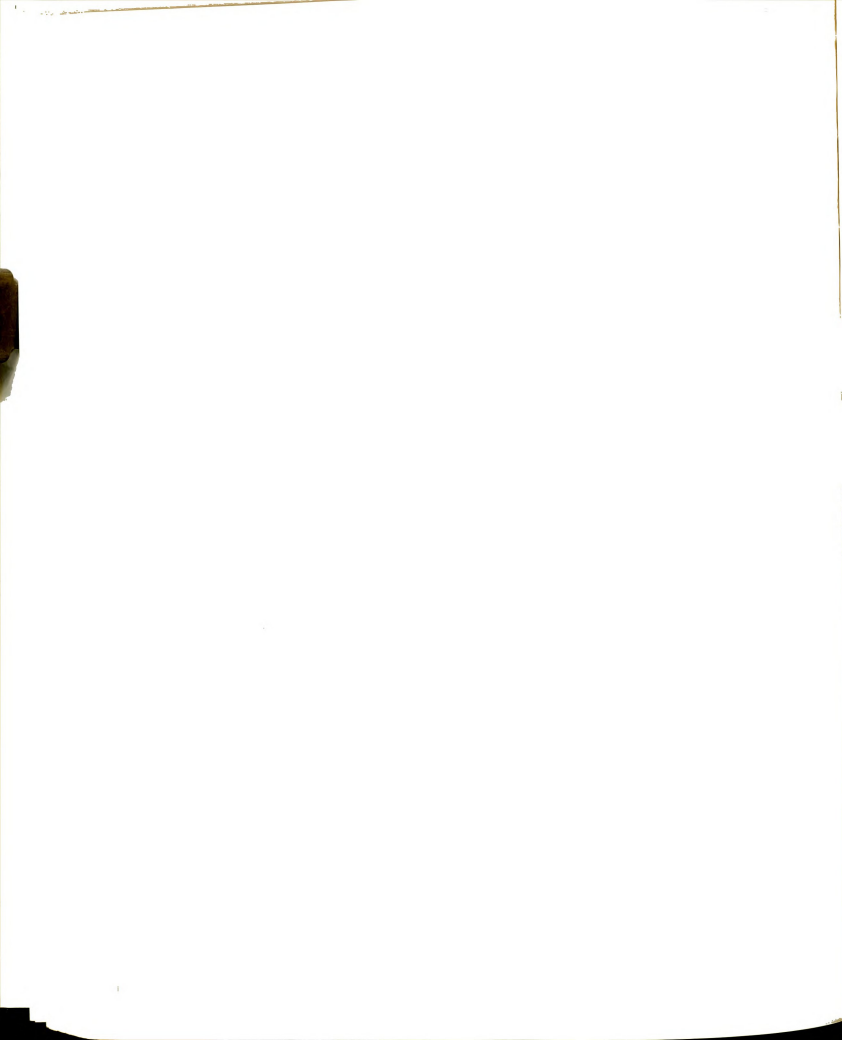


improvements, and an endowment.⁴ Following the traditional campaign tactics of Mr. Ferris, the campaigners attempted to procure subscriptions by praising the distinguishing features of the school. These included a no entrance requirement policy, an appeal to all who desired

- d. Building to cost \$75,000.00 - for: -
 - 1. Library
 - 2. Administrative Offices
 - 3. Supplies
 - 4. Advertising Material
 - 5. Records
- e. Building to cost \$100,000.00 - for: -
 - 1. Music
 - 2. Physical Training
 - 3. Bath and Showers
 - 4. Social Functions
- f. New East Wing and Other Improvements for Present Main Building to cost \$200,000.00 - for: -
 - 1. Class Rooms
 - 2. Auditorium and Study Hall
 - 3. Rooms for Junior College and High School Work
 - 4. Heating System

Estimated Cost of Above Buildings and Improvements	\$ 750,000.00
Endowment Fund	<u>750,000.00</u>
Total Necessary for Enlargement and Endowment	<u>\$1,500,000.00</u>

⁴Ibid. The funds collected by the campaigners would be controlled by the Ferris Institute Benefit Association through the board of trustees. Subscriptions for the fund came in \$50.00 minimum, \$100.00 to \$500.00 contributing, \$1,000.00 to \$2,500.00 sustaining, \$5,000.00 to \$10,000.00 memorial, and \$25,000.00 and over amounts. Each subscription had a designated purpose, with the sustaining one providing machines for business and teaching courses, the memorial helping to purchase classroom equipment and laboratories, and the foundation subscription supplying scholarships and the development of college departments.



an education, a guarantee that no embarrassment would occur as a result of age, an emphasis on the gospel of work, and a sincere, helpful and interested faculty.⁵ Unfortunately, Gerris Masselink would not see the results of his labor. On April 20, 1929, at the age of fifty-six, he succumbed to the complications of typhoid fever.⁶

For Ferris Institute, 1929 marked the beginning of a procession of school presidents and the completion of the Alumni Building. The significance of this year in a broader sense was explained by John Galbraith.

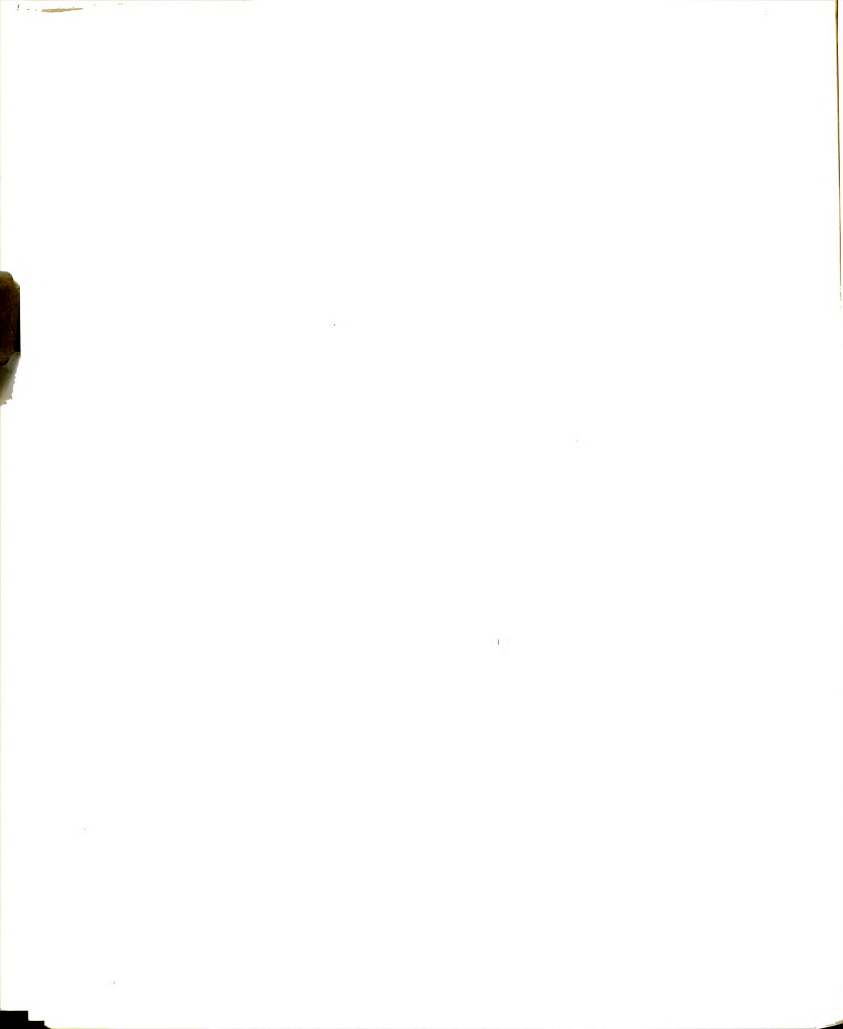
Some years, like some poets and politicians and some lovely women, are singled out for fame far beyond the common lot, and 1929 was clearly such a year. Like 1066, 1776, and 1914, it is a year that everyone remembers. One went to college before 1929, was married after 1929, or wasn't even born in 1929, which bespeaks of total innocence.⁷

For the most part the early depression years in Michigan were gloomy. With the state's industrial economy resting principally on the automobile, Michigan suffered greatly.

⁵Expansion Campaign, 1929, FIFS.

⁶The institute was closed on April 20-21. "The seating capacity of the church would not permit the students to attend the funeral services. They are to call at the church between the hours of 10:30-1:00 on Tuesday. At 2:30 in the afternoon . . . students will assemble at the cemetery and form lines on each side of the drive and thus await the funeral procession." Folder FIFS, 26a8.

⁷John Kenneth Galbraith, The Great Crash 1929 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), p. 4.



Automobile production fell off from five million units in 1929 to two million in 1933. In 1930, 20 per cent of the state's non agricultural workers were unemployed; in 1931, 29 per cent, and in 1933, nearly 50 per cent. More than half a million people were dependent on public funds for their daily bread.⁸

To alleviate employment difficulties many sought means of acquiring new skills, especially in adult education classes. Aid provided by the federal government included the establishment of loan funds. Nevertheless, prospective students were faced with reduced revenues in both non-tax supported and tax supported educational institutions which necessitated reductions in staff and salaries.⁹

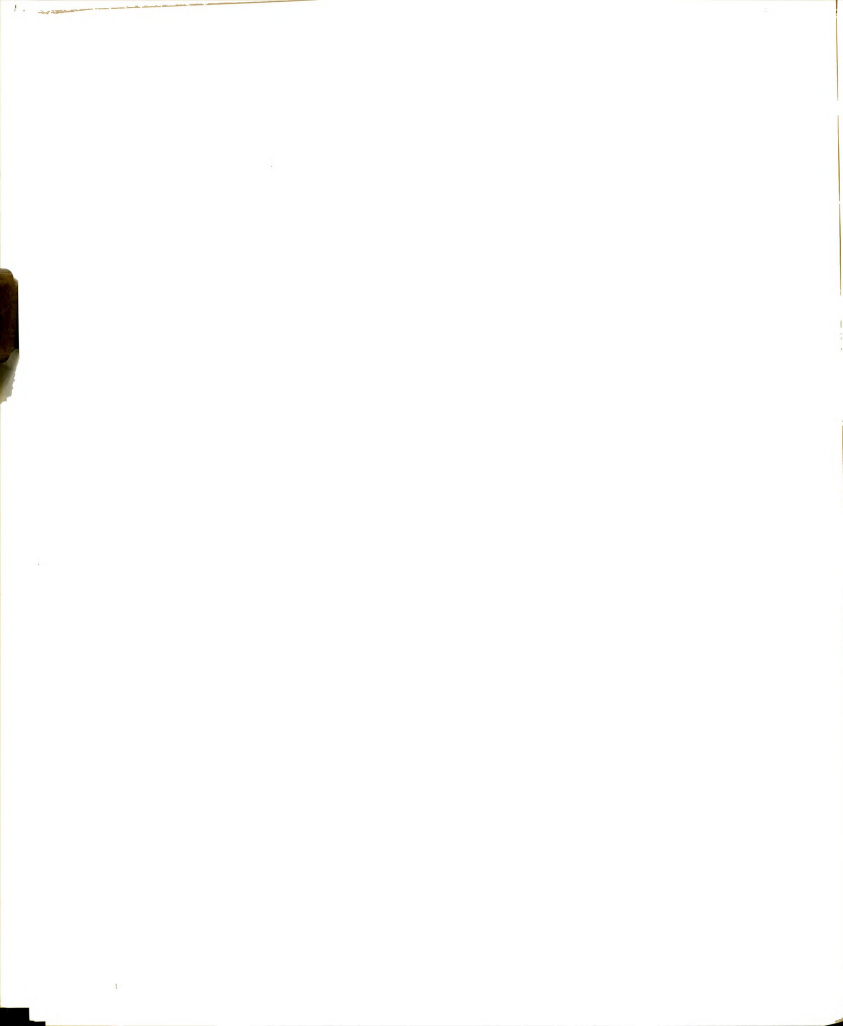
At Ferris Institute Bert S. Travis, Emmanuel M. Clark, Karl G. Merrill, Ernest J. Parr and Grover C. Baker managed administrative affairs until a new president could be chosen. All of these men were members of the faculty and long time associates of the school.¹⁰ They agreed on the following policy.

The selection of a new president will be made with great care and deliberation. The man to

⁸F. Cleaver Bald, Michigan in Four Centuries (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), p. 419.

⁹Willis F. Dunbar, The Michigan Record in Higher Education (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963), pp. 301-303.

¹⁰"Ferris Institute Goes on"; Folder FIFS, IpD14. (Typed sheet). The Big Rapids Pioneer of April 26, 1929, had listed Charles E. Bender of Grand Rapids representing the Ferris estate. Apparently, he was also considered a member of the Board to manage the school.



be chosen will have already demonstrated his abilities and established his reputation as an educator, as well as an organizer, and as a leader of young people. No undue haste will be made in such a selection, although it is desired that one shall be chosen to begin his work by September.¹¹

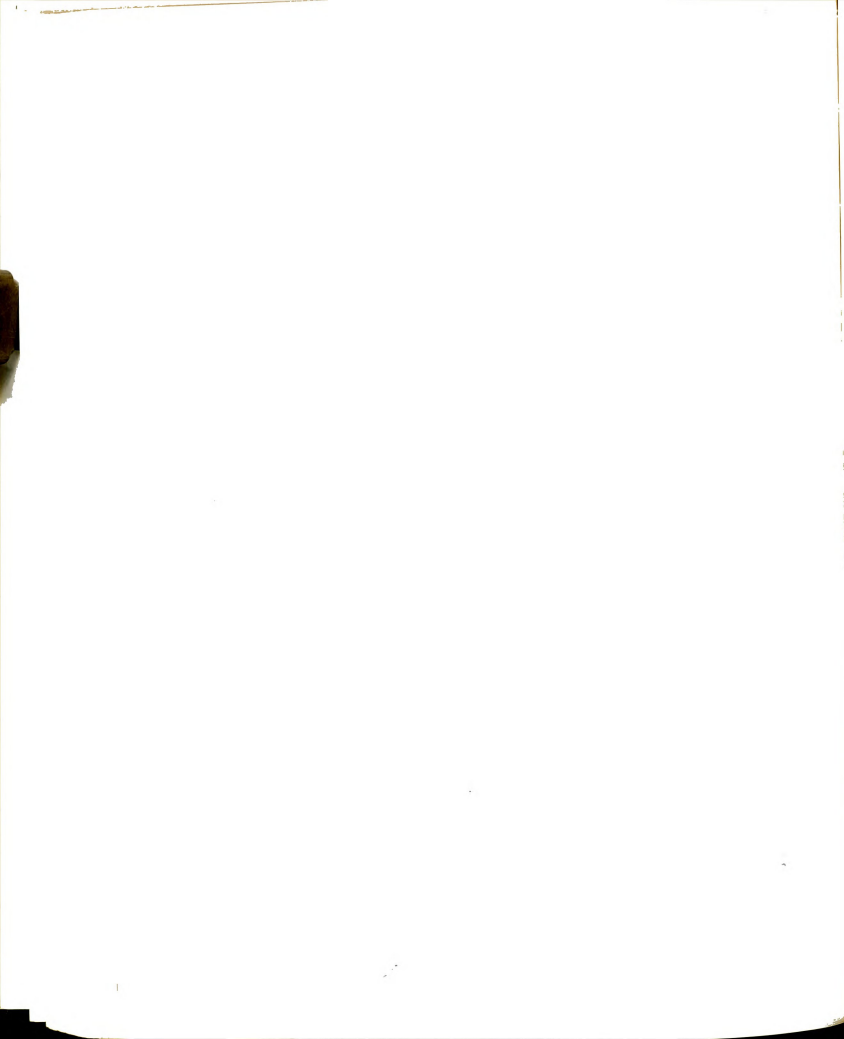
The choice was Alpheus A. Worcester, a practicing attorney in Big Rapids.

Before Worcester received official notice of his selection as acting-president, the cornerstone ceremonies for the Alumni Building had occurred. On Wednesday afternoon May 15, 1929, hundreds of persons witnessed the ceremonies, both in the school auditorium and at the building site. In the auditorium John Bergelin, representing Big Rapids' businessmen, Fred Ashley speaking for the Ferris Cooperative Association, and Webster Pearce, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, paid tribute to Mr. Ferris and his associates for the persistence and courage they had shown in attempting to perpetuate the school.¹² Leaving the auditorium the group proceeded to the alumni building where Bert S. Travis with assistance from the class of 1884-1885, completed the ceremonies.¹³

¹¹Note; Folder FIFS, F3g2c.

¹²Note, "Alumni Building Corner Stone is Laid"; Folder FIFS, D15.

¹³The 1884-1885 class members were Gaylord Brown, the first student enrolled at the school, William P. Nisbett, George West, Jennie Dalziel West, Belle Wilder Meer, Charles Tenny, Mary Sanford, Harry Ladner, Sylvia Hart Shattuck, John Dalziel, C. Ed. Bailey,



During Worcester's brief service as president the first female pharmacy officers in the school's history were elected and a debate about the significance of the traditional morning exercises was conducted by the debating club.¹⁴ The debating club organized by Roy Newton, newly chosen president of Phi Rho Pi, an honorary debating fraternity¹⁵ decided that morning exercises should be continued.¹⁶ The significance of this debate seems to be

Susie Barton Neville, and Della Roberts Megargle. Big Rapids Pioneer, May 14, 1929; Folder FIFS, E258a.

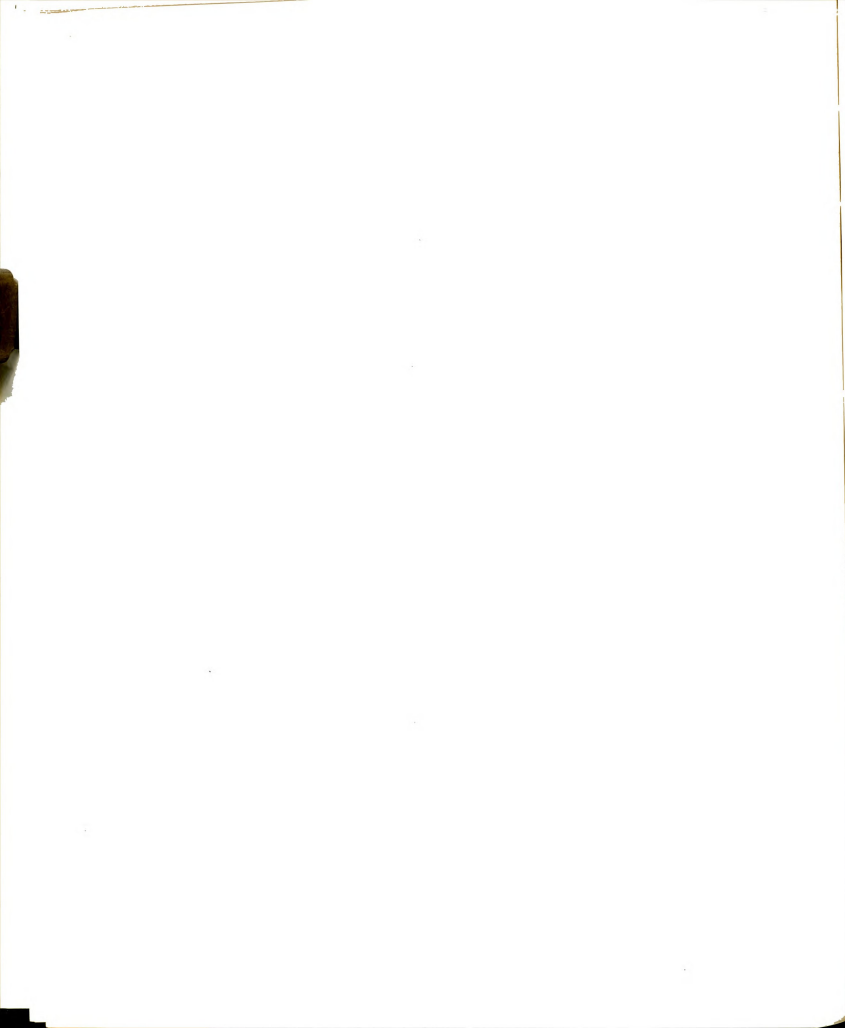
The cornerstone contained the following articles:

1. List of faculty since 1884.
2. List of subscribers to the expansion campaign fund.
3. List of brick layers
4. Pioneer Historical Ferris Institute Edition
5. Memorial F.I. News - Mr. Ferris
6. Memorial F.I. News - Gerrit Masselink
7. Literary Voice (Oldest Student paper).
8. Useful Education (Oldest F.I. paper).
9. Catalog (First 1894-95).
10. Year Book, twenty-fifth year, 1909.
11. Year Book of 1928 and 1929.
12. Special pictures of Mr. Ferris and Mr. Masselink
13. Special pen of Mr. Ferris
14. Big Rapids News edition for Mr. Ferris

¹⁴Institute News (Sept. 18, 1929); Folder FIFS,
2c.

¹⁵Institute News (Oct. 2, 1929); Folder FIFS, F3g2c.
Newton had been hired by Mr. Ferris in 1926. He con-
ceded to take an active part in school activities, with
exception, until his retirement in 1968.

¹⁶Institute News (April 3, 1929); Folder FIFS,
"The purpose of Phi Rho Pi, is to promote the in-
s of debating, oratory, extemporaneous speaking, and
Forensic activity in the junior colleges. . . ."
and Gold, 1930.



in the questioning of a traditional activity directly associated with the founder of the institution. Were they losing their importance for both students and faculty? Later developments seem to support an affirmative answer.

A student reported his reaction to these activities of the debating club in the year book.

Every Wednesday nite they gather with their lungs girt
for the fray.

Armed with notes and shod with satire, seeking
statements to allay.

How I love to hear them rave and rant in tones
bombastic.

How they rattle off statistics in a manner truly
drastic.

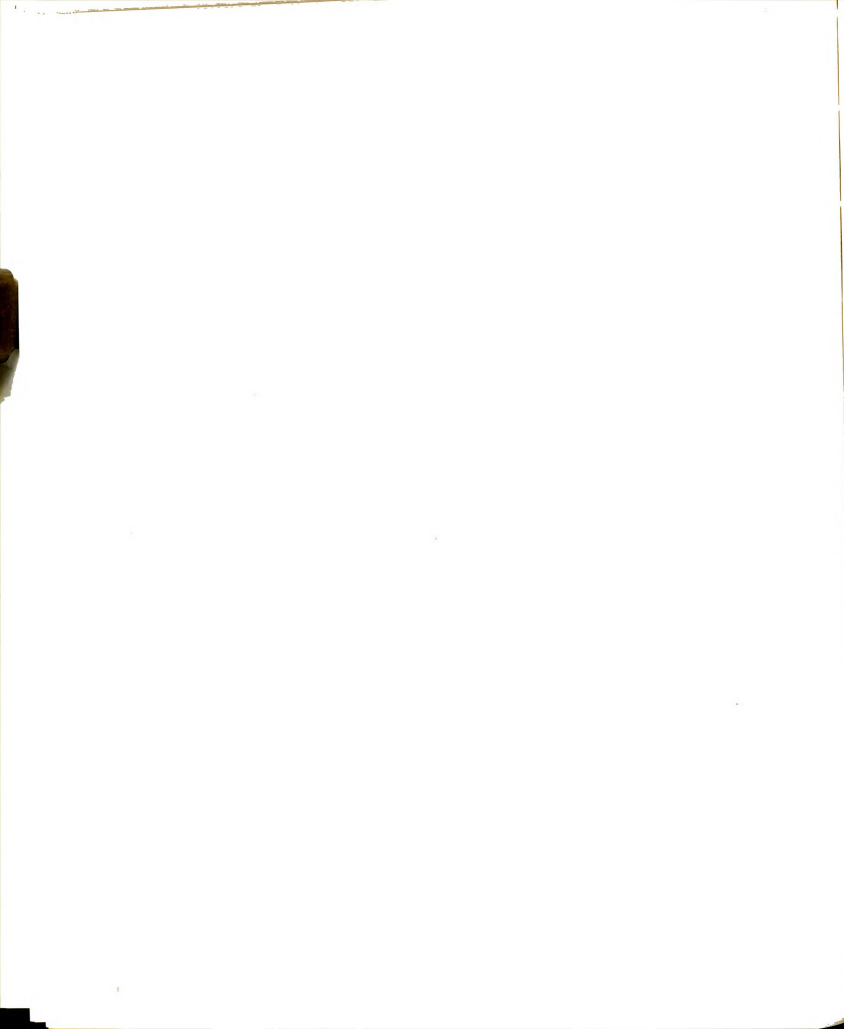
It is always entertaining and you gain instead
of losing,

If you let these wise debaters do your Wednesday
nite amusing.¹⁷

Throughout the first year of the new decade, social activities provided by the school helped to counteract the gloom of the depression. Beginning in the fall with a benefit dance at the Big Rapids Armory, the Homecoming festivities culminated by the Phi Sigma Chi's fourth annual ball, school activities continued into winter with the commercial department ball and the first dancing party held in the new alumni building.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Crimson and Gold, 1930, p. 40. One change that did not occur was that planned by the stockholders whereby Ferris Institute might be sold. Apparently, the committee organized to consider this question failed to make necessary arrangements. Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees, Feb. 25, 1930, FIFS, A7a.



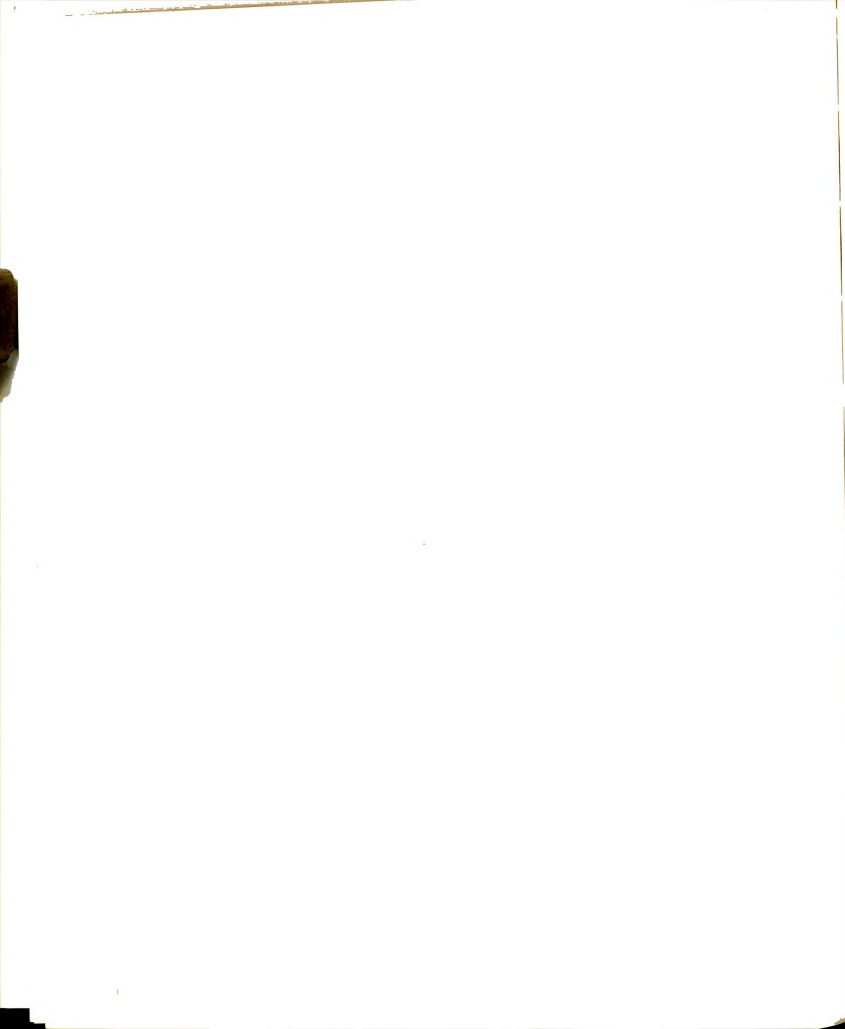
The temporary service of Worcester was terminated with the selection of a new president. The board had called a special meeting to consider the question of engaging Wells D. White as president of the institute. After lengthy discussion with Mr. White, the board decided to hire him for a period of approximately one year.¹⁹ White, a former student at Michigan State Normal College and Michigan Agricultural College had taught at Ortonville and Clio, Michigan. From Clio he went to Quincy, Illinois as head of the Consolidated Hartland Schools.²⁰

In a position statement given in the summer of 1930, Mr. White related his attitudes about the school.

I believe there is a great future ahead for Ferris Institute to perpetuate the great work that it has so well maintained since it was established. Not only do I believe in the future of the institution; but in communications from college presidents of the State, and alumni scattered over this and other states - in the great work of Ferris - declare the work done by this college could not have been done by any other. It is not in competition with any other college; it has a distinct mission to fill; all educational institutions of the state believe that, and all are in accord in the prayer that those of us to whom the Institute has been

¹⁹ The advisory board consisted of Bert S. Travis, Emmanuel M. Clark, Karl G. Merrill, Ernest J. Parr and Grover C. Baker. Special meeting of the Board of Trustees, June 4, 1930, Financial Records, July 1, 1930-Aug. 31, 1931, p. 138; FIFS, A7a.

²⁰ Institute News (June 16, 1930); Folder FIFS, F3g2c.



entrusted with God's help shall be successful in carrying out this mission.²¹

When fall term 1930 opened with White at the helm, Ferris Institute was faced with a financial crisis which was not going to ease to any substantial degree, until veterans returned from World War II. With funds scarce and the prospects of acquiring additional finances doubtful, school officials on several occasions paid alumni building accounts with school funds.

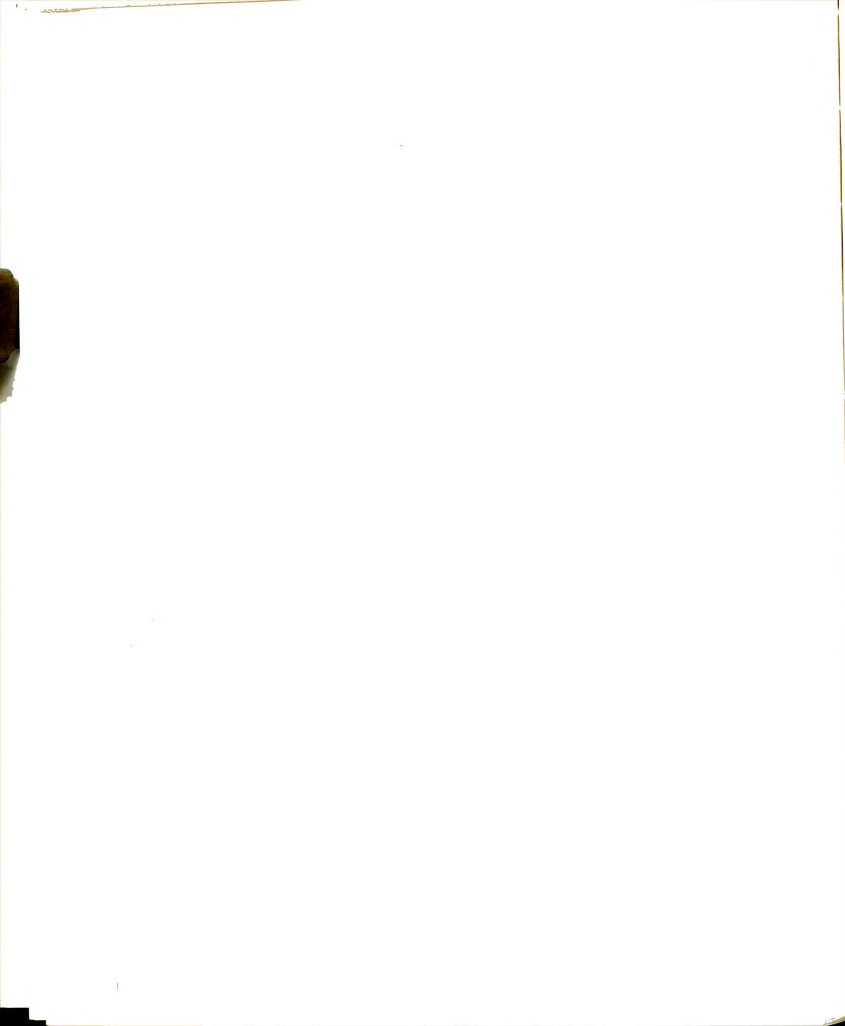
After the proceeds of the bond sale on the Alumni building and all immediate accounts were settled, \$5,500 was returned to the school fund, in the forms of certificates of deposit, thus leaving a net deficit of \$931.63.²²

Athletics During the Depression 1930-1937

In the midst of the financial difficulties of the thirties and during the tenure of presidents White, Brown and Ward, regular athletic and social events provided students with diversions from the academic world. Among the athletic activities was football under the direction of Bill McElwain. That season only twenty-five of sixty

²¹Ibid. At this time Bert S. Travis was secretary of the school, Emmanuel M. Clark was Vice-president, Grover C. Baker was registrar, E. J. Parr, Dean of Pharmacy, and Karl G. Merrill was director of the business department.

²²Financial Records, Aug. 30, 1930, p. 139; FIFS, A7a. A resolution adopted at a Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees, Feb. 25, 1930, stated that the corporation would borrow \$30,000.00 and then issue bonds for repayment of the bond. The Board executed a trust mortgage of its real estate, buildings and equipment to secure the payment of the bond and interest.



candidates stayed with the team. Nevertheless, the Institute News was optimistic about the team and McElwain's coaching ability.

The material this year looks very good for a first string eleven but a little weak on reserve material. This is due to a great number of men on the squad who have never played football before, but never the less the coach will build up a squad to make the other schools fear Ferris.²³

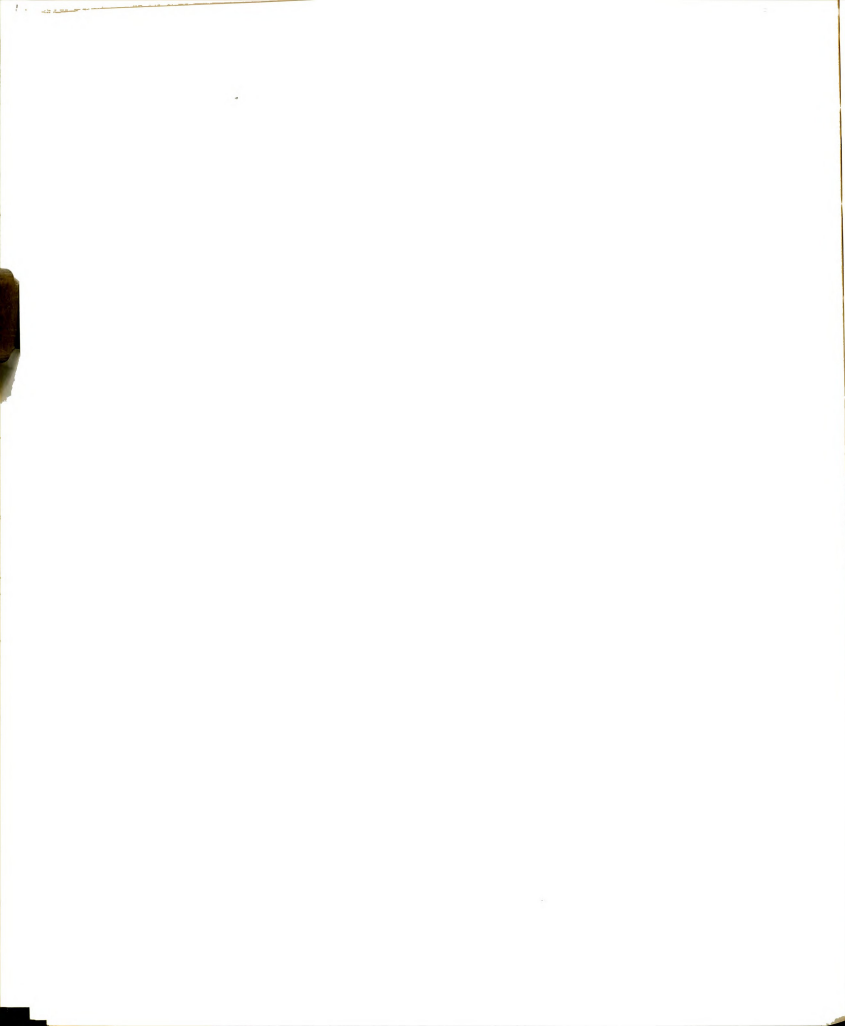
The previous year the football team had recorded a 6-2 season with victories over Alma College, Grand Rapids Junior College, Detroit Technical College, Flint Technical School, the Michigan State freshman team, and the Notre Dame "B" team. The Notre Dame Homecoming game attracted the largest crowd ever to see a football game in Big Rapids.²⁴ Overshadowing the football record was a 15-2 season by the basketball team.²⁵ Highlights of the season included two rare victories over Grand Rapids Junior College.²⁶

²³ Institute News (Oct. 1, 1930); Folder FIFS, F3g2d.

²⁴ The victories over Alma and the Michigan State Frosh were the first against those opponents in the history of the institute. Big Rapids Pioneer, May 14, 1929; Folder FIFS, Dlb.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid. These athletic events at the institute were controlled by an athletic commission headed by Bert S. Travis. Other members included E. W. Pennock, faculty manager; E. M. Clark, in charge of advertising; Arthur Simons, mediator for the businessmen and athletic commission; Harold Tamblin, student manager in charge of gate receipts, and William Platts, assistant student manager. Institute News (Sept. 25, 1929); Folder FIFS, F3g2c.



This increased athletic participation by students seemed to necessitate eligibility regulations. These were written by a committee consisting of Ernest J. Parr, Karl G. Merrill, and Grover C. Baker.

In view of the fact that there has always been more or less criticism of the fact that the Institute did not have any eligibility regulations governing players on the teams, representing the school in athletic contests; and further, believing that for the general good of the school and of athletics, there should be standards of eligibility; we would respectfully recommend the adoption of the following:

- a. That a player to be eligible for taking part in athletic games which represent the school should be a regularly enrolled student of the school.²⁷
- b. That the player maintain an acceptable record for attendance at the school, both roll-call and class attendance.
- c. That the player carry a minimum of three classes which represent 12 term hours of work or its equivalent.
- d. That the player's class work indicate that he is doing passing work. And that a player be warned and the coach notified one week in advance by the teacher who reports poor work, otherwise he is eligible to play. When the player brings his work up to standard, the teacher may give notice and the player may again be eligible. Players must be maintaining passing grade work in at least three classes.²⁸

²⁷ This rule indicates a significant change that was occurring in enrollment at the school. Traditionally, many students attended the school sporadically, often enrolling when farm chores were at an ebb. This pattern hindered a quality athletic program because many prospective team members would remain at the school only a short time and then leave to work on the farm or earn money elsewhere.

²⁸ Letter, E. J. Parr, K. G. Merrill, Grover C. Baker to the Trustees of the Ferris Institute, Sept. 23, 1929, Folder FIFS, 00p1123.

Other significant events in the development of the athletic program occurred during the presidency of Ernest E. Brown. Assuming his duties in 1932, Brown among other things, gave considerable attention to the athletic program. For example, he recommended the following plan.²⁹

1. Continue to charge students .25 activity fee per week. Fifty percent of the money collected was to be used for varsity and intramural programs. The other 50 percent for various school activities.
2. A total athletic budget of \$1,800.00 based on an average attendance of 400 students.
3. A faculty athletic committee to attempt to affiliate Ferris Institute with a recognized collegiate athletic conference.
4. Athletes would not be subsidized either by the remission of tuition or favored status for jobs.³⁰
5. Coaches or other members of the physical education department would have no jurisdiction over the labor of athletes in other departments.³¹

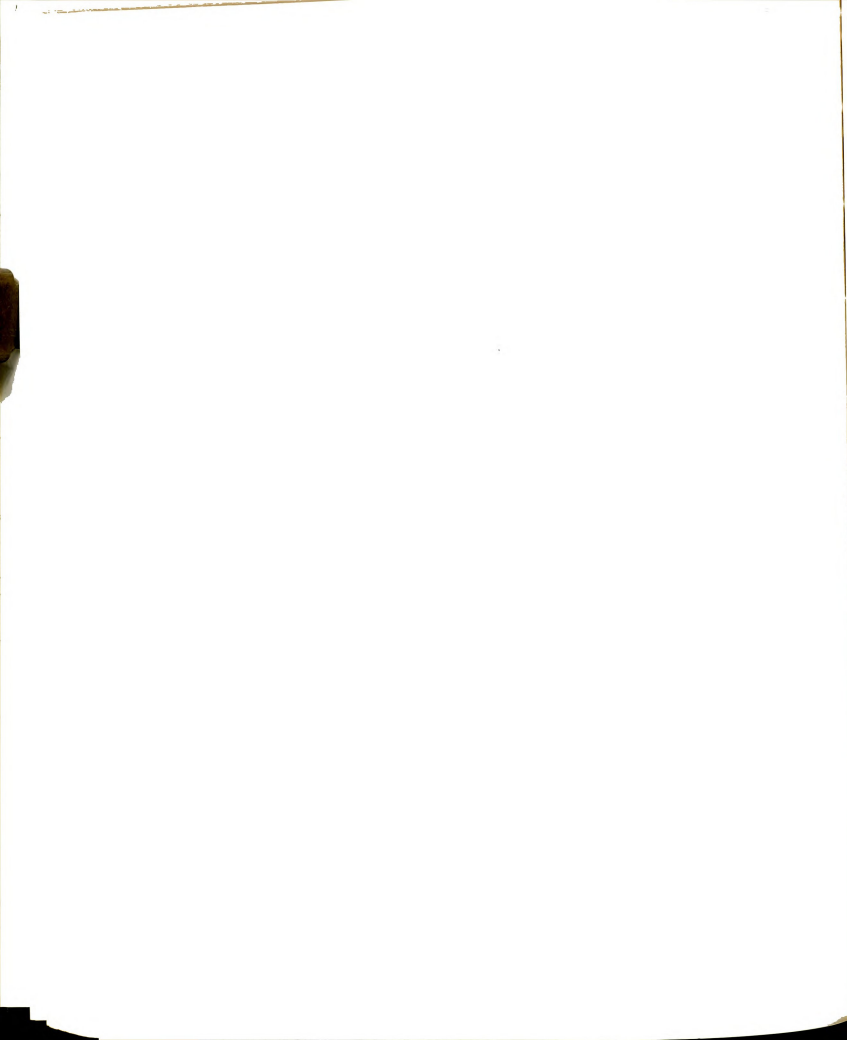
During the 1933-34 school year a new school song was written for the stimulation of both students and faculty.

Rah! Rah! Football boys of Ferris Institute.
They're a bunch that's hard to beat.

²⁹ Board of Trustees Meeting, Official Minutes, p. 56, Nov. 28, 1932, President's Office. Although it is not mentioned, it is quite possible that "Top" Taggart had considerable influence on these developments. Taggart, along with other faculty members, were responsible for the impetus given to athletics at the institute during this period.

³⁰ Not more than two student janitor jobs were to be given to athletes. Ibid., p. 56.

³¹ This motion by Brown was carried unanimously by the trustees. At another meeting it was suggested and supported by the trustees that two tennis courts be installed. Board of Trustees Meeting, Official Minutes, p. 36, April 14, 1932, President's office.



Boost 'em, coax 'em
 Rah! Rah! Hah! Ha! sturdy boys of old F.I.
 Cheer 'em with a rousing song
 Rah! rah, rah.³²

With these inspiring words to instill them with the winning spirit, the football and basketball teams compiled records of 2-4-0³³ and 10-9 respectively.³⁴ The losing football season was more bitter due to player injuries resulting from a poor home playing field.

'Riverside Park,' or 'Stoney Field,' as it is more aptly called at times, is unfit for further use. It may even be considered as really dangerous; being covered with boulders ranging in size from an egg to a football, There is probably no poorer college field in . . . Michigan.³⁵

Of special significance to the athletic program was the return of Bill McElwain in 1936, after an eighteen week leave of absence to work on a law degree,³⁶ and the institute's entrance into the Michigan-Ontario Athletic Conference.³⁷ The excitement of playing in a conference was expressed in the Ferris Weekly.

³²Ferris Weekly, IV, no. 3 (Oct. 2, 1933), p. 2.

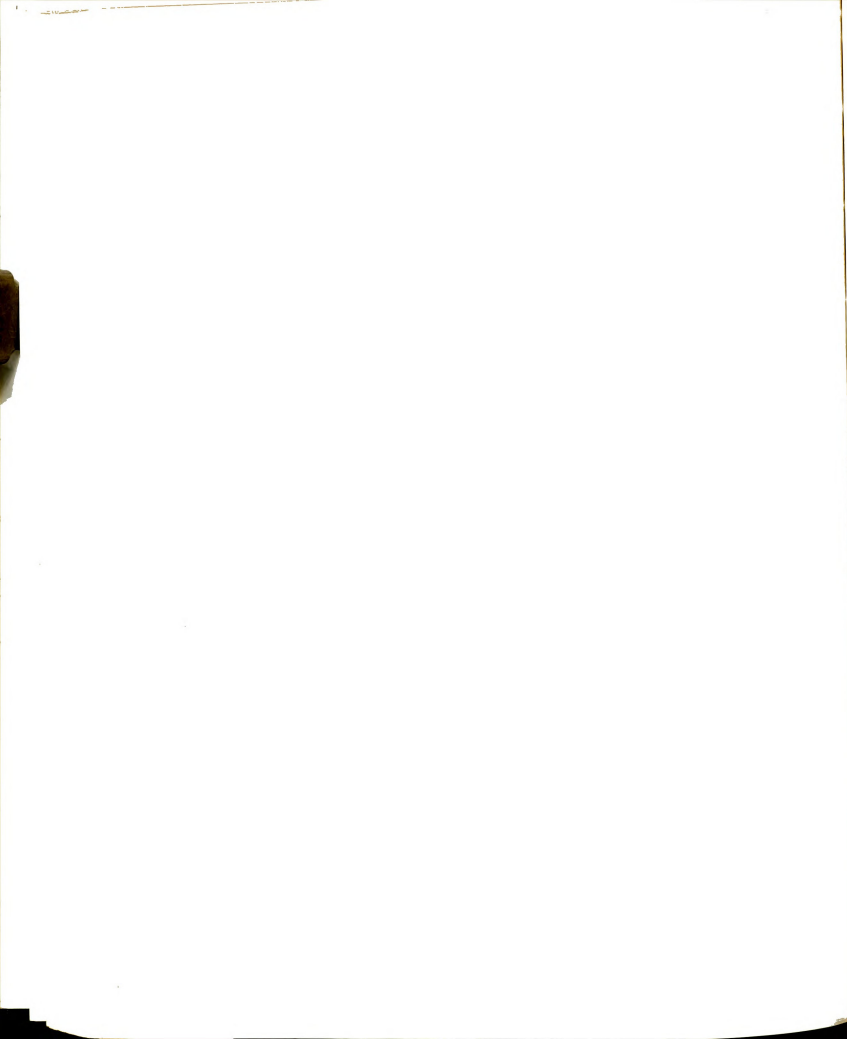
³³FIFS, c201, Folder 5.

³⁴FIFS, c201, Folder 4.

³⁵Ferris Weekly, IV, no. 5 (Oct. 17, 1933), p. 2.

³⁶Ferris Weekly, V, no. 31 (April 30, 1935), p. 4.

³⁷Ferris Weekly, VI, no. 12 (Dec. 10, 1935), p. 2.
 The conference consisted of Ferris Institute; Assumption College of Sandwich, Ontario; St. Mary's College of Orchard Lake, Michigan; Adrian College; Lawrence Technical School and Battle Creek College.



For the first time the school will be able to participate in . . . athletics on an organized basis. Schedule making will be simplified and in addition the way will be opened up for minor sports on an inter-school basis, an Institute program that has been in need of just this stimulant.³⁸

In addition, increased enthusiasm was displayed in the girl's athletic program which included tennis, volleyball and basketball. "The formation of womens sport classes is an innovation at Ferris Institute President E. E. Brown said, and it opens an entirely new field of activities for the institute women."³⁹

Homecoming, a traditional activity associated with college football, had come to Ferris Institute in 1926.⁴⁰ It was organized by Gamma Phi Sigma, later to become the Phi Sigma Chi fraternity.⁴¹ After receiving their charter they decided to organize a Homecoming day for old members to be initiated into the new fraternity.⁴² "They asked the Institute to cooperate with them, . . . and the idea was conceived to make it a school Homecoming instead of merely that of the fraternity."⁴³ Apparently the game, dance and

³⁸ Ibid.

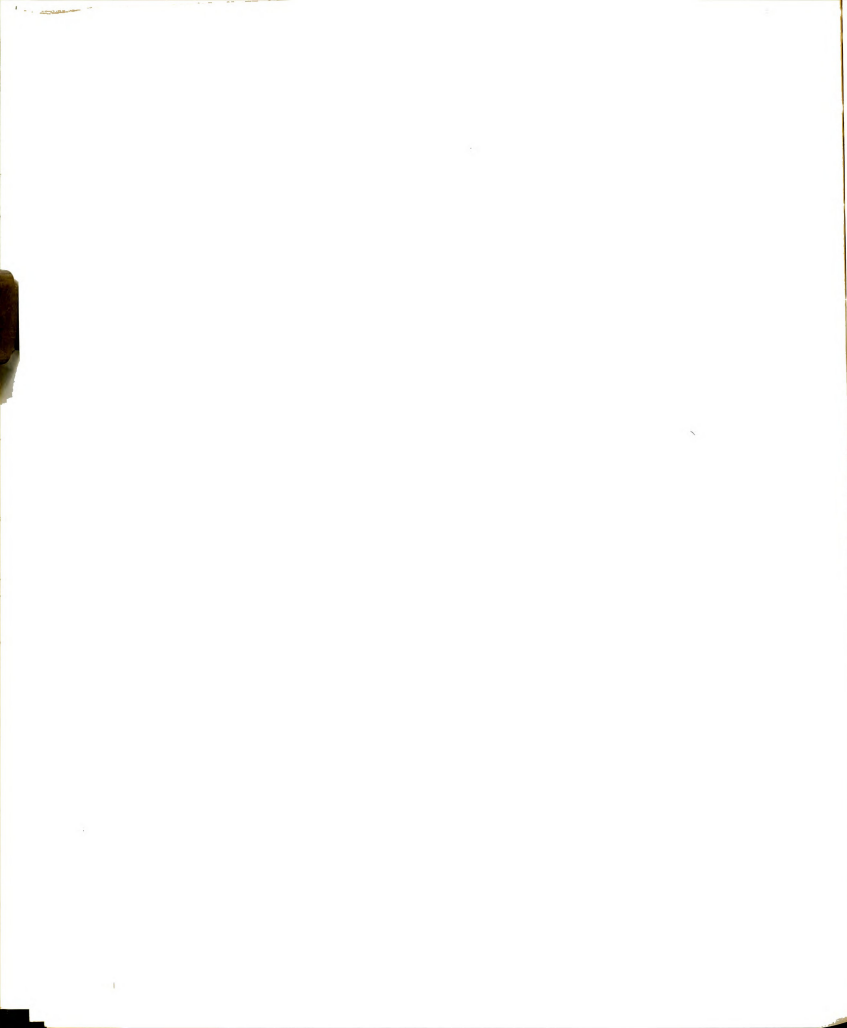
³⁹ Ferris Weekly, V, no. 21 (Feb. 19, 1935), p. 1.

⁴⁰ Institute News (Oct. 15, 1930); Folder FIFS, F3g2d.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.



initiation activities associated with the first Homecoming were successful enough to make them annual affairs.⁴⁴

A New Decade and New Problems

Administratively, 1931 was a year of change. Plans were made in late summer of 1931 to purchase the school from former stockholders.⁴⁵ The Big Rapids businessmen who successfully negotiated the purchase agreed to continue the school as a non-profit and non-stock organization.⁴⁶ They met on August 24, 1931, to appoint nine board directors for the institute⁴⁷ and instruct them to perpetuate the school as an educational institution.⁴⁸

That evening the first board of trustees meeting was held to review the plan of incorporation and elect

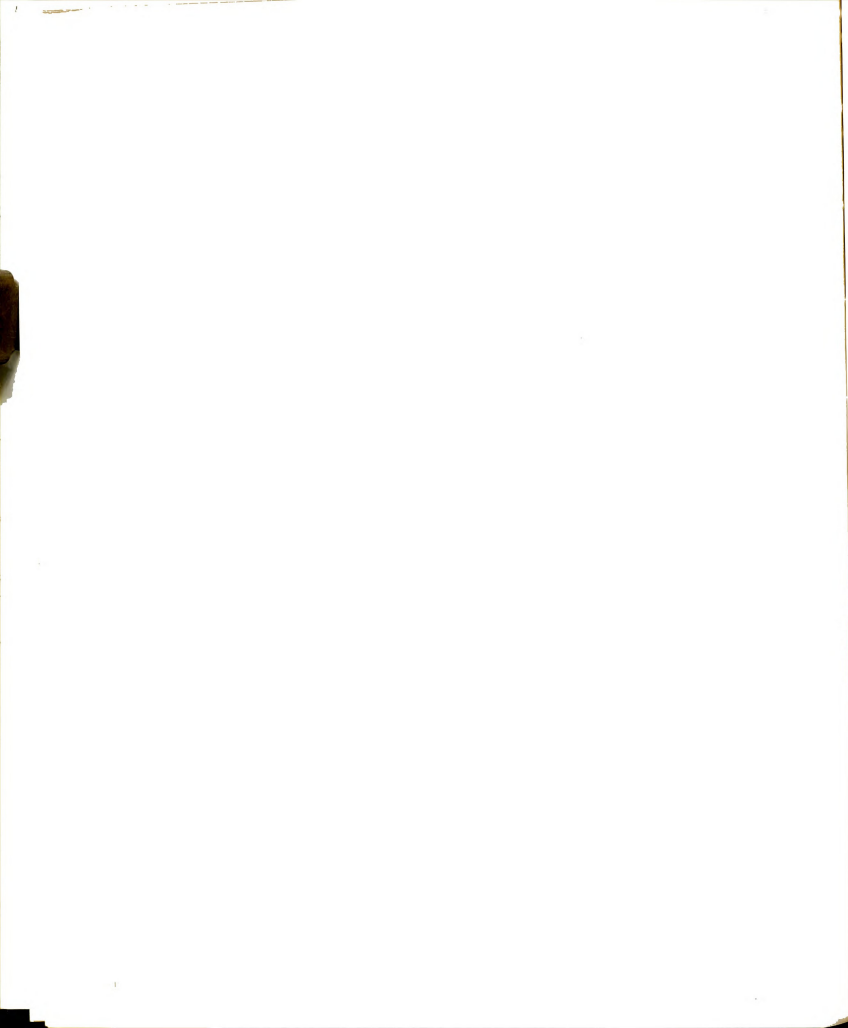
⁴⁴The Institute News (Oct. 22, 1930); Folder FIFS, F3g2d; with Sam E. Buck as managing editor coined the following phrase. "Homecoming is a quick flight back to happiness for a day." It was also reported that a new administrative system had been organized for the Institute News. A faculty committee with Professor Miserez as faculty advisor proposed to: ". . . have a better paper than has ever been produced before. . . ." Institute News (Oct. 1, 1930); Folder FIFS, F3g2d. Professor Miserez also took over Masselink's Bible class. Note; Folder FIFS, F3g2d.

⁴⁵Ferris Weekly, II, no. 1 (Sept. 14, 1931), p. 1.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Board of Incorporators - Ferris Institute. Official Minutes of Board Meeting, II, Aug. 24, 1931, President's office.

⁴⁸Ibid.



officers.⁴⁹ The new corporation assumed control over \$36,350.00 from the old Ferris Institute and agreed to pay all outstanding open accounts to a total of \$18,000.00.⁵⁰ It was also resolved that the corporation come to an agreement with Mrs. Masselink, Bert S. Travis, Irene Travis, Emmanuel M. Clark, Ethel Ferris and the Michigan Trust Company, whereby these people would be given promissory notes in payment for their capital stock.⁵¹ Three days later a second board of trustees meeting was held to select an executive council to administer the affairs of the institute.⁵² Emmanuel M. Clark was chosen as chairman, with Karl G. Merrill as vice-chairman, and Ernest J. Parr as business manager.⁵³

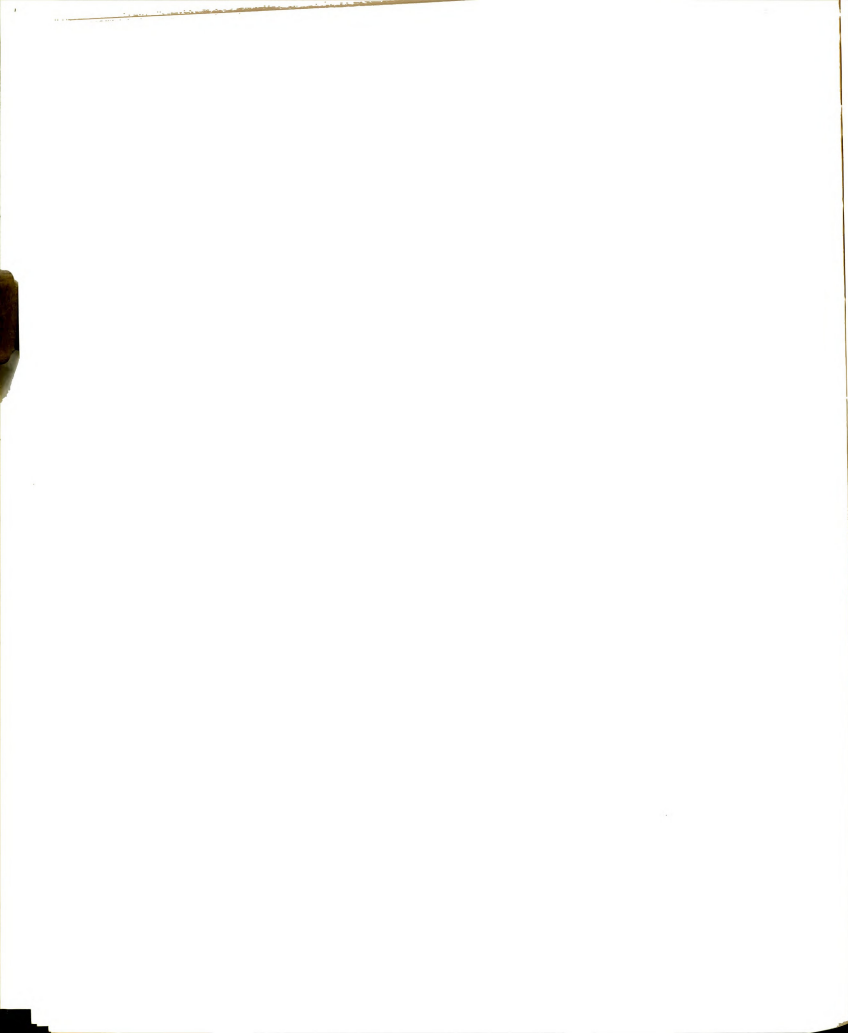
⁴⁹Board of Trustees Ferris Institute. Official Minutes of board meeting, p. 17, Aug. 24, 1931 (typewritten), President's office. Hereafter, unless otherwise stated it is to be assumed that board minutes are typewritten. The trustees were William F. Turner (chairman for 1932), Roy S. Buck (vice-chairman), William C. Taggart, Arthur J. Butler, Floyd Bouck, James B. Campbell, Willis C. Judson, George Fairman, Ray Waters. Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid. These payments were to be made by a bond signed by all incorporators.

⁵¹Ibid. The promissory notes were distributed as follows: Lavina Masselink, \$17,500.00; Emmanuel M. Clark, \$520.00; Ethel McCloud Ferris, \$500.00; Michigan Trust Company, \$170.00; and Mr. and Mrs. Bert S. Travis, jointly, with full right of survivorship, \$17,660.00. The total sum was \$36,350.00.

⁵²Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 19, August 27, 1931, President's office.

⁵³Ibid.



Confronted with revenue shortages, these men contemplated the possibility of reduced salaries for instructors. After reviewing existing and prospective revenues it was decided by the board to set the total salary of faculty and staff at Ferris Institute for the 1931-32 school year at \$62,700.00.⁵⁴ Hopefully, these austerity measures would aid the school in getting a good start for the new school year.

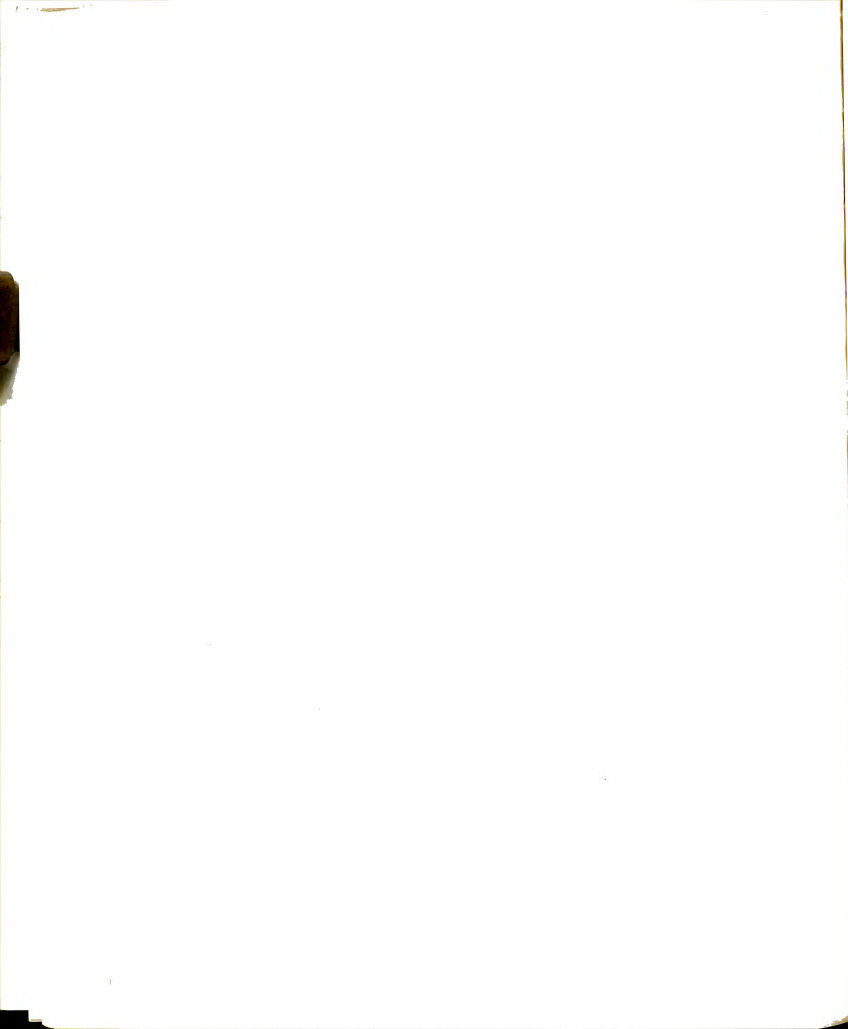
Students were encouraged by Clark to get a good start by spending most of their time studying and observing the newly standardized campus rules and regulations.⁵⁵ Speaking to students about campus rules, Ernest J. Parr stated that all students were to follow attendance policies.

1. Be in your seat for roll call 7:55 every morning. Noon roll call discontinued past summer - will not be used again if cooperation given in the morning.

2. Classes may be changed or dropped only per permission of the instructor and head of the department.

⁵⁴Ibid. Sept. 2, 1931, p. 20. Yearly individual salaries ranged from \$3300.00 for Emmanuel M. Clark and Ernest J. Parr; \$2880.00 for Karl G. Merrill; to \$975.00 for Tunis Cole, the janitor. In 1931-32 school year the faculty numbered thirty-one including administrators who also taught.

⁵⁵Ferris Weekly, II, no. 1 (Sept. 14, 1931), p. 1. Published by the students every Monday. On October 7, it was published on Wednesday, while later, Tuesday became the publishing date. Also see Ferris Weekly, II, no. 2 (Sept. 21, 1931), p. 1. A school committee was assigned to work with the landladies, the acting president of the school, Dean of Women and president of the student's house union. Ladies attempted to standardize rooming houses in the interests of student, faculty and landladies.



3. All class programs must be filed with Registrar. [Grover C. Baker]

4. Excuses from roll call or absences from classes [are] granted by the president, but an accurate record of these is kept for reference when outside recommendations are required.

5. No smoking will be permitted on the campus, except during certain school parties when a smoking room will be furnished.⁵⁶

In addition to these general rules applicable to all students were regulations for coeds designed to: "Assure parents that some effort is being made to supervise girl's outside activities."⁵⁷

One student expressed his view of these regulations as they manifested themselves in the assembly routine.

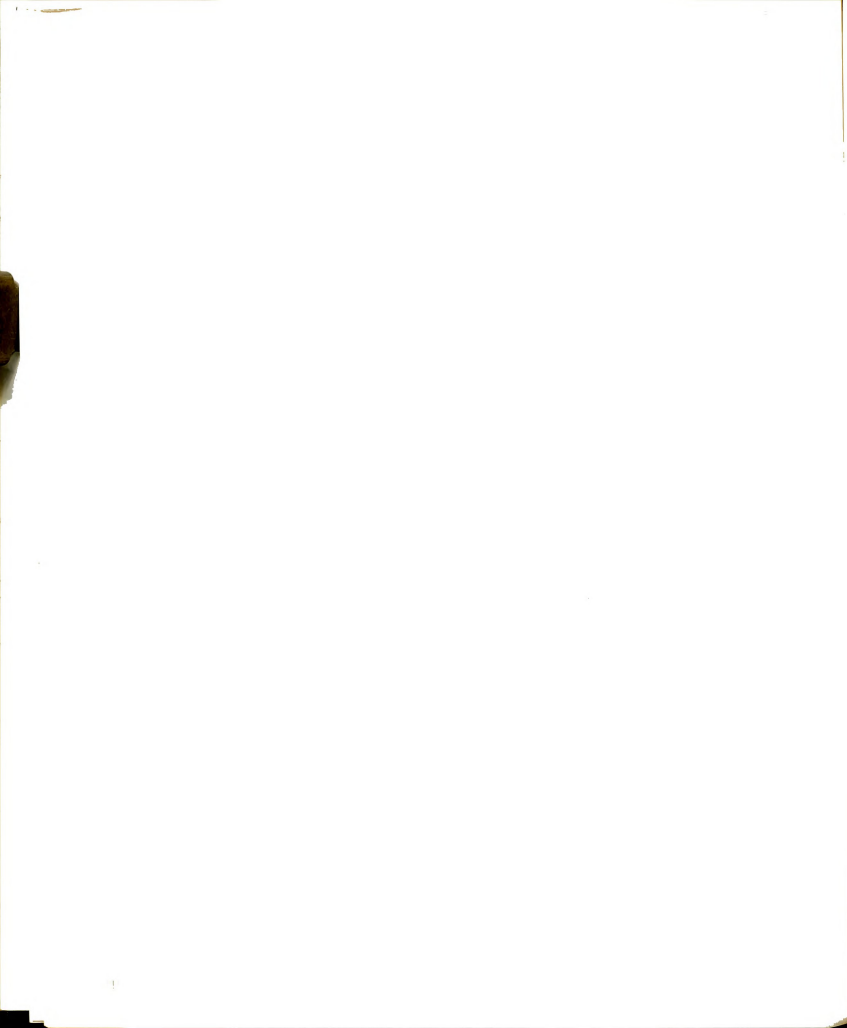
Br-r-r that old alarm again;
Seven o'clock so soon?
Seems as though I just turned in,
Now hear that old thing croon.

Wonder if it's snowing out,
Or is it damp and wet;
Hard to tell what's coming next.
We've had no winter yet.

Lets see-what books to take to class,
My gosh! I ought to know;
I've been carrying them now for many months
Thru sun and rain and snow.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid. These regulations included a 9:30 p.m. curfew Monday through Thursday and an 11:30 p.m. curfew Friday through Sunday. Another regulation stated that: "Gentlemen may be entertained in a suitable room on the first floor, provided by the householder [Ferris Institute lacked campus student housing until the end of World War II] but only on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. . . ." Ibid.



Oh! here they are - oh! boy!
 half past
 I must step on the gas;
 Or miss that roll call class.

Well! here we are in assembly;
 Wonder what's up for today.
 "The following owe tuition"
 So it starts the same old way.

Maybe a speaker this morning
 Maybe a musical selection-
 The suspense is really fierce.
 It gets just that perplexin.

No, I'm wrong-its basketball;
 Good Bill again.
 "A victorious season ahead," says he,
 "Maybe lose some - but then -."

A talk on depression now;
 Dr. Clark says things are coming;
 Guess the solution's to buckle in hard
 And we'll soon have things a humming.

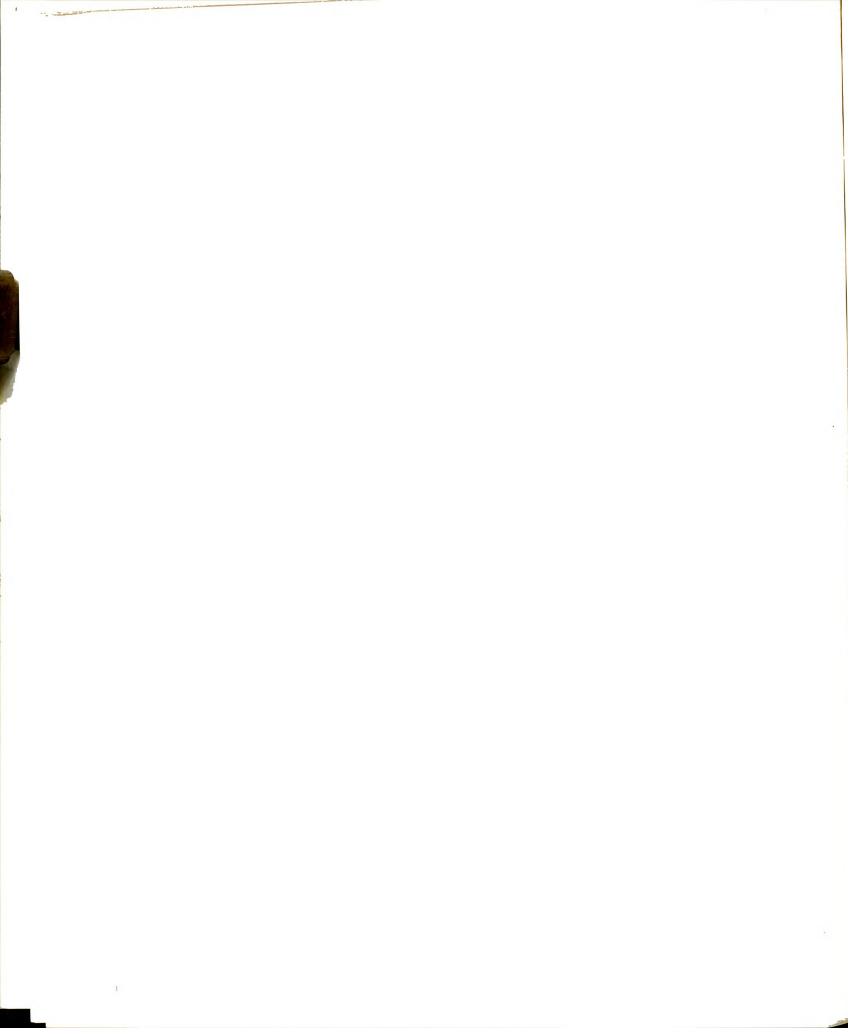
Hurray - some more of Africa
 Mr. Travis can bring the thrills;
 Lions with dual personalities -
 Doesn't it give you chills?

 Now we'll sing some songs you know
 For dear old Alma Mater;
 If everyone feels the way he sings
 There isn't a one should hate her.

Then we pass out as the band plays loud
 To the "Men of Ohio" tune
 Oh! Well! it won't be long before
 The bell will ring for noon.⁵⁸

When the bell rang to end the school day some students headed for the playing field to await the instructions of coach McElwain and assistants Art Simon and Ivan

⁵⁸W. S. Raub, "See You in Assembly," Ferris Weekly, II, no. 18 (Feb. 3, 1932), p. 4.



