

**The Philomathean Society**  
**of**  
**The University of Pennsylvania**

*A Sesquicentennial History*

## Acknowledgement

This historical commentary is more than the product of an isolated group of Philomatheans laboring under a hot summer sun and the efforts of a latter-day editor who recovered their work, corrected historical, stylistic, and typographical errors, contributing his own labor to theirs in an effort to produce an accurate and engaging history. Rather, it is the work of all those who have been members of the Society and who have lived the history which we have had the privilege to record as faithfully as possible.

During the two summers preceding the sesquicentennial year, the minute books of the Society from 1913 to the 1963 were synthesized, read, and compiled into a coherent history. The History Committee conducted dozens of interviews with Philomathean Alumni and gradually developed the framework for a coherent history celebrating the Society's one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary. Scores of other senior members aided in this effort, conducting supplementary interviews and corresponding with the Junior Membership, whose replies provided valuable corroboration to the minutes. The raw data that the History Committee had at its disposal was enormous. During the summer of 1964, the writers attempted to capture the essence of this material. Nearly half-century later, their successor discovered their work in his progress toward producing his own history of the Philomathean Society and decided that rather than writing a rival work, he would combine the research that he had accumulated with the drafts and outlines produced by his predecessors.

The History Committee was fortunate in being able to call on senior members E. Sculley Bradley, Murray Eisenberg and Charles F. Ludwig for editorial assistance. Draft upon draft was read and reread. Corrections were made and then the process would begin again. Junior members Marcey Belfer, Miriam Kotzin, Ralph Plotkin and Arthur Shapiro worked with the Committee in gathering, sorting and typing information for the alumni listings. Special mention goes to Donald Boyle of the University of Pennsylvania Printing Office for his infinite patience with our ignorance of his profession. To all of the above, the History Committee owes its most grateful thanks.

This project has been an exclusively Philomathean undertaking, emerging from a desire to celebrate the Society's sesquicentennial and revived nearly fifty years later. Yet, it could never have been realized without the moral support of Robert Y. Longley, Dean of Men, and Charles

Babcock, Acting Dean of the College.

The History Committee has worked as a group and as the sum of individual efforts. Alan Oslick worked on the history up to 1943, and Richard Golden, the Introduction and the section on the post-War period. David Geenwald and Neil Jokelson served in general editorial capacities and have attempted to weave an integrated structure. To this end, their editor, Andrew Kincaid, in compiling an updated edition for the bicentennial, maintained their original voice wherever possible, although certain revisions were unavoidable in an effort to assure the factual accuracy of the history as well as ensure that the work is as cohesive as possible.

The Committee apologizes for the numerous sins of omission and commission present in the directories. It can excuse the errors only on grounds of time limitations, difficulty of communication with the widespread alumni and natural lapses of memory over the years. The Alumni Directory includes all alumni before the class of 1914 who are, to the Committee's knowledge, alive. As many alumni as possible have been included beginning with that class. The list of Moderators during the early forties is subject to error because of inadequate records.

The Committee and their editor take full responsibility for any deficiencies in the following pages. That which is creditable belongs to the entire Society, for it is that body which has given us the inspiration, as it has done for its members throughout the past one hundred-fifty years.

#### HISTORY COMMITTEE

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October 2, 1964

August 11, 2009

## Introduction

"It is now just half a century since the then senior class of this University entertained the proposition and carried it through to form a society, the objects of which should be congenial with and promotive of the studies prosecuted in the classes. It was to be for mental, what the old gymnasium was for bodily strength, an arena for mutual improvement, where the precaution of secrecy was rather a shield for the diffident, and the encouragement of retiring merit, too often unconscious of its capacity (by its tendency to isolation). After some informal meetings and conferences the subject was submitted to the Provost for approval, and the organization and constitution completed under the title of 'The Philomathean Society of the University of Pennsylvania.'"

These were the words of the Philomathean Society's first Moderator, Christian F. Crusé, in 1863, on the occasion of the Society's fiftieth anniversary. The Society's first meeting was held on October 2, 1813, and the framed constituting declaration signed by the thirteen charter members on that date still proudly hangs on the wall of the Society's meeting room. This established as the Society's governing purpose, the promotion of "...our improvement in Learning, and likewise more firmly establish the reputation of the University..." The Board of Trustees of the University approved the establishment of the Society on November 23, 1813, formalizing what had already been a reality for over a month. Upon the Board's order, the Society was allotted a large hall and two adjoining rooms in the building that had been constructed and designed for the use of President of the United States, but was given to the University when the national capital moved to Washington, having never been occupied by a sitting president.

In broad outline, the Philo of 1813 and of 1964 are spiritually the same. Traditions have changed slowly, if at all, and the now-Reverend Crusé would feel perfectly at home during one of today's meetings, recognizing its basic forms and institutions. The Society meets formally in its quarters eight Friday evenings each semester, generally on alternating weeks, as scheduling permits. The Literary Exercises are the foci of the meetings, and provide a venue for members to share original insight on research and composition, allowing a venue in which to receive criticism and commentary from their peers. This, then, can be seen as a response to the perceived inadequacies of the University at the time, as members sought an external forum in which to have their work evaluated as the formal venues did not satisfy their appetite for critical

engagement. Each meeting, the Moderator appoints a different member to serve as the President of the Literary Exercises and thus serve as the chair for this portion of the evening; the responsibility is relatively minor and is often conferred upon younger members. Upon appointment, the President in turn designates one member as the Critic of the Exercise, who, upon conclusion of the program, delivers a formal critique of the material presented, commenting on form as well as content. The Philomathean Constitution is then read for three minutes to ensure that the members retain a working knowledge of the document, and the "Review" of the previous meeting follows. It is usually satiric and can take any form the reviewer wishes, including prose, poetry or even, on occasion, mathematical formulae. These reviews have been collected and written into bound volumes since the 1820s.

After the Review, the program arranged by the Literary Exercises Committee and generated by a Junior Member is presented. It might consist of an Oxford style debate on the topic "Resolved, That chivalry is dead," a reading of *Under Milkwood*, a live demonstration of a rat's reaction to artificial cranial stimuli, or an annotated musical program on Beethoven's Fourth Symphony or Charlie Parker. Most often, however, the Literary Exercises center upon prepared expository or analytical papers, although topic is entirely a matter of interest and preference. The diversity of topics presented and discussed reflects the variety of interests of the members, including, classical Marxism, Abstract Expressionism, characterization in *Anna Karenina*, social and work patterns in a garment shop, St. Teresa and the Golden Age of Spanish Literature, the dating of Easter, Arab-Israeli relations, the poetry of Catullus, the chemical origin of life, and Chinese phonetics. Hence, the diversity of the Literary Exercises presented mirrors the diversity of interests exhibited by the membership, allowing each to benefit from the expertise and study of every other member, enhancing and supplementing the formal learning at the University, thus fulfilling its purpose. The earnest discussion which inevitably followed the formal, prepared portion of the presentation ended neither with the adjournment of the meeting, nor with the Moderator's extinguishing the lights as he locked the doors behind him, but nearly always continued into the bleary hours of the morning at some campus restaurant.

Preceding the lit ex is the business section of the meeting. A typical business meeting might last several hours while members discuss and argue the selection of an Annual Orator, methods of raising money to support a publication, the philosophy of selecting books for the Society's library, the correct parliamentary procedure to be followed, and, paradoxically, why the

business section of meetings are so long. Though many members often objected to these long business meetings, they objected more vehemently when the Cabinet implemented a plan or course of action without fully discussing the details on the floor. The meetings followed a modified parliamentary procedure and obeyed a relatively strict standard of decorum; members stood while speaking and addressed each other formally by last names and the relevant honorifics. To increase the sense of formal debate, the seating was arranged into a ring along the outer walls of the meeting room, so that the members of the society naturally faced each other during new business and did not have to crane their necks with every exchange, swiveling to see who had spoken.

The Moderator is the Society's chief officer. His responsibility is to preside at the meetings and to ensure the maintenance of the Society's standards and the observance of its traditions. He must familiarize himself with every Society activity and successfully administer all of its programs, although in this latter capacity he has the support of the Chairmen of the respective committees. It is his duty to maintain satisfactory relations with the faculty, administration, and student body, ensuring that the Society maintains its position of esteem within the institution. In essence, he is public face of the Philomathean Society, the head of the body corporate that elected him. It is his duty to appoint committees, manage the affairs of the Society, and deliver an inaugural address setting forth his policies and soliciting the help of his fellow members. The Cabinet, his advisors and the officers elected to take charge of various aspects of society life, is composed of the six other members. While presiding, he sits on an elevated platform behind an enclosed, wooden podium and armed with a wooden gavel and a square marble block that was once part of the President's Mansion that had served as home to the University prior to relocating to West Philadelphia.

The Censores Morum flank the Moderator on either side and the Scriba sits at a desk directly in front of their podium. These four officers are clad in traditional black academic regalia at the Society's expense. At the beginning of a meeting, or when returning from a recess, the Scriba will notify the society by ringing a bell throughout the halls, shepherding the members into the meeting room, whereupon he will join the Moderator and Censores Morum at the door and enter as part of their procession while the membership stands until the Moderator has taken his seat. Traditionally, the main function of the Censores Morum has been to maintain the decorum of the meeting by censoring the conduct of the members, including the Moderator,

entering fines and credits into small notebooks kept for this purpose to be tallied and collected at the end of the meetings. In addition, the First and Second Censors serve as the Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively, of the Membership Committee and thus are charged with matters of recruitment. The meeting minutes are written by the Scriba into large, leather bound volumes which eventually find their place in the Society's archives where they remain accessible to all members. With the exception of several gaps, especially during and immediately following the Second World War, the Society has complete records of meeting minutes dating back to its founding in 1813.

In addition the aforementioned officers, the Society elects a Recorder, Treasurer and Librarian to aid in the successful and efficient running of the Society. The Recorder's primary function is the care of the Recorder's Roll into which each member writes his name upon initiation. This roll is continuous from 1813, excepting a few years around World War II, during which the society was not only nomadic, but also barely existent, having been evicted from its temporary quarters in Houston Hall by the United States Navy for an officer training program. The Recorder is also responsible for communications with alumni, and is in charge of the maintenance of the Society's archives. The duties of the Treasurer and Librarian are self-explanatory, but nonetheless critical to the functioning of the Society.

Philo also maintained a strong sense of tradition in its activities, including the Annual Oration, the Banquet and Commencement Exercises, and the Bowl Oration. The Annual Oration is an address delivered toward the end of the spring semester by an outstanding author or scholar as a service to the intellectual community surrounding the University. The Banquet and Commencement Exercises are held after the last meeting of the spring semester and are the Society's official farewell to graduating members, a time where graduating members can reminisce with one another as a group before commencement. Following a banquet marked by innumerable toasts and glasses of wine, the graduates receive Philo's ancient, Latin diploma and pass from Junior to Senior membership, the current Moderator is presented a gold key bearing the emblem of the Society, and a prominent alumnus delivers an address and members of the graduating class present the Latin Oration, an original English Poem, and the Valedictory.

The process of application and acceptance to membership is long and exhaustive. To gain the privilege of participating in the Society's activities, a student must demonstrate his qualifications for membership by speaking briefly before the Society on a topic of his choosing,

submitting a creative or critical paper, generally about five hundred words in length, and discussing his ideas and interests in an interview with the Membership Committee. New members are selected from those who have completed this procedure only after exhaustive and thorough discussion by the entire membership, constituted as a Committee of the Whole and presided over by the First Censor as Chair of the Membership Committee. The Society's Constitution dictates that there may be a maximum of fifty junior members at any given time, with the qualifying stipulation that, at most, sixteen of those members be women. This limit, while seemingly arbitrary, has been found to be optimal over the years, permitting close personal contact among the members and effective debate at the meetings, while providing sufficient numbers to administer Society projects successfully. That said, however, a simple vote to overturn or ignore this provision may be employed to expand the membership cap so as to elect more than the constitutionally dictated allotment.

Upon initiation into the Society, new members receive a Latin certificate of membership, a lapel rosette bearing the Society's emblem, and a key to the quarters. The initiate also signs his name to the Recorder's Roll during a traditional candle-lit ceremony, well remembered for the Censor's exclamation "Adsumus" which admits him to Philomathean Hall.

Although the Society consists mostly of undergraduates, a limited number of graduate students may be accepted to Special membership by following the same application procedure, though, officially, they are granted membership by the Cabinet, not the Committee of the Whole. Interestingly, Philo is the only undergraduate student organization at the University retaining this privilege.

These members are fifty very distinct individuals and Philo expresses the personalities of its current members in the nature of debate, the types of events and activities held, and the general tenor of Society life. The membership is divided relatively equally among the four classes and, moreover, the members come from all over the United States, including several members from foreign nations. All of the undergraduate schools are represented in Philo, and most expect to continue their education beyond their bachelor's degree.

During its first forty-three years, the Society concentrated primarily on internal programs designed to promote the learning of its own members, rather than the University as a whole, although it did publish several short-lived magazines such as the *University Magazine*. One such internal program to which the members devoted much time and money was the building of a



library of thousands of volumes which, in reality, served as the library of the University until the last decades of the nineteenth century when the Furness library was completed and the University's collection surpassed the Society's. Furthermore, Philo has exerted influence in the University curriculum, including several efforts and campaigns that have led to the foundation of entire departments. Vice Provost and historian Roy F. Nichols related this example in an address delivered on October 6, 1956 upon the dedication of the present Philomathean Hall.

