

Archives

Principal T. T. Cranny Receives An Interesting Group of Old Time Programs From Will F. Brewer, Who Graduated In 1886.

July 19, 1935

A valuable addition to the archives of Grinnell High School was made this week when a group of programs for Class Day and Commencement Exercises for the years, 1885, 1886, and 1889, were received by Principal T. T. Cranny from Will F. Brewer, who graduated from the local institution in 1886. Mr. Brewer is now connected with the English department of Montana State College, a division of the University of Montana, located at Bozeman.

Members of the creative writing class at Grinnell High School under the supervision of Miss Irene J. Cook have been attempting to gather material for, and prepare a history of the local institution, but have been handicapped by a lack of adequate information concerning its early years. Facts contained in incidental material on the programs and in Mr. Brewer's letter will go a long way towards filling the gaps in the previous information available for the history.

The Commencement programs were each made up of a series of essays and orations dealing with subjects which are still popular with high school students such as "A Nation's Progress;" "Socialism;" "A Crisis in History;" and "The Necessity of Education;" while the musical features on each program are for the most part furnished by older members of the community.

The programs each year were held on Friday afternoons in the Congregational church. According to the program 1885 was the sixteenth graduation year at the high school.

A. C. Hart is listed as Superintendent of Schools in 1885 with Charles A. Taylor, Principal, and Charles W. Jaynes, assistant, but the school officials in other years are not listed. Levi Kim-

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ball, who was president of the Board of Education, presented the diplomas in 1885, while Dr. E. W. Clark held this position both in 1886 and 1889.

Included in the list of graduates for the various years are many whose names will be familiar only to the older inhabitants of the community: Laura A. Barker, Stella Bartlett, Maude J. Pearson, Bertha L. Clark, Lodezka Agard, Frances A. Worcester, Della Marsh, Mae L. Hedges, Kate Y. Grinnell, Julia A. Ridley, and Frank W. Harrison for 1885; Will F. Brewer, Ruth E. Grier, Lettie M. Isenberg, Clara F. Knebel, Anna M. Norton, and Kate L. Simmerman, for 1886; and Ella M. Allen, Walter H. Bye, Elbert J. Clarke, Olivia B. Ford, Mary A. Pilgrim, Schuyler C. Clay, Minnie D. Francisco, Daisy W. Lemon, Ernest Head, William J. Knébel, Maude H. Morris, Emma Love, Louis D. Kemmerer, H. Teresa Peirce, Bertha Morris Grace Rouse, Mary E. Sherman, Emily Swadling, and John W. Thayer for 1889.

Emily Magoun and Rolla Penfield appeared on the Class Day program in 1886, but not on the Commencement program. Among those who appeared on the musical portions of the program in the various years were Mrs. G. M. Christian, Miss Jessie Childs, Miss Lizzie Fenno, Mrs. Etta Holyoke, Miss Elma Bailey, and quartets composed of the "Messrs. Burton, Gaines, Newman, and Douglass," and the "Messrs. Porter, Needham, Newman, and Bartlett." Clergymen who appeared in the various years were Dr. John Stafford, and Rev. E. English.

In his letter to Mr. Cranny when sending the programs Mr. Brewer had a little to say about some of the old-timers at the school and some of the school arrangements, writing in part: "Rolla M. Penfield, who appears on the class day program dropped out of school shortly before the end of the year. A few years ago he was living near Chicago. Of those who did graduate, not one remained in Grinnell for many years. Clara Knebel and I went on to college and graduated in 1891. She married, and was still living in Nebraska the last I knew. Kate Simmerman after teaching successfully in Bozeman for many years went west to Colorado, I think, and died there many years ago.

"The high school occupied the southeast corner of the second floor of the old square wooden building which was moved to the north side of the lot, and stood there for many years before it was torn down. The northwest corner of the building had the principal's office, the superintendent's office, a small library, and a small store-room for the science teaching. The only piece of scientific apparatus I can remember was an old friction electric machine for producing electric sparks. The east half of the second floor was grade school quarters and the whole of the first floor. The only other school building was South School

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