Cole.⁵⁹ Art Simon was the local movie theater manager who permitted the school use of the building for pharomic lectures and benefit plays for the athletic association. Students would often fill the balcony of the theater to see current films like "Merely Mary Ann" with Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell, complete with a Looney Tune, a screen song and Paramount Sound News.⁶⁰ On Monday's at 9:00 p.m. students might be treated to a guest feature; perhaps Buster Keaton and Charlotte Greenwood performing in "Parlor, Bedroom, and Bath."⁶¹ A special Homecoming attraction was the movie "Caught Plastered." Other activities included a game with Albion attended by over 2,000 people with more than 300 attending the Phi Sigma Chi Homecoming Ball in the evening.⁶²

For some students and alumni highlights of that Homecoming weekend were a mock robbery and a flagpole incident. It seems that:

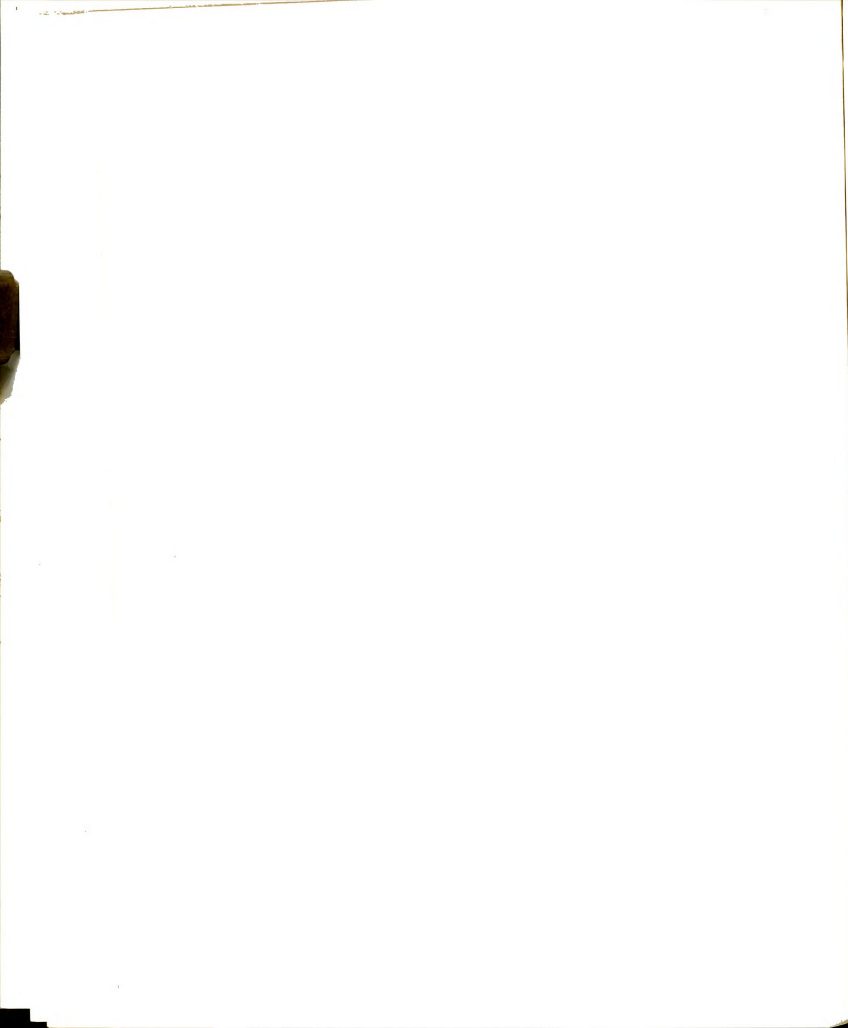
A group of old Ferris graduates in more or less convivial mood playfully stole \$418,000.00 in

⁵⁹Ferris Weekly, II, no. 1 (Sept. 14, 1931), p. 2. That year the football schedule included games with Western State Teachers College at Kalamazoo, Hope College, Central State Teachers College, Albion [Homecoming], General Motors Technical School, Michigan State Normal College, St. Mary's College, Orchard Lake, Michigan, and the University of Detroit freshmen. The Ferris Institute band made its first public appearance at the Albion game. Ibid., p. 1.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ferris Weekly, II, no. 5 (Oct. 14, 1931), p. 1.



college currency from the commercial department school bank, It is thought the robbery was carefully planned to take place during the few minutes that the current was off Friday, so that the bank's alarm would not ring and disturb those who were working behind the counter.⁶³

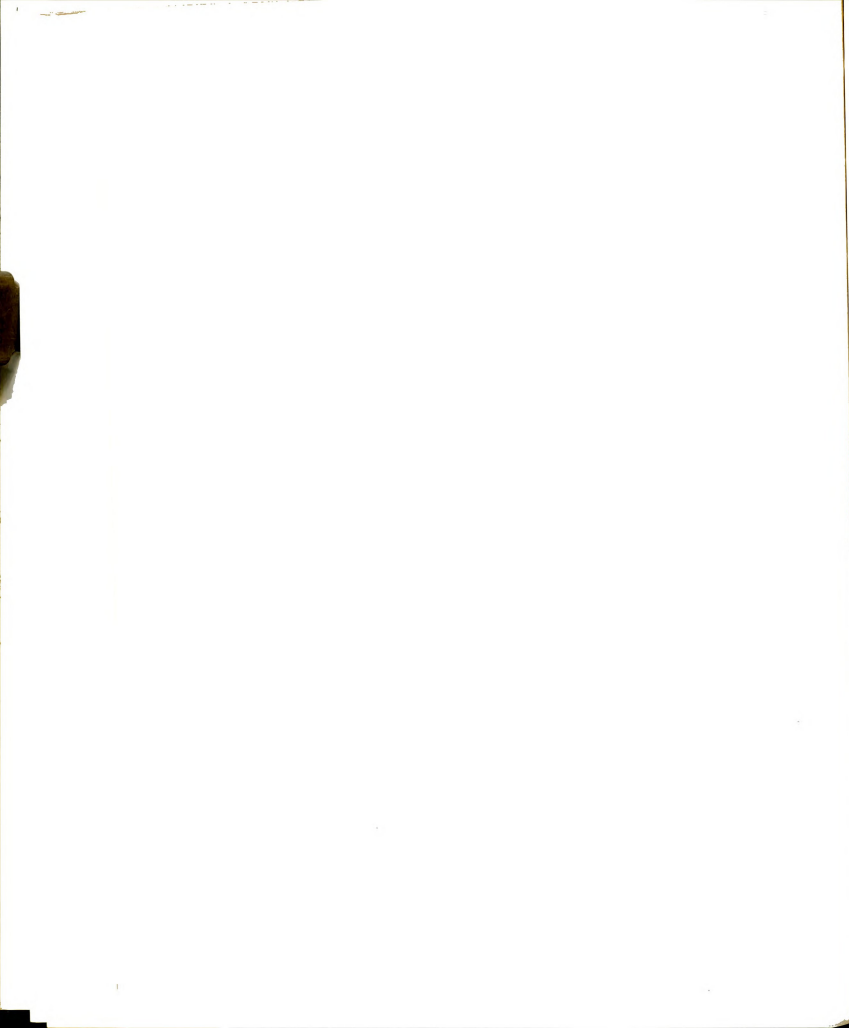
The other antic involved the hoisting of a pharomic banner to the top of the school's flagpole. With this accomplished the pole was smeared with lard.⁶⁴

Lest one think that more serious student activities were absent at the school it can be mentioned that some students were taking premedical tests;⁶⁵ others musical ability tests to determine: ". . . what a person could

⁶³Ferris Weekly, II, no. 6 (Oct. 21, 1930, p. 1. This money was "play" currency used to aid students in developing banking skills.

⁶⁴Ferris Weekly, II, no. 4 (Oct. 7, 1931), p. 1.

⁶⁵Ferris Weekly, II, no. 13 (Dec. 9, 1931), p. 1. The tests were sent to Washington to be graded by an official of the Association of Medical Colleges. A letter was also sent to the Department of Public Instruction in Michigan, regarding requirements for a four year course in pharmacy. Financial Records, p. 147, FIFS, A7a. Alpheus A. Worcester also prepared the necessary papers to increase the capitalization of Ferris Institute from \$50,000.00 to \$100,000.00 to meet State requirements for granting degrees in pharmacy. Ibid. Ernest J. Parr also wrote a letter to the secretary of the National Pharmaceutical Association requesting a visit from their board to inspect facilities at Ferris Institute. Ibid.



do with music";⁶⁶ and still others joined the new class in classics,⁶⁷ or the French club.⁶⁸

Perhaps the topic of a most serious nature reported in the student newspaper was that of military activity in the world. Commenting on the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the tense military situation in other parts of the world, the editors adopted an anti-war position.

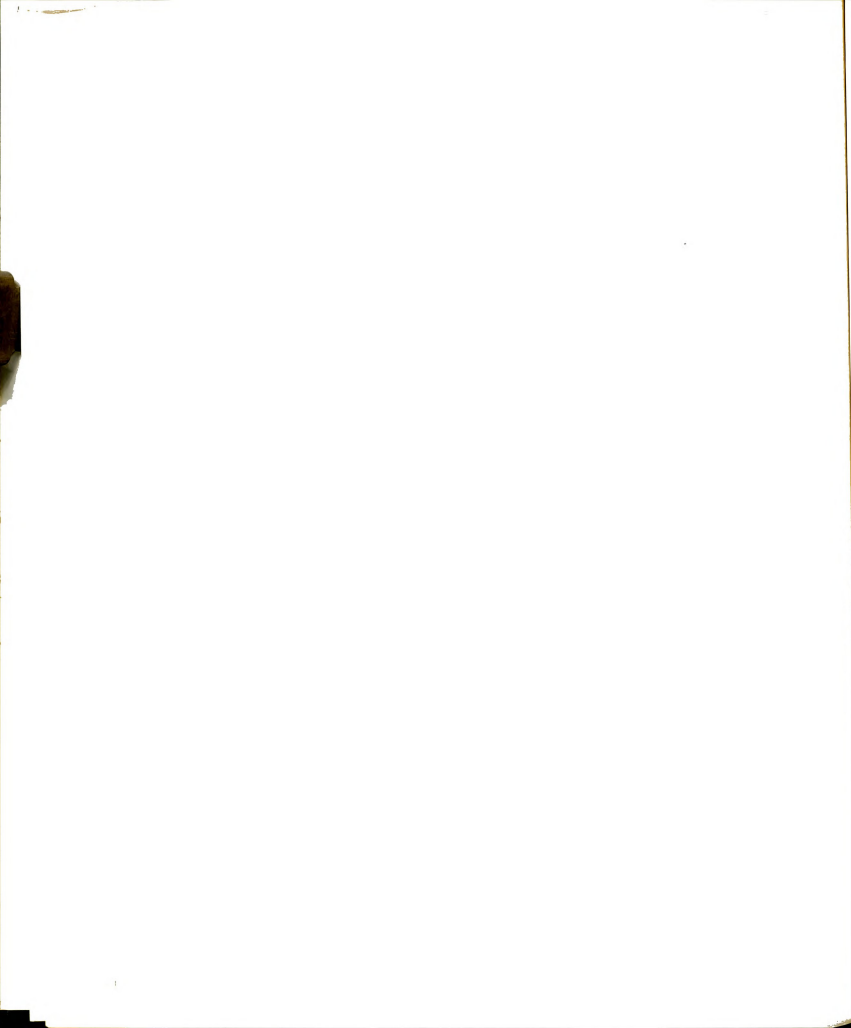
We were taught that the lives of our fathers and brothers were not given in vain [reference to World War I] and that conditions here were necessary because that great world conflict was to end all wars. Today, fifteen years after those tragedies took place, we know differently. We have learned that war cannot be ended by war. If this anniversary [United States entrance into World War I] brings unpleasant memories to our minds it should remind us that inter-national peace and good will cannot be attained through armaments.⁶⁹

⁶⁶Ferris Weekly, II, no. 13 (Dec. 9, 1931), p. 1. Professor Karl Kuhlman claimed that musical talent depended on approximately six inherent factors in an individual, the basic nature of which could not be significantly changed.

⁶⁷Ferris Weekly, II, no. 20 (Feb. 10, 1932), p. 1.

⁶⁸Ferris Weekly, II, no. 17 (Jan. 27, 1932), p. 4. The results of a questionnaire developed in a psychology class showed that Ferris students spent eight hours and eleven minutes sleeping, three hours and thirty-three minutes studying, and nearly four hours in classes out of the twenty-four hour day. The remainder was spent eating, relaxing or in school activities. Ferris Weekly, II, no. 21 (Feb. 7, 1932), p. 1.

⁶⁹Ferris Weekly, II, no. 28 (April 6, 1932), p. 2.



One Man's Struggle

With President White's term in office ending in 1931, a search for a new school president was initiated. A committee of three headed by William Turner was appointed to negotiate terms with prospective candidates.⁷⁰ The search led to Ypsilanti, Michigan and Dr. M. S. Pittman.⁷¹ Although no immediate action was taken on the committee's suggestion that Pittman be hired, two trustees did recommend him as a competent educator who would conduct himself in the best interests of the institute.⁷² This recommendation led to a resolution whereby the trustees agreed:

" . . . that Dr. M. S. Pittman of Ypsilanti possesses the necessary qualifications to ably fill the position of president of the Ferris Institute."⁷³ However, Pittman rejected the offer; consequently the Board made a tentative offer of a five year contract, with 25 per cent of the institution's net profits, and an annual salary of \$4,000.00 to Mr. C. C. Barnes of Mt. Pleasant.⁷⁴ For undisclosed

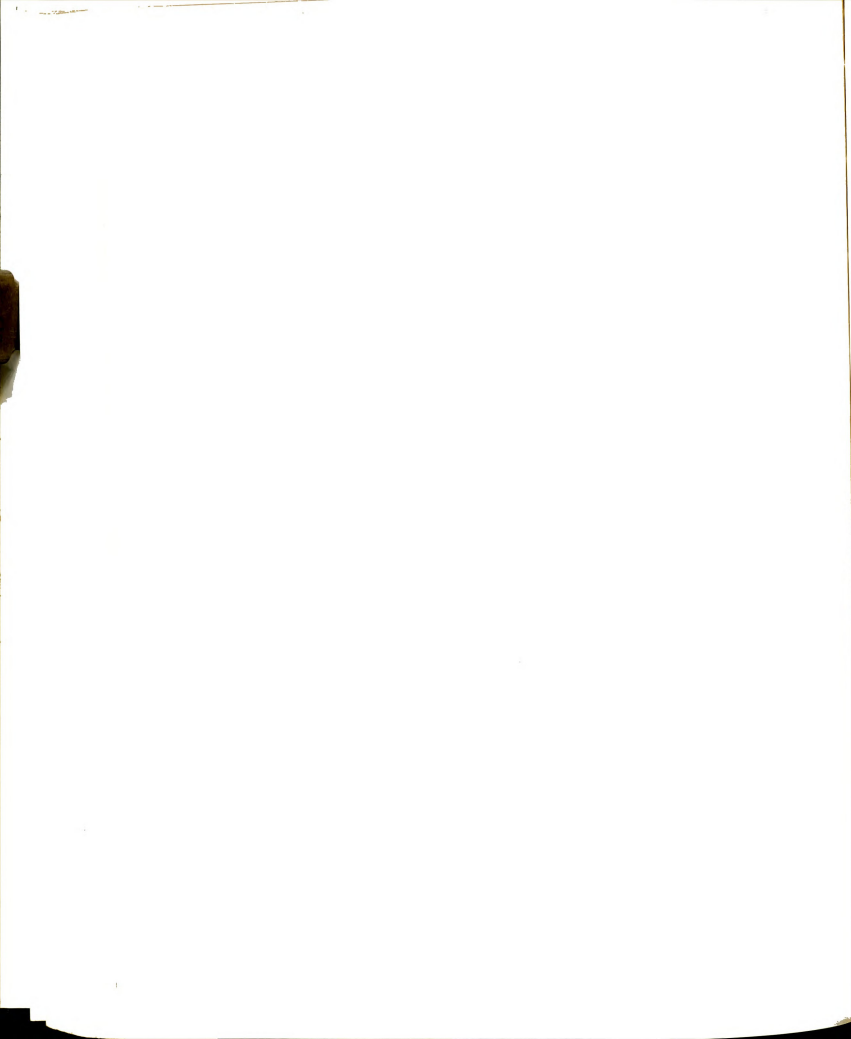
⁷⁰Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 28, Dec. 14, 1931, President's office.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 33, March 28, 1932, President's office.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid. An invitation was to be given to Dr. Pittman, asking him to assume his duties on April 1, 1932 or as soon as it was convenient for him.

⁷⁴Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 32, Oct. 1, 1932, President's office. Barnes was asked to assume his duties no later than Jan. 1, 1933.



reasons Barnes rejected the offer and the search for a president continued.

The investigating committee suggested that an offer be made to Ernest E. Brown of Oklahoma City.⁷⁵ An offer was made, Brown accepted, and he began his service with the school by recommending that the institute withdraw from the advertising solicitation of Big Rapids merchants.⁷⁶ He suggested that in its place the school arrange to have a four page section called the Ferris Weekly in the Big Rapids Pioneer.⁷⁷ The paper would be delivered to the faculty and students without cost on Wednesday afternoon.⁷⁸

Brown was officially installed as president on Dec. 8, 1932.⁷⁹ He began his inaugural address by quoting a letter from Isaiah Bowman, a Ferris alumnus, who maintained that only the spirit and idealism of the old institute

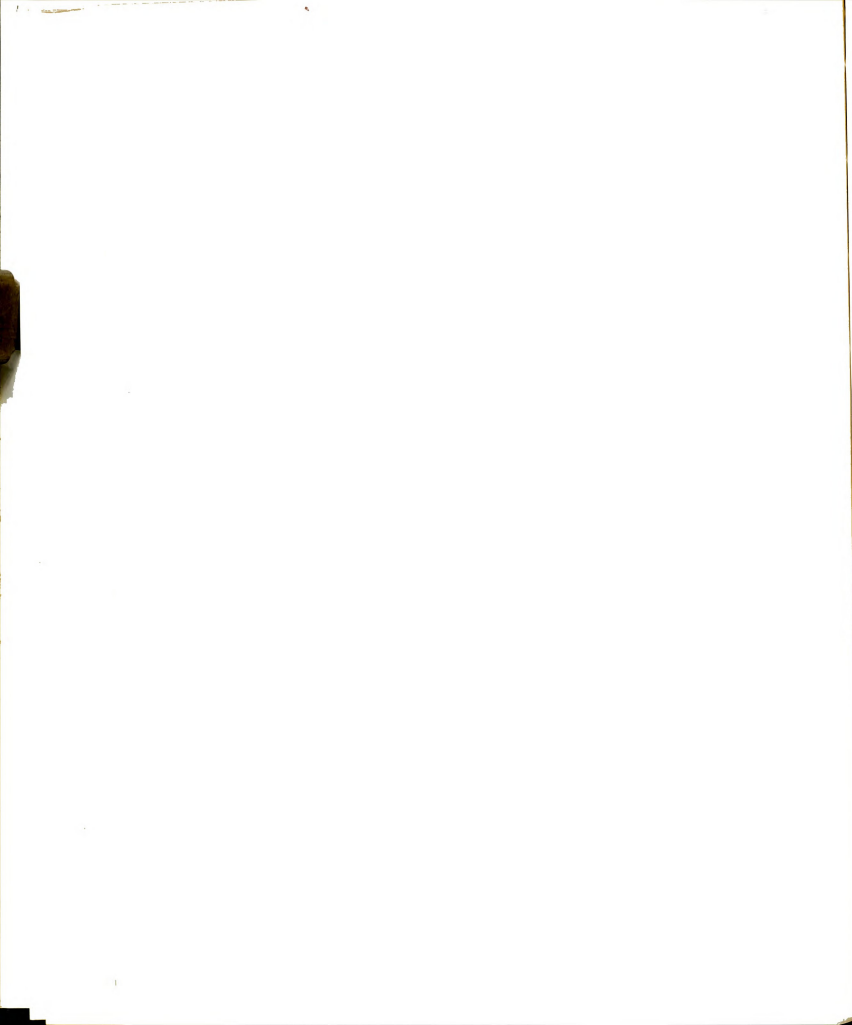
⁷⁵Ibid., p. 54, Oct. 13, 1932, President's office. Brown was offered a \$5,000.00 annual salary, but no mention was made of a five year contract or a 25 percent cut of the net profits of the institution as was offered Barnes.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 56a, Nov. 28, 1932, President's office.

⁷⁷Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes; p. 56a, Nov. 28, 1932, President's office.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Booklet, "Inaugural Address of Ernest Edward Brown," Dec. 8, 1932, Folder FIFS, DA. Brown had previously been president of Southwestern Teachers College in Wetherford, Oklahoma, Superintendent of Erick, Oklahoma Schools, Sayre Public Schools in Oklahoma and Chief Inspector for the State of Oklahoma.



could be perpetuated.⁸⁰ Brown, then asked a series of questions and provided answers for them. One question asked to whom the school belonged.

Not the corporation nor the town nor the faculty. Isaiah Bowman and the thousands like him own Ferris Institute. . . . Perhaps . . . this simple title should not be vested even in them. They are stewards of F. I. Michigan owns F.I. In a broader sense America and the world owns F.I.⁸¹

He then spoke of the advantages and disadvantages of the development of the new complex, technological world. Asking that Ferris Institute prepare to meet the challenges of such a world, Brown advocated an extension of cultural training at the school.

. . . , we have a new social justification for the so-called liberal or cultural education. If cultural training is emphasis on the principles of things and not so much on their narrow applications we have certainly made a case of desperate need for cultural training.⁸²

He then advocated an education which was concerned with the real problems of the day.

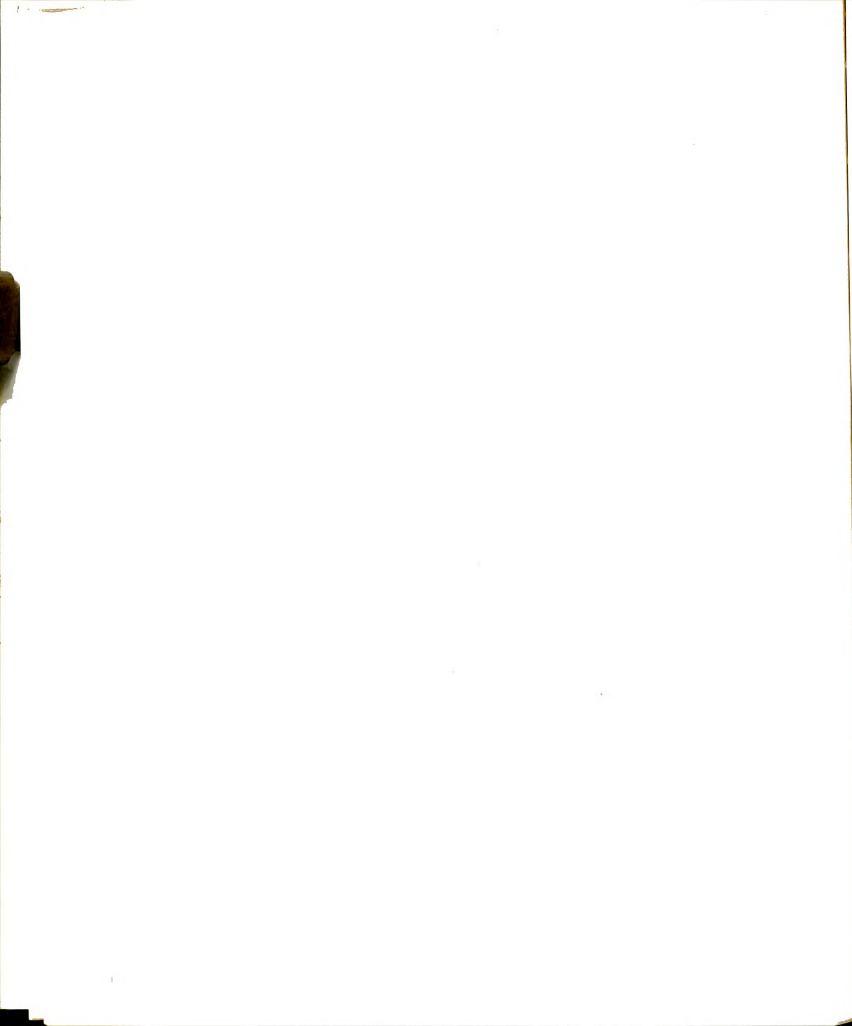
Recalling the traditional morning assemblies and their importance in the school program, Brown asked for a continuation of that tradition.

You may object that it is a sort of intellectual spoonfeeding. My answer would be that there is a place in every dinner for a hot appetizing course. It should lead to more systematic and solid treatment of the same material in the various class rooms. We should be very foolish to

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.



give up or greatly modify this very stimulating and inspiring part of our program. We may not be able to put quite as much pepper and paprika into the course as in the old days but we should be able to keep it appetizing.⁸³

Concluding his remarks, President Brown clarified his position on the institute's future educational tasks.

Let us not worry much about granting degrees. We should grant them as a matter of course at the end of every bonafide four year program on the collegiate level. We have no business crowding into fields already adequately cared for by other Michigan colleges. The chance of the young is too sacred for any college to trifle with by trying to be all things to all people. Certainly we shall never need to resort to educational check raising by certifying credits for more than they are worth. Such a program it seems to me carries some promise of building a new Ferris that can be truthfully described by America's favorite slogan, 'Bigger and Better'.⁸⁴

Of immediate concern to Brown were the economic problems of the school. The serious nature of those problems was expressed by one faculty member in a letter to a friend.

Yes, the Institute is in a precarious condition, but just how precarious I can't say. We have the assurance of the Board of Trustees that it positively will not close down, so that's encouraging.⁸⁵

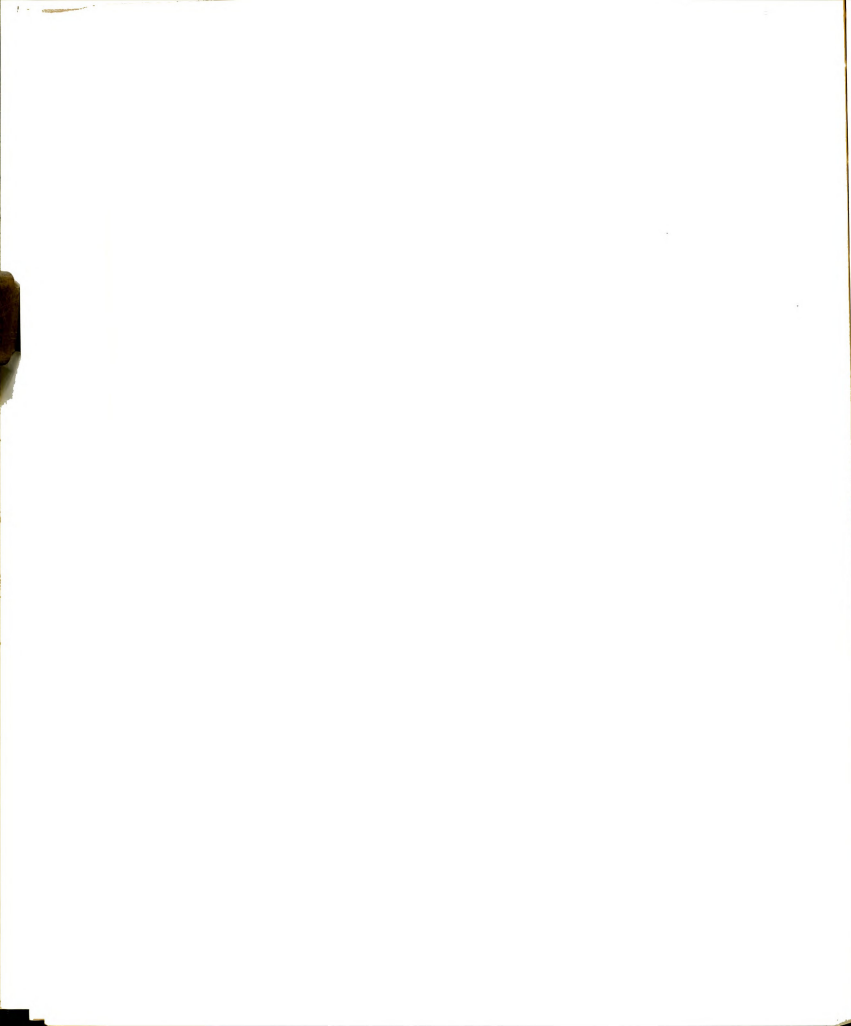
Commenting on the mood of the faculty he claimed that:

. . . the morale of the faculty is pretty low. Some think the cut [in wages] was all out of proportion to the reduced enrolment [sic].

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Letter, Roy Newton to Fred Woodbridge, Sept. 24, 1932, Newton Collection, Folder 1932-1933.



Some of the townspeople have been jealous of the 'big incomes' up at F.I., and are probably secretly gloating over it.⁸⁶

Given these conditions, Brown decided to partially relieve them by recommending a reduction of faculty and staff for the remainder of the 1932-33 school year.⁸⁷

Brown informed the trustees of his plan, explaining that those given a leave of absence to attend college would be compensated with a six dollar per week sum for the actual time spent at those institutions.⁸⁸

He clarified his position by assuring the faculty and staff that the plan was a result of economic necessity and not personal vindictiveness against anyone.

That it is understood that this action is taken purely in the interest of economy, that no question of rank, seniority, or rating are to be considered, and eligibility for re-employment is not to be prejudiced either favorably or unfavorably except that these teachers are to have priority in consideration for summer school.⁸⁹

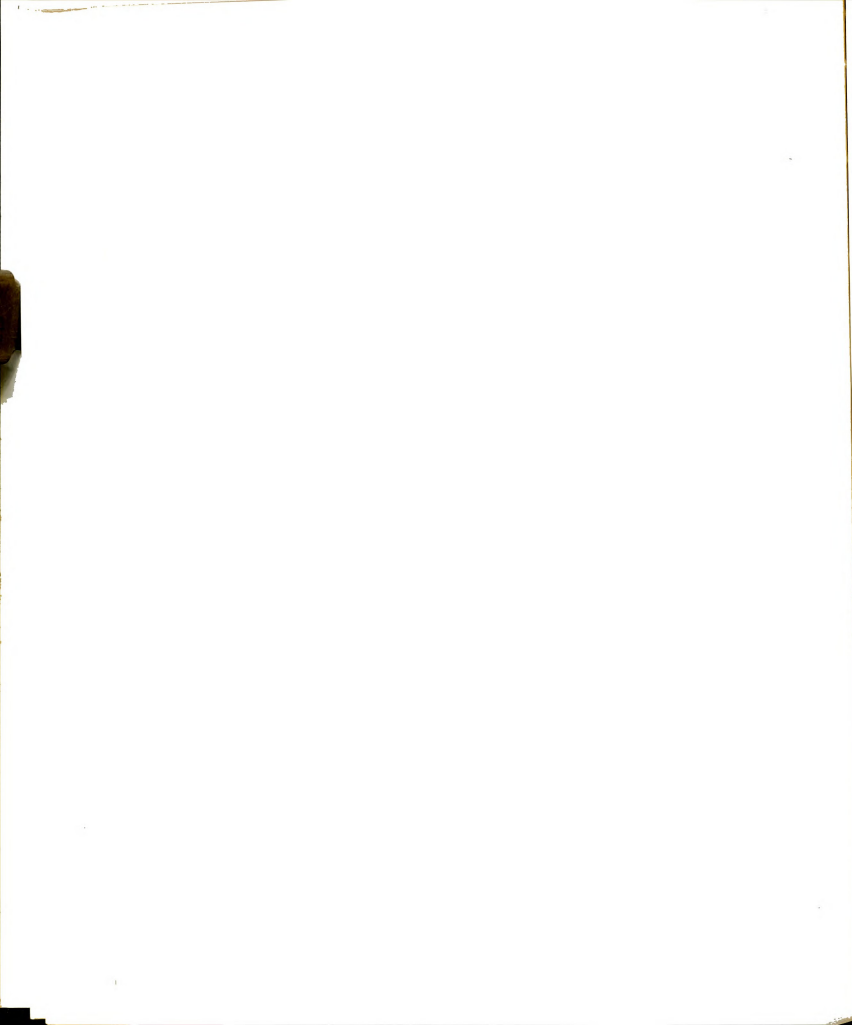
The Big Rapids Pioneer reported that these strategies by Brown were part of a faculty reorganization scheme. "This move [giving leaves of absence] is being made in accordance with the progressive policy instituted by Dr. Brown. Under

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 57, Dec. 16, 1932, President's office. The faculty was reduced by six persons and the clerical staff by one person.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.



this program the scholastic standing of the faculty will be raised."⁹⁰

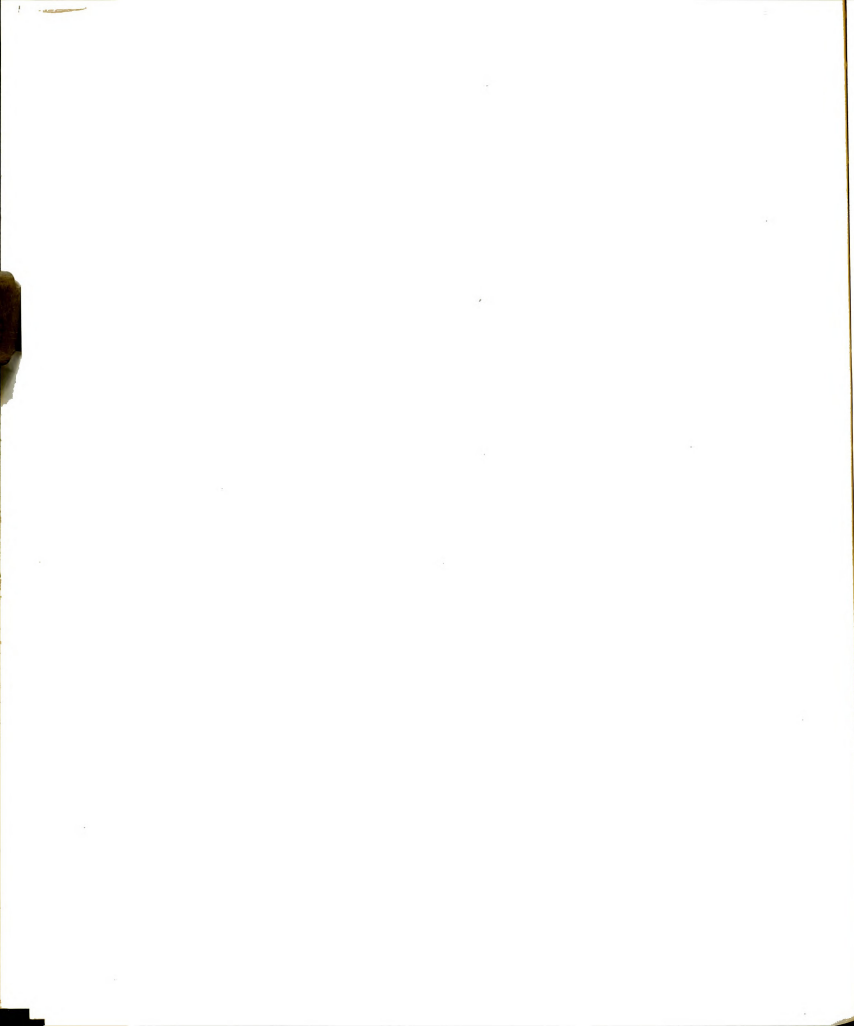
President Brown and the trustees were not alone in their attempts to appraise the role of the school in the difficult times of the thirties. The Ferris Weekly claimed that a changing student attitude had developed at the institute. The editors reported a change from blind loyalty to a more understanding attitude towards the school and its value to students.

The students at Ferris are becoming interested in the school because they are sensing that the school is interested in them. Under its present plan of operation [Board of Trustees] the school utilizes every surplus dollar directly for student benefit or for building up the school. That material manifestation of interest in the students means more to them today than any amount of empty inspirational talk of school loyalty and school spirit. That is why there is a new attitude at Ferris Institute.⁹¹

Similarly, other Michigan college and university students were taking positions on social, economic and political matters. From the formation of the "Veterans of Future Wars" club at the University of Michigan to the 1935 peace

⁹⁰Big Rapids Pioneer, Dec. 21, 1932; Folder FIFS, E2526all. E. E. Emshwillen went to Michigan State College to pursue a doctorate in physics, while R. R. Reed, Jeanette Higgins, and Helen Bellen went elsewhere for additional formal education. Ibid.

⁹¹Ferris Weekly, II, no. 1 (Sept. 14, 1932), p. 3. The painting of the old green walls and corridors with a fresh coat of tan paint seemed to lend credence to the editors remarks that a new look and attitude was developing at the school. Ferris Weekly, III, no. 3 (Sept. 21, 1932), p. 4.



rallies in Ann Arbor and East Lansing students seemed to be taking their schooling seriously.⁹² These changes were noted by President Shaw of Michigan State College in 1934.

The heightened competition and possible unemployment which loom ahead of today's graduate have produced a noticeably more practical, workaday atmosphere in campus life. Indeed, it is not uncommon to have alumni and upper classmen lament the total lack of school spirit among lower classmen. College is now a means to an end for all - not a stop - gap for some, as before. . . . From an administrative point of view, this new seriousness of attitude means much; there has been marked decrease in need for disciplinary action and marked increase in the desire of student organizations to work constructively with administrative officials.⁹³

These reports came amidst serious problems on the Ferris Institute campus. For example, the ten of twenty pharmics who failed to return to school claimed lack of funds as the reason,⁹⁴ and students unable to pay admission to the Homecoming football game were permitted to enter free of charge.⁹⁵

Interest by students and faculty in political problems manifested itself in a series of discussions on socialism as a viable political and economic system.⁹⁶

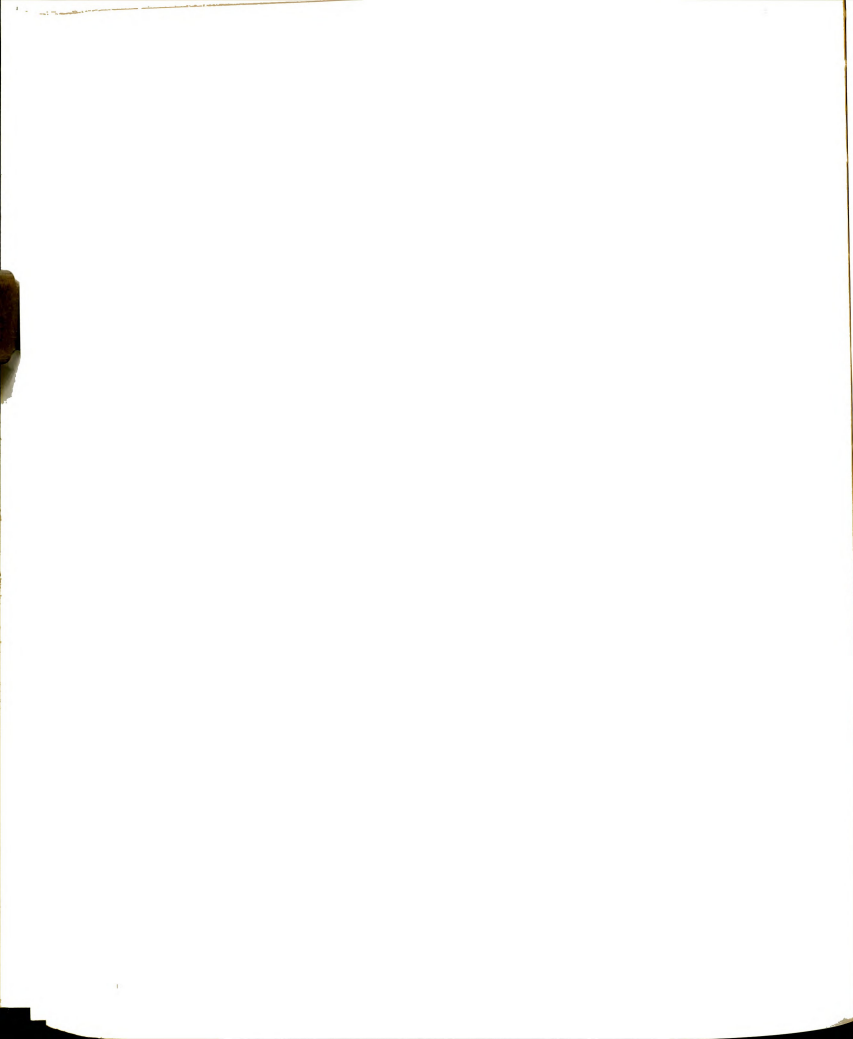
⁹²Dunbar, Higher Education, p. 315. Also see Madison Kuhn, Michigan State: The First Hundred Years (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1955), p. 393.

⁹³Kuhn, p. 388.

⁹⁴Ferris Weekly, III, no. 3 (Sept. 28, 1932), p. 1.

⁹⁵Ferris Weekly, III, no. 6 (Oct. 19, 1932), p. 1.

⁹⁶Ibid.



During student assemblies faculty members also debated the advantages and disadvantages of communism as a political system.⁹⁷ The peak of student interest and awareness of political affairs occurred in an editorial commenting on a recent Supreme Court ruling against military training as a compulsory part of a university education. The Weekly claimed:

Youth wants to be free!!
 Youth wants arbitration!!
 Youth shouts a protest against the sacrosanctity of war and ruin that will engulf Western civilization. Youth believes that physically and morally war is a dirty, ignoble thing. Youth will triumph!!!⁹⁸

Meanwhile, President Brown's reorganization plans were producing changes in the assembly programs and the school's advertising in the Big Rapids Pioneer.⁹⁹ Assembly programs now included regular talks by faculty members, special events by student organizations, and an occasional guest speaker.¹⁰⁰ Brown also contributed to the programs by giving informal talks on poetry¹⁰¹ and mathematics.¹⁰²

⁹⁷Ferris Weekly, III, no. 17 (Jan. 24, 1933), p. 1.

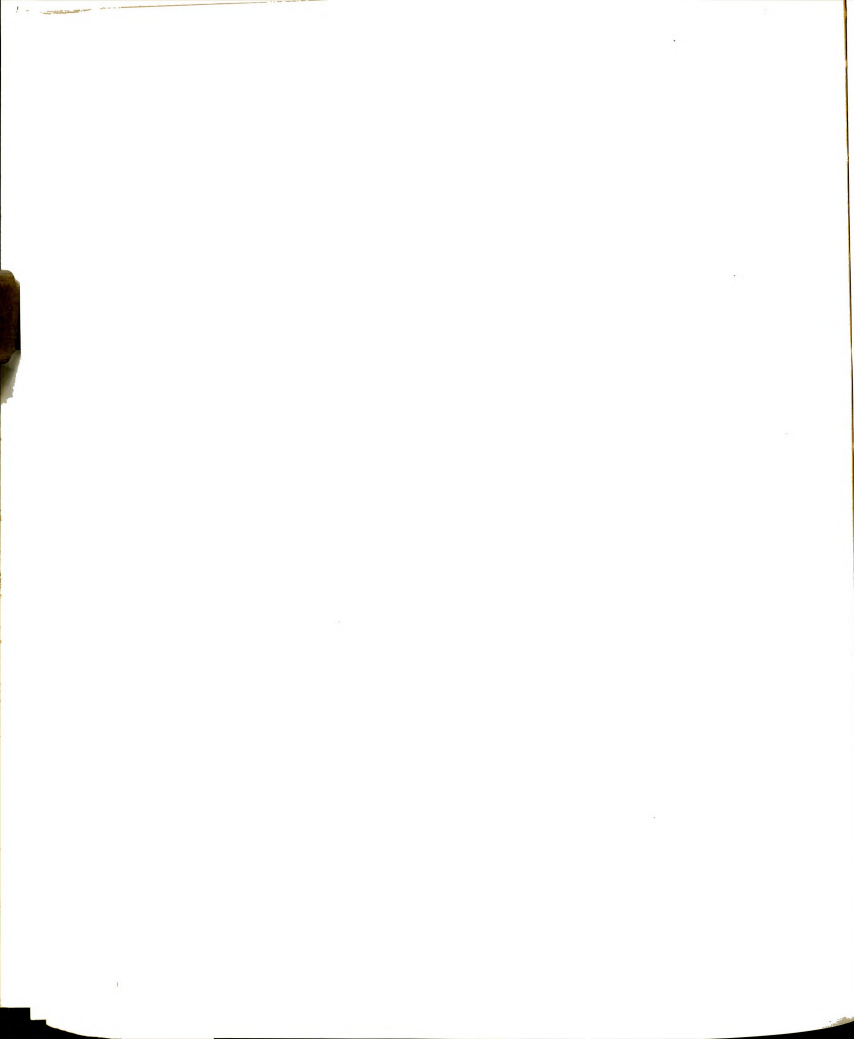
⁹⁸Ferris Weekly, III, no. 23 (March 7, 1932), p. 2.

⁹⁹Brown's plan for the Ferris Weekly has been previously mentioned as one of his first actions as president.

¹⁰⁰Ferris Weekly, III, no. 14 (Dec. 21, 1932), p. 1.

¹⁰¹Ferris Weekly, III, no. 10 (Nov. 16, 1932), p. 1.

¹⁰²Ferris Weekly, III, no. 13 (Dec. 14, 1932), p. 1.



In addition, assemblies were reduced from five to two per week with roll call at assemblies being discontinued.¹⁰³ Brown explained his reasons for such a policy as follows:

An increasing need for a general conference period and the large number of necessary absences from assembly because of the hour made a change advisable. The change keeps the traditional morning exercises, makes it possible for all to attend, [time was changed to 9:30 p.m.] and gives us a more flexible system and a general consultation hour.¹⁰⁴

Other significant developments included the organization of a student council,¹⁰⁵ the abolishment of written excuses for absences from class and assembly,¹⁰⁶ permission for students to smoke in a special room at the east end of the Alumni Building,¹⁰⁷ the presentation of athletic awards for the first time since the basketball season of 1930-31,¹⁰⁸ and a request by the commercial department for

¹⁰³Ferris Weekly, III, no. 21 (Feb. 21, 1933), p. 1.

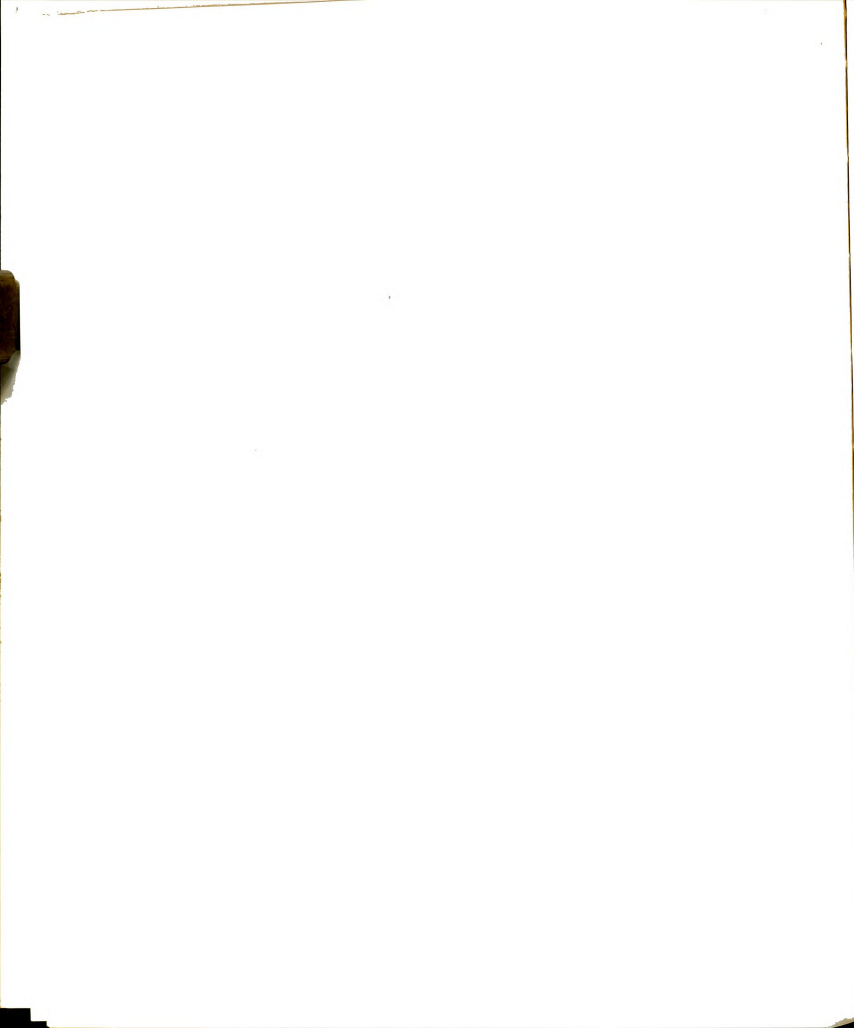
¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ferris Weekly, vol. 3, no. 22 (Feb. 28, 1933), p. 1.

¹⁰⁶Ferris Weekly, vol. 3, no. 22 (Feb. 28, 1933), p. 1. Brown claimed that he wanted to be less juvenile in his attempts to lessen the number of absences. Students were allowed a maximum of four absences per term without signed excuses. Each unexcused absence over four in one term resulted in a lowering of a student's grade. The reduction in one's grade was greater on Monday and Friday.

¹⁰⁷Ferris Weekly, vol. 3, no. 27 (April 4, 1933), p. 1. Heretofore, smoking had been restricted to basketball games and parties.

¹⁰⁸Ferris Weekly, III, no. 28 (April 11, 1933), p. 1.



approval to grant Bachelor of Science degrees and life teaching certificates.¹⁰⁹

To publicize the activities of the school, Brown implemented his advertising plan by having a Ferris Weekly supplement of the Pioneer printed and mailed to ten thousand alumni and prospective Ferris students. "The purpose of the plan is to bring before residents of the state the activities of the Institute as a means of advertising it to the high school students and others desirous of obtaining further education."¹¹⁰

Brown's campaign to secure students for the institute had been preceded by a fall meeting held at City Hall:

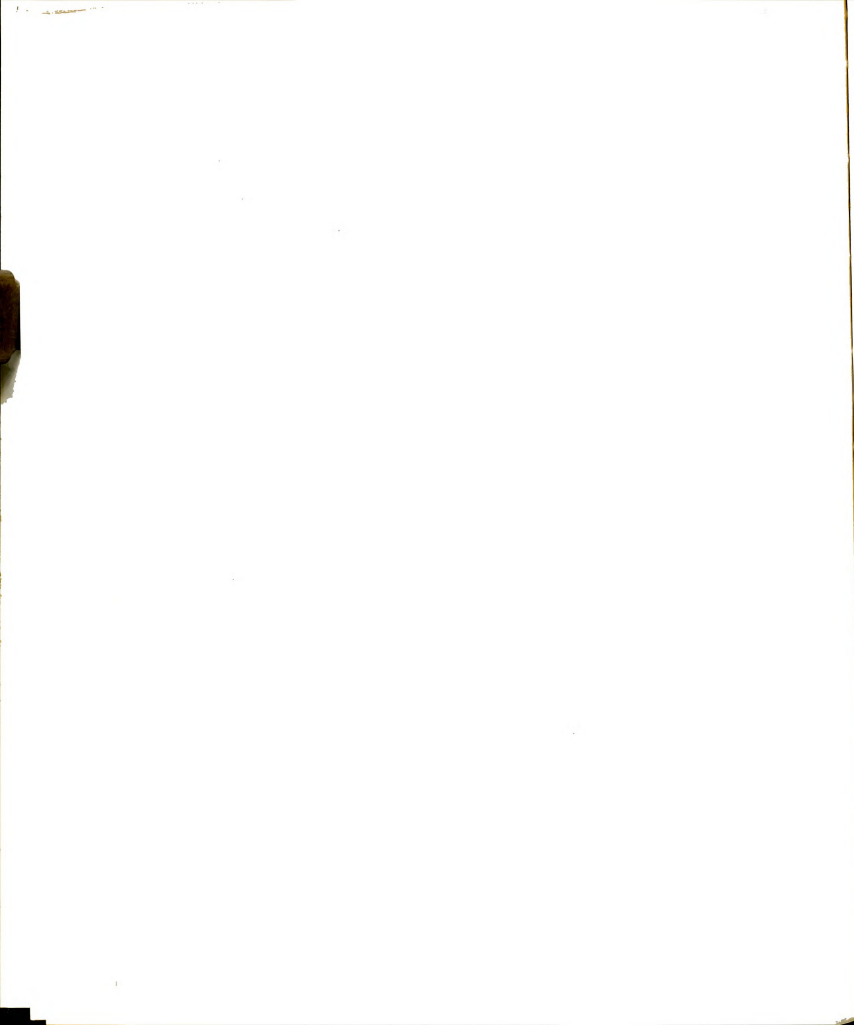
. . . for the purpose of considering matters of interest in connection with the Ferris Institute to secure the cooperation of the citizens of Big Rapids, and to arrange for a campaign to secure students.¹¹¹

Specifically, the trustees told the citizens of their dismay over the financial difficulties of the institution. They were referring to the bonded indebtedness incurred from the first mortgage on the school since its

¹⁰⁹ Ferris Weekly, III, no. 21 (Feb. 21, 1933), p. 1. The proposal was made to the State Department of Education.

¹¹⁰ Big Rapids Pioneer, Dec. 21, 1932; Folder FIFS, E2526all. Apparently, Brown had operated a similar plan at Southwestern Teachers College, Oklahoma where he was president. Ibid.

¹¹¹ Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 48, Sept. 8, 1932, President's office.



incorporation.¹¹² This meeting resulted in a plan to attract students with a free tuition offer for eighteen of them.¹¹³ Unfortunately, there were always more than eighteen students who needed financial aid.¹¹⁴

The new year, 1933-34, began with the naming of a new Dean of Pharmacy,¹¹⁵ a new business manager¹¹⁶ and old debts and, despite better conditions in Michigan, the institute's economic plight worsened.¹¹⁷ From January

¹¹²Ibid., p. 41, July 25, 1932, President's office. A series of meetings was held from June through October to determine how this indebtedness could be handled. It was finally suggested on Oct. 31, 1932, that the: "... secretary-treasurer and chairman [of the Board of Trustees] make a chattel mortgage of the personal property, goods and chattels of the Ferris Institute to Turner, Waters, Judson, Bouck, Buck, Taggart, Fairman, Campbell and Butler to secure their endorsement on a certain note given to the Citizens Bank in the sum of \$4500.00." Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 55, Oct. 31, 1932, President's office.

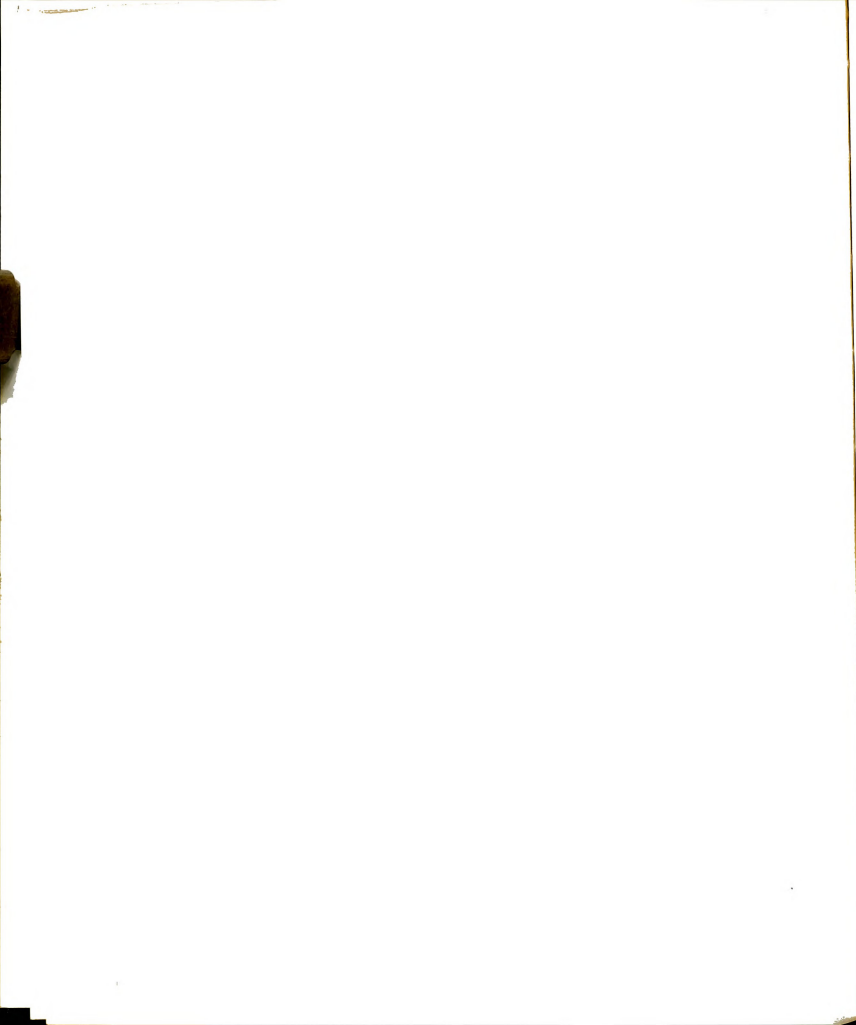
¹¹³Board of Trustees Meeting. Official minutes, p. 30; January 4, 1932, President's office.

¹¹⁴No mention was made of the criteria for selection of students.

¹¹⁵E. H. Wisner was named acting dean until the end of the year.

¹¹⁶E. M. Clark.

¹¹⁷No direct cause-effect relationship is implied by this statement. There were local as well as national factors influencing the school. In Michigan, farmers profited by repeal of the general property tax and the substitution of the sales tax while certain New Deal programs reduced crop surpluses and saved their farms from forced sales. F. Cleaver Bald, Michigan in Four Centuries (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), p. 419.



through December the trustees¹¹⁸ attempted and subsequently failed to pay the school's debts. Although persistent attempts were made to pay \$300.00 per month towards the school's debts,¹¹⁹ requests for the extension of payments were frequent. These financial problems comprised the major concerns of the administration for the 1933-34 school year.¹²⁰ One who could remember most of the earlier financial difficulties and place the present one's in perspective was Bert S. Travis, who after thirty-seven years as a teacher, secretary and treasurer at the school terminated his career.¹²¹

That fall the school entered into a cooperative venture with the Civilian Conservation Corp, whereby members

¹¹⁸W. C. Taggart, Floyd Bouck and Willis C. Judson continued as trustees for the school.

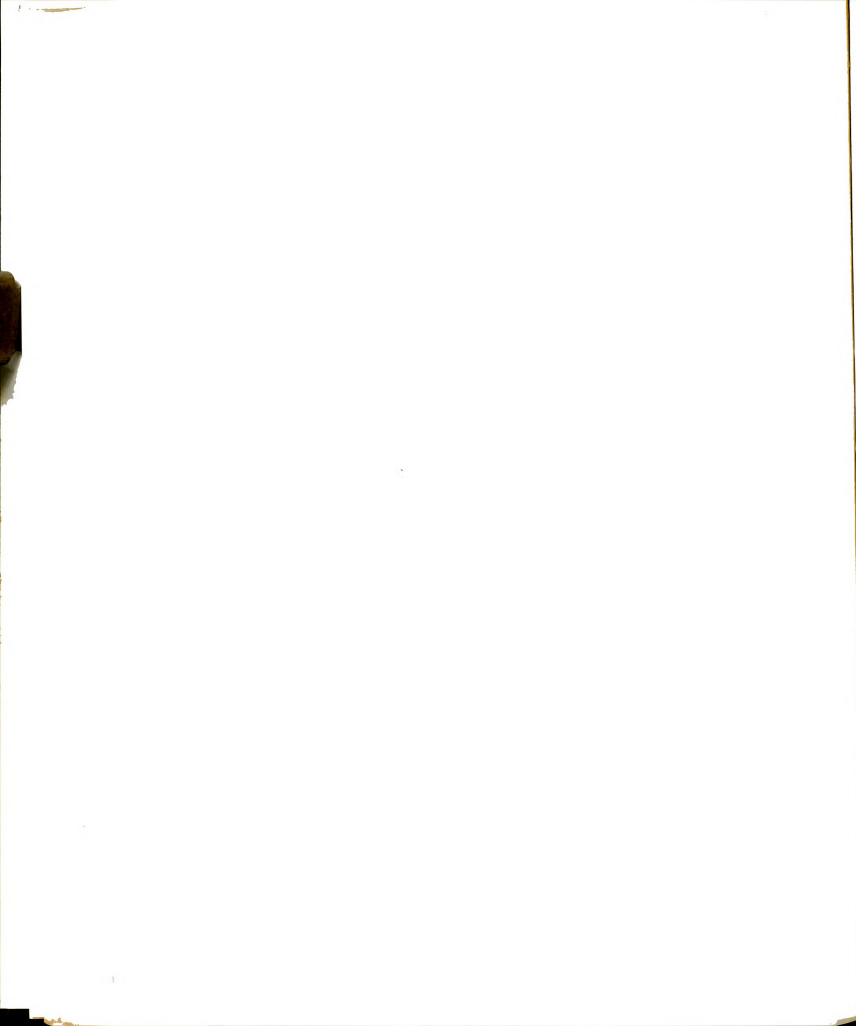
¹¹⁹Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 59, Jan. 20, 1933, President's office.

¹²⁰On Jan 30, 1933 a motion was carried requesting that the holders of bonds totaling \$19,000.00 and maturing on Feb. 1, 1933, consent to the extension of the maturity date to Feb. 1, 1937. Board of Trustees Meeting, Official Minutes, p. 60; President's office.

On Sept. 1, 1933 a \$500.00 loan was secured from the Citizens State Bank of Big Rapids, to be paid out of the first school income after that date. Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 70, President's office.

On Dec. 14, 1933, it was suggested that a loan of \$1000.00 be negotiated with the Citizen's State Bank, payable on Jan. 8, 1934. Collateral for the loan was the account of the institute at the Big Rapids Savings Bank. Board of Trustees Minutes. Official Minutes, p. 73, President's office.

¹²¹Big Rapids Pioneer, Sept. 26, 1933; Folder FIFS, 26b3. Mr. Travis would continue to do correspondence teaching.



of that group were permitted to enroll in night classes at the institute.¹²² The C.C.C. program in Michigan eventually included 103 camps where young men between seventeen and twenty-eight years of age without jobs could work on numerous conservation projects.¹²³ Other campus events that year included new coed regulations extending curfew hours,¹²⁴ the organization of a theatre guild,¹²⁵ the school's first all fraternity party,¹²⁶ and the first anniversary of President Brown's student council plan.¹²⁷

Summarizing these events and activities and then comparing the school's assets and liabilities, a faculty member reached the following conclusions.

1. Not located in a large center of population.
2. Big Rapids is losing population.
3. There is no great wealth concentrated in Big Rapids.
4. The growth of the public high school cuts into the college preparatory program.

¹²²Ibid. The Civilian Conservation Corp. was located approximately fifteen miles south of Big Rapids.

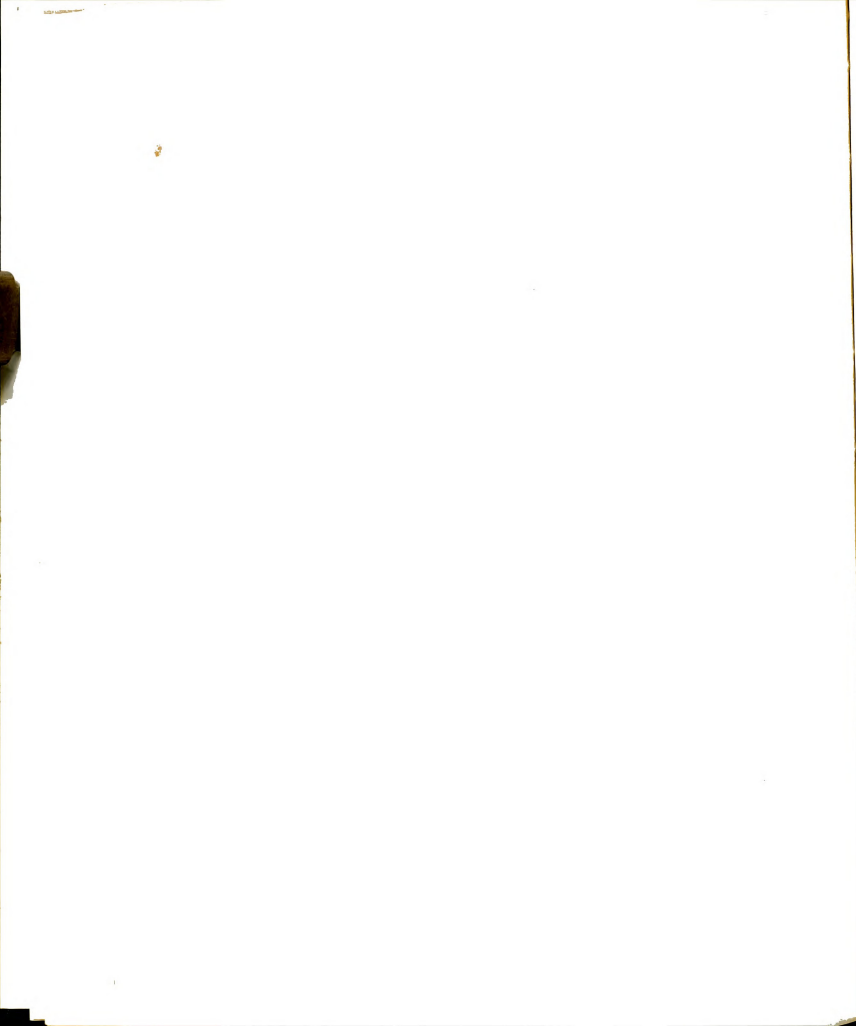
¹²³Bald, Michigan in Four Centuries, p. 414.

¹²⁴Ferris Weekly, IV, no. 2 (Sept. 26, 1933), p. 2. The 300 students compared with 324 enrolled at the same time the previous year. The breakdown included 84 pharmacy, 79 commercial, 46 college preparatory, 48 junior college, and 28 normal [education] students. Also see Ferris Weekly, X, no. 25 (April 10, 1934), p. 3. The new curfew times were 11 p.m. on weeknights and 12 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 1.

¹²⁶Ferris Weekly, IV, no. 22 (March 20, 1934), p. 1.

¹²⁷Ferris Weekly, IV, no. 19 (Feb. 27, 1934), p. 2.



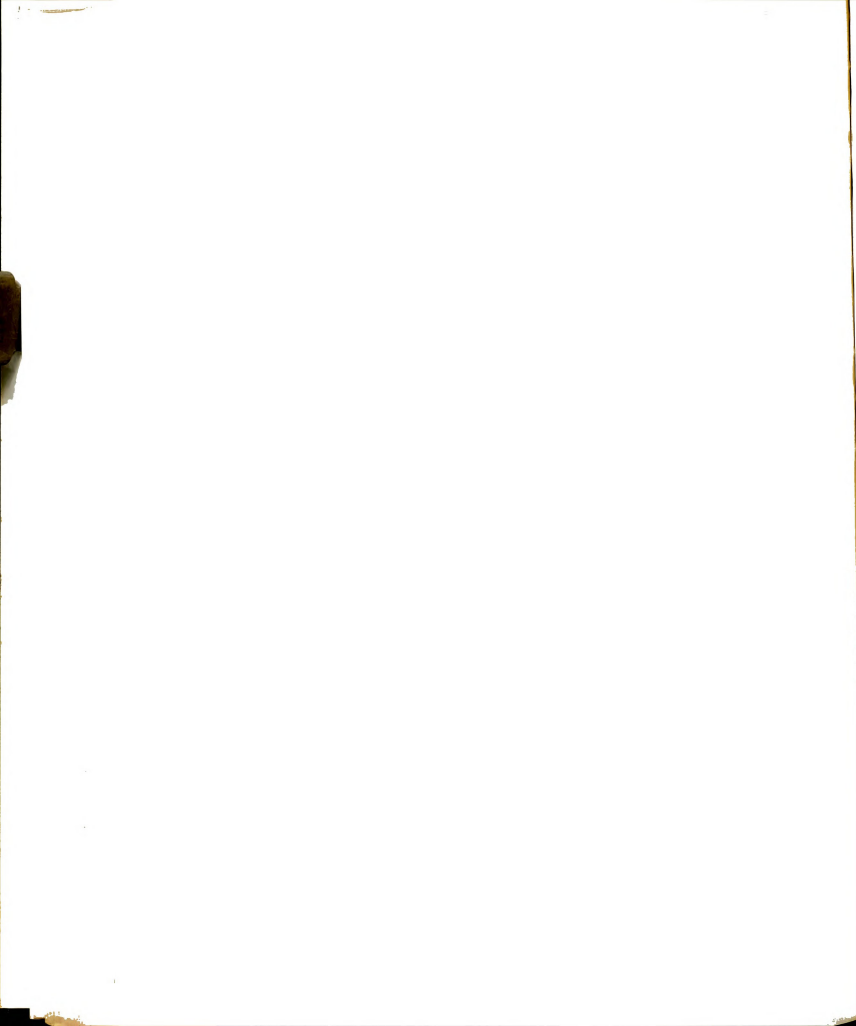
5. There is increasing competition in pharmacy from Detroit schools.
6. The school still maintains its good name, reputation and good will.
7. The school is open to all - A people's school.
8. The closing of some county normal schools may aid our teacher training program.
9. There will probably be an increasing demand for short term vocational courses.¹²⁸

Implicit in these remarks was a warning that the school was on unstable grounds. Credence was given to this warning when the financial problems of 1933 turned into the catastrophe of 1934. In a series of austerity moves Brown and the trustees attempted to head off bankruptcy. Beginning in January, Brown requested that personal service costs for spring term be reduced to \$3,000.00 or \$3,500.00 below the approved costs for fall term.¹²⁹ He also suggested that full-time faculty members be given leaves of absence, that he be permitted to donate his services as president, that all salaries be reduced by 25 per cent to no more than \$100.00 per month, and that he be allowed to make adjustments in small expenditures to offset some of the more drastic proposals.¹³⁰

¹²⁸"Substance of an Interview with Dean J. B. Edmonson," Spring, 1934, Newton Collection; Folder 1933-1934.

¹²⁹Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 74; Jan. 11, 1934, President's office.

¹³⁰Ibid. To offset some of the financial difficulties a \$2000.00 loan was secured from the Citizens National Bank of Big Rapids. Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 75; Feb. 9, 1934, President's office. The Federal government also aided the school by providing financial assistance to students through the Federal Student



Another strategy designed to cope with these financial problems was the transfer of a section of campus land to the city of Big Rapids; ". . . on a three year lease, to be used for play ground purposes, with provision for reclamation at any time within the three year period. . . ." ¹³¹

In addition, authorization was given the trustees to make application for a grant from the Rackham Fund ¹³² and a loan from a bank. ¹³³

Apparently, some of these financial measures disturbed certain faculty members. Particularly distraught over the reduction in pay was Professor Miserez who spoke

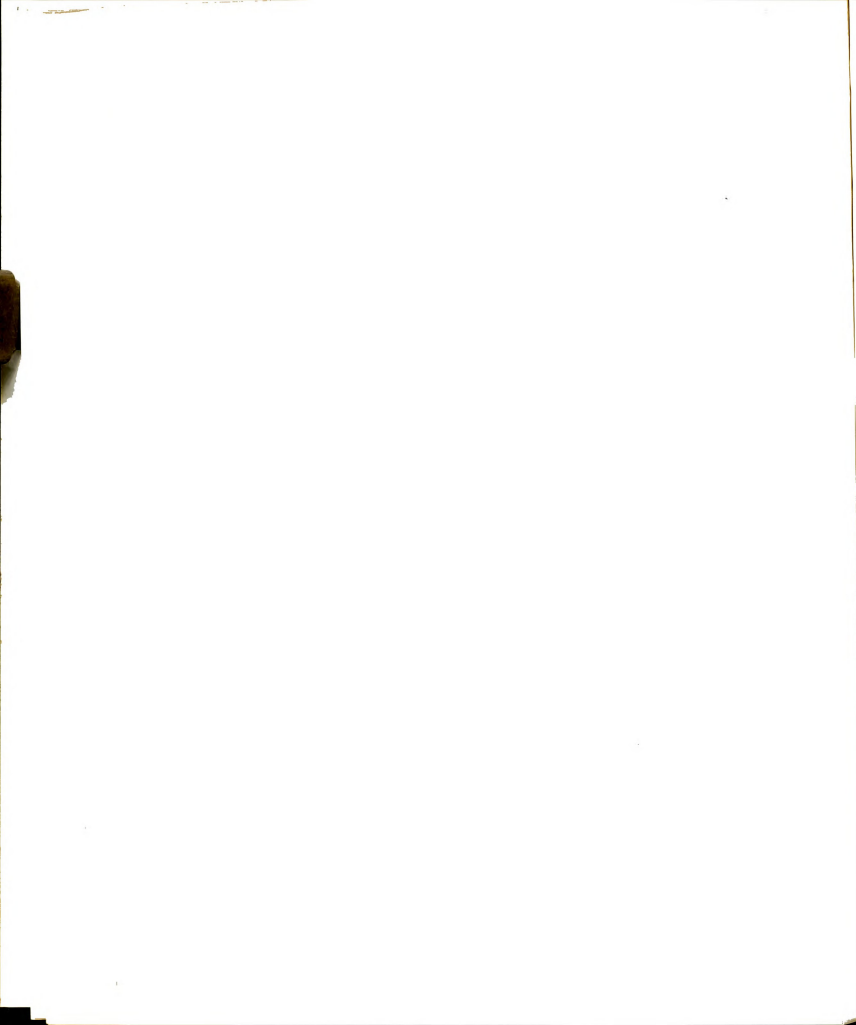
Fund. Brown was given complete authority to make appropriate arrangements which resulted in a net tuition increase of about \$150.00 per month for the school. Board of Trustees Minutes. Official Minutes, p. 76, March 8, 1934, President's office.

¹³¹ Official Minutes, p. 76, March 8, 1934, President's office.

¹³² Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 86; Aug. 3, 1934, President's office. Horace H. and Mary A. Rackham had developed a fund for aiding educators and educational institutions. Eventually the school did receive a \$10,000.00 loan on a matching basis.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 80, May 10, 1934. It was requested by the trustees that a \$10,000.00 loan be requested from an agreeable party to apply on the payment of financial obligations owed by the institute. They also asked that: ". . . all of said loan shall mature in 1940 and shall draw interest of 4% per annum from and after July 1, 1936, that said notes shall further provide that 25% of the amount . . . be redeemable each year by the holder of such notes who is a resident of the County in which the original purchases resided at the time of purchase, but that the same shall not exceed 50% of tuition due in any one year."

