

MAYNARD HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI

First of all, I am indebted to Birger Koski for furnishing me with much of the material used in this monograph. Although I am an alumnus of Maynard High, I must admit my memories of the irregular annual meetings is rather nebulous. I can only recall the two reunions I attended and that is probably due to the fact that I held office during those two periods.

This monograph should deal mostly with the Alumni and its history, but I am sure my listeners would like to learn the names of the first graduates from Maynard High School. This was the Class of 1886 and was composed of the following members: Effie Flood, Florence Winkley, Emily Robinson, George Newton, and Brooks Reed. Now that I have gone this far, I think it only fair that I should mention the names of the other members who attended high school at this time. There was no Junior Class, but the Sophomore Class consisted of Nellie Rouse, Florence and Laura Woodart, Annie Morris, Charles Brackett, William Johnson, and Hattie Lowe. The only member of the Freshman Class was Cora Harwood.

The first move towards an Alumni Association developed in 1899, thirteen years after the first graduation. On July 21, 1899, a small group of former graduates met at the high school. The object of the meeting was to determine the feasibility of forming a High School Alumni Association. All present were in favor of the idea and it was voted to hold another meeting on the following month, (Aug. 11th) for the purpose of electing officers for the ensuing year.

The result of this election was as follows: George Gutteridge, President; Mrs. Samuel Lawton, Vice-President; Laura Woodart, Secretary; Fred McCleary, Treasurer; John Lawton, William Naylor, Annie Pettigrew, Marion Winkley, and Elizabeth Salisbury, Executive Committee. The school committee was invited to become honorary members.

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The first social reunion was held in Good Templars Hall, September 1 of the same year. There was an excellent banquet followed by speeches. The general tenor of the talks was to encourage more pupils to attend high school and as we would say today, discourage "drop-outs". There was not much activity during the years 1900 and 1901, however, the second annual reunion was a great success. It was held in Co-operative Hall with Lawton's Orchestra furnishing the music. The date of this event was August 29, 1902.

Miss Laura Woodart was elected President for 1903. Seven years later (Oct. 3rd) 1909, the meeting featured the presence of many past presidents including Mrs. Squire Siswick, Mrs. Fred Ballou, Mrs. John Horan, Ethel Butterworth, Irene Batley, Fannie Harwood, and Laura Woodart. An excellent dinner and program was enjoyed by the Alumni.

Alfred McCleary was chosen President for 1910. The next reunion was held the following year, September 2nd, in Masonic Hall. A turkey dinner was served, followed by a concert and social hour. Blanche Mason was elected as the new President. The next meeting was held March 15, 1912, in Masonic Hall with Linwood White presiding. Frank May, Louis Sullivan, and James Ledgard were elected to the High School Athletic Association. This was apparently a business meeting only as the 14th Annual Reunion was held three months later in Masonic Hall (June 21, 1912). The officers were encouraged by the large attendance. The business meeting was first on the program, followed by a sumptuous banquet. Our President then called on Joseph Walker, Speaker of the House, and Rep. Arthur Coughlan, our representative to the General Court. Among other things, the speaker mentioned, "while Rep. Coughlan is not regarded as an outstanding orator, he is regarded as the handsomest member of the House". Lawton's Orchestra provided a musical program. Irene Martin was elected President; Nina Clark, Secretary, and James B. Farrell, Treasurer.

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The next reunion was held two years later in Masonic Hall, December 4, 1914. First came the business meeting and it was voted to assess each member one dollar annually in lieu of any entertainment. May Parkin was chosen as the new President. The Alumni had two hundred members, however, there were only one hundred members at the reunion. The next meeting was held the following year (June 18, 1915) at Colonial Hall. Two hundred members were present and Gov. David I. Walsh was the guest of honor. A dance followed to the strains of Lawton's Orchestra. Another enthusiastic meeting was held the following year, (June 30, 1916) in Colonial Hall. Raymond Hamlin presided at the business meeting. It was voted to give a loving cup next year to the class having the most members present. The Riverside Orchestra furnished the music for the occasion. Louis Sullivan was elected President for the following year.

It was now the year 1920, four years had elapsed without holding any reunions. President Louis Sullivan called for a meeting to be held at his house, March 5th, 1920. It was hoped that interest would be revived but the scarcely attended meeting turned out to be a dismal failure. During an interim of eight years, alumni activities were completely forgotten. However, in January, 1928 (Jan. 13) Dr. Raymond Hooper and Donald Lent attempted to revive interest in the Alumni Association and through their efforts a business meeting was called for February 3rd. Don Lent, who was Coach of the athletic team of the high school, notified the group that due to football changes, Crowe Park was no longer available. It was suggested that some of the land owned by the town, generally known as the Poor Farm, would make an ideal site to be known as Alumni Field. The idea soon caught on and the suggestion that the large field be transferred to the school department to be used for high school athletic activities, needed only the approval of the voters.

An article was placed on the town warrant pertaining to the above and

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passed without a dissenting vote. A business meeting was called for February 3, 1928, with Louis Sullivan, President of the Association, presiding. It was voted to call a business meeting on February 17, 1928. James Ledgard was elected President with a new set of officers, including Dorothy Hannon, Secretary and Sadie Case, Treasurer. The former by-laws were adopted. It was voted to hold the Annual Reunion April 13, 1928. The program consisted of a banquet and dance in Colonial Hall with the famous Sheridan Orchestra furnishing the music for the occasion. Six hundred notices had been sent to all members and it seemed that nearly all were present.

May 4, 1929, the Alumni Association held a banquet and dance. Community singing instead of speakers. We can only conjecture that the last of the Alumni Reunions was held on January 3, 1930, as no mention of any other meetings can be found in the local newspapers. Harold Morgan was President; Mrs. Jerry Lynch, Vice-President; Al Cowles, Secretary; Mrs. Sadie Case, Treasurer; Mrs. Mary Sanderson, Historian. The executive committee included Harold Morgan, Loretta Mullin, Robert Lester, Mildred Mullin, Charles Lerer, and James Farrell. The meeting decided to sponsor a minstrel show, and Loretta Mullin, Robert Lester, and James Farrell were appointed on this committee. As far as I can recall the minstrel show never did materialize, which leads me to believe that 1930 was indeed, the last of our Alumni Reunions.

Sometimes I wish the alumni meetings could be revived and yet, would it be practical with such large groups graduating every year? Class reunions serve the purpose of the alumni meetings in a limited way as they are more practical and intimate.

All dates are from the Maynard News.

Read at the Maynard Historical Society Meeting -- James B. Farrell