"It was in the hall of Philomathean that I like to think that the idea of teaching American history at the University was born. On November 1, 1838, a distinguished lawyer from the community, William Bradford Reed, delivered an oration in which he urged the study and teaching of American history. Interestingly enough, sixteen years later he became the first one to teach American history at the University. This was the first fruit on an idea presented to Philomathean."

Further, in 1856, a project was undertaken which brought the Society international recognition. Historian and senior member Edward P. Cheyney relates the incident in his *History of the University of Pennsylvania, 1740-1940* (pages 248-249).

"A member procured and presented to the Society in 1856 a plaster cast of the well-known monument in the British Museum with its trilingual inscription in Hieroglyphics, Demotic, and Greek (the Rosetta Stone). It had lately attracted much attention and been described and translated by the French scholar Champollion. A little group of interested members of 'Philo'... had themselves appointed a committee to report upon it. With what one of them afterwards called 'the happy temerity of youth and inexperience,' and feeling 'that nothing possible to man ought to trouble a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and of the Philomathean Society, by the time they had graduated, two years later, they had produced the report in two successive editions, in book form. Printed in colors by a lithographic process, with appropriate illustration and ornament, it gave a textual reproduction of the inscription in its three languages, collated with the Lepsius text of the corresponding inscription on the wall of the temple at Philae.'"

"It was a work of genuine scholarship, of ingenuity, boldness, industry, and good taste. It drew a complimentary letter from Baron von Humboldt, who was doubtless unaware of the youth and lack of training, as he was certainly unfamiliar with American learning, of the producers of what he calls 'the first essay at independent investigation offered by the litterateurs

of the New Continent.' The two editions of the Report were soon exhausted and have long since become rarities sought for by librarians." This work was the first completely accurate translation of the Rosetta Stone, and it deciphered hieroglyphic characters never previously defined." Similarly, in 1896, a committee was appointed to translate the work *De Mysteriis* of Andocides. The committee later published its comprehensive translation and was subsequently commended by Professor Lamberton, the head of the Department of Greek.

In 1873, the University and the Society moved to West Philadelphia. A fourth floor was built on College Hall especially for the Philomathean Society and its rival, the Zelosophic Society, founded in 1829. This provision was secured in order to ensure that Philo and Zelo would indeed move along with the University from their accommodations in the Presidential Mansion. Each organization had two spacious rooms for its separate use along with locks to ensure privacy.

In the fall of 1875, Philo founded the first college publication at Pennsylvania which had for its sole object news of student interest. The *University Magazine* was published monthly and reflected a need, as determined by Philo, for an outlet devoted to students in which undergraduates could express their opinions and keep apprised of University news. The magazine ran from 1875 until 1885, whereupon it merged with the *Pennsylvanian*. This move was in part a response to the growing sentiment at Penn that Philo, an organization of barely fifty members should not control the primary media organ of a University with nearly one thousand undergraduates. With this in mind, Philo relinquished control and consented to the merger, though Philo ensured that it would maintain an editorial presence on the board of the *Pennsylvanian*. The Society's Moderator, George Wharton Pepper, became the first editor-in-chief of the *Pennsylvanian*, and many Philo members have thereafter held that and other editorial posts on the *Pennsylvanian*, and its successor, the *Daily Pennsylvanian*.

Throughout the first century of its existence, Philo remained almost exclusively a debating society. Certainly, the Society engaged in other activities, but formal, competitive debate dominated Society life, holding a preeminence that it never would again. Predictably, Philo's principal contender and adversary was the Zelosophic Society, and the annual Philo-Zelo Debate often attracted thousands of spectators from the general public in the Musical Fund hall and other forums of Philadelphia. Debates often focused on controversial issues of the day, including women's suffrage, the direct election of senators, and the adoption of a federal income

tax. One such illustrative example is recorded in the Philomathean archives, indicating that just prior to the Civil War, a Moderator placed two pistols on the lectern, placed his palm between them, leaned over and announced, "Gentlemen, tonight we shall debate slavery!" This anecdote, though perhaps apocryphal, indicates the degree to which debate figured into Society life and the timbre of these contests.

Philo also sparred with other literary and debating societies of other colleges from New York to North Carolina, engaging in the flourishing culture of American literary societies that, at the time, pervaded American universities. In 1894, the Society joined with the teams of other institutions to establish the first "Intercollegiate Debate Union" in the United States. As in the case of the student newspaper, the Society again yielded its monopoly position and organized the University Debate Council; open to all undergraduate students, that same year. Hence, Philo influenced and contributed to University life by establishing affiliated organizations, rather than dominating it directly, under the aegis of the Society itself.

Dramatic productions represent another major Philomathean activity. The earliest such production was the Greek Play of 1886 presented by the Philomathean and Zelosophic Societies in Philadelphia's Academy of Music, and subsequently published in book form. This tradition continued even after the schisms with the Mask and Wig Club and the Pennsylvania Players, both of which originated from Philomathean impetus and personnel. This, then, indicates a pattern throughout Philomathean history, evinced also in the aforementioned cases of the University Debate Council and *Pennsylvanian*, in which Philos, under the auspices of the society, begin to undertake an enterprise, and, having become successful, sever official ties to the Society, spawning entirely new student organizations. Hence, even though Philo became apparently and paradoxically less directly central to student life as it became more successful, it still figured prominently in the affairs of the general student population.

The Society's Centennial History contains a spirited account of the later development of dramatic activity, explaining that "Dramatic productions are Philo's most recently instituted form of activity. The Philo plays owe their, existence to two factors which have many times been active in the Society. One is lack of funds which has always made the members work when all else has failed, while the other is that which Philo alone of all the organized groups at the University seems to foster for its own sake: a love of old things. It was not the purpose of the Society to compete with that Dramatic Organization at the University whose productions are

famous throughout the college world and whose unbroken line of success has put Pennsylvania far in advance of every other college in the field of dramatic productions. Even hostile critics are forced to acknowledge the superiority of the Mask and Wig Play. But the Mask and Wig Club has confined itself to the production of comic opera and left to other hands the task of reviving the good things of former years. In 1904 the Ben Greet Company came to the University and gave some of its famous Shakespearean plays in the Botanical Gardens of the University. This was done under the joint auspices of the Zelosophic and Philomathean Societies.”

“...The representation by a professional company in Philadelphia of that noble morality play of the fifteenth century, *Everyman*, convinced the members that old plays would be favorably received by a modern audience. Professor Clarence G. Child, of the English Department, had edited for publication "The Second Shepherd's Play," an interlude from the Towneley Cycle; he now prepared an acting version and it was submitted to the Play Committee. So it happened that 'The Second Shepherd's Play' was produced upon the natural stage in the Botanical Gardens by members of the Philomathean Society. The effort was so well received that an extra performance outside the University had to be arranged, and after all bills were paid, a sufficient surplus remained to be laid aside for a more ambitious undertaking the following year.”

“In 1909 the committee in charge decided not to repeat the simple religious drama but to give some one of the many famous compositions of the Elizabethan period. '... the boocke of Harey Porter called the two angrey wemen of Abengton' (as it is called in Henslowe's Diary) ...was likewise so successful financially that the Society's rooms were completely refurnished and the bare walls covered with the grime of thirty-five years were at last painted. The remainder of the money was placed in the 'Philomathean Play Fund,' from which no money can be drawn save for financing Philo plays. Two members of the Society are annually elected trustees to see that the surplus of one year's play is used to make up any deficit which may occur the following year.”

"The next play was given in 1911, and in that year 'The Pleasant Comedy of Mucedorous,' an Elizabethan drama attributed to Thomas Lodge, was presented by the Society on the outdoor stage. In 1912, Thomas Dekkar's 'The Shoemaker's Holiday,' a lively comedy of life in medieval London, was given, and required so large a cast that nearly half of the Society took part."

"With all the advantages of an outdoor play, one great drawback existed, which so

repeatedly caused trouble that a change was necessary. This drawback was the weather. Rain had so often necessitated postponements that the play committee resolved to forsake the Botanical Gardens and go to one of the down-town theatres. The South Broad Street Theatre was chosen as the scene of Philo's tremendous success in 1913. Ben Jonson's masterpiece, 'The Alchemist,' was given by a company of Philomatheans in which it seemed as though every man's part had been written for him. Some member was found to be a faithful counterpart of each character, and the result brought from Professor Felix E. Schelling, our greatest authority on the Elizabethan drama, the comment that it was the least amateurish play he had ever seen given by amateurs. "...'Dol' so cleverly concealed his sex that the play was more than half over when a lady in the audience in utter surprise exclaimed, 'Why, it's a boy!' "

To commemorate its one hundredth anniversary in 1913, the Society gave an elaborate celebration under the direction of moderator Randolph G. Adams. On December 13, 1913, a formal meeting attended by Junior and Senior members and guests was held in Houston Hall. Diplomas of honorary membership were conferred on the provost and five prominent professors. Professor of History Edward P. Cheyney delivered a historical summary of Philo's first hundred years. After the ceremonies, the meeting adjourned to Philomathean Hall, where refreshments were served and the Society's "valuable and interesting relics were exhibited" alongside framed pictures of the Society's former moderators.

Additionally, a history of the first hundred years was written and printed. It contained a collection of speeches of historical interest, lists of alumni and Moderators, winners of Society prizes and similar information of interest to Philomatheans. Professor Cheyney's speech was included, as was a comparable one by Reverend Crusé on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary. The volume went on sale December 13, 1913, under the title *A History of the Philomathean Society of the University of Pennsylvania*.

### **University Setting 1914 – 1928**

The contrast between the University in 1914 and today is striking, particularly to alumni who can compare their memories to the present. The trolley, for example, no longer runs along Woodland Avenue, which has been covered over and incorporated into campus. Moreover, the campus newspaper no longer devotes itself almost exclusively to coverage of sports and social

events, having diversified into other arenas of student interest. Crowds that once overflowed Franklin Field now elbow their way into the sparkling new, air-conditioned Van Pelt Library. By contrast, an editorial in the March 10, 1914 issue of the *Pennsylvanian* urged students to take "an occasional trip" to the library, while some graduates supposedly boasted of never having entered the library in their four year sojourn at Penn, giving rise to a whole host of questions, the answers to which are likely more distressing than the situation itself. Their very survival challenged, the fraternities are attempting to reevaluate their role in the University community, beleaguered by the rapid transformation of the University throughout the first half of the century. No longer the playground of the social elite of the first two decades of this century, nor the regional, backwater institution of the hard 1930s, Penn has attained a position of intellectual leadership, responsible to the demands of serious young men and women who have sought higher education since World War II. This shift in the composition of the undergraduate population has driven much of the social change at the University.

Nevertheless, returning alumni have not found Penn completely altered. The mission of the institution, as founded by Benjamin Franklin, to provide for the cultural and educational needs of its community, still motivates the University and remains unchanged. For the man who treasures the richness of tradition, yet finds delight in intellectually stimulating dynamism, the Philomathean Society reflects both the most progressive and conservative elements that have indelibly shaped the character of Pennsylvania, especially during the period of rapid change following the Second World War.

A bellwether among student organizations, the Society, by 1914, had survived the mass extinction of collegiate literary societies which had destroyed most of Philo's counterparts at other American colleges. These distant cousins of Philo had perished either by attempting to maintain the pure scholasticism of the German university or by becoming purely social fraternities, succumbing to social pressures at their several institutions. In this sense, Philomathean Hall was rarely an "ivory tower," as it sought not only to incorporate a social aspect in its activities, but also engage with the University community as a whole. Thus, although the Society was no longer the preeminent student organization at Penn, a status which it had shared with Zelo, Philomatheans continued to take an active part in matters vital to the University community and the world at large. This hybrid existence necessarily has created ambiguity and even confusion among non-members with respect to what exactly Philo is. This

selfsame duality, however, is the feature that has allowed Philo to survive the changes in the University, furnishing the Society with an immense flexibility that permits Philo to show whichever face is needed at a given moment, depending upon the currents of the University at large. Hence, during the Depression, when Penn had fallen in status academically, Philo became more socially-oriented, only to rekindle its academic prowess after the war.

Despite this somewhat curious position, Philo very often found itself at the center of University debates, participating in the shaping of Penn. On such struggle arose in 1915 between a relatively conservative faction of alumni and an embattled faculty over the issues of academic freedom and control over educational policy. Penn historian Edward P. Cheney records that on June 15, 1915, the Board of Trustees curtly informed the young, popular, but controversial Assistant Professor of economics, Dr. Scott Nearing that his appointment would not be renewed and tenure would not be granted. Further, the right to appeal was summarily denied. This action provoked a harsh condemnation of the University by the American Association of University Professors. Although Dr. Nearing was not restored to his position, the faculty eventually secured a more desirable appointment procedure as a result of the incident, safeguarding against further incidents. Philomatheans clearly sympathized with the faculty position in their debates and discussions.

Similarly, another struggle emerged in 1919 and concerned the granting of permission to a "Labor Discussion Group" to use the quarters of the Society. The debate, although ostensibly couched in terms of procedure with respect to allowing an external group use of the halls, exposed stark differences among the members as to the desirability of social change and its possible directions. It was an era characterized intellectually and emotionally by the challenging and supplanting of "old truths" by "new truths," resulting in institutional and societal cognitive dissonance and the consequent tension and frustration. Further, the debates and Literary Exercises throughout this period reflected a basic concern of Philomatheans in broader ethical questions. In 1918, the Society adopted a proposal promulgated by Moderator John Frederick Lewis Jr., that an honor examination system be instituted at Penn, and a petition from the Society was presented to the faculty.