Ibid.



to the board about it.¹³⁴ One of the board members reacted to Miserez's actions in the following manner.

That I understand Mr. Miserez has made assertions concerning the management of the school, which, if true, demand my resignation and the abdication of the entire board of trustees and of the present corporation, and, if false or unwarranted, would demand that Mr. Miserez be dropped from the staff as early as possible.¹³⁵

Other evidence of faculty dissent was shown in a special board meeting in May. The meeting was called to discuss the difficulties with instructors and to protect the interests of Ferris Institute.¹³⁶ Apparently, two members of the pharmacy department had threatened to collect and succeeded in acquiring a sum of money from pharmacy students.¹³⁷ It was also reported by the trustees that these two gentlemen had threatened to sever connections with the school, take the short term pharmacy students out of school and organize a private class.¹³⁸

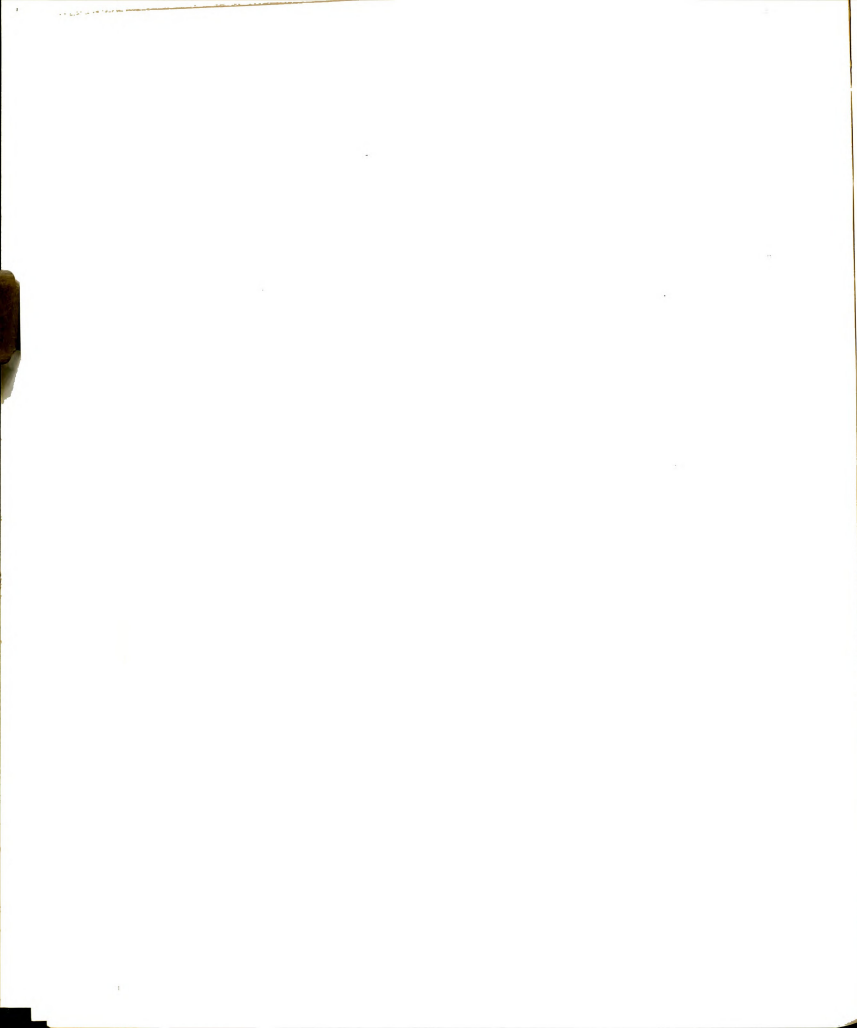
¹³⁴Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 76, March 8, 1934, President's office. There is no indication as to the nature of Mr. Miserez's accusations; or whether they were proven true or false.

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 81, May 24, 1934, President's office.

¹³⁷Ibid. The collection of money seemed to be related to the attempts at organizing a private class.

¹³⁸Ibid. There is no evidence to indicate how this case turned out. Trustee Turner did resign, and E. M. Clark was released for the remainder of the 1933-34 school year. Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 90, Dec. 13, 1934, President's office.



Some sixty of the 309 students enrolled during fall term of 1934, took advantage of the Federal Education Recovery Act and worked on the school's tennis courts, weeded lawns and cleared "Stoney" field.¹³⁹ Other students were involved in the F.E.R.A. freshman college project, whereby some eligible high school graduates who were financially unable to attend college were given the opportunity to do so.¹⁴⁰ A few local children were also benefited by an F.E.R.A. nursery program in which they had regular kindergarten work.¹⁴¹ The 106 graduates who managed to survive the 1934-35 school year participated in the fifty-first commencement of Ferris Institute.¹⁴²

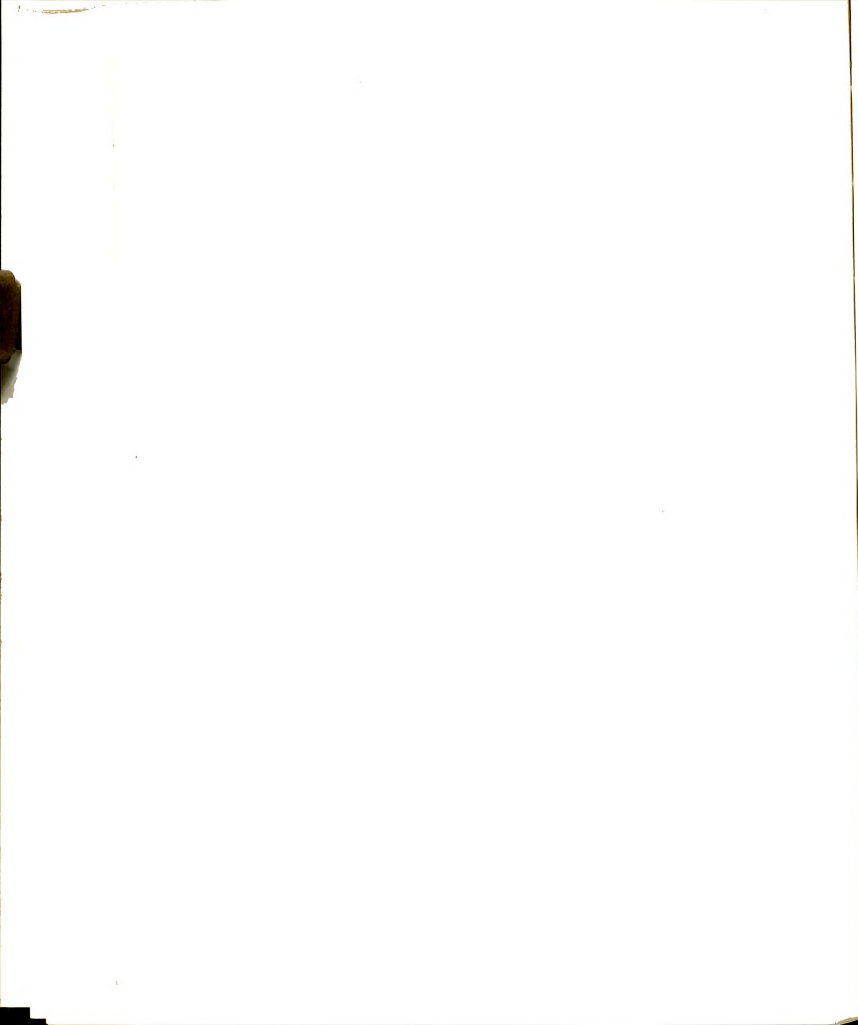
Unfortunately, the next year was similar to the previous, in terms of loans procured and in extension of time for payments. Beginning with a \$2,000.00 loan to meet the

¹³⁹Ferris Weekly, V, no. 3 (Sept. 25, 1934), p. 1.

¹⁴⁰Ferris Weekly, V, no. 9 (Nov. 6, 1934), p. 1. President Brown was able to bypass the usual thirty student minimum requirement by providing the instructors.

¹⁴¹Ferris Weekly, V, no. 7 (Oct. 23, 1934), p. 1.

¹⁴²Commencement Program, 1935. Folder FIFS, E31. An additional program in medical technology was offered in Sept., 1936. It was a one year course open to high school graduates who could take it independently of any other course or as an option in the four year pharmacy program. Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 99, Jan. 9, 1936, President's office. The medical technology course did not materialize.



payroll,¹⁴³ a \$1,200.00 one for meeting operating expenses,¹⁴⁴ and authorization from the board to borrow a maximum of \$3,000.00 to meet future expenses,¹⁴⁵ the school appeared to be on the threshold of bankruptcy.

With few exceptions similar conditions prevailed the next school year. The exceptions included a reported 21 per cent increase in enrollment and improved agricultural and general business conditions in Michigan which were deemed responsible for such an enrollment increase.¹⁴⁶

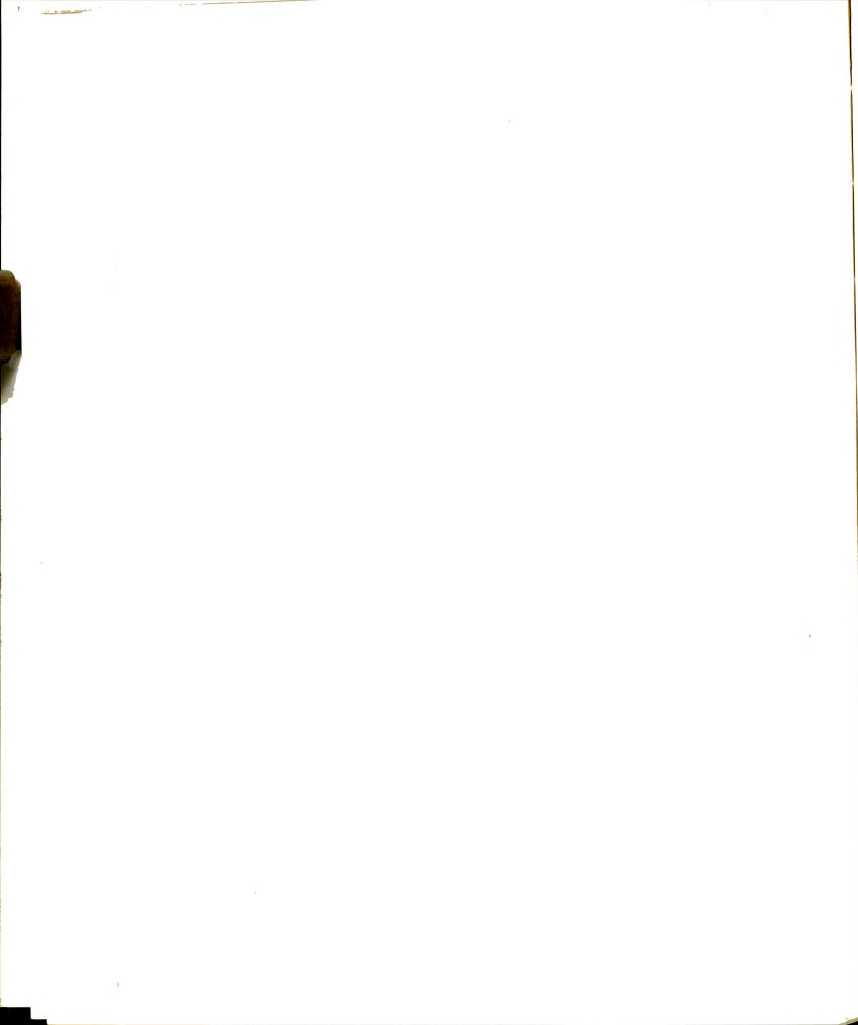
Many of these students who had been given the opportunity to attend school this year neglected to follow school attendance policy at assemblies. To clarify the policy and reprimand violators Brown attended an assembly and read the names of students who had exceeded their absence limit.

¹⁴³Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 90, Jan. 10, 1935, President's office. This \$2000.00 loan was renewed with the Citizens State Bank for a period of 60 days. Ibid., p. 96, Oct. 10, 1935.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 93, Aug. 8, 1935.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 97, Nov. 21, 1925. Roy Buck resigned as a trustee as of Sept. 17, 1935. Ibid., p. 95.

¹⁴⁶Ferris Weekly, VI, no. 1 (Sept. 10, 1935), p. 1. The Weekly stopped publication at the end of the school year and was replaced by another student newspaper The Ferris Torch. The reputation of the Weekly had reached one former editor who asked if the paper was as bad as he had heard. Replying to this question a professor claimed: "The Ferris Weekly is as bad as you say, and to make matters worse we may have lost the national advertising we had for a few weeks." Letter, Roy Newton to George Bleasby, No. 21, 1936, Newton Collection, Folder 1936-1937 overflow.



I see no reason why these students should not be dropped from their classes and from Ferris Institute. I do not intend to argue the question; you are attending a college where compulsory attendance is maintained. And if you don't want to attend assemblies, you will have to go to some other school.¹⁴⁷

Some students added to Brown's discomfort by abusing their smoking privileges. The Ferris Weekly appealed to these students to confine their smoking to designated areas by reminding them of traditional school policy.

Until about two years ago the influence of the stern and high ideals of the late founder of our school denied the student the privilege of smoking anywhere in the buildings or on the campus. Let's use the smoking room.¹⁴⁸

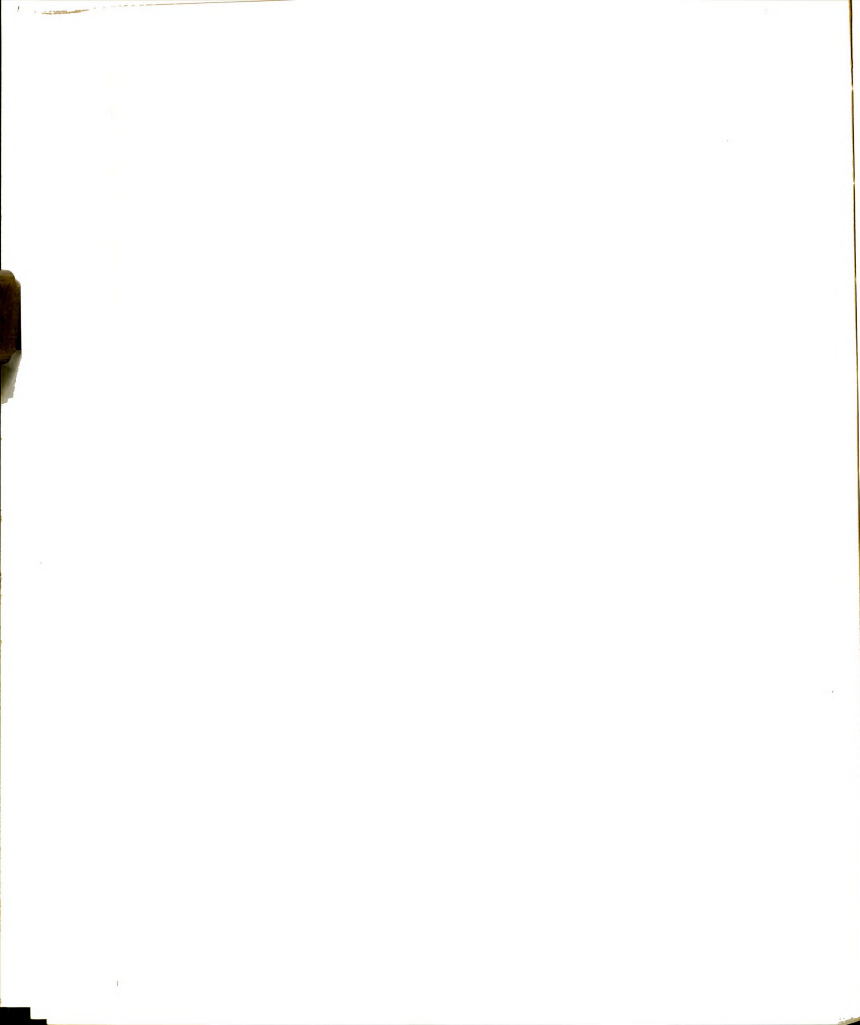
In response to faculty and student requests, new courses were placed in the curriculum. There was one dealing with the one-act play, another in beginning journalism, and others in American literature, beginning shorthand, arithmetic, principles of reading, and beginning trigonometry.¹⁴⁹ Three unusual offerings were those in police training work designed for men in clerical positions,¹⁵⁰ in medical technology, and a thirty-six weeks program

¹⁴⁷ Ferris Weekly, V, no. 19 (Feb. 5, 1935), p. 1.

¹⁴⁸ Ferris Weekly, V, no. 16 (Jan. 15, 1935), p. 2. In addition to the smoking room students were given a new recreation room complete with a donated world wide reception radio. Ferris Weekly, V, no. 19 (Feb. 5, 1935), p. 1.

¹⁴⁹ Ferris Weekly, V, no. 21 (Feb. 19, 1935), p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ Ferris Weekly, VI, no. 18 (Feb. 11, 1936), p. 1.



for training hospital laboratory technicians and physician's assistants.¹⁵¹

Important administrative changes were in the making for 1936. In a board of trustees meeting held on March 12, Ernest E. Brown's resignation was accepted and Emmanuel M. Clark was installed as acting president of the school.¹⁵²

Clark remained as acting president until the board accepted Merle S. Ward as president of the institution.¹⁵³ Ward attended his first board meeting Sept. 10¹⁵⁴ and was officially installed as president on Oct. 9, 1936.¹⁵⁵ He

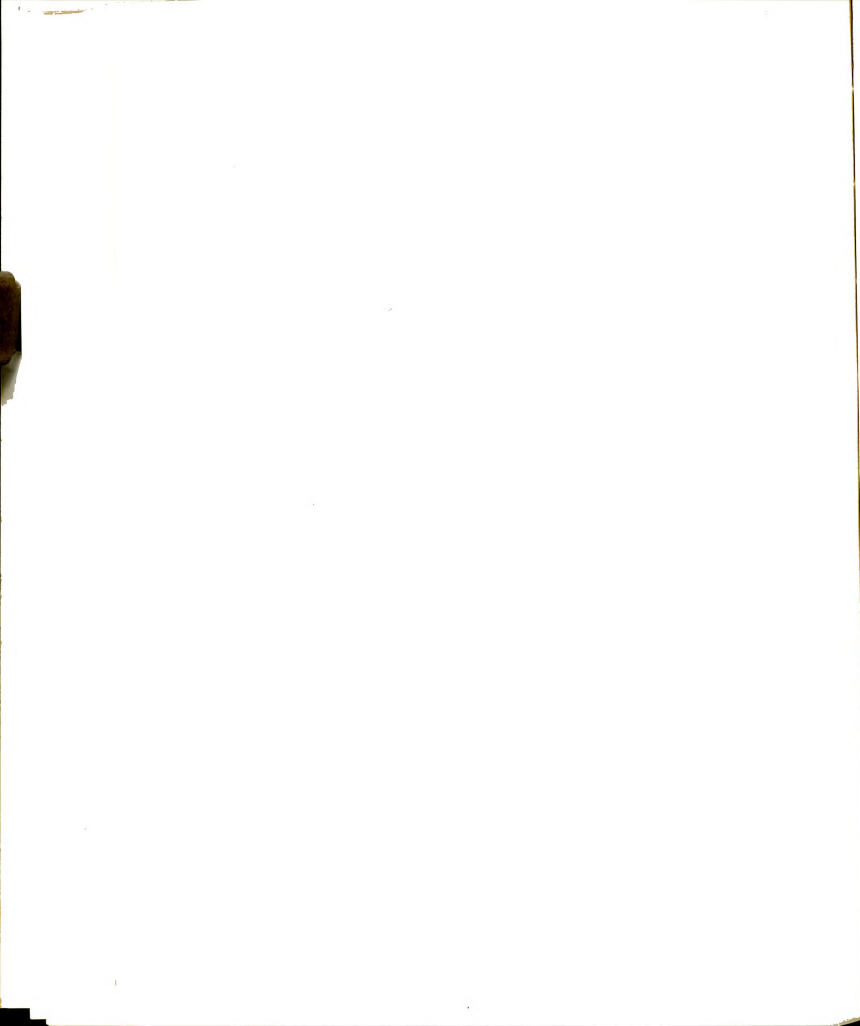
¹⁵¹Ferris Weekly, VI, no. 15 (Jan. 21, 1936), p. 1.

¹⁵²Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 101, March 12, 1936, President's office. Apparently Brown had left the school periodically because in February Clark was given full powers as president to act in Brown's absence. Ibid., 100; Feb. 13, 1936. Clark received a beginning salary of \$3000.00 to be paid in monthly installments of \$250.00 retroactive from February 13. Ibid., p. 101, March 12, 1936. Also see Ferris Weekly, VI, no. 19 (Feb. 18, 1936), p. 2. Brown left Ferris Institute to take over the presidency of Northwestern State Teachers College at Alva, Oklahoma. An editorial in the Ferris Weekly claimed that: "Although the news is a week old the complete shock concerning the departure of President . . . Brown has not yet worn off. He has worked very hard and overcome tremendous difficulties in pulling the school from the dark chaos of another era to its present stability."

¹⁵³Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 107; June 27, 1936, President's office. The trustees who voted on this measure were Judson, Bouck, Ray H. Waters, Campbell, Turner, Arthur Butler, Ward, Taggart, and Grieve.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 109, August 13, 1936.

¹⁵⁵Ibid. At this time, fall 1936, the elections for the board were conducted. Those elected, in the order of votes received were: William C. Taggart, Willis C. Judson, and Thomas P. Treynor. Board of Trustees Meeting. Official



had taken his undergraduate studies at Indiana University and Teachers College, Columbia University,¹⁵⁶ and in addition his doctoral work at the latter institution.¹⁵⁷ As a teacher and principal in elementary school, a high school instructor, a director of student teaching, and a college professor and president, Ward brought varied experience to the presidency at Ferris Institute.¹⁵⁸

The selection of Ward as president ended a turbulent era in the school's history. It was marked by almost continual administrative changes and the effects of economic, political, and social forces.¹⁵⁹ These forces manifested themselves in financial deficits, increased concern over international and national politics, and changing student attitudes towards authority. It was an era of deprivation marked by reduced student enrollment, faculty wage cuts and

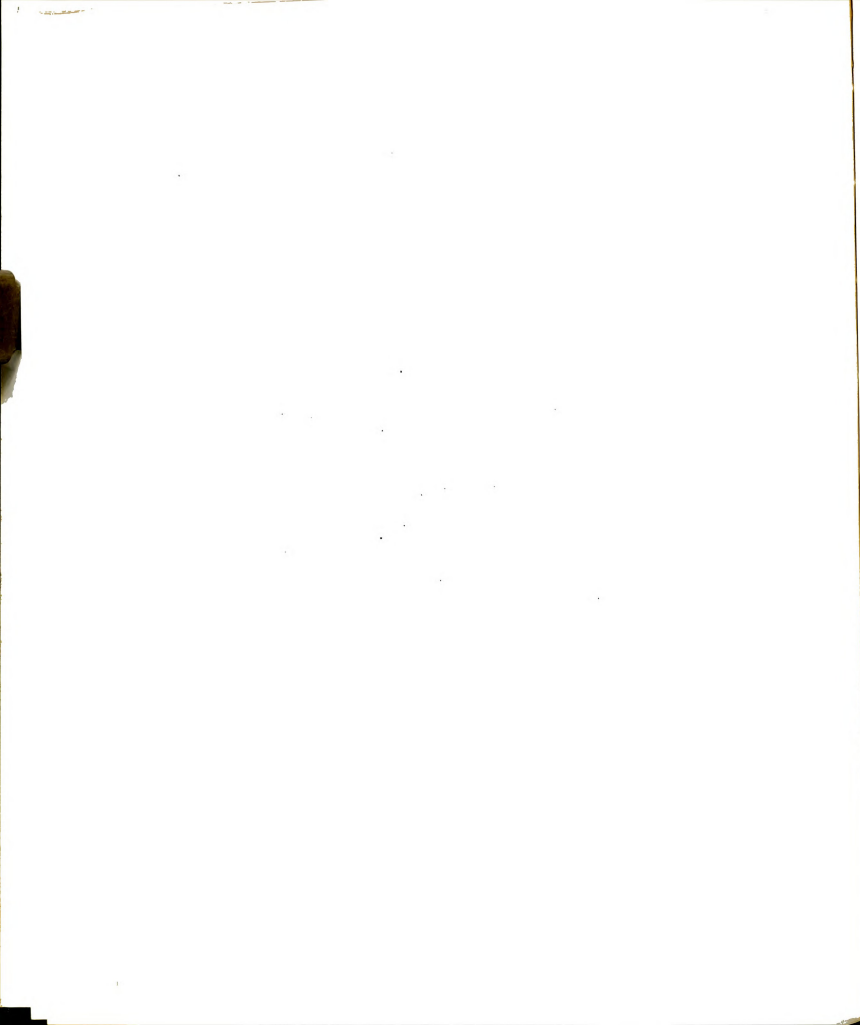
Minutes, p. 39, Sept. 11, 1936, President's office. Taggart was chairman, Ray H. Waters, vice-chairman, and Arthur J. Butler, secretary-treasurer. Butler was secretary-treasurer of the board from 1931-1939. In December Butler was allowed to hire a clerk for \$10.00 a month. Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 113, Dec. 10, 1936, President's office.

¹⁵⁶ Pamphlet: Merle S. Ward (undated), Newton Collection. The information on this sheet was designed to entice groups to employ Ward as a public speaker.

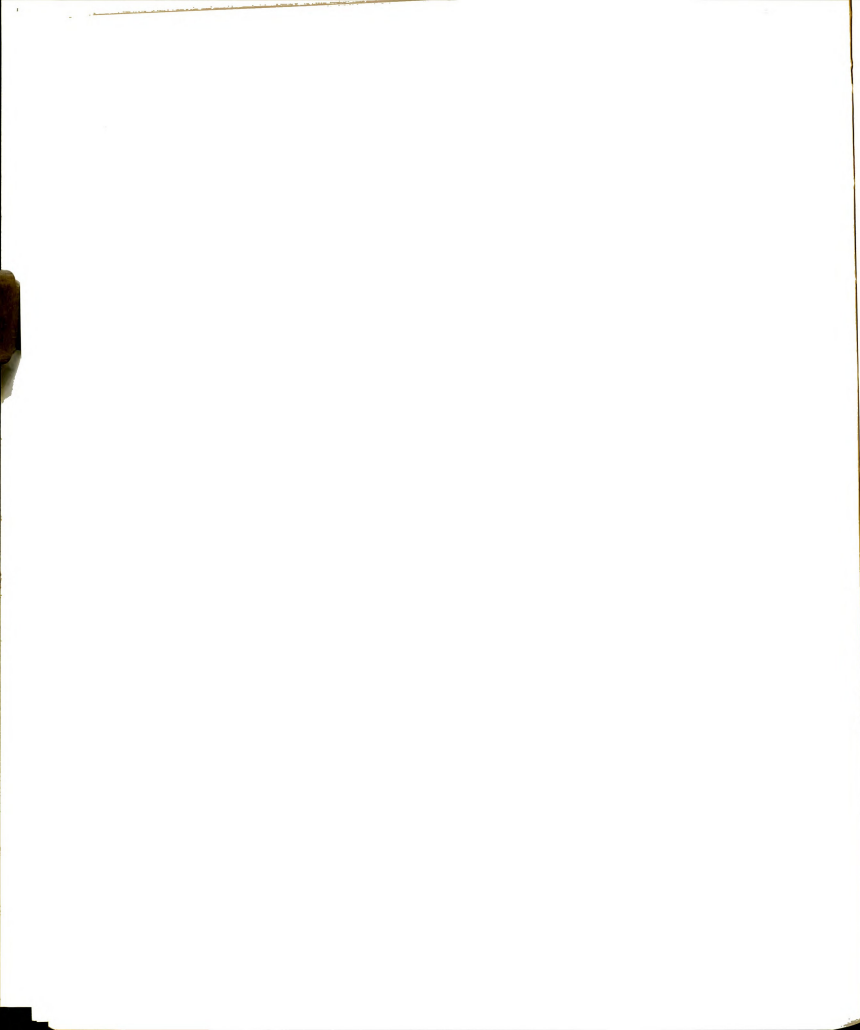
¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ The short terms of many administrators were indicative of either inability to cope with severe financial problems or the desire to escape what might have been a rewarding but losing battle against overwhelming odds.



forced leaves of absence. Nevertheless, persistent efforts at keeping the school financially solvent kept the doors open, only to face another period of storm and stress.



CHAPTER V

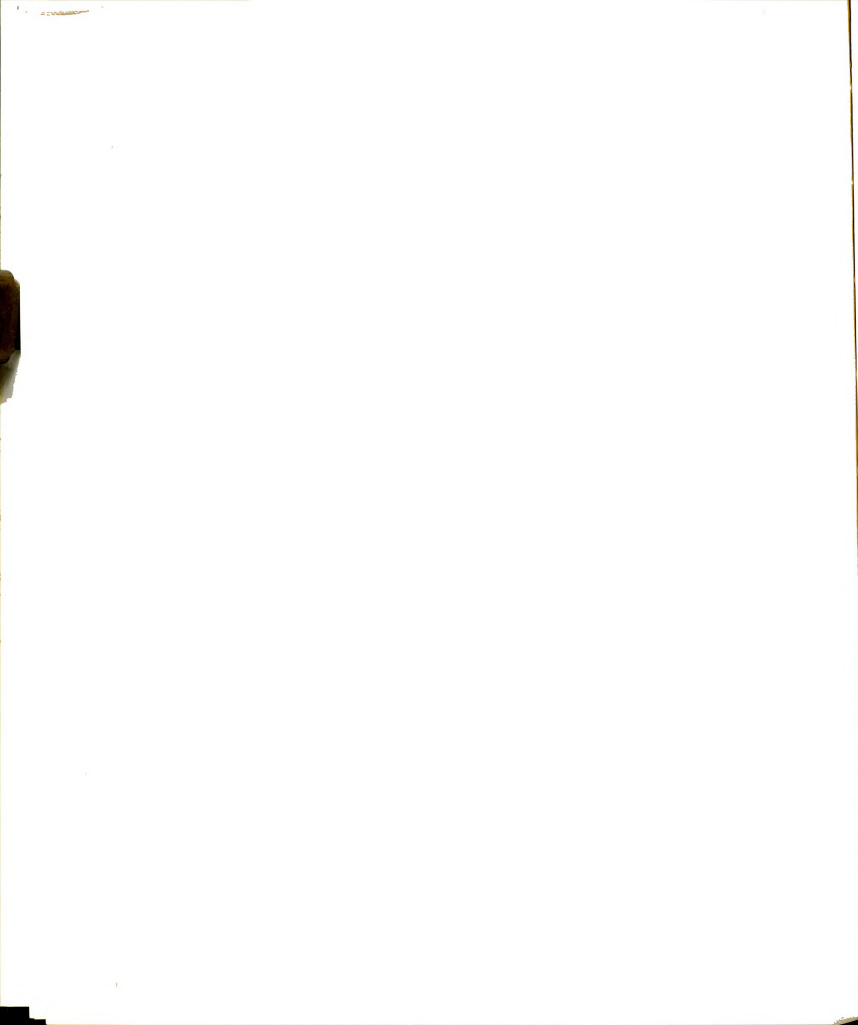
THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL 1936-1946

The Economic Scene

Merle S. Ward's ten year term as president of Ferris Institute brought many policy changes in both academic and financial matters. He made energetic attempts to increase the enrollment, raise academic standards, centralize the library, find new sources of financial assistance, raise an endowment, and extend the means of publicizing the school. In his inaugural address Ward claimed that he had to redefine the school's role in terms of the new social and economic conditions in America.¹ Although he did not mention specific conditions it is possible to present an overview of the economic picture during his first years as president.

Economically some Americans had made gains by 1936. Congressional measures were passed which dealt with unemployment, banks, farmers, business and labor. Regulations were also formulated which affected the taxing, borrowing and spending of money. Summarizing these efforts in his

¹Bulletin, Oct. 9, 1936; Folder FIFS, D.A. Until Ward came Emmanuel M. Clark was acting president.



1936 election campaign, Franklin Roosevelt could point to the fact that:

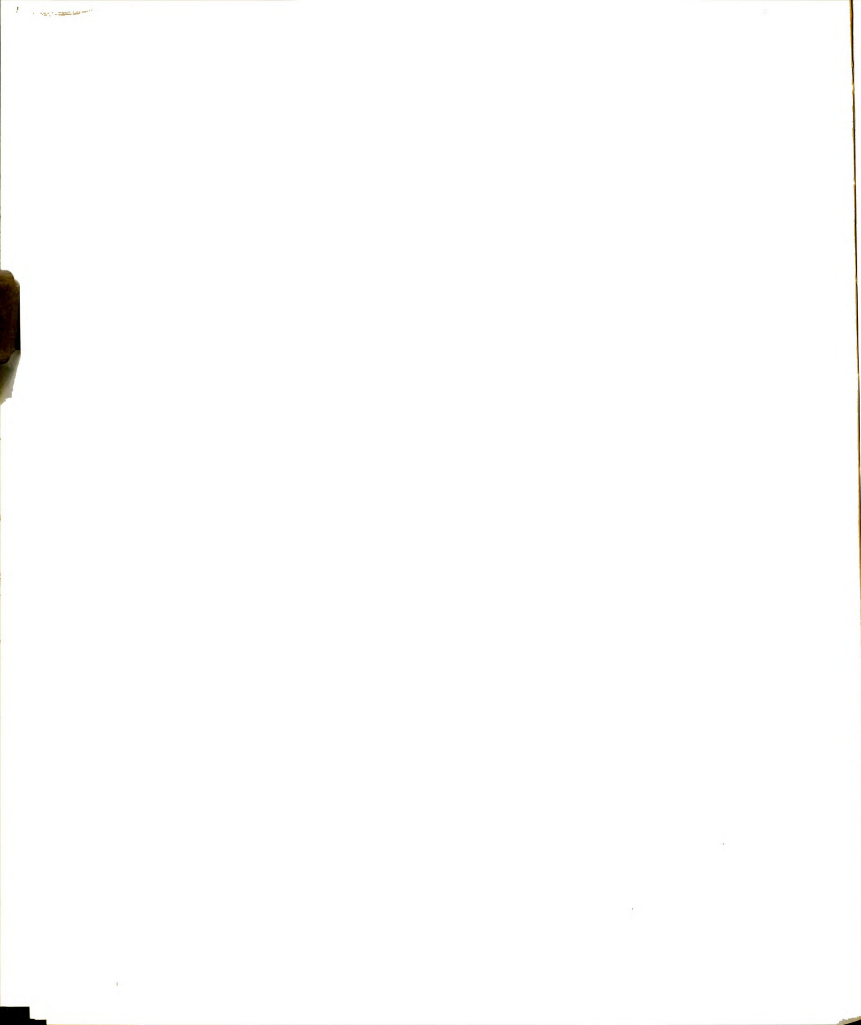
. . . at least six million jobs had been created in three years, and that national income was half again as high in 1936 as in 1933. Industrial output had almost doubled since he took office; by the fall of 1936, Detroit was rolling out more automobiles than in any year save 1929 and three times more than in 1922, and the electrical industry was selling more current than at any time in the past. In May, 1936, the New York Times Index of Business Activity climbed to 100 for the first time since 1930. Corporation profit sheets, which showed a \$2 billion deficit in 1933, ran \$5 billion in the black in 1936. . . . From the first quarter of 1933 to the third quarter of 1936, net income of farm operators almost quadrupled.²

The remainder of the decade was characterized by a recession in the fall of 1937 which took away some of the gains made in 1936 and a general improvement in the economy 1938 through 1940 as the shadow of World War II hung over the country.

Curriculum--Preserving the Past and Adjusting to the Present

During the thirties technical and teachers' colleges expanded their pre-professional offerings. The Detroit Institute of Technology, Lawrence Institute of Technology, General Motors Institute and Chrysler Institute trained students to assume managerial or technical positions. The four state teachers' colleges also broadened their programs

²William Leuchtenburg, Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal: 1932-1940 (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 194.



to include pre-professional training in such fields as medicine, law, business administration, and engineering.

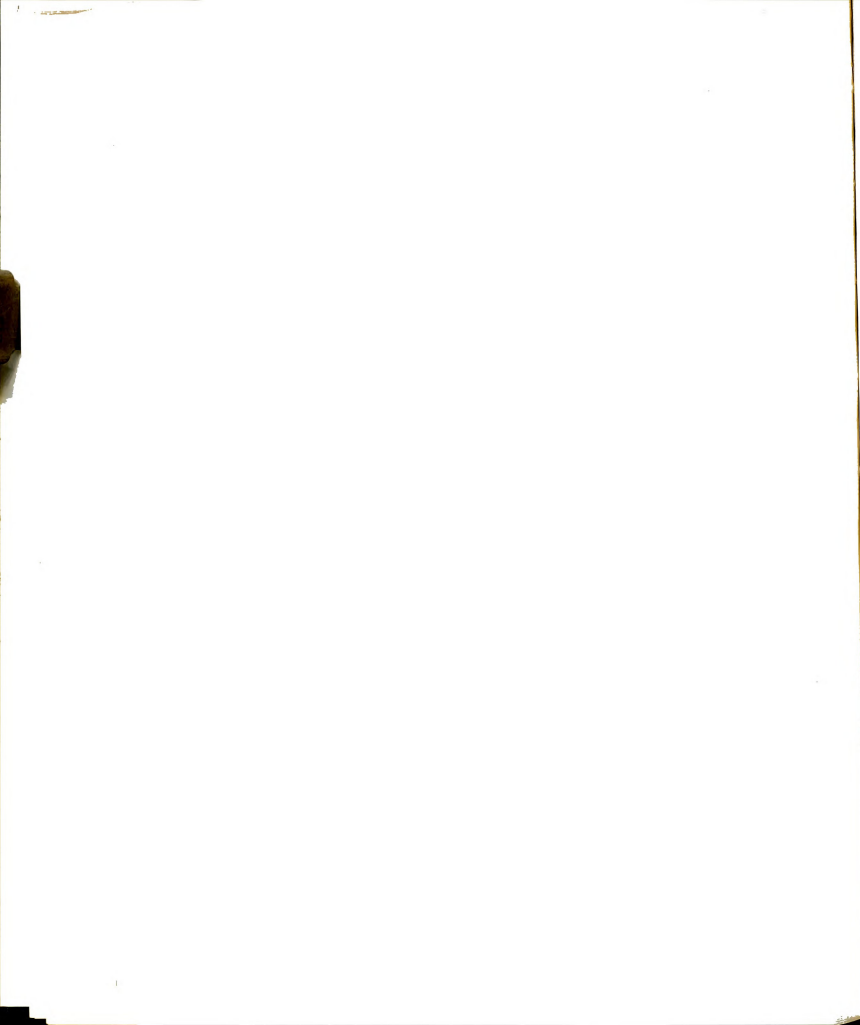
Similarly, Ward expanded the curricular offerings of Ferris Institute. Responding to the political, economic, and social conditions in the nation he presented his plans for the school's future. He maintained that Ferris Institute should not compete in educational areas already adequately cared for by other Michigan colleges.³ What, then, was the role of Ferris Institute in Michigan's educational scheme?

It seems clear that this institution should continue to offer educational opportunity to the youth who, for one reason or another has failed to complete his early training. It should determine, through an exhaustive survey, the vocations and semi-professions now in need of trained workers, and establish short courses of one or two years duration, for the training of prospective workers in these fields.⁴

Specifically, Ward suggested that the institute make contributions in the training of commercial teachers, especially those heading for rural communities. He also advocated an expansion of the junior college program, with the provision that it offer standard two year courses in vocational and cultural areas. In addition to these

³ Bulletin, Oct. 9, 1936; Folder FIFS, D.A.

⁴ Ibid.



suggestions he asked for a continuation of the four year programs in pharmacy and commerce.⁵

Despite Ward's claim that the school should accommodate those students lacking early training he proposed educational goals which seemed more appropriate to an academically oriented institution. Beginning with the premise that the heart of educational problems was the living teacher and learner he emphasized the need for ". . . scholars on the faculty . . . , bearing degrees that evidence scholarship, but scholarship is not enough. They must also have the zeal for making scholars, a passion for the art of teaching."⁶

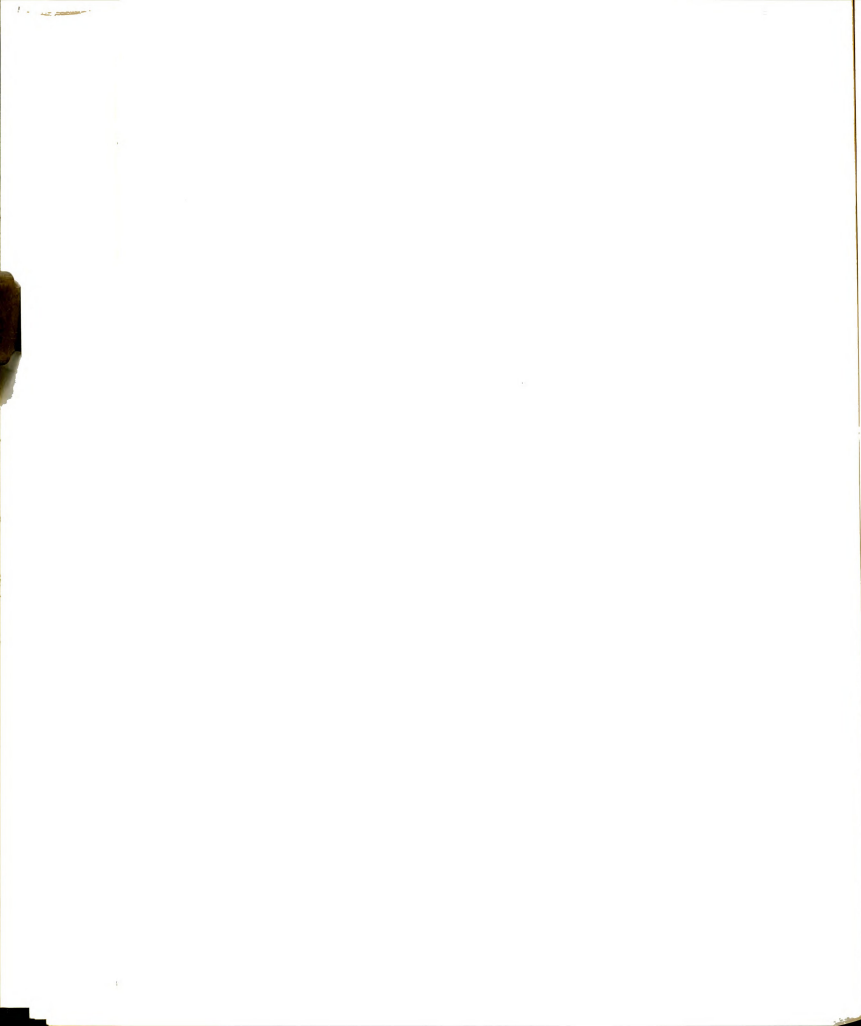
Nevertheless, the sense of mission expressed in these and the following remarks by Ward was in the tradition of Ferris Institute and indeed, in much of the educational rhetoric in American history.

I am education. I bear the torch that enlightens the world, fires the imagination of men, feeds the flame of genius. I give wings to dreams and might to hand and brain.

From out the deep shadows of the past I come, wearing the scars of struggle and the stripes of toil, but bearing in triumph the wisdom of all ages. Man, because of me, holds dominion over earth, air and sea; it is for him I leash lightning, plumb the deep, and shackle the ether [the upper regions of space]. . . .

⁵Ibid. The cultural areas were those liberal arts disciplines like history and English.

⁶Ibid.



The school is my workshop, here I stir ambitions, stimulate ideals, forge the keys that open the door to opportunity; the aid of aspiration. I am irresistible power.⁷

The Ferris tradition was explained to those of the 411 students enrolled fall term of 1938.⁸

We are preserving the great traditions of the past, such as efficacy of hard work, the democratic ideal of equality of educational opportunity, the personal interest of teachers in students, and the belief that the building of character is paramount in the educational process.⁹

Advertised as an integral part of this Ferris tradition were lower costs to attend the school.

You are anxious to go some place where the cost of education is low and where the quality of education is high. Do you not believe that a school which is organized so that no one can profit from its finances would give you much for your money? Do you know that a school which has tried for over fifty years to bring education within the means of everyone would do its utmost to make all charges connected with school activities and living reasonable?¹⁰

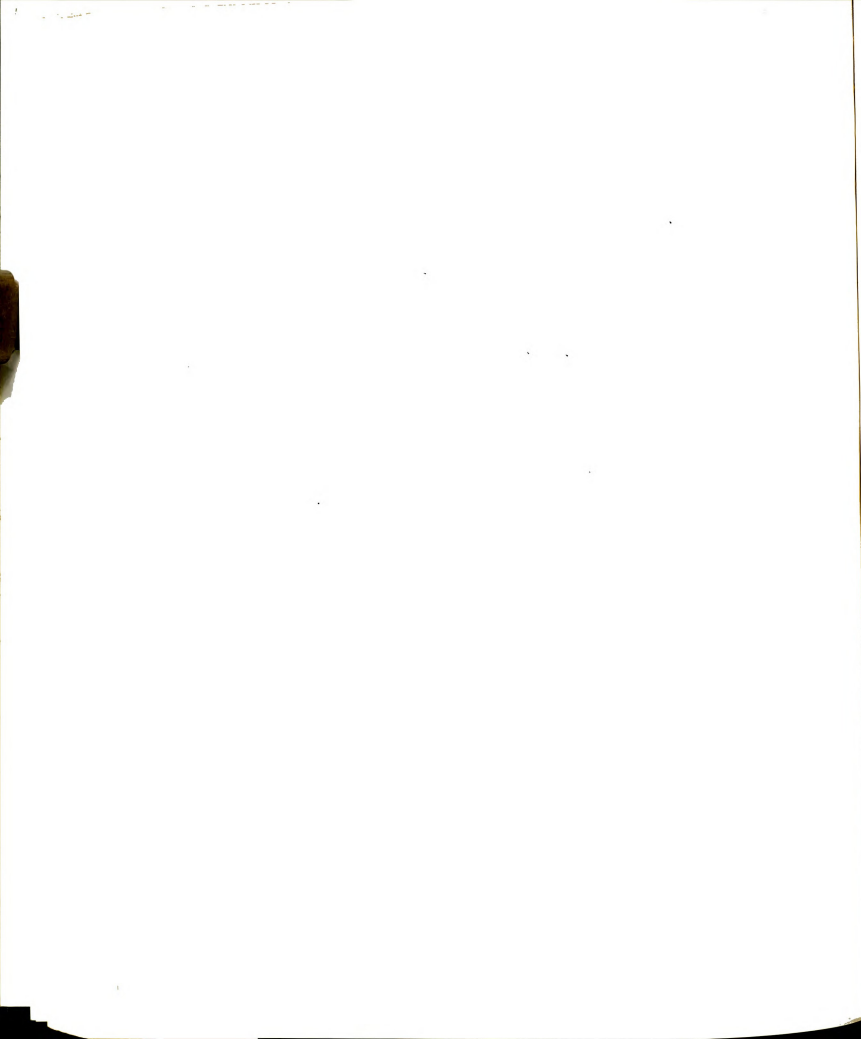
An example of the costs for attending the school were found in a student's expense book.

⁷Ibid.

⁸This enrollment was compared with the 351 reported at a similar time the previous year. Ferris Torch, IX, no. 1 (Sept. 20, 1938), p. 1. Enrollment increased 40.5% in pharmacy, 13% in commerce, and 24.5% in college preparatory.

⁹Ferris Torch, IX, no. 1 (Sept. 20, 1938), p. 2.

¹⁰Around the Calendar at Ferris Institute, Sept. 5, 1938; Folder FIFS, c45c. Board rates ranged from \$1.00 to \$3.50 for fifteen meals, and from \$1.50 to \$5.00 for twenty-one meals.



	4 week period	weekly
Groceries	\$11.50	\$ 2.88
Rooms (lights furnished)	6.00	1.50
Movies	1.50	.38
Dances	.80	.20
Twelve weeks tuition and fees	52.45	4.37
Books and supplies	8.90	.75
Incidentals	3.00	.75
TOTAL	\$84.15	\$10.83

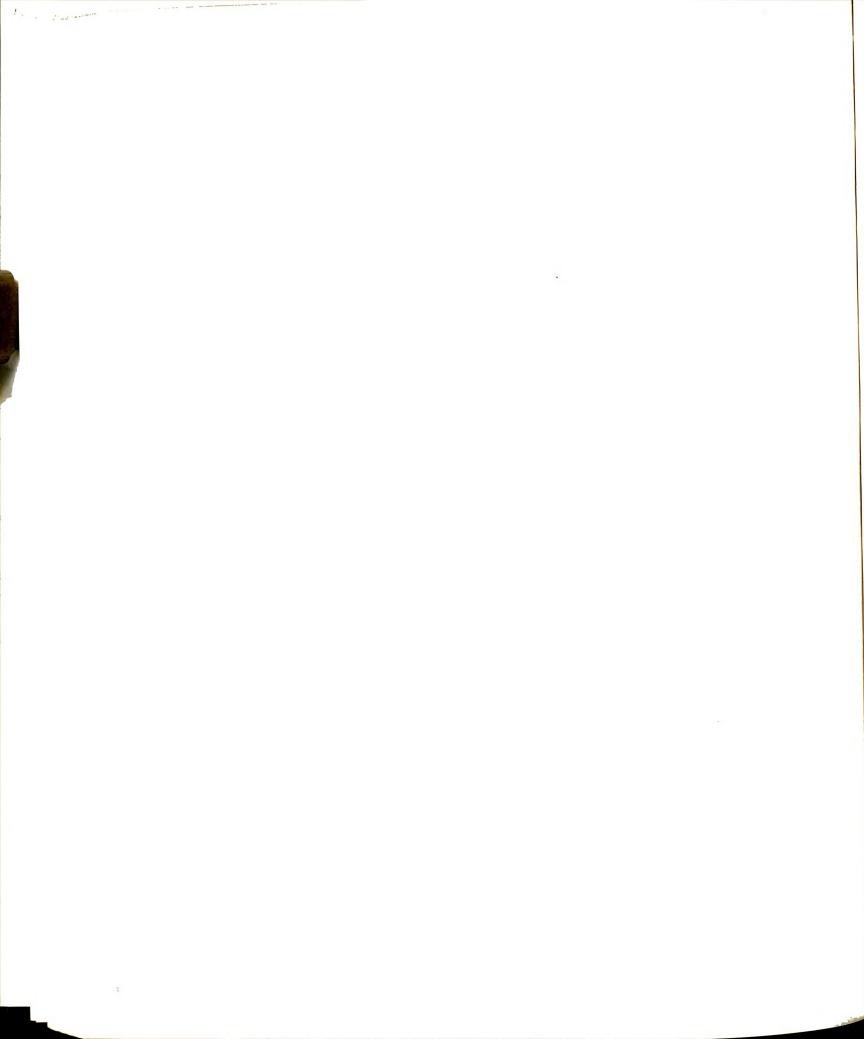
Source: Around the Calendar at Ferris Institute, Sept. 5, 1938; Folder FIFS, c45c.

In addition to character development and reported lower costs, Ferris offered diverse academic experiences in the colleges of Commerce, Pharmacy, Education, Junior College, and College Preparatory. The College of Commerce advertised a program designed to train students for business with skills for administrative and non-administrative positions.¹¹

Pharmacy students were greeted by Dean Simon Benson who had secured national recognition for the College of Pharmacy by the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy.¹² Credence was given to this recognition when the

¹¹Ibid. The Commerce program included courses in advertising, salesmanship, banking, accounting, commercial law, business English, shorthand, and typewriting. A Bachelor of Science in Commerce degree was also offered by the College of Commerce.

¹²Ferris Torch, IX, no. 1 (Sept. 20, 1938), p. 1. Recognition followed an inspection tour by Dean R. A. Lyman of the University of Nebraska, Dean C. H. Rogers of the University of Minnesota, and C. J. K. Lemme of Purdue. The College was also a member of the Student Branch of the American Pharmaceutical Association.



institute reported that 62 per cent of the successful candidates taking the state pharmacy examinations in June, 1937 had received their training at Ferris Institute.¹³ Offering a four year program leading to a Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacy, the College claimed that pharmaceutical firms, wholesale drug companies, hospitals, food companies and other businesses provided occupational opportunities for a pharmacy trained person.¹⁴

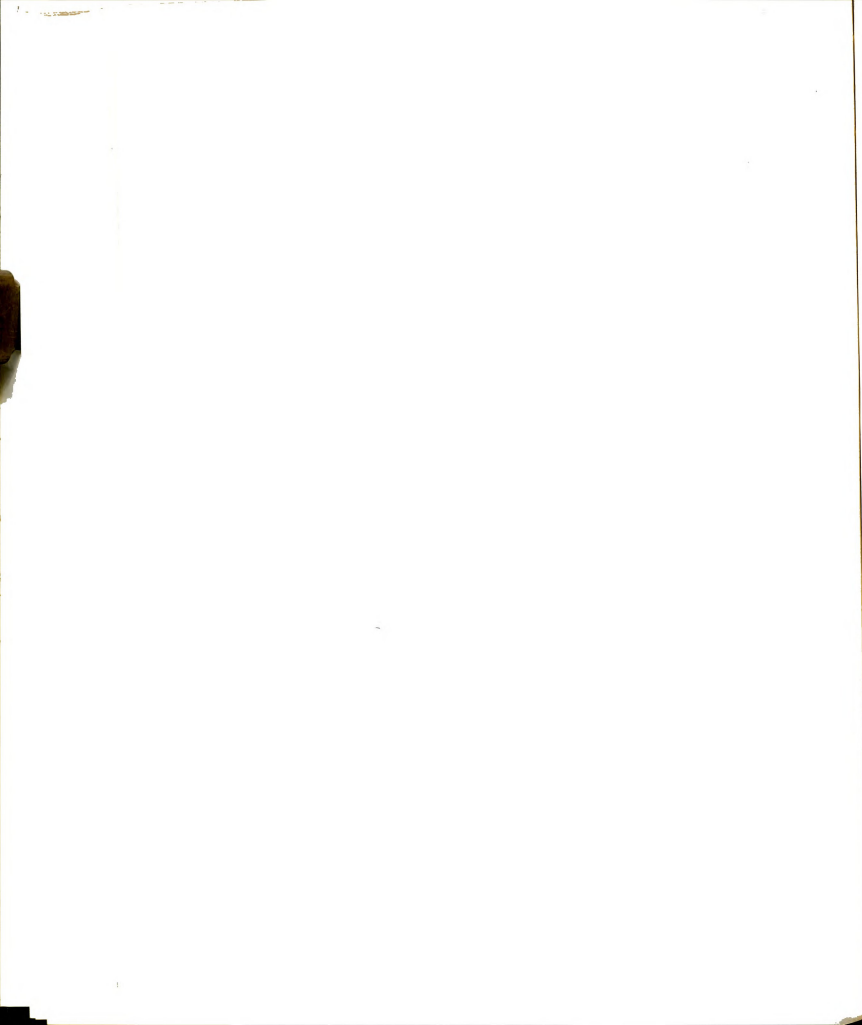
With Dean Laura Wurtzel heading the College of Education and its teacher training program, students in commerce, science and rural elementary courses prepared to qualify for state teaching certificates.

Students in the Junior College could enroll in pre-professional or general literary programs. Offering courses leading to the A.B. or B.S. degrees the College provided graduates the necessary qualifications for entering four year institutions. Approved by the Michigan Association of Junior Colleges, the State Board of Education, and the State Department of Public Instruction, graduates of the College were admitted without examination to the junior class at the University of Michigan.¹⁵

¹³ Around the Calendar.

¹⁴ Ibid. Dean Benson received an American Medical Association research grant to investigate: ". . . the therapeutic effects of skin counter-irritants." Ferris Torch, IX, no. 8 (Nov. 8, 1938), p. 1.

¹⁵ Around the Calendar.



Junior College students were also offered the following advantages.

Classes are small. Students get to know one another and to know their teachers personally. Students are coached in the proper technique of budgeting their time and in the most effective techniques of study. Personal help is a rule, not the exception. A spirit of friendly informality makes learning a pleasure.¹⁶

An added incentive to Junior College students was the trophy presented to the student with the highest scholastic standing.¹⁷

The College Preparatory program was designed to appeal to a different audience than the Junior College course.

Are you past the usual high school age? Have you completed high school but found that you have not sufficient credits to enter college or university? Have you ever applied for a job and been turned down because you were not a high school graduate?¹⁸

An affirmative answer to one or more of these questions plus an ambition to enter college or acquire high school accreditation placed one in a position to consider the College Preparatory program.¹⁹

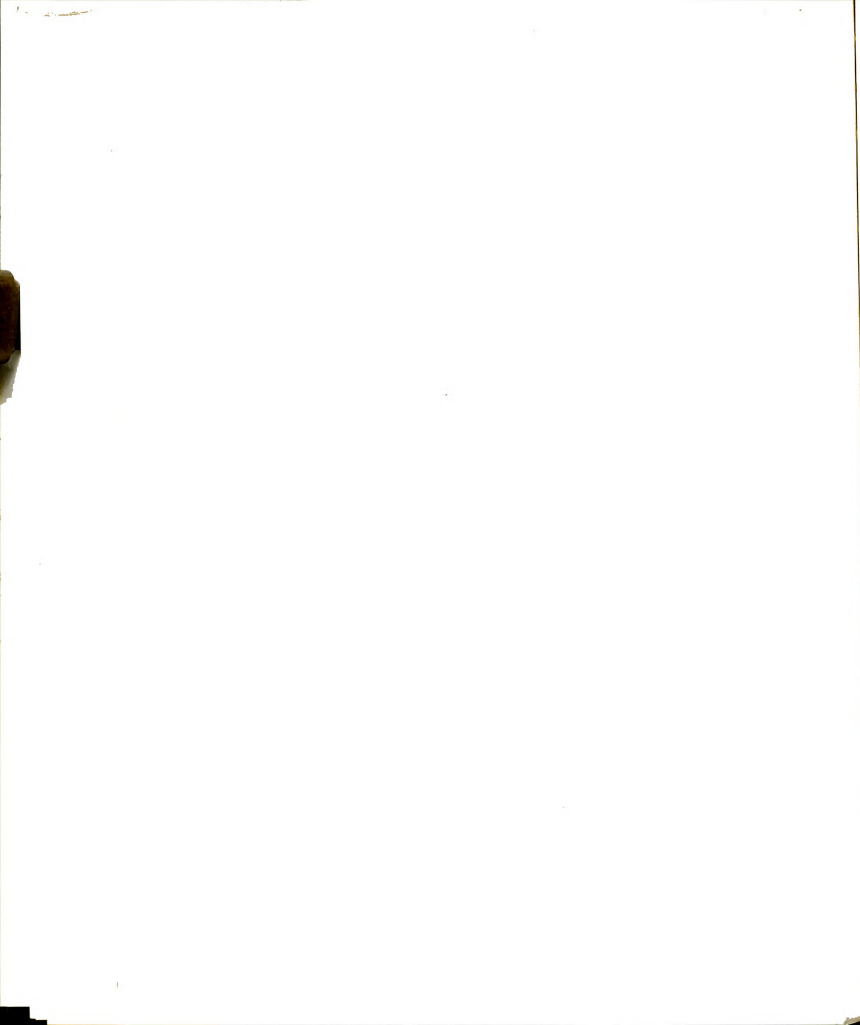
Of special significance to financially poor students was the National Youth Administration's part-time work

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ferris Torch, IX, no. 3 (Oct. 4, 1938), p. 1.

¹⁸ Around the Calendar.

¹⁹ The program was first accredited by the University of Michigan in 1891. Around the Calendar.



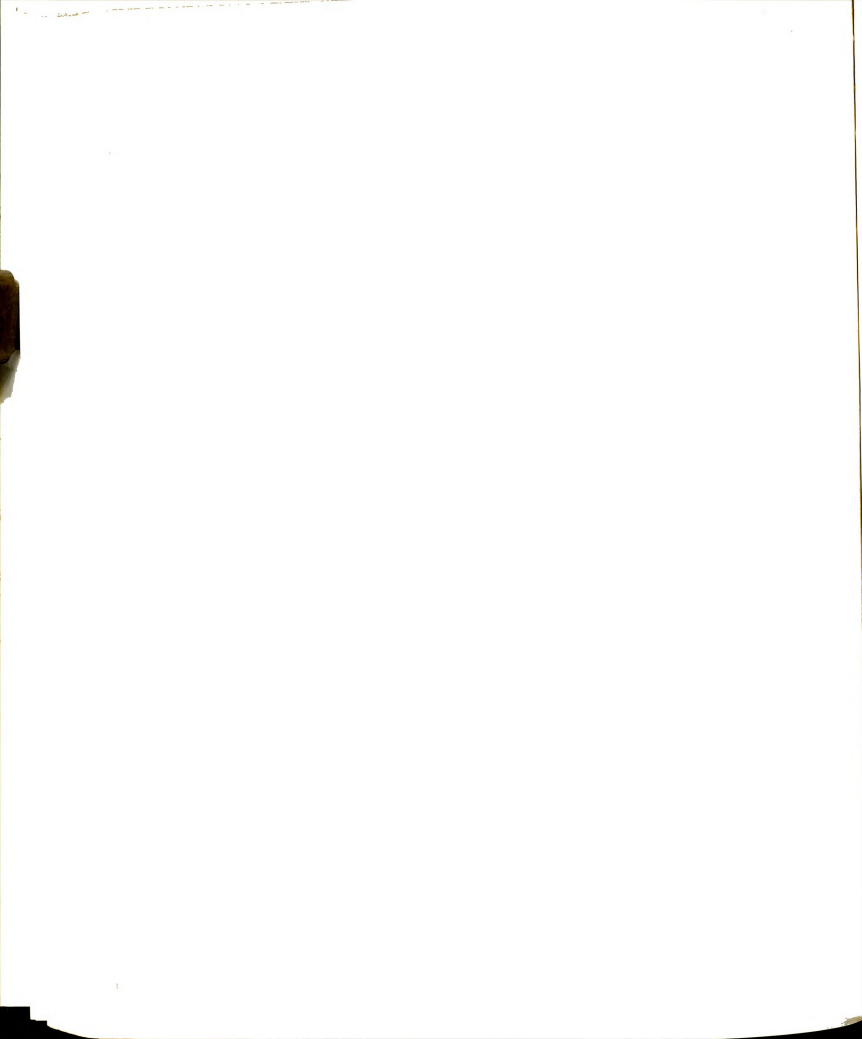
program. With two curricula, one for undergraduate and graduate work and another for high school studies, the program offered clerical typing, construction work, departmental service and class assistants work, library work, ground and building maintenance, art and music, and recreation work.²⁰

Throughout 1939 the curriculum remained essentially the same as the previous year with the exception of a civilian pilot training course. A plan was developed whereby instructions were taken through the Meceola Flying Club with the instructors paid by the Civil Aeronautics Authority.²¹ Eventually twenty-five students signified their intent to enroll in the course which included seventy-two hours of ground school training, and thirty-five to fifty hours of actual flight instruction.²² In addition to Federal aid through the Civil Aeronautics Authority, the school received a Works Progress

²⁰Ferris Torch, IX, no. 2 (Sept. 27, 1938), p. 4. Approximately sixty students received aid through this program.

²¹Ferris Torch, X, no. 2 (Sept. 26, 1939), p. 2. For further information about the plan see Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 160, Oct. 6, 1939, President's office.

²²Ferris Torch, X, No. 4 (Oct. 10, 1939), p. 1. Emmanuel M. Clark and Grover C. Baker were in charge of the ground school. All flight instruction was taken at the Roben-Hood airport, north of Big Rapids on U.S. 131. Mr. Howard Travis, a local pilot was the flying instructor. Ferris Torch, X, no. 13 (Jan. 9, 1940), p. 1.



Administration project²³ to construct tennis courts and an athletic field.²⁴ The estimated completion date was Jan. 1, 1940 with the field to be dedicated on Homecoming day in the memory of Gerrit Masselink.²⁵

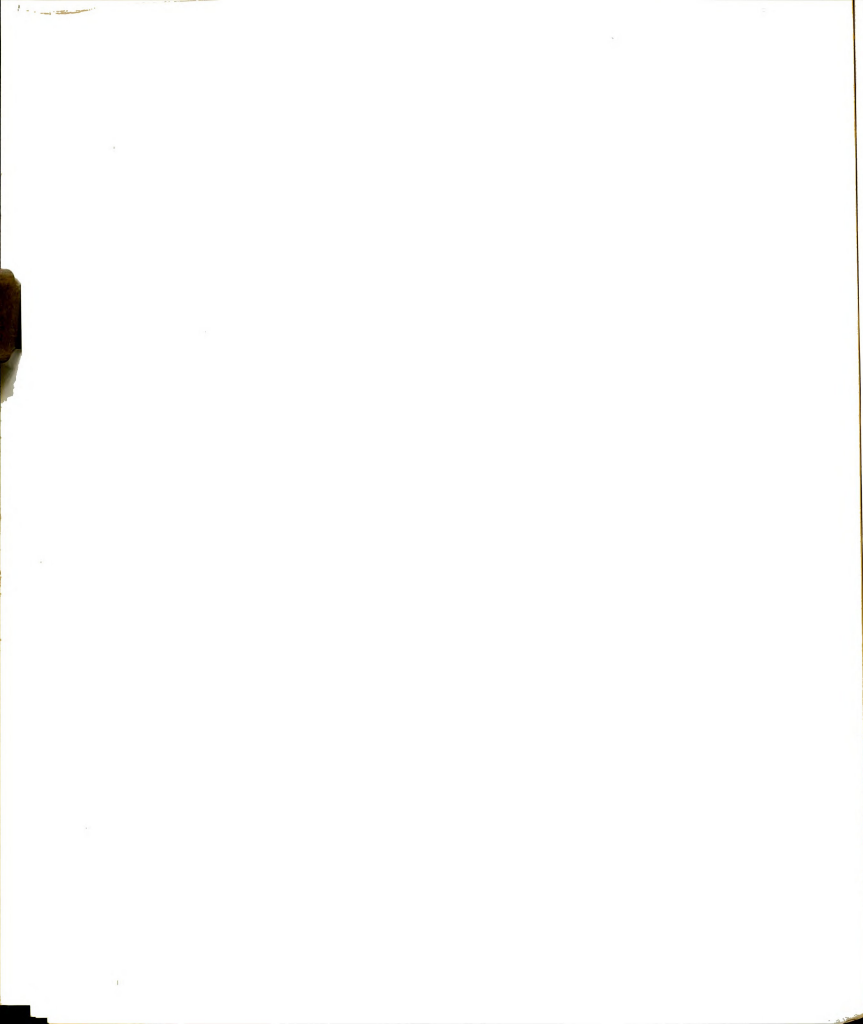
Encouraging information was also received from the American Council on Pharmaceutical Education whose officers approved the pharmacy college,²⁶ and from the North Central Association which gave tentative approval to the school. Representatives of the Michigan division of the North Central evaluation team had inspected the premises

²³ Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 1, Jan. 12, 1940, President's office. The school had many difficulties with the tennis courts which needed resurfacing. Ferris Torch, X, no. 8 (Feb. 13, 1940). Plans for resurfacing were to be completed as part of a W.P.A. project. Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 21, Sept. 20, 1940. The first cement for the stands was poured in November, 1939. Ferris Torch, X, no. 9 (Nov. 21, 1939), p. 1.

²⁵ Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 21, Nov. 8, 1940. The athletic field was a municipal one constructed on property contributed by Ferris Institute. In a reciprocal move, the school gave certain properties to the city of Big Rapids for \$1.00 and: "... other good and valuable consideration." Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 27, Nov. 8, 1940, President's office.

²⁶ Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 1, Jan. 12, 1940, President's office. Also see Ferris Torch, X, no. 14 (Jan. 16, 1940), p. 1. Three years previous the library staff had abandoned inadequate quarters on the second floor of the main hall and moved to the third floor of the pharmacy building. There were approximately 7,500 volumes in the library. Ferris Torch, X, no. 27 (April 23, 1940), p. 6. Students in the library complained of unusual odors coming from the pharmacy laboratories on lower floors. Ferris Torch, X, no. 27 (April 23, 1940), p. 8.



and programs of Ferris Institute and gave general approval of the school.²⁷ The inspection team summarized their findings.

We believe that Ferris Institute should be encouraged and that it serves a very useful place among educational institutions of Michigan. We also believe that it has made considerable progress under Dr. Ward's presidency, and that if some of his present efforts for more adequate finances meet with success, the next few years will show even more growth than in the last few.²⁸

The military program of the institute was also expanded with the organization of a Regular Officers Corp unit,²⁹ and the extension of the flight pilot training program.³⁰

The president's plan for change at the school also manifested itself in a new police training secretarial course and a remodeled typing room, thereafter designated as the library.³¹ Other changes in 1937 included an agreement to pay faculty members having attended graduate school during the summer of 1934,³² reversal of a previous board

²⁷Ferris Torch, X, no. 1 (Sept. 22, 1939), p. 1. The inspection team came to the school on May 2, 1939 and inspected the library facilities.

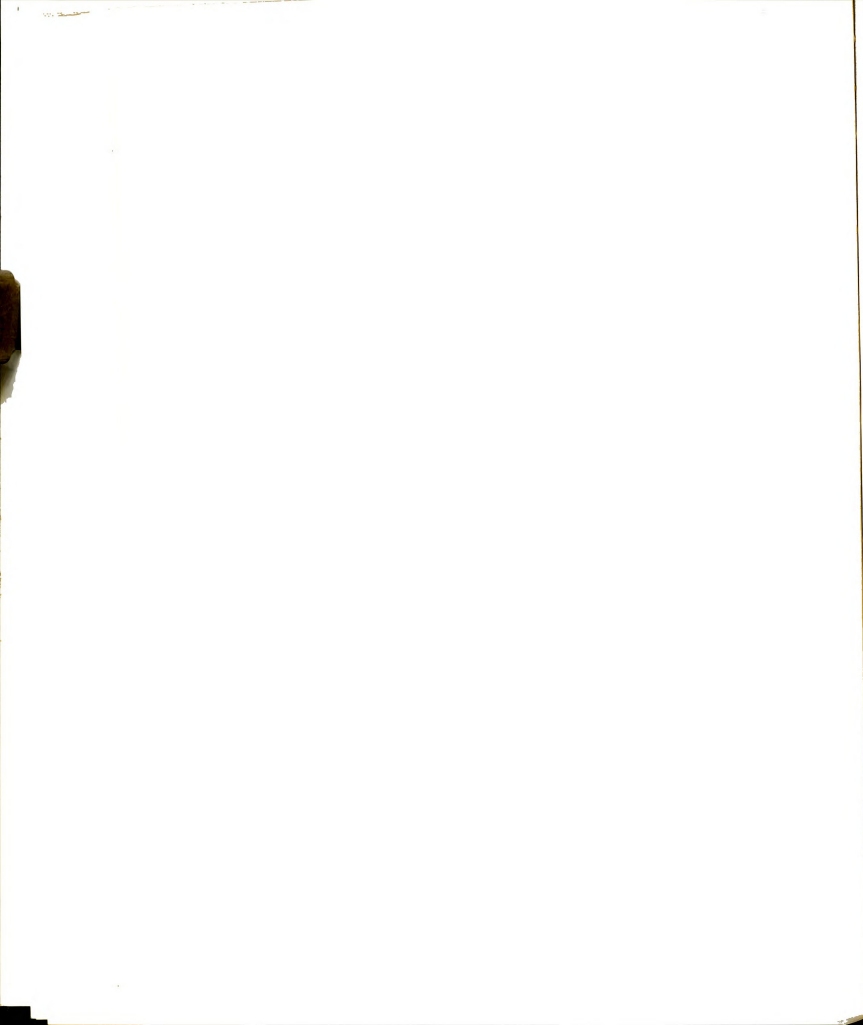
²⁸Ferris Torch, X, no. 1 (Sept. 22, 1939), p. 2.

²⁹Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 19, Sept. 13, 1940.

³⁰Ibid., p. 9, June 14, 1940.

³¹Big Rapids Pioneer, July 29, 1937, p. 14. Clarence Mitchell was the new librarian.

³²Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 128, Sept. 9, 1937, President's office. The police secretarial offering was one course.



decision by honoring tuition certificates issued by the old corporation,³³ and the recommendation that sick leave be granted to members of the faculty for two weeks on full salary in any one year, accumulative to twenty days.³⁴ As administrators before him, Ward responded to what he deemed were societal requests and demands for certain programs. Response to such requests was assured because of the financial aid provided by the federal government which in great measure alleviated financial difficulties at the school.

