Schedule for a Day At the University At Lewisburg in the Seventies

Most of the students got up at six o'clock in the morning and went down town to breakfast, which consisted of sausages and buckwheat cakes with coffee and perhaps milk. Chapel met at 7:15. The roll was called every day. The answer was "Here", except on Monday. Since church attendance was required on Monday you answered "Yes Sir!" if you had been to church; otherwise you simply yelled "Here". The first class met at 7:30. On Monday the Seniors practiced orations, and the Juniors read essays. Sophomores and Freshmen delivered declamations. On Thursdays lectures were delivered to the Seniors by the President. Other Professors talked on different subjects to the different classes. There was no recitation on Mondays because there was no study time to prepare the lessons the day before. Wednesday nights the students were supposed to attend Prayer Meeting. On other days recitations began at 7:30 and lasted until 8:00. Students then had half an hour to fix up their rooms, make their beds or go down town to the Post Office on Market Street to see if the girl from home had remembered them.

All rooms in the college consisted of a study for two on the north side of the building and single sleeping rooms across the hall. The study rooms only were heated. Sometimes in the winter both students brought their iron bedsteads into the study. These, with two tables and two chairs, made quite close living quarters. At 9:00 the study hour begins and lasted until 11:00. Everyone was supposed to be in his room and not to call out the window to his classmate living in the room below. "How far does the lesson go to-day?" and drop a basin of water on the fellow below when he put out his head.

Every student had a class five days a week from 11:00 to 12:00. Then they had two hours to go to the Post Office and dinner. Many students formed boarding groups. The boys furnished the supplies, and the boarding house keeper furnished dishes, fuel, and cooked meals for $2.00 per week. Potatoes were bought by the wagon load in the fall, pork by the whole hog, beef, a side at a time, so that food sometimes did not cost more than 80 a week, although it usually ran from $1.25 and up. At 2:00 P.M., study hour began and the President, in coming to his office, sometimes walked around to the back of the building to see if anyone was playing ball, pitching horseshoes, swinging on the rings, or just walking around and smoking. Students were not allowed to smoke on the campus outside of their rooms. Study hour lasted until 4:00 P.M. All students were in recitation from 4:00 until 5:00. This means, of course, that there were three recitations a day, all three occurring at the same hour and ending at 5:00 P.M. Then came supper and recreation until 7:00 P.M. All students were now supposed to be in their rooms to study until 9:00 P.M. To be certain of this professors were supposed to visit the rooms on unscheduled occasions. The students, believing that if a professor visited last night and would not come the present night, would sometimes go visiting girls in the evening. They would leave their lamps burning to indicate that there was somebody in the room. They usually went down town by a back street as most of the professors lived on University Avenue. Sometimes they visited other students. Then they would look the door so that if the professor called the visitor could disappear under the bed. Before they would open the door they would ask, "Who's there?" In one case the reply to that question was, "It's me!"

"Well, who?"

"Professor Blank."

Now Professor Blank was professor of English Literature and Rhetoric. The reply
came from inside the room, "Oh, no you aren't. Professor Blank would never say "It's me". The Professor did not insist on coming in.

Quiet hour ended at 10:00 and then the students were supposed to go to bed, just as the soldiers in the army camps are supposed to retire today. In one case this was not done. There was a four inch solid iron ball, a relic of the Civil War, that found its way into one floor of the West Wing. Another student, or at least a person who occupied one of the rooms on the second floor was in the habit of rolling this ball along the hall at most any time of the night. He was told that if he did not stop that performance he would get what was coming to him.

At that time there was a pump near the Academy Building (now Taylor Hall). It was winter and the trough under the spout of the pump was full of ice. Some of the boys cut a seat in the ice. When the fellow was dressed in his nightgown and ready for bed, having prevented the other boys from sleeping for some hours, they took him to the pump, sat him on the ice seat, and cooled him off by pumping water over him. The iron ball disappeared. .......

Students in those days had no opportunity to choose subjects. There were just 36 subjects in the four years course. Every year students took three the first term, three the second, three the third, and that finished their education. The first optional course was offered in 1879 and the only surviving member of the class of 1880 was the first to take an optional study. Since then the courses have been multiplied as you see them in the catalogue today. The object of an education in the seventies was to give a man an all around view of life; and to specialize in nothing in particular. The student had no chance to choose what he would take. He took everything, or left college. He might not succeed in passing all of his examinations, but it was possible in those early days to put off an examination until almost commencement time. One applicant is credited with having gone into the President a week before commencement with an armful of books and saying, "These are subjects which I have failed, but I am ready for the examinations if you will kindly give them to me now". The President accepted the proposition and the young man was so bright that he is said to have passed everything and received his diploma.

Every hour of the day was taken up with some subject. On Saturday the two Literature Societies met - the Theta and the Euphëia Theta Alpha. Each society had a room in the main building with a library. The Society furnished the rooms, if they desired, and had meetings every Saturday morning from 9:00 until 12:00. The exercises consisted of orations, essays, and debates. Some of the members were appointed as judges for the debates and the discussions were carried on as it was believed to be the manner of many public assemblies. The young men sometimes spent very much time in the preparation of these orations and essays, and in that way prepared themselves for what they would need if they went into public service. But there was no choosing of a calling, as in the case of many of the students of the present time, who use the college course as a preparation for what they think will be their life work. Only the foundations of an education were supposed to be laid in those olden days.