Religion also attracted the critical attention of the University student. An appearance by evangelist Billy Sunday in the vicinity of campus attracted some nine thousand spectators. Subsequently, in response a petition circulated and signed by a significant number of students,

compulsory attendance at chapel services was required in September, 1914, breaking with Penn's tradition as a secular institution. By the following March, however, attendance had fallen, and student opinion was sharply divided over the requirement.

The dropping of Greek as a required course in 1914 had its repercussions for the University community. In the spring of 1916, Philo substituted an English salutatory in place of the Greek welcoming address at its annual Commencement Exercises, mirroring the pattern evident in the wider University. The traditional Latin poem at the Commencement was likewise replaced by an English poem in a rejection of the erstwhile sacrosanct Classical languages in favor of a more democratic alternative in vernacular English. This additional step away from the classical languages anticipated the University recognition of modern languages as equal to their ancient counterparts when Classical language requirements were dropped entirely in 1918. This example, then, further supports the pattern of twinning that has characterized Philo's relationship to the University. It is difficult, of course, to determine whether Philo and the University are responding to one another or if both institutions are reacting to the same group of exogenous forces.

In the same fashion, some of the preliminary skirmishes over equal academic rights for women first took place on the floor of the Philomathean Hall. Following a recommendation of the Provost which was later approved by the Faculty, concerning the integration of women students into the College, Philomatheans discussed the possible admission of women into the Society in December of 1917. At the time, most Philomatheans strongly opposed both the Provost's plan and the admittance of women into the Society. Shortly thereafter, the Society debated its Zelosophic rival on the question, deciding, expectedly, that the University ought to maintain its policy of segregation. In reporting a subsequent debate concerning the propriety of war-time restrictions on free speech, *The Pennsylvanian* on January 25, 1918, noted the significance accorded the debates: "It will be a no decision debate, but a straw vote will be taken, as in the last event, when the co-ed question was debated. This meeting was well Attended...held the same evening as a meeting of the Board of University Trustees, and, as a result, one of the Trustees and several faculty members showed up to judge student opinion." Hence, this passage is a substantive indication that Philo, at least, in part, influenced the administration's perception of undergraduate preferences, though it remains unclear as to how heavily such considerations weighed upon the Trustees in their making their decision.



By 1914, the pall from World War I had begun to descend over the Society, influencing all aspects of Society life. Despite the sobering presence of the War, discussion managed to remain humorous for a while. In explaining "The War Loan," for example, Society Treasurer Pearce Gabell declared the United States Treasury to be "much in the same condition as that of the Philomathean..." How the war was to affect America was still uncertain and responses varied. By October of 1915, however, the specter of compulsory military drill faced American college students and it became increasingly difficult to ignore the realities of the European War. Young war enthusiasts circulated a petition calling on the Trustees to provide military training for the student body. Philomatheans such as Robert Spiller raised their voices to defend opponents of the petition from the vituperation and aspersion of its backers, urging an abstention from war. Further, Philomathean Ralph Cheyney, son of the historian, declared his intention to sail on the "Ark of Peace" expedition planned by Rosika Schwimmer and sponsored by Henry Ford. Among the orders issued to convince the nation that it was indeed at war, was a ten P.M. curfew, which necessitated an earlier meeting time for the Society. Plans for an all-University honor code and the integration of women students into the College dissolved as Major Charles T. Griffith of the United States Army assumed command of the University, effectively suspending the normal function of student activities, though the Society maintained its most basic operations. Philip Price and other members courageously raised their voices against the mounting intolerance against dissenters and usurpation of the University by the military.

Many members and recent graduates promptly enlisted to join the war effort. The consequent manpower drain forced the Society to suspend some provisions of its constitution during the war; previous notions of quorum had to be reconsidered and revised to accommodate the wartime context. World War I had hardly ended when the college alumni, through a specially-constituted "Committee of One hundred," produced the "Wilmington declaration," decrying the undefined but evident trend in University affairs toward the creation of a large university in the sense known today. Primarily graduates residing in the Philadelphia area, these alumni wanted Penn to remain a small regional institution which would promote "training for leadership," rather than adapt its focus to a more modern model. Though the University was hard-pressed financially, they remained hesitant to accept state aid, fearing political intervention and interference that would wrest control of the University away from the Trustees and place it in the hands of the state.

In support of the majority faculty position, the Society passed a resolution at the time of the resignation of Provost Edgar Fahs Smith that differed sharply with the alumni's "Wilmington declaration." The Society even supported conversion of the University into a state institution, which it had not been since a brief period in the late 1780s, although this proposition was never realized. Even so, in 1920 the government seemed to be the only source of needed financial support in an era in which education was even more starved for funds than is the case today. In effect, the Society went on record as substantially endorsing the vigorous expansion and advancement that would not begin until the period of concerted development carried out by the Harnwell administration. This then, is another instance of Philo playing an active role in debating University policy. This particular position in support of the expansion the University is should be noted, however, because, as will become evident, as the University has expanded, Philo has had to contend with the realities of being a small cadre within multiplying undergraduate population.

The early 1920s were self-indulgent years on college campuses. Even Philo occasionally departed from its generally cautious and benign course of bustling activity in plays and debating, to involve itself in other, more controversial endeavors, adapting to the prevailing context within the University, without abjuring its structure and function. Such changes, however, did not go unnoticed. On one occasion on which Philo demonstrated its flirtation with the more libertine aspects of Penn, the University administration became incensed when the Society joined a student protest over the expulsion of several high-spirited campus rowdies.

The later 1920s and early 1930s found Pennsylvanians stirred by the "Valley Forge Plan," the Sacco-Vanzetti case, and prohibition. From about 1926 until the outbreak of the Second World War, considerable discussion in Philo and among Penn alumni centered on efforts to relocate the University from its home in West Philadelphia. The substantial enthusiasm generated for the proposal evidenced the latent dissatisfaction felt by most students, faculty members, and alumni with the rather unappealing city surroundings of West Philadelphia. Indeed, many alumni refused to send their children to Pennsylvania; school loyalty was hard to nourish, especially considering the unsavory trappings of the campus. Several Penn alumni offered to contribute farmland sites at Valley Forge to the University, contingent on a time limit for the relocation. The uncertain long-range financial position of the University treasury as well as powerful opposition of some sanguine faculty members eventually barred the plan from being implemented and the University ultimately remained in its West Philadelphia location. One issue

that gave rise to intense factionalism within the society and the University was the Sacco-Vanzetti case. The outcome of one particularly heated discussion in the Society was recorded, but lost to history, as several passages of the minute book were torn out. To the contrary, the Prohibition issue seems to have inspired more evasive actions than noble words. All of these events and trends, moreover, determined the forces working upon the Society and influenced the interaction between Philo and its members, both in terms of continuity within the society and the changes that it chose to adopt.

### **Activities**

If the Philomathean Society ever needed a justification, the scope and brilliance of its activities would serve admirably. Its efforts have been high in quality, while being predominately planned and realized by the students themselves with minimal faculty intervention or assistance. The varied nature of the activities reflects the broad interests and needs of Philomatheans, evincing the truly mercurial nature of a Society whose composition manifestly alters its activities. That is, as opposed to other organizations, such as athletic teams or publications, Philo does not select members on the basis of their ability to fulfill a predetermined and explicitly defined role within the Society. Thus, it is hard to speak of a set roster of Philomathean activities, but a general assessment of the more prominent activities follows.

### **Dramatics**

Of all the efforts that engaged members, none consumed as much time or drew as substantial or visible a public response as the dramatic programs performed by Philo. Its eager young actors were expansively productive in a variety of dramatic undertakings throughout the academic year. Ambitious projects were launched, often with little apparent concern over the financial responsibilities to be incurred, continuing Philo's tempestuous relationship with fiscal responsibility, budget deficits, and abysmally poor planning. These matters, however, rarely preoccupied the membership, who instead chose to rationalize their situation: if Philo had weathered the storms of the past, then surely this time was no different and no significant harm could come of their recklessness. Undoubtedly, this attitude must have created many problems for Society treasurers, who, fortunately, had a tendency to be both loyal and exceptionally resourceful. Most importantly, however, these dramatic programs did much to enrich the cultural

life of the University as well as to provide valuable experience for all participants, thus fulfilling its stated purpose and continuing the historical pattern of recasting itself to fit whatever need or absence it perceived within the University.

For many years the Society presented annual productions of outstanding quality. In an era more remembered for its "Ziegfield Follies," Philo produced works of a considerably more serious nature. In 1914 the University witnessed Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, which was a triumph for the member-players. Playing three consecutive nights at the Little Theatre, this production quite possibly surpassed any previous Philomathean dramatic endeavor, both in preparation and in execution. All the furnishings were faithful to the Elizabethan setting of the plays, including the portrayal of female roles by played by male Society members. Further, publicity materials waxed poetic, presenting the play as "a satire upon the overblown and fantastique chivalry of that daye," no doubt indulging some member's penchant for atavism. In a review in *The Pennsylvanian* of May 14, 1914, Dr. Felix Schelling of the English department praised the production both for its entertainment value and its authenticity. Repeating an earlier success, performed in 1912, a Society cast also presented *The Shoemaker's Holiday*. In this play by Thomas Dekker, a contemporary of Shakespeare, one Simon Eyre rises in the world to become Lord Mayor of Locidon. Ernest F. Hausser, the poet who was to die in World War I, played the lead role. By now an enthusiastic friend of Philo, Professor Schelling supervised the arrangements to ensure authenticity. Under a headline "Philo Play Great Success," *The Pennsylvanian* wrote on May 7, 1915, "The intelligent appreciation of the company of the meaning of the lines and the power of the play bespeaks hard work."

While their acting on the whole had afforded artistic successes, the men of Philo were dissatisfied with the rather un-Elizabethan setting of both the Little Theatre and the Botanical Gardens. Spurred on by the ambitious and imaginative chairman of the Play Committee, George F. Kearney, the Society announced its intention to reconstruct the Globe Theatre in West Philadelphia. First proposed by Kearney in October of 1915, the plans won an enthusiastic response among both Philomatheans and the faculty.

The rather ambitious Philo project drew considerable attention from the Philadelphia press. Public interest combined with substantial Society efforts served to make the Philomathean Society sponsored production of *The Comedy of Errors* a major element in the Philadelphia commemoration of the tercentenary of the death of Shakespeare. The elaborate production,

however, necessitated opening the casting tryouts to the entire student body, to the mutual satisfaction of eager non-member undergraduates and an overburdened Society. Moreover, a new precedent was set, as the Society for the first time permitted women to participate in its production, beginning a general pattern toward integration. Although admittedly unfaithful to the original in this detail, the performances successfully avoided the often farcical effect of an all male cast. The response to the tryouts and the ensuing competition for coveted roles were so intense that the Society elected to select two distinct casts to perform on alternate nights during the week of performance. Moreover, this production marked the beginning of the relatively long-standing and mutually beneficial relationship between the Society and Percy Winters, a prominent American drama critic and director, who oversaw the Philomathean play.

The planning progressed well. Hamilton Walk was selected to be the site of the new Globe theatre and Dr. Horace Furness, Jr., drew up building plans, while Dr. Felix Schelling supervised construction details. The new Globe had a capacity of about one thousand and cost approximately \$1,350 in material costs. As the first performance drew near, public interest mounted. Philadelphia newspapers carried extensive advance feature articles and the *Evening Ledger* of May 17, 1916, carried a photograph of the reconstructed Globe. Even *The Pennsylvanian* relaxed the usual iron hold of sports coverage to welcome the debut. Unlike the photo coverage in the city press, the campus paper did not make an exception to its de facto policy of printing photographs only of athletes or dead faculty members.

Complete with photos of the cast, the Philadelphia press printed enthusiastic reviews of the Society's production. The following excerpt from the *Evening Ledger* of May 16, 1916 represents the nature of the reviews, "The place of presentation could not have been better chosen....the way (to the theater) was through dim-lit lanes, overhung with branches and greenery, such lanes as London had with its sputtering lanterns.... The audience, in the pit, sat with heads bared to the blue vaults of heaven and came away with better health for the hours spent.... A merry prologue, full of philosophy as a walnut of meat, came pell-mell from the brain of Prof. Felix E. Schelling, through the mouth of a most excellent and entertaining fool. Then the play was on, and the play was the thing. No scene shifting at the Globe in 1599. Then, as last night, a bustling lad hustled out, put up a placard telling the imagination of the next scene and act represented, and so swift was the action, so keen the dialogue, so witty the actor lads and lassies, that no sense of loss was experienced. The excellent cast has been thoroughly drilled..., and it

gave a presentation that made the heart long for more of it, for a return of the days when the stage did not bewilder the eye and stun the senses with a riot of color and noise and movement, but made its appeal to heart and brain. Between acts...there were gay dances.... drilled by C. Ellwood Carpenter. And there was strange, stirring barbaric music from an orchestra conducted by Karl R. Alden....Particularly well done were the parts of the Dromios, interpreted by Park B. Turner and F. DeWaters; Solinus, by Edward Anschutz; Aegon, by L. H. Harris, and the Antipholis of Syracuse, by R. Bevis Lord.”

The *North American* of the same date wrote, “The shade of Shakespeare himself might have witnessed the performance...last night with no reason to suspect that 300 years had passed since he and his company had trod the boards of the old Globe Theater at Southwark.”

Besides being an artistic success, the *Comedy of Errors* netted the Society \$1,500 in profits, despite the enormous outlay that the production had demanded. Rather than going to the Society coffers to protect Philo from future debt, the profits were used to adapt the Philo library chamber into a convertible experimental theater complete with portable stage. The library book cases were removed, and new meeting room seats with overhanging book shelves were installed to make room for this new arrangement.