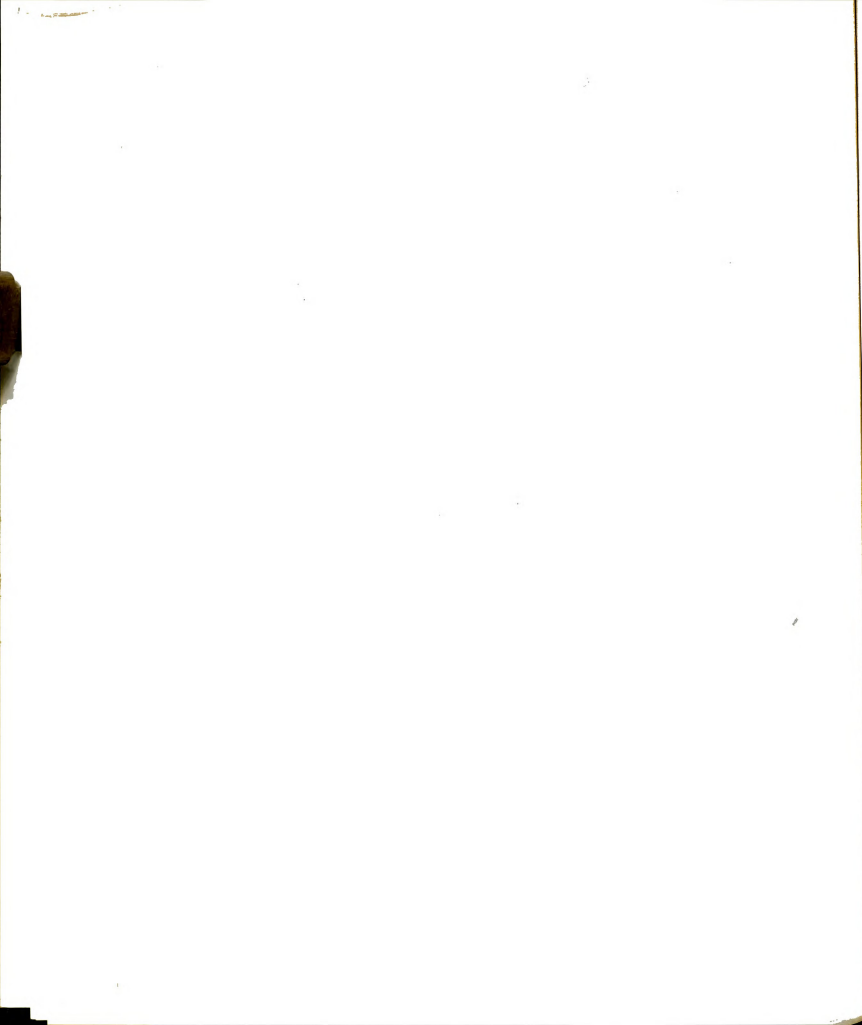
A Time for Questioning

Amidst the problems of international economic collapse and political questions about the stability of capitalism Ferris students managed to focus attention on the prospects of a general health examination and a test for syphilis to be given entering students.³⁵ Concern over these matters initiated an administrative investigation into the cost, procedures and possibilities of state aid for such health examinations. Do colleges offer syphilis tests? Are they compulsory? In a reply to such questions Dr. Forsythe stated that:

³³ Ibid., p. 131, Oct. 14, 1937.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 132, Nov. 11, 1937.

³⁵ Letter, Roy Newton to Dr. Warren E. Forsythe, Director of University Health Service, Ann Arbor, Michigan, April 27, 1939, Newton Collection, Folder 1938-1939. No explanation was given for the student interest in a testing service for syphilis.



Much depends upon local circumstance. I do not think I would make it [syphilis test] a requirement. There is insufficient reason so far as the protection of other students is concerned and there is no use creating the antagonism to your work in general for that reason.³⁶

Although the syphilis test was never implemented the health examination was initiated on a voluntary basis under the vocational guidance program.³⁷ To explain the entire health program representatives from the United States Public Health Service spoke to students. The Torch claimed that: "This is the first time such an assembly program has been given before a mixed body of students during the regular school year. This fact in itself marks a progressive step."³⁸ A campaign was organized with the Junior College and varsity club adopting a resolution stating that beginning fall term 1939, all students be required to take a suitable blood test for syphilis.³⁹ Although the syphilis test was not considered essential for student health protection, regulations on the availability of liquor were deemed necessary. In a Ferris Torch editorial it was claimed local merchants were selling liquor to minors, thus breaking state law.⁴⁰ The editorial also stated that:

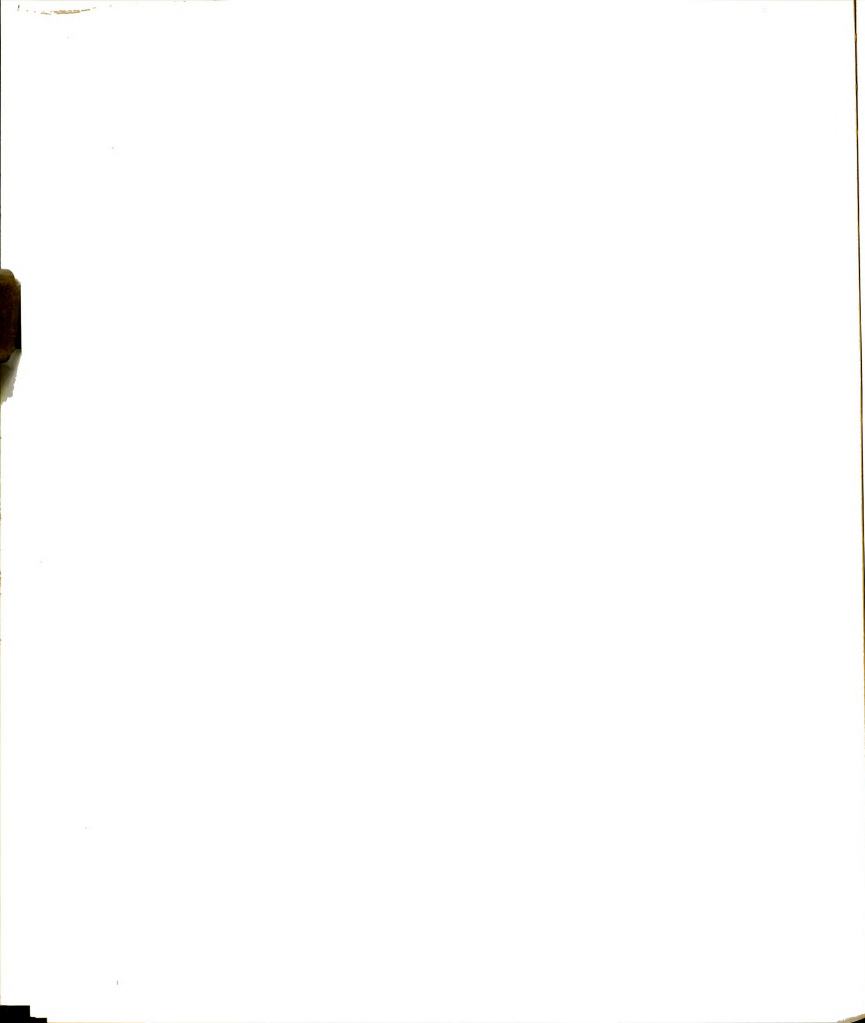
³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ferris Torch, X, no. 3 (Oct. 3, 1939), p. 1.

³⁸ Ferris Torch, X, no. 5 (Oct. 17, 1939), p. 4.

³⁹ Ferris Torch, IX, no. 17 (Jan. 31, 1939), p. 1.
This plan was never implemented.

⁴⁰ Ferris Torch, IX, no. 23 (March 14, 1939), p. 4.



"I believe habitual drunkenness in the student body is a good problem for the Student-Activity committee to wrestle with."⁴¹ President Ward publicly reviewed the editorials and organized a committee to discuss and research the problem.⁴² The results of that group were reported as follows:

The committee reports that they have conferred with the various enforcement officers as well as the proprietors of the retail establishments all of whom have assured this committee that the law, relative to the sale of alcoholic liquors will be strictly lived up to, and rigidly enforced.⁴³

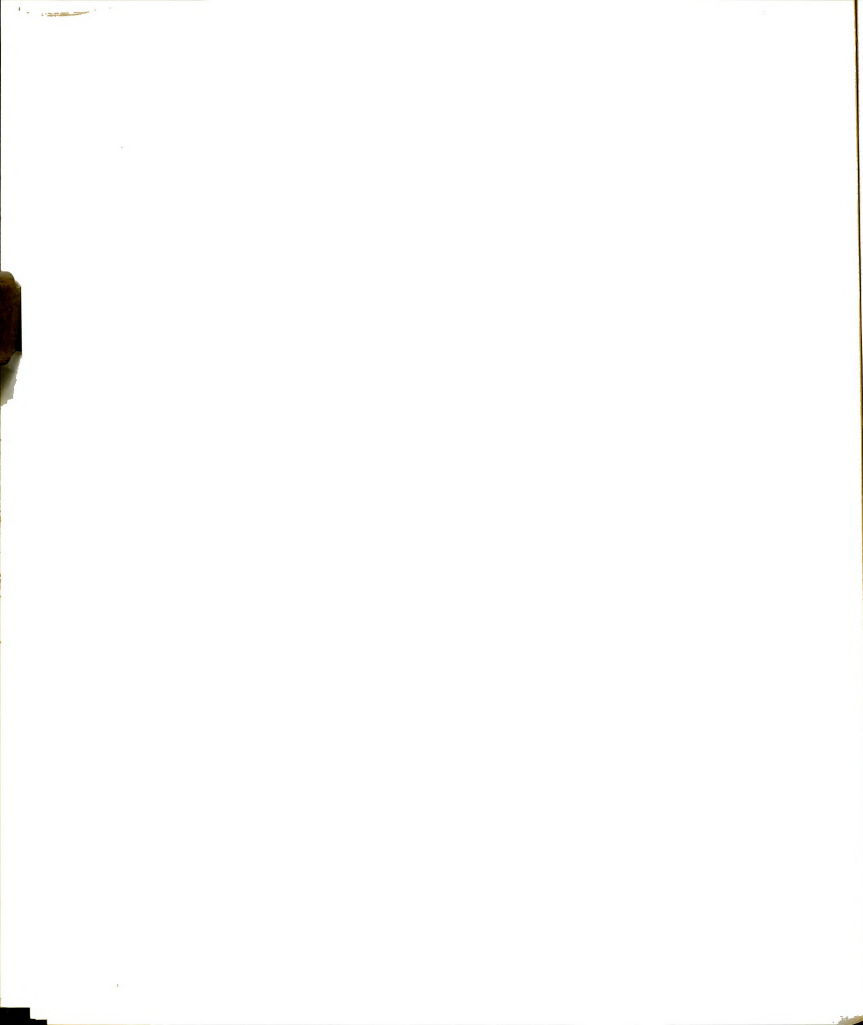
A traditional question which emerged as a key one in 1939 was that concerning morning exercises. Students claimed inequities in policy regarding faculty and student attendance at assemblies. The student view was expressed in the Torch.

If one should look around the assembly hall during an assembly, one would notice quite frequently the paucity of faculty members. There is a ruling that faculty members are not required to attend assemblies. Yet the faculty insists that the student body attend each and every assembly or take the consequences.

⁴¹Ibid. Apparently the editorial was severely criticized by some Ferris Institute students because in the next issue of the Torch [IX, no. 24 (March 21, 1939), p. 4.], the editor restated his claim that he merely reported a situation and did not moralize.

⁴²Ferris Torch, IX, no. 26 (April 4, 1939), p. 1. The Committee consisted of the Dean of Men, Women, as well as Pennock and Hogstad from Pharmacy.

⁴³Ferris Torch, IX, no. 27 (April 18, 1939), p. 1.



To many of the students, the assemblies are hated tasks which we must bear. They are something which the students feel in crammed down their throats, a cross which must be borne. The faculty must feel the same way; for if there is an assembly which does not particularly appeal to them they don't go.⁴⁴

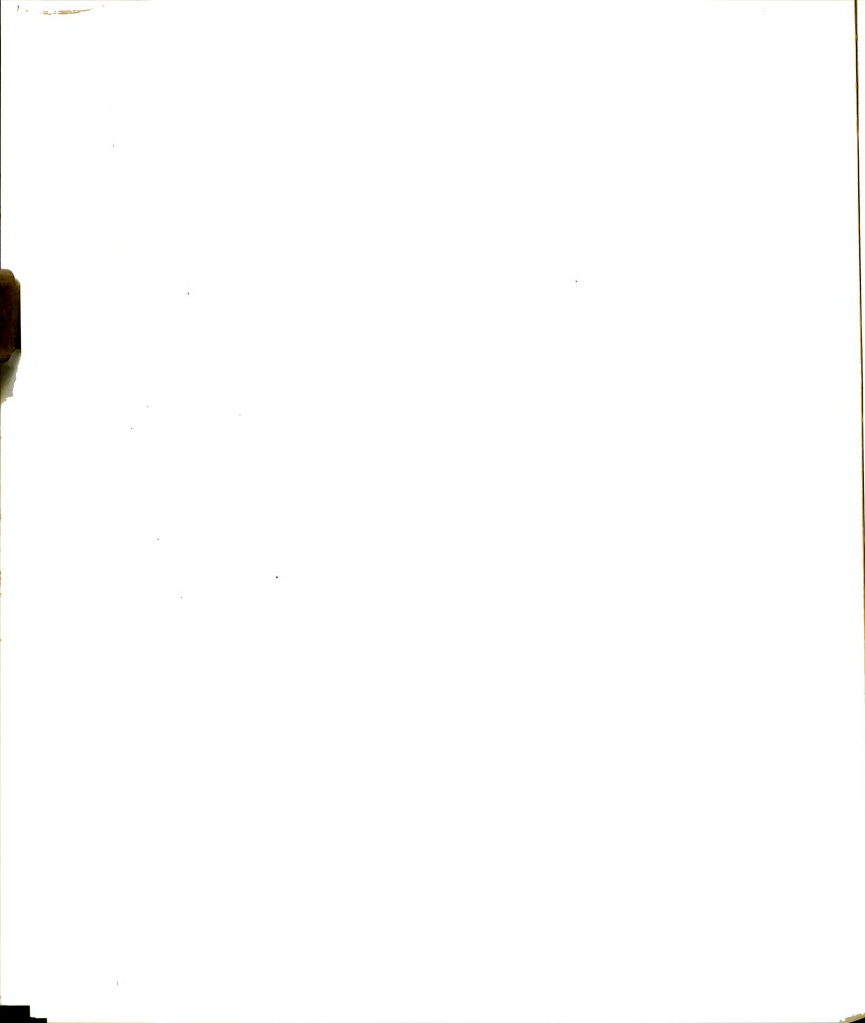
For some students the maintenance of an academic program and discussion of serious topics were necessary but not sufficient conditions for complete student experiences. Increasingly, some placed emphasis on the athletic program and began to question existing policy. Should Ferris Institute begin to subsidize athletes? This question was debated by some students without reaching a decision.⁴⁵

Perhaps those forces supporting the affirmative position in that debate retained memories of a 0-5-2 football record in the Michigan-Ontario Collegiate Conference and an eighteenth position in the state football ratings.⁴⁶ The pain of a losing season was partially eased with the acquisition of an air-conditioned and radio equipped bus to make trips to Hope College, Central State, Assumption, and

⁴⁴Ferris Torch, X, no. 2 (Sept. 25, 1939), p. 2. During Ward's administration morning exercises were eliminated.

⁴⁵Ferris Torch, IX, no. 18 (Feb. 7, 1939), p. 2.

⁴⁶Ferris Torch, IX, no. 10 (Nov. 22, 1938), p. 3. Also see Ferris Torch, IX, no. 6 (Oct. 25, 1938), p. 2.



St. Mary's.⁴⁷ The basketball team fared worse than the football squad with a 1-16 record.⁴⁸

The athletic teams of later years fared no better than those of the 1938-39 season. The 1940-41 football team playing on "Stoney" field recorded a 2-6 season.⁴⁹ Following that dismal football showing the basketball team treated the 438 students to a 2-15 record. It was reported that the team was: ". . . the recipient of boos and catcalls for another poor season."⁵⁰

For the athletic program a most significant event was the resignation of Bill McElwain as coach. In an assembly program he gave reasons for his departure.⁵¹ "It is the policy of the school to have a full time coach, and, all around, my resignation will be best for the school and myself."⁵² Apparently, the administration had

⁴⁷Ferris Torch, IX, no. 2 (Sept. 27, 1938), p. 4. Tennis became a varsity sport with Bill McElwain making plans to enter M.O.C.C. tournament competition. Ferris Torch, IX, no. 16 (Jan. 24, 1939), p. 3.

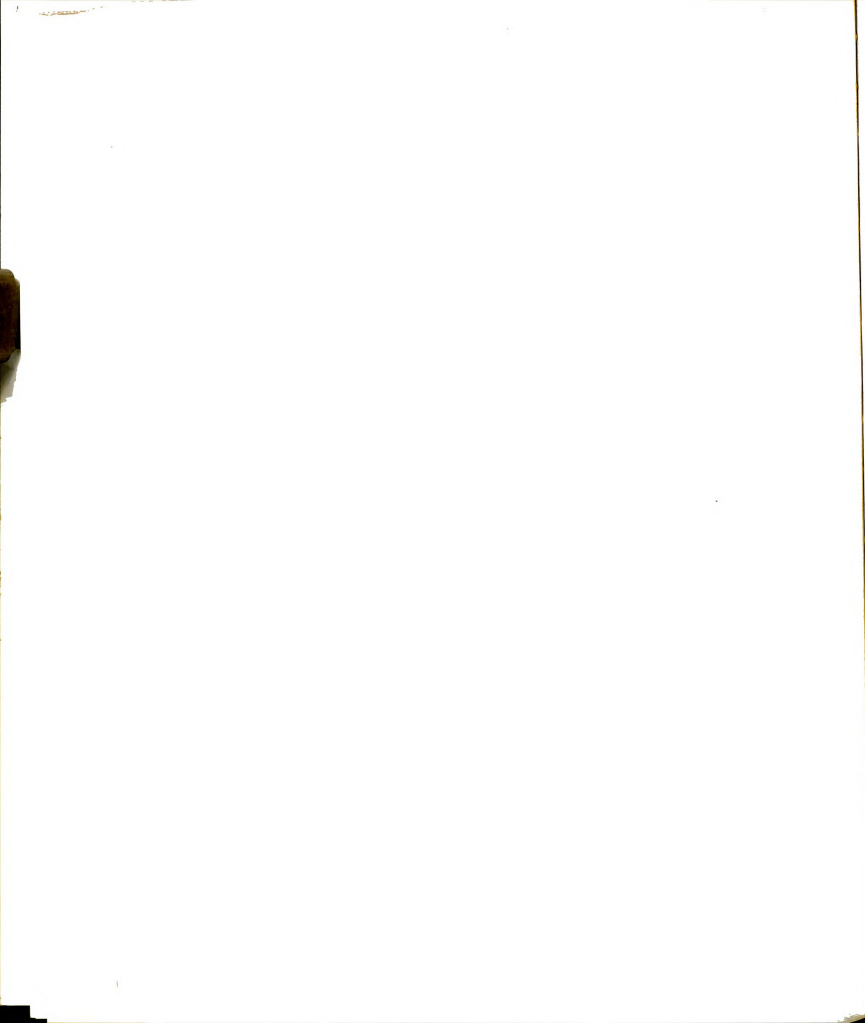
⁴⁸Ferris Torch, IX, no. 22 (March 7, 1939), p. 3. The institute received permission to host the 1940 M.O.C.C. spring games in track, tennis, and golf. Ferris Torch, IX, no. 29 (May 2, 1939), p. 1. An intramural program was also developed and included wrestling, boxing, and perhaps ice hockey. Ferris Torch, IX, no. 14 (Jan. 10, 1939), p. 1.

⁴⁹Ferris Torch, X, no. 1 (Sept. 22, 1939), p. 1.

⁵⁰Ferris Torch, X, no. 22 (March 5, 1940), p. 3.

⁵¹Ferris Torch, X, no. 30 (May 14, 1940), p. 1.

⁵²Ibid.



announced intentions of expanding the physical education program and desired the services of a full-time coach.⁵³

It is difficult to imply a questioning of McElwain's coaching ability in the following statement; nevertheless, there was concern over the plight of the athletic program. "During the past few years the Bulldog Zenith has been ebbing and the competition among playing talent and reduced enrollment has injured the Ferris record."⁵⁴

Social activities also provided some students with opportunities to relax and temporarily escape the academic world. Some sought relaxation in a "sweater swing" where: ". . . ten Ferris jitter bugs went into action, showing their latest dance, a combination of the soft shoe step and the modern hop."⁵⁵ Other students went to the Big Rapids Theatre to see such hits as "Topper" with Constance Bennett and Cary Grant, and "My Lucky Star" with Sonja Henie."⁵⁶

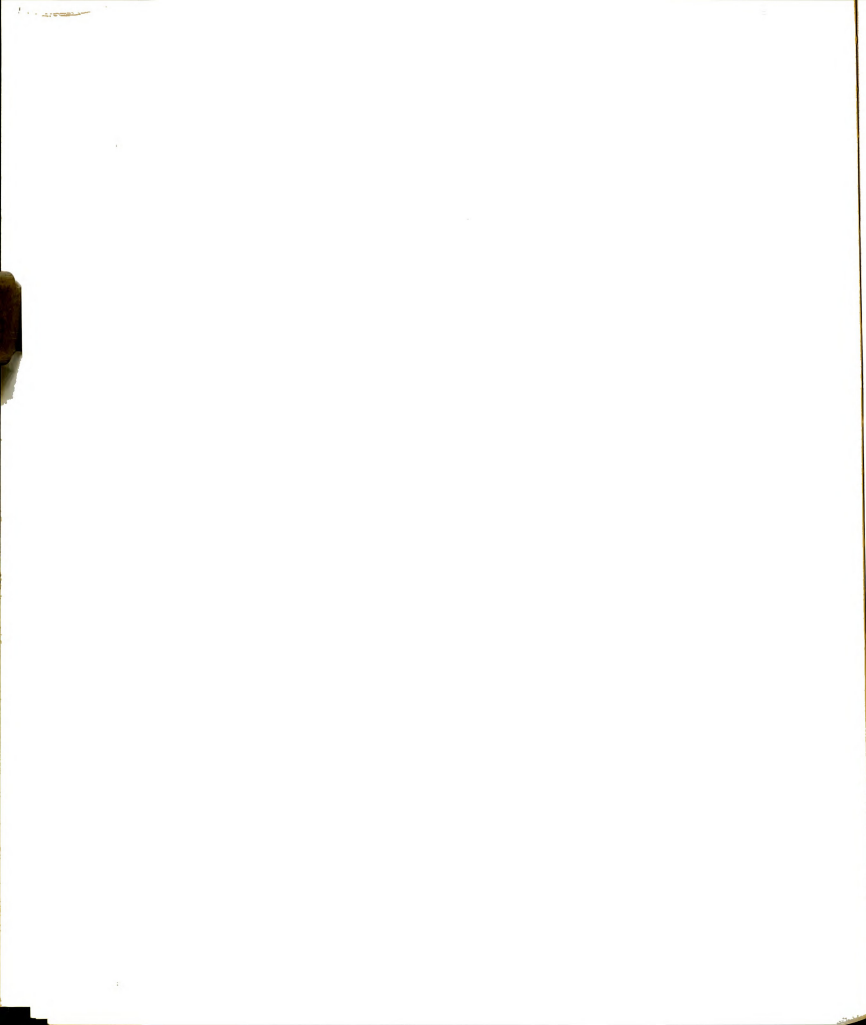
Athletic and social adventures did not diminish the necessity for students to continue their questioning of more serious matters. What was the future of a competitive

⁵³Ibid. Having taken leaves of absence to work on a law degree McElwain had been employed on a part-time basis for two years.

⁵⁴Ferris Torch, X, no. 30 (May 14, 1940), p. 1.

⁵⁵Ferris Torch, IX, no. 16 (Jan. 24, 1938), p. 1.

⁵⁶Ferris Torch, IX, no. 2 (Sept. 27, 1938), p. 4.



economy? Could and should one impose a welfare state on a capitalistic foundation? Was the New Deal a failure in true social-economic planning? Was capitalism as proclaimed by the editors of Common Sense the breeder of wars?⁵⁷ Whatever the answer to this last question many Ferris students would lend their skills and energies to the forthcoming war effort.

Finances

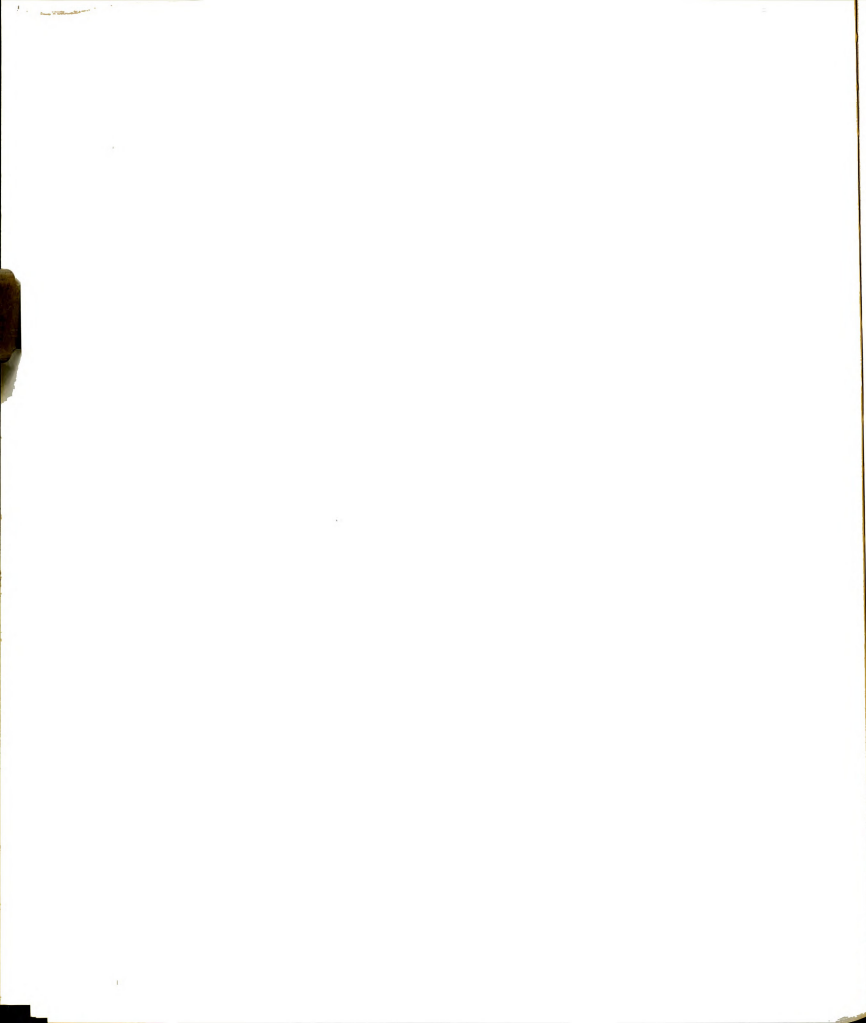
Overshadowing all other measures to maintain and increase the stability of the school during Ward's administration were the attempts to cope with immediate financial problems. The loan strategy had been used in the past and 1937 was no exception. Beginning in January with a loan of \$2,000.00⁵⁸ from the Citizens-State Bank and continuing to August with another \$2,000.00 loan,⁵⁹ the administration attempted to counteract financial deficits. Yet, despite these problems the trustees embarked on Project 16, a plan to build an athletic field.⁶⁰ The new \$65,000.00 municipal

⁵⁷Common Sense, IV (Oct., 1935), p. 2.

⁵⁸Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 114, Jan. 14, 1937, President's office.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 126, Aug. 12, 1937. The following spring a loan of \$4,000.00 was received from the Citizens State Bank to meet current expenses. Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 138, Aug. 11, 1938, President's office.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 128, Sept. 9, 1937, President's office.



stadium was located behind the Ferris Institute campus. It included concrete stands with a 3,000 spectator capacity, a football field, baseball and softball diamonds, handball courts, and a cinder track.⁶¹

Throughout the summer and continuing into the fall of 1939 the administration attempted to meet the financial crisis. Efforts included plans to sell institute property,⁶² and the borrowing of money to keep the school open. For example, in June,⁶³ August,⁶⁴ and November, 1939,⁶⁵ loans were received in the amounts of \$4,000.00, \$2,500.00, \$5,000.00 and \$3,000.00 respectively. These loans were used to meet current expenses including the payroll.

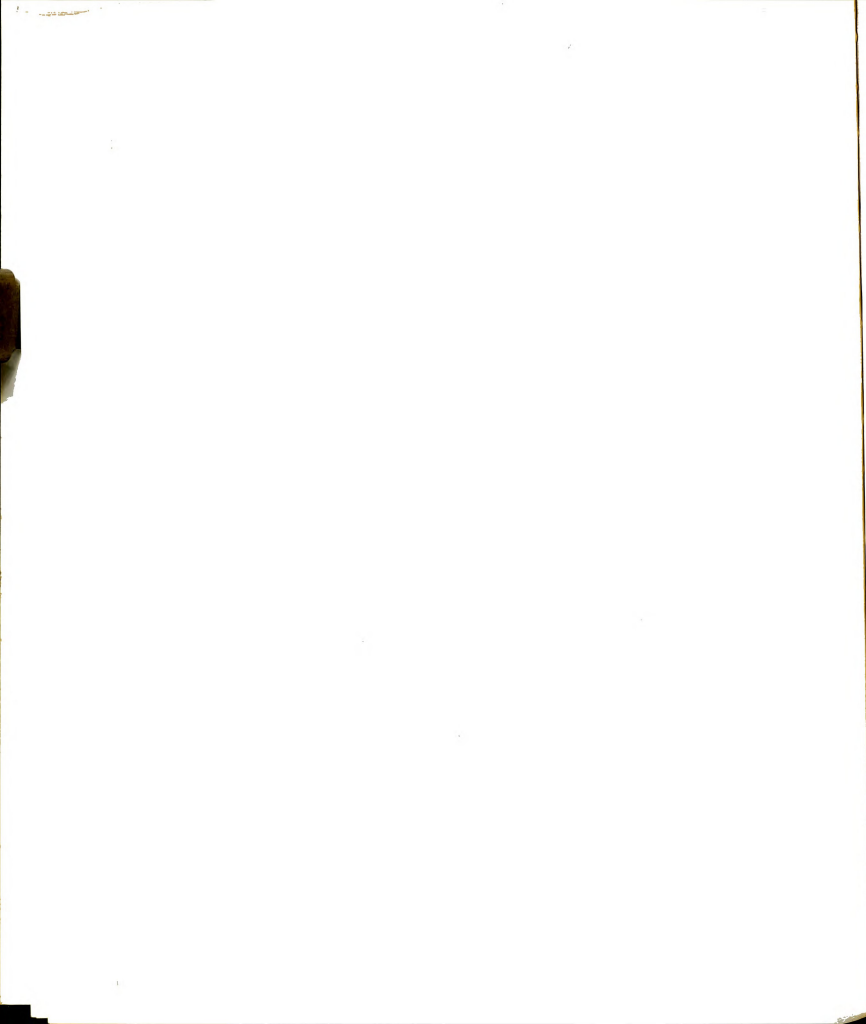
⁶¹Ferris Torch, IX, no. 2 (Sept. 27, 1938), p. 1. It was reported that approximately 200 men would be added to the thirty-five already working on the construction of the stadium. Ibid.

⁶²Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 146, April 24, 1939, President's office. Meanwhile, the trustees had voted to suspend the rules and elected Ray H. Waters, William F. Turner and Eugene A. Ward to succeed themselves as Trustees. Ibid., p. 140, Sept. 8, 1938. Frank Johnson, Nate S. Shapero, Frank J. Matchett, Louis Hull, and Archibald Broomfield were elected and declared members of the incorporating body of the school. Ibid., p. 39, Sept. 8, 1938.

⁶³Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 151, June 16, 1939, President's office.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 153, Aug. 10, 1939.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 161, Nov. 10, 1939. In September three new trustees were elected. Willis C. Judson, W. C. Taggart and Frank Johnson were the new officials.



In his annual report, Ward claimed a 20 per cent increase in enrollment, an expanded scholarship program,⁶⁶ and the development of a Carlisle Memorial Fund.⁶⁷ Through the Memorial Fund, loans would be available to students on the basis of their academic records and financial need. Initially, the maximum amount a student could borrow was full tuition for one year.⁶⁸ Contributions to the fund came from many sources including the Rackham Fund,⁶⁹ and the Big Rapids Chamber of Commerce. Smaller contributions were received from faculty and townspeople including \$140.25 from a faculty member who conducted a rummage sale.⁷⁰

An integral part of attempts to place the school on a stable financial foundation was the building of an

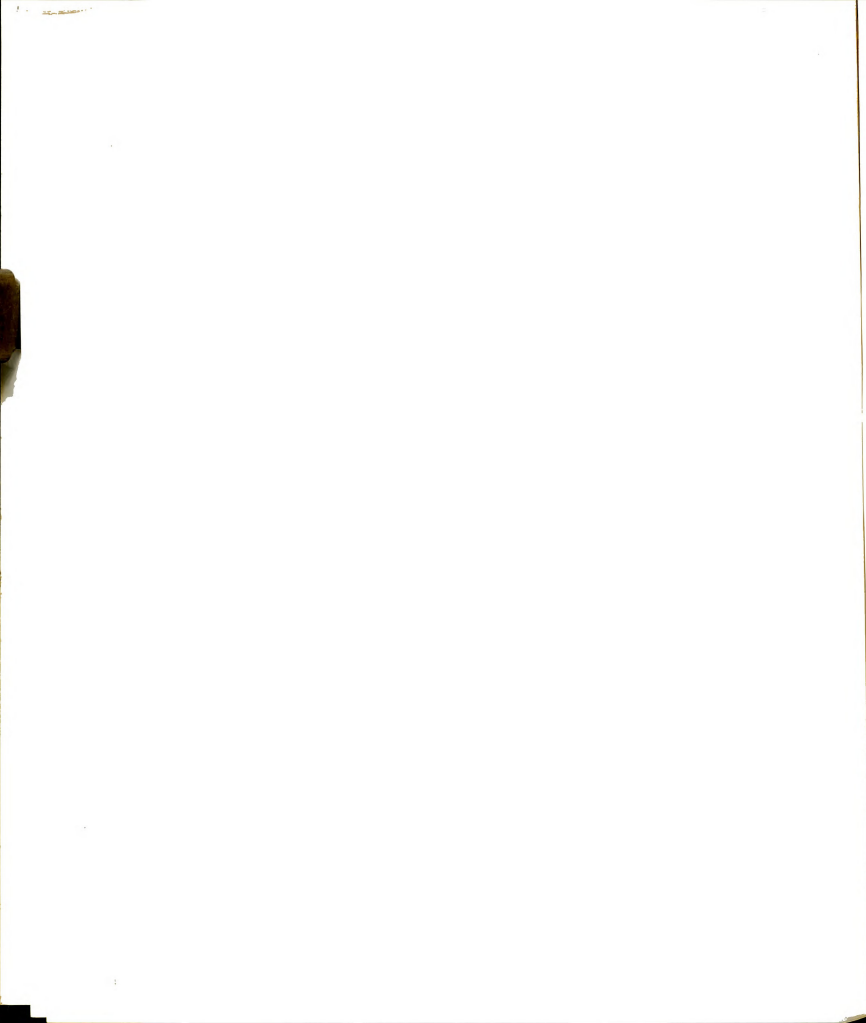
⁶⁶Ferris Torch, X, no. 2 (Sept. 26, 1939), p. 2. The scholarships available were a \$50.00 Ferris Institute, a \$100.00 Rotary Club, a \$50.00 Rural Teaching and a \$50.00 College Preparatory one.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ferris Torch, IX, no. 28 (April 25, 1939), p. 2.

⁶⁹The Horace and Mary Rackham Fund contributed \$10,000.00 on a matching basis. This contribution was contingent upon the school matching the \$10,000 Rackham offering by March 1, 1939. An intensive campaign was launched by the school and the \$10,000.00 amount was reached. Ferris Torch, X, no. 2 (Sept. 26, 1939), p. 2. An audit conducted in June, 1939 by Alfred S. Cramer showed more than \$20,000.00 in the Fund. The fund was then turned over to the board of trustees. Ibid.

⁷⁰School and Student Record, 1939, pp. 151-156.



endowment. Ward reported this as the major task of his administration.

In reality, this will be carrying on to completion the vision of Woodbridge N. Ferris and Gerrit Masselink back in 1927. At that time they planned a \$1,500,000.00 endowment, approximately one-half to be used for building. Only the one alumni building was completed. It is quite possible that large numbers of those who pledged on the endowment and were prevented by the depression from paying their pledges will be willing to do so now to carry out the plan of the founder of this institution - and guarantee a perpetual memorial for him.⁷¹

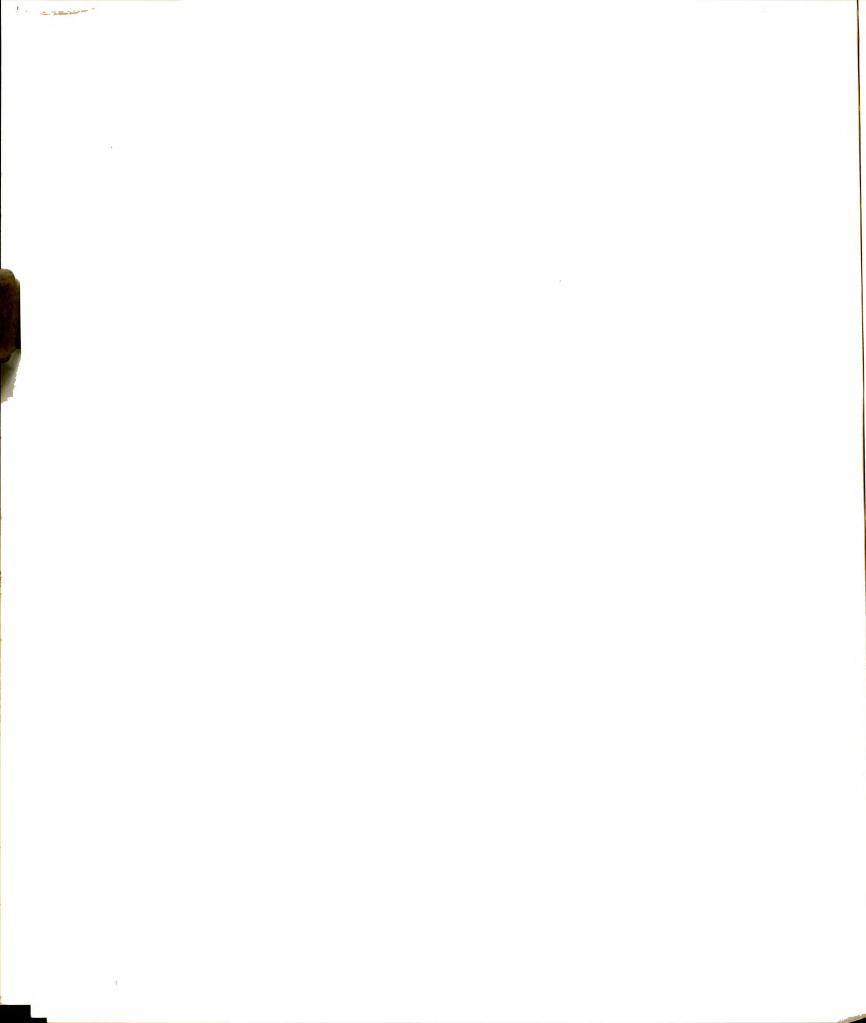
Unfortunately, these optimistic appraisals of the school's financial future were proven false in the spring of 1940. The paucity of funds necessitated loans totaling \$14,600.00,⁷² as well as a renewed determination to develop a plan for refunding the accumulated indebtedness.⁷³

The following September President Ward reported that the school's enrollment and gross receipts had risen steadily since 1936. In 1936 the total enrollment and receipts were reported at 200 students and \$50,000.00

⁷¹Ferris Torch, X, no. 2 (Sept. 26, 1939), p. 2.

⁷²Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 5, May 16, 1940, President's office. Also see official minutes, Ibid., p. 7, June 6, 1940; Ibid., p. 13, Aug. 9, 1940; Ibid., p. 27, Nov. 8, 1940.

⁷³Willis Judson, Eugene Ward, Edwin B. Young, Johnson and Gordon Yeo were selected as a committee to develop a plan for refunding the indebtedness. At this time Campbell was the chairman of the board, Ward was vice-chairman and Butler, secretary-treasurer. In September, 1940 Ray H. Waters and William C. Taggart resigned as Trustees. Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 15, Sept. 12, 1940, President's office.



respectively.⁷⁴ In successive years through 1940, enrollment steadily increased to 426 during fall term 1940, 458 winter term and 414 spring term.⁷⁵ Receipts were reported as \$72,000 in 1937, \$84,000.00 in 1938, \$93,000.00 in 1939, and \$101,000.00 in 1940.⁷⁶

These reported figures combined with Ward's attempts at raising an endowment indicated to some people that he was bringing the school out of financial disaster. Added credence for this view was a statement made by Ward in which he stated that:

At the last meeting of the Board of Trustees . . . , a campaign for a million dollars or more was authorized. We plan to carry on vigorously this campaign during the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of our pharmacy school and on to the sixtieth public anniversary of the founding of the institution in 1944.⁷⁷

Ward was praised by Louis Hull, president of the Ferris Institute State Alumni Association.

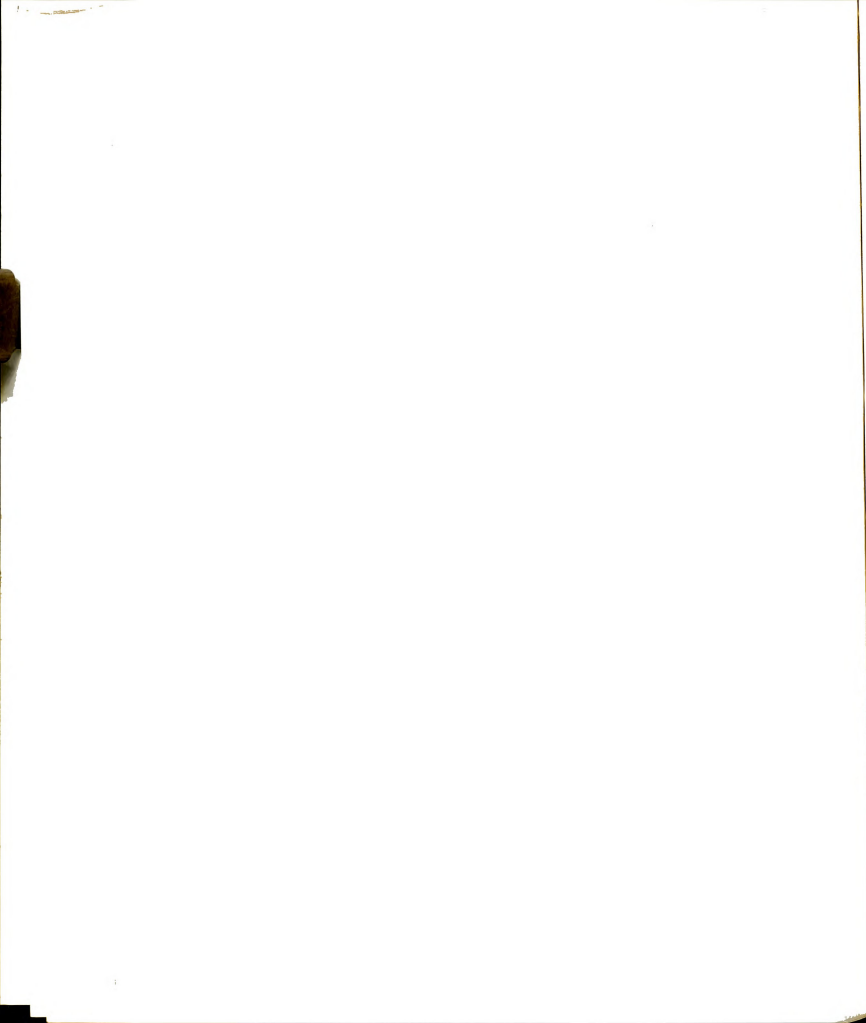
You have brought it [the school] from an un-accredited institution in pharmacy to one of the highest accredited institutions in pharmacy, and the other departments of the school have been reconditioned accordingly.

⁷⁴Annual Report of the President of Ferris Institute, Sept. 12, 1940; Folder FIFS, B3.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Letter, Merle S. Ward to John Jensen, Feb. 6, 1942; Folder FIFS, D3d7. Faculty members had already contributed \$3,500.00, one alumnus had pledged 5 per cent of the total amount raised in the next two years and another individual contributed \$10,000.00. The largest single pledge was that of \$50,000.00 over a five year period.



Buildings have been reconditioned, equipment purchased, a new library of several thousand volumes have been made possible, a student loan fund of over \$20,000.00 has been raised and put into actual operation.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, as a matter of course the winter of 1941 brought questions about the school's indebtedness. Indicative of problems were salary reductions and the usual loans. Apparently, the \$4,897.54 paid per month in salaries was overburdening. As one trustee reported:

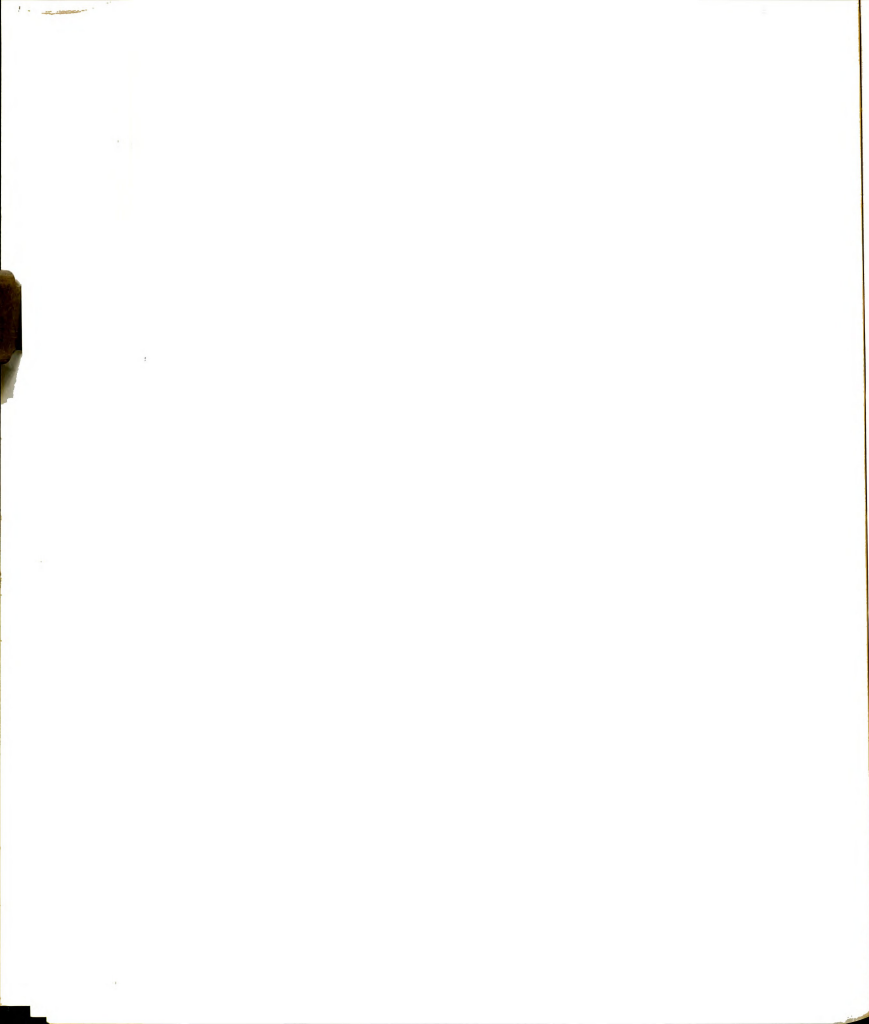
Whereas, due to Selective Service and economic conditions, the enrollment of the Ferris Institute, as well as other colleges has shown a decided decrease, which reduces the monthly receipts, Whereas, this Board realizes that this country is now facing an uncertain economic future, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the foregoing salary schedule be approved and adopted apyable monthly, subject to readjustment by this Board at any time a decrease in enrollment or other unavoidable cause should, . . . make such readjustment necessary, and that a copy be delivered to each of the members of the faculty.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Letter, Louis H. Hull to Merle S. Ward, Nov. 25, 1941; Folder FIFS, D3d7.

⁷⁹Ibid. The administrative salary schedule as listed on Sept. 20, 1941 was as follows: Listed on a monthly basis.

Merle S. Ward - President	461.54
Emmanuel M. Clark - Vice-President	210.00
A. H. Bauman - Business Manager	165.00
Grover C. Baker - Registrar	185.00
Odell Lamb- Ass't. to President	185.00
C. M. Mitchell - Librarian	185.00
C. V. Money - Athletic Director	185.00
Ellie Kivela - Secretary to President	90.00
Mary R. Ward - Dean of Women	140.00
Simon Benson - Dean of Pharmacy	250.00
Karl G. Merrill - Dean of Commerce	185.00
Marjorie Hunsinger - Dean of Education	185.00

Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 21, Sept. 20, 1940, President's office.



Loans for 1941 helped to maintain current expenses, especially payrolls. Ranging in amounts from \$1,500.00⁸⁰ to \$30,000.00⁸¹ these loans included a \$3,000.00 sum from the Carlisle Memorial Fund.⁸² Some of the loans were secured by pledging institute property as collateral.

The uncertainties and general tension related to financial problems led to administration and faculty confrontation. To investigate the situation a board meeting was held on January 17, 1941.⁸³ Eugene Ward removed all faculty members of the School of Pharmacy from the room except the person giving testimony. The testimony apparently verified rumors of discord and unrest among pharmacy faculty and students.

Specifically mentioned was Anton Hogstad who had been charged with certain abuses. Dean of Pharmacy Simon Benson reported that he had attempted to evade personality clashes, but was forced to act when students protested about departmental conditions. "He then read portions of certain letters from which it was indicated upon whom the blame could be blamed."⁸⁴ The board agreed that some action

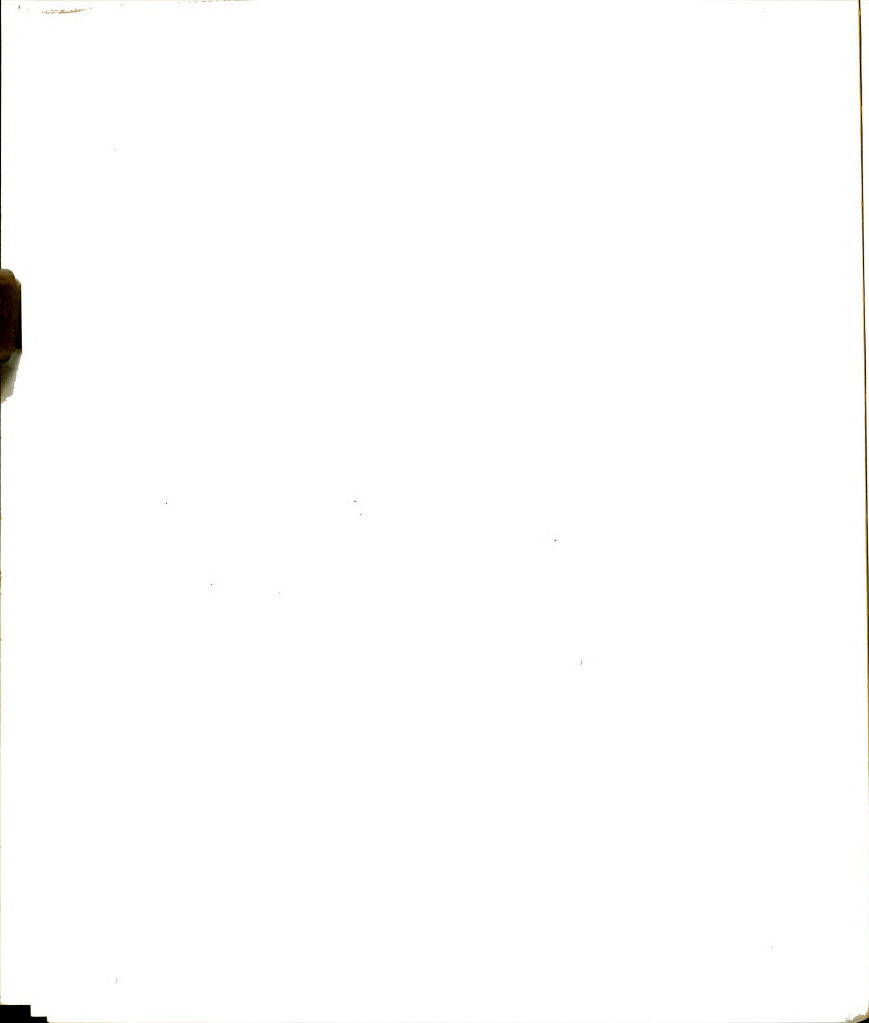
⁸⁰Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 51, June 13, 1941, President's office.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 77, Oct. 31, 1941.

⁸²Ibid., p. 59, July 18, 1941.

⁸³Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 33, Jan. 17, 1941, President's office.

⁸⁴Ibid.



was called for and suggested that Merle Ward wire a Jose Aponte of Puerto Rico and ask him if he desired employment at the school.⁸⁵ It seems that the board in consultation with the department had decided to release Mr. Hogstad.⁸⁶ This case also led to the dismissal of Dean Benson for unknown reasons and whose removal was incumbent upon a financial settlement for the balance of the year.⁸⁷

The Threat of Bankruptcy

Talk of bankruptcy permeated board meetings in 1942 and 1943.⁸⁸ To handle financial problems the trustees finally hired a business manager.⁸⁹ They also asked Charles E. Fairman and Wallace F. Henry to contact

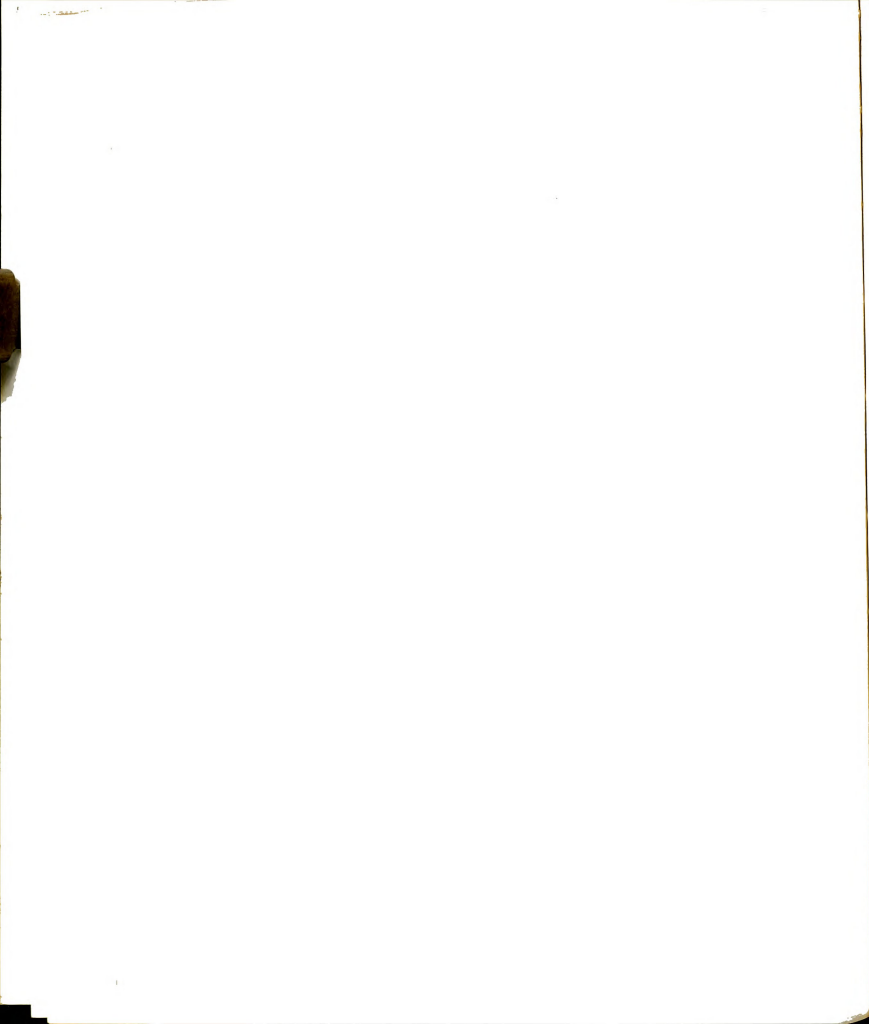
⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 37, March 24, 1941, President's office. In a conversation between Mr. Hogstad and President Ward, it was evident that a confrontation of severe proportions was developing.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 55, July 11, 1941. It was also suggested that the school appoint a Mr. Hopkins as Dean of Pharmacy at \$3,000.00 per year.

⁸⁸ Apparently, the Dow Chemical Company alleviated a small part of the problem by endowing \$18,000.00 to the Institute. Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 99, Jan. 9, 1942, President's office. Payrolls could not be met so a sufficient amount to meet these was borrowed from the endowment and put in the General Fund. The note was to be paid in full as soon as sufficient funds were available through the sale of bonds or tuition payments. Ibid.

⁸⁹ Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 101, Feb. 13, 1942, President's office.



the institute's creditors and attempt to settle accounts.⁹⁰

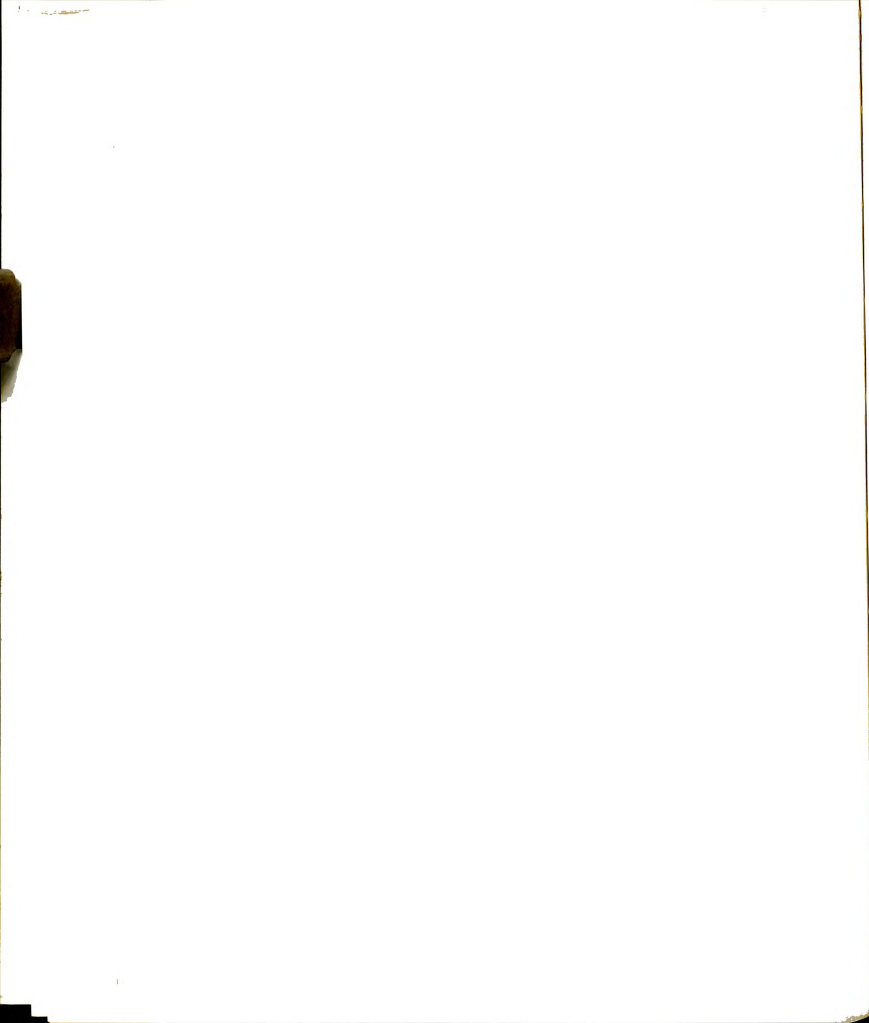
The gravity of the school's financial position was exposed in the following resolution presented by a trustee on February 13, 1942.

The undersigned members of the Finance Committee feel that there must be an immediate drastic re-organization in the affairs of Ferris Institute if the school is to survive. We believe that the general policy of the school be changed in this way. We should discontinue our efforts to become a four year cultural college and should instead place all emphasis upon the enlargement of our commercial and Pharmacy schools. Starting with the coming Spring term further economies must be put into effect. We reluctantly suggest to the Board as follows. The services of the Art and Science Director must be dispensed with. Expenses of the administration must be pared to the bone. If we are to have a President his work should be confined to the duties of administration within the school and to the teaching of two or more regular classes. We believe that field work directed toward securing an endowment will prove unprofitable during the emergency and that it will not pay us to spend time and money on such work at least until the war ends. No travelling expenses of any nature should be incurred without the express authority of the Board.⁹¹

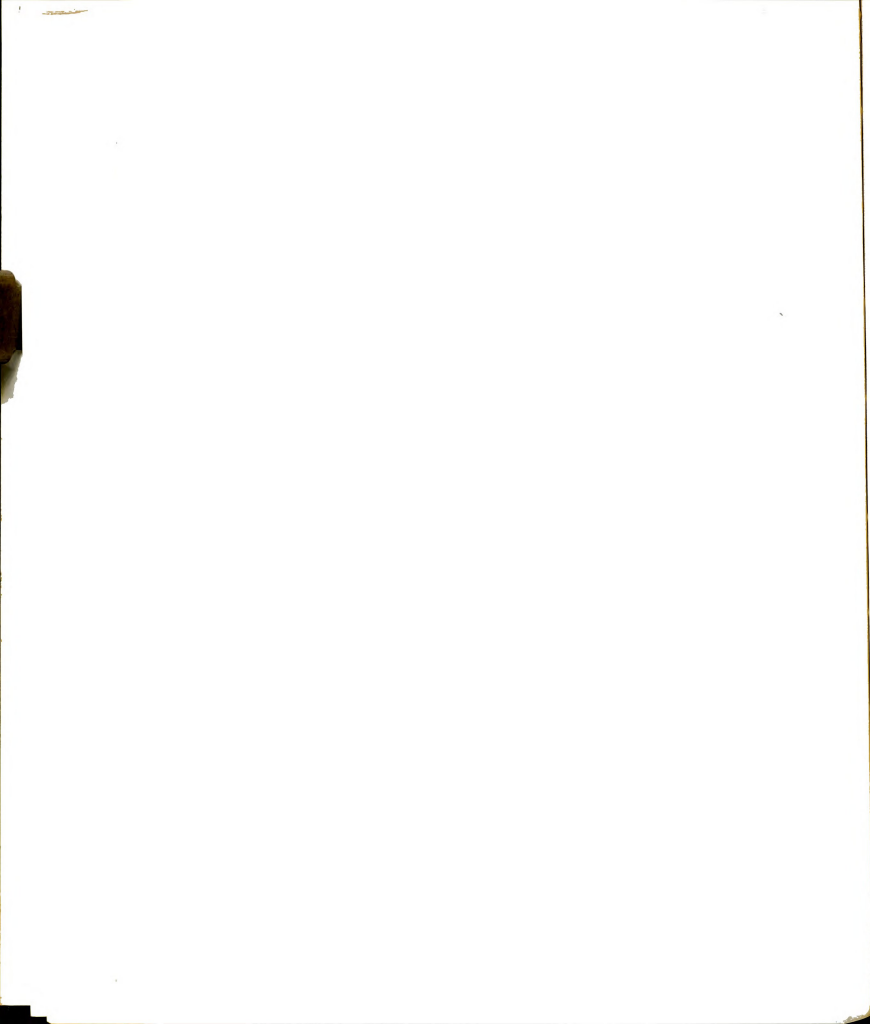
Other suggestions for the operation of the school came from a faculty member.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid. Apparently, Ward had taken a few leaves for public speaking purposes and had attempted to implement his cultural plans at the school. Willis Judson, Edwin Young and Charles Fairman signed this resolution. Staff reductions at this time included leaves of absence without pay. The Board agreed that four people be relieved of their duties at the end of winter term, 1942. Ibid.



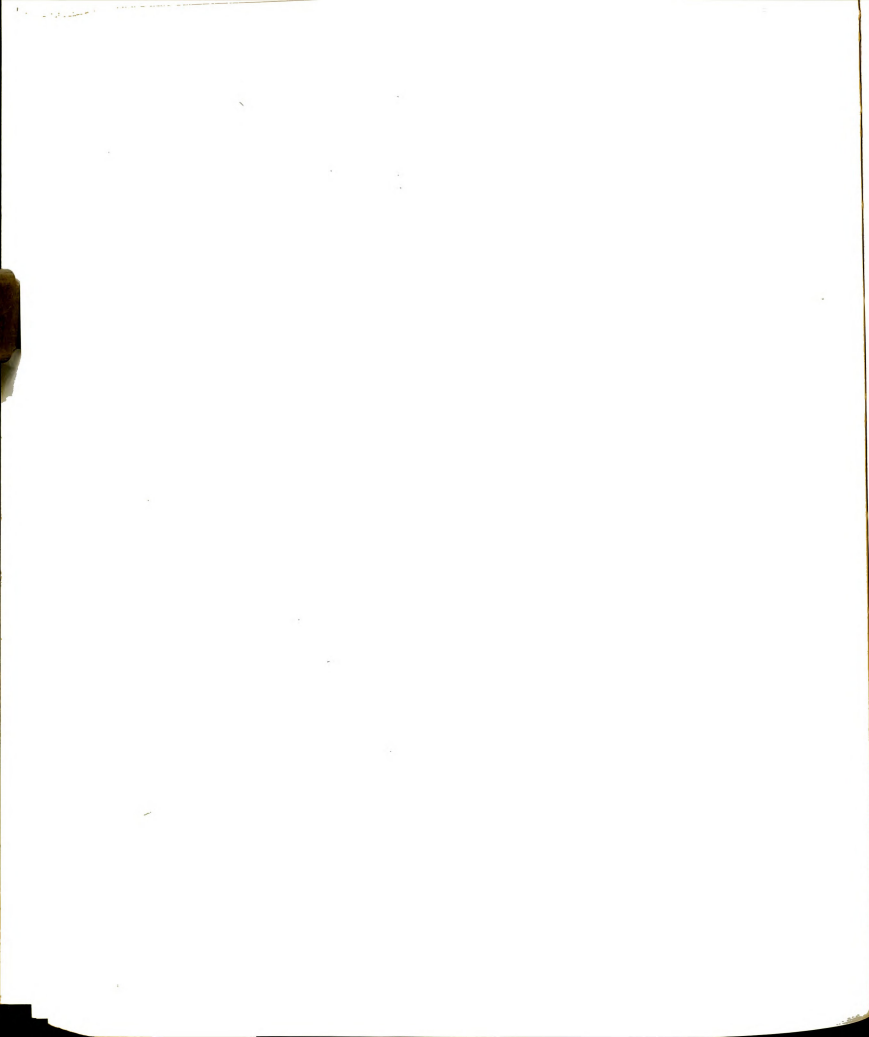
1. Cancel and discontinue all intercollegiate athletic contests for the duration of the war, but build up intra-mural athletics as far as possible without expenditure of money for equipment, etc.
2. Reduce the 76 page, illustrated catalog to 8 pages.
3. Reduce summer school catalog to 4 pages (from 8).
4. Use same red May Bulletin as last year (with a few modifications) but print it on light weight paper, and have only 3,000 copies printed instead of the usual 30,000.
5. For August Bulletin do a reprint of the May Bulletin and send out a token mailing--a few hundred, to keep our second-class mailing permit valid.
6. Discontinue all library purchases.
7. Discontinue all travel expense accounts for the President's office, and for all other staff members, except for the few instances cited later.
8. Make the Endowment Drive pay its own way as it goes--paper, stamps, printing bill, secretarial help, etc.
9. Cancel the proposed spring tour of the A Capella Choir for this spring and for the duration.
10. Get a reduction on the light rate from Consumers Power. Deal directly with Mr. Karn in Jackson.
11. Discontinue all night meetings in the buildings to conserve heat and light.
12. Get city of Big Rapids to donate the school's water bill for the duration.
13. Determine whether it is possible to get a reduction in gas rates.
14. Drop from the teaching staff at the end of the current (winter) term the following staff members:
 - Miss Hazel Holmgren (music & art)
 - Mr. C. V. Money (coach)
 - Mr. Donald Mathieson (pharmacy)
- Do not replace these staff members. Divide their work up among remaining members.
15. Give Librarian full teaching load for the duration.
16. If necessary, in order to offer enough conflict-free hours for classes with the reduced teaching staff, add another teaching hour to the day--from 4 to 4:50 pm.



17. If necessary in order to offer enough classes, have the newly appointed Business Manager (assuming he is an outside man and not a member of the staff as present) teach one class a day. Have President Ward teach one or two classes a day.
18. Figure out some way to reduce the cost of keeping the school's field representatives operating during the summer. Suggestions: a "flat rate" per diem for car and personal expenses, instead of the present rate; reduce the number of men in the field in summer; more careful arrangement of itinerary to avoid back-tracking over territory already covered.
19. Cancel proposed College Day at Ferris in the spring.
20. Cancel proposed invitational spring track meet for high schools.
21. Remove telephones from Business Office and Torch Office.
22. Keep Business Office open to students a maximum of 4 hours a day, thus leaving Business Manager free to do office work the remainder of the day.
23. Discontinue practice of sending representatives from Ferris to all the College Day programs which are held in high schools all over the state. Cover only a few of the biggest.
24. Cut down drastically cost of assemblies for 1942-43 and for duration.
25. Discontinue replacements and repairs of materials and equipment except where absolutely vital to continued minimum operation of plant and school. Conserve and protect all school properties.
26. Have College of Pharmacy voluntarily withdraw from the two associations in which it holds membership. Ditto for the three in which the Junior College holds membership.
27. Issue school paper, Ferris Torch, only every two weeks instead of once a week, as at present.⁹²

Formal explanation of financial plight of the school was given to students on Feb. 4, 1942. In an address, Ward stated that the faculty would be reduced and an

⁹²Newton Collection, Folder, 1941-1942.



austerity program initiated.⁹³ To emphasize the policy, Ward made the following analogy.

Look at your automobile dealers today--no cars to sell. They have to eliminate perhaps their whole staff. An automobile dealer told me the other night "I don't know where I will have any income next year." Every type of business, I imagine, is going to suffer losses. So long as the war continues people won't buy so much. Every businessman and head of a business is going to have to economize.

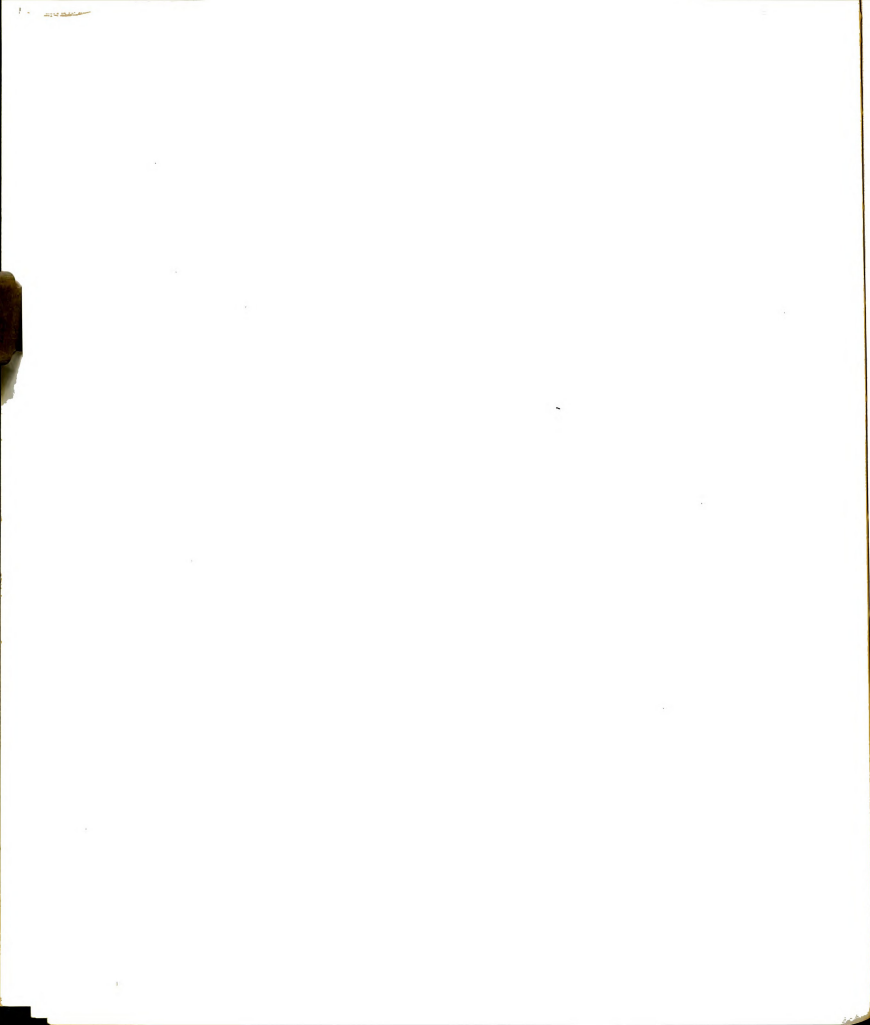
The world is a world war, and it is dislocating the life of every single individual and it is sending thousands of people into bankruptcy. Even you students, young as you are, it is having an effect on your lives, might change the whole tenor of your life. The war dominates, . . . all you can do is to meet the situation and do the best you can. That is what is being done.⁹⁴

This assembly announcement was followed by another on February 18, 1942 in which Alfred Cramer, a public accountant hired to assess the financial state of the school, gave a more detailed account of the situation. After briefly surveying the historic financial struggles of the institute, Cramer explained his views on the problem.

