

1855

June 16. 1857

American Antiquarian Society
Worcester, Mass.

From the Author.

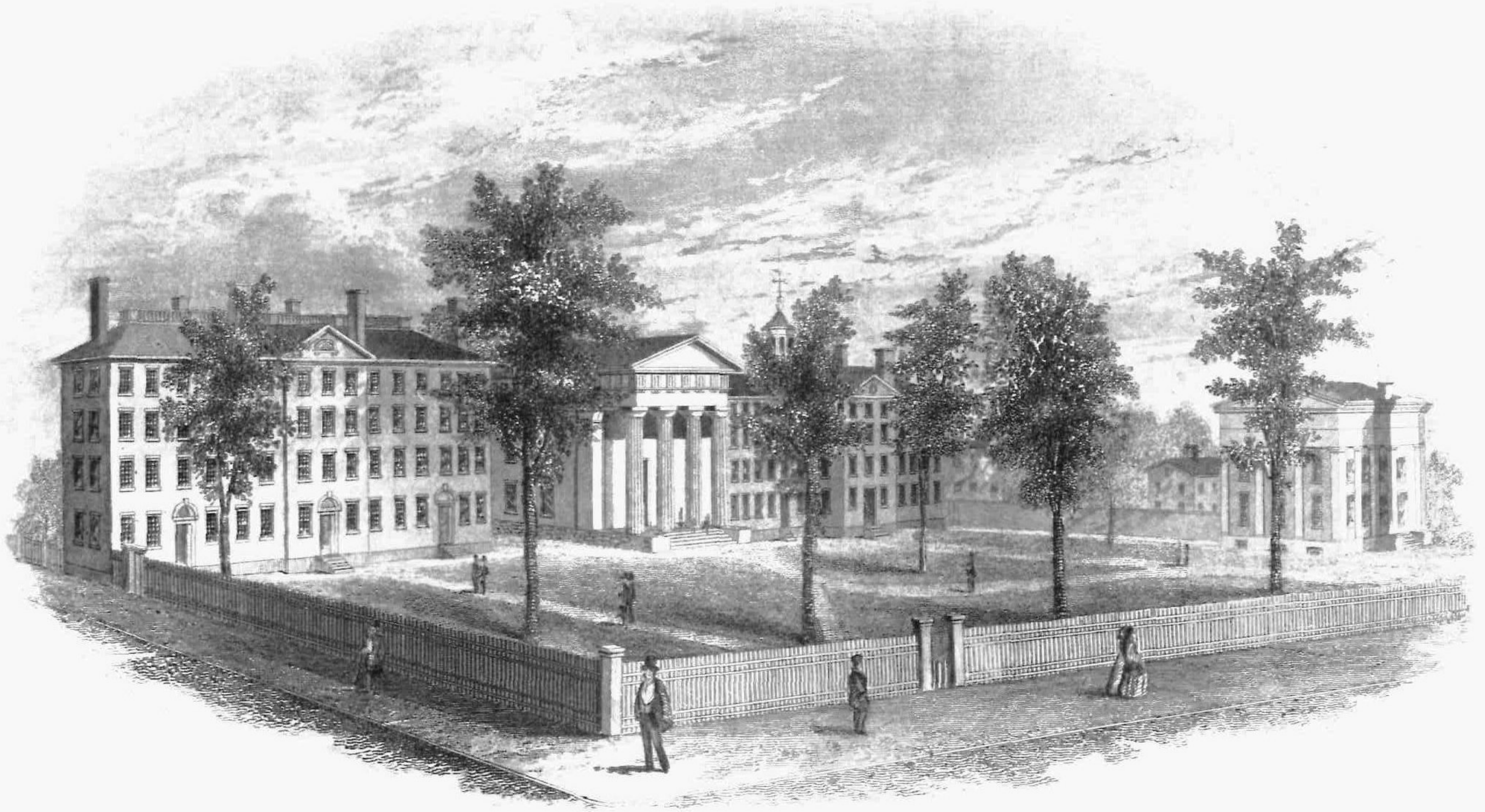
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HISTORICAL SKETCH

— OF —

BROWN UNIVERSITY.