Over the summer of 1916, the complexion of national life began to feel ripples of the war raging in Europe. The national campaign that began to whip up patriotic fervor as a prelude to American entry into the War had an effect of making the country increasingly self-assertive. Sensitive to the winds of patriotism and the perceived dominance of European culture, the Philomathean Society announced plans in late autumn of 1916 to produce a *Masque of the American Drama*. Similarly, Arthur Hobson Quinn, Professor of English, felt that more emphasis should be placed on literature by American authors. Whether Philo simply responded to public demand or whether it too was swept up in the wave of patriotism is unclear, but it is evident that, as with other trends in the University, Philo’s actions paralleled broader currents. The year 1917 was to be the one hundred-fiftieth anniversary of the first American production of an American play, *The Prince of Parthia* (1767), by Thomas Godfrey. The play, destined to win national acclaim both for the Society and the University as a whole, the *Masque* was to assert the claims of American drama and the maturity of the cultural aspects of American life as equivalent to their European counterparts.

As developed by the energetic and adept George F. Kearney, the *Masque* concerns the

wooing of the beautiful maiden, Drama, by the strapping young America. Five diversions, Commerce, Puritanism, Foreign Plays, The Fates, and Industry, in turn preempt the attention of the distractible America. Meeting their respective challenges, America also tries to prove his worthiness to the hand of Drama by courting her with five American plays, designed to win her affections and admiration. Having overcome the myriad diversions and finally won the love of Drama, America weds her in a lavish ceremony, illustrative of his devotion and persistence.

With the idea of making the *Masque* a University project, the Philo invited the Zelosophic Society to be a co-sponsor in promoting student participation and managing the affair. As one member somewhat bewilderingly expressed himself, "Philo is fulfilling a real mission if she can draw the floaters and the co-eds into the life of the University." This admittedly patronizing analysis, while certainly uncouth, indicates the degree to which that this project influenced University life, as it involved and incorporated social groups that did not routinely find themselves at the center of student activities and, whether by choice or social pressure, remained marginalized in this era. While it would be an overstatement to describe the Philo of this era as an element of social change, it is worthwhile to notice that some of the old prejudices which still governed social interaction in the nation had begun to break down in the Philomathean Society.

Plans mushroomed. The poet Albert E. Trombly, an instructor in the Department of Romance Languages, submitted a script based on a scenario by Professor Quinn that was enthusiastically received and subsequently published. An architecture student, J. Wilson Brooks, submitted the winning set of stage plans. Hundreds of students turned out for the play's casts and dance groups. Percy Winters devoted his nationally known talent for directing to the endeavor. The equally-known composer, Reginald de Koven, wrote the score, and an associate of his, Wassail Leps, took charge of the chorus. Perhaps most impressively, seventy members of the Philadelphia Orchestra joined the effort and served in the *Masque* orchestra. Finally, Leicester B. Holland did an outstanding job in supervising the overall designs and costumes.

Impressed by the scope and importance of the *Masque* as well as by its competent management, the University administration proved cooperative in some crucial arrangements. For example, the University's willingness to extend gym credit to participants in the *Masque* dance groups no doubt cultivated an increased interest and involvement in the production from the student population. The cast had been selected by Charles Sommer and a non-member, Miss

Glouner, won the coveted roles of America and Drama respectively. The Society selected the best designs for the lead to a costume. Rather than the typical representation of "Uncle Sam," the organizers favored his portrayal as a frontiersman.

President Wilson asked Congress for a formal declaration of war. Responding to this critical moment, the Philo-Zelo *Masque* Committee voted to contribute all profits from the endeavor to the University's newly established Base Hospital. Work continued on the project and students from the University enrolled in various phases of the stage production. The Botanical Gardens had to expand their venue to accommodate the expected crowds. An *ad hoc* cottage industry emerged on the fourth floor of College Hall as the Zelo quarters were appropriated by fifteen seamstresses for their temporary workshop and Philo Hall was transformed into a dye works for some 2,500 yards of costume material. In total, nearly fifteen hundred costumes had to be dyed and sewn from fresh bolts of fabric.

The set, once completed, consisted of a broad stage in the foreground on which the massive dance groups and choruses performed, behind which sat a raised platform upon which the principal actions and events took place. Finally, behind both of these were stages upon which scenes from five American plays were re-enacted in pantomime as part of the larger production, allowing for an effective portrayal of the plays-within-a-play framing of the *Masque*. The production was undeniably enormous, requiring expert coordination, staging, and directing to avoid the potential chaos that a play of this complexity could become. This production then, represents the apogee of Philomathean dramatics and of the Society's relative prestige and clout as an organization. The sheer enormity and intricacy of the production should indicate not only Philo's logistical capabilities, but also the respect and influence that the Society commanded among the student body and with the University administration. By opening night, the chilly evening of May 14, 1917, the eyes of the University and the city focused upon the *Masque of the American Drama*, which, by this point, had even received some national attention. Besides a special "Masque issue" of the campus magazine, *Red & Blue*, and lengthy articles in the city press, a national periodical, *Book News Monthly* featured a special article by Dr. Quinn on the *Masque*.

Aided by milder weather toward the end of the week, the *Masque* was seen by thousands of spectators throughout its run. Many prominent actors, artists, educators, and politicians either attended or sent their heartiest best wishes, lauding the efforts of the Society and the students



who contributed their time to the production. Highly pleased with what had seen and heard earlier in the week, the noted composer and critic, Reginald de Koven personally conducted the orchestra at the Friday evening performance. The *Masque* was not simply an artistic success, but also a community achievement. A *Pennsylvanian* article dated May 21, 1917, echoed national sentiment, "For the first time, art, like athletics, became a university activity and a medium to unite a whole community," thus illustrating Philo's profound influence on University life, fulfilling its stated goal of increasing "the academic prestige" of the University. On Saturday, an editorial further commented, "After two performances today the *Masque of American Drama* will be a matter of history. But in the records of Pennsylvania's achievements none will hold a more worthy or larger place," echoing the significance of the contribution that Philo had made to the University.

After audiences, hands tired from applause, had deserted the Gardens and after the University had basked in national attention, the *Masque* Committee suddenly found itself facing a startling debt of \$19,000, despite the unmitigated success of the production and the critical acclaim that it had received. Threatened with financial peril, the Society immediately sought to make up the disparity. This balance was eventually raised by the students under the leadership of George F. Kearney and John F. Lewis, Jr. The initial public fund-raising effort, a dance, saw for the first time at the University both men and women students assuming actual managerial responsibilities, rather than token or ceremonial roles. The dance, however, failed to raise sufficient funds to allay the creditors and the crippling debt incurred by the *Masque* was only finally met after the two literary societies collaborated to sponsor a highly successful, mass patriotic rally at Franklin Field, featuring nationally known entertainers and demonstrations by units of the Armed Forces. Unsurprisingly, given the rash of unfettered patriotism which had spawned the *Masque* in the first place, this effort actually produced a modest surplus. Philomatheans donated the \$860 in profits from the venture to begin a construction fund for a new University Hospital to replace to the make-shift "base hospital" which had proven lacking.

Even while the *Masque* was being arranged, the Society was producing original plays written by Penn students in its "Playshop" series. Philo decided, however, to break precedent with past efforts of this type and ran the series without Zelo assistance. A student competition was held for one program. The contest was judged by professors of English Clarence Griffin Child and Thomas O'Bolger, who selected three plays from the applicants, including two works

submitted by Philomatheans: *The Great God Bull*, by Robert E. Spiller, and *May, a Morality Play* by George F. Kearney. John Frederick Lewis, Jr., son of the President of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and manager of the "Playshop", secured the Academy building for a special performance and arranged subsequent presentations before the Drama League of Philadelphia and the Philomusian Club. This series provided Philomatheans and other undergraduates a venue for creative expression on a smaller scale than the larger Philomathean productions, responding to the absence of a University course in creative writing or theatrical production. This series, like the Society itself, offered creative minds a forum for peer review and criticism outside of the formal strictures of

Insufficient fund-raising efforts and the war emergency necessitated the postponement of any further plays until the spring term of 1919, especially considering the financial disaster wrought by the *Masque*. Continuing its new policy of engaging the services of both the non-members and women, Philo held try-outs in March for a series of short Russian plays. The coach of the series was a Professor of Sanskrit, Dr. Franklin Edgerton. Further, Philo sent out delegations to the Philadelphia high schools to secure a maximum audience for the production. Being realistic and cautious in the light of recent events, members were asked to underwrite any losses by personal financial contributions, hoping to avoid the calamitous debt that the Society had faced following the *Masque*. The program was performed on Saturday, May 17, 1919 to a modest, but positive reception.

From Russia, the Society turned its attention to the prodigious outpouring of Irish creative efforts. An Irish program and an original play were scheduled. Professor of English, Dr. Cornelius Weygandt, an expert in Irish plays as evinced by his 1913 work *Irish Plays and Playwrights*, headed the committee to select the original play from among thirteen entries. The Irish program, which included the plays *In the Shadow of the Glen* by J.M. Synge, *The Rising of the Moon*, by Lady Gregory, *The Singers* by Padraic Pearse, and *Land of Heart's Desire* by W.B. Yeats, won the strong and vocal support of the local Pan-Celtic Union, and was presented to enthusiastic audiences in the Academy of Music in Philadelphia on May 19, 1920. Inspired by the successes of Philo and the interest in drama which the Society had created, the English department started a Dramatic Club in the fall of 1920. Despite its attempts, however, after the war, the Society was unable to recapture the mighty momentum built up during the aforementioned halcyon, now known as the "Golden Age of Philo." This was particularly true in

regard to dramatic activities which require not only consistent dedication and direction, but also substantial outlays of money, as evinced by the case of the *Masque of American Drama* and the subsequent fundraising campaigns to stave off debt. Apparently, the membership had tired of staging productions only to be met with substantial deficits.

Throughout the early twenties, the Society presented annual productions, many of which were original works. In 1923, the Society presented a program of original plays at the Philomusian Club. In 1924, after a false start with a projected offering of *Oedipus Rex*, the Society presented three playlets by Lord Dunsay: *The Glittering Gate*, *The Lost Silk Hat*, and *Fame and the Poet*. The 1925 production of *The Critic* reversed the trend to deficit financing. Even so, by the late twenties, the Society had produced so many financially unsuccessful productions by 1926, Philo sentiment entreated, "Let's not have a charity production" reflecting the Society's desire to avoid the losses that had become expected from dramatic endeavors. This sentiment led members to refrain from launching new productions because of anemic Society support, choosing instead to focus on other endeavors.

The grand tradition was continued, despite controversy. These efforts, however, did little to vindicate their proponents. For example, in May of 1926, poor ticket sales greeted Philo's interpretation of Edmond Rostand's *Chanticleer*. Similarly, rehearsal cutting and a lack of enthusiasm plagued the 1927 offering, *He Who Gets Slapped* by Andreyev. Hence, the Dramatic Period of Philomathean history had ended; from this point forward, Philo life would no longer be dominated by its functions as a theatre company, permitting other aspects of the Society to become more developed. To this end, the Censors noted a "smoldering" revolt by the members against plays. Further, the Society treasurer was beleaguered by bill collectors, eager to make good on Society debts. Despite motions to the contrary, a paucity of member support, and historical precedent, Molière's *Tartuffe or the Hypocrite* was produced in the spring of 1927, and afforded an aesthetic success, as well as the additional financial havoc that had come to be expected from such endeavors. Lack of faith in Philo's ability to sell tickets impelled the University to demand a heavy, personal underwriting by the members of any possible debts prior to further productions. This edict in March of 1928, accompanied by the transfer of the Society to less adequate space in Houston Hall the following fall, dissuaded the members from scheduling further efforts for several years. Thus, other than an occasional "Christmas burlesque" and other similarly inexpensive farces, the next manifestation of interest in drama came in March

of 1931, when the Society voted to enter into the Dramatic Art Alliance competition. Several members claimed that this move was dictated by Zelo's example.

During almost two decades preceding the move from College Hall, Philomathean dramatics brought many outstanding cultural programs to the University. The productions not only afforded Society members and other students invaluable artistic and business experience, but provided Penn with the benefits from of hosting such cultural events, including a highly favorable public perception. Certainly, the University of today owes a great deal to the weary but proud Philomatheans, heir to the rich heritage in dramatics that Philomatheans helped to provide.

### **Debating**

Intercollegiate debating formed another crucial segment of Philomathean life, supplanting, to some degree, theatrics after the decline of dramatic productions in the twenties. Until World War II and its ensuing homelessness, the Philomathean Society was renowned for its debating teams. Besides spirited debates held with the Zelosophic Society and a co-ed team, Philomatheans journeyed to other colleges, including Swarthmore, Haverford, Cornell, Columbia, and Villanova all of whom succumbed to an often victorious Philomathean squad. A typical event might pit Philomatheans against the Philolexian Society of Columbia on such burning issues of the day as the direct election of senators, women's suffrage, and US intervention in Europe.