At the present time there is in the process of completion a program of refinancing, which will leave this Institution in the soundest position that it has ever been in since the formation of the present non-profit organization. Business men in this community and loyal alumni throughout

⁹³"Assembly Announcement," Newton Collection, Folder 1941-1942.

⁹⁴Ibid.



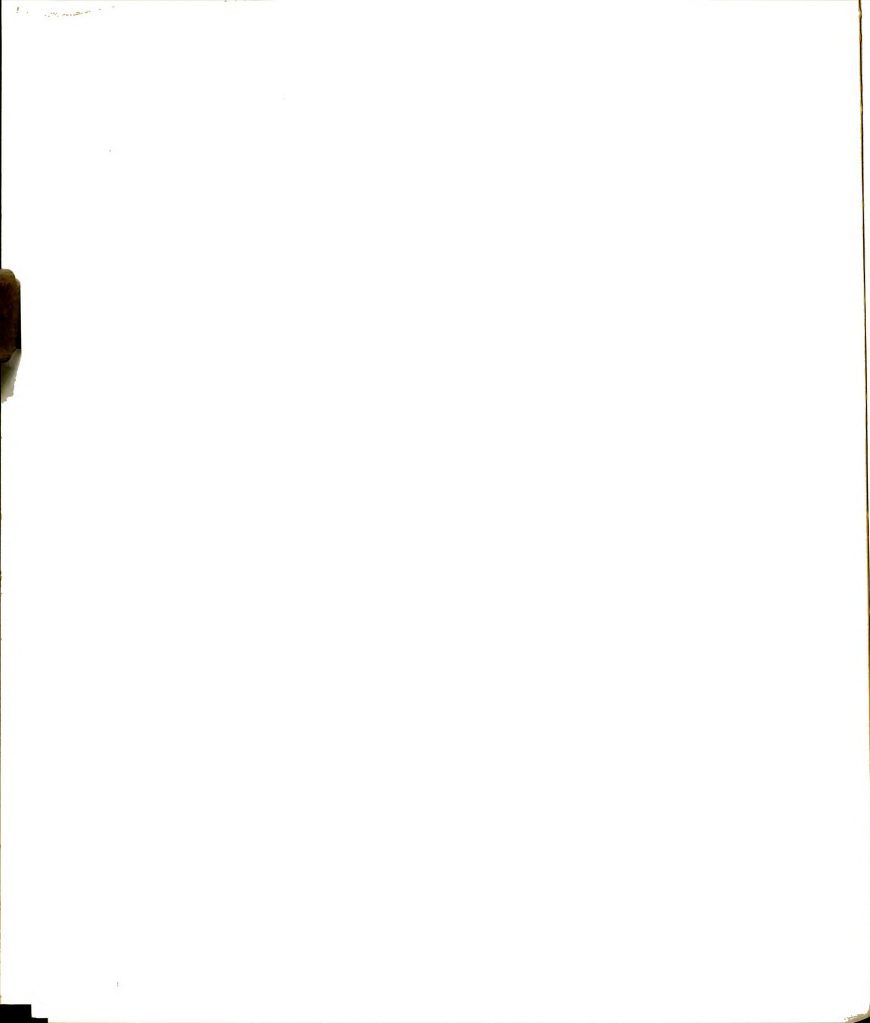
the state are putting into this Institution some of their own money. And it is folded money, the kind that counts. But they are determined that they will not have to do it again in six months. In other words, we will bail the boat dry and she is going to be kept dry. The Institution will apply to the old saying: "You can't pay out more than you take in."

At the beginning of a term its income is known. Its income being known, its expenditures can be kept within that income. It may be a problem of preserving essential minimums but upon those essential minimums the Institution can be build [sic] when the upswing comes. And you know this is a strange thing to say, but I believe the thing that is the weakness of Ferris Institute is going to be its strength in the near future: lack of state support or the backing of a denomination from a financial standpoint, because Ferris Institute, having to live within its income, must apply business principles to it now. The thing that may be our weakness now may be our strength.⁹⁵

Cramer then attempted to allay fears of students that the rising student-faculty ratio would be educationally indefensible by claiming that the ratio would be as good as that at the University of Kentucky. He also reported that the trustees had resolved to strengthen the pharmacy and commercial departments and to reduce the overhead costs of the school. Finally, he claimed that: ". . . , the Institution is going to continue to be refinanced, because we have preserved an essential nucleus from which expansion can come when all this wrath of the world is over."⁹⁶

⁹⁵Ibid. The weakness of which Cramer spoke was to remain a weakness forcing the board to seek state support or the school.

⁹⁶Ibid.



This relationship between financial problems and war was expressed in the Ferris Institute School Bulletin in November, 1943. An advertisement designed to solicit funds for the school, the article reviewed the establishment of an Emergency Reserve Fund of \$20,000.00.

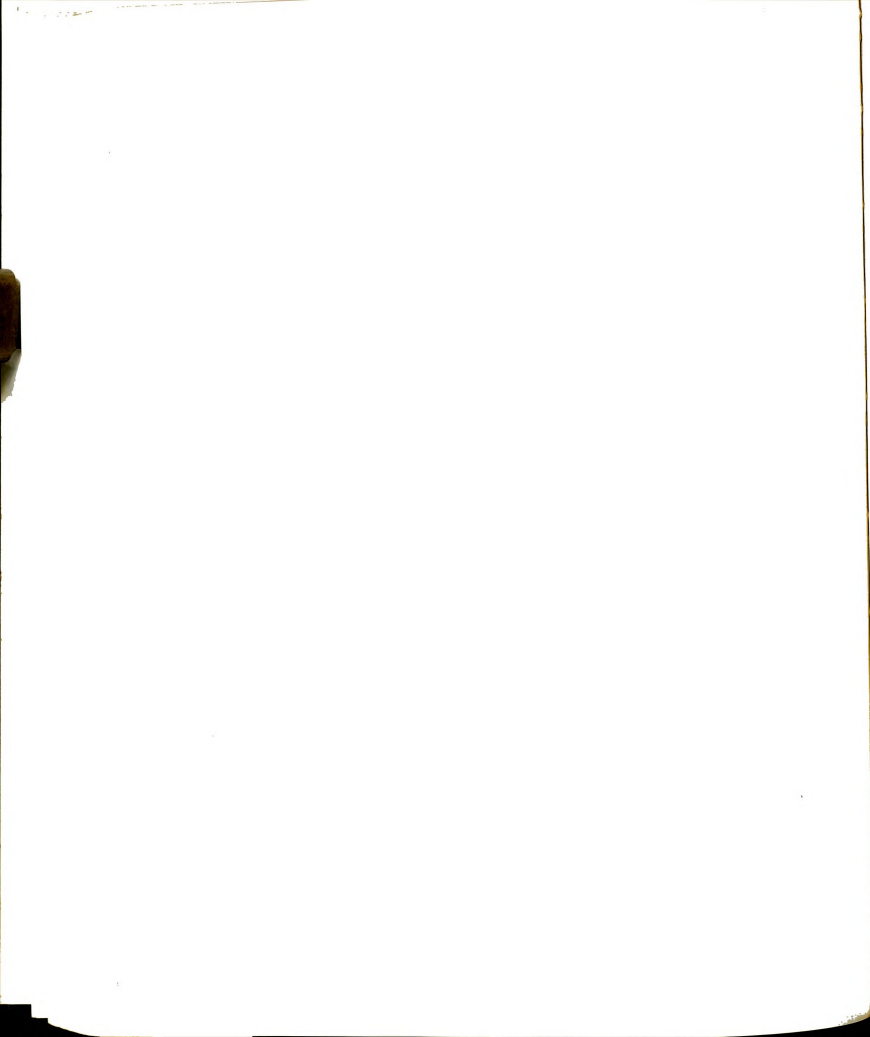
Big Rapids citizens and business firms, alumni, and friends of the institution throughout the state and neighbouring states have responded in an inspiring manner. Already the half-way mark has been reached in cash or pledges. Contributions have ranged from \$10 to \$3,000. More and more it seems certain that the goal will be reached within the near future. Perhaps you would like to be one of the group of sustaining members to the Emergency Reserve Fund.⁹⁷

Speaking to the student body in 1943 the administrators commented upon institutional adjustments to the war effort and reiterated its claim that Ferris Institute was not in a unique position.

In the total war that has now engulfed the world Ferris Institute has pledged its full co-operation with our government in its war effort, and has promised that its whole organization, men and women, facilities, and equipment, are at the government's disposal, as it may require them. Officials of Ferris Institute believe, with many other educators, that the war cannot be won without heavy costs to colleges and universities, and that colleges should be willing to pay those costs. They should fit themselves into the whole structure of this war; which is a war of the people. In that way they will find themselves by losing [sic] themselves in the war effort.

It is therefore believed that the best program a college student can follow now is to develop a rugged body and to acquire habits of clear thinking

⁹⁷ Ferris Institute School Bulletin, No., 1943, Newton
lection, Folder 1942-1943.



and analysis which fit him to absorb quickly and accurately the new knowledge which military or naval service requires.

To this end Ferris Institute has instituted a physical fitness program, modified its curricula, accelerated all courses, accepted war training units and established new potential courses designed to prepare young men and young women in the shortest possible time, for clerical, civil service, Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Air Corps, and civilian defense positions.⁹⁸

Adjustments were common in schools throughout the nation.

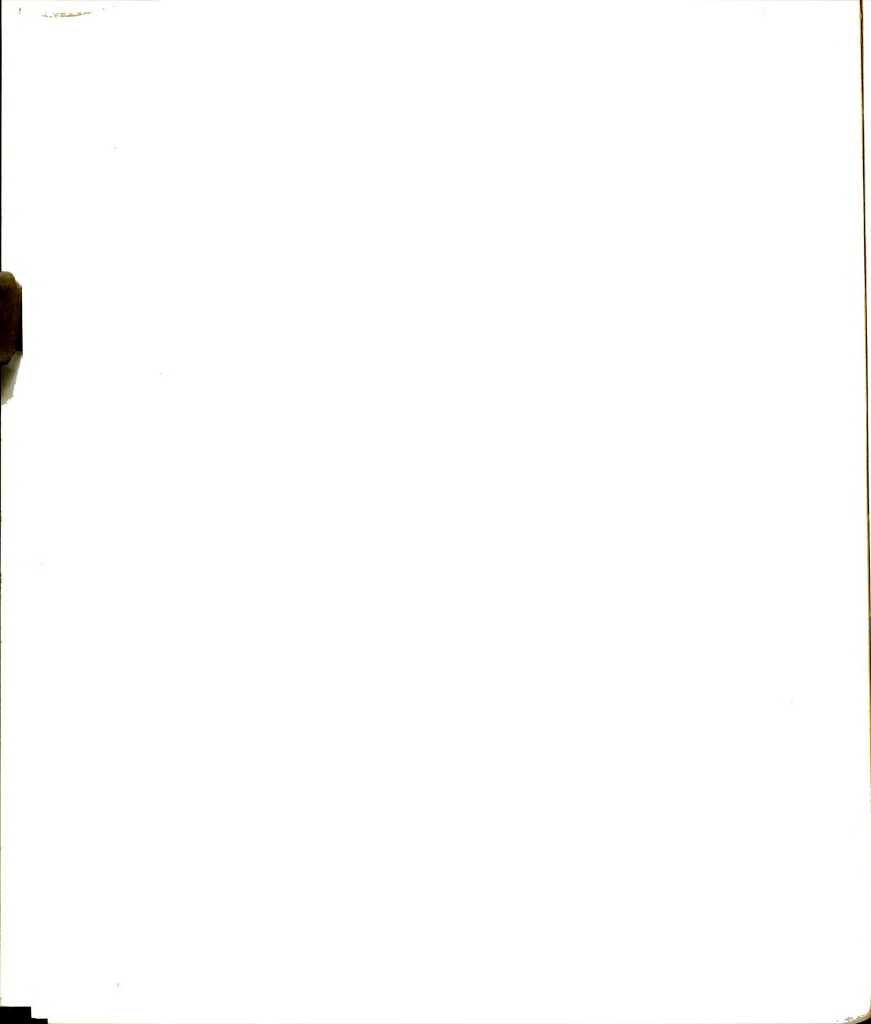
Michigan colleges offered special courses for military training units of the army, navy and air force. The University of Michigan offered engineering, science, and managerial courses; Michigan State College provided similar courses for about 10,000 trainees while Wayne University organized to aid wartime civilian projects.⁹⁹

On a smaller scale, the independent and church related colleges also contributed to civilian defense and postwar planning by offering war related programs.

At Ferris Institute war related rhetoric was supported by more concrete measures to meet the emergency situation. Loans were secured from the Citizens State Bank for \$4,000.00 and \$2,000.00 respectively, while at the same time tuition refunds were given to enrolled

⁹⁸Ferris Institute Catalog, 1943-1944, p. 3. In compliance with war conditions, athletic schedules were greatly reduced. Ibid., p. 6.

⁹⁹Willis F. Dunbar, The Michigan Record in Higher Education (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963), p. 333-334.



students inducted into the armed forces prior to the middle of a term.¹⁰⁰ Those inducted after mid-term received no refund but were given academic credit for those classes they were passing at the time of induction.¹⁰¹

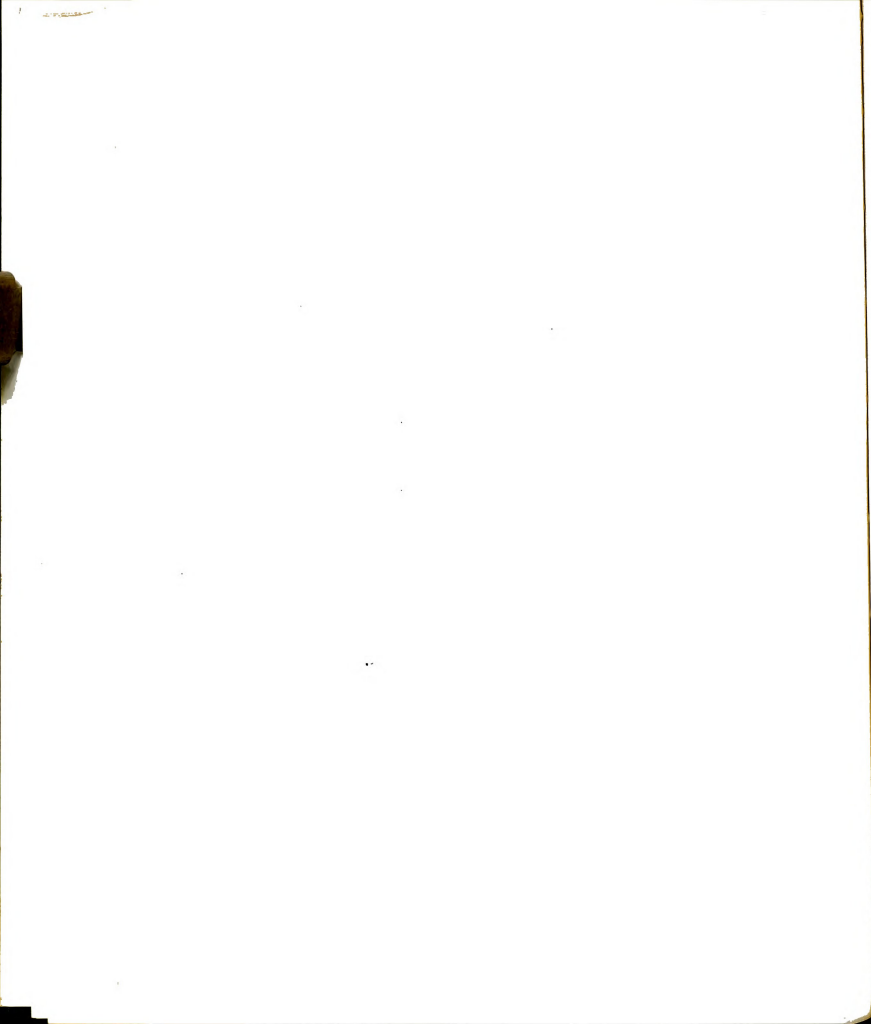
As fall term of the 1942-43 school year approached, thoughts of financial insolvency were prominent throughout the campus. Credence was given to those fears when one looked at the reduced budget of \$13,496.55 allowed for fall term.¹⁰² Fall term also brought a major change in the incorporating body and the Board of Trustees. Including one death which created a vacancy, there were six incorporators who resigned, allegedly to allow younger and more active men to assume the responsibilities of the institute.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 123, Aug. 14, 1942, President's office.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes (Typed note), 1942, President's office. The reported deficit for fall term was \$75.00. Of the \$13,496.55 budget, 7,663.75 was allotted for faculty salaries.

¹⁰³Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 27, Sept. 10, 1942, President's office. George F. Fairman, F. E. Hood, A. J. Longwell, Dr. D. MacIntyre retired, and Glenn Grieve died. New incorporators were Alfred Amer, Glenn Linten, John D. McClathery, John R. Buck, Harold Worcester, and Colon Smith. Ibid., New trustees were Willis Judson, George H. Yeo, Frank Johnson, and Charles Fairman. Ibid. New Trustee Officers were James Campbell - chairman, E. A. Ward - vice-chairman, J. Dyke - sec.-treasurer. The following summer plans were made to prepare a school budget for the next year. Tentative nine months budget of \$28,000.00 was set with



Rejection by the State

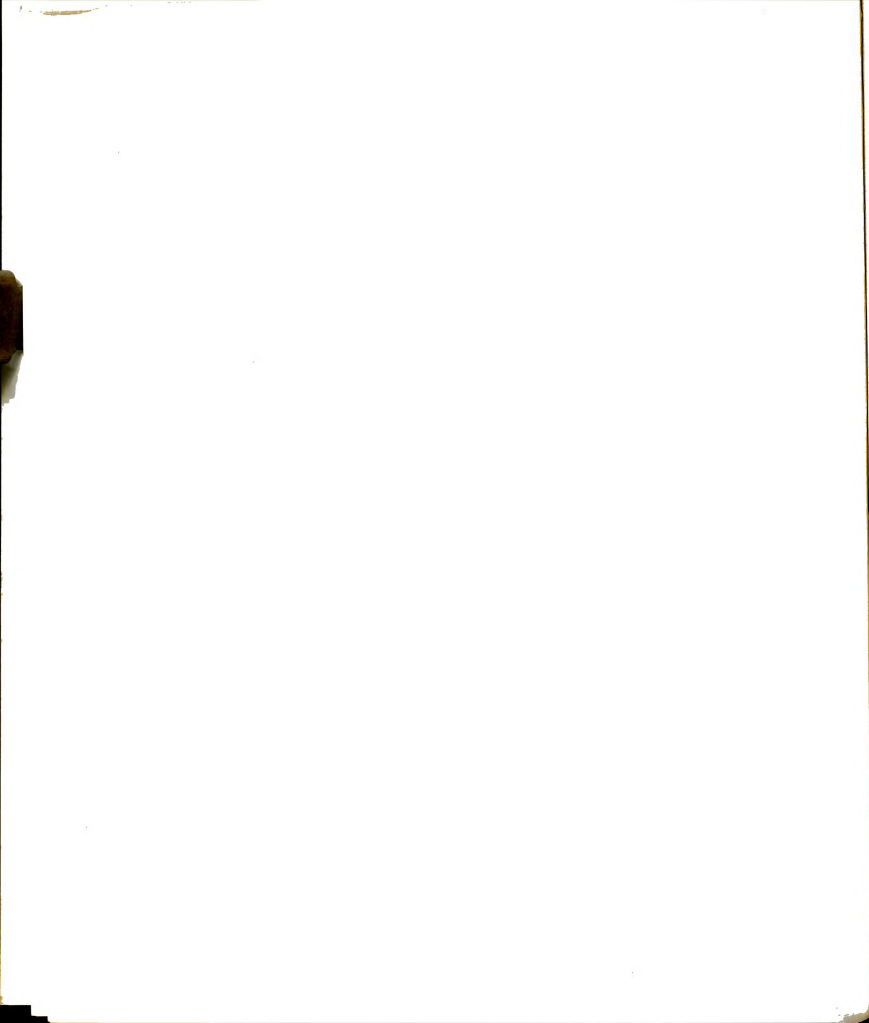
One attempt to solve the financial problems of Ferris Institute took the form of a petition submitted to the trustees asking for the purchase of the school. The petition asked for a meeting of the trustees to vote upon a resolution authorizing the sale of Ferris Institute to the state of Michigan for the purpose of establishing a vocational school.

Initiated in 1941 this effort manifested itself in 1943 when the state education department offered to purchase the school for the purpose of establishing a vocational and trade school. The trustees supported the proposal and claimed that it was in the best interests of the institution to have the state assume the financial obligations which plagued the school.¹⁰⁴ Eventually the legislature passed a bill making the school a state

the majority of it going for faculty salaries. Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 147, Aug. 7, 1943, President's office. Also see Board of Trustees Meeting. Official minutes, p. 47, May 14, 1941, President's office. This proposal was signed by thirteen persons including Charles Fairman, William F. Turner, W. C. Judson, and Edwin B. Young.

Apparently, some attempt was made to govern the financial transaction by keeping efficient records. In the summer of 1941, Mr. Kuyper, a CPA, was hired to audit the books and accounts of F.I. Ibid., p. 51, June 13, 1941. Mr. Kuyper was to release those books to the business department which in turn was to report to the finance committee. There is little evidence, except the records from the thirties to indicate how accurately records were kept.

¹⁰⁴Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 137, Feb. 5, 1943, President's office.



institution, however, the bill was vetoed by governor Harry F. Kelly:

. . . on the grounds that a need for this kind of a school had not been established, that the buildings were not adaptable to a vocational and trade type program such as was proposed, that there had been no study of the cost of converting and operating Ferris Institute on that kind of basis, and that there was no determination of the potential of students who would be served by such a program.¹⁰⁵

With this defeat the administration was forced to continue its struggling ways. Requests were made by the board to the office of Price Administration for food rationing checks while authorization was given to sell 25 per cent of the school's typewriters.¹⁰⁶

News of these austerity programs and strategies was abundant throughout the remainder of the school year. These efforts included the sale of bed springs¹⁰⁷ and a house owned by the school,¹⁰⁸ a \$2,125.97 loan to pay insurance premiums,¹⁰⁹ a \$2,100 withdrawal from the

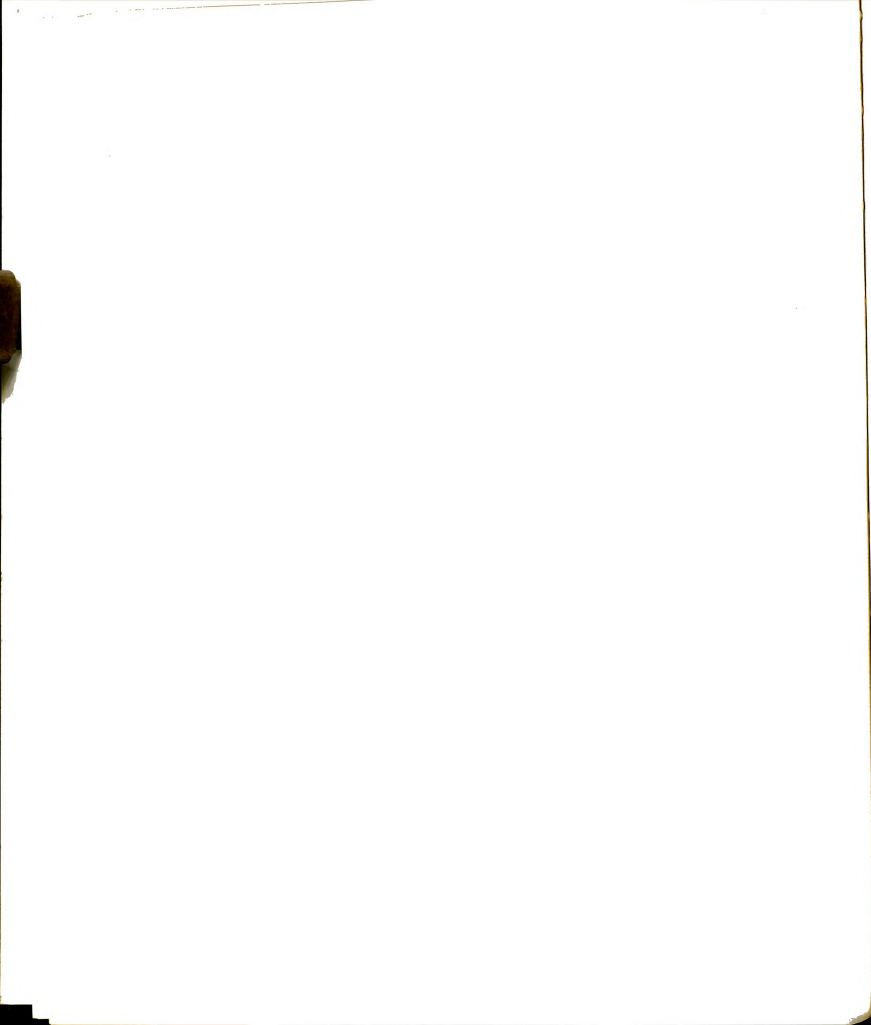
¹⁰⁵ Dunbar, Higher Education in Michigan, p. 343, citing president Victor F. Spathelf to author, Oct. 24, 1960.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 145, May 14, 1943.

¹⁰⁷ Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 151, Oct. 16, 1943. These bed springs were probably from student living quarters.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. This hours among others was vacant and not used in connection with the operation of the school. A Big Rapids couple offered \$3,750.00 for the real estate, and it was accepted.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 159, Jan. 15, 1944. The note was from the Big Rapids Savings Bank to be payable over a period of three years.



Endowment Fund,¹¹⁰ the sale of athletic equipment to Big Rapids High School,¹¹¹ and the temporary curtailment of school health service.¹¹²

Plans were also made for a canvassing project to acquire funds for the school.¹¹³ Part of this plan included the withdrawal of the endowment money from the Citizens State Bank.¹¹⁴ Donald Worcester, a member of the trustees until 1950 and chairman of the board, 1944-1950 presented the following resolution.

Whereas, due to the War and the consequent demand for large numbers of persons of the age usually served by F.I., . . . [industry, armed forces] beyond the control of the trustees. . . the enrollment has fallen off greatly.

Whereas the closing of the school even temporarily, would almost certainly have an adverse effect upon its future, and it now appears that the present emergency will not continue beyond the termination of the war in Europe, and may even be relaxed before then by the return of veterans in need of special training, or the release from industry of workers in specialized plants . . . , the Trustees deem it important to

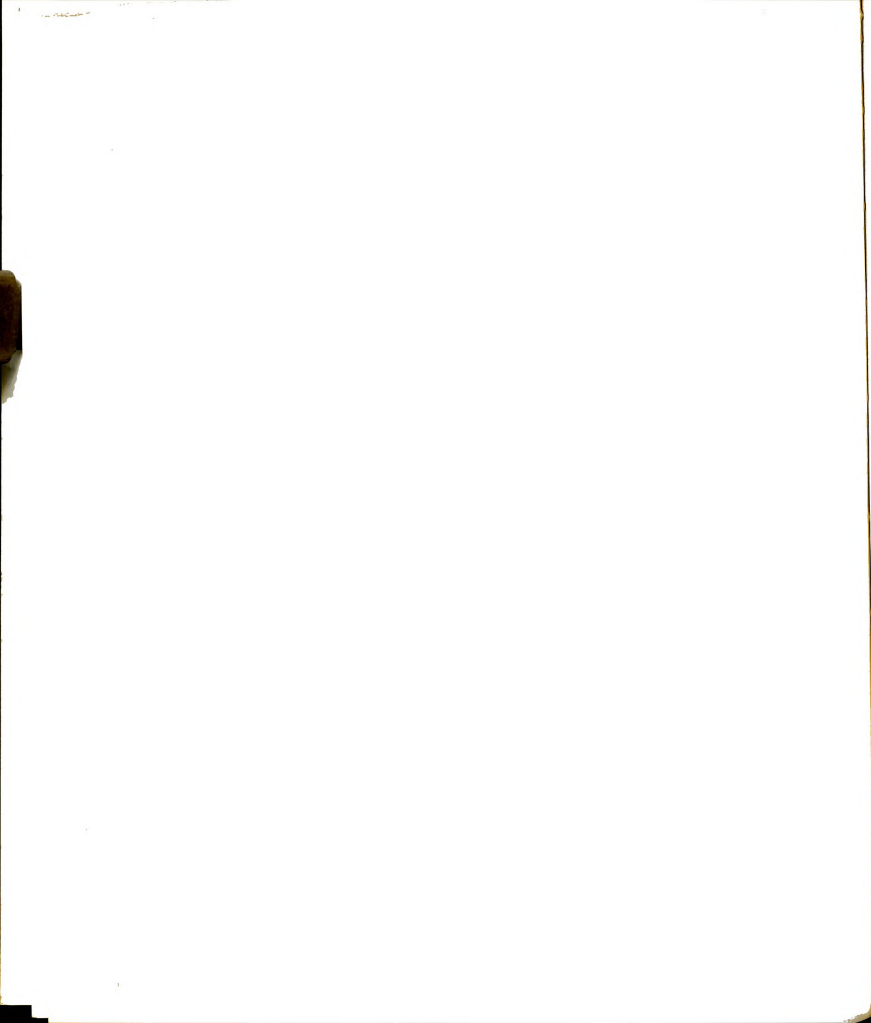
¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 165, Feb. 12, 1944.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 167, March 11, 1944. Football supplies sold for \$75.00 and bleachers for \$50.00. Ibid., p. 183, Oct. 21, 1944.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 175, July 15, 1944. The health service was reinstated as of an Aug. 14 board meeting, p. 177.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 173, June 10, 1944. It is reported by Mr. Roy Newton that Charles Fairman and others literally "passed the hat" up and down Michigan avenue. Newton also reported that Mrs. Merle S. Ward made fudge and sold that to meet payrolls.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 161, Feb. 12, 1944.



continue operating the school as long as feasible. . . . With regret and trepidation they request that all available funds of the corporation be used to cope with the emergency. . . .¹¹⁵

With these successful calls for courage and determination the school survived the year and managed to graduate thirty-two students.¹¹⁶ Those present at this sixtieth annual commencement witnessed the presentation of a number of honorary degrees, including Doctor of Laws degrees to Karl G. Merrill, Dean of Commerce and Education and Vice-President of the Institute, Mr. Nate S. Shapero, former student and now president of the Cunningham Drug Stores of Detroit, and William C. Taggart, long time athletic promoter at the school.¹¹⁷

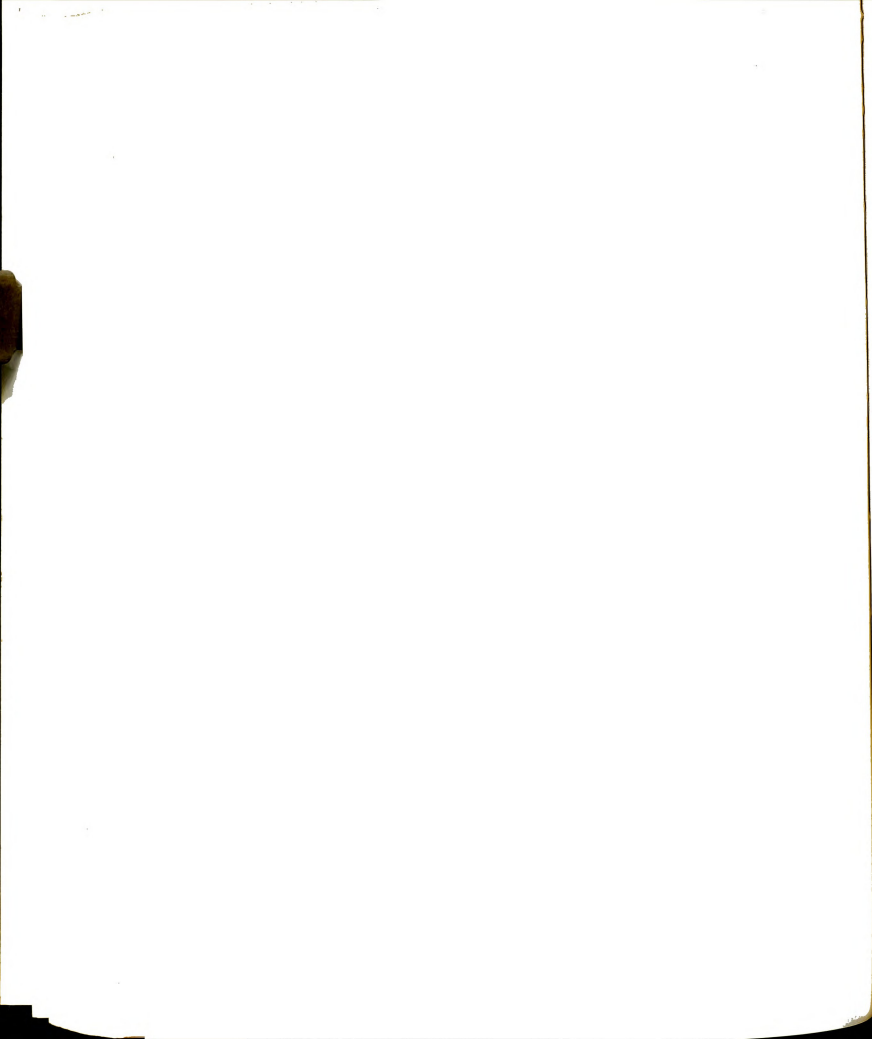
Courage and determination were the order of the day in most Michigan colleges as decreased enrollment and reduced finances created problems. Hindered by these problems; ". . . attendance at Michigan's colleges and universities dropped from around 60,000 in 1939-1940 to about 40,000 in 1943-1944."¹¹⁸ Despite financial aid from the state many colleges curtailed their regular programs while

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Commencement Program 1944; Folder FIFS, E31.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Dunbar, Higher Education in Michigan, p. 327.



church related and independent schools relied upon tax exempt gifts from individuals and corporate donors.¹¹⁹

In the 1944-45 school year at Ferris Institute a new pharmacy dean was hired,¹²⁰ the student hospitalization fee increased,¹²¹ tuition raised to \$65.00 per term,¹²² a search made for ways to secure any government surplus property from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation,¹²³ and newspaper advertising renewed.¹²⁴

As fall term of the following year (1946) began it appeared that the worst was over. With financial aid from the Federal government and an influx of veterans to boost the enrollment the school appeared to face a brighter future. For example, new teachers were hired to teach drafting and watch repair, history and English, radio and refrigeration. Administrative changes included the acquisition of business and personnel managers.¹²⁵ Other signs

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 329.

¹²⁰Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, (note), Oct. 21, 1944, President's office. Ralph Wilson was the new Dean.

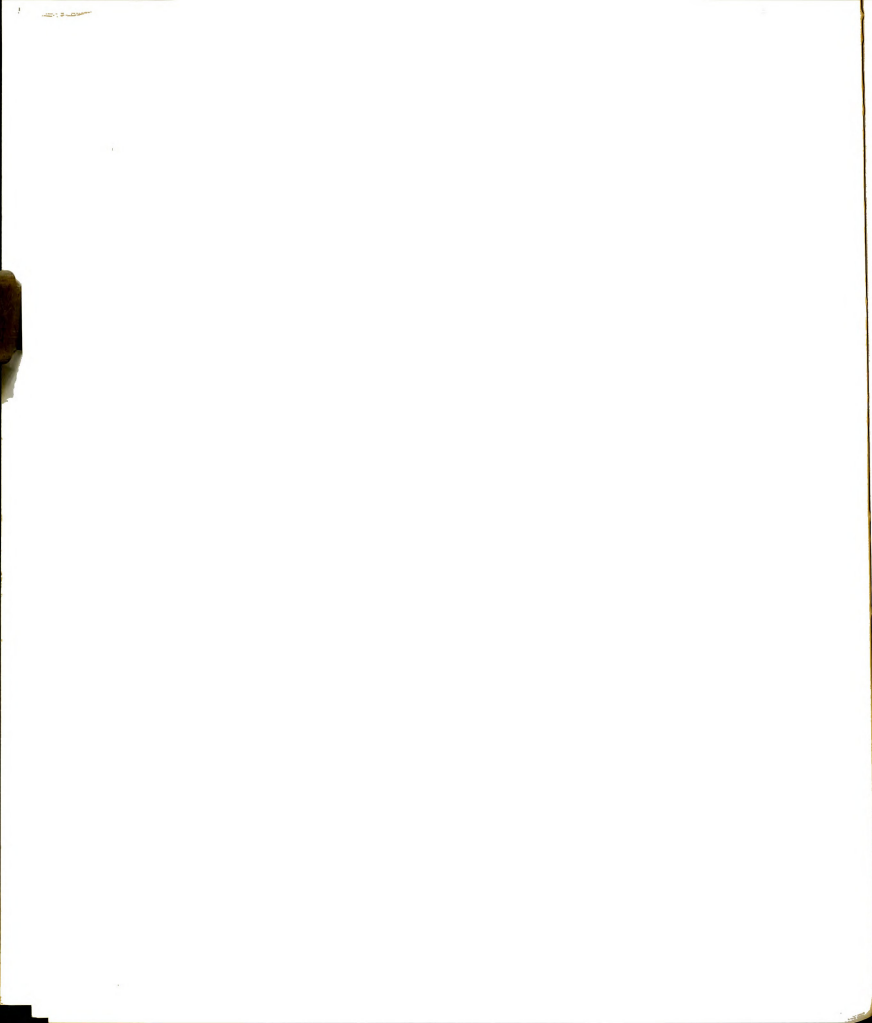
¹²¹Ibid., p. 193, Feb. 10, 1945. Raised to \$2.00.

¹²²Ibid. The student received a 5 per cent discount if he paid in advance.

¹²³Ibid., p. 203, July 21, 1945.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 205, Aug. 18, 1945.

¹²⁵Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, n.p., Sept. 15, 1945. Also see p. 315, Feb. 11, 1946, President's office.



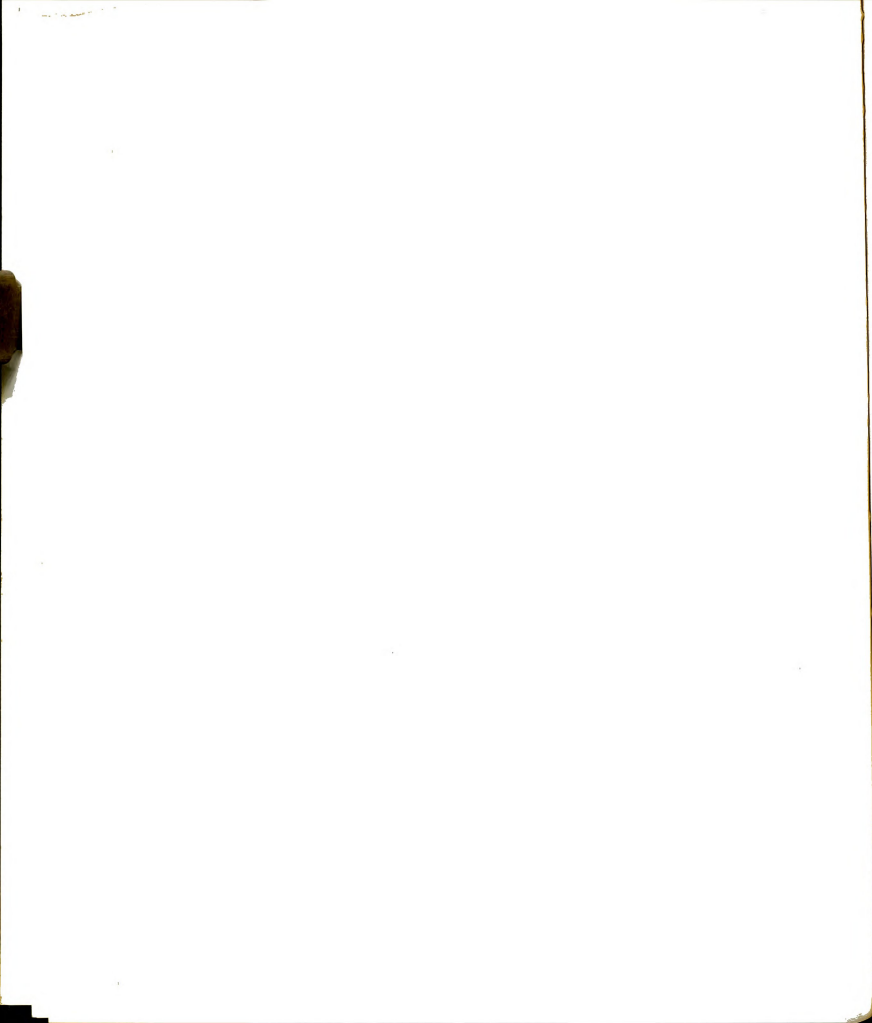
of a brighter picture were the \$100.00 per month set aside for a building fund, a new lunch counter, tuition¹²⁶ and salary increases.¹²⁷

Of key significance to the school's future was the resignation of Merle S. Ward as president.¹²⁸ He had served as the chief administrative officer for ten years, most of which were immersed in financial problems. During his service at the school money was scarce, students were few and morale was deflated. His staff had felt the anguish of selling bedsprings, of seeing the President's wife making fudge, of a series of loans, all designed to prevent a fatal bankruptcy which would terminate the school as a keeper of educational opportunity.

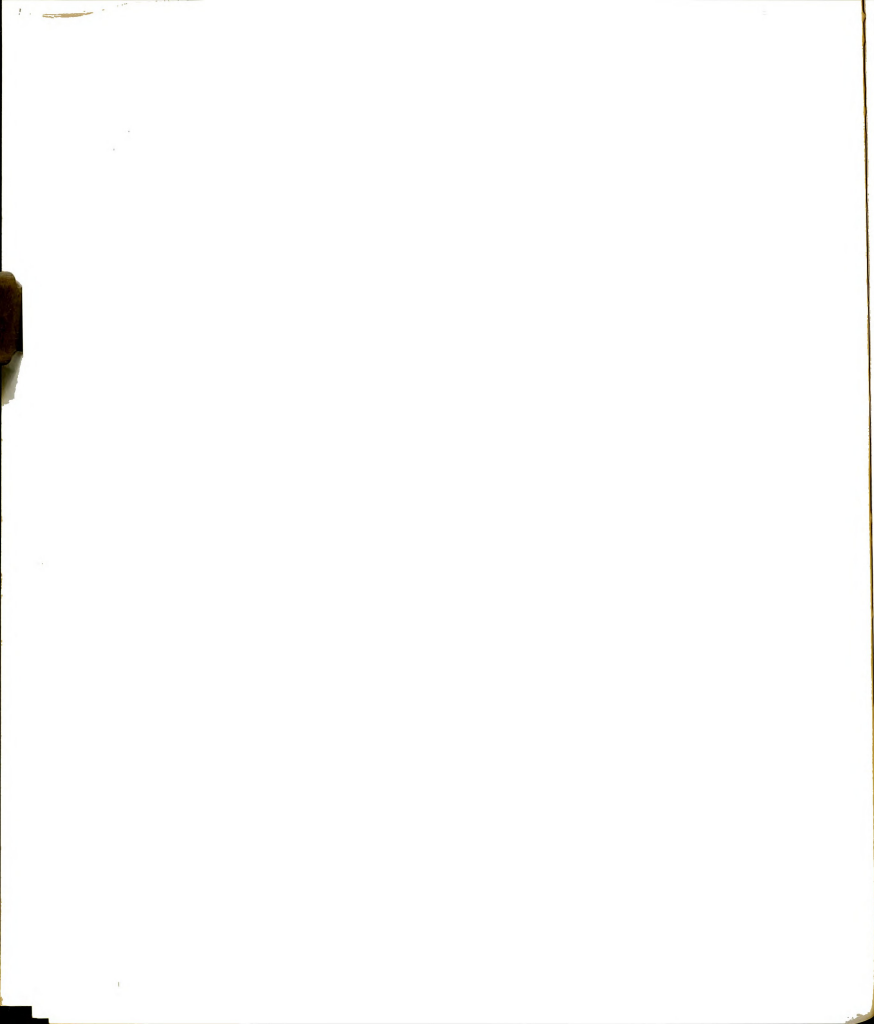
¹²⁶ Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 297, Sept. 13, 1945, President's office. Also see p. 315, Feb. 11, 1946.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 323, April 13, 1946. During the winter of 1946 a group of Mennonites had offered \$50,000.00 for Ferris Institute. The proposal was rejected because they failed to show the financial ability to purchase and operate the school. The purchase price had to cover all outstanding debts in full while the whole plan of operation had to be acceptable to the State Board of Education. Board of Trustees Meeting, Official Minutes, p. 309, Jan. 24, 1946. President's office. Also see Board Minutes, p. 315, Feb. 18, 1946.

¹²⁸ Ibid. Donald Worcester read a letter from Ward indicating that he wished to resign and asking for a refund of his \$750.00 contribution toward the Endowment Fund. Ibid. He also requested two weeks salary and vacation pay over and above the regular salary effective July 1, 1946. The trustees informed him that his request for additional wages was denied. Ibid., p. 327, June 21, 1946. Byron J. Brophy succeeded Ward as president at the beginning of summer term 1946.



With his resignation an era had ended. It included not only the ten years of his administration, but encompassed the history of the school. Beginning with its founding in 1884 and continuing through 1946, the school had lived a precarious existence, flirting with financial death, yet doggedly remaining alive. The school was alive as World War II ended, and it seemed as though it might seek life more abundantly in the years ahead.



CHAPTER VI

THE END OF THE PRIVATE SCHOOL ERA 1946-1952

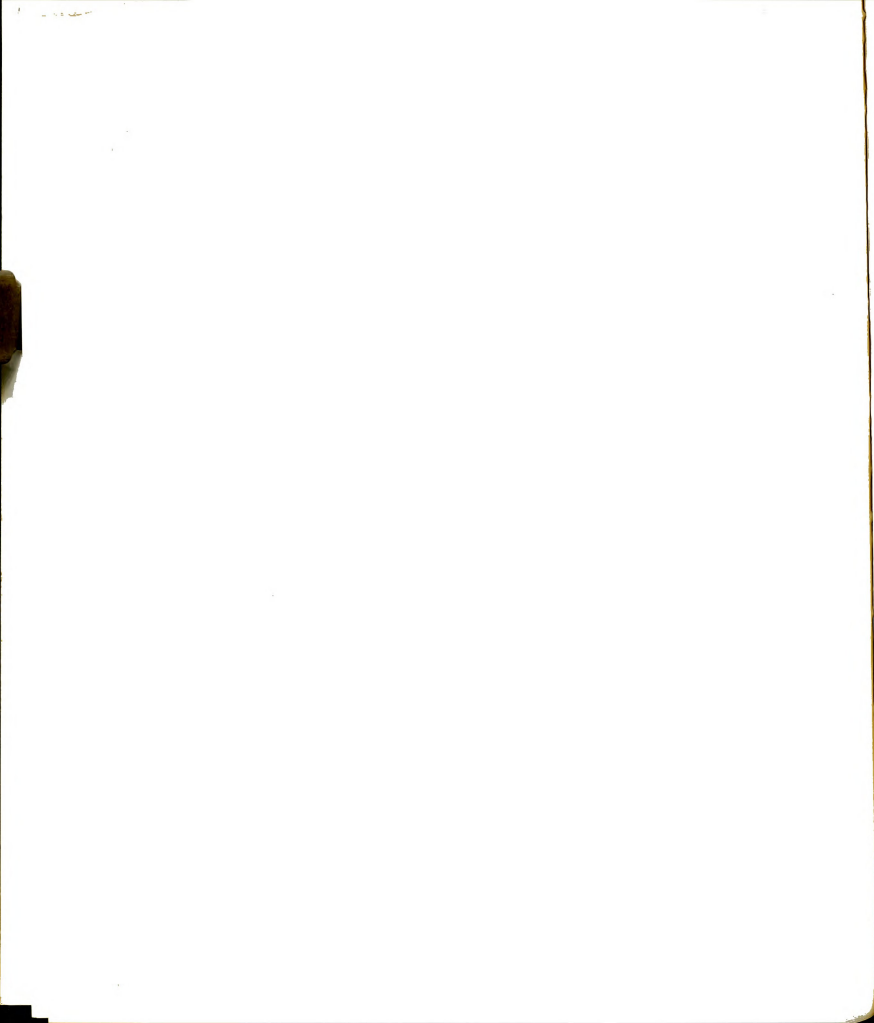
Post War Expansion

World War II was over and a new era in American history had begun. The exhilaration of it touched the lives of almost everyone.

The sense of wonderful possibilities ahead kept breaking into every part of living. In the year when man mastered the atom, a good many people did not smile at the feature-page stories which predicted that the average American would soon work twenty-five hours a week, return to a dinner cooked by the flick of a single button, educate his children through the finest authorities televised into a sun-heated living room, and take his vacation a continent away. In a period when medical research had just produced the yellow magic of penicillin only to have it promptly topped by streptomycin, it did not seem utopian to talk of conquering tuberculosis, infantile paralysis, even cancer.¹

The end of war meant a return of veterans, who with the aid of the G.I. Bill of Rights, streamed into colleges and universities throughout America. Recognition of this phenomenal growth in enrollment was made by The President's Commission on Higher Education for Democracy in 1947. The Commission reported that enrollment in institutions of higher education had increased from 250,000 in 1900 to

¹Eric F. Goldman, The Crucial Decade-and After-American, 1945-1960 (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. 13.



2,354,000 in 1947. Of these over two million students one million were veterans.²

Michigan colleges were affected by the immediate post war enrollment expansion. The University of Michigan enrolled almost 23,000 students in the fall of 1949, Michigan State College enrollment rose from 7,116 in 1940-41 to 16,253 in 1949-50, Wayne University attracted 28,804 students in 1949-50, while smaller institutions like the Michigan College of Mining and Technology and Calvin College also experienced population growth.³

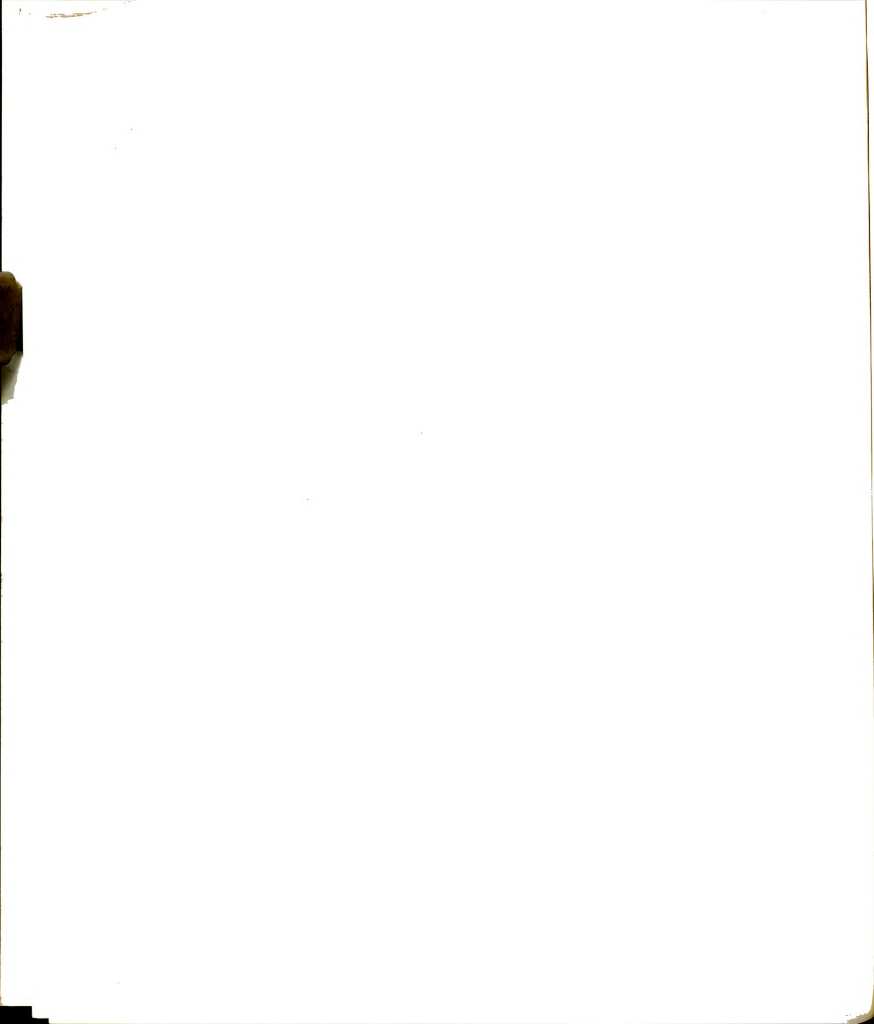
The influx of veterans was also experienced at Ferris Institute where 82 per cent of the 852 students enrolled fall term of 1946 were veterans. With veterans dominating the campus scene programs and activities were changed and altered to meet their needs. For example, a veterans counseling service was organized for those desiring to learn about educational opportunities under the Rehabilitation Training Act [Public Law 16], or the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of Congress [Public Law 346].⁴

The school catalog advertised the veterans program as a pre-college endeavor, organized and approved:

²Richard Hofstadter and Wilson Smith, eds., American Higher Education: A Documentary History, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 976.

³Willis F. Dunbar, The Michigan Record in Higher Education (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963), pp. 337-343.

⁴Ferris Institute Catalog, 1946-1947, p. 13.



. . . under which veterans with elementary or high school deficiencies may take vocational, aptitude, and achievement tests upon entrance, [and] be awarded credit where shown proficient, [and] be permitted to proceed at their own speed, and be granted the high school diploma after mastery of work equivalent to a standard recognized high school course.⁵

These signs of new life at the school included the selection of a new president. In the fall of 1946, the trustees formulated guidelines for the duties of the new Ferris Institute president. He was to furnish professional leadership, direct and coordinate all activities at the institute, and present a quarterly budget for board approval.⁶ His major responsibility:

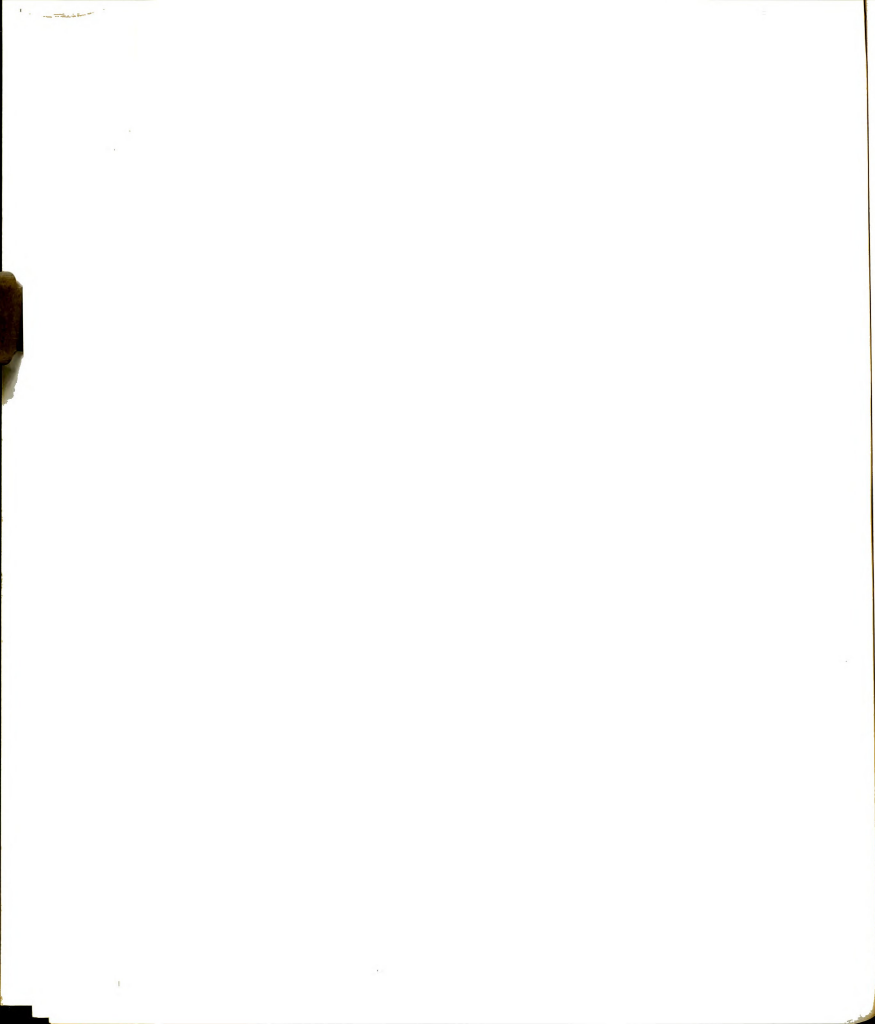
. . . is efficient administration and management of the operations of F.I. and not speech making or other remotely related activities which frequently consume the energies and reduce the efficiency of the school administration in order to increase the prestige or income of the administrator.⁷

Considered equal to the task was Byron J. Brophy who led the school in its attempts to gain financial and

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 331, Sept. 7, 1946, President's office.

⁷ Ibid. It is possible that these remarks resulted from experiences with Merle S. Ward who advertised his services as a public speaker and participated in activities which could be considered indirectly if not remotely connected with the administration of Ferris Institute.



administrative stability.⁸ Also indicative of the new look and attempts at revival was the rebirth of the Ferris Torch which had been out of circulation between 1940 and 1946. The editors reported that: "The revival of the Torch is a challenge to the unorganized student body of Ferris Institute to take an active part in the building of a new and healthy school spirit."⁹

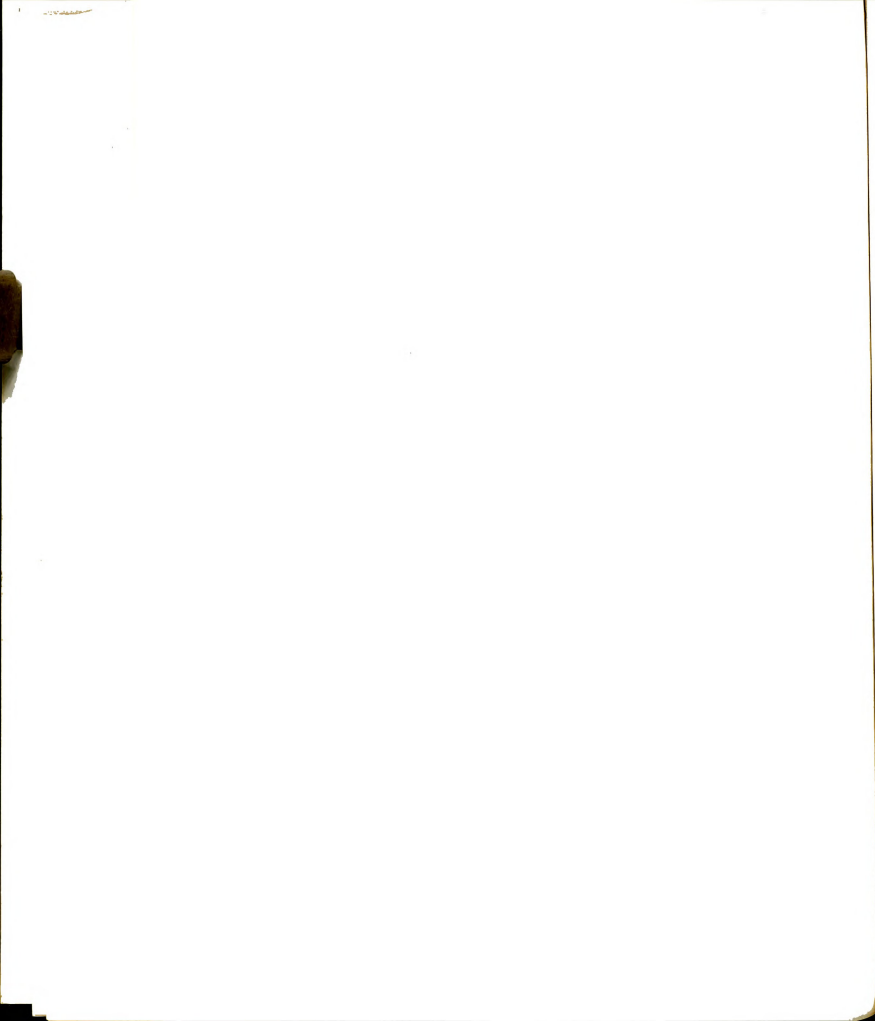
Shortly after Brophy assumed the presidency a survey was conducted to determine the housing needs of faculty and students. The findings showed a lack of housing, and subsequent inquiry led to a proposal whereby an organization of local citizens would provide enough capital to make a down payment on two to five houses. These would be rented to Ferris faculty whose rent payments would be used to repay the loan to local citizens.¹⁰ Another loan of \$30,000.00 was authorized to meet expenses, with the accounts receivable from the United States government to act as security.¹¹

⁸Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 329, June 26, 1946, President's office. One of Brophy's first actions was to purchase a home from the school with the institute paying the balance remaining after \$8,000.00 and interest had been paid by Brophy.

⁹Ferris Torch, I, no. 1 (Dec. 17, 1946), p. 1.

¹⁰Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 357, Nov. 5, 1946, President's office. The homes were used for many years.

¹¹Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 339, Sept. 7, 1946, President's office. Some expenses were paid with the charges made to civic, fraternal, religious



For veterans, a temporary housing project was developed under the Veterans Emergency Planning Program.¹² There were units for both married and single veterans with the "Riverside Homes" for family housing and seven units behind the school to accommodate 152 single men.¹³

Housing facilities also included thirty-three private and twenty-four government trailers for married couples.¹⁴ Prior to the fall of 1946 graduate students had lived in tents and trailers only during the summer months. In the spring of 1947 several veterans moved into the camp thus initiating yearly habitation of the facilities.

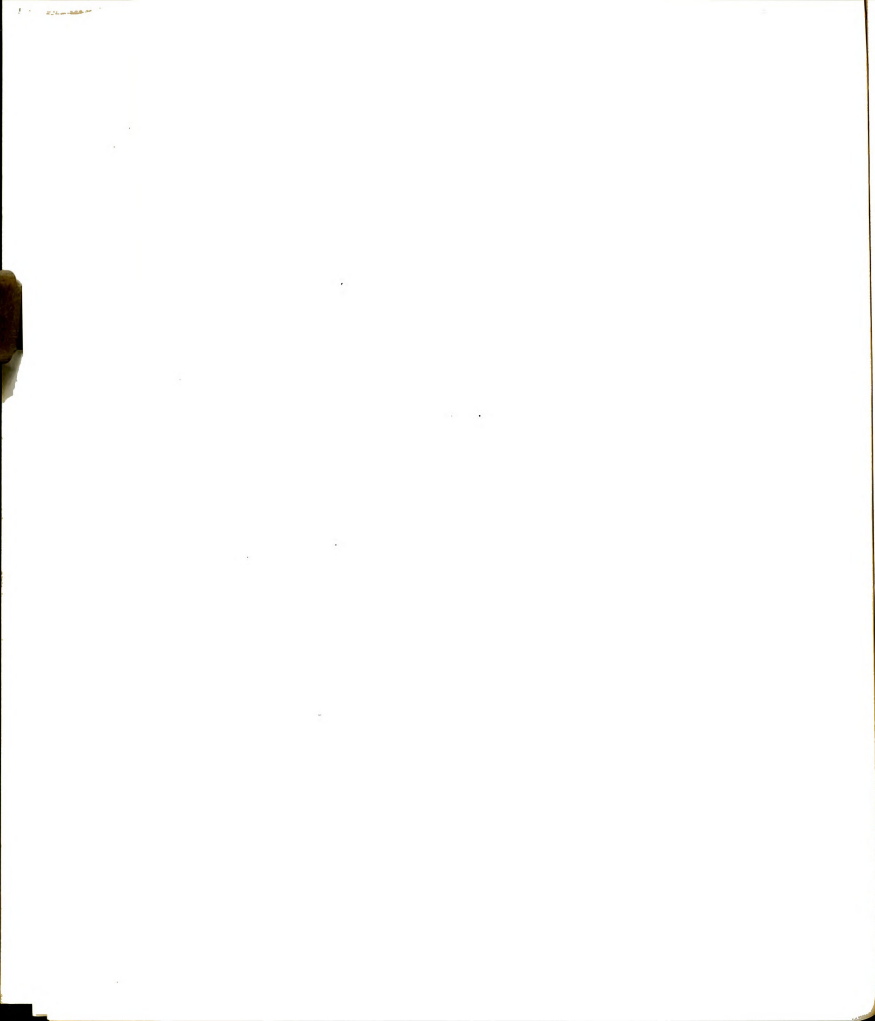
Were these veterans going to study at a private or public institution? Another attempt to relieve private investment from the responsibilities of supporting the school was initiated in the winter of 1946. At that time,

and educational groups for the use of the institute's facilities. For those groups having no admission charge, the school's fee was \$10.00 per evening in the gymnasium, \$2.50 an evening for a room, and \$3.00 per hour for less than an evening. If there was an admission charge, the school's price was \$15.00 for the gymnasium, and \$5.00 for a classroom.

¹²Ferris Torch, I, no. 1 (Dec. 17, 1946), p. 1.

¹³Ibid. The "Riverside Homes" were fifteen units on the banks of the Muskegon. A later Torch publication reported that there were eight family and twenty-four single units.

¹⁴Ibid. There were sixty-six adults and ten children living in the civilian units, with forty-eight adults and eight children living in the government units.



Brophy told an Executive Board meeting of Ferris Institute, that he was going to see the president of the University of Michigan about offering Ferris Institute to the university free of indebtedness and without cost.¹⁵ The only condition was that: ". . . the University permanently continue to operate the Institute as a school of the University in Big Rapids."¹⁶ Considering future events a more important decision was a request by Brophy that the fire insurance situation be studied for one year, after which a decision would be made as to the amount of insurance required to cover the institute's assets.¹⁷

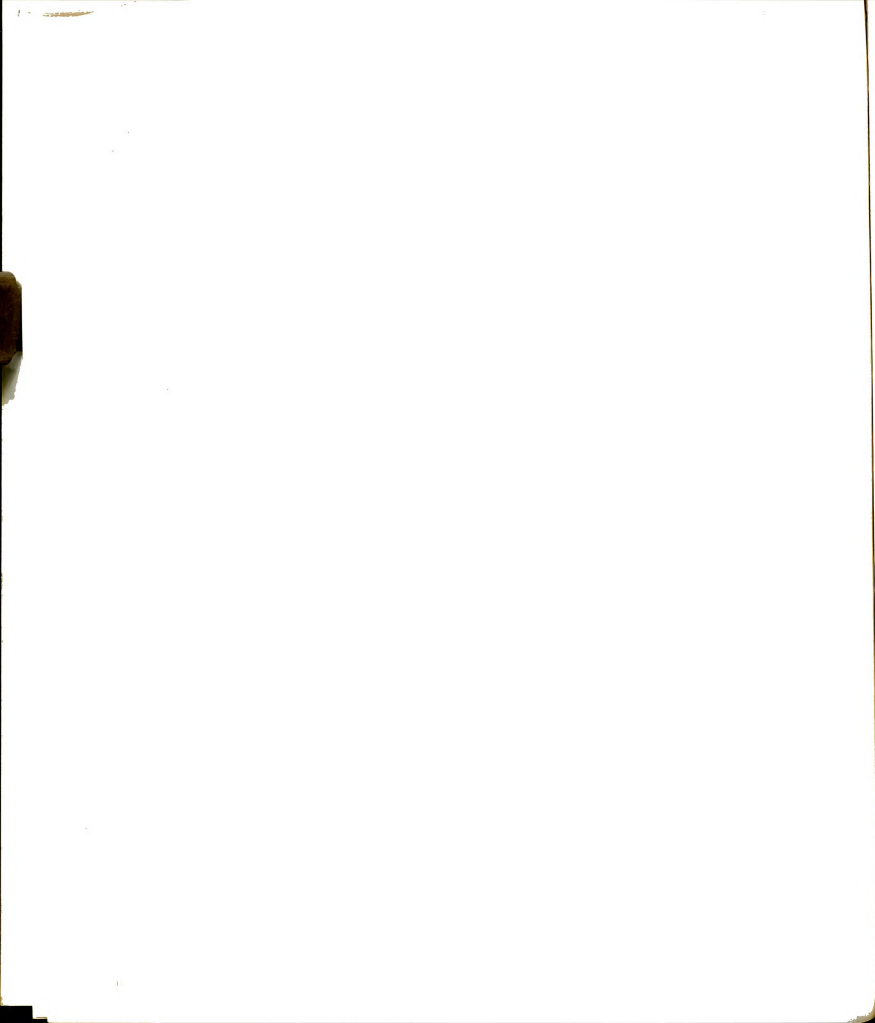
The financial picture for the 1947-48 school year showed an estimated income of \$292,731.00 based upon an anticipated average enrollment of 825 for fall, winter and

¹⁵Executive Board Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 357, Nov. 5, 1946, President's office.

¹⁶Ibid. The proposal was addressed to President Ruthven and was signed by Donald Worcester-chairman, Charles Fairman-secretary, and Lowell H. DeMoss-recording secretary.

In a special meeting of the Executive Committee Board held on Dec. 30, 1947, the trustees gave President Brophy the authority to extend his negotiations with the University of Michigan: ". . . to include any agencies qualified and financially capable of continuing and improving the education program of F.I. . . ." See Official Minutes, p. 4, President's office.

¹⁷Executive Board Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 359, Dec. 30, 1946, President's office. Charles Fairman requested that the school secure insurance for one year at a straight fire rate on 75 per cent of the appraised value of the main building, alumni building, pharmacy building, boiler house, and upon 50 per cent of the appraised value of insurable contents in the first three buildings.



spring terms, as well as 395 students for summer term.¹⁸
 The breakdown of the budget is shown in the following
 table.

TABLE 3.--Ferris Institute budget 1947-1948.

Estimated Basic Income 1947-1948	
Tuition Income	\$231,350
Student Fees	22,561
Laboratory Fees	27,370
Bookstore Income (Profit)	9,000
Miscellaneous Income	2,450
Total	<u>\$292,731</u>

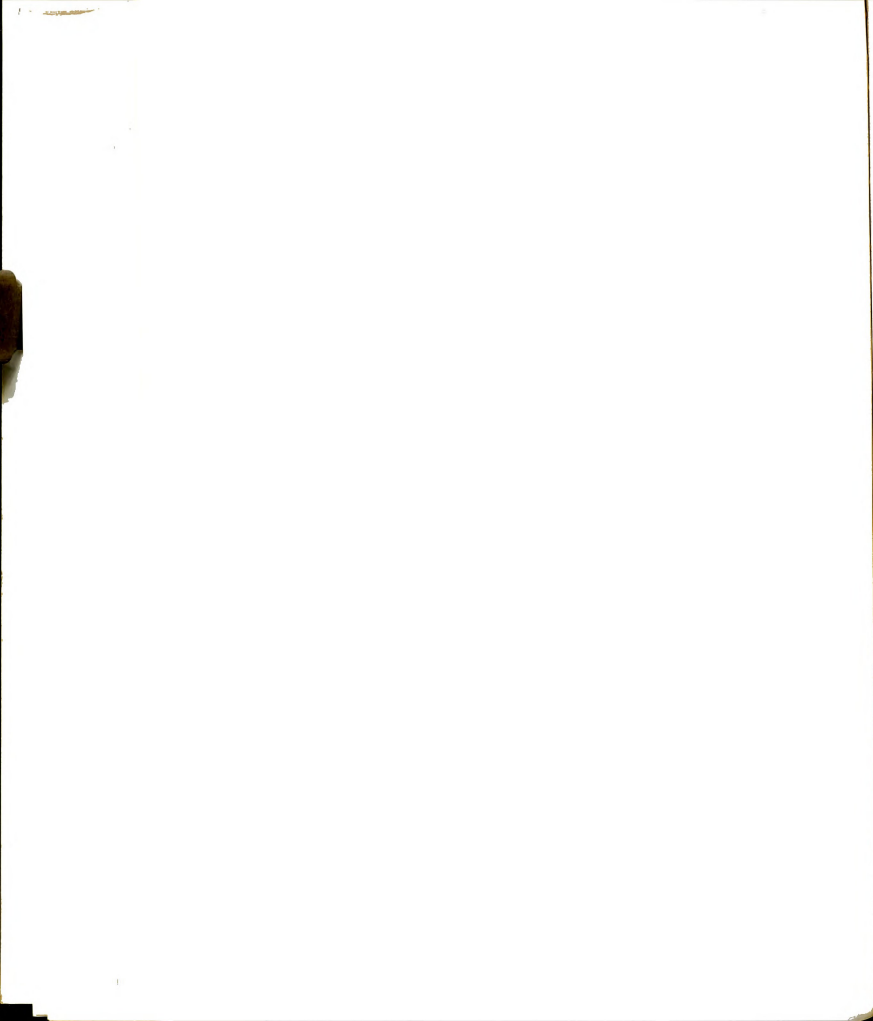
Recommended Basic Expenditures	
Salaries	\$182,750
Equipment	17,500
Supplies	12,995
Other operational expenses	37,194
Repairs and Maintenance	5,125
Library	3,525
Student Activities	7,762
Administrative	*
Contingency	25,880
Total	<u>\$292,731</u>

*No figure was given for 1947-1948.