By R. A. Guild Librarian



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

W. H. BURNETT DEL.

The R. I. Schoolmaster.

VOL. IV.

MARCH, 1858.

NO. 1.

For the Schoolmaster.

Historical Sketch of Brown University.

WE are happy to present to our readers, in connection with the foregoing engraving of BROWN UNIVERSITY, the following historical sketch, by R. A. GUILD, Esq, librarian of the University. It was first published in the Providence Journal of Sept. 1, 1857, the original article which forms its basis having been prepared by the same author for the New American Cyclopædia. It has been thoroughly revised and corrected by the author for publication in the SCHOOLMASTER.

Mr. Guild has, we understand, for many years past, been assiduously collecting catalogues and pamphlets of every kind, relative to the history and condition of the college. These have recently been bound in a substantial manner, and placed upon the shelves of the library, making upwards of thirty volumes of inestimable value.

BROWN UNIVERSITY.

ITS ORIGIN, PROGRESS AND PRESENT CONDITION.

IN the year 1707, the Philadelphia Association, composed mostly of Baptist Churches in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, was formed, for the purpose of promoting the welfare of the Baptist denomination in America. At an early period, these churches thus associated, projected plans for the education of a suitable

ministry, the restrictions of denominational government rendering it humiliating, and even difficult, for young men of their persuasion to be educated in the higher institutions of learning then in existence. For dissenting, even, from the prevailing sentiments of the community in matters of religious belief and practice, the minority were, in many of the States, subject to oppressive laws, and, in too many cases, bitter persecution. In 1762, the Association, at the special instigation of the Rev Morgan Edwards, a celebrated Welsh clergyman, then pastor of the First Baptist Church in Philadelphia, formed the design of establishing in the colony of Rhode Island, "under the chief direction of the Baptists, a College, in which," says the historian Backus, "education might be promoted and superior learning obtained, free from any sectarian religious tests." The leader selected for this important work was the Rev. James Manning, a native of New Jersey, and recently a graduate at Princeton. In July, 1763, he accordingly visited Newport, then at the height of its commercial prosperity, and proposed the subject of his mission to several gentlemen of the Baptist denomination, among whom were the Hon. Samuel Ward, Governor of the colony, Hon. Josiah Lyndon, who was afterwards Governor, Col. John Gardiner, Deputy Gov-

ernor, and twelve others of the same persuasion. They readily concurred with the proposal, and at once entered upon the means necessary for the accomplishment of the object. After various struggles and difficulties in consequence of the determined opposition and artful maneuvering of certain gentlemen of another persuasion, whose names we gladly pass over in silence, a charter, reflecting the liberal sentiments of the people in matters of religion, was obtained from the legislature in February, 1764, "for a College or University in the English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, in New England in America." One of the provisions of this charter is as follows:

"And furthermore it is hereby enacted and declared, That into this liberal and catholic institution shall never be admitted any religious tests. But, on the contrary, all the members hereof shall forever enjoy full, free, absolute and uninterrupted liberty of conscience: And that the places of Professors, Tutors, and all other officers, the President alone excepted, shall be free and open for all denominations of Protestants: And that youth of all religious denominations shall and may be freely admitted to the equal advantages, emoluments and honors of the College or University; and shall receive a like fair, generous and equal treatment, during their residence therein, they conducting themselves peaceably, and conforming to the laws and statutes thereof. And that the public teaching shall, in general, respect the sciences; and that the sectarian differences of opinion shall not make any part of the public and classical instruction."

The government of the College is vested in a Board of Fellows, consisting of twelve members, of whom eight, including the President, must be Baptists; and a Board of Trustees, consisting of thirty-six members, of whom twenty-two must be Baptists, five Friends or Quakers, four Congregationalists,

and five Episcopalians. These represent the different denominations existing in the State at the time when the charter was obtained. The instruction and immediate government of the College rests forever in the President and Board of Fellows.

