A History of Student Publications at
Bucknell University from 1870 to 1930.

Anne Louise Prosser Post
Bucknell University
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Introduction

More than two decades passed after the founding of the University at Lewisburg in 1846 before the first student publication appeared on the campus of this institution. It was not lack of student interest that caused such delay; it was lack of adequate means of supporting such an undertaking. Not until the alumni association and the student body were sufficiently large, and sufficiently interested, to support a periodical publication could the students of this institution hope to engage successfully in a publishing enterprise.

Part I

The first student publication at the University at Lewisburg, The College Herald, appeared in May, 1870. It was a monthly of eight pages, the joint effort of the Theta Alpha and Eueopia societies. These two societies had been established before the end of Professor Stephen W. Taylor's term as acting President of the college in 1851. They were of equal size, and every student belonged to one or the other of them. When the first part of the main college building, West Wing, was completed, these societies were given rooms furnished with carpets, armchairs, desks, and library cases. Here they held their weekly meetings. These societies sponsored essays, debates, and orations in which, sooner or later, every student was required to participate. Oratory appears to have been the most popular activity, and students readily engaged in many formal debates. The oratorical training
received in such debates was of future use to many famous men.
President John Harris in his student days at the University was much respected for his oratorical ability, and he was known to his fellow students as "John C. Calhoun."

Long before 1870 the literary societies of the University at Lewisburg had wished to start a college periodical, but, in the words of a student of that early period, it was not until "the third term of our college year, 1869, [that] Euepia started something worthwhile. She appointed a committee to inquire into the feasibility of establishing a college periodical. The same thing was done directly by Theta Alpha. The committee of Theta Alpha was made up of our best. John Humpstone, Henry Bliss and Thomas Eastwood were the committee [of Theta Alpha.]
All of them in later life became famous men."¹ The plan presented by the joint committee, providing for a publication by the two societies of an eight-page monthly paper to be called The College Herald, was adopted by both societies on March 5, 1870.² The first editors were George Whitman and B.F. Robb for Euepia and W.R. Patton and John Humpstone for Theta Alpha. W.T. Grier of Theta Alpha and J.H. Chambers of Euepia served as the first business managers of The College Herald. Dr. William Bartol and President David Jayne Hill served as editors for Theta Alpha in their senior year.

To find means to support the first student publication was a problem that plagued the business managers of The College Herald, as it was a problem that plagued the business managers of subsequent student publications at the University at Lewisburg. Because none of the early student publishing enterprises was under the sponsorship of the University, there was no way to guarantee a fixed yearly income for

¹ Dr. Bartol's Diary— A Retrospect, Book 2, p. 36.
² The College Herald, Vol. 1, No. 1, May, 1870, p.4.
any one of them. The yearly subscription to *The College Herald* was seventy-five cents. *Alumni* were eagerly solicited to become regular subscribers to the publication. *The College Herald* soon increased its circulation to more than four hundred subscribers. Many subscribers were very negligent in paying their bill, a fact made clear by editorials making constant pleas for support. The paper carried two and a half pages of paid local advertisements to help defray the expenses. An editorial in the issue for February, 1873, emphasized the fact that the paper was not a money making business; all literary and mechanical labor was done gratuitously. It was necessary for the management to insist that subscriptions be paid promptly and in cash, for paper and printing cost money.

Each page of *The College Herald* was divided into two columns, and the material was classed as Literary, Editorial, Local or Seminary and Academy News. Each of these departments was designated by large black-letter headings. In the first issue a two-page article, appearing appropriately on the first page and illustrated with a woodcut drawing of the University building on the hill, gave a summary history of the college. One literary article in this number dealt with the *Brooklyn* Baptist Convention, and another described a student's first trip from Pittsburgh to the University in 1850. Other items in this first issue included obituary notices, Crozer Seminary news, reports on the physical culture of the school, and news of past college events and announcements of future college activities.

The content of *The College Herald* remained basically unchanged during its ten years of publication. Literary material continued to predominate in the magazine, but with the passing years there was an increase in the amount of space given to athletic interests.
Student interest in athletics developed strongly during the years immediately following 1870, and periodicals became the medium in which this interest could be expressed. The need for a gymnasium was continually mentioned in The College Herald. By arousing the interest of the alumni and friends of the University, the Herald was instrumental in bringing about an enlargement of the athletic program.

The College Herald was intended to serve a variety of purposes. Besides publishing literary pieces and sports news, it provided much news of the activities of the University campus as well as considerable news from other college campuses. Nevertheless, it continued to be primarily a literary magazine. Editors encouraged students, faculty, curators, trustees, and friends of the University to submit material for publication. "Feeling our incomptency and having the pressure of college duties upon us," wrote the editors in the autumn of 1870, "we look forward to the cooperation of our friends." All types of materials were published, for there was room for "short, pithy articles from any source which may interest our readers."  

