

## The Ottawa Heritage

Even a superficial view of the history of Ottawa University discloses some challenging facts. The first fact is the University in its early years was closely related to the missionary enterprise of the Christian movement. Totham Meeker, working with the Ottawa Indians in the 1830's and 40's, suffering everything except martyrdom in the difficult work, publishing in the Indian language, was the forerunner of what was to follow. It was Meeker who influenced John Tecumseh Jones to spearhead the original arrangement between the Indians and the white Baptists to found a school. While this did not work out as planned, the spirit of the original undertaking was nevertheless missionary and Christian.

The second conclusion is similar to the first. Through the difficult years to follow the actual beginnings, the school relied upon faithful leaders like M. L. Ward to keep the dream alive—despite litigation, fires and inadequate finances—there were always some who would sacrifice personal gain for the larger goals of the university. The Trustees gave Dr. Ward at one time a few hundred dollars a year, plus pasture and feed for his horse and cow, for which the good Doctor was to pay all the teachers and expenses of the school—unless very small tuition charges would be sufficient.

When Ottawa has needed leaders it has always had them. Perhaps the most significant heritage of all has been the indefinable, but very real spirit which has made student life in this school unique.

If a building burned, as one did in 1902—even before a class had met in it—students adapted themselves to the situation.

If a physical labor were needed for a building—all boys turned out in 1914 to remove the dirt for the foundation of what is now the Commons—it was provided.

If a heart-breaking football game was lost in the last minute of play to Baker as in 1914—the students rallied after the evening meal for a “post mortem” pep meeting. There is something very different about a pep meeting after a defeat.

It was a traditional custom in the years when the writer was a student here for students to meet trains to greet newcomers (just as is done during Charter Day now) and, for boys anyway, to offer their own rooms as headquarters until rooms could be found. There were no boys' dormitories.

If funds are needed for a W.S.S.F. drive, as has been true annually in recent years, students of moderate means give sacrificially to the world student enterprise

Perhaps the most noteworthy characteristic of our student life is the spirit of good will which lives among us. So, we say on Charter Day, “remember the ones before you and all they tried to do, for you're a part of the Ottawa spirit—and the spirit's a part of you.”

—B. Smith Haworth.