Source: Executive Committee Board Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 372, Aug. 21, 1947, President's office.

The board also discussed the possibility of making the Carlisle Fund an integral part of the financial structure of the institute, and sustaining an endowment fund

¹⁸Executive Committee Board Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 372, Aug. 21, 1947, President's office.



under direct jurisdiction of the administration.¹⁹ A suggestion was made to establish a sustaining fund called the Ferris Memorial Fund to be annually increased by budgeting for it, \$3.00 per enrollment per term or about \$9,000.00 per year.²⁰ A proposal was also made to organize a \$10.00 club among alumni, faculty and students with a goal of \$500,000.00.²¹

Added to the efforts of providing a stable financial base for the school were those at attaining State accreditation. To this end Brophy submitted to the State accreditation committee, a proposal requesting that Ferris Institute be considered for accreditation.²² Apparently his efforts were successful because tentative accreditation was lifted in favor of full accreditation.²³

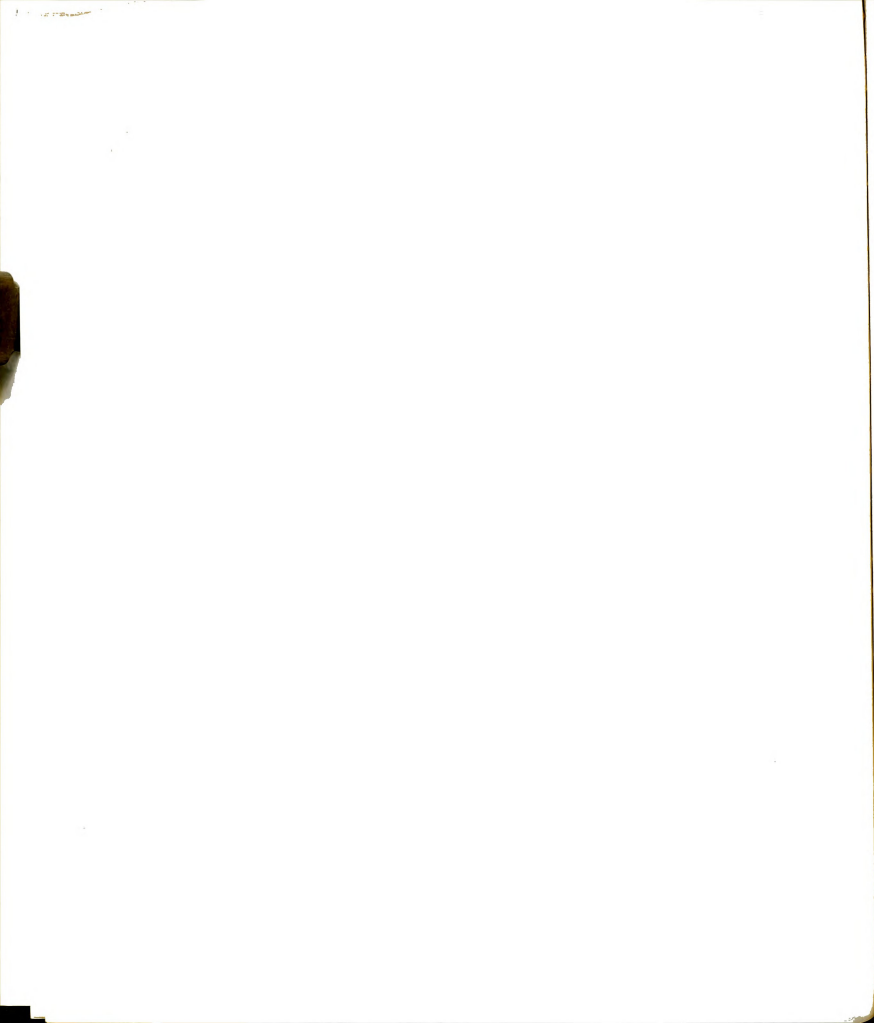
¹⁹Annual Meeting of Incorporating Members of Ferris Institute. Official Minutes, p. 381, Oct. 17, 1947, President's office. The proposal was based on the view that the fund as then constituted was of little use to the institute. The Carlisle Fund was previously the Carlisle Memorial Fund and was a part of the financial assets of the school [Board Minutes, May and June, 1939], and was given away by the incorporators on May 8, 1942.

²⁰Annual Meeting, p. 381, Oct. 17, 1947.

²¹Ibid.

²²Annual Meeting of Incorporating Members of Ferris Institute. Official Minutes, p. 379, Oct. 17, 1947, President's office. As of Oct. 17, 1946, there were twenty-eight incorporating members. Annual Meeting, Oct. 17, 1946.

²³Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 1, Nov. 7, 1947, President's office.



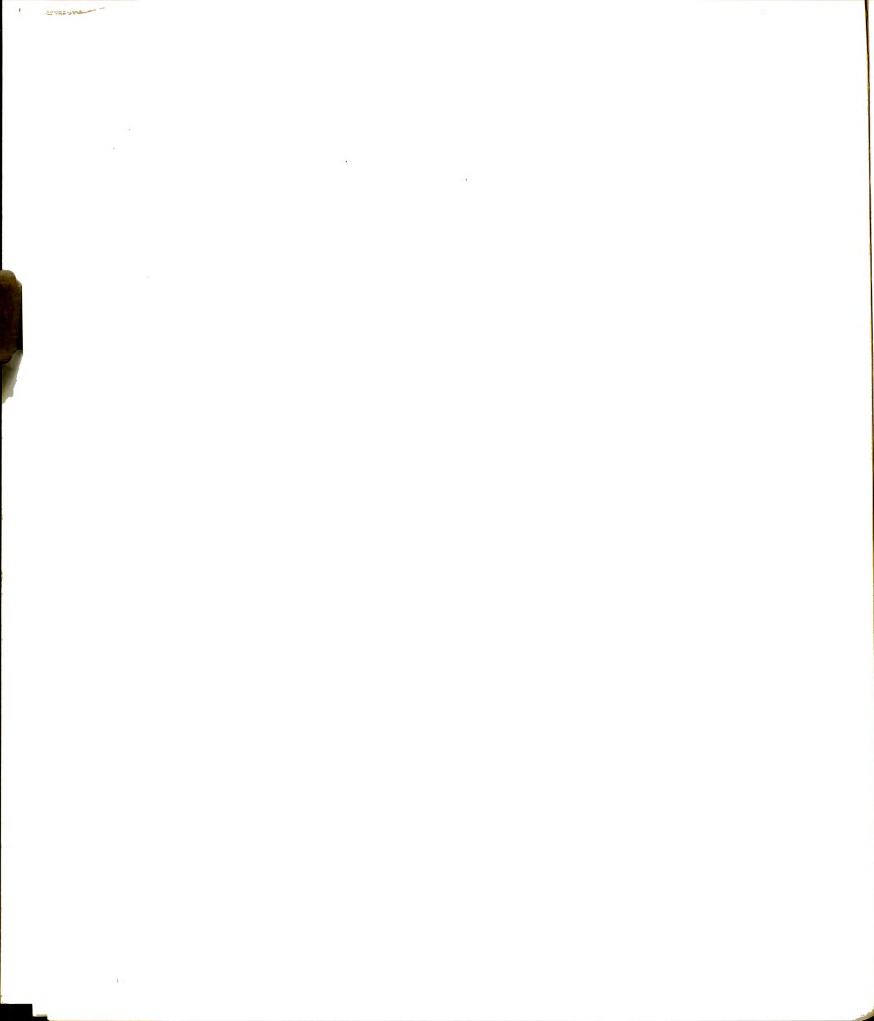
Summarizing the school's financial and administrative position in his annual report, Brophy emphasized the need for saving money and maintaining high standards of academic service.

1. Keep out of debt as long as possible. Set aside as much money as possible for hard times.
2. Get state support as soon as possible.
3. Raise supplemental funds as quickly as possible.
4. Consolidate all material resources of Ferris Institute to provide maximum credit in periods of crisis. Two corporations and the city now share the two resources.
5. Exploit the board members and honorariums to provide the Institute with the political and financial leadership and power necessary to reach financial security at the earliest possible date.
6. Develop strong public relations and publicity.
7. Organize and indoctrinate alumni for continuing support.
8. Maintain high standards of service in all departments at any cost; avoid expensive expansion.
9. Keep costs to students down and improve living conditions for them in the community.
10. Find a Santa Claus.²⁴

Endeavors to provide a substantial financial base for the school continued throughout this period. For example, a plan was developed by the Institute of Financial Relations of Chicago, the owner of a copyrighted scheme of financial underwriting.²⁵ The plan manifest itself in a

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Executive Committee Board Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 5, Jan. 20, 1948, President's office. The organization was reported by the board as a new one, yet still equipped to implement a plan of financial underwriting: "... which, if successful, should go far toward establishing the needed endowment and/or financial backing required by Ferris." Ibid.

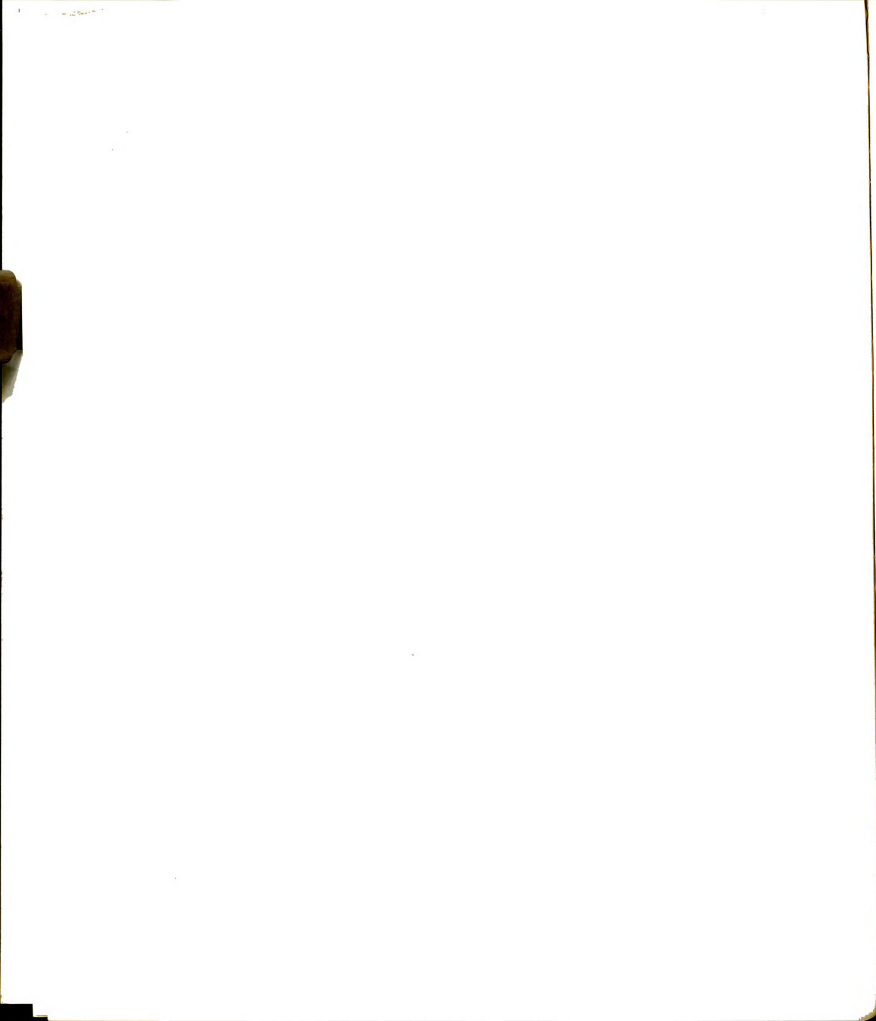


campaign designed to obtain subscriptions to support the school. As reported to the board, the Institute of Financial Relations would collect minimum subscriptions of \$500.00 and also accept any other gifts or contributions, subsequently forwarding them to the school.²⁶

Another plan to stabilize the school's administrative and financial position was offered by Bishop's Whittemore and Emrick of the Episcopal church. They proposed that the Episcopal church be given three lay representatives on the board of trustees, to be selected by the Episcopal Bishops of Michigan. During the succeeding year or two the Bishop's promised to experiment and plan

²⁶ Ibid. For each subscription collected, a down payment of 10 percent of the total subscription was asked for and sent to the school. The campaign was to commence as soon as possible after July 23, 1948, and continue until June 30, 1949, unless extended by mutual consent of the I.F.R. and Ferris Institute. Ferris agreed to hold in reserve or invest 3 percent of the face value of each subscription certificate in force for each payment made beyond the initial deposit to insure the payment of installments to the subscribers during the ten years following the maturity of the certificates. Ferris also agreed to give the I.F.R. a complete list of graduates, a history of the school for trainees, an outline of the proposed use of funds, and the facilities for the meetings. The I.F.R. agreed to initiate the campaign and train at least ten representatives within a period of ninety days and who would devote 75 percent of their time until a goal of \$2,000,000.00 or more of the net par underwriting subscriptions had been secured or until June 30, 1949.

Brophy had to personally approve or reject the representatives within five days of being presented with their credentials. The I.F.R. was to receive a flat fee of 7 1/2 percent of all insured subscriptions to be figured on the face value and 7 1/2 percent of all out-right contributions.



for the school's future.²⁷ However, the church rejected the trustees' request that they offer a monetary guarantee in testimony of their good intentions.

Brophy initiated other strategies to cope with the school's problems. He called for emergency action to enable the institute to acquire full title to the Federal Housing Units that were then operated by the school for the Federal government.²⁸ He hoped that this would assist some veterans in obtaining a college education at Ferris Institute. Brophy also thought it advisable to maintain a close working relationship with the community; consequently, he told the board to obtain membership for the school in the Big Rapids Chamber of Commerce.²⁹

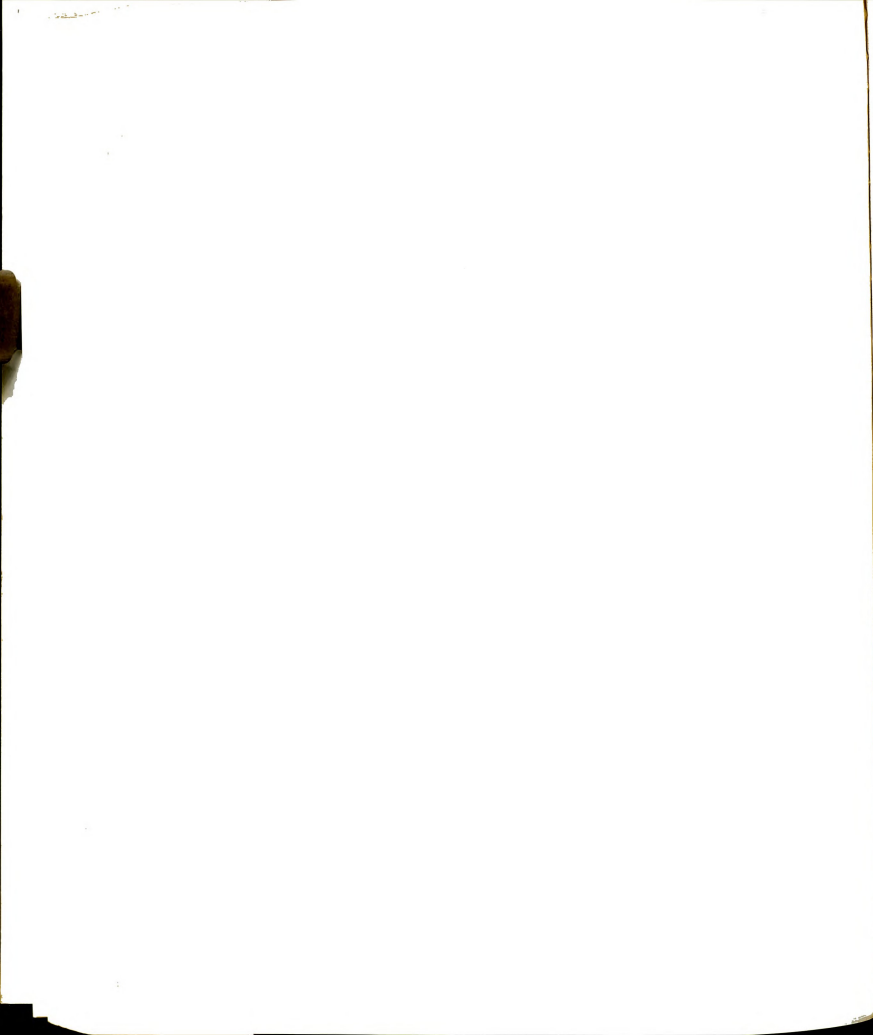
Brophy and the board continued their efforts to ensure the institute's survival when Brophy recommended that the board consider affiliation, either with the University of Michigan, Michigan State College, Central Michigan College of Education or some religious group.³⁰ In the

²⁷ Special Executive Board Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 9, May 21, 1948, President's office.

²⁸ Special Executive Committee Board Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 15, July 17, 1948, President's office. These efforts were successful according to a report given at the Annual Meeting of Incorporators, held on Oct. 15, 1948. See page 791, President's office.

²⁹ Special Executive Committee Board Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 15, July 17, 1948, President's office.

³⁰ Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 17, Oct. 12, 1948, President's office.



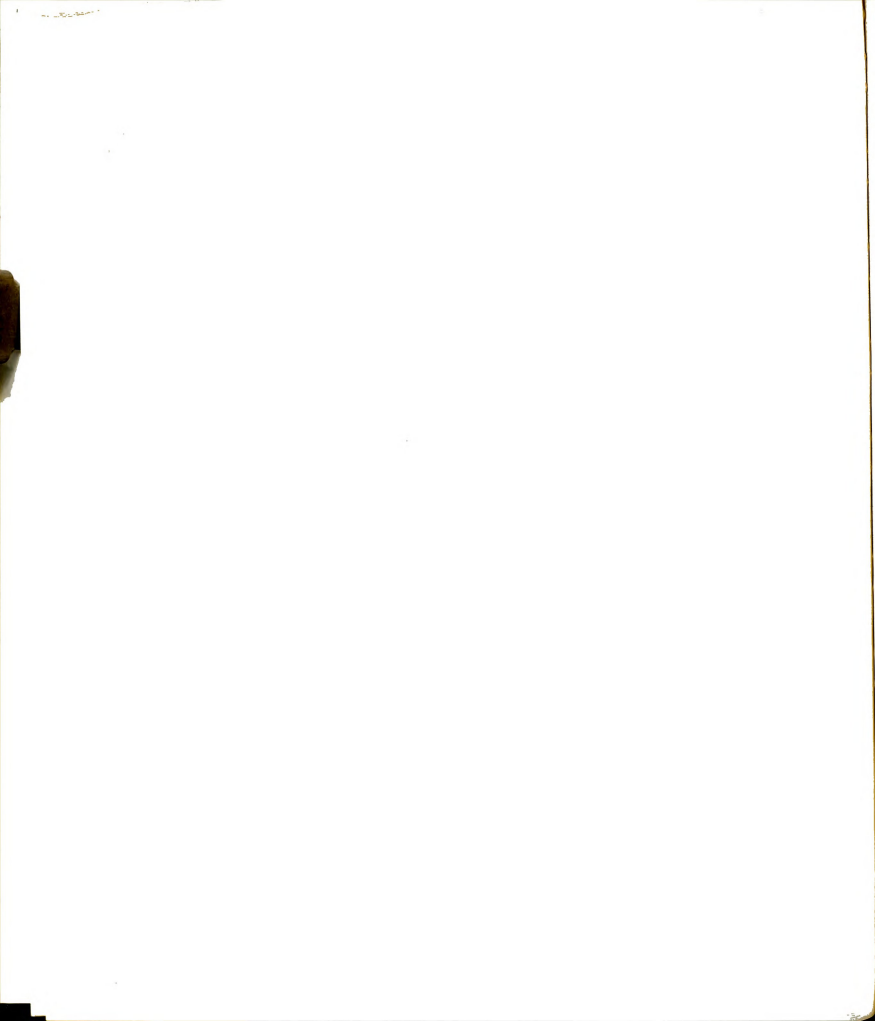
course of this Executive Committee meeting President Brophy and Donald Worcester reviewed the history of the school and the struggles of Mr. Ferris.

They maintained that the struggle was still a serious one, in that, competition among State institutes of education might cause a drop in enrollments at smaller schools. Brophy then mentioned that two main barriers to overcome were the negative attitudes of accrediting agencies toward the school and the stringent admission policies of the state colleges towards Ferris students. Specific suggestions by Brophy included attempts to have a legislative committee investigate the procedures for obtaining state affiliation, especially with a state university.

The School is Offered to the
State of Michigan

These efforts to achieve financial and administrative stability culminated in a specific assessment of the situation by Donald Worcester, and a recommendation that the school be offered to the state of Michigan. Worcester claimed that:

Ferris Institute is inadequately financed, and as a result lacks the strength to overcome its major weaknesses. During the current period of relative prosperity due to government subsidy and over-enrollments everything possible should be done to gain financial support which will guarantee an



adequate and continuous income during periods of stress and strain.³¹

Strength to overcome the weaknesses of the institution was considered to reside with the state of Michigan. A proposal was presented to the Honorable G. Mennen Williams, the Governor, in which the board reviewed the traditional purpose of the institution under Woodbridge N. Ferris, commented on remarks from prominent alumni and gave reasons for the school being an asset to the state.³²

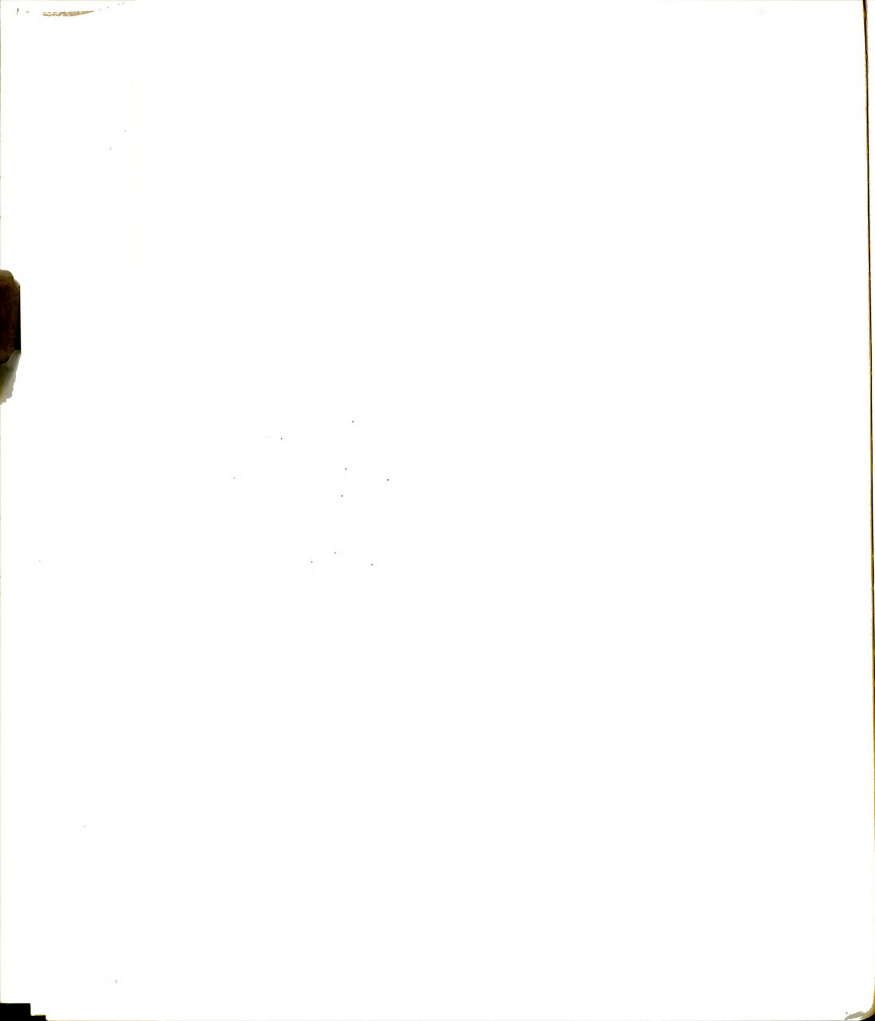
The Board presented its case to the State as follows:

After a great deal of thought we [signed by Donald Worcester, Chairman of the Board, Alfred S. Cramer, Vice-Chairman, and Charles E. Fairman, Secretary] feel that the interests of the State and especially the future students of this institution, would best be served by direct affiliation with the State's educational system.

We therefore, propose that the State of Michigan accept as a gift this great institution which Mr. Ferris established, and continue it as a living monument to him and his whole life. In this way, the State of Michigan could best express its

³¹Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees. Official Minutes, p. 23, Oct. 15, 1948, President's office.

³²Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, Nov. 22, 1948, President's office. The comments of Isaiah Bowman, alumnus, and former President of John Hopkins University were reported, along with a list of prominent alumni including Raymond W. Starr of the United States Supreme Court; Justice Edward M. Sharpe of the State Supreme Court; Harlow H. Curtis, President of General Motors Corporation; Nate S. Shapero, President of Cunningham Drug Co.; the late Frank D. Fitzgerald, former Governor of Michigan; W. G. Bower, Vice-President of the New York Central Railway System; Frank Johnson, Chief Engineer for the Ford Motor Company; and Thomas Reed, a former State Attorney General.



appreciation for the contributions of one of the noblest souls the State has ever known.

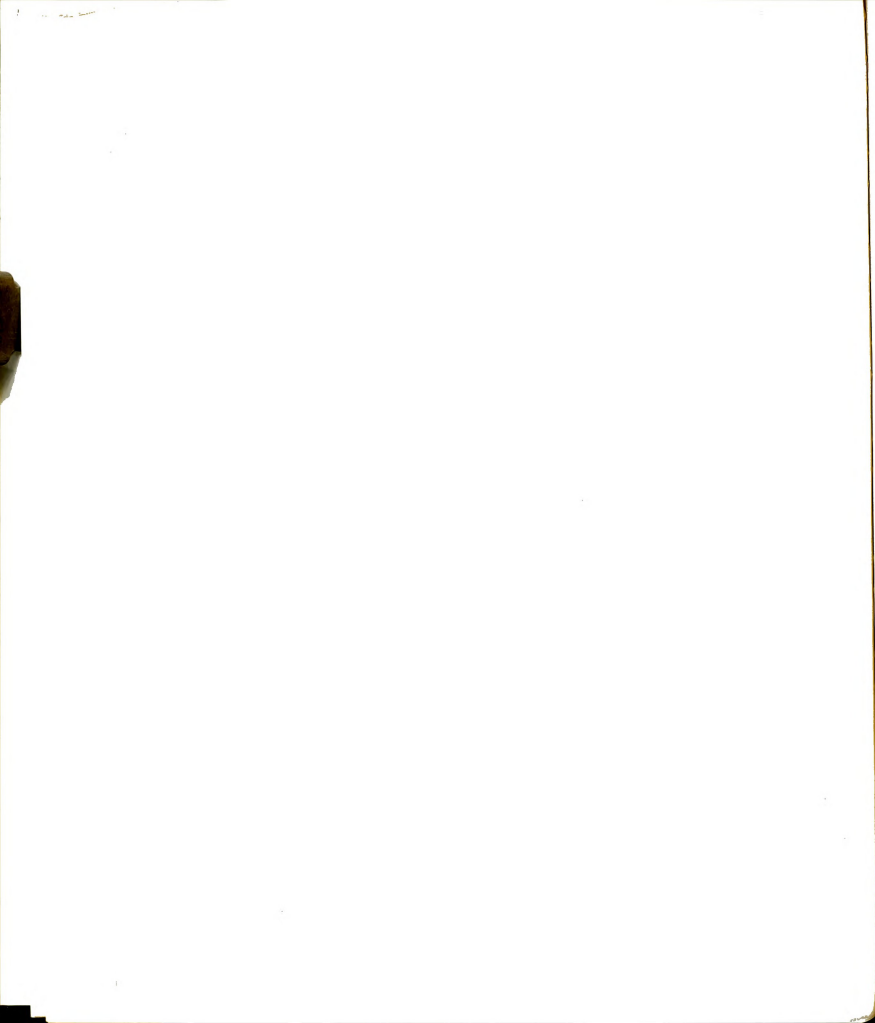
Today, as in the days of Ferris, Ferris Institute is accepting boys and girls as they come to us and giving them the opportunity to overcome their educational handicaps, to enable them to realize their hopes and ambitions. We take them as they come, and give them the help they need to realize their potentialities. We are developing the nation's greatest wealth, viz. the nation's youth. This is the legacy which Woodbridge N. Ferris bequeathed to the State of Michigan and of which we are proud to be the bearers.

Obviously the need for such a school is persistent and the great State of Michigan should guarantee the continuance of its principles, objectives, and services for the benefit of the thousands of youth who will continue to need its program. There could be no better investment, nor more appropriate monument erected to that great servant of the State of Michigan, Woodbridge N. Ferris. The institution is currently serving the needs of some eleven-hundred youth, is debt free, and has an unobligated valuation of approximately a million dollars.

It is therefore, with a great deal of pride and humility that this Executive Committee, as authorized by the Board of Trustees, propose that a plan be initiated leading to a gift of Ferris Institute to the State of Michigan, subject only to the condition that it be operated continuously under the name of its founder at its present location as a monument to him, and that the State perpetuate, at equal or better standards, the liberal educational policies upon which rests the fame of this school.³³

While the proposal was being considered by the State legislature, supporters of the measure exerted efforts to

³³ Ibid.

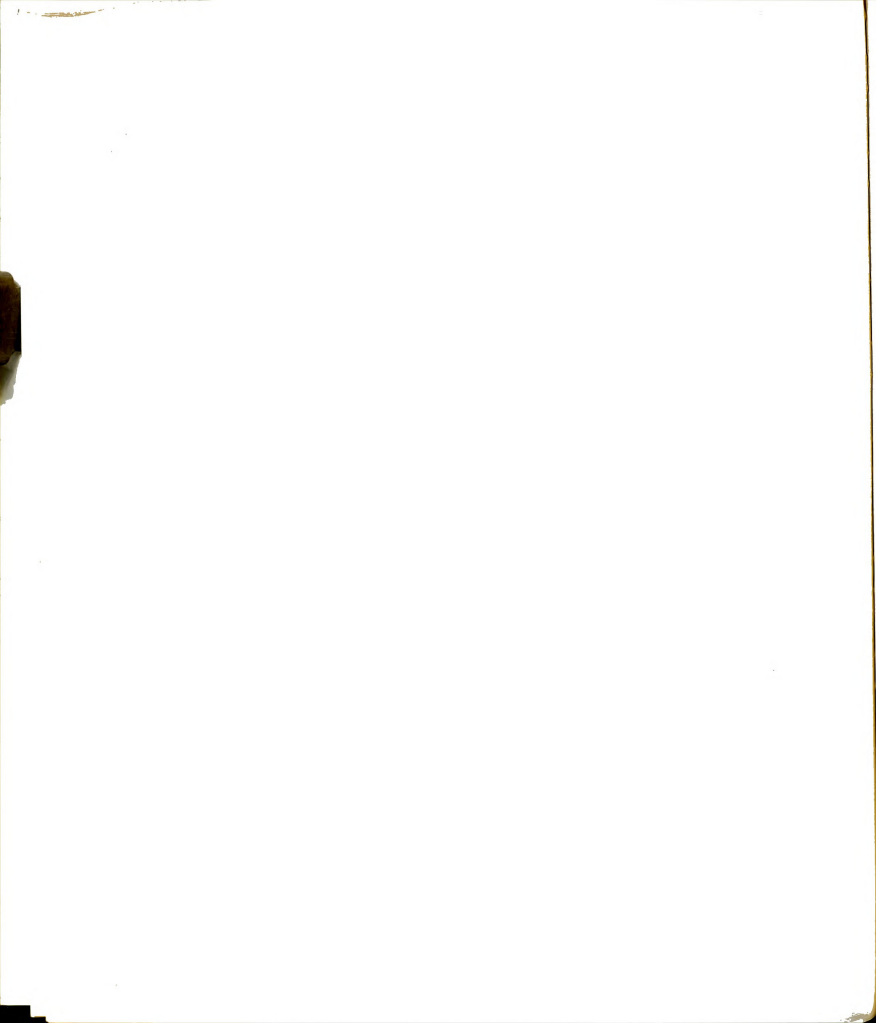


influence the Governor's Committee through Senator Colin Smith.³⁴ It seems that disagreement arose between trustees on the method of presenting the proposal to the legislature. Added to the tension were reports of signed protests against the bill and reviews of a former plan to keep the Ferris Institute gift on a non-partisan basis. Some insisted that the bill be a partisan one initiated and sponsored by Republicans. Others countered with the view that a bi-partisan action was necessary and that a delay in presenting the bill was most expedient.

The efforts by supporters of the bill were successful in warding off dissenters and in getting the bill passed. A writer on the Detroit News staff took a skeptical view of the entire proceedings.

The Ferris alumni on key legislative committees saw to [the acceptance of the proposal by the legislature]. . . . They overrode objections of the Department of Public Instruction that an "opportunity school" did not fit into the State's educational system - and if it did, it should be located in Detroit where it could serve the greatest number. State construction experts scoffed at the claim that the school's

³⁴ Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 29, Jan. 9, 1949, President's office. The Governor's committee included Dr. Alexander G. Ruthven, President--University of Michigan; Dr. Charles L. Anspach, President--Central Michigan College; Dr. Lee M. Thurston--Superintendent of Public Instruction; Representative Harold W. Hungerford--chairman of House Education Committee; Senator Don VanderWerp--Chairman--Senate Education Committee; Nate Shapero, Owner--Cunningham Drug Chain; Judge Edward M. Sharpe--Chief Justice State Supreme Court; a representative from the Senate and House Finance Committees, and a representative from the State Board of Administration--John McKivitt.



physical properties were worth more than \$1,000,000.00. These consisted of Old Main, a red brick castle-like structure ready for the scrap-heap, a number of war surplus barracks used as classrooms and only one presentable Alumni Building erected in 1929.³⁵

Despite the dissenters Senate Bill 251 was unanimously approved by the Senate on April 27, 1949, and passed the House on May 9 by a vote of eighty-three to eight.³⁶ The provisions of the bill can be summarized as follows:

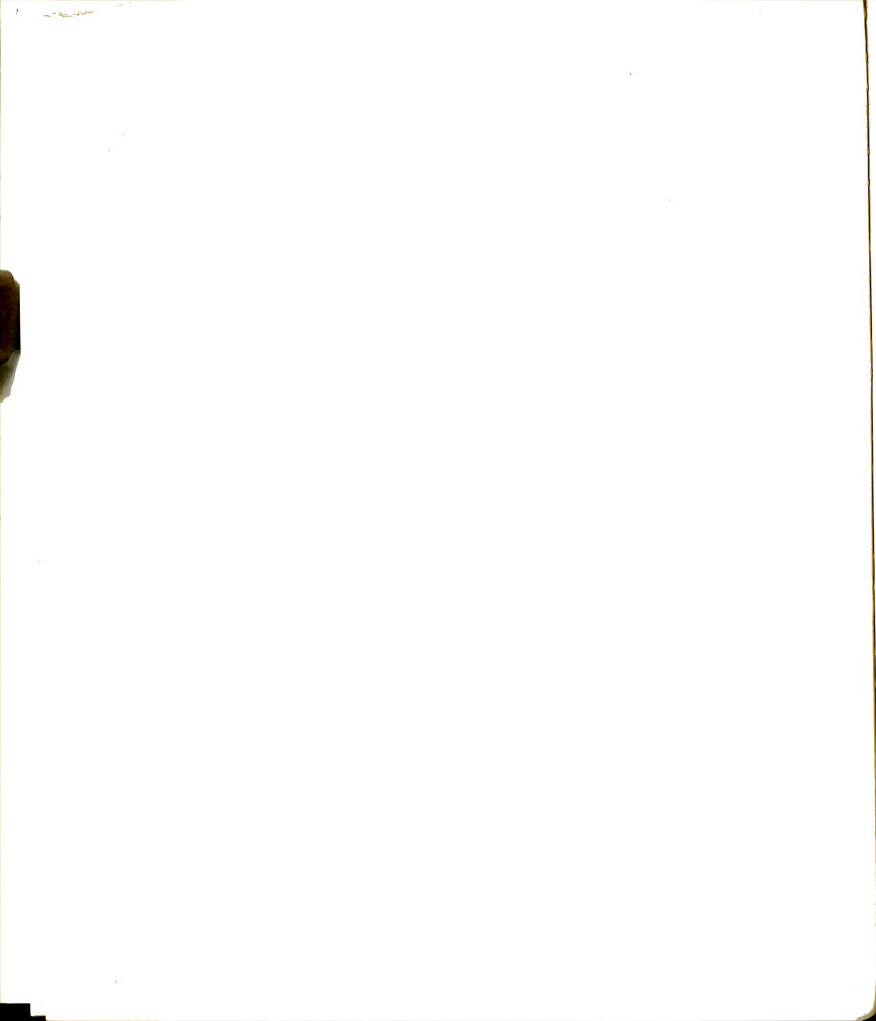
1. The school will be continued in Big Rapids as a State institution under the name of Ferris Institute.
2. As a State institution, the school would continue to operate in accordance with policies and curricula established through the years.
3. An eight member Board of Control will be approved by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.
4. The Board of Control was empowered with the authority to do all acts necessary to ensure the proper management of the school. It will assume control and management of the Institute on July 1, 1950.³⁷

Repercussions from these negotiations with the State were manifest in a claim for damages by the Institute of Financial Relations. They claimed that a settlement beyond the contract stipulations was necessary to compensate

³⁵Allen Schoenfield, "Ferris Institute Becomes a State School," Detroit News, n.d.

³⁶The more common name was the Smith-VanderWerp Bill, see Folder FIFS, D18 for a copy of the bill. The bill was officially known as Act 114, Public Acts of 1949.

³⁷Ibid.



for damages to their program resulting from attempts to transfer the school to the State.³⁸ Specifically, the attorney for the firm sent the following communicaae to the trustees.

You are fully informed as to the fact that Mr. Albaugh's organization expended approximately \$5,300.00 up to the time it was discovered that you had been secretly negotiating the transfer of the school to state ownership. You know, or should know, the embarrassing position you placed Mr. Albaugh and his associates in by concealing your negotiations while knowing that they were canvassing prominent alumni, state officials, and others, indirectly involved in the transfer of the school to the state. . . . We have the books of account. Furthermore, we have definite evidence that Mr. Albaugh's organization has suffered material damages as a result of the difficulty here involved.³⁹

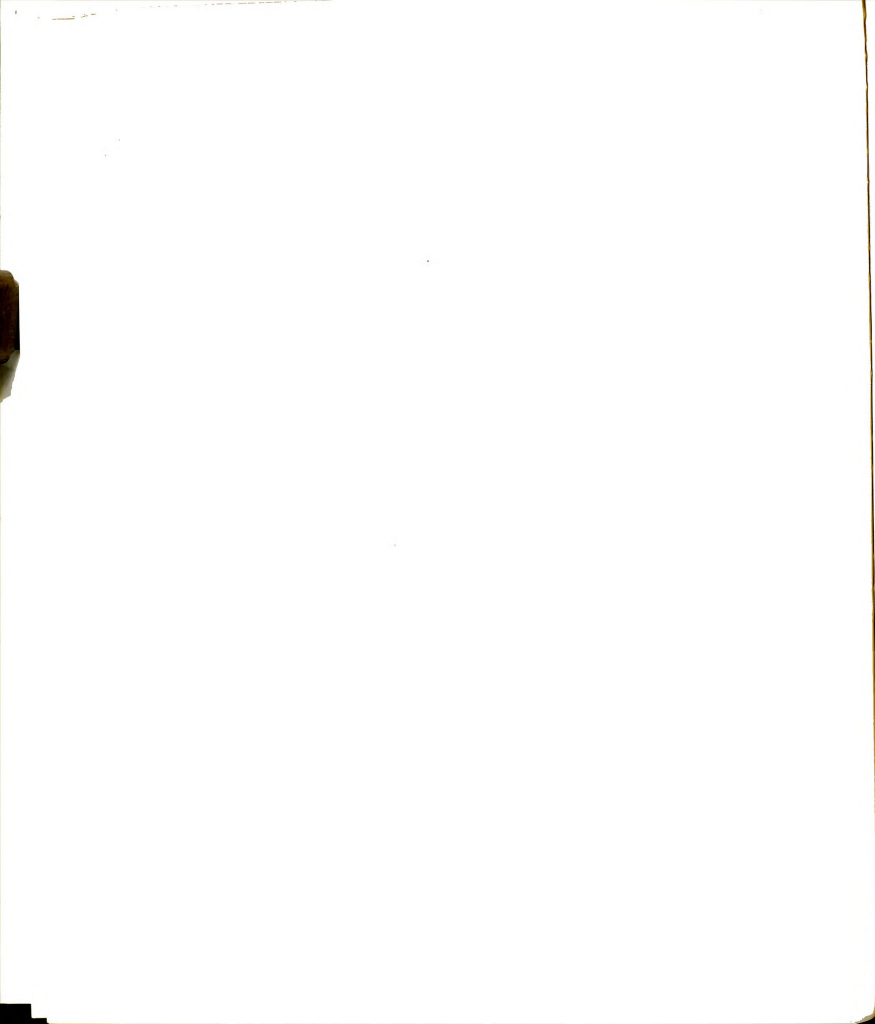
Although President Brophy rejected a settlement offer of \$6,500.00 the executive committee eventually agreed to a settlement of \$4,500.00.⁴⁰

The strain of the campaign for survival left Brophy tired and ill. Fall term 1949, he submitted a letter of resignation for the alleged purpose of allowing the State of Michigan free rein to appoint a new president or

³⁸Special Executive Committee Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 35, Feb. 28, 1949, President's office.

³⁹Executive Committee Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 55, Aug. 22, 1949, President's office.

⁴⁰Special Executive Committee Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 55A, Sept. 8, 1949, Preident's office.



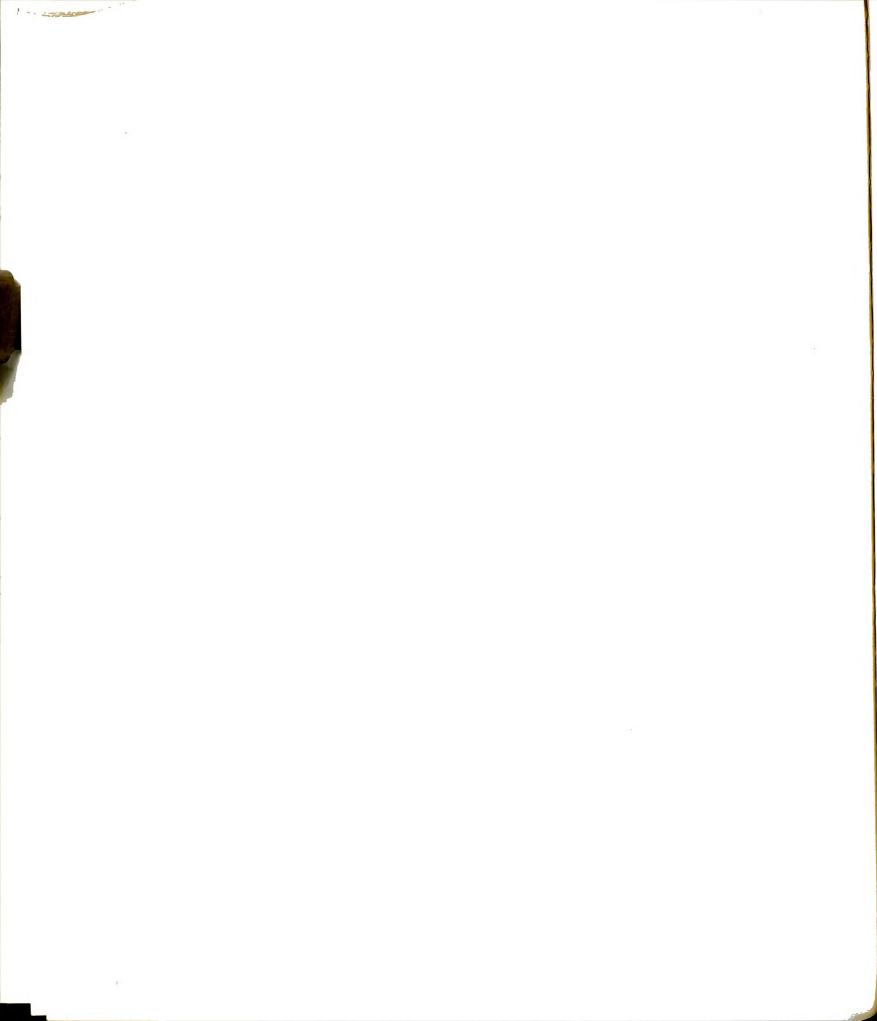
administrative officer.⁴¹ The board agreed that Brophy had accomplished those objectives assigned to him; namely, the formation of a financial reserve for the operation of the school, and the rehabilitation of the buildings, equipment and the faculty. They also agreed to compensate him for his achievements.

However, before he vacated his position, Brophy investigated the legal questions involved in the transfer of the school to the state of Michigan. Specifically, he and the board wanted to know what the legal responsibility of the State would be in accepting the unsatisfied obligations, commitments, and liabilities of the school made prior to passage of the Smith-Vanderwerp Bill, or subsequent to the acceptance of responsibility by the new board.⁴² Donald Worcester replied to Brophy's questions.

In my opinion, the gift and conveyance is subject to the liabilities, obligations and commitments made both before and subsequent to the passage of the Act prior to date of transfer, whether the commitments . . . extend

⁴¹Annual Meeting of the Board of Incorporators. Official Minutes, p. 62, Oct. 28, 1949, President's office. Brophy's term in office didn't end until Sept. 1, 1951. Apparently, if he continued his employment according to the same terms as provided in his contract, his compensation would be more than he would receive from the State.

⁴²Letter, Byron J. Brophy to Donald H. Worcester, Jan. 4, 1950, Board Minutes 1949-1950, President's office. Brophy was referring to staff contracts which extended beyond the date of transfer, college catalog commitments, contracts with State or national agencies, or unpaid accounts not satisfied prior to the transfer.



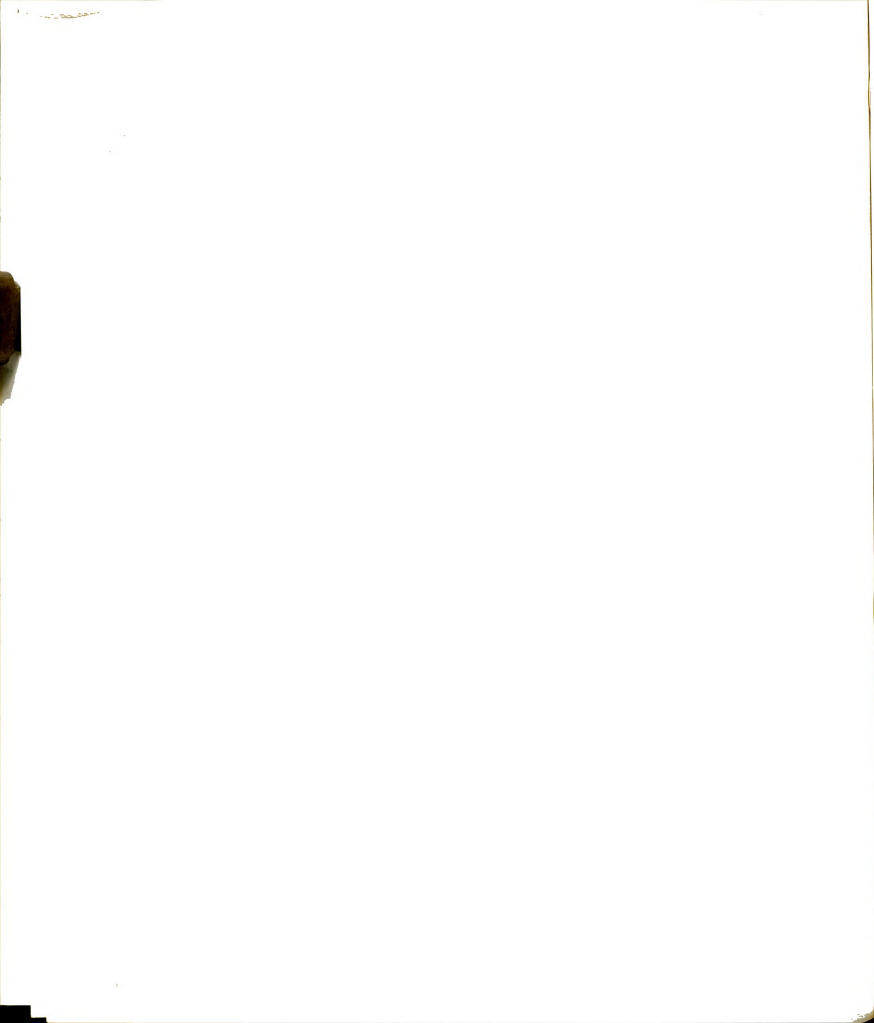
beyond the period of transfer or are past due at that time.⁴³

Fire on Campus

The most important and tragic event of the year was a raging fire on the school premises. Of undetermined origin the fire broke out on Tuesday, February 21, 1950 in front of the middle section of the Main Building. A brisk wind was blowing from the northeast and the temperature hovered only a few degrees from zero. Despite the efforts of the fire department, the fire soon engulfed the Main building and jumped across to the Pharmacy building. In a few hours both buildings with their contents were completely destroyed. Considerable damage was also done to the adjacent Alumni building and slight damage occurred in two neighboring war surplus barracks.

As soon as the progress of the fire had been checked, administrative and faculty meetings were called to develop plans for meeting the emergency. By 2 a.m. the following day tentative plans and work assignments had been made. At 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, February 22, a mass meeting of students and staff was held at the Big Rapids theatre. Within five days after the fire, 100 men who had roomed in six barracks south of the Pharmacy building were moved to

⁴³Letter, Donald H. Worcester to Byron J. Brophy, Feb. 17, 1950, Board Minutes 1947-1940, p. 3, President's office.



private homes in Big Rapids, and the barracks converted into temporary classrooms and library offices. Enrollment for spring term carried on as scheduled and on Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 27-28, classes in all departments met as planned.⁴⁴

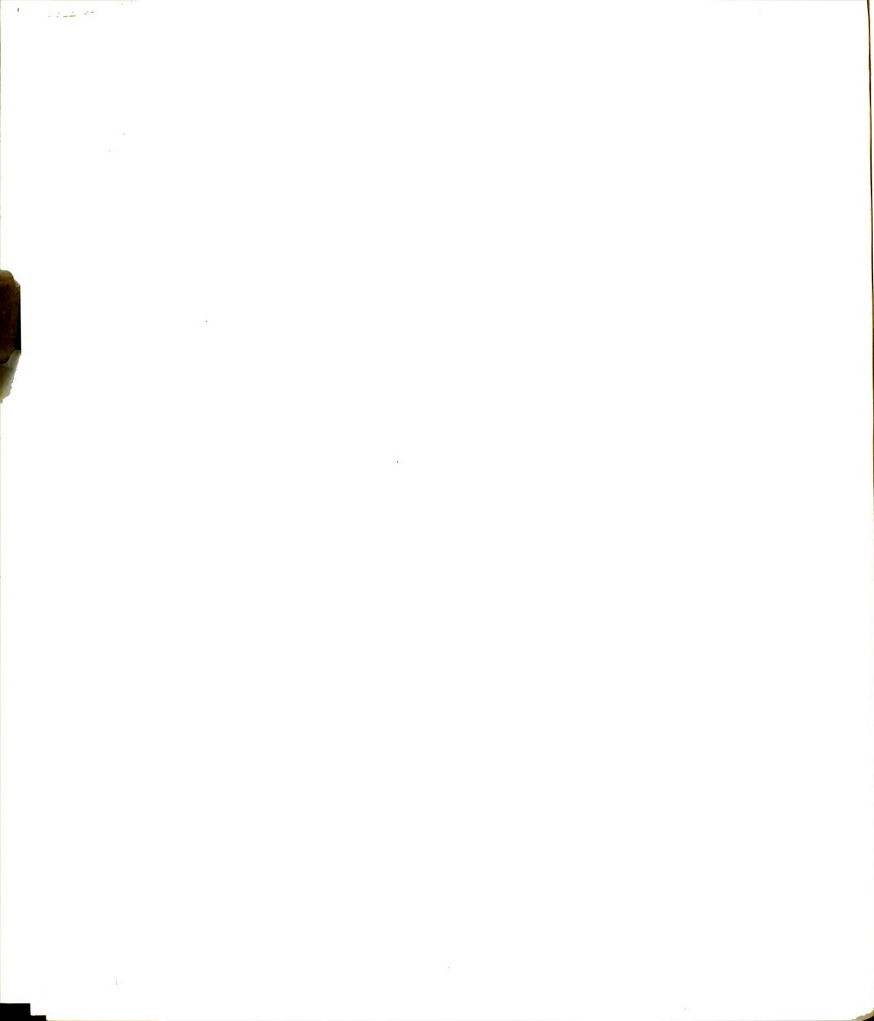
In a series of meetings throughout 1950 the trustees, the building committee and the new board of control⁴⁵ developed strategies for handling the rebirth of the school. State Building Division officials estimated that it would cost approximately \$1,000,000.00 to construct a building of the size desired by the planners.⁴⁶ These officials

⁴⁴One of the most crippling losses was the library. Karl G. Merrill reported that: "The people of B.R. and the county, together with friends and alumni raised over \$4,500.00 which they gave to the librarian for books." The library was housed in one of the barracks but later moved to the West Building. The east and West Buildings were ready for use in 1952. History of Ferris Institute, 1956, Folder FIFS, D19.

Another measure taken to meet the emergency was a brick fund campaign. Proposed by the local Chamber of Commerce, the plan consisted of selling brick subscriptions with each brick bearing the names of its donors. Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 73, Feb. 22, 1950, President's office.

⁴⁵Ibid. At this meeting the name of seven members of the Board of Control were read by President Brophy. Those persons were Lawrence W. Prakken, Russel B. Nye, Mrs. Bess E. Fishman, Ray C. Vandercook, Casey C. Wiggins, Eugene A. Ward, and Raymond W. Starr. A letter from Governor Williams stated that: "The best agency to consider rebuilding Ferris is the State Board of Control which takes office under law, on July 1, 1950. I am appointing most of the members ahead of time." Ibid.

⁴⁶Joint Meeting of the Board of Trustees and Board of Control. Official Minutes, p. 77, March 4, 1950, President's office.



also estimated that it would cost \$1,500,000.00 to replace lost classroom space and laboratories which could accommodate 2,000 students.⁴⁷ There was also discussion about girl's dormitories, recreational playgrounds and other building possibilities.⁴⁸

In the aftermath of disaster Brophy told students of the needs and responsibilities necessary to successfully cope with the situation.

Never in the history of Ferris Institute has there been a greater need or greater opportunity. The need is for loyalty and calm determination on the part of all to realize and fight for the opportunity continued in the tragedy. The heritage left by our great founder . . . must be recovered. His "Bulldogs" must demonstrate the right to their name.

The situation is bad, but it could have been worse. There is nothing to be gained from crying about what can't be helped. Together we must make the best of what we have lost. Ferris MUST GO ON! and with God's help it will be done.⁴⁹

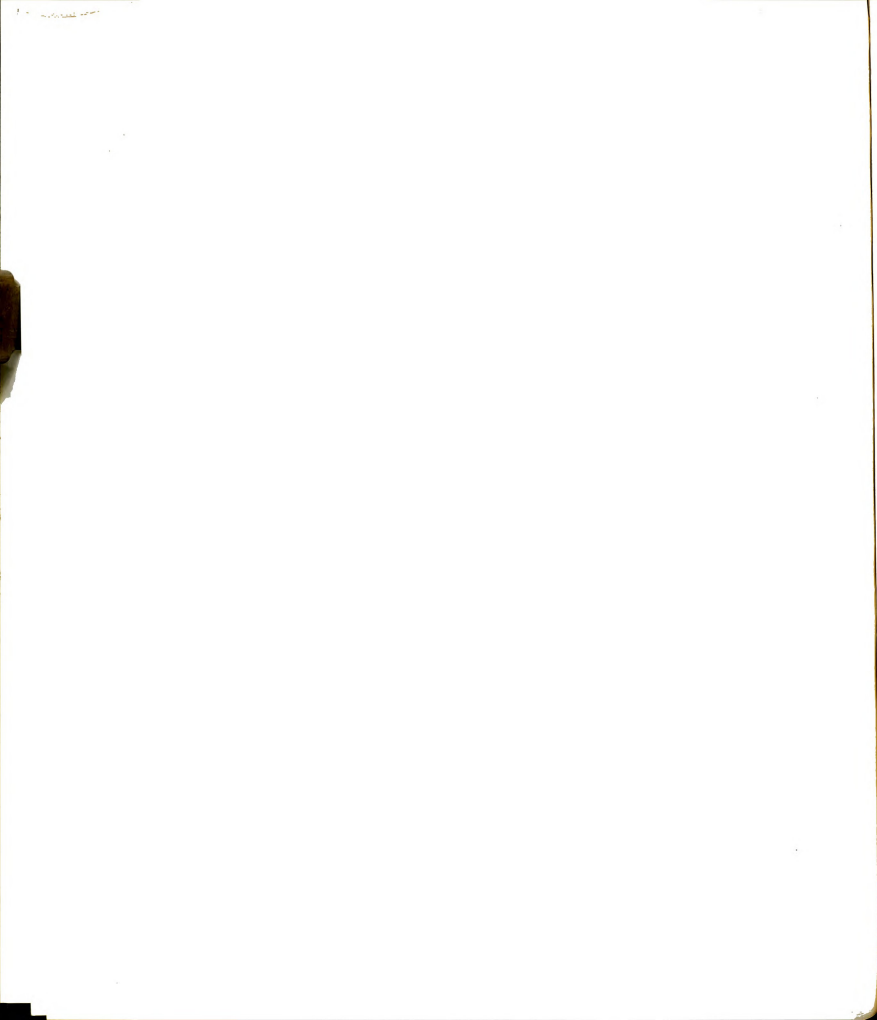
The State Takes Over

Ferris did go on. The first official meeting of the board of control occurred on Saturday, July 1, 1950,

⁴⁷Special Meeting of the Building Committee. Official Minutes, p. 83, March 29, 1950, President's office.

⁴⁸Ibid. In a Building Committee meeting on May 20, 1950, Charles Fairman recommended the services of Roger Allen and Associates of Grand Rapids for the purpose of providing preliminary documents for the Ferris building project. He also said that the State had given authority to a maximum of \$750,000.00.

⁴⁹Ferris Torch, IV, no. 80 (March 9, 1950), p. 1.



with all members present.⁵⁰ After formally accepting the property on behalf of the state of Michigan the board decided to honor all existing faculty and staff contracts through Sept. 1, 1951 and to ask for the hiring of Byron J. Brophy for a five year period as president, beginning July 1, 1950.⁵¹

In addition, the new board urged prompt State action in completing the new building:

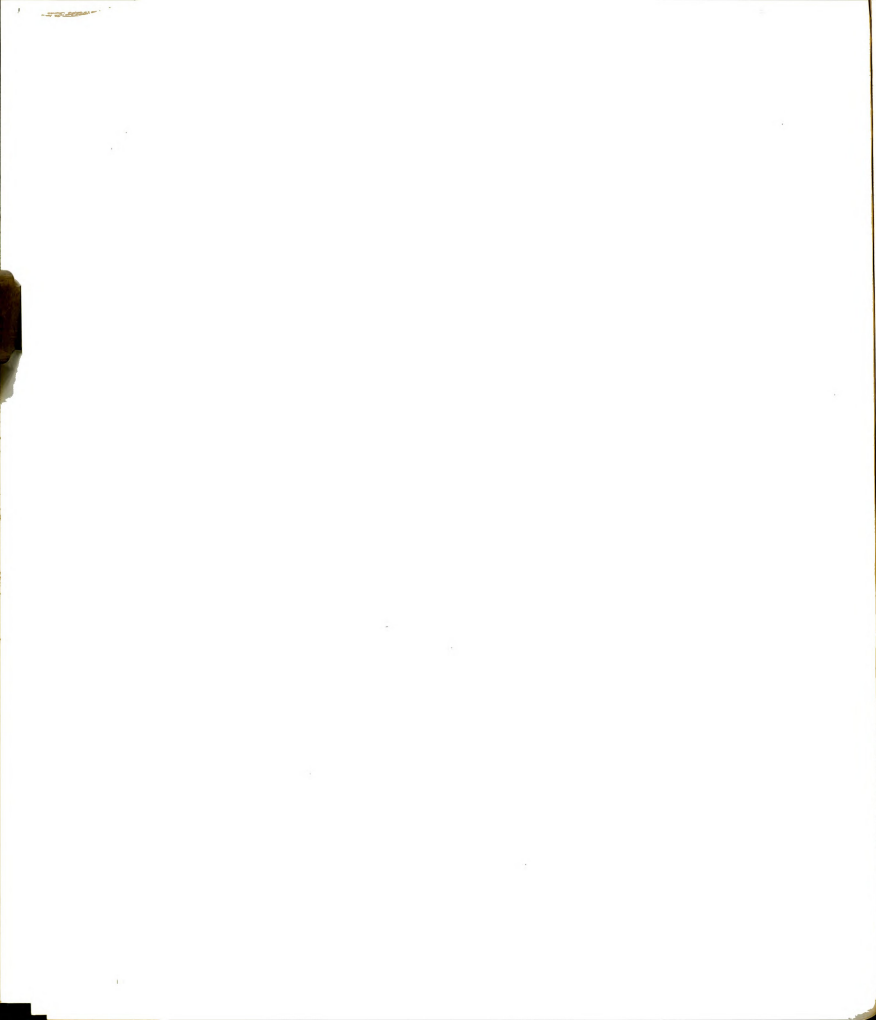
. . . for the reason that the Institute is almost entirely dependent upon the reaction of students and the public which in turn has a direct bearing on student enrollment and income, and for the reason that the Institute and its future program and progress will be materially benefited by the early completion of such proposed buildings.⁵²

Conversely, the final board of trustees meeting was held on July 28, 1950 with the final audit being accepted by that group.

⁵⁰Board of Control Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 9, July 1, 1950, President's office. The meeting was held in the Alumni building. Raymond W. Starr was elected chairman, Roy C. Vandercook as vice-chairman, Charles Fairman--secretary, and Mrs. Bess Fishman as treasurer.

⁵¹Ibid. Brophy was offered an annual salary of \$10,000.00 for the first three years and \$12,000.00 for the next two. The board of trustees had deposited \$20,000.00 with the State Treasurer to be made available to the Board of Control on July 1, 1950. The board of control immediately requisitioned that amount for operating expenses. For daily funds the board secured an open account in the Big Rapids Savings Bank (now the First National Bank) in the name of the board of control and all funds received by the institute, except those from the State, were to be deposited there.

⁵²Ibid.



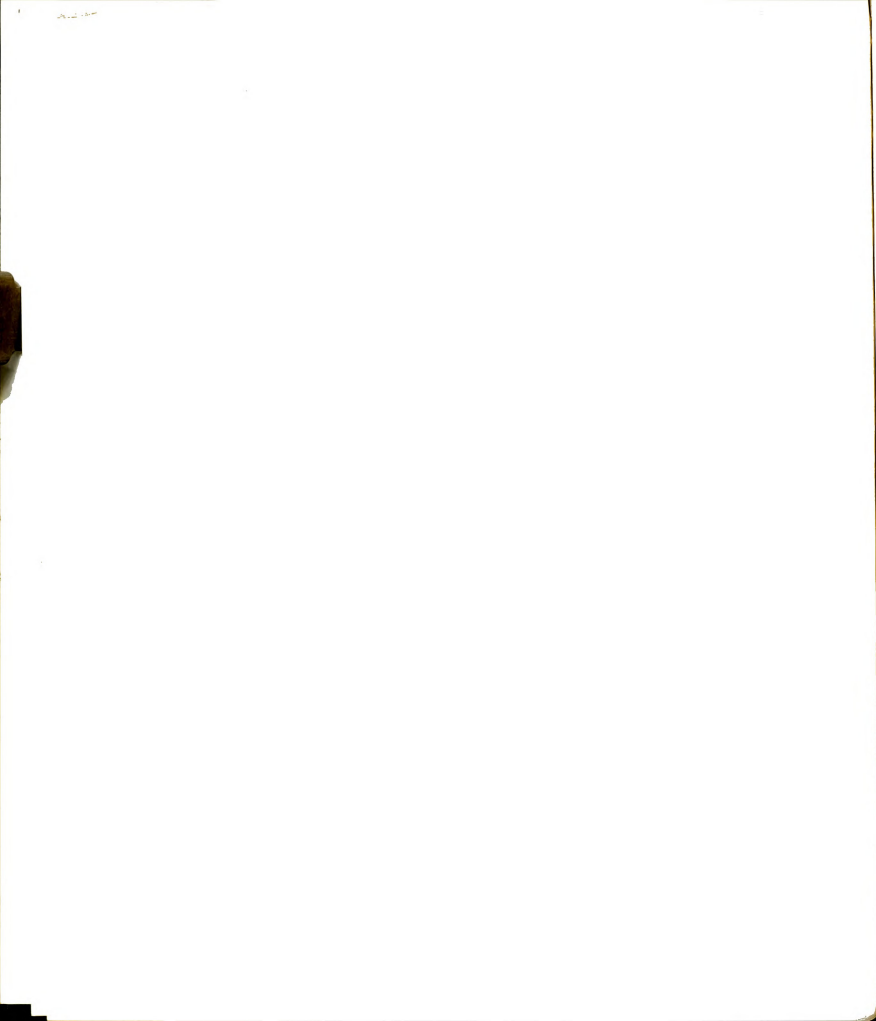
Be it Resolved that it is the intent and purpose of the Executive Committee . . . to acknowledge satisfactory fulfillment of President Byron J. Brophy's contract in all respects, to terminate all responsibility of President Brophy to this committee and to the Ferris Institute, a private corporation from and after June 30, 1950 and confirming previous arrangements directly with Mr. Brophy to deal exclusively with the Board of Control of Ferris Institute from and after said date, EXCEPT, however as to such matters of a "wind up" nature, not now in contemplation of the parties and concerning which it may be legally necessary for President Brophy to meet with this committee.⁵³

An era had ended. Beginning in 1884 as a proprietary adventure, the school had lived a precarious existence, delicately treading through periods of near bankruptcy, and always managing to save a small but significant bit of strength for the next crisis.

The new era began with the preparation of a budget for the new public institution.⁵⁴ Total estimated expenditures for the 1950-51 year were presented as follows:

⁵³Board of Trustees Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 106, July 28, 1950, President's office.

⁵⁴Budget requests included an estimate that seventeen classrooms would be needed; ten that held fifty students, five that held eighty, and two that held 100 students. Board of Trustees Minutes, pp. 84-85, n.d., President's office. Insurance claims amounted to \$269,688.74 on all buildings damaged in the fire. The total was presented to the State as insurance claim money, of which \$119,689.13 was returned to Ferris Institute to cover fire loss replacements. Later 141,000.00 was remitted to the State and added to the building appropriations. Letter, Byron J. Brophy to Donald Powers, Aug. 31, 1951, President's office. Powers was the Supervisor of the Systems Section Accounting Division in the Department of Administration at Lansing.



EXPENDITURES

Salary	\$318,380.00
Supplies	24,363.00
Equipment	32,351.00
Repairs--Improvements, Maintenance	25,350.00
Operational Expense	69,347.00
Total Instruction Expen- ditures	\$469,691.00
Total Other Services	107,200.00
Transfer to Reserve for Building Fund	4,910.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES	\$570,891.00 ⁵⁵

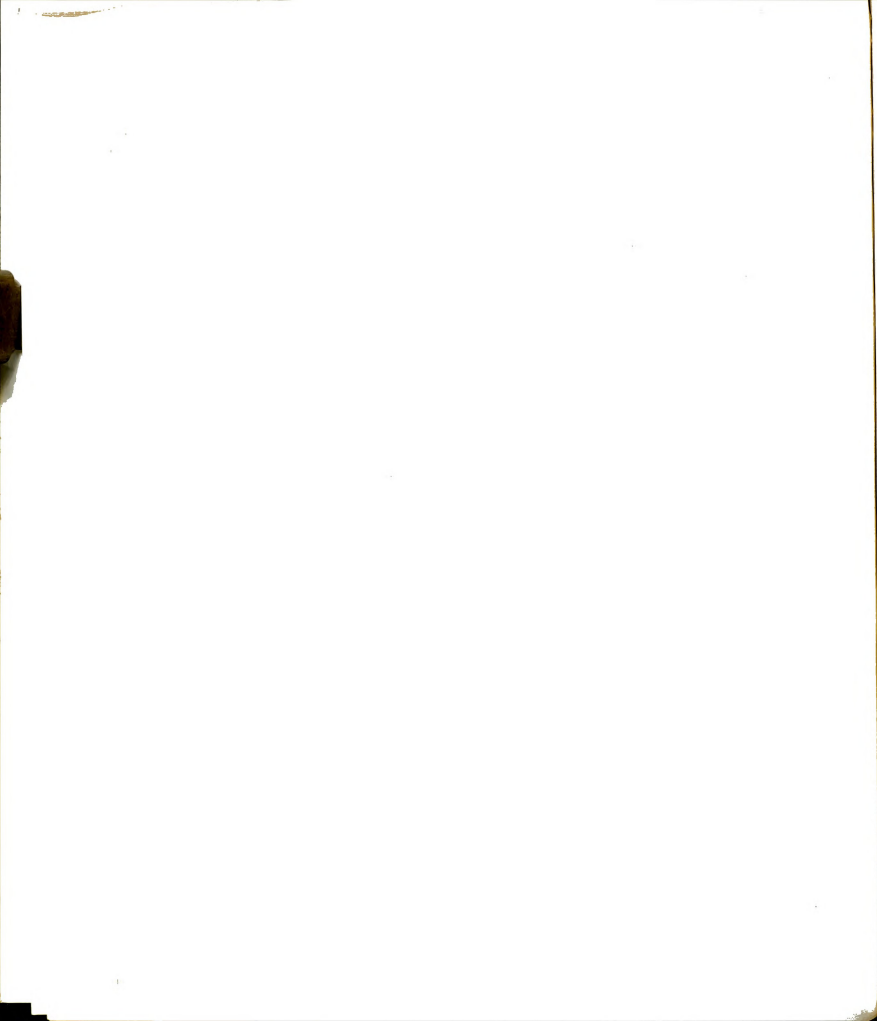
Source: Board of Control Minutes 1950-1954, President's office.

The Changing Campus Scene

Signs of new life on the Big Rapids campus were greatly attributed to returning veterans and the spirit they brought with them. Could it be that part of a revived school spirit were the series of "Girl of the Week" pictures and cartoon depicting contemporary social and political events?⁵⁶ Could it be that the presence of veterans on campus increased the possibilities of changing

⁵⁵Ernst and Ernst, the auditors listed the average term enrollment for 1947-1948 (twelve months) as 952; 1948-1949 as 943; and 1949-1950 (10 1/2 months) as 934. It was also reported that a comparison of income in past years had been made to better prepare the present one. Totals reported were \$401,042.00 for the 1947-1948 year, \$394,519.00 for 1948-1949, and \$464,691.00. Board of Control Minutes 1950-1954, President's office.

