There had been some form of athletic sports at Bucknell prior to the year 1892. Before that year they consisted of base-ball, foot-ball, tennis, quoits and marbles. Tradition said there had once been a field day, but no one remembered anything about it and the only relics that remained to prove the existence of prehistoric giants were a large cast-iron shot and a large cast-iron ball with a hole in it. These articles may still be in the gymnasium; if they are, they constitute the nucleus for field work at Bucknell. Registrar Gretzinger unearthed these from the cellar of the Main Hall in the Spring of 1892, and they aroused considerable curiosity. Soon after, a meeting of the Athletic Association was held, at which it was resolved to hold a field and track meet to determine the all-round champion of the college. A date was set and no more was thought about it until about a week before the event. At that time several men began to practice running, jumping and putting the shot. A sledge handle was driven into the hole in the cast-iron ball, and it was called a hammer. By much effort the committee succeeded in obtaining a trophy for the occasion. That little silver spoon holder is viewed by the children with much pride to-day, a relic of Father's college days. How I won it is a mystery, for I was a novus homo, a dark horse, a green freshie. Among those who did creditable work on that day were Harvey Smith, the Wyant brothers, Charles Allen, George Shorkely and others whose names have escaped my memory. As I recall now some of the records, they seem very trifling compared with present attainments. The shot was put about twenty-six feet, the hammer thrown fifty-seven feet, the 100-yard dash was made in 12 seconds, the mile run in six minutes, 15 seconds, the broad jump was eighteen feet. Although there was nothing phenomenal in these records, a beginning had been made, and we were ready to try again.

In the Spring of 1893, another meet was arranged, and it was thought best to allow each man to enter any event he wished. As in the previous year no one
trained but myself. The results were demoralizing to athletics in one way and helpful in another. Every record of the previous year was broken and new records were made in a number of events. Among these were the hurdles and the pole vault. Those first hurdles were curious affairs. Not having any money to buy strips we drove stakes in the ground and stretched ropes across the top. If a man cleared them, well and good; if he caught his foot, rope, stakes and man fell, while his competitors had a clear run to the next hurdle. Among those who distinguished themselves this day was John B. Cressinger. At the close of the day, having won eight out of the ten events I had entered, the thought struck me that such victories were demoralizing. To have athletics continue it would be necessary to distribute the records more generally among the students. The value of training had been demonstrated so clearly that every man knew why he had failed.

That evening I called on President Harris, told him the outcome of the sports, mentioned the fact that I was working my way through college by caring for the gymnasium building, and then suggested that a Department of Athletics be organized with myself as director. The appointment was made and I forthwith entered upon my duties.

In the Winter of 1893-94 we held a successful in-door meet and made some good records. Amos Williams displayed great ability in the high-kick and Harvey Marsh in the pole vault. Robert Slifer gave promise of speed in the mile run, Harvey Smith cleared five feet two inches in high jump.

When Spring opened I announced in a meeting of the Athletic Association that I would not enter any contest, but desired an opportunity to help raise the records. This privilege was granted, and we began training in earnest. About fourteen men were ready to present themselves when the annual contests were held. This year I read very carefully articles on training and the conduct of sports. Then in order to familiarize myself with the best methods, I went to State College in order to see the Penna. Inter-collegiate games. Mr. George Hoskins, now Director of Athletics at Bucknell, was then in charge of the sports at State College. He very kindly showed me the apparatus used at the meet and gave me many pointers which were of great value. I watched very carefully the management of the contests and the methods used. The most striking event was the throwing of the hammer by Clark of Swarthmore. Up to that hour I had never seen a man turn in a seven-foot ring. Upon returning to Bucknell I immediately put my newly acquired knowledge into practice. Through the kindness of Mr. Gretzinger the university carpenters made some real hurdles for both heights. I had a pattern made by a turner from which a lead hammer and shot were cast. Because ropes and wires broke, we put a half inch rod in the hammer with a T handle. With this crude affair Ben Brick succeeded in making a throw of seventy-seven feet. After the contests were over I called on the manager of the Mirro
and suggested that he give a cup to the class that should make the highest number of points. He took the matter up immediately and offered a handsome trophy. Among those who distinguished themselves this year in the class contests were Carey and Kaufman in the vault, Williams in the jump, Hanna and Jackson in the walk, Lesher, Brick and Davis in the weights, Snow and Dillon in the runs, Bunnell and Miller in the hurdles and dashes. The Class of '95 won the cup easily.

During my last year a successful in-door meet was held. In addition to the usual program we introduced boxing, fencing and the high dive. In this latter event C. Lindemann excelled, clearing about five feet six inches. Harper and Bourne were the scientific boxers. Ezra Allen and I read some directions for fencing and then went through a series of movements that looked like the real article, although every motion had been duly rehearsed.

When the Spring of 1895 opened about twenty men might have been seen running down the back road to Gundy’s. We had no track and the side path was easier to run upon than the grass. For the development of sprints, a stretch of turf near the railroad was peeled and spiked shoes were used for the first time. Our contests were held upon the turf. A space of 220 yards was marked out by stakes, and the men were obliged to keep outside of them. Yet in spite of the fact that we held our games upon grass with tennis shoes, some very good work was done. Many of the students do not know that Prof. Nelson Davis was once quite skillful with hammer and shot. That Prof. Riemer was able to run a mile in good time. That Prof. Simpson could hold his own in the walk. That Prof. Lindemann was an excellent hurdler. All of these men and others who have passed to other fields of activity loved sport for itself. We never had contests with other colleges, because we had no track, and they would not admit us to the Association until we could give return games in proper style. We seldom had any more money than was necessary to pay for the programs and advertising. Yet once or twice we had a slight surplus which we gladly gave to the Athletic Association to help remove the annual base-ball deficit. Those who always stood by us, who were always in sympathy with manly sport, who acted as officials in rain or shine, were Professors Perrine, Bartol, Hulley and Rockwood, and Registrar Gretzinger.