Debates, while always competitive, were not necessarily divisive or antagonistic; often, the Philo-Zelo debate would feature mixed teams composed of members representing both societies. Further, intra-Society debating played a prominent role in Philo. Many of these topics pertained to Philomathean or University life, including such debates as "Resolved, that the University ...should adopt the German university system." The negative side prevailed, preferring the day-to-day emphasis of the American system over the final exam system prevalent in Germany. Further, especially in internal debates, wit served as a supplement to formal debating technique, allowing participants to demonstrate additional talents. Among the surviving fragments of internal debate is a quip from November 19, 1920. When one speaker saw the hand of anarchist Emma Goldman behind the Non-Partisan League of the Northern Plains, another observed "that it doesn't matter what men are behind a movement--the movement may be good but the men may not. Examples: Philadelphia politics, the athletic council, Philo's plays, and the

Wharton School.” This emphasis on debate was further reflected in the prominence of Philo in the University debate community; in 1918, for example, five of the six recipients of the coveted golden “P” were Philos, namely, Charles C. Parlin, E. Sculley Bradley, George Parlin, Charles L. Seasholes, and John F. Lewis, Jr.

The wide appeal of debating as an important field of intercollegiate competition prompted the Society to form the first Philadelphia high school debate league in 1917. A circulating trophy was awarded annually until 1931, when the perennial champions, Gratz High, retired the cup and kept it for their personal collection, necessitating the purchase of another trophy. The league fostered the participation and success of many Philadelphia schools, including Central, Germantown, Frankford, and South Philadelphia High Schools. These efforts did not go without notice, and in 1923 the Dean of the College, Robert Belle Burke, specifically commended the Society for its encouragement of high school debating. This annual award has continued to the present, with the second cup still in circulation. As with dramatics, Philo adapted, according to the desire of its members, to satisfy the perceived need for an expanded debating league.

### Athletics

Sportsmen of a sort, Philos for many years fielded their own football and baseball teams for intramural play. Zelo, of course, as Philo’s neighbor to the East, served as Philo’s primary rival in these contests. Zelo, however, was not the Society’s only competition on campus. For example, one football game in October of 1914 found eleven Philo men pitted against an unyielding faculty team determined prove their superiority, consisting of Drs. Child, Hadzits, Lichtenberger, Moxey, Nearing, O’Bolger, Shelly, and Weygandt, and Deans Quinn, McCrea, and Frazer. A thriller, the game ended in a tie, 69-69, allowing both Philo and the Faculty to declare they hadn’t lost.

One of Professor George Taylor’s favorite stories relates how Philomatheans actually won one match without having to go to the field. It appears that one year, Zelo traversed the rarefied space atop College Hall and challenged a particularly inexperienced Philomathean Society to a rugged test of endurance. The rather unseasoned Philos demurred, suggesting that perhaps it was too cold outside for such athletic competitions. Intrigued, however, the intrepid Philos pulled out their encyclopedias and other reference works and tried to figure out exactly what kind of a game football was. Having acquired a sufficient definition, they began to examine

their resources, add up their weights, employ physics as needed, and survey the playing field. After these extensive calculations, the Philomatheans became so convinced of the inevitability of their victory that they drew up a formal mathematical proof delineating their undeniable superiority and submitted it to Zelo for consideration. Strangely enough, Zelo folded and forfeited the game on the strength of the proof alone. This anecdote, while perhaps apocryphal and almost certainly embellished for effect, captures the whimsical levity that has long characterized Philo and, better than any other factor, explains Philo's ability to maintain its precarious position between social and intellectual, without a definite, clearly described mandate.

### **Publications**

Philomatheans have not only been budding actors, brash debaters, and intellectual, albeit foppish, athletes, but also earnest young editors. Virtually all publications that have addressed themselves specifically to a University of Pennsylvania audience originated as Society enterprises. Internally, the Society maintained a number of journals. Of particular note were *The Philomathean*, a weekly commentary bulletin published throughout 1913 and 1914, and its successor, the *Garrett Gazette* that served as a forum members while keeping them apprised of Society events. The *Gazette*, however, was not identical to *The Philomathean* and emerged from a separate impulse.

For many years prior to 1919, a black box stood in the Philomathean Hall into which members would deposit whatever original writings they wished, and at a specified time during each meeting, the contents were read aloud to the membership. This tradition was formalized in 1919, when a member was appointed to type the offerings and bind them into a volume called *The Garrett Gazette*. This publication, named for the fourth floor of College Hall inhabited by Philos and Zelos, additionally took on the duties of *The Philomathean* and became Philo's only weekly publication. *The Gazette* was intended solely for internal reading and contained a variety of subject matter, ranging from essays to poetry and plays. The complete series remains in the Society's archives.

Another internal publication reflecting the member's intense interest in dramatics was *The Philocritic*, which contained reviews by Philomatheans of most legitimate theatrical productions performed in Philadelphia. The Society's fame as a dramatic organization seems to have been sufficient through the early twenties for its envoys to receive courtesy passes to the Philadelphia

theaters, so that Philo reviewers might assay current productions without burdening the Society financially.

Furthermore, Philo was instrumental in the establishment and foundation of nearly every University publication, including *The Pennsylvanian*, *University Magazine*, and *The Punch Bowl*. These organizations, in a pattern that parallels that of dramatic organizations, soon splintered from Philo, severing official ties, though they retained substantial connections to the Society. The example of *The Pennsylvanian* is typical in that by 1887 it retained no official association with Philo, though a substantial portion of its editorial board was comprised of Philomatheans, including the first editor-in-chief, George Wharton Pepper, who was concurrently the Society's Moderator. Hence, Philo influence in the newspaper was, technically, unofficial, though it could exert control if needed. Over time, this connection deteriorated, though Philo generally maintained a member on the boards of most student publications. Other campus wide publications in which Society members had a major initiating interest included the monthly literary journals, *Red & Blue*, *The Lotus*, and *Junto*. With its lively articles by well-known writers and refreshing campus unknowns, *Junto* helped Philo achieve its mission by creating a University forum for intellectual discourse.

### **Lecture programs**

One of the most outstanding services that the Society has contributed to the intellectual life of the University has always been its provision of a respected rostrum. Through this vehicle, members spoke to the Society and guest speakers lectured before campus audiences, edifying and enriching their spectators. The inception of the "Two O'clock Talk" series in the spring of 1914 won an attentive reception and a loyal following. A *Pennsylvanian* editorial of March 25, 1914, applauded the series as the "first, definite attempt to bring Faculty and students together!" The spring program included lectures by Drs. Weygandt and Nearing who spoke on "Modern Movements in Literature" and "Reducing the High Cost of Living," respectively. The fall 1914, series featured lectures by Drs. Lichtenberger, Lingeback, Patten, Schelling and Twitmyer, on economic, historical, and social aspects of the "European war." With the exception of a University sponsored series, the general caliber of most other campus offerings might be characterized by noting a speech in 1915 by the Bishop of Brazil, wherein he saw the major threat to South America arising from "infidels," though what he meant by this is not entirely

clear. Suffice it to say that at this time, Philo provided one of the few venues for substantive intellectual engagement outside of the classroom.

Although its public events became less frequent during the 1920s, many faculty members and alumni favored the Society with talks made particularly vital by the special interest the speakers had in their topics. The scope of these lectures to the public and the Literary Exercises given at general meetings ranged from American literature to Thai legend, offering a wide variety of topics for discussion.

### **Social Activities**

Many purely social activities served to lighten the week, distracting members from the demands of academic life. Dubbed with such names as "Hobo's Night," members made excursions to Philadelphia stage productions and cultural offerings. Some more adventurous Philomatheans also occasionally organized hikes. With the arrival of spring, Philomatheans often left the books, scripts, and speeches behind for a day's jaunt to such spots as Valley Forge (1915) and Bryn Athyn (1921). A winter dance often featured prominently in the Philomathean calendar in the days before World War II. Other purely social events included Christmas and graduation parties. A rather clever scheme to link past with present before the advent of a Philo Alumni Association was a "Grandfather's Night" party in the fall of 1915 which gave Senior members and opportunity to mingle with the junior membership without being intrusive.

### **Traditions**

Maintaining the customs of the Society and its distinctive institutions has not been an easy task. Each year there are prospective candidates for membership who are bemused, astounded, or enraged upon discovering the seeming quaintness and patent absurdity of the Society. Many have bristled with an ill-informed suspicion of what appears to be snobbish exclusiveness. Possibly many new members firmly resolve themselves to either ignore or trample on the inexplicably sacrosanct traditions of the Society. Such iconoclasts, however, are generally tempered by the sentiments of their peers. For the traditionalist, the initially strange ways of the Society need no justification. Such an individual soon finds himself at home in a student organization whose past accomplishments demonstrate its potential for future achievement. The questioning mind and the creative soul find here a favorable environment in which to develop among supportive and interested peers. For the pragmatist, on the other hand,



the one hundred fifty year history of the Society demonstrates the elements of continuity afforded by the traditional in Philo as a counterbalance to the essential characteristic and instability of all student societies, that of an ever-changing membership.

The Society was incorporated in 1917 as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Members Pearce Gabell, Walter Chambers, Albert Elsasser, Edgar M. Luttgen, and Philip Price were instrumental in the incorporation process and are responsible for the protections that Philo enjoys as a result. The Charter of the corporation is still prominently displayed in the present Philomathean Hall. The original purpose of incorporation, unsurprisingly, was to protect those members who had reached their majority from any personal liability for debts incurred from the *Masque of the American Drama* or any future productions. Members thereafter, however, were not only participants in a student organization, but were also the members of a corporation whose directors and officers were the same as the Cabinet and officers of the student Society. As an organization, Philo had long proven itself unique. Now it was to be unique as a corporation as well, for what other corporation would receive a letter that contained "gentle swats from the Dean and Vice-Provost as to 'raising hell with our brains'"? George Kearney's boldly descriptive summation of Philomathean activities, "Join Philo and raise hell with your brains" was first used on a 1917 membership recruiting poster, and was subsequently moderated to mollify Administration sensibilities.

Membership recruiting took far more forms than bold posters. A weekly internal publication in October of 1914, stated: "Philo is now reaping her harvest. Ever since the notable drought of 1908-10, she had been diligently sowing and tilling. Ubiquitous placards, mail matter, plays, banquet, debates, two o'clock talks, journalistic squibs and spreads, and the personal element have all been approaching their logical conclusion...we have beheld the gratifying multitude which came...; verily a throng of ardent suitors. A little comparison...

<u>Smoker</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
1911	40
1912	50
1913	60
1914	125

We are now recruiting men to fill our available berths, from the finest lot of men.... Therefore, members of Philo let us bear patiently with our moderator and accept meekly his demands for special meetings, though they shatter home ties, and even wrench our very heart-

strings."

Typical of a good year for Philo was the fall of 1915, when ninety-four candidates applied for seventeen vacancies, evincing the Society's enormous popularity with the student body. Until World War I, applicants spoke before the Society at virtually every meeting, indicating a broad base of University interest in Philomathean activities, especially considering that the population of the University was substantially smaller then than it is now. This interest then reflects not only the character of a University eager for an intellectual forum outside of the formal curriculum and collegiate spaces, but also the prominence and cache of the Society within the University as respected organization.

Integrating new members into the Society has always been a challenge to the viability of the institution. Exasperated by what he considered to be a particularly reticent crop of new members, Frank Baxter declared in 1922 that he was worried that the new members might be turning into "silent sphinxes," unwilling, or perhaps, unable to contribute to the discourse of the Society in a manner that he would have liked. A 1915 meeting was devoted to an "Intensive Study of Philomatheans" directed toward the newer members, emphasizing such interpersonal skills as criticizing without offense. A 1919 Traditions Committee report scored the ever-lasting problem of maintaining high levels of attendance despite the competition of abundant University and city activities, as well as academic pressures.

Factionalism, a dangerous element in any organization, has generally been kept under control in the Society. Through the years, the Moderators, who are the officers most responsible for promoting unity, along with the rest of the membership, have been on guard against this influence. The Society early took a decisive stand for unity and open mindedness and in 1916, John Frederick Lewis, Jr., won the support of the Society in adding to the initiation oath a pledge explicitly prohibiting racial or religious prejudice in considering candidates for membership. In this respect, Philo was far ahead of most organizations on the campus and in the nation, where racism and bigotry pervaded, even in relatively progressive circles. Similarly, the Society opened its doors to all schools of the University once they became firmly established, guaranteeing that Philo would allow members of all the schools to interact and benefit from their divergent experiences. Despite this apparent tolerance, the Society, curiously remained closed to women until after World War II, although it did admit women before the University at large decided abolish its policy of segregation.

Alumni interest in Philo affairs has also fostered stability, as Senior Members provide a connection with the traditions and history of the society and as such, there have always been efforts to establish contact with the Society's alumni. Philo early sought to have all future books by senior members added to its library, although it is not evident that this well-intentioned move was ever actually implemented. In December of 1919, an Alumni Association was formally organized for the first time. It had its own letterhead stationery and an official journal called *Old Philo*. Volume I, Number 1, spring 1920, of *Old Philo* contained the following account of the Association's origins: "During the summer of 1919 a number of the younger Alumni of Philo formed the very good habit of meeting and eating at more or less regular intervals. There were three such meetings during the hot months, which were in reality 'Glad-to-see-you-back-from-the-front' parties and had little bearing on the future of Alumni Relations. The same group, with many additions, met on December 9, 1919, at the Arcadia Cafe, and, between courses, organized the Alumni Association, elected officers for the current academic year, approved by-laws, which were later adopted by the undergraduate society as addenda to the Philo constitution, arranged for a meeting on Washington's Birthday, and adjourned, having accomplished what they proposed to do." In 1921, undergraduate representation on the Philomathean Alumni Council was approved. The Alumni Association continued as a formal body through most of the twenties, but, as happens with many Philomathean endeavors, eventually became an informal group which had annual dinners or home gatherings until World War II.