In the autumn of the year in which the College was established, its instructions were commenced at Warren, under the direction of Mr. Manning, who was formally elected its President in September, 1765. With him was associated soon after, as tutor, Mr. David Howell, also a graduate from Princeton. In 1767, Mr. Edwards, at whose instigation the College was planned, and by whose indefatigable exertions mainly the charter was secured, was appointed an agent to solicit contributions for the College in England and Ireland. He embarked for the former country early in the next year, and returned in 1769, and presented his account with the corporation, by which it appeared that he had collected for the College £888 (sterling) 10s. 2d.; whereupon it was voted, "That the thanks of this Corporation be given to Rev. Morgan Edwards, by the Chancellor, (Stephen Hopkins,) for his great care and attention to the interests of this society." The original document containing the subscriptions thus obtained by Mr. Edwards, has been recently deposited in the archives of the library of Brown University. Among the names of subscribers, in their own handwriting, are those of Benjamin Franklin, then residing in London, £10, and Benjamin West, £10 10s.

After the return of Mr. Edwards, the Rev. Hezekiah Smith collected funds for the College in South Carolina and Georgia, amounting in the currency of these States at that period, to £2,523 8s. 2d. Subscriptions were also obtained and collections taken up by the churches connected with the Philadelphia Association. Still the endowments of the College were so

scanty that the President, for some time, was unable to obtain his full salary.

The first Commencement was held in the meeting house at Warren, September 7, 1769, when seven young men took their first degree in the Arts. Of these, the Rev. Charles Thompson, who succeeded Dr. Manning in the pastorate of the Warren Church, took the highest honors, and pronounced the Valedictory Address. Two more of this class, says the Rev. Mr. Tustin in his dedication discourse, delivered at Warren, were eminently useful Baptist ministers; one of whom, the Rev. William Rogers, D. D., was the successor of Morgan Edwards as pastor of the church in Philadelphia, and for many years, was Professor of Oratory and Belles Lettres in the University of Pennsylvania; the other was the Rev. William Williams, for many years pastor of a church in Wrentham, Mass., and who was elected to the Fellowship of the College in 1789. Mr. Williams instructed many young men in the study of theology, and probably prepared more young men for the College than any other man since its beginning. A fourth member of this class was General James Mitchell Varnum, afterwards distinguished for his eloquence as a member of Congress from the State of Rhode Island, and who was also a Brigadier General in the American army in the war of the Revolution. A full and extremely interesting account of this Commencement is given in the "Providence Gazette and Country Journal," printed by John Carter, September 9, 1769. The closing part of the account is as follows:

"The President concluded the exercises with prayer. The whole was conducted with a propriety and solemnity suitable to the occasion. The audience (consisting of the principal gentlemen and ladies of this Colony, and many from the neighboring governments,) though large and crowded, behaved with the utmost decorum.

"Not only the candidates, but even the

President, were dressed in American manufactures. Finally be it observed, that *this class are the first sons of that College* which has existed for more than four years; during all which time it labored under great disadvantages, notwithstanding the warm patronage and encouragement of many worthy men of fortune and benevolence; and it is hoped, from the disposition which many discovered on that day, and other favorable circumstances, that these disadvantages will soon, in part, be happily removed."

As the place for the permanent location of the College was still undetermined, the four towns of Warren, Providence, Newport and East Greenwich, in four different counties of the State, all preferred their claims as being, each respectively, the most eligible situation. The consequence was, that the public mind was greatly agitated by the contentions which grew out of these conflicting claims. Mr. Edwards, in referring to the subject, says:—"Warren was at first agreed on as a proper situation, where a small wing was to be erected in the spring of 1770, and about £800 raised towards effecting it. But soon afterwards, some who were unwilling it should be there, and some who were unwilling it should be anywhere, did so far agree as to lay aside the said location, and propose that the county which should raise the most money, should have the College."