⁵⁶Ferris Torch, I, no. 5 (March 11, 1947), p. 2. The male to female ratio at this time was 10-1. Ibid., I, no. 1 (Sept. 17, 1946), p. 4.



the Torch to meet contemporary needs and desires? Whatever the reasons, commentary in the student paper did show concern for those topics which might interest veterans.⁵⁷

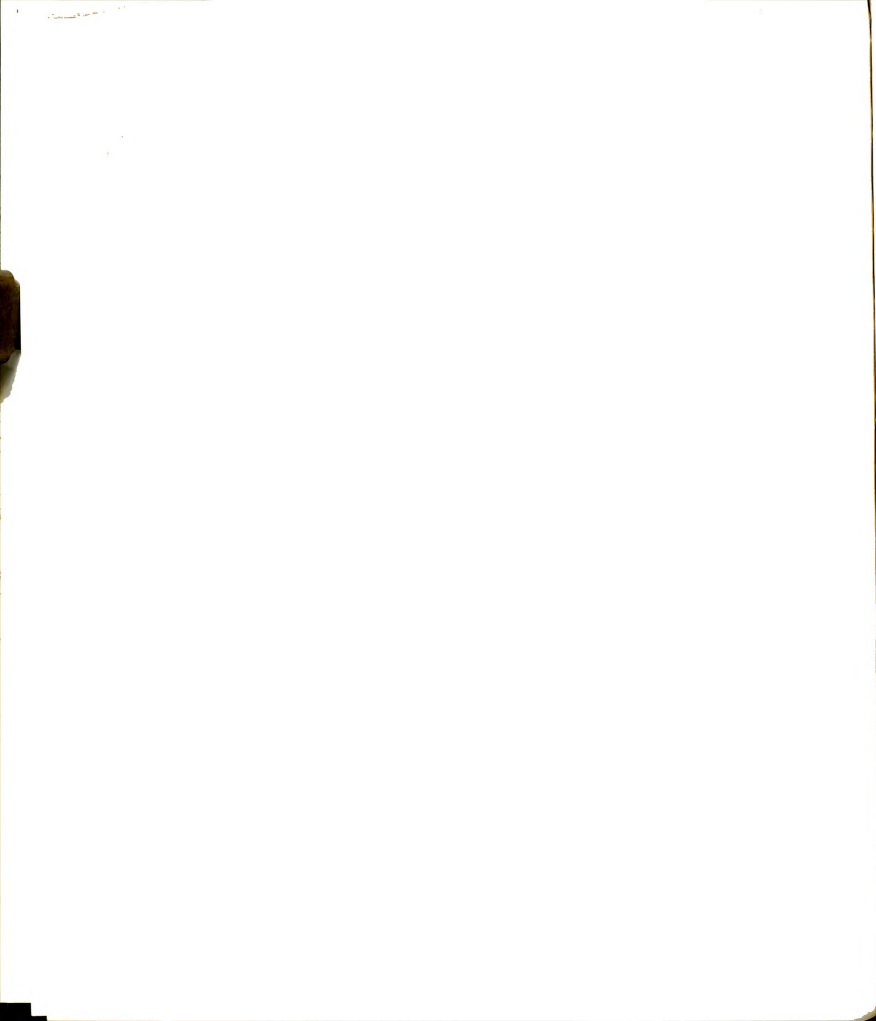
Curricular changes kept pace with others designed to aid the veteran in securing an education. An example of one new area of study for the school was the Trade and Industry program, offering radio, electric appliance, refrigeration, and watch and clock repair.⁵⁸ Put in the broad perspective of school policy this program was a significant one.

Ferris is, in the broader sense of the word, essentially a vocational school. It aims to develop in each student the ability to meet the technical requirements of an income-producing position, and to give some the basic general education prerequisite for entrance to advanced professional schools of law, medicine, nursing, engineering and the like.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Specific examples of changes adopted to meet veterans needs included a 50 per cent reduction in tuition to wives of regularly enrolled veterans of World War II. Ferris Torch, I, no. 3 (Feb. 11, 1947), p. 1. Another change was the organization of a Ferris Institute Social Council, a joint faculty-student group to plan student activities. Ferris Torch, I, no. 6 (March 25, 1947), p. 1.

⁵⁸Ferris Institute School Bulletin-Catalog 1946-1947, p. 38.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 4. In comparison the 1948-1949 Bulletin claimed that Ferris was: "... in the broader sense of the word, essentially a technical college," p. 5. No rationale was given for this descriptive change. The veterans trade training program was licensed by the Michigan Board of Education under Public Laws 16 and 346. During



Another curricular change occurred in the physical education program which initiated an education minor including courses in gymnastics, football, basketball, officiating, first aid and accident prevention, and the administration of physical education.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, students⁶¹ were organizing an Episcopal Canterbury club, a school Christmas celebration,⁶² a Ferris Newman club for Catholic students to include corporate communions, study clubs, retreats, and parties.⁶³ However, these events were only minor indications of student interest in school activities. A key event was the organization of a student government, supported by 92 per cent of all departments, with 58 per cent of the students

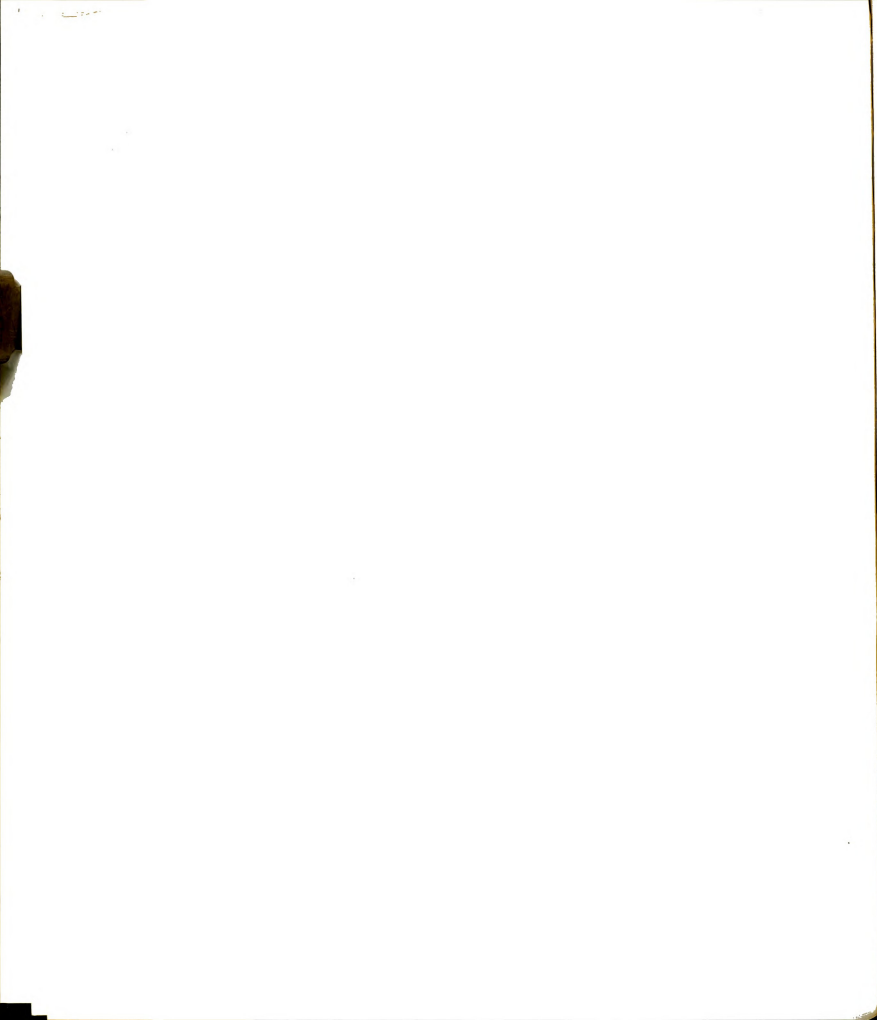
the winter of 1947 there were seventeen students in radio repair, three in electrical appliance repair, twenty-six in refrigeration repair, forty-seven in drawing, and forty-five in watch repair. Ferris Torch, I, no. 2 (Jan. 21, 1947), p. 1.

⁶⁰Ferris Torch, I, no. 6 (March 25, 1947), p. 4.

⁶¹Ferris Torch, II, no. 3 (Nov. 19, 1947), p. 2. There was an increase in student enrollment this year. The total of 1,124 students was surpassed only by the 1915 figure. The numbers included 1,036 men, 892 of whom were veterans, and 88 women. Pharmacy enrolled 335, Commerce 550, College Preparatory 117, and Trade and Industry 122 students. Ferris Torch, II, no. 1 (Oct. 4, 1947), p. 1. There were forty-three staff and faculty members to operate the school. Ferris Institute School Bulletin-Catalog 1947-1948.

⁶²Ferris Torch, II, no. 5 (Dec. 18, 1947), p. 1. Celebration was scheduled as an all-day affair on December 18.

⁶³Ibid.



agreeing to hold office if elected, and 94 per cent agreeing to support a student government, if started.⁶⁴

Immediate concerns for the student government included problems of rent and smoking regulations. The Torch reported that:

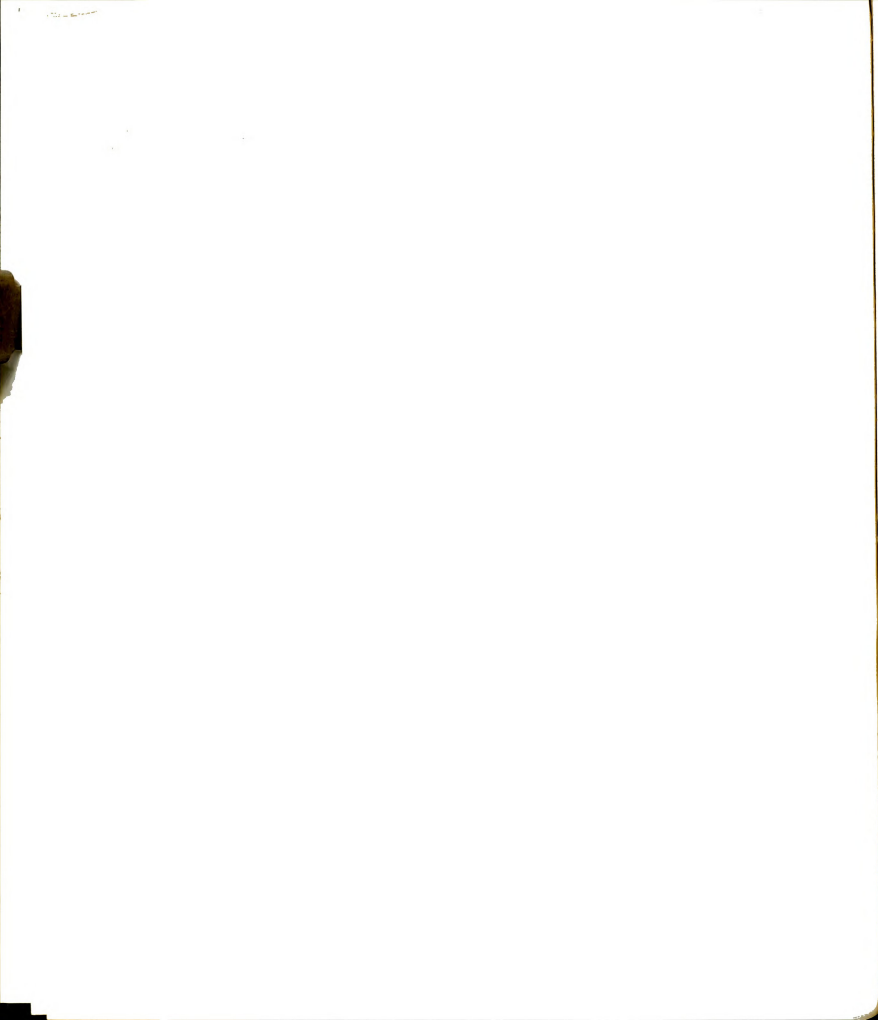
. . . students today feel that in some instances Big Rapids is biting the hand that is feeding it. The ex-G.I. has either \$65 or \$90 a month. . . . A high proportion of this small income must go each month for rent, which even in these inflationary days is shocking. Student's can't understand why the rent for small, often shabby apartments or rooms should be as high or higher than they have found in large industrial cities.⁶⁵

Despite more liberal policies, regulations about student smoking remained a source of contention. Taking issue with these policies was a transfer student from a church-affiliated school who was surprised to see people smoking on campus. The student offered the suggestion that there be: "No Smoking on campus, inside or out of buildings by students or instructors and faculty."⁶⁶

⁶⁴Ferris Torch, II, no. 8 (Feb. 12, 1948), p. 1. Class organization included Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors, in Commercial, Pharmacy, College Preparatory and Trade and Industry departments. Ibid., II, no. 9 (Feb. 26, 1948), p. 1. The Student Council Constitution was ratified on May 6, 1948. Ibid., II, no. 14 (May 6, 1948), p. 1.

⁶⁵Ferris Torch, II, no. 6 (Jan. 15, 1948), p. 2.

⁶⁶Ibid., II, no. 7 (Jan. 29, 1948), p. 4. This suggestion was not accepted by student or faculty organizations.



A complete athletic program was initiated and developed at Ferris in 1941. Varsity football, basketball, and baseball were played, while intramural programs were organized to provide recreation for other students. The Scarlet and Gold football squad recorded a 6-2-1 season which was highlighted by a 39-0 victory over a University of Wisconsin extension team.⁶⁷ The basketball and baseball teams compiled 5-18 and 5-4 records respectively.⁶⁸

The 1,113 students enrolled fall term 1948 were greeted with newly painted classrooms, improved class materials, and new machines in the commercial department.⁶⁹ Noticeable changes in the composition of those 1,113 students were recognized by the Torch.

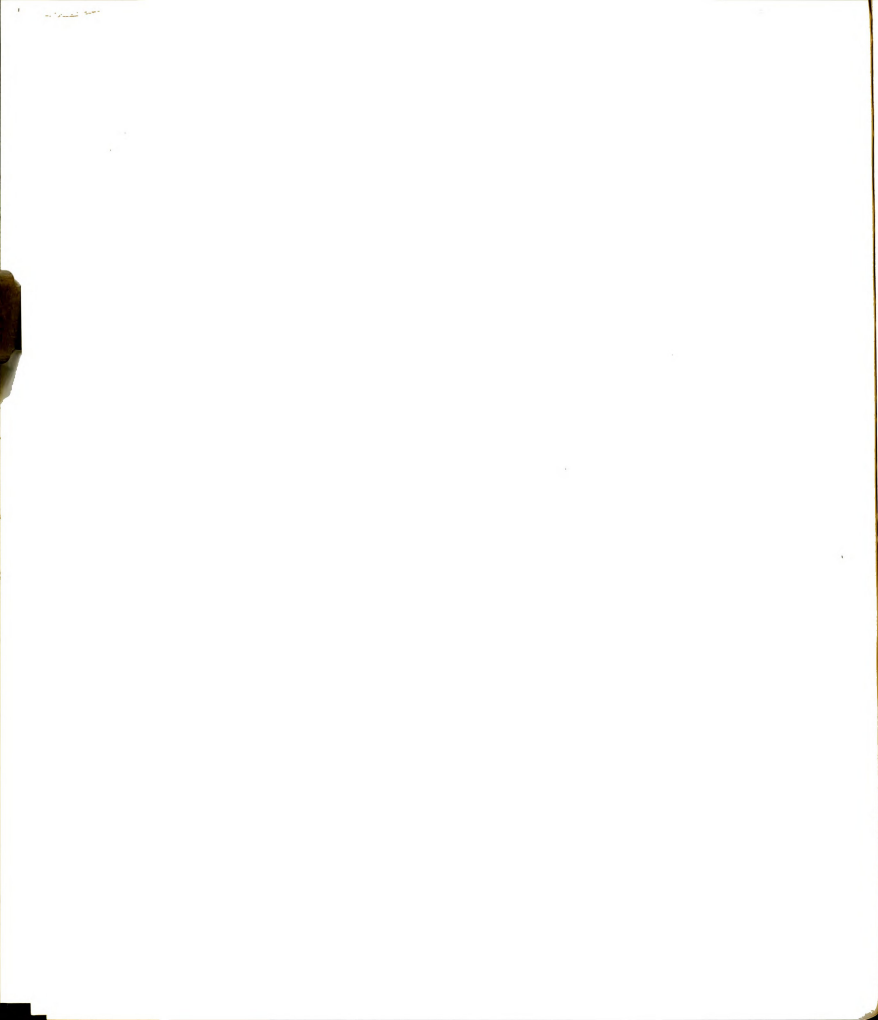
Everywhere at Ferris, we can read the signs evidencing the coming of a newer generation - the non-veteran. The first evidence is the new look in hirsutism [beards]. Replacing the five o'clock-every o'clock shadow, is the smooth, once a week, whether I need it or not shave.

The fraternities do their part in furthering the distinction. Repelled momentarily by the veterans aversion to the old sadistic tendencies, the fraternities are now in their

⁶⁷Ibid., II, no. 3 (Nov. 19, 1947), p. 1.

⁶⁸Ferris Torch, II, no. 6 (Jan. 15, 1948), p. 6. A new bus was purchased for \$9,400.00 by Big Rapids businessmen to take the athletic teams to away games. Ibid., II, no. 7 (Jan. 29, 1948), p. 1. Homecoming festivities were also resumed after the war. Ibid., II, no. 1 (Oct. 4, 1947), p. 1.

⁶⁹Ferris Torch, III, no. 1 (Oct. 14, 1948), p. 1. Of the 1,113 reported students, seventy-three were females.



full glory, exerting their power on the new crop of fair young pledges. Instead of the note pads and buttons of last year, we now see everywhere, spinhead caps and shoe-shine kits.

By far the most appreciated example of the dropping percentage of veterans is the sharp clicking of heels and the sight of skirts and sweaters hurrying through the hall. Surely, those girls can't all be veterans.⁷⁰

Student political activity on campus focused on the Thomas Dewey, Harry Truman United States Presidential election. Some students conducted a political rally and mock election in which Dewey emerged the victor.⁷¹ As one student recalled, this result was not an accurate portrayal of the national election results.

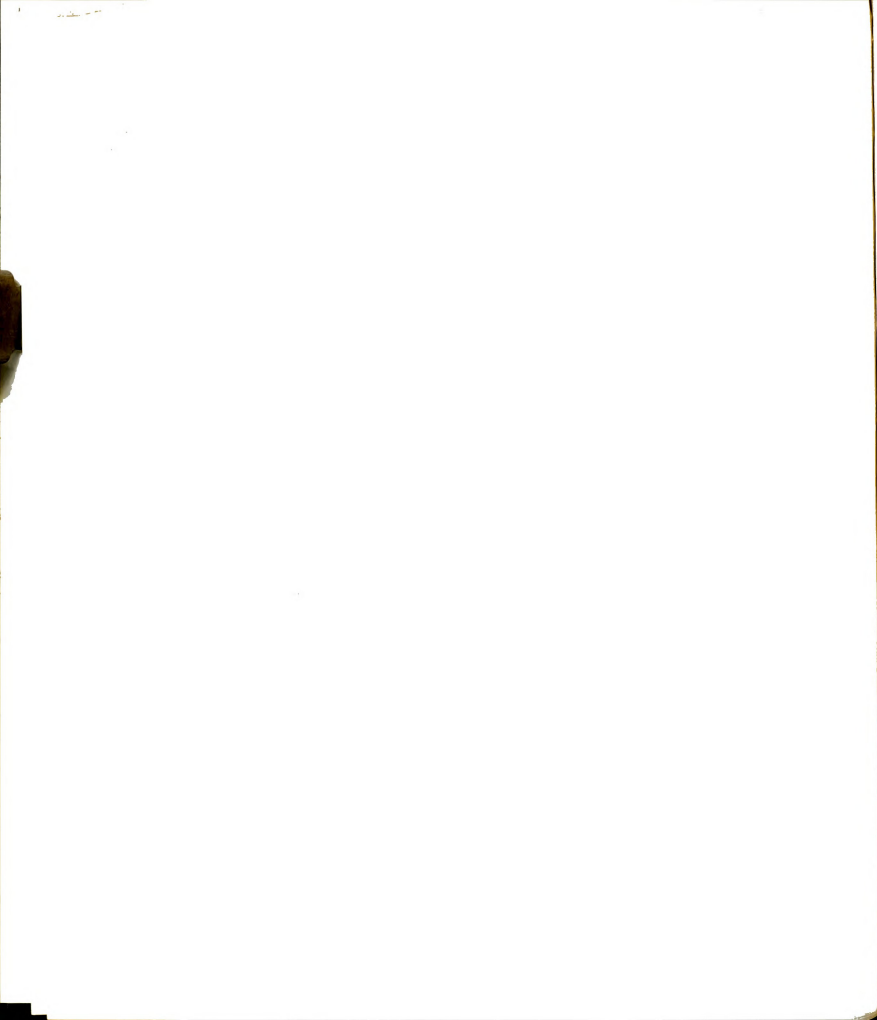
Young Tom Dewey
Went to the White House
To sit and be leader alone
But when he got there
Old Harry was there
So a sadder Tom Dewey went home.⁷²

Advertising the school as a State institution the Board invited all persons to visit the Ferris display at the Central Michigan Fair. The display included pictures,

⁷⁰ Ibid. Some credence was given to this view by the precedent making entrance of Gloria L. Gordon in the Trade and Industry Clock and Watch Repair program. Ibid., p. 3.

⁷¹ Ferris Torch, III, no. 2 (Oct. 28, 1948), p. 1.

⁷² Ferris Torch, III, no. 3 (Nov. 11, 1948), p. 2. Another political activity was a Canterbury club peace rally held in the gymnasium. The topic of discussion was "What the United Nations Is and What It May Become." Ferris Torch, III, no. 3 (Nov. 11, 1948), p. 1.



textbooks, and faculty and student presentations about the school's program.⁷³ Describing the school as coeducational, nonsectarian and approved for the training of veterans, Brophy claimed that a complete job placement center, and a guidance and counseling program were available to students.⁷⁴

Other developments included the establishment of a printing program. After studying printing programs at Dunwoody Institute and the Milwaukee Trade School, Ralph Pattullo concluded that a similar program was desirable for Ferris Institute.⁷⁵ A resolution was introduced by the Board of Directors of the Michigan Press Association stating that:

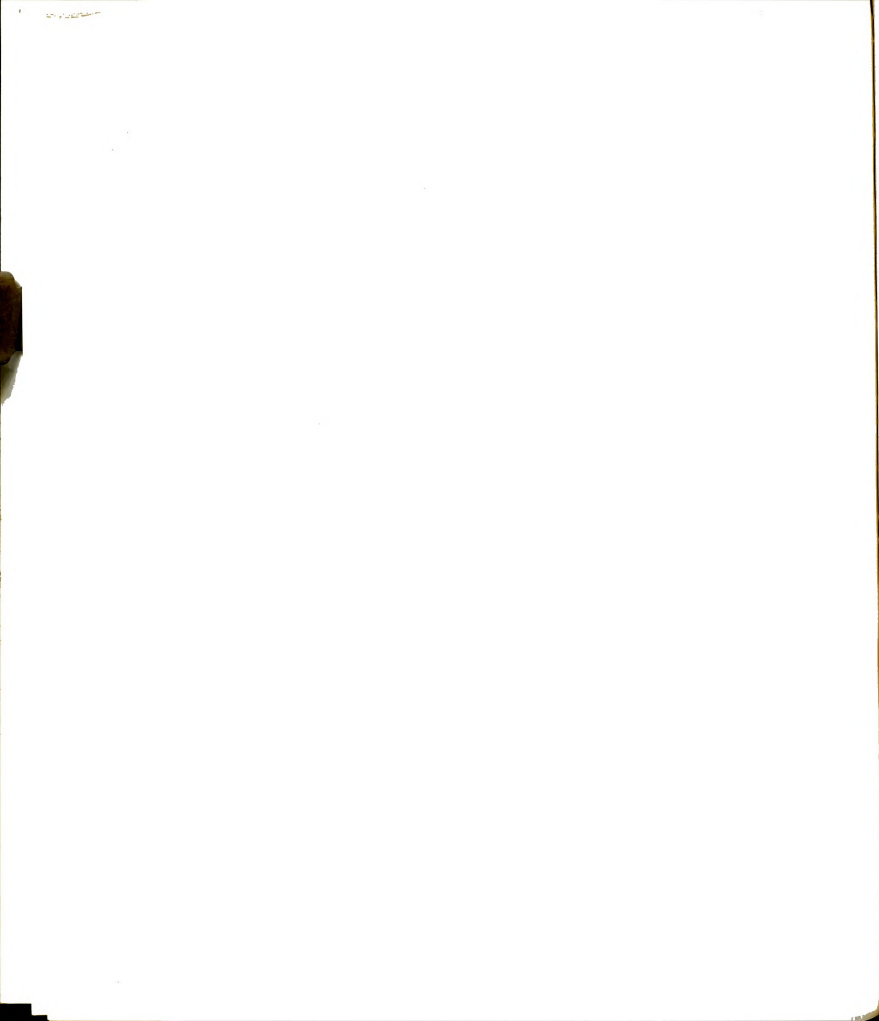
The Board of Directors feels that establishment of printing training courses at Ferris Institute, . . . would offer vocational opportunities for many young men, and that training of veterans already under way at the Michigan Veteran's Vocational School, Pine Lake Doster, would not be in conflict with such training at Ferris Institute.⁷⁶

⁷³ Letter, Byron J. Brophy to the Patrons of the Central Michigan Fair, n.d.; Folder FIFS, D3d8.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Executive Committee Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 71, Feb. 17, 1950, President's office.

⁷⁶ Ibid. On Dec. 6, 1950 it was reported that there was a possibility of the Veterans Administration closing the Pine Lake School and that much of the equipment could be used at Ferris Institute. It was also mentioned that the State government budget of 1950-1951 carried an item concerning the possible administration of Pine Lake by Ferris Institute. Executive Committee Board Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 29, Dec. 6, 1950, President's office.



While these many possibilities were being considered, fall term 1950-51 opened with the sound of power shovels, bulldozers, and other earth moving equipment ringing in the ears of Ferris faculty and students.⁷⁷ The long awaited building program had started with construction of the East building. The Torch reported that:

It is the first objective of the administration to get the students out of the barracks as soon as possible and into the East Wing, which will be the classroom wing for the College of Commerce and College Preparatory departments. It will also include a Physics laboratory among its 26 rooms.⁷⁸

The West Building was to be similarly constructed, and housing the offices of the Deans of Women and Men, Alumni Secretary, Dramatics department, the Torch, and the Women's League.⁷⁹

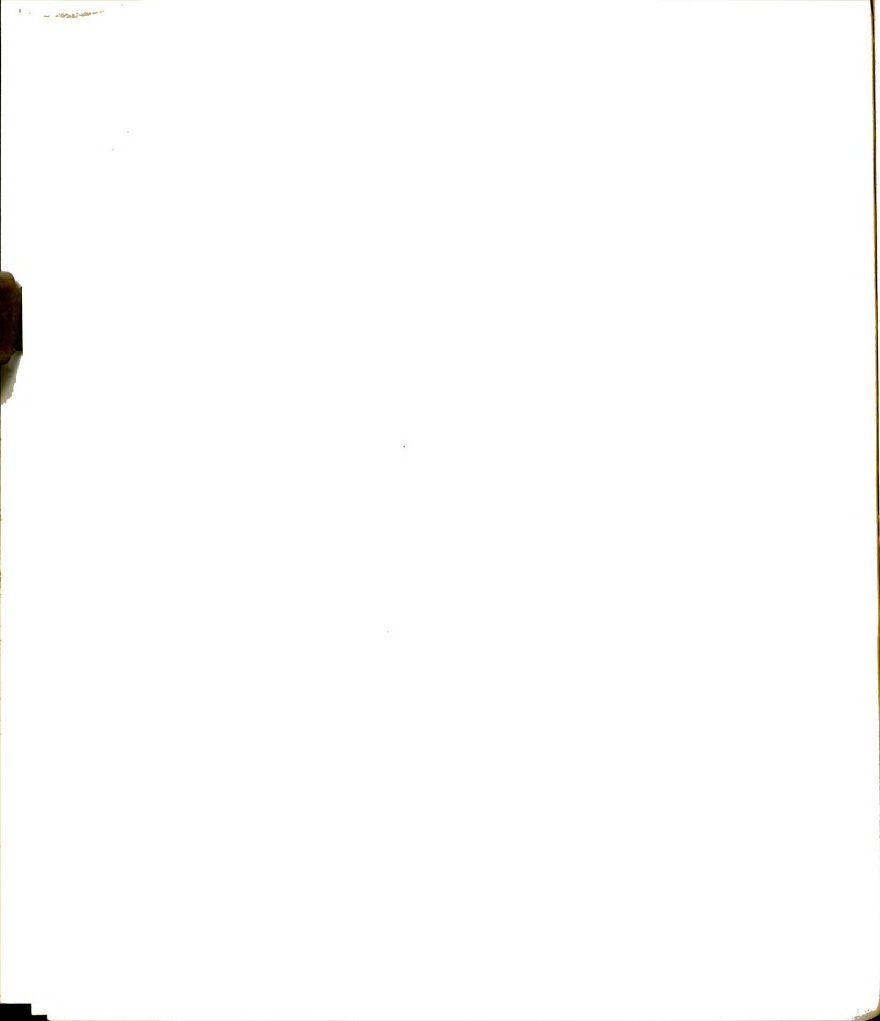
The progress of construction was reported by Charles Fairman who claimed that as of Dec. 6, nearly all of the foundation of the new building was completed.⁸⁰ At the same time, prospective cornerstone ceremonies for the East

⁷⁷Ferris Torch, V, no. 1 (Oct. 6, 1950), p. 1.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid., V, no. 2 (Oct. 23, 1950), p. 1. The library was located on the second floor. The cost of the East and West buildings was \$1,091,000.00 or \$195,000.00 over the original estimates of March, 1950. Ferris Torch, V, no. 7 (Feb. 12, 1951), p. 1.

⁸⁰Executive Board Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 29, Dec. 6, 1950, President's office. The State legislature had appropriated \$900,000 for the East and West buildings



building were being formulated. The cornerstone would contain a Ferris Institute Catalog and brochures, articles of transfer, annual reports, a yearbook, a souvenir edition of the Pioneer, a copy of Public Act 114, a history of Ferris Institute, a current personnel list, photographs, and a map of the campus.

Construction of the East and West buildings, however significant to the school's development, did not occupy all of the faculty and students' time. The yearbook, which had not been published for twenty years was reissued and named the Ferriscope.⁸¹ In addition, a combination of student and faculty talent led to the writing of an Alma Mater song for Ferris Institute.

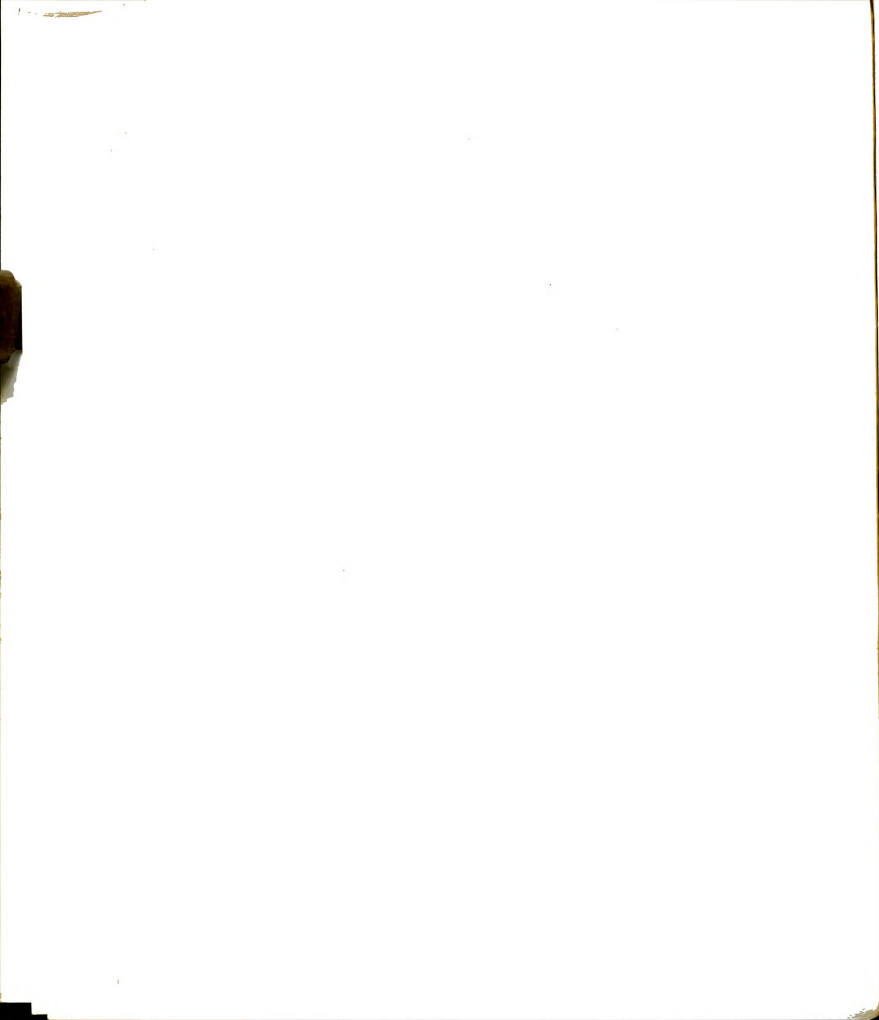
We're loyal to our Alma Mater,
We'll stand by her through ev'ry peril.
We're proud to be her sons and daughters,
Our spirit echoes through her halls.

with the bids being accepted on that amount. Building Committee Meeting, Official Minutes, p. 35, Dec. 29, 1950, President's office.

Strategies to meet the financial obligations related to construction included the authorization to Brophy to pay the State Treasurer \$141,000.00 to the credit of the Ferris Institute Building Project to supplement the \$900,000.00 authorized by the State. The \$141,000.00 was composed of \$81,000.00 from the Ferris Building Fund, \$60,000.00 from operating funds and the balance from the fire insurance fund.

It was also resolved that Brophy, Lowell H. DeMoss or Ralph E. Pattullo apply through the Citizens State Bank to the Federal Reserve Bank in Chicago, for authorization to exchange sufficient Series F, United States Savings Bonds to realize at least \$81,000.00 in cash. Executive Committee Meeting. Official Minutes, Jan. 8, 1951, President's office.

⁸¹Ferris Torch, V, no. 4 (Nov. 20, 1950), p. 1.



Though raged by fire, our Alma Mater,
Returns to triumph over all.
To you, F.I. we pledge our allegiance,
We'll e'er be at your call.

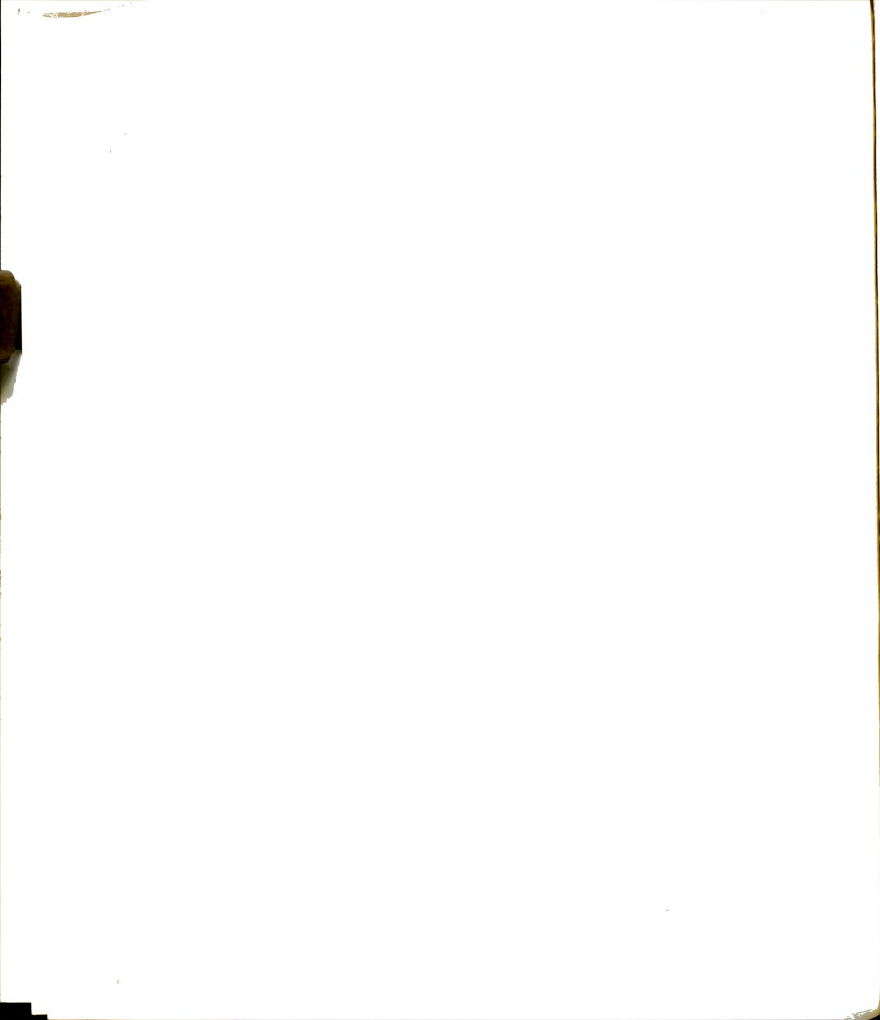
Within her walls we'll find the answer,
The spirit why we work and learn.
And why we strive and want to carry
A hope for freedom with concern.
We'll see that Ferris lives forever,
Her colors wave Crimson and Gold.
Within our hearts she'll be remembered;
Alma Mater as of old.⁸²

As previously mentioned, the imbalance in the male to female ratio at the school had created some dissent among students. When veterans returned from World War II they swamped the campus and subsequently changed the ratio even more drastically than in previous years. With the Korean conflict again upsetting the balance, those males remaining at the school asked that they be treated to more effeminate girls. They candidly reported their thoughts in the Torch.

Where is our co-ed faction of the student body? When I say that, it means, boy, what a let down. We have grown up with pictures of college girls (coeds) ever before us. Smart, chic, gals who are ever up on new fashions. If women think men are blind to the fact that hair styles, make-up and clothes are just standard they are so-o-o wrong. About the only thing that hasn't changed are babushkas.

Why the high school girls here in town are two full years ahead of you girls at Ferris. I can agree with the men's sentiments here having attended other colleges. Why only here close by at Alma you can see a girl and immediately

⁸² Ibid.



tell she's a co-ed. While here at Ferris you can't tell is she is going to chop wood or shovel coal, sometimes. We want a little more femininity. No wonder more girls don't come here.⁸³

In a counter article the twenty-four pleading males who write this article were reprimanded by the female "wood-choppers." "Okay, some changes should be made. Seeing that you are the first to bring up the subject, we nominate you . . . to start carrying them out. When you wear suits, we'll wear hats and heels."⁸⁴

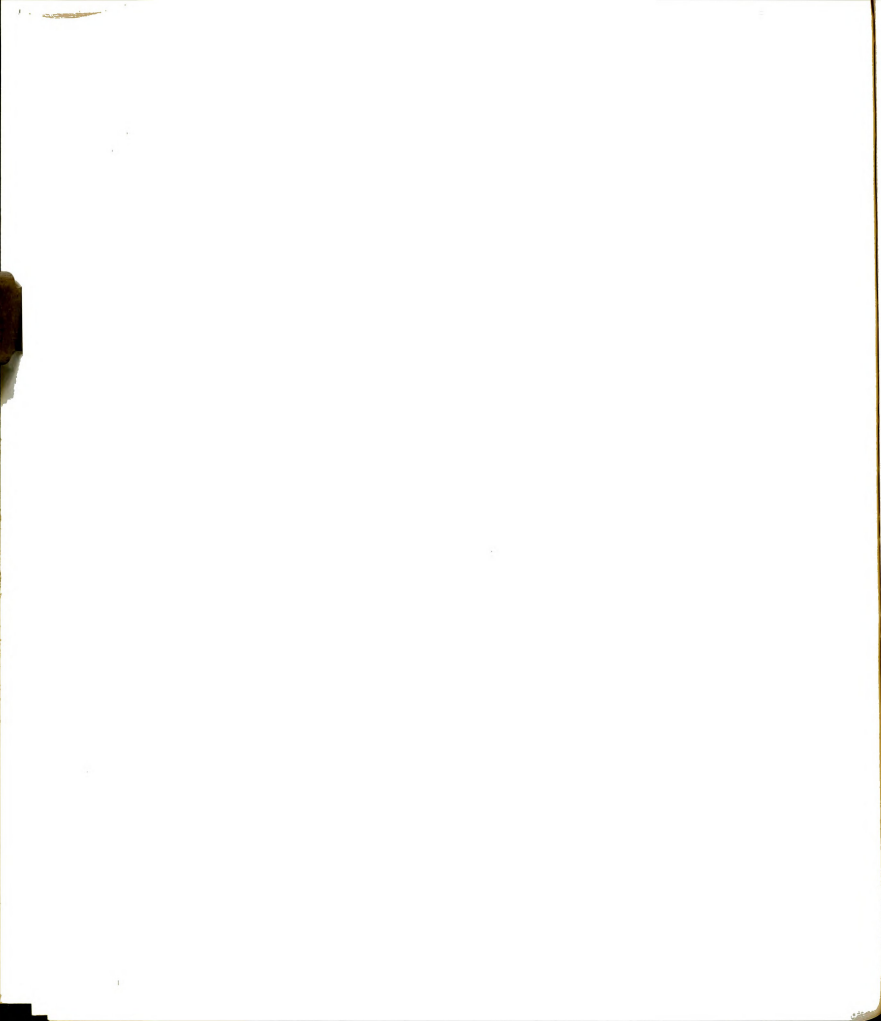
More amiable than these two groups of students were those participants of the first Big Rapids Business, Industry and Education Day. Represented at the festivities were the Chamber of Commerce, local schools, industry, business and Ferris Institute, all cooperating for the reported purposes of increasing the teacher's understanding of the American economic system, to secure more cooperation between industry and education, to assist in the development of educational programs based on cooperative planning with industry, and to realize opportunities which local business and industry offered graduates.⁸⁵

Amidst these encouraging signs of town-gown relations, came the news that Byron J. Brophy had submitted

⁸³Ferris Torch, V, no. 8 (March 2, 1951), p. 2.

⁸⁴Ferris Torch, V, no. 9 (March 30, 1951), p. 2.

⁸⁵Ibid., VI, no. 6 (Jan. 17, 1951), p. 1.



his resignation. He indicated that a nervous ailment was responsible for his decision to terminate his contract, effective June 30, 1952.⁸⁶ He also said that upon his resignation he would appoint Karl G. Merrill as acting president, with Lowell De Moss and Ralph E. Pattullo as part of the Executive committee.⁸⁷

A search for a new president was started, with all applications discussed in detail by the board. The initial screening reduced the number of candidates to eleven with Victor F. Spathelf the first choice and Dr. William Wood a close second.⁸⁸ After detailed discussion of their qualifications the committee read investigatory reports about both men. Further discussion led to the following conclusion. "Resolved that Victor F. Spathlef, now Director of Student Affairs at Wayne University, shall be and is hereby appointed President of Ferris Institute.
 . . . "⁸⁹

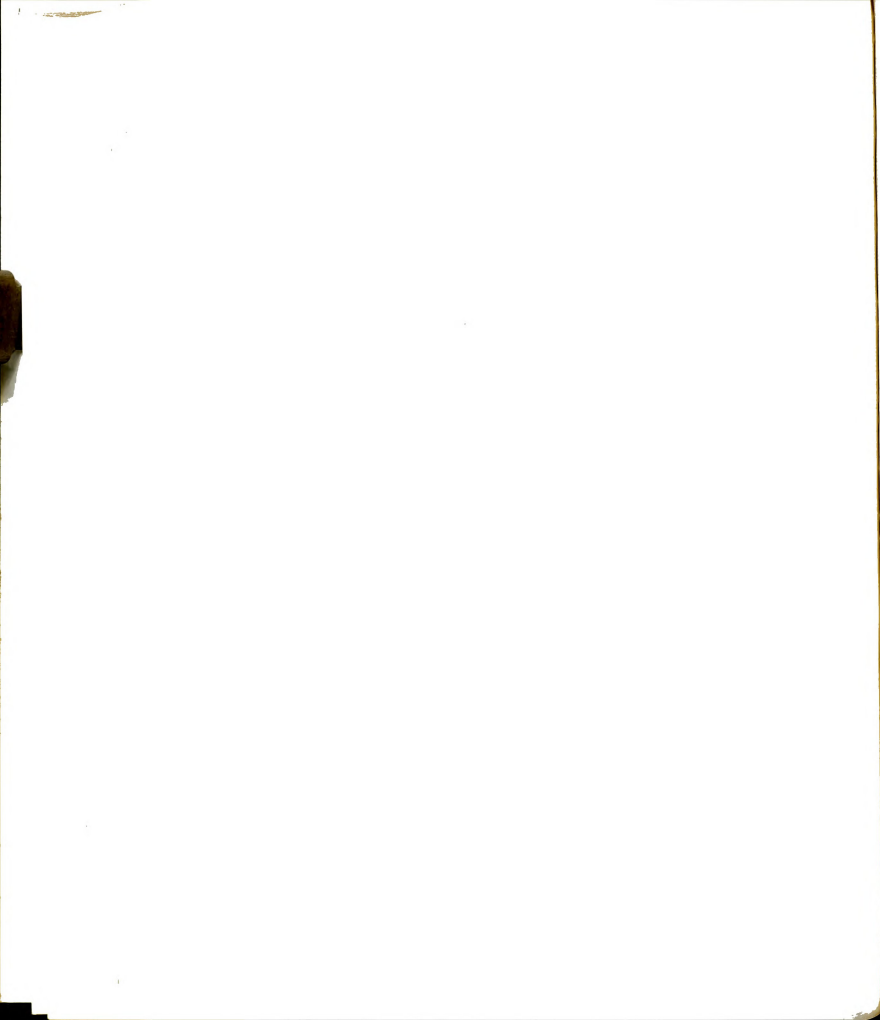
The struggle was over. Those precarious years when bankruptcy loomed large on the horizon were over. The days of insufficient enrollment were over. Morning exercises were also over. In short, the days of Ferris

⁸⁶Board of Control Meeting. Official Minutes, p. 67, Feb. 2, 1952, President's office.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Special Meeting of the Board of Control. Official Minutes, p. 76, June 21, 1952, President's office.

⁸⁹Ibid.



Institute as a private institution gave way to those as a publicly supported State school. And as the invitation to the dedication of that red brick structure with the Vermont purple slated roof in 1894 had stated: "The Old Order Changeth, Yielding Place to New."⁹⁰

⁹⁰First Catalog, 1894-1895.

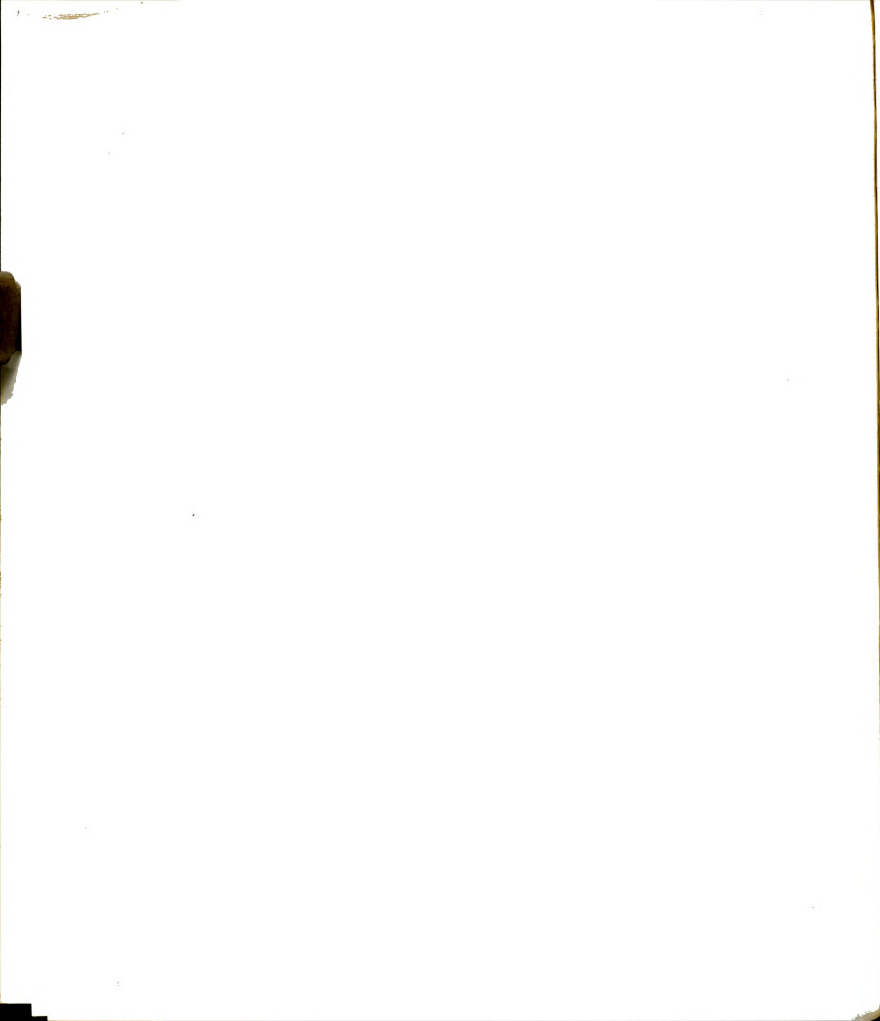
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

For the sixty-eight years covered in this study, Ferris Institute retained a deserved reputation as an opportunity school. Catering to children and adults from the backwoods of Michigan, Mr. Ferris was determined to provide reading, writing and arithmetic skills to those unfortunate enough to have missed formal educational opportunities. Furthermore, his persistent claim that age was no barrier to entering his school was verified by the few but significant numbers of illiterate adults who accepted Ferris' invitation to learn.

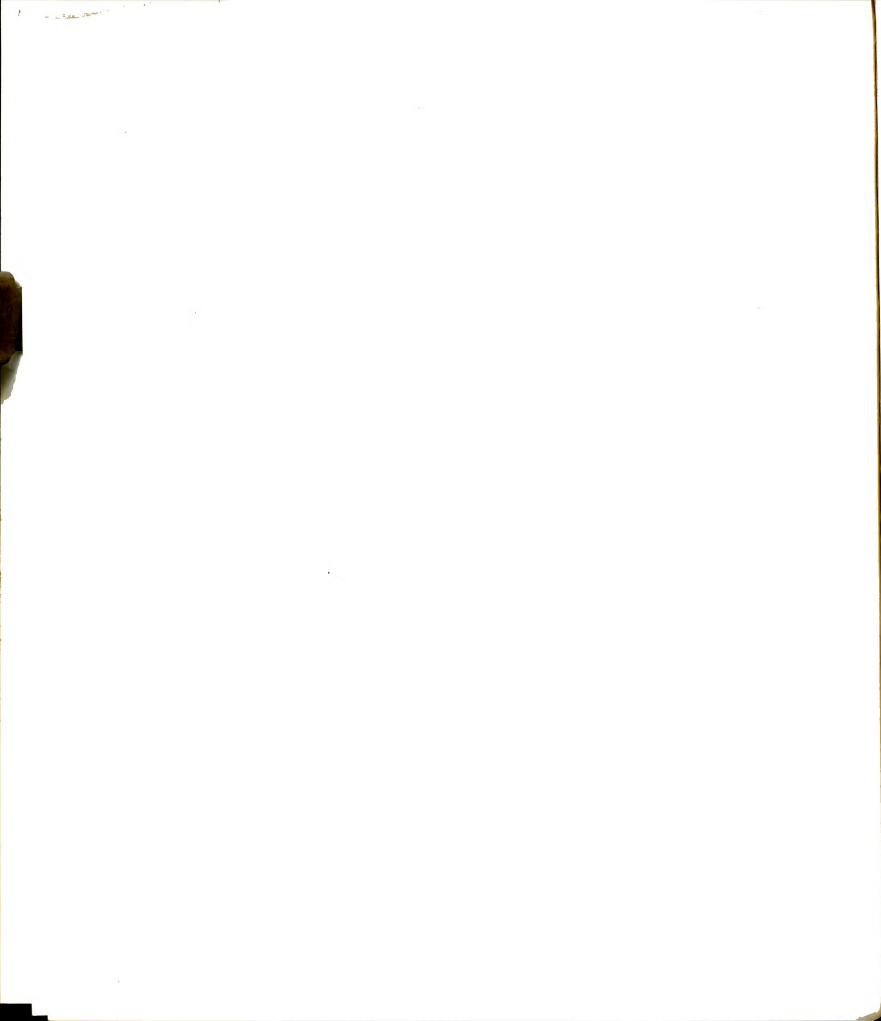
Essentially, all schools are opportunity institutions in some sense of that word. From those offering medical and law degrees to those providing kindergarten training all schools claim to give students the opportunity to spiritually, socially, economically or politically improve their positions in life.

Ferris Institute with its open-door admissions policy and varied programs could claim to offer opportunities in all of these areas. To a significant degree, economic, political and social growth was assured for students entering the school without basic communication,



mathematical, business and trade skills. Spiritual growth, although not measurable in the same manner was encouraged in the Bible study groups of Ferris and Masselink. It was these activities offered to thousands of eventually successful people which aided Ferris Institute in its unique contribution to the people of Michigan. Nevertheless, many educators praised the more publicized and status producing professional programs in pharmaceutical education and teacher preparation. However, it must be emphasized that the unique contribution of Ferris Institute was not with professional programs but with those terminal programs which aided students who otherwise might have floundered in the competition for jobs.

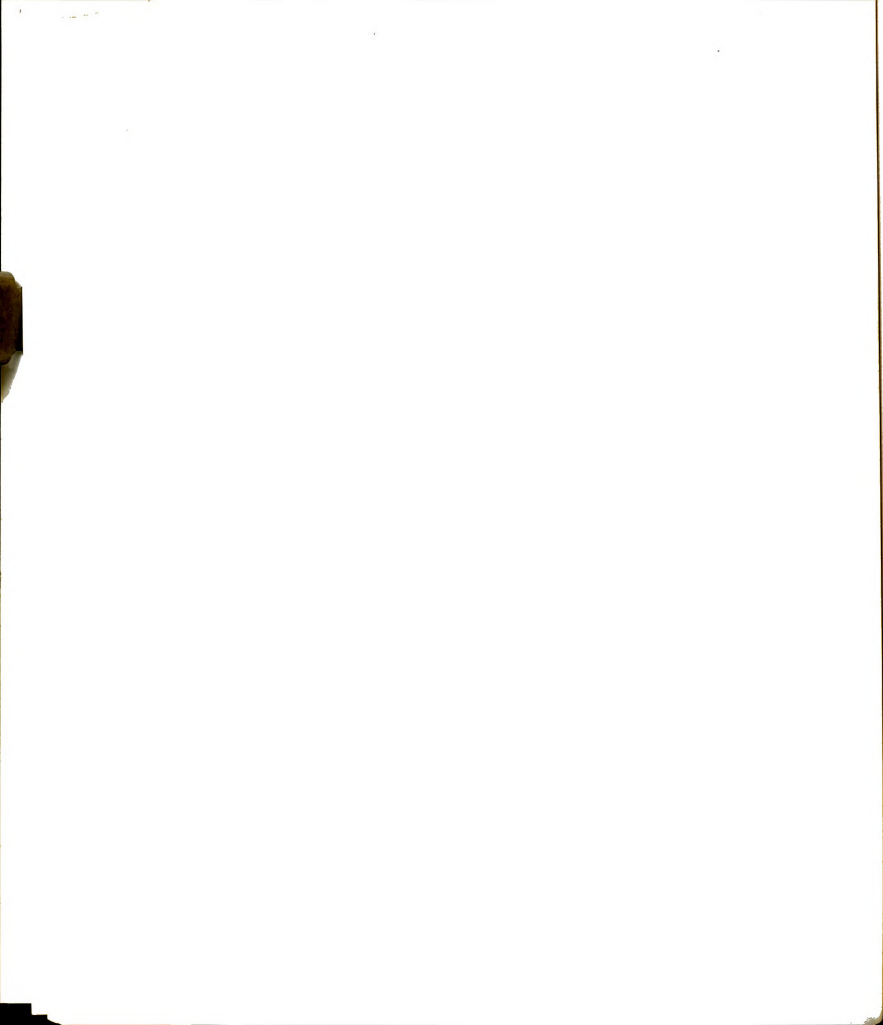
Unfortunately, the struggle for status among institutions of higher education has left schools like Ferris in an unfavorable position. Maintaining a liberal admittance policy throughout the period of this study Ferris administrators acquired a reputation of operating a "second chance" institution. Often viewed with disdain by liberal arts supporters these men faced the problem of claiming that "second chance" institutions provided valuable services for less academically and intellectually qualified students and "late-bloomers," while risking the consequences of being labelled a second rate institution. Some critics used the fewer numbers of Ph.D. recipients on the staff as evidence of the school's inferiority. The claim



was made in the face of evidence which negated a necessary relationship between the acquisition of such a degree and better teaching skills.

Indeed to equate the possession of a doctoral degree with teaching ability in history and telegraphy, for example, is unfair. The skills necessary to become a teacher of telegraphy cannot be equated with those necessary to become a teacher of history. Perhaps an example from art will aid in proving the point. Many art instructors in respected art departments view the possession of a Master's degree as both necessary and sufficient academic preparation for their job. In short, prior to passing judgment upon the lack of formal academic preparation of a faculty it is necessary to discern the purpose of the school and the nature of its program.

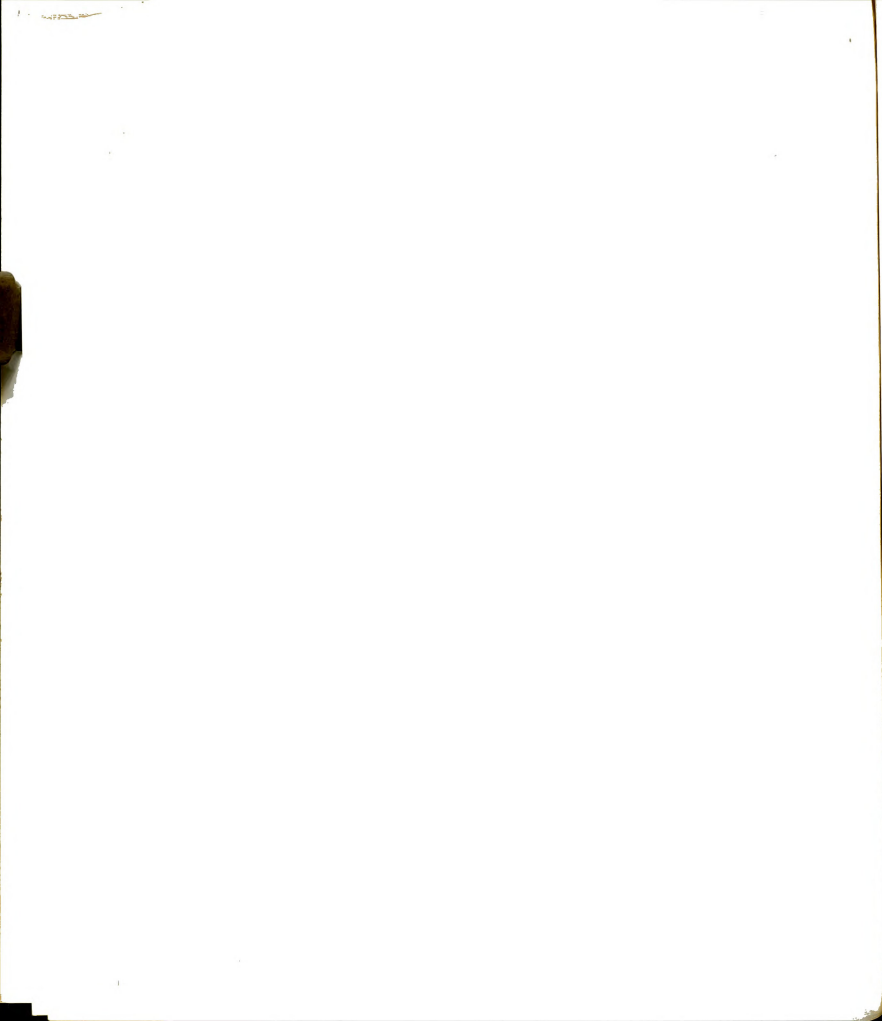
Ferris Institute also suffered from the stigma attached to manual training, vocational and industrial education by educators determined to limit higher education to what they considered academically justifiable programs. Many held this view despite the fact that industrial America needed and desired many of the skilled workers produced by Ferris Institute and similar schools. To combat the stigma attached to the school because of its industrial education programs, Mr. Ferris and others periodically reduced the emphasis on that portion of the curriculum and promoted teacher preparation and



pharmaceutical education. Indeed, the name change from Ferris Industrial to Ferris Institute was indicative of the fear of being associated with industrial education. The result of such practices was a masking of the original purposes of the school; namely, the promotion of industrial and business education. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that publicizing pharmaceutical and teacher preparation programs has lent a degree of academic respectability to the institution.

As a rural based private institution Ferris' services attracted a limited clientele. Prior to efficient transportation and communication systems, only students in nearby communities had easy access to the school. This geographical isolation from the more liberal urban, cultural and social elements in addition to the school's deliberate promotion of Christian morals and character development limited the range of experience to which students might be exposed.

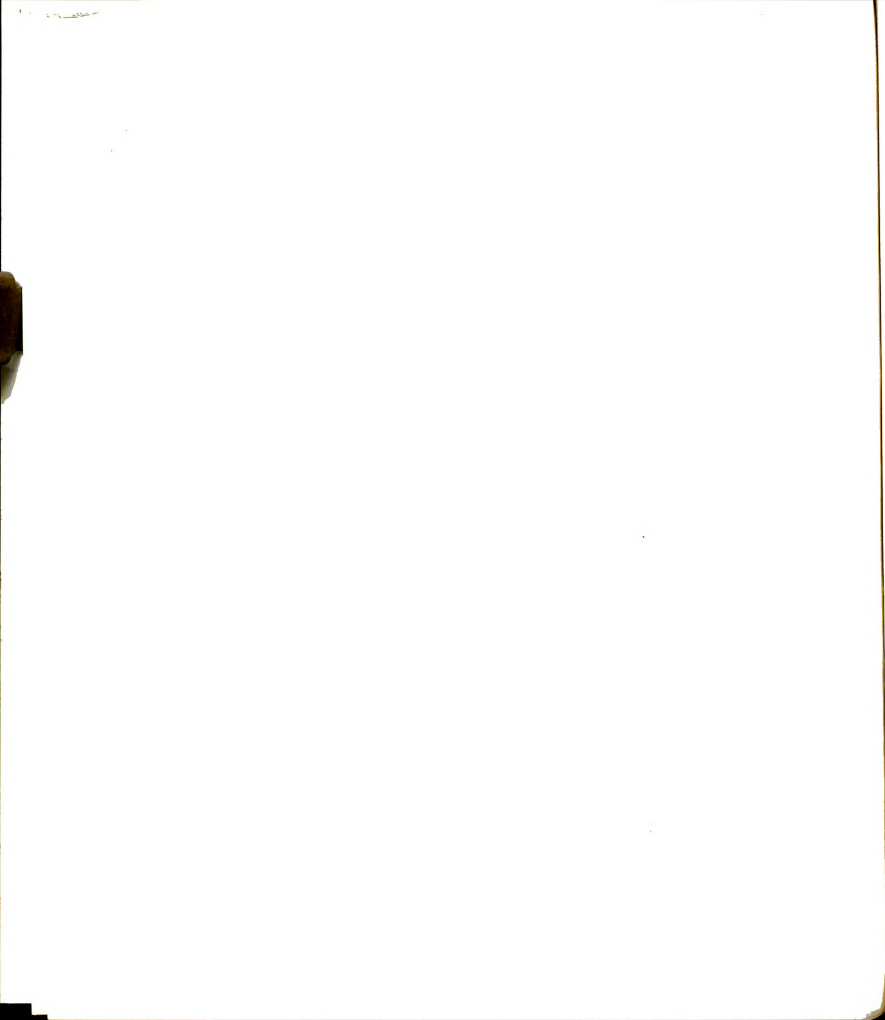
Of course, such limitations appealed to those parents and students who desired immunity from the supposedly morally corrupting influences of American society which many thought were more prevalent in the larger cities. For parents of coeds the protective policy of Mr. Ferris and his colleagues must have assured them that the virtue of their daughters was more secure than in a more heterogeneous and liberal institution. Notwithstanding the



liberalization of certain rules and regulations during the Brown, Ward and Brophy administrations, this protective policy designed to promote and maintain the Christian character of their students was present throughout the period of this study.

Could it have been otherwise in Big Rapids? It does not seem possible that a conservative rural town would tolerate an excessively liberal if not radically left student or faculty population. Indeed, as more students with questionable ideas and behaviors infiltrated local establishments, they would be suspected of being influenced by undesirable administrators and teachers. For some residents it might appear that school officials and faculty were deliberately undermining traditional values and behaviors. The presence of a large young college population in any small town brings fears of exuberant social and moral behavior. In a fundamentalist, non-drinking town like Big Rapids these fears would be increased.

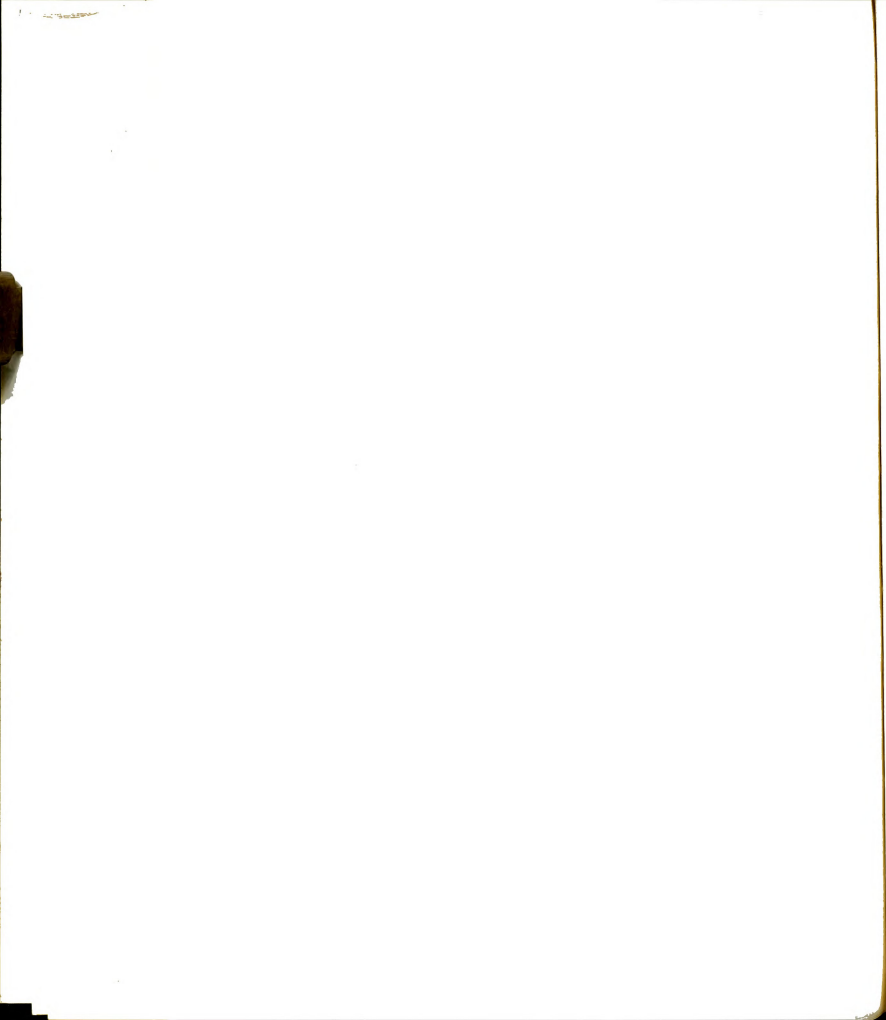
Still, the conservatism of Big Rapids does not reveal the total picture. The cognizance of an adaptability to the needs, requests and demands of state and national business establishments necessitated a flexible program at Ferris Institute. Efforts were also made by administrators and instructors to prepare students for the larger world outside Big Rapids.



As more students brought with them ideas and behaviors significantly different from those of former students a dilemma was created for school officials. If they permitted such students to enroll in accordance with the traditional admittance policy they risked the contamination or undermining of moral and social roles promoted by the town and school. If these roles were changed, the school faced the possibility that students supporting traditional roles would seek denominational schools and perhaps aid in placing these schools in a favorable competitive position for students.

If the more liberal students were refused admittance where would one find substitutes for a private school adventure whose continued existence was dependent upon tuition fees? Would rejected students seek other institutions and thereby aid their position in the competition for students? With the exception of the Ferris and Masselink years the admission of more liberal students increased each year. A struggling institution could hold its moral position as long as it survived. But that survival was not assured unless fee paying students in significant numbers were admitted to the school.

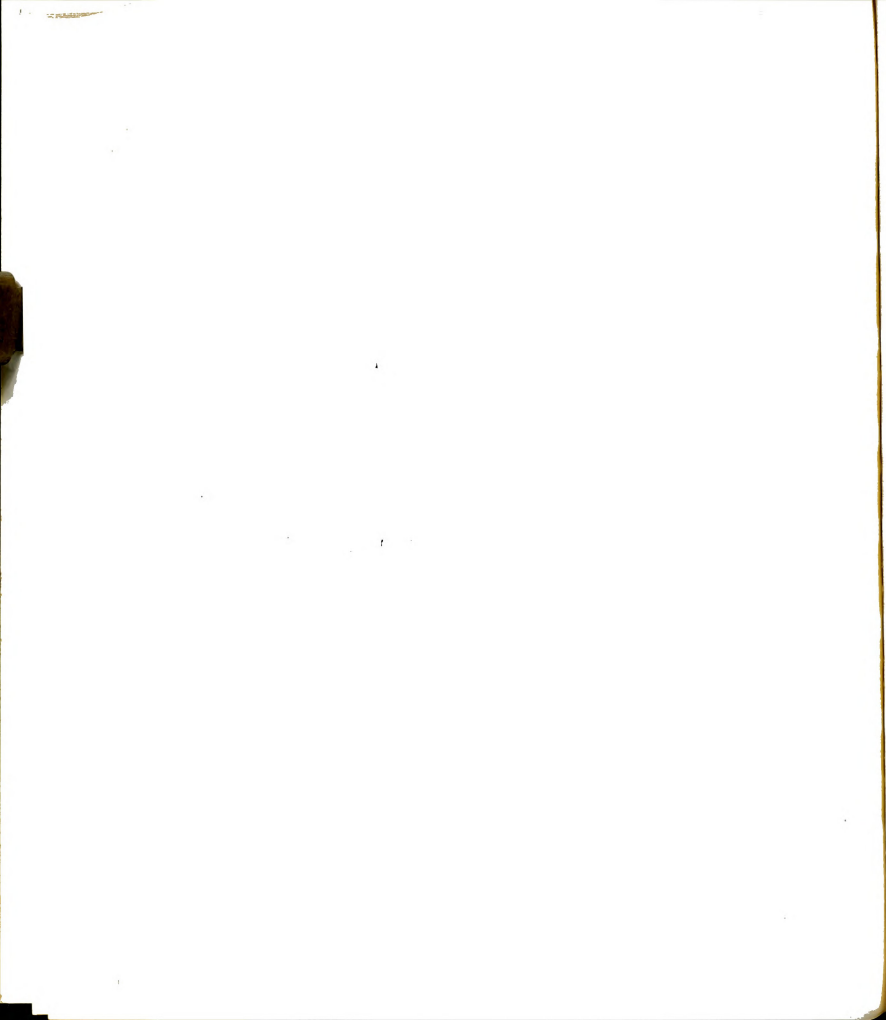
As suggested throughout the paper a key problem for Ferris Institute was that of maintaining a stable financial base. A problem common to many private schools, the struggle to achieve and maintain financial solvency has



taken its toll in the number of private institutions eliminated from the American educational scene. Some have catered to a wealthy elite, others have attracted members of specific religious groups while others have offered scholarships to talented students whose schooling was paid for by the tuition received from the wealthy elite.

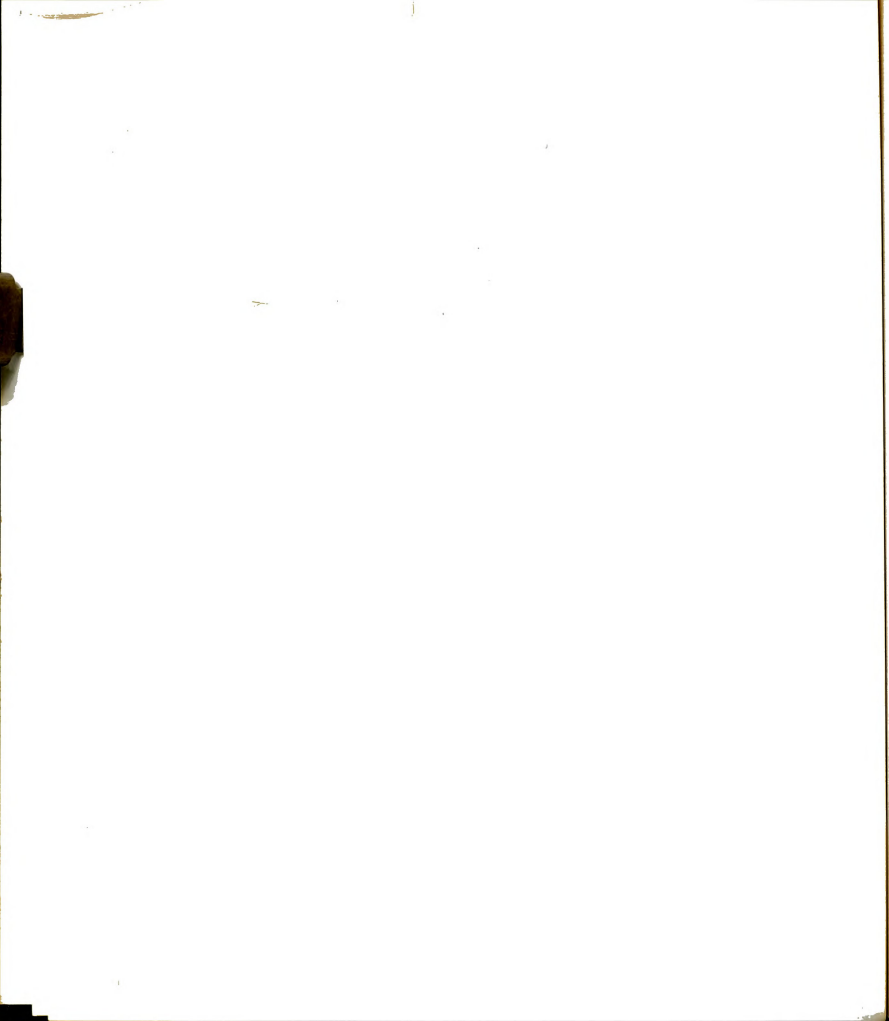
As a private school Ferris Institute was not in a favorable position. It attracted neither the wealthy elite nor sought the faithful as might a Methodist or Baptist school. It was in the position of being dependent upon tuition for financial stability while catering to those least able to contribute substantially to support the school. Given these problems it is remarkable that the school survived to become a public institution.