The Twenties also saw substantial change with regard to the composition of the meetings. The reading of the Philomathean Review was made an official part of the meetings after April of 1921, but the tradition of writing the Review in rhyme was officially dropped in 1928. The order of the meetings was also changed in 1928. Literary Exercises had, until this point, preceded the business meeting, but it was seen necessary to reverse their order. This order was modified so as to maintain attendance during the relatively uninteresting details of Society business, rather than have the membership file out after the Lit Ex. Rather than be bored, however, members have on occasion spiced the proceedings by launching verbal battles and displaying their great powers of oratory and parliamentary maneuvering, much to the distress of the Moderator, the Censores Morum, and even the speaker of the evening, who have little recourse but to watch impotently as these rogue members hijack the meeting for their personal enjoyment. In this way, the business portion of the meeting has grown in prominence, serving as an outlet for members' creativity and

a means of injecting levity and mirth into an otherwise dull section of the meeting.

One additional aspect that contributed to the excitement of Society life was its continual rivalry with the Zelosophic Society. Much Philomathean energy in the past was directed towards efforts to surpass the achievements of its junior, rival undergraduate literary society. From 1873 to 1928, Philo and Zelo shared the top floor of College Hall. From either end of the fourth floor, the societies directed their efforts at producing dramatic presentations, publications, and debating teams that would outshine the rival. As might be expected, this rivalry frequently inspired a considerable amount of mischief from both groups. Insistent pounding on the shared dividing wall often brought the meeting of one of the societies to a noisy halt, as a retributive mission was dispatched. Raiding parties at times found their way across the roof, along the sill, and through a window in the adjoining room, where they set upon their unwitting opponents. Having gained access to the Zelo section in a more traditional way, a Philo “detective committee” in 1922 discovered two publications, the Philo bowl, and a member's book that had recently gone missing from the Philomathean Halls. These pranks notwithstanding, the tradition of friendly competition between the two societies proved to inspire the best in both societies.

Throughout the Society's history, Philomatheans have perennially obsessed over signs of an “imminent decline,” with graduating members certain that the demise of the Society awaits the more junior members. It is perhaps because members have expressed their concern at suspected symptoms of this alleged decline that the Society has fought perpetually to retain its identity and stature, preserving its position at the center of University life. These prophets have always had ample fodder for their predictions, including Moderator Jesse Ormandroyd, who, shortly after Philo's centennial, compared the Philo of his day to the Society of the past. He cited a Librarian's statement from 1826 that indicated that five hundred essays had been submitted by members that year for an internal publication, and further stated that by 1828, every member was contributing papers. He demanded that Philo live up to its possibilities, and further its individual and collective knowledge, urging the membership to participate in the same way it had a century ago, despite the manifold changes in the Society.

Not all Philomatheans, of course, saw evidence of regression. In 1920, Moderator John F. Lewis, Jr. wrote in *Old Philo*, “We are far from dead. Although old Joe Coates said at the banquet that in his day ('68) the great cry was that Philo was degenerating, and although old birds of '16 and '17 get that off now, we say that we're giving a lot for our descendants to

degenerate from.” He went on to cite the numerous accomplishments of his administration, which, although different from the prolific written contributions of the previous century, were impressive nonetheless. The period from Philo's Centennial through the mid-twenties has been called the "Golden Age" of Philo, and was not equaled until the 1950s. By the late 1920s, however, Philo found it difficult to maintain its past efforts, holding fewer events and often opting for social occasions over more intellectually oriented activities. One member in 1926 found the existence of the Society justified by a Christmas party, one debate, and one “hobo night” held the previous semester on the grounds that these few activities had helped to “solidify our spirits.”

At least spirit was not lacking, evinced by the peppy football rally that was held in February of 1927. Similarly, bored and eager for entertainment, the society would occasionally attempt "beheadings" on the floor of the meeting room. These were mock executions staged with a bronze sword remaining from the Greek Play of 1886, the culmination of a mock trial that had convicted accused party of a supposed infraction against the "traditions" of the Society.

The prominent influence of literary societies in American college life was rapidly fading. Underscoring this fact was an October, 1913, letter from the Philomathean Literary Society of Ohio State University, which proposed the formation of a national organization of literary societies in an effort to protect the remaining organizations from collapse. Nothing came of this proposal and by the end of the following decade there existed a few potential members for such a national confederation. The liberal arts tradition of American college undergraduate education was becoming subservient to specialized, vocationally oriented curricula, and remained in this state for three decades. This trend was particularly evident at Penn, where business, technical, and scientific educations were favored over the humanities. During this nadir, the Society would decline sharply from its active, prominent role, damaged by the decreased interest in pure learning and the activities of a literary society. In spite of this, however, Philo survived as an innovating force in the life of the University.

### **1928-1943**

The relatively complacent position of the Society within the University was rudely shattered in the fall of 1927. The University, desperate for space, cast its possessive eyes on the fourth floor of College Hall. With an appeal to the long-standing agreement between the Society

and the University and Philo's long record of service, Dr. Josiah Penniman, the Provost and former Moderator, requested Philomatheans and Zelosophians to vacate their home. Although a lawyer alumnus volunteered to fight the move, the Society bowed to the request. In turn, the University formally recognized the Society's right to its traditional quarters and promised to return Philo to its home upon the completion of additional facilities. In the interim, the Society was granted the use of one, and later two, rooms in Houston Hall for the purposes of continuing its functions.

This move was a strong blow to the Society. Subject to orders of the Director of Houston Hall, the Society could not conduct many of the activities that had made membership such a rewarding experience and had so enriched University life. Even the regular meetings of the Society had to be postponed and rescheduled. One initiation had to take place in the Christian Association Building as a result of the shut-down of Houston Hall on a special occasion. Meetings held in Houston Hall had to comply with the closing time of 11:30 P.M, which seriously impeded Philomathean life as general meetings often went past midnight. This curfew was regularly appealed to Provost Penniman and the Houston Hall Director, Paul Hartenstein, but the appeal was just as regularly denied.

Records remaining of Philomathean activities during the years 1928-1943 are correspondingly unimpressive. The dramatic extravaganzas, the outstanding debates, and the lecture programs that had once characterized Philomathean life had shriveled to virtual nonexistence. Membership dropped drastically from the highs of the immediate post-Centennial years, wherein competition was fierce for the few available slots. Nevertheless, despite all that happened, Philomatheans occasionally held a meeting in which the discussions were as inspired, sharp, and worldly as in the best years of the Society. The status of the Philomathean residence has always been inextricably linked to its success as an organization, for when Philo has had unobstructed use of its halls it has flourished, but when as with the relocation to Houston Hall and the eventual expulsion from even these temporary quarters, the status of the Philo's home has been in question or in flux, the Society suffers.

### **University Setting**

Penn, which has never maintained as ample an endowment as its Ivy League brethren, was hit hard by the Depression. The disinterest which is responsible for this lack of endowment

and support Penn might be explained by a number of factors. While fortunate in being able to share in the cultural resources and entertainment facilities available in historic and cosmopolitan Philadelphia, the amorphous University community was unable to lead a distinctive, cohesive life of its own and thus unable to nurture the loyalty that the alumni of other institutions felt toward their colleges. The loyalty that did develop flourished through the fraternity system or respect for powerful Penn football squads and thus, when alumni were inclined to make donations, the proceeds were directed at these smaller organizations within the University. Further, the deteriorating character of the neighborhoods surrounding the campus deterred many alumni from sending their children to the University, exacerbating the weakness of the undergraduate body and starving the University for quality candidates, tuition receipts, and wealthier parents. Penn could still command alumni respect for its outstanding law and medical schools, but the scenery, social prestige, and even scholarship of some of Penn's rivals siphoned off from the undergraduate division many of those students whose families had long constituted the supportive establishment. Names well planted in American history such as Biddle and Cadwalader yielded in Philo to the names of the children of aspiring newcomers to the shores of America. These shifts in the composition of the student body and in the mood of the times had their effect on the tenor of Philo. Members were more interested in trimming expenditures and lowering dues, abandoning former activities in favor of cutting loose socially. Hence, during this period, Philo's position within the University remained uncertain. Something of an anomaly or an anachronism on the nation level, Philo lacked a clear model on which to base its actions and was simultaneously drawn by a desire to maintain its intellectual foundations and, conversely, become "closer akin to a fraternity," following the trend toward an increasingly dominant social life that had characterized the depression years at Penn. This tension was only exacerbated by the internal campaign to secure a private home for the Society, which would have almost certainly ensured that it would have become a purely social organization, hardly different from the rest of the Greek system.

At the University, concerted efforts were aimed at enabling students to work in order to offset tuition expenses, but a survey of such opportunities in the fall of 1931 uncovered a mere sixty-two campus openings. This policy, while not particularly helpful, was more progressive than the measures taken by other universities. Notre Dame, for example, forbade the attendance of any student desiring term employment.

Events in Europe also began to catch the attention of America in general and Penn in particular. For example, even before the outbreak of violence in Europe, Penn began to receive refugees fleeing the persecution of the Third Reich. Threatened because of his religion and socialist politics, Dr. Hans Neisser arrived in the United States in 1933 and joined the Wharton School as an expert on monetary theory, becoming the first Jew to receive tenure at the University. This said, however, sentiment at Penn reflected the isolationism of the nation. A broad poll undertaken in October, 1939, found that 24 per cent of Penn students had declared their refusal to bear arms if called upon to fight, 52.5 percent of the student body would have barred the lend-lease program, and only 42 percent endorsed the national leadership of President Roosevelt. A poll as late as the spring of 1941 found 69 percent of the students opposed to American ships conveying supplies to the Allies, though these opinions would be reversed in December of that year.

### Activities

During the depression, the Society was a gradually became a ghost of its former self, taking on fewer endeavors that could rival the productions of the previous decade. The loss of Philo's adequately spaced, traditional home in College Hall only exacerbated the decline induced by the depression. The verbal agreement the Society had made with the University that had preserved the right of the Society to return to the "garrett" was still theoretically in effect, but the University remained desperate for space. Within the Society, restless and frustrated members returned to the idea of buying a house for Society use. For a time, a waffle shop near campus caught the fancy of members, though, as it would have cost the Society upwards of \$25,000, nothing came of such fantasies. Nevertheless, the indignity of having the Houston Hall janitor flick off the lights during meetings invited members to concoct such dreamlike wishes.

Despite these problems, in 1931 Philo managed to enter its production of Eugene O'Neil's *In the Zone* into a campus competition, though the Philo tradition of elaborate and involved dramatic productions had ended even before the Depression. This evident and ubiquitous lack of funding only served to solidify the trend toward minor, simple undertakings. In 1932 the Society joined the Intercollegiate Dramatic Society with the inaugural production of *An Incident*. Philo managed to stage presentations again in 1934 and 1937, but these did not attain the status of the productions from the 1920s.



Not all areas of endeavor collapsed, however. Philo continued to sponsor student publications, including, among others, *Junto*, a topical literary magazine that featured such notable figures as six-time presidential candidate from the Socialist Party Norman Thomas and actor Edward G. Robinson. It was the first student publication at the University that attempted to develop a readership among the general public of Philadelphia. In this respect *Junto* became modestly successful and, at one point, copies were even available for sale on local news stands. Philo continued these efforts in *Red & Blue*, a literary magazine it had founded before the First World War. *Red & Blue* was an enthusiastic journal which had well mirrored the mood of the student body since its founding. By December of 1936, however, the magazine was beleaguered and on the verge of disbanding. Philo was granted two places on its board in an attempt by the staff to keep the journal alive. Despite these efforts, however, student interest continued to decline and *Red & Blue* folded two years later. The *Garrett Gazette*, Philo's internal journal and record continued its very irregular issuance. A typical issue ran about forty typed pages, including essays, bulletins, and Society news. While some members filled it with an abundance of thoughtful essays of note, the *Gazette* usually suffered from Societal neglect.

In 1933 and 1938, Philo started and abandoned plans to publish an anniversary history. In the final discussion in 1938, it was resolved to postpone the history and a major celebration until the 1963 sesquicentennial. One member blasted the buck-passing and wondered if this meant the Society would do nothing for twenty-five years.

During this period, Philomatheans expressed their concern for world events. From 1935 through 1937 the Society appears to have supported activities of a "Student Peace Society." An early chairman of the group was a Philomathean, continuing the long history of Philomathean leadership in University life outside of the auspices and control of Philo itself. As the menace of European fascism became more obvious and better understood, Philo withdrew from endorsing neutralist organizations, favoring instead a more active role for the United States. Pointing to Mussolini's and Hitler's backing of Franco and the Falange, two members urged in December of 1937 that Philo offer a token monetary contribution to Spanish Loyalists in their defense of the Second Republic as a gesture of moral support for democracy's resistance of Fascism. This however, strikes a notable discord with the general national sentiment, which would remain determinedly neutral until 1941.

Literary Exercises throughout the dark years of the Depression continued to show sparks

of intelligence in an otherwise unremarkable calendar of events. A selection of topics from 1933 to 1938 indicates their broad scope, as they included such diverse subjects as Behaviorism, the Philosophy of Spengler, Chinese Education, the works of Ibsen, Anatole France, Chopin, French Impressionism, and Einsteinian Theories of Physics. While this selection evidences the continued prominence that literary topics enjoyed, Literary Exercises were given more frequently on scientific topics than previously, indicating a broader shift in the society away from a purely literary focus, expanding from the humanities to interests in different fields of inquiry and investigation. Hence, Philo followed the University trend toward diverse study, rather than dogmatically adhering to its strictly literary foundations. Discussion following the exercises was generally quite lively, epitomized by the near-battle that emerged in response to the submission of a paper on the work of Gustav Mahler in 1940.