The two ablest competitors in this contest were the towns of Providence and Newport. The latter town raised £4,000 by subscription, but Providence gained the advantage by raising £4,280; and after an earnest discussion on the merits of the conflicting claims, the Corporation, on the 7th of February, 1770, decided by a vote of twenty-one to fourteen, that the edifice be built in the town of Providence, and that there the College be continued forever. Accordingly, in the May following,

Dr. Manning, with his undergraduates, removed hither.

The work of instruction went on with regularity till the Revolution, when a gap occurs in the catalogue of Commencements, from 1777 to 1782. The College edifice recently completed, was occupied at this time by the State militia, and as a French hospital for the troops of Rochambeau. In 1786 the President was elected to Congress, where he gave his influence to the establishment of the Constitution, still retaining the College office. His appointment to this place of responsibility, which was spontaneously and unanimously conferred upon him by the General Assembly, upon his casual appearance among them, was, says Judge Pitman in his address to the Alumni, as honorable to themselves as to him. His death occurred on Friday morning, July 29th, 1791, in the 53d year of his age. His remains were carried into the College Hall, where prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Hitchcock, after which they were deposited in the North Burial Place. "The funeral," says the United States Chronicle, published in Providence at that time by Bennett Wheeler, "is thought to have been the most numerous and respectable ever attended in this town." Dr. Manning may be regarded in one sense as the Founder of the College, for although the plan of it originally emanated from the Philadelphia Association, as stated in the commencement of this account, it was nevertheless owing to his personal influence and exertions, that it was happily matured, and from a state of infancy and trial, nurtured and developed, until it attained, before the termination of his labors, a position of comparative affluence and respectability.

The following particulars relating to his personal appearance, habits and manners, from the graceful pen of his biographer, Professor Goddard, are appropriate in this connection :

"The advantages of a most attractive ex-

terior, Dr. Manning possessed in no common measure. His person was graceful and commanding, and his countenance was remarkably expressive of sensibility, dignity and cheerfulness." In his youth, he was noted for bodily strength and activity. These qualities he was accustomed to display in the athletic exercises common among the young men of his day, and in his mature years, in some of the severer labors of husbandry. Unpoetical as the occupation may seem, he sometimes made his own stone wall; and in the use of the scythe, he acknowledged no superior among the best trained laborers in the meadow. To his habits of vigorous muscular exercise may be attributed, in part, his excellent constitution, and the sound health, which, till within a few years of his death, he uninterruptedly enjoyed.

"The voice of Dr. Manning was not among the least of his attractions. To its extraordinary compass and harmony may, in no small degree be ascribed the vivid impression which he made upon minds. How potent is the fascination of a musical and expressive voice! How sad to think, that, in these days of almost universal accomplishment, this mighty instrument for touching the heart of man should be comparatively neglected! When in connection with a more careful culture of our moral being, the voice shall be trained to a more perfect manifestation of its powers, a charm, hitherto unfelt, will be lent to the graceful pleasures of life, and an influence of almost untried efficacy to its serious occasions.

"The manners of Dr. Manning were not less prepossessing than his personal appearance. They seemed to be the expression of that dignity and grace for which he was so remarkable, and of which he appeared to be entirely unconscious—a dignity and grace, not artificial or studied in the least, but the gift of pure nature. He was easy without negligence, and polite without affectation.

Unlike many of the distinguished men in our country, he was too well bred to adopt an air of patronage and condescension towards his inferiors either in talent or in station. As a Christian, also, he felt the importance of cultivated manners, and he acknowledged no necessary connection between the sternest fidelity to principle and the precision and austerity with which it is sometimes found associated. Like the venerable Wheelock, the founder of Dartmouth College, he abhorred all religious profession which was not marked with good manners."

"In the discipline and instruction of the College, Dr. Manning was eminently successful. He secured the obedience of his pupils, rather by the gentleness of parental persuasion than by the sternness of official authority. His instructions, which were always oral, never failed to command their attention, and to leave upon their minds a distinct impression. Classical learning was his forte, and to the classics and their cognate branches, he principally confined himself."