The Herald provided an outlet for students who were eager to express opinions on matters of current interest. In addition to many essays and articles on academic literary matters, it printed articles dealing with timely topics that were expressions of the spirit of the age. One such topic was the controversial question of the use of tobacco. The pros and the cons on smoking were very similar to those we read in present-day literature. One essay discussed this topic and printed in The College Herald concluded with this statement: "Since while [sic] the tobacco plant grows, it is more than likely that men will continue worshippers at the nicotine altar."

3. The College Herald, Vol. 1, No. 4, October, 1870, p.4.
4. Ibid., p.4.
5. The College Herald, Vol. 3, No. 8, February, 1873, p. 3.
While the nation debated the question of woman suffrage, college students debated the idea of co-education of the sexes. The Herald carried an article penned by a certain J.H.G. who vehemently opposed the admission of women to the same college with men. A woman, he argued, would limit the privileges now given to the male students, for "she would be as just in demanding the same privileges for equal rights as for admission."  

The College Herald was well received by all who read it. Dr. Bartol, to whose diary we are indebted for much information on this subject, reported that "The College Herald was received with a cheer by the faculty, alumni, and students. The Philadelphia Daily Press [he continued] gave it a puff as follows: 'The College Herald is the name of a monthly issued by the students of the Lewisburg University. It is handsomely printed and well edited, and shows signs of substantial prosperity.'" Sensing this success, the editors, in their second issue, triumphantly declared: "Those who have been suspicious concerning the fate of this enterprise can lay aside their fears, and accept the Herald as a fixed fact."  

Contemporaneous college journals recognized the merit of this publication and made arrangements for exchange with it. Presently articles from other college journals became a regular feature in the monthly issues of the Herald.  

Besides winning recognition as a merititious student publication, the Herald brought many benefits to the University. With the profits made by the sale of this publication, the literary societies bought books for their libraries. Moreover, The College Herald, by providing a means of communication, stimulated the interest of the alumni in

the progress of the University. Finally, the Herald, as a reputable
publication, enhanced the reputation of the University as a progressive
institution.

The success of The College Herald in its first year of publication
warranted an expansion of the paper to provide space for the publication
of more material. Accordingly, with the issue for December, 1870, The
Herald was enlarged to twelve pages. Two and a half additional pages
were allotted for literary matter and one and half pages were used for
additional advertisements. The Herald carried a full column advertisement
for the University, listing the courses available. It is evident that
the University authorities foresaw that there would be a widespread
circulation of this publication among the friends of the alumni, and
here was an opportunity to advertise the growing University.

The reason for the enlargement of the Herald was given in the
editorial of the December issue. "In undertaking this enlargement
they [the literary societies] have been guided rather by an earnest
desire to make the Herald in every respect worthy of the institution
it represents. Very soon after the appearance of the first number it
was felt that its limited space prevented anything but cursory treatment
of but a few of the numerous departments of college journalism."
With the issue for March, 1873, The Herald was reduced to its former
size of eight pages. This was done because a new typographical style
of fancy department headings with flourishing print now graced the
pages of the Herald. With this innovation, the cost of printing had in
increased, and the size of the paper had to be reduced to compensate for
the rising costs. The editorial of the March issue promised a return
to the former size of the paper if sufficient subscriptions and never
advertisements could be secured.
The College Herald enjoyed sole and unchallenged dominance as a student publication for a full decade, for it satisfied the needs of the infant University. It was a means whereby the pertinent news of the University could be disseminated to students, alumni, and friends; and, at the same time, it provided an outlet for the literary expression of both students and faculty.

What, then, was the cause of the failure of The College Herald? During its ten years of continuous publication, financial difficulties had sporadically plagued the business managers of this enterprise. Although there are no financial statements published in the form of accounts or ledgers to substantiate this assertion, much evidence tending to sustain it can be found in the statements published in The College Herald. Editorials constantly begged subscribers and advertisers to pay their bills. The University, although it favored the continuation of a student publication, could not give financial support to the Herald. Financial hardship, however, was not the sole reason for the eventual discontinuance of this publication. The sponsors of The College Herald merited some criticism. Since the two literary societies, Theta Alpha and Euepia, which published the Herald, were rivals, there is some reason to believe that this spirit of rivalry had ill effects upon their joint enterprise. It was said, "This spirit of rivalry might militate greatly against the interest of a periodical, whose publication should depend upon the cooperation of these societies."\(^9\) Apparently there was much disharmony among the rival editors and managers; and, since social spirit ran very high, the first periodical was destined to fall. In 1880, after several attempts to revitalize the Herald, the first publication of the University ceased to exist.

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