Guests frequently appeared at the invitation of the Society, contributing to the intellectual discourse in the Society and adding to the knowledge and learning of the members. The many discussions led by faculty members provided an invaluable opportunity for contact and association with outstanding members of various departments. The following examples will give some idea of the men and ideas addressed to Philomatheans:

Dr. E. Sculley Bradley  
Dr. Domenico Vittorini  
Dr. William N. Loucks

President Lincoln  
Pyronbella  
Economic Stability

Similarly, senior members occasionally returned to the Society and delivered orations on subjects of diverse nature. These topics, however serious, did not preclude occasional creative embellishments or touches of humor. In such instance, in a 1931 discussion following a lit-ex on the plight of American farmers, one member proposed an elaborate “solution” for persistently low crop prices, namely, a government organized, crippling drought that would devastate yields and, consequently, drive up prices. Another member, stridently opposed to this course of action called it impractical and urged members not to be deluded by the persuasive tongue of the proponent.

Even in its somewhat diminished state, Philo’s example and heritage remained sufficiently inspiring to motivate women students to attempt to form a female analog to Philomathean Society. The idea was first presented in 1934, but no further word was heard until

November of 1937, when several students from the College for Women requested a copy of the Philomathean constitution as a model. The attempt, however, was never fully realized and no such organization was ever formed.

### **Decline**

By 1940, the number of Philomatheans had fallen to the extent that the Society briefly considered a merger with the Ergo Philosophical Society to increase membership. Congress's declaration of war in 1941 accelerated the drain on membership, bringing chaos to the Society. Continual loss of members to the armed forces created an instability which made long-range projects impossible and weakened institutional memory of traditions and practices. Under these circumstances, informal discussions with faculty members were the only feasible activity. The meetings, now open to the public, continued to be held on Friday nights and regularly attracted about twenty-five students from outside of the Society, but this participation was tangential at best. Nevertheless, as the war dragged on, membership losses became critical. Fearing the imminent dissolution of the Society, Moderator Jerome Mittelman, in the summer of 1943 deposited its precious archives in the University Library. Shortly thereafter, the United States Navy, which had established a wartime officer training and education program on campus, annexed Houston Hall, including the Society's Library and record collection, destroying or discarding much of the Society's possessions. The now-displaced Society was rendered nomadic, which it remained until the 1950s, nomadic, wandering without a fixed residence.

### **Rebirth**

The University of Pennsylvania, like all institutions of higher learning in the United States, was deluged from 1945 until the early 1950s by an influx of World War II veterans who returned to finish their interrupted educations or to initiate them by taking advantage of government assistance in the form of the G.I. Bill. Most schools, including Penn, were ill equipped to accommodate this drastic rise in student enrollments during this period. Class sizes grew and lectures were held in every conceivable space, from basements and attics to old houses adjacent to the campus that the University had acquired for this purpose.

These veterans generally came from less privileged backgrounds than the students of prewar generations, and tended to be older, more mature, and more dedicated to the pursuit of

their education than their predecessors. They were not particularly inclined to the precedents and traditions of prewar student life nor its procedural manifestations which were often regarded as undemocratic or unnecessary. Many were already married, or married while in college. They rushed to make up for the lost war years of their lives, but carried with them a wonderful enthusiasm for knowledge and culture.

Student activities were affected as deeply by this phenomenon as all other segments of University life. Houston Hall, the student union, became largely devoted to dining facilities and public meeting rooms for recently founded or revived student organizations as campus life reawakened from the period of inactivity during the War. Activities formerly housed there and elsewhere were homeless or shifted from place to place. Competition for reserving the few meeting rooms was intense. Many prewar activities were revived, but changed in form if not substance.

The Philomathean Society also felt the effects of this change in the University. Philo had declined to the lowest point in its history during World War II. Most faculty members at the time heard nothing about the Society and had assumed its demise, though the Society still existed, albeit on the verge of extinction. It was a tribute to the idea behind Philo: a forum where ideas encountered in and out of class could be developed and discussed in an intellectually rigorous, yet socially informal atmosphere that the Society once more rose from the doldrums. The individual most responsible for the rebirth was John Patton, a war veteran, who, along with several other veterans worked to revive Philo. In a recent letter to the Society he explained the reasons for his actions and the actual process:

“As a native Philadelphian, I was generally interested in restoring some of the old University traditions which had died during the War. I think that the idea of reviving Philo came to me after I had noticed a large brass plate bearing the Society's name on one of the doors on the third floor of Houston Hall. This plate currently is fastened to the door of the Society's meeting room. I made inquiries at the office...and was surprised to learn that the Society was defunct. I felt the need of some kind of ‘cultural’ society on campus. The Veterans Club, of which I was president, had quite different interests, needless to say. Therefore, I set out to learn more about it and to see whether I might recruit other students to the cause of reorganizing the Society.”

“In the course of my researches on the subject, I came across the Society's books and records in the campus library. I was the only one at the time who perused these and learned about

the history and traditions of Philo...It was I who passed on to the others whatever knowledge they had of the Society. My determination then, seconded by the others, was to reconstitute Philo as nearly as possible to what it had been in the past, but trying to make it more 'democratic' in the process, even to the extent of admitting women for the first time. Since we had absolutely no place of our own in which to keep anything belonging to the Society (we had to reserve a different room in Houston Hall for each meeting), we did not avail ourselves of the minutes and other archives materials. Lacking a Philo Hall, we really could not go very far."

"My colleagues and I were interested in reviewing all of the Society's traditions, although we felt that some were impractical at the time and should be held in abeyance until Philo was on firm footing and had a home of its own. However, we did not want to be limited by tradition and precedent. We wanted Philo to be a dynamic organization, open to all. We were rather disgusted at the idea of white and black balls for voting on a candidate and instead voted by a show of hands. My group and (one headed by) Hilary Putnam began spontaneously and coincidentally, without knowledge of each other. It was only after my friends and I had formed our committee and discussed the Society with older faculty members and were under way with our plans that we learned about Putnam's group. As soon as I learned of their existence I approached Hilary Putnam and told him that we would be happy to combine the two groups and include him on the committee."

Hilary Putnam was the last junior member on campus who had joined the Society prior to its expulsion from Houston Hall in 1943, preserving, with some of his classmates, the continuity of the Society. Throughout the war, he and those of his fellow members remaining at the University met irregularly in private homes and apartments such that, when John Patton inquired as to the status of Society with the University, it was presumed that the Society had disbanded, though in reality it had continued to exist as a homeless and amorphous organization. They invited faculty members to join their discussions and in general attempted to preserve whatever they could of the Philo tradition. Formal organization was impossible, but at least the name and idea of the Society were kept alive through the war years. Thanks to these informal meetings, Philo can truthfully claim one hundred-fifty years of unbroken existence.

Patton tracked down Theodore Bonn, Philo class of 1943, who was to act as the liaison between the Administration and the Philo. Upon Bonn's recommendation, Patton's group was officially recognized by the University and merged with Putnam's circle. Other alumni,

especially E. Sculley Bradley, Robert Spiller and John F. Lewis, Jr., rendered invaluable assistance in providing continuity between the old Philo and its revived, postwar incarnation. Dr. Albert Harbage, Philo's faculty advisor, resumed his former position. The first official post-war Philo meeting was held on May 29, 1947, and was attended by nineteen people, including Patton, Putnam and Bonn. An executive reorganization committee corresponding to the former cabinet was elected with Patton as Moderator and Putnam as Second Censor. It was agreed that applicants for membership should submit papers and, at some time in the future, give an address before the Society.

This meeting of May 29 was the last time minutes were to be taken until fall of 1949, and no roll of the members was kept regularly until the fall of 1953. These lapses are fair indications of the great discrepancy between Society's less traditional practices of this period and that of previous period, evincing the differences in membership and the undergraduate population. Meetings were held in the afternoon as well as in the evening on any day of the week, and business meetings usually took only half an hour, as opposed to the night-long affairs that meetings had been in the pre-War era. Society activities were largely aimed at bringing faculty members into touch with the students, and virtually all meetings were open to the general student body. The old tradition of literary exercises went by the wayside, deemed too formal for the postwar context. Similarly, from the spring of 1948 to June, 1952, each member received a membership card instead of the traditional Latin membership certificate. Hence, Philo maintained the flexibility that had allowed it to survive during the pre-War period, adapting, in its re-organized form, to fit the needs of the immediate post-War generation of undergraduates, who chafed under formal procedures and the strictures of tradition.

The most fundamental change introduced during this period, however, was not the shift away from formal structure, but rather the admittance of women. Letters from the Moderator at that time appeared on October 21, 1948, in the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, and in the *Pennsylvania News*, the women's weekly student newspaper, and complained of the adverse editorial comments which the change had provoked. One editorial had been headlined "Philo Hits Bottom/Admits Women!" This move was not uncontested within the Society and, for several years after the decision, all Society correspondence bearing women's signatures was initialed rather than signed to avoid alienating the more conservative alumni who might have balked at Philo's decision. Moreover, even as long afterwards as April, 1950, the meeting minutes hint at

finer imposed on members who refused to speak to their female counterparts, indicating that latent sexism still pervaded the society, in spite of official policy. That said, however, Philo was markedly more progressive than Penn as an undergraduate institution, which did not integrate men and women until 1974, more than twenty-five years after Philo had rejected such prejudices.

Despite the organizational changes and the limitations of physical facilities, meetings in the early fall of 1947 consistently attracted forty to forty-five students. The success of these meetings and those of the next two years may be attributed to the favorable response of the student body to the Society's policy, as expressed by John Patton: "We were willing to sponsor anything that would liven up the cultural atmosphere on campus." One set of lectures inspired a change in the University curriculum, when, at the behest of its membership, Philo petitioned the University for the introduction of the study of comparative literature. When the University refused to take action, the Society responded by offering a series of lectures in comparative literature by members of the respective language departments. The unusually heavy attendance of these lectures convinced many professors of the demand for this study among the student population. The Society's plea was reexamined and a department of Comparative Literature was finally instituted as one of the first interdisciplinary undergraduate departments at Penn.

The spring semester's efforts were devoted largely to attempts at founding a new literary magazine. In 1948, the Society had helped to publish a magazine named *Trend*, which unfortunately lapsed after two issues. Convinced of its inability to publish on its own, the Society turned to the general student body. In support of the endeavor the Society organized a lecture series on contemporary literature. Finally, in the spring of 1951, Philo founded the *Pennsylvania Literary Review*. The PLR's objective was to present the best literary efforts of the University's undergraduates. The magazine listed as its "Founding Fathers" three former Moderators, including John Patton, who had stayed at Penn for his graduate studies and retained a Special membership in Philo. The *Pennsylvania Literary Review* continued under Philo control for over ten years, until the magazine eventually folded.

In the spring of 1951, Dr. Robert Spiller became the Society's sponsor, replacing Dr. Harbage, who had left for Harvard. The Society showed renewed vigor with the delivery of a fully fledged inaugural address by the incoming Moderator, and with the reinstatement of the requirement that candidates for membership deliver a speech before the members of the Society.

But there were also complaints that meetings were too infrequent and not interesting enough, that the procedure was too formal and that only two members had paid their dues. On May 17, new officers were elected, but the posts of Second Censor, Recorder and Librarian were left vacant. During this entire period, the only committees mentioned were the membership or reading committee, and an occasional banquet committee, as the need arose. There is no record whether the Cabinet met regularly, or at all.

The next two years were a constant battle between Philo's continued existence and its impending extinction. A series of proposals aimed at raising the Society to its former glory was introduced each meeting by Charles F. Ludwig, a sophomore admitted to membership May 17, 1951. In October, his motion to reinstitute the Annual Banquet passed, followed by his suggestion that December to create a Philo lapel pin, which was also adopted. In January, also at his suggestion, a Recorder and Librarian were appointed from the junior membership. On December 6, 1951, Ludwig delivered a six page report of proposals for revitalizing Philo which went into every phase of Society activity. Eventually, every one of his suggestions was followed, but at the time, a great deal of opposition arose. The greatest point of contention was the revival of old and formal traditions. Members who were accustomed to the post-War Philo could see little benefit in reviving such practices as having the Moderator and Censors preside over the meetings in academic robes or keeping handwritten ledgers of meeting minutes. Ludwig saw in Philo the underpinnings for the stability of the Society and he noted that the periods when Philo attained its finest achievements were times when its traditions were most observed. In the next few years, his insistence on maintaining tradition almost split the Society in half, but in the end, his unflagging campaign prevailed. Ludwig's analysis, however, is flawed it falsely ascribes Philo's success to its adherence to tradition. Philo, even when innovative, has been successful, and this success has more to do with Philo's status within the University, particularly with regard to popularity, respect, and having a secure place to meet, rather than simply following the traditions of previous generations.

In October, 1951, a series of lectures on religion was planned, but abandoned in February because of an inability to obtain speakers. In January, a Philo night at Hedgerow Theater was scheduled to raise money for the Society. Sartre's *No Exit* was to be seen, but membership support was so poor and community response so unenthusiastic that the theater was practically empty. Members refused to return unsold tickets they had promised to sell and Philo yet again



entered the fall semester with a deficit.