* * * * *

"On the Christian character of Dr. Manning his life is the best eulogy. His religion was wrought into the texture of his moral being. It exerted a pervading and habitual control, regulating his principles, tastes, habits and opinions. It exhibited no disproportions, it delighted in no bustle; it was reflected in no strong lights. In life it was his animating spirit—in death it was his sustaining hope."

In 1792 he was succeeded in the Presidency by the Rev. Jonathan Maxcy, who, the year before, upon the death of Manning, had been chosen Professor of Divinity. He was born in Attleborough, Massachusetts, in 1767. When only 33 years of age the honorary degree of Doctor in Divinity was conferred upon him by Harvard University. He was, it is believed, appointed to the office of a college President the youngest, and officiated the

longest, in proportion to his years, of any person in the United States. In 1802 he succeeded Dr. Edwards in the Presidency of Union College, New York. Here he officiated with increasing reputation until 1804, when he was called to another sphere of action. In that year, upon the establishment of the South Carolina College, he received the appointment of President, and accepted it with the fond anticipation of finding a warmer clime more congenial to his constitution. Over this institution he presided until his death, which occurred in 1820, in his 53d year. His Collegiate Addresses have been recently published, in a small duodecimo form, in London. From the biographical introduction to these Addresses, by Prof. Romeo Elton, the following extracts are made:

"In his person he was rather small of stature, yet of a fine and well proportioned figure. His features were regular and manly, indicating intelligence and benevolence; and, especially in conversation and public speaking, they were strongly expressive. Grace and dignity were also combined in his movements."

"As a scholar, Dr. Maxcy held a very high rank. His stores of knowledge were varied and profound, and he had at all times the command over them. Like the celebrated Robert Hall, he appears to have evinced an early taste for metaphysical studies, and to have thoroughly understood the various systems of philosophy. To this circumstance was probably owing much of that clearness, precision and facility, which enabled him at once to separate truth from error, and to wield his arguments with irresistible effect."

"As an instructor Dr. Maxcy possessed unusual ability, and, perhaps, no President of any college in the United States ever enjoyed a higher reputation. The precision and perspicuity with which he could develop his ideas in the most appropriate language, rendered him peculiarly qualified for this office. His

numerous pupils all unite in pronouncing him, as a teacher, one of the most perfect models."

"As a preacher, Dr. Maxey's reputation did not depend so much on any one striking excellence, as on the union of many. These were so happily combined, that it would be difficult to say which was the most prominent. His conceptions were vigorous, and were expressed in a pure, terse and eloquent style. A profound and breathless silence, and intense feeling, and a spirit of holy elevation, were the almost invariable attendants of his preaching."

"In the character of Dr. Maxey, mental and moral worth were happily combined. And so long as genius, hallowed and sublimed by piety, shall command veneration, he will be remembered in his country as a star of the first magnitude."

The Rev. Asa Messer, a graduate of the College in 1790, succeeded Dr. Maxey, and occupied the Presidency twenty-four years, until 1826, when he retired from office. Possessing a handsome competence, the fruit, in part, of his habitual frugality, he was enabled to pass the remainder of his life in the enjoyment of independent leisure. His fellow-citizens, of Providence, elected him for several years to responsible municipal trusts, which he discharged with characteristic punctuality and uprightness. He died, after a short illness, in 1836, aged 65 years.

"His religious opinions," says Prof. Goddard, "especially for the last twenty years of his life, corresponded nearly to those of the General Baptists of England. He was a strenuous advocate for the supremacy of the scriptures, and for their entire sufficiency in matters of faith and practice. As a preacher, he wanted the attractive graces of elocution; but he never failed to address to the understanding and the conscience, the most clear and cogent exhibitions of the great practical truths of the Bible. For what is termed po-

lite literature he had no particular fondness, but he was a good classical scholar, and was well versed in the mathematics, and the several branches of natural philosophy. In moral science, also, we have known few better reasoners or more successful teachers. In fine, Dr. Messer was remarkable, rather for the vigor than the versatility of his powers; rather, for solid acquirement, than for captivating embellishments; rather for wisdom than for wit; rather for grave processes of ratiocination, than for the airy frolics of fancy."

