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Literary Societies of Ottawa University

On the afternoon of Dec 17th 1869 the students of Ottawa University meet to take action concerning the organization of the first Literary Society of this institution. The result of this meeting and one held Dec 21 was the organization of the Euphemian Society, which held its first regular meeting Jan 4th 1870 with D. B. Holt (now editor of the "Western Baptist") in the chair. The members of this society numbered 38 and among this number we notice the names of some who are now prominent business men in this city. The society continued to prosper during that
year, but the next year, owing to the fact that only a few of its members returned to school they found it impracticable to continue their meetings and so in connection with the public school organized a new society with its headquarters at the old Brick S. H.

The next society of which we find any mention is the Calliopean. The records state that on Oct 29, 1877 a meeting was called by Prof. Williams who stated the object of the meeting to be the organization of a Literary Society. Prof. Williams was elected president and for the first year or so the society was under the personal supervision of the faculty. Among the founding workers we find the names of Messrs Bass, Whitney and a modern triumvirate Whitecotton, Dicklow & Fred Holt,
Everything went along smoothly until the autumn of 1882 when the young ladies headed by the principal, Miss Varnum, sowed and in the room across the hall around one dimly lighted lamp met and took the first steps toward organizing a society of their own Sept 15 1882. The name chosen was "Ladies Athenian". The Athenian society started out under the most promising circumstances with 19 charter members and during the first year the society was as much as ever prosperous. But the same cannot be said of the Calliopean society. It never recovered from its loss. It lingered along for a few months but on the night of March 30th 1883 it passed away. An attempt was made at the beginning of the next school year...
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to resurrect it but in vain. The Calhounian society was a thing of the past. The young men, without a society until Dec 1st, 1883 when they met and formed the Kappa Nu Kappa. This society was short lived but it should ever be remembered that it was through its efforts that the Olympian was formed. The young men believing that the last part of the proverb, "United we stand, divided we fall," had been proven by the society determined, if possible, to ascertain the truth of the first part, "United we stand." With this object in view they appointed a committee to visit the ladies society and to use all honorable means to effect a union between the two. The Young Ladies though struggling with
many difficulties for an existence decided that they could not join the Kappa society but that the societies should hold their meetings together for two months. Under this arrangement things went along smoothly and at the end of that time the ties that bound them were so strong that neither could bear to think of separating. But when the young gentlemen were informed that they lacked "sand" they determined to show their grit by going it alone once more. But once was enough and at the close of their first meeting adjourned "sine die". The young ladies at a sad and solemn session decided to dissolve and kept as a monument over the Athenian grave our organ. The following week the students met and from the ruins of these societies the
Olympian was formed and has continued from that time to this an honor, to its founders and to its members. In it was combined all that was good in both and it stood without a rival until the beginning of the present term. It then became apparent that another literary society was needed by the students and this need was fully met by the organization of the Philaletheian society. The last but not the least of the societies that have been connected with this institution. Though younger than its sister, the Olympian, yet in many respects it is not inferior, and the time is not far distant when "the last shall be first, and the first last." Long may these societies live in friendly competition, to be an honor to our university and a blessing to its students - a blessing to the nation.