Administratively the school was governed by a series of men with varying academic and business skills but all dedicated to the proposition that all men should be given the opportunity to be in some significant manner educated. This thinking was most prevalent during the Ferris and Masselink years when the basic educational position of the school was established. Other administrators although dedicated to similar principles were victims of external circumstances and tenaciously fighting financial ruin with varying degrees of success. In the midst of these struggles they had neither the time nor inclination to contemplate philosophical questions.

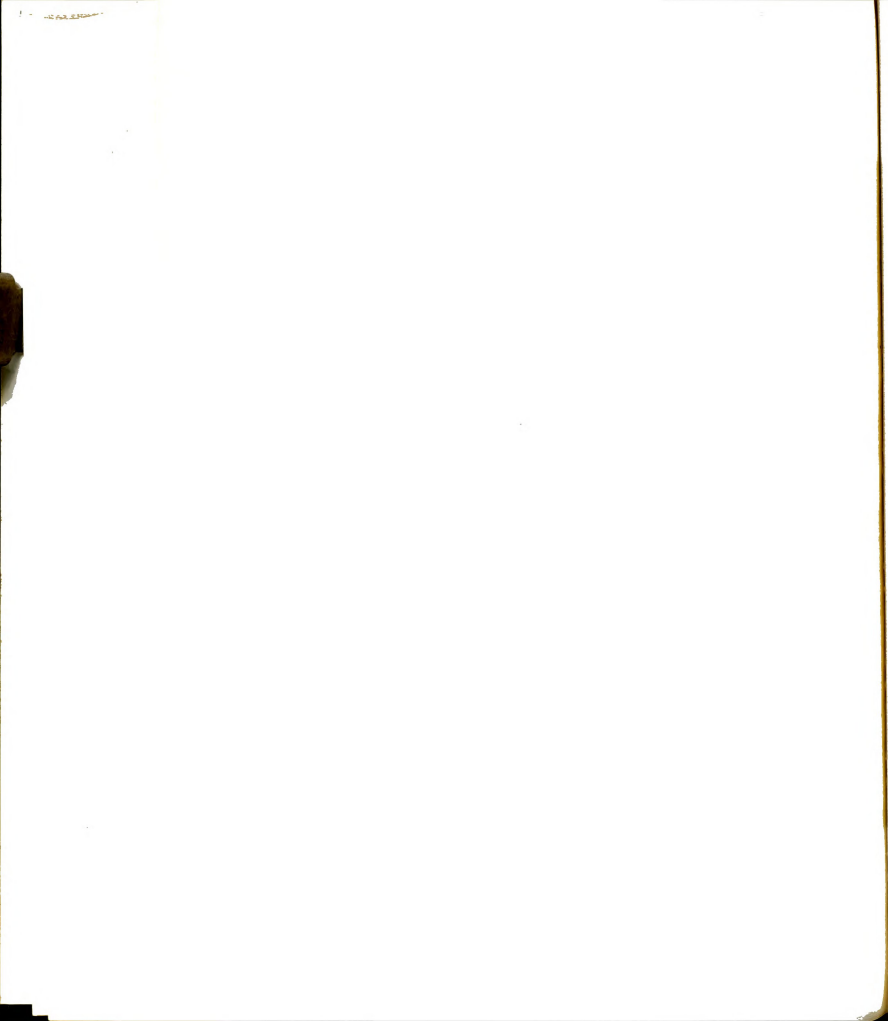


The short duration of many administrators was indicative of either inability to cope with severe financial problems or the desire to escape what might have been a rewarding but losing battle against overwhelming odds. Many expanded program offerings to meet additional job classifications in business, industry and education but so did other schools. Tax supported institutions were in a more favorable position to continue and broaden their programs than non-tax supported schools like Ferris. Despite these disadvantages Ferris was able to attract necessary if not sufficient numbers of students and procure enough funds to survive until rescued by the state.

With the selection of Victor F. Spathelf as president in 1952, the school as a public institution was established as an integral part of Michigan's educational system. Spathelf's dynamic administrative policies have since that time succeeded in enhancing the reputation of Ferris Institute as an opportunity school in the manner previously designated by Woodbridge N. Ferris. Indeed, one could claim that the institution throughout its history has maintained a spirit synonymous with that initiated and developed by its founder.



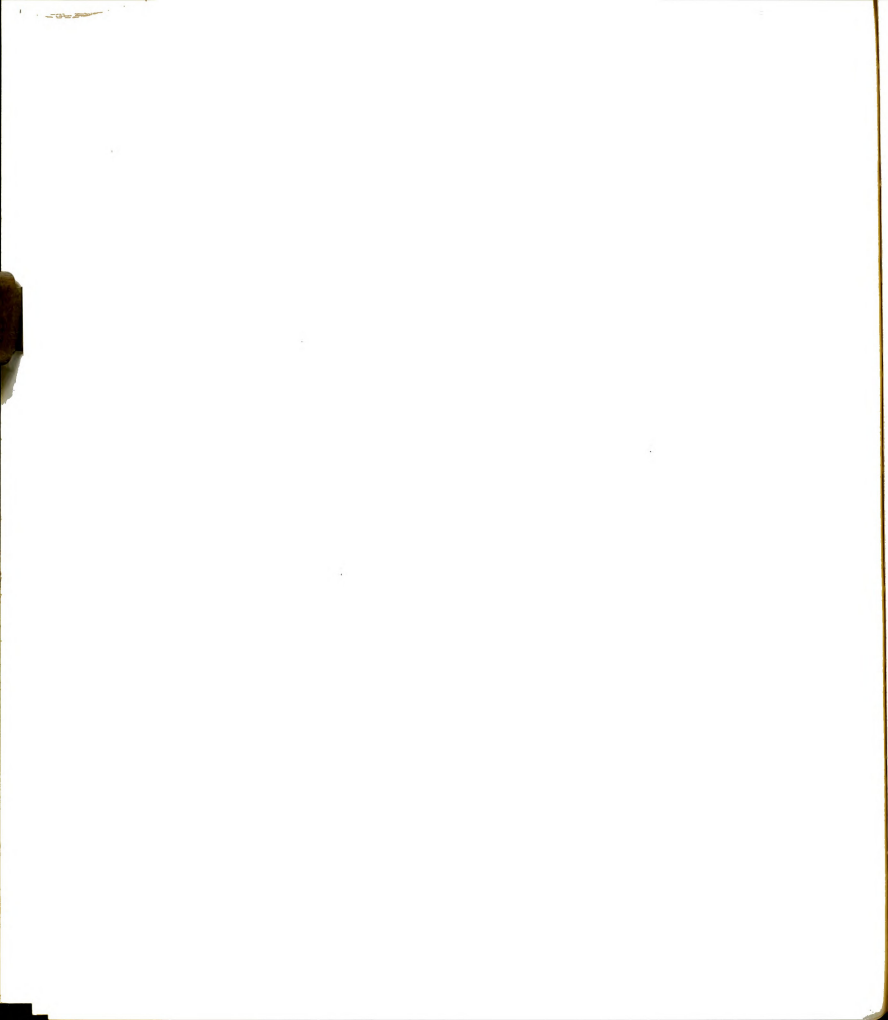
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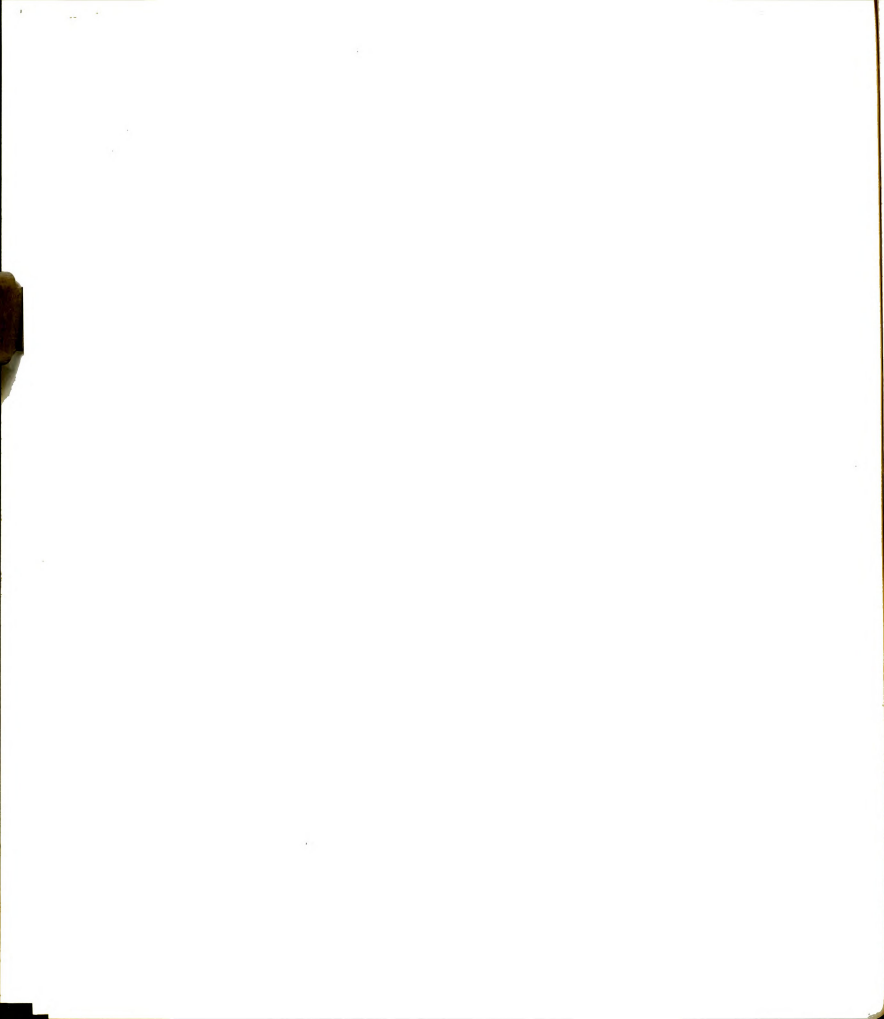
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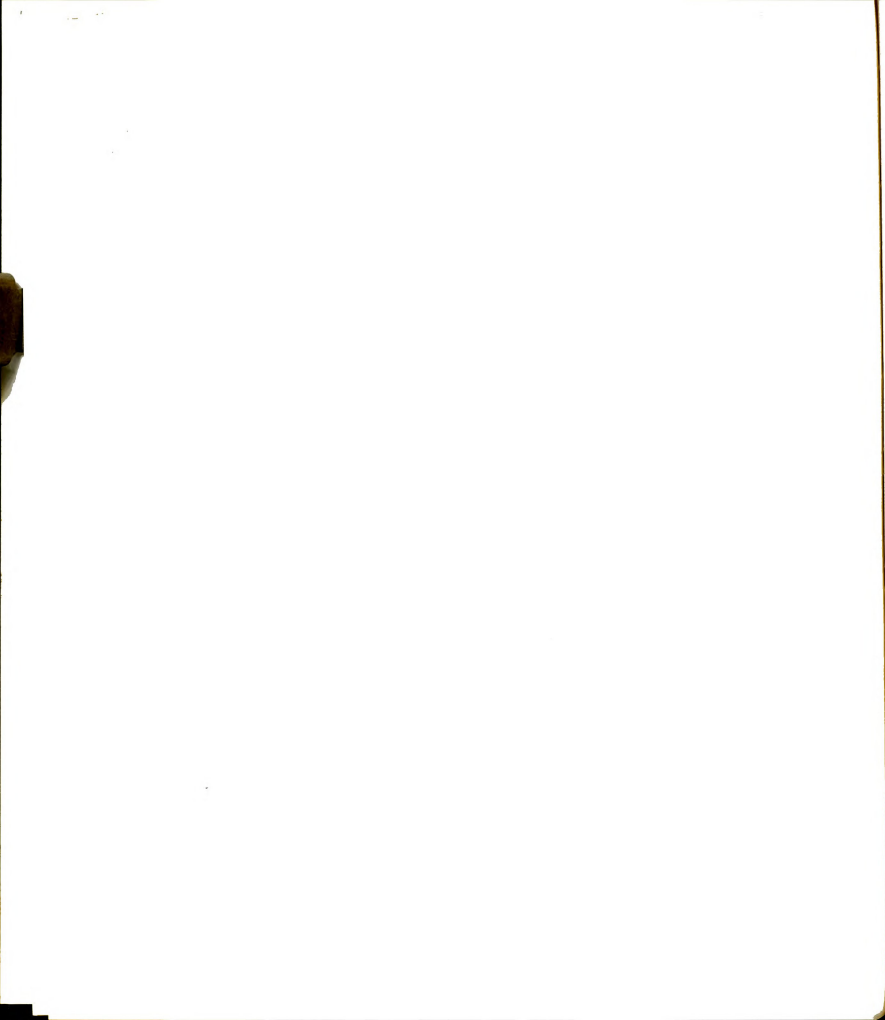
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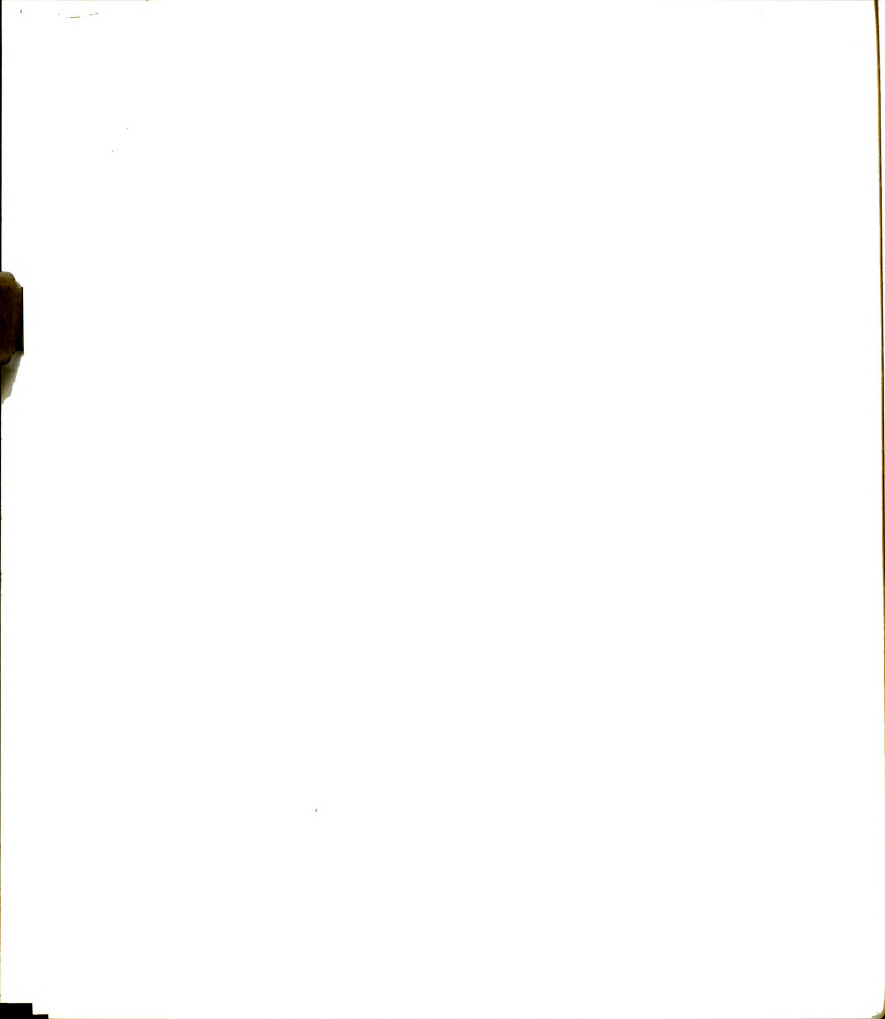
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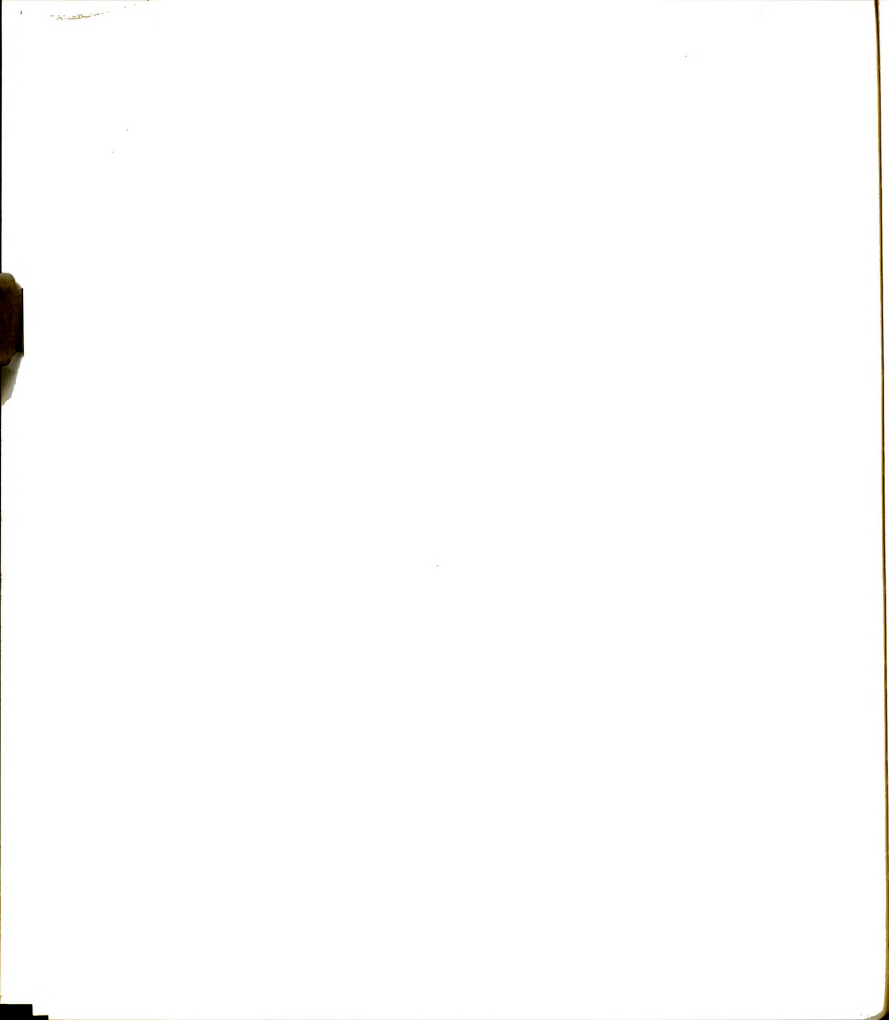
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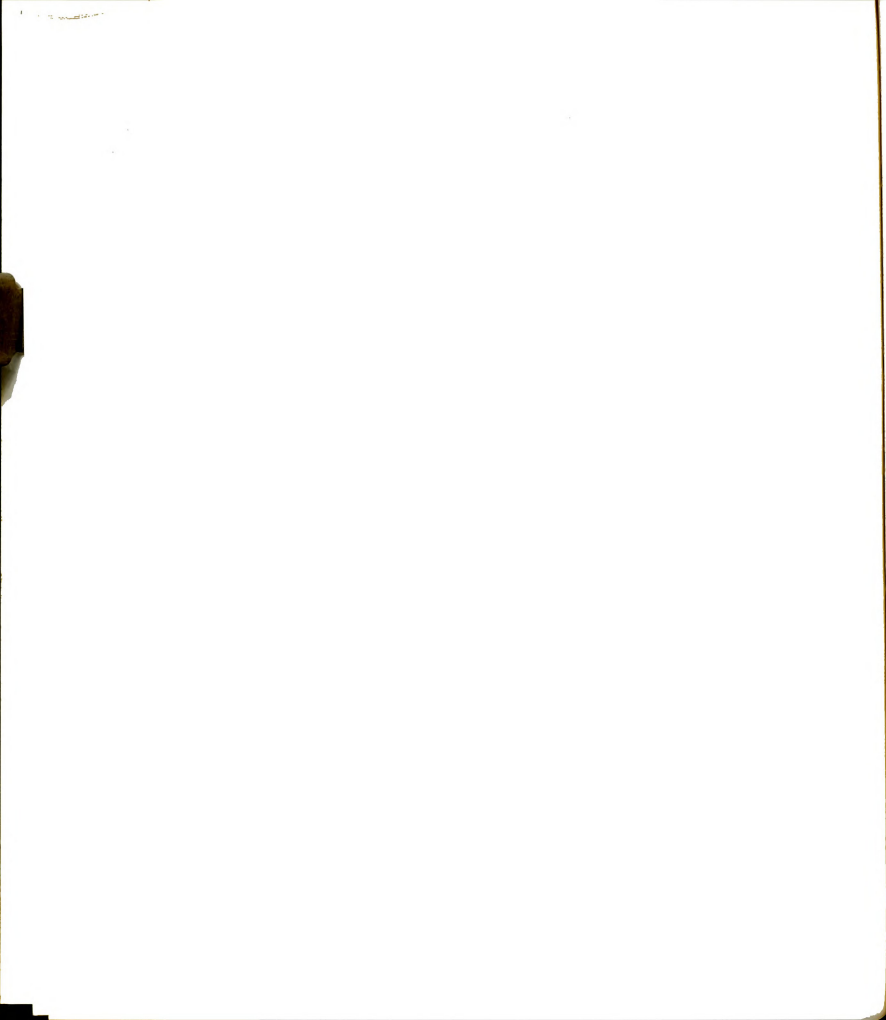
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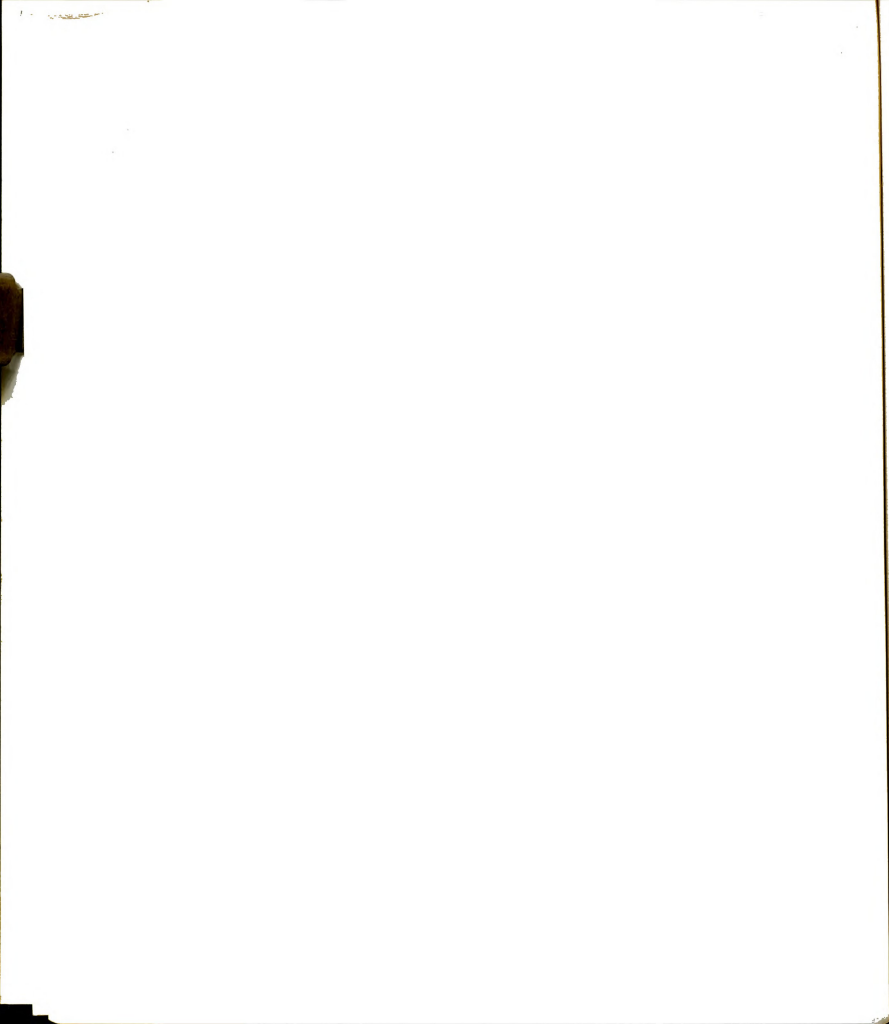
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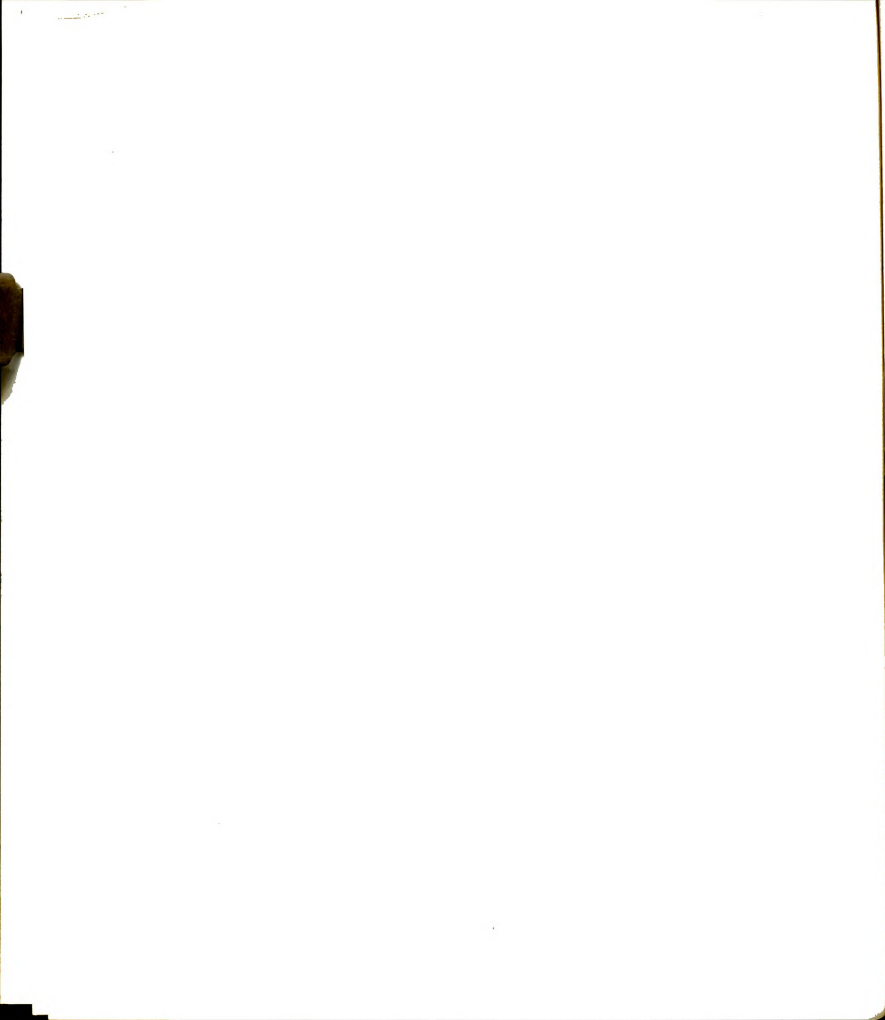
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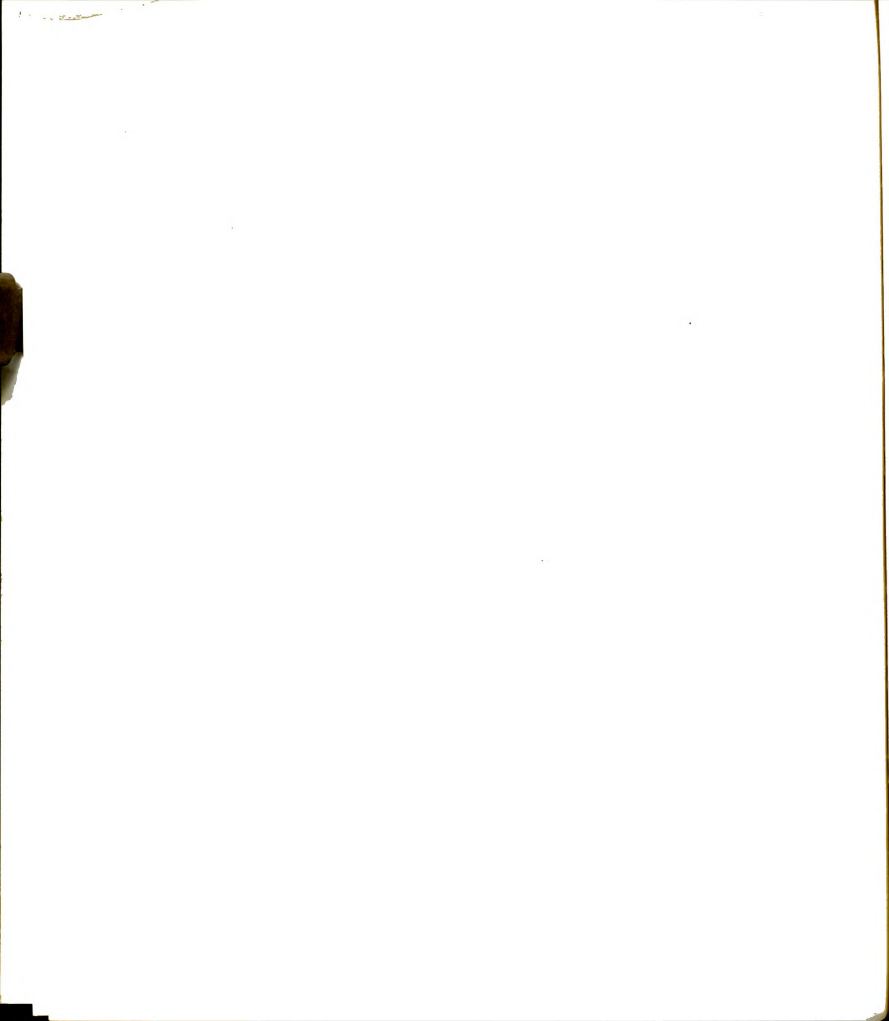
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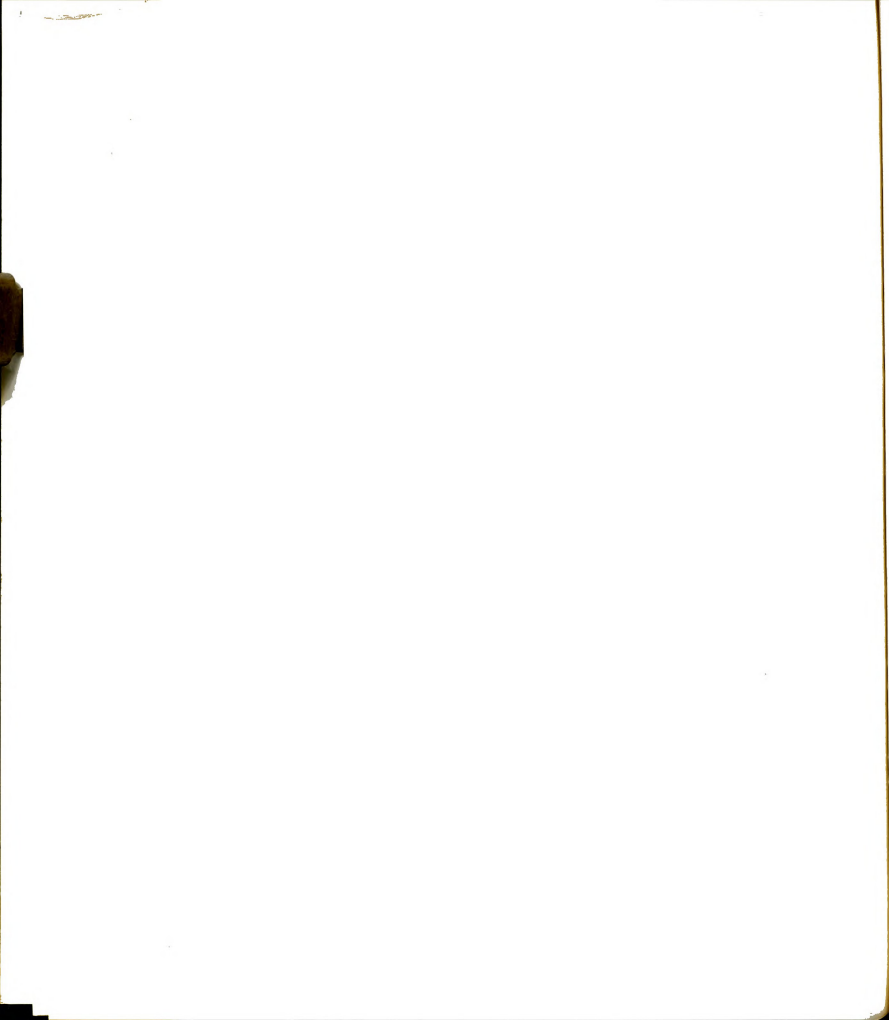
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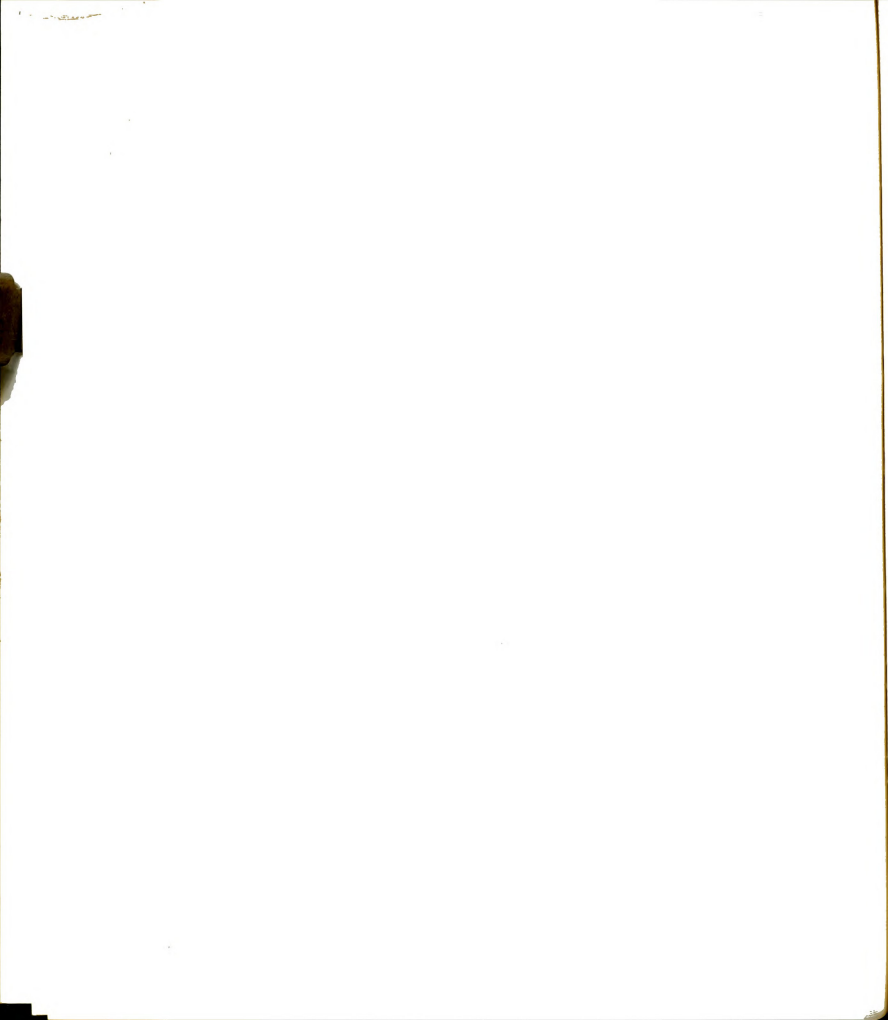
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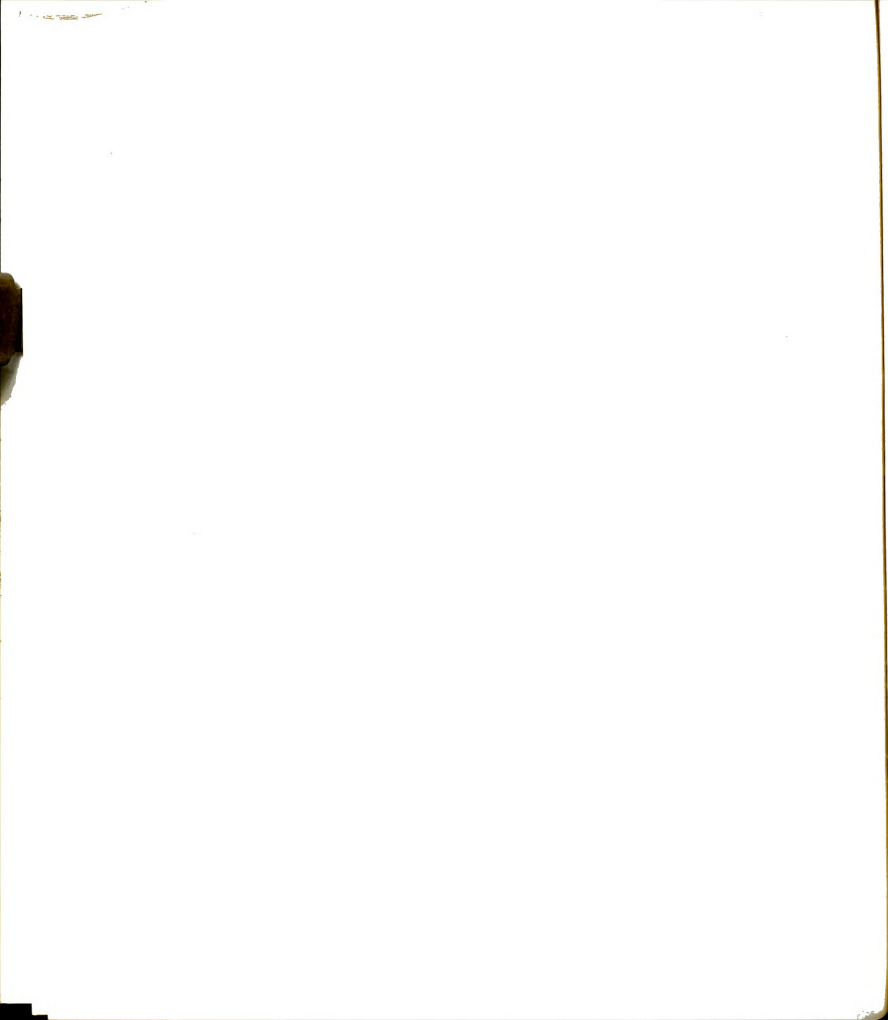
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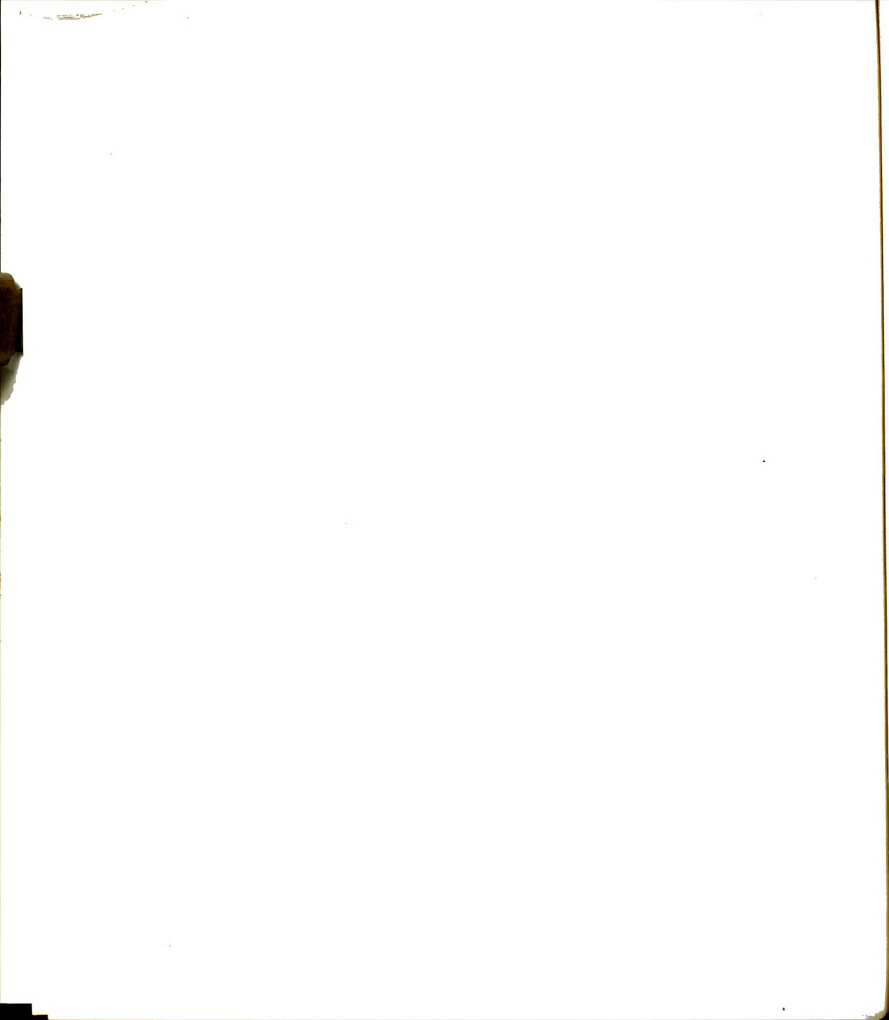
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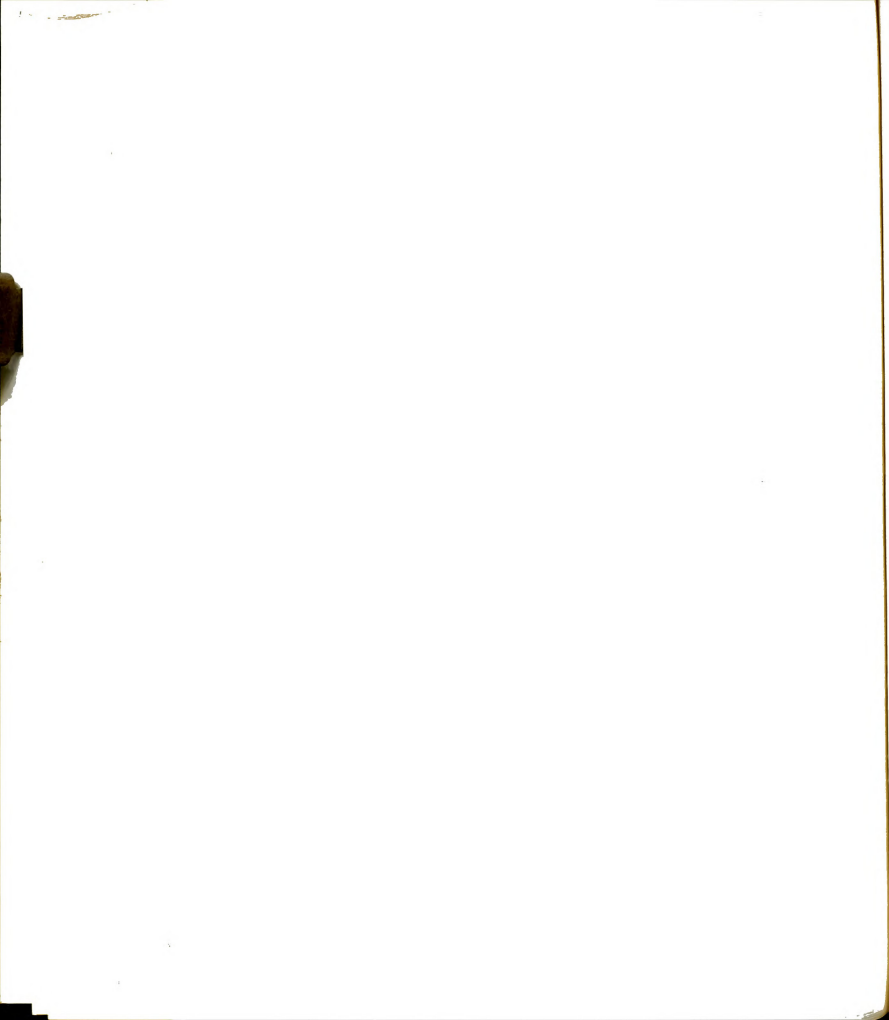
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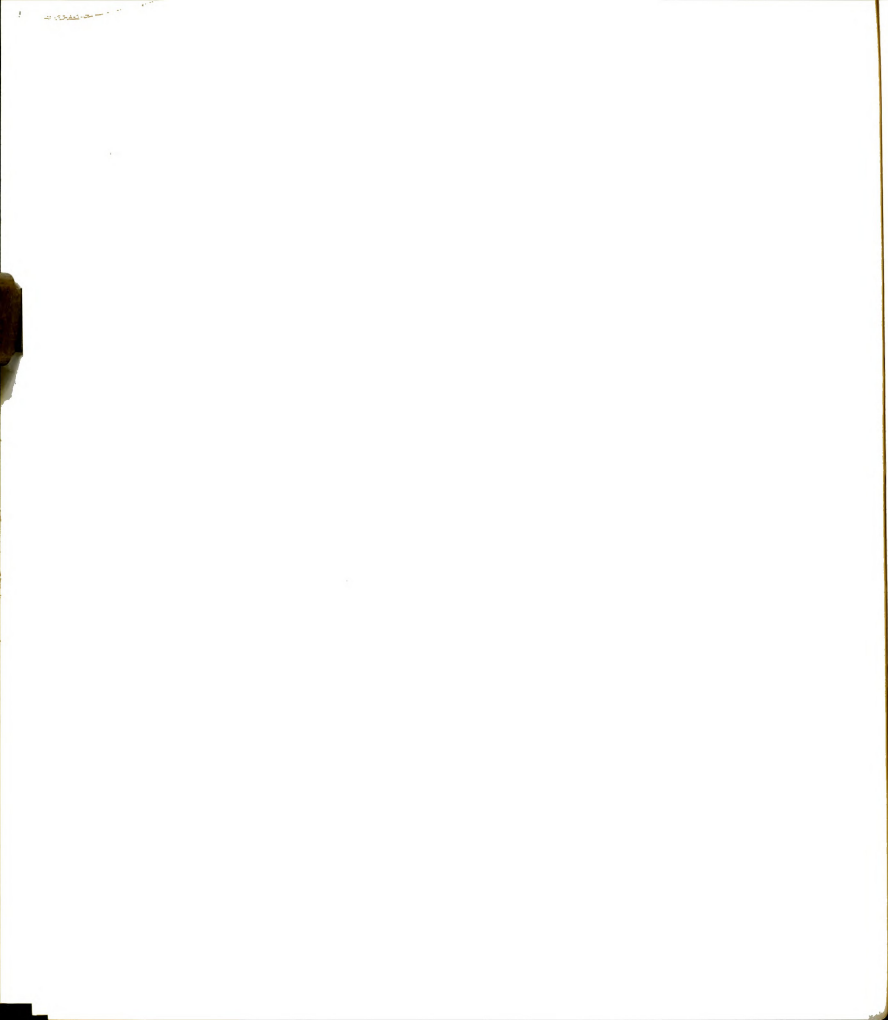
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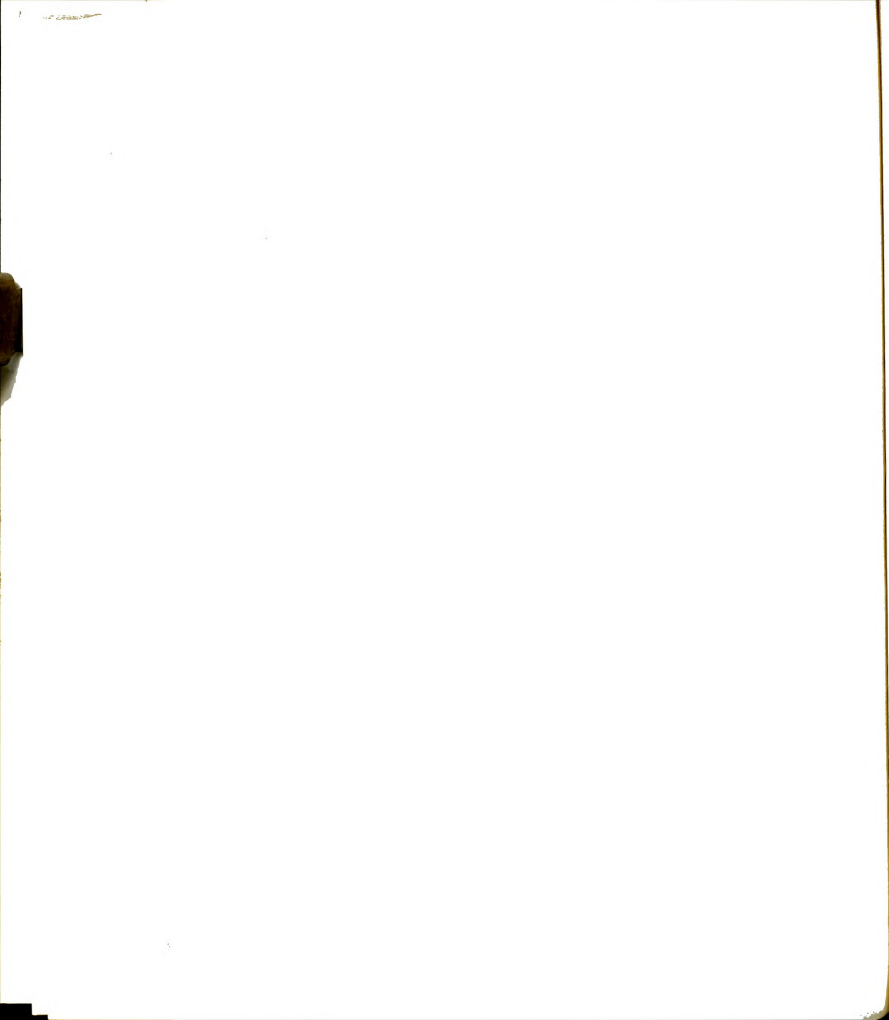
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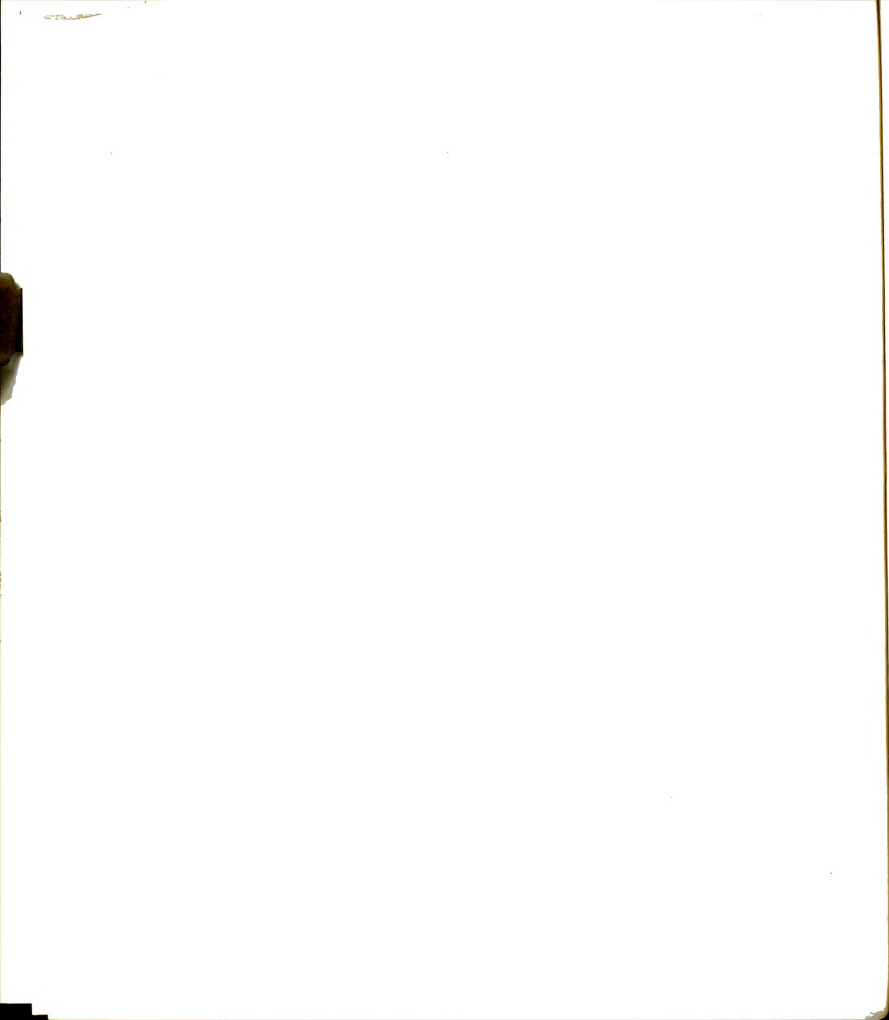
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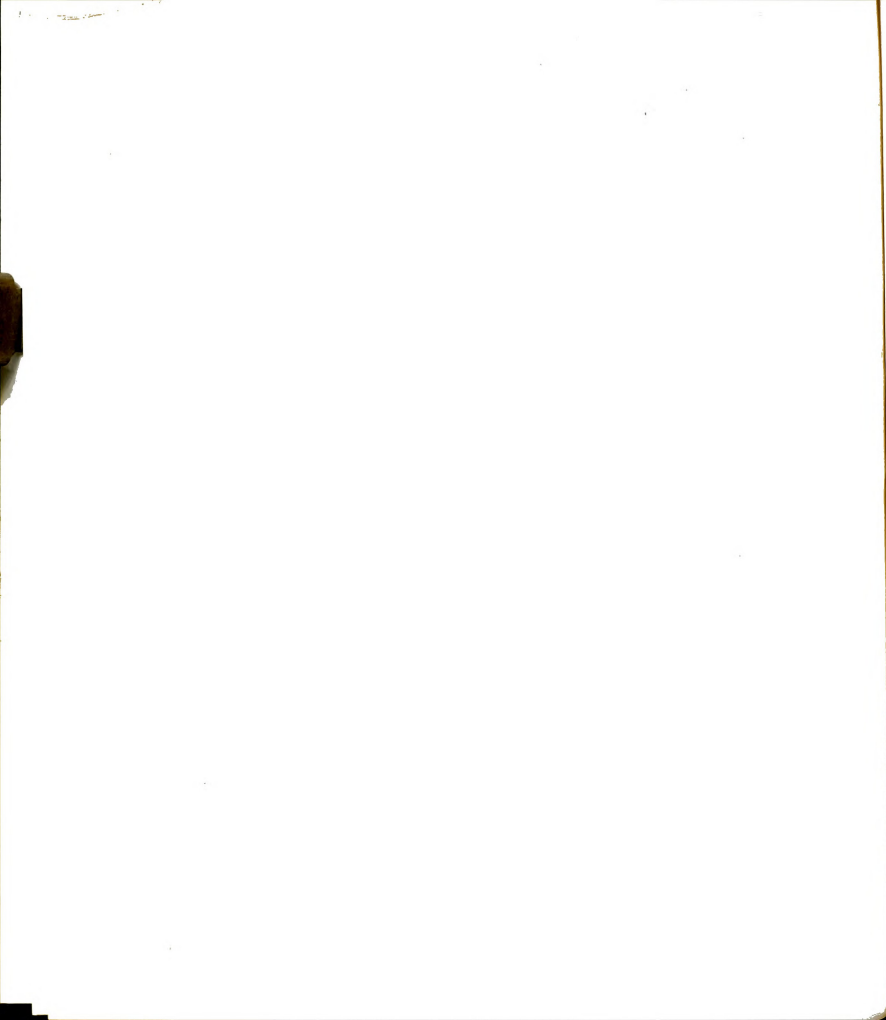


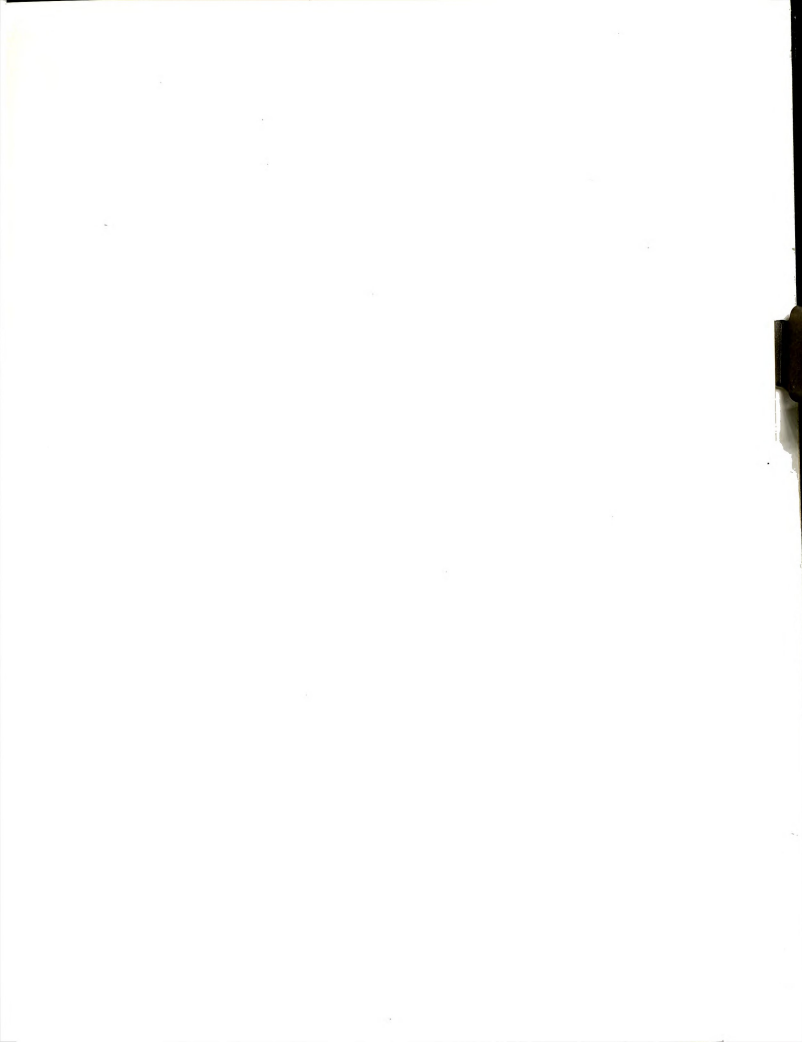
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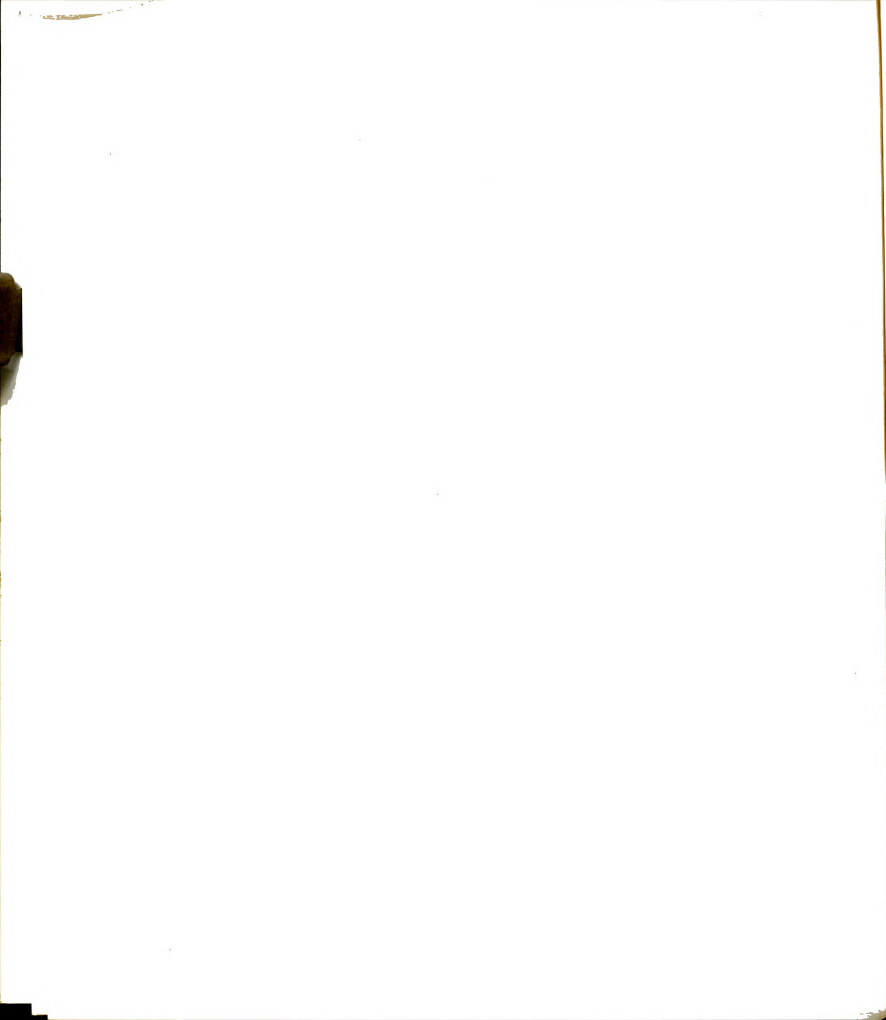
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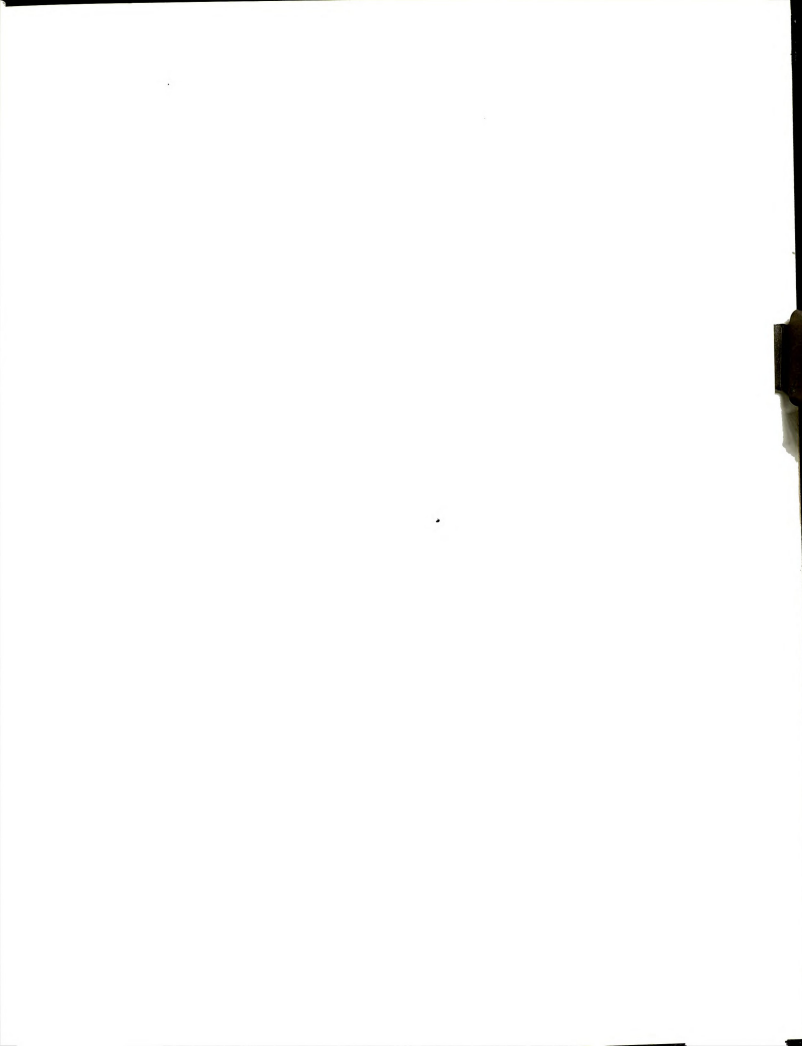
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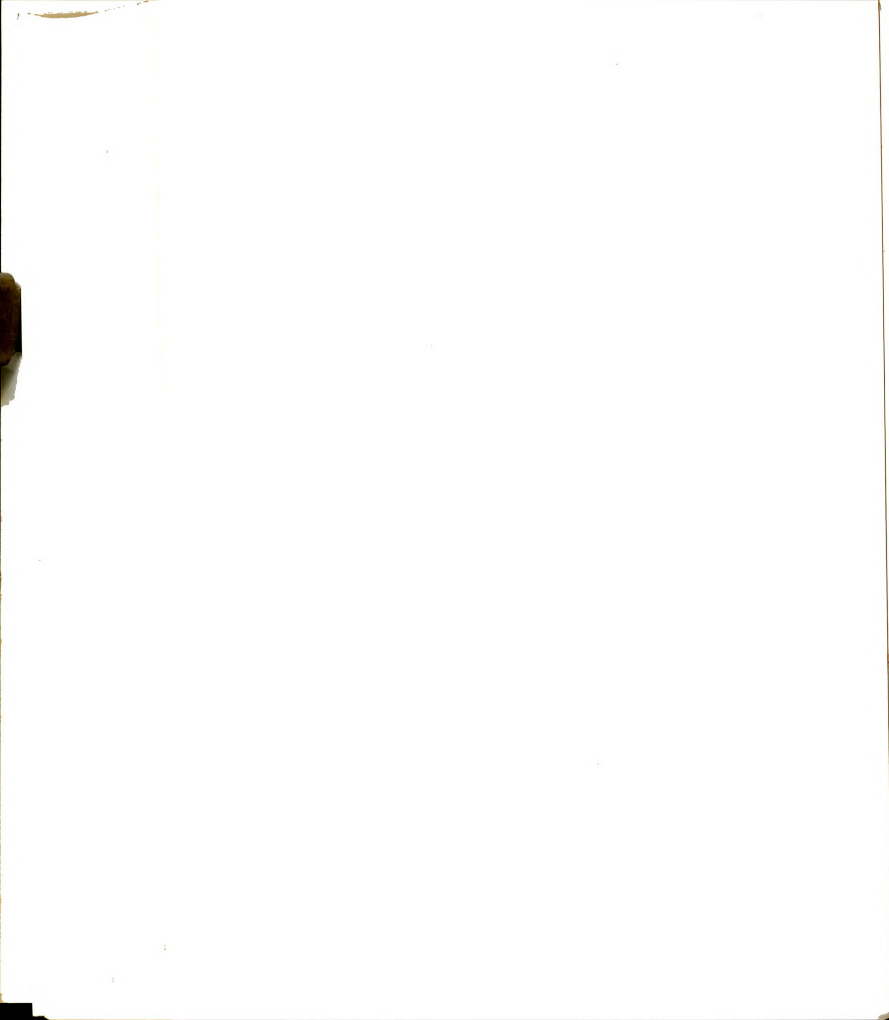
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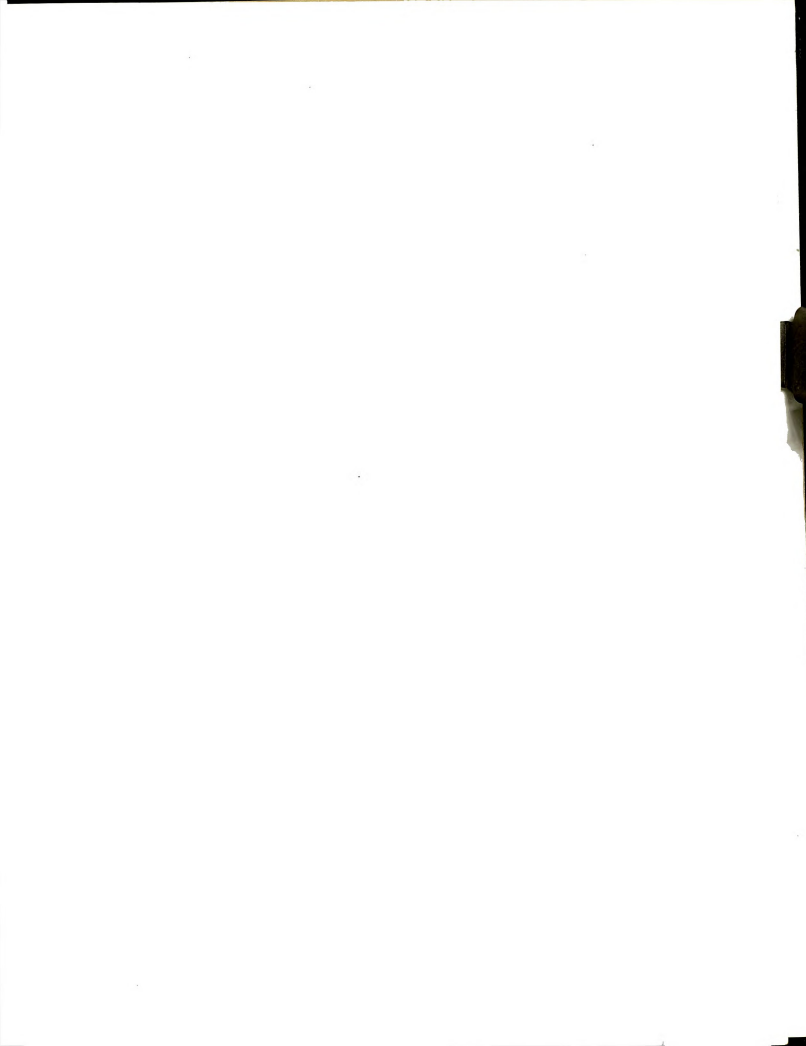


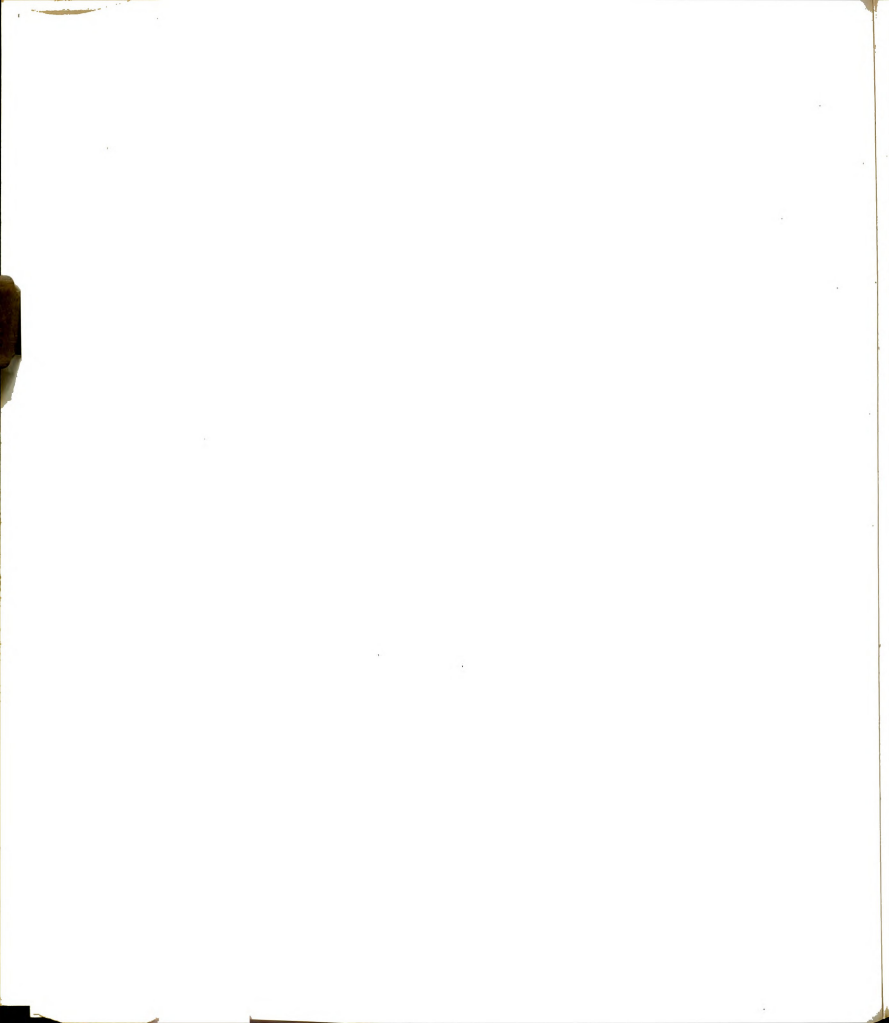












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