It was soon after the commencement of his administration, in September, 1804, that the College received the name of Brown University, in honor of Nicholas Brown, its most distinguished benefactor. He was the son of Nicholas Brown, one of the "four brothers," (Nicholas, Joseph, John and Moses) whose comprehensive views, mercantile energy, and enlarged philanthropy, contributed so much to the prosperity of their native town, and to the growth and success of the College in the days of its infancy. Mr. Brown was born in Providence, on the fourth of April, 1769. He graduated in 1786, under the presidency of Dr. Manning, and in 1791, at the early age of twenty-two, he became a member of the Corporation. In 1796, he was elected Treasurer of the Corporation, which office he held until September, 1825, when, having been elected to the Board of Fellows, he was succeeded by the late Moses B. Ives, who retained the office until his death, August 7, 1857. During a period of nearly thirty-two years, we may remark in this connection, Mr. Ives thus superintended the financial affairs of the institution, giving to the promotion of its highest interests, his valuable time, his wise counsels, and his liberal benefactions. His death has occasioned a vacancy which will not soon be filled.

Mr. Brown, as Treasurer, had a full knowledge of the wants of the College, and prompt-

ly came forward, with unexampled liberality, to its relief. In 1804 he founded a professorship of Oratory and Belles Lettres. In 1822, he erected, at his own expense, Hope College, and in 1834, Manning Hall. His recorded benefactions to the University, during a period of more than forty years, including land and buildings, at their estimated value when given, and also bequests, amount in round numbers to one hundred and sixty thousand dollars. He died full of honors and years, surrounded by those who venerated and loved him, on the 27th of September, 1841, in the 73d year of his age. His son, Mr. John Carter Brown, it should be added, continues the same generous interest in the welfare and progress of the University, which characterized his father's life from early manhood throughout.

Mr. Messer was succeeded in the Presidency by the Rev. Francis Wayland, in 1827. His administration has been distinguished by many important reforms in the government of the College, and in the distribution of its studies. He resigned his office in 1855, having been the executive head of the University twenty eight years, during which period he administered its affairs with consummate ability, and by his personal character, and the genius and spirit of his writings, greatly extended the reputation of the College, until for sound learning and morals, it has come to be regarded as second to no institution in the land. The external monuments of his presidency, the halls and mansion which have been added to the University buildings, the noble Library and the fund that secures its perpetual growth, the recent munificent endowment of one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, and the increased provisions for the highest education, have all been reared, either directly or indirectly, by his untiring energy and zeal; and they will perpetuate to coming generations the priceless services to education which he has thus rendered, while those who

have received his instructions, will bear testimony to the power of his teachings, and the thoroughness of his discipline.

Dr. Wayland was born in New York, of English parentage, in 1796. He graduated at Union College in 1813, at which institution he was afterwards tutor, for a period of five years, during the latter part of which time he preached to a congregation at Burnt Hills. He has recently been engaged in supplying the pulpit of the First Baptist Church and Society in Providence.

He was succeeded in the Presidency by the Rev. Barnas Sears, who was unanimously elected to this high office at a special meeting of the Corporation held on the 21st of August, 1855. Dr. Sears was born in Sandisfield, Berkshire county, Massachusetts, in 1802, and graduated at the University in 1825, under President Messer. In 1829 he was appointed to a Professorship in the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution, New York, now Madison University, where he remained until 1833, when he left for Europe, and spent several years in the study of Theology, Classical Literature, and Philosophy, at the Universities of Halle, Leipsic, and Berlin. Upon his return he was appointed to a Professorship in the Theological Seminary at Newton, Massachusetts, where he remained twelve years. In 1848 he was called to the post, made vacant by the resignation of the Hon. Horace Mann, of Secretary and Executive Agent of the Massachusetts Board of Education, which place he filled with distinguished usefulness and honor, for a period of seven years. In these several situations, all of them connected with the interests of education and learning, Dr. Sears has become widely known to the public, and by his professional labors and published writings has acquired a high reputation for superior talents and varied scholarship. He was thus prëeminently fitted to become the successor of Wayland

and Messer, Maxcy and Manning. His administration as the President of the University has thus far been highly successful, while his unvarying courtesy and kind genial spirit have won for him the esteem of his fellow citizens, and the universal love of the students.

The University at present has four college buildings or halls, and a mansion house for the President, as follows: University Hall, built in 1770-1, of brick, four stories high, 150 feet long and 46 wide, with a projection in the centre on the east and west sides, of 10 by 32, containing 58 rooms for officers and students; Hope College, built in 1821-2, of brick, four stories high, 120 feet long and 40 wide, containing 48 rooms for officers and students, including two halls for the Philermian and United Brothers Societies; Manning Hall, built in 1834, of stone covered with cement, 90 feet in length, including the portico, by 42 in width, two stories high, containing upon the first floor the Library room, and upon the second the Chapel; Rhode Island Hall, built in 1839-40, of stone covered with cement, 70 feet long by 42 wide, with a projection on the west side of 12 by 26, two stories high, containing on the first floor two lecture rooms for the Professors of Chemistry and of Natural Philosophy, on the second floor an ample hall for the Cabinet of Mineralogy and Geology, Portraits, &c., and in the basement a Chemical Laboratory suitable for conducting chemical analysis, and the various processes of chemistry applied to the Arts. Its enclosures are graded and adorned with stately elms, comprising, with its adjoining grounds, upwards of 14 acres of land, situated in the eastern section of the city, between Waterman, Brown, George and Prospect streets. Its invested funds, including the Library Fund, amount to two hundred thousand dollars. The College Library contains 28,000 carefully selected bound volumes, besides a large collection of unbound pamphlets. The Society Lib-

raries present, in addition, an aggregate of 6000 volumes. The last triennial catalogue, published in 1856, gives the entire number of graduates as 1809, of whom 1212 are now living. Of this number of graduates 506 have been ordained as ministers, of whom 334 are now living.

The present number of undergraduates is 225. The officers of instruction are the President, eight professors and an assistant professor, besides the librarian, whose duties are confined to his particular department. There are two vacations, one commencing about the last week in January, of three weeks; and another, commencing about the second week in July, of eight weeks. Besides these there are two recesses of one week each. The Annual Commencement exercises occur on the first Wednesday in September, during which week candidates for admission to the College are examined.

The Three Callers.

Morn calleth fondly to a fair boy straying
 Mid golden meadows, rich with clover dew;
 She calls, but he still thinks of naught, save
 playing:
 And so she smiles, and waves him an adieu!
 Whilst he, still merry with his flowery store
 Deems not that Morn, sweet Morn, returns no
 more.

Noon cometh—but the boy to manhood growing,
 Heeds not the time—he sees but one sweet form,
 One young, fair face, from bower of jasmine
 glowing,
 And all his loving heart with bliss is warm.
 So Noon, unnoticed, seeks the western shore,
 And man forgets that Noon returns no more.

Night tappeth at a casement gleaming
 With the thin fire-light flickering faint and low,
 By which a gray-haired man is sadly dreaming
 O'er pleasures gone—as all life's pleasures go;
 Night calls him to her—and he leaves his door,
 Silent and dark,—and he returns no more!

CHARLES SWAIN.

Guild, Reuben Aldridge. Historical sketch of Brown University. [s.n.], [1858]. Sabin Americana: History of the Americas, 1500-1926, link.gale.com/apps/doc/CY0107738184/SABN?u=prov98893&sid=gale_marc&pg=1. Accessed 15 June 2023.