The 1951-1952 academic year had its bleak moments, but it also had moments of promise. In December, Ludwig announced that he had removed the Philo archives from the University Library and secured the contents in two closets he had obtained for the Society in Houston Hall. Ludwig purchased a new Recorder's Roll for the Society, into which he wrote the available names of the membership since World War II. From this point, the Recorder's Roll was kept as continuously as it had been from 1813 to 1939, with every member signing his name in it upon his initiation. The old initiation ceremony was reinstated in February at Ludwig's insistence and a new precedent was set when Irene Block was elected the first woman Moderator. But despite the potential of this year, the spring semester ended on the most depressing level since the War. Minutes were taken more infrequently and the membership became apathetic. Finally, at the last meeting of the term, Ludwig was elected Moderator by the handful of remaining members. Only the offices of Moderator, Censors and Treasurer were filled. The others remained vacant, either because they were not needed or because there were not enough members to fill them. Apparently, the University atmosphere was not conducive to intellectual organizations, as student interest seems to have flagged during this period.

Newly-elected and eager to renovate the Society, Ludwig spent the summer examining the Philo's archives and came back in the fall with a better idea of what he wanted to accomplish. Beginning in the fall of 1952, Philo began to follow some of its traditions more assiduously. Minutes were kept consistently and members regularly delivered Literary Exercises. For the first time since the War, Philo to be merely a discussion group and lecture platform for faculty and began to assume its former role as an outlet for original intellectual efforts and a forum for constructive criticism. Superficially, the minutes of this time resembled those of the twenties, but they lack mention of any external activities, indicating that the Society had not fully returned to its position of prominence.

During this same period, the Society continually pressed the Administration for new quarters in accordance with the verbal agreement made at the time of Philo's expulsion from College Hall. At the time, Philo had to share a room in Houston Hall with twelve other student groups. The Society did not even have a desk of its own, though it did have exclusive use of two closets in which to keep its invaluable archives and its small but growing library. Until Philo installed new locks on the doors, even this meager home was not safe from vandalism and

several precious objects were stolen. Efforts to obtain adequate quarters drained much of the Society's energy until 1956, when sufficient space was finally procured. Ludwig was reelected Moderator in the spring semester, and again for the fall of 1953 when he was a graduate student. This required a special constitutional dispensation, and is the only time in the Society's history that a graduate student has served as Moderator.

In the spring of 1953, Philo reinstated its tradition of bestowing an annual award to the champion debating team in the Philadelphia public high school league. Further, Philo revived the tradition of awarding diplomas to its graduating members at the end of the semester. With the revival of this tradition, all the official documents of membership were once again in use. The majority of Society effort in the fall of 1953 was directed toward increasing membership. Philo conducted a vigorous campaign and nineteen new members were initiated, bringing the total membership to twenty-five and away from the brink of extinction. The Society revived many of its practices that had lapsed during the war, beginning with a series of lectures on the origins of the Cold War, which featured professors from the University and other area colleges. Internal activity consisted mostly of debates and papers on topics of current interest.

Philomathean Neil Willing was elected President of the Governing Board of University Student Assembly in the fall of 1953. The University Student Assembly occupied the efforts of a number of leading Philo members during this period, reflecting Philo's general rebirth after its near dissolution during the Second World War. Further, it is interesting to note that, even in its attenuated state, Philo maintained a preeminent position within the University, including the University Student Assembly. During the this same period, Philomathean Alan M. Ruben conceived the idea of establishing at Penn an institution similar to the English Oxford Union. The proposed organization was to debate the political issues of the day in the manner of a legislative to body. It was not be a student government with jurisdiction over campus affairs, but rather an organ for discussion and finding innovative solutions. Approximately twelve leading student activities were asked officially to sponsor the Undergraduate Student Assembly and to constitute its Governing Board by sending one representative from each organization. A constitution was drafted after a year of discussions with members of the Department of Political Science. It established a legislative branch with representation based on participation of the three political clubs at that time: Young Democrats, Young Republicans, and Young Progressives. The Governing Board served as the executive branch to care for administrative details. On October

26, 1951, Philo voted to be a sponsor, and appointed Ludwig its representative to the Governing Board. The Society ratified the Undergraduate Student Assembly constitution in March, 1952. Each political party offered a platform and slate of candidates for the House. Seating of the parties was by proportional representation based on campus election results. Almost thirteen hundred students voted at the polling booths set up across the campus on Election Day. The first meeting of the House was held in late spring of 1952. Probably because of the coincidence of the American presidential election, USA met with overwhelming student support in its first year.

In 1953, however, extreme internal dissent among the three political parties resulted in secession and eventual disorganization. Upon dissolution, USA's documents were deposited in the University Archives with instructions that whoever tried to establish a similar organization should have free access to them.

In the spring semester of 1954, Ludwig declined the Moderator's chair and was instead elected First Censor. This started an unwritten custom in the Society that the Moderator be first elected in the spring semester, and invariably reelected for the following fall. Because the Moderator is usually a low senior in his second term of office, he is thereby available for one more semester before graduation to assist the new Moderator in learning his duties. This custom has contributed to the stability of the Society by preserving a degree of institutional memory in the legacy of the Moderator. Moreover, the former Moderator often serves as First Censor in the spring of his senior year, such that he can further ensure the continuity of the Society by educating the incoming class of new members in the traditions and culture of Philo.

On February 12, 1954, Ludwig delivered his farewell address after having served as Moderator for a year and a half. He himself best summarized the achievements of his administration and his conception of the Society's future course in the following words:

“My Fellow Philomatheans: Tonight, for the first time since prewar days, a Moderator of the Philomathean Society has garbed himself in the traditional academic robes worn by the officers of Philo. This marks the end of one era and the beginning of another.”

“A year and a half ago, I offered a program of four points, plus a fifth, supplementary to the others. The goals were: 1. Increased membership; 2. Library and rooms; 3. Programs by and for the membership by means of the Literary Exercises; 4. Creative, constructive criticism; and 5. Service to the University. Four-fifths of this program has been fulfilled or is well on its way to fruition.”

“The membership has increased in size and quality and should reach the traditional limit of fifty members by next year. The members are all working and contributing to the continual progress of Philo, both in administration, and more important, in the creative efforts characteristic of this organization. The Literary Exercises have been fully revived and restored and have once more assumed the dominant part they have played in the Society. This has been accompanied by a change in the mental outlook of Philo members from one of cynicism, sarcasm, and destruction to one of creative construction. The Society's library has been revived and steps have and will be taken to make it become of greater value to the members, and more a part of their reading habits.”

“I made service to the University merely a supplementary item in my program because I felt that Philo had to be restored and buttressed from within before it could have that reserve of time, energy, finances, and spirit necessary to carry a program of activity to the entire campus. Yet, we have fared so well with the internal rebirth of Philo that we have already been able to begin a wide series of programs for the rest of the student body. The Biennial Lecture Series has already been revived and begun this year. The Annual Oration is also being revived, and the Annual Oratorical Contest which we administer for the General Alumni Society will soon be held. We have resumed interest in the Philadelphia High School Debating League, which we founded in 1917, offering the Philomathean Debate Trophy once more for competition. A Philo magazine or some other sort of publication will, I hope, soon be read by the faculty and student body of this University.”

“The past year and a half has therefore brought an enormous change in the character of Philo. When I first joined the Society, there were few meetings, no Literary Exercises, no certificates of election, membership, or the Philomathean diploma. There were no collected archives and curios, no membership drives or annual receptions, no gold keys, lapel pins, committees, or much form of organization. It is clear that Philo has been restored in the face of overwhelming odds.”

“But now the Society has reached a turning point. An enormous amount of time had to be spent during my administration in occupations of necessity, in building, block upon block, and in consolidating these advances. The greater part of these functions of necessity have been completed. The cap and gown which I now wear are symbolic of this metamorphosis. From the coveralls of administration, the Society now has the responsibility more than ever of donning the

academic robes symbolizing intellectual creativity and in pursuing the stated goal in its Constitution, 'To improve the learning of its members'."

"Philo must be as wise in this as in its building stage. The Society has understood the function of history, that the present is the living past, that the past is inseparable from the present, and that the progressive philosophy of Anglo-American institutions and society is the continual looking to the future, but always with a gradual continuity, evolving out of the past; a tradition that form is necessary to channel effort into useful endeavor, but should not become an end in itself. This Philo must continue to be. It must preserve its basic institutions, characteristics, and traditions while looking to a broad new horizon of intellectual activity. It must restore itself as the intellectual center of student life at Penn, and as a leading coordinator and arbiter of extra-curricular activity. To do this involves a number of things. It does not mean putting on airs of intellectual artiness, snobbery, or conceit, or in meddling in the affairs of other organizations. It does require an energetic and humble membership, not fearful or too lazy to undertake large programs and projects, whose execution would require work not only benefitting the Society and the student body, but the individual members in many ways of an intangible nature."

"The first and most important single factor which will decide whether this new era shall continue to be one of progress is the finding of a permanent, suitable, commodious home for the Society. Philo shall retrograde if it must continue to live out of a desk and two closets. It is the essence of Philo that it exist in a place where not only its members, but those students and faculty so desiring may meet on a common ground in a dignified atmosphere at any time for the informal exchange of ideas and for intellectual fellowship. The Friday night meetings should not be the sole occasion for the gathering of the Society, but rather should be the culmination of a full week of the exchange of ideas, when the Society itself reaches its peak in formal debate and discussion."

"Accompanying the rooms, the Society should publish a good magazine, once again produce plays, and bring eminent authorities in all fields to the campus. Philo should try to cooperate with the other activities on campus in coordinating them into a fabric of unity to replace the excessive competition which now exists in fields of essentially similar intellectual aims."

By the fall of 1954, only the absence of adequate quarters kept the Society from attaining its former status and enjoying the stability that accommodations provide. Initially, most effort

were concentrated primarily on reclaiming the Society's old facilities on the fourth floor of College Hall rather than obtaining a new space. In anticipation of finally being granted its request, Philo appointed committees to investigate what support, if any, its alumni would provide in furnishing the new quarters once they were secured.

After lengthy negotiations between Ludwig and the University Space Committee, Philo was granted sole use of a room on the fourth floor of Hare Building in the spring of 1955. The Hare Building had recently been vacated by the Wharton School of Commerce and Finance, which had moved into its new home in Dietrich Hall, the first major new building erected at Penn since World War II. The grant of the space in the Hare building was accepted as a temporary measure until a final home for the Society could be secured. Despite the vacancies created by the construction of Dietrich Hall, space was still critically scarce in all parts of the University.

Henry Steele Commager delivered the Annual Oration that year. These lectures continued into the fall semester and were jointly published by Philo and the Pennsylvania Literary Review in 1956. Every copy was sold on the first day of distribution. This lecture series and its successors were not only important to Philo, but also to Penn. Numerous lectures were given on campus in the post-War years. The University commenced an annual Franklin Lecture Series featuring prominent non-faculty speakers. Student apathy in the early 1950s, however, resulted in such small audiences that the Franklin Lectures were suspended. By 1955, no campus organization sponsored major lectures because of the fear of inevitable failure. Moderator Albert Fishlow, however, fervently believed that non-classroom lectures were a vital part of the intellectual life that a great university should provide. Disturbed by this apparent deficiency, he proposed that Philo sponsor two major lecture series each year. The fall would feature faculty members from Penn, while by contrast the spring would present well-known scholars and public figures from other parts of the country. Each highly publicized series would focus on a theme of widespread interest in order to attract the broadest possible audience. All speakers would confer in advance on the areas to be covered in their addresses. The Society acted on Fishlow's suggestion, and the exceptionally well attended Cultural Heritage series emerged as a result. It was the success of this initiative that ultimately led the University to reinstitute the Franklin lectures and encouraged other student organizations to attempt series of their own. This, then, is an exemplary instance of Philo's leadership within the University, in that, despite its relatively

Lilliputian size and recent tribulations, it successfully addressed a deficiency in the University program, precipitating a response from the administration, acting as a foil that reveals, by way of contrast, the flaws of the University.

*Penn Pics*, the beleaguered and insipid campus humor magazine, was banned in the spring of 1955 because of its salacious content. The editors were unable to obtain funds for a new magazine, and for a while it appeared that the University would be without a satiric publication. In an effort to prevent this, Albert Fishlow, acting on behalf of the Society, approached the editors and the Administration, offering Philo's support for a new humor magazine, as the now defunct *Penn Pics* was the successor of the Philomathean *Punch Bowl*. A new magazine, *Highball* was founded as a result and was first published in the fall of 1955. During its first year of publication, a Society representative held a seat on *Highball's* editorial board, but following its established practice, the Society withdrew from the board in the spring when it felt that the magazine could continue on its own. A mere three years after its founding, however, *Highball*, too, was banned for salaciousness.

Besides publishing the Cultural Heritage lectures, the Society also sponsored several luncheon concerts and one major lecturer, Owen Lattimore, in the spring of 1956. Lattimore, the distinguished but controversial expert on Asia, had been violently attacked by United States Senator Joseph McCarthy in one of his demagogical diatribes against alleged communists and conspirators. Guards were hired to protect the University Museum Auditorium from threatened picketing and troublemaking. None of the expected difficulties materialized, and Lattimore delivered the Annual Oration for 1956, "Asia Ten Years after The War" before an orderly and overflowing audience.

On January 13, 1956, Albert Fishlow was nominated by Charles F. Ludwig for the position of Censor Emeritus and was elected unanimously, excepting his own abstention. As stated in the minutes, Mr. Fishlow felt that "Mr. Ludwig was the only person the Society has had who deserved the honor of a unanimous vote...." and so he abstained as a matter of humility and a gesture of respect. The Fishlow administration hastened the return of Philo to its status as a major influence in undergraduate affairs at Penn. Sponsorship of *Highball* and in particular, its presentation of the annual lecture series which it later published demonstrated that the Society had the resources to extend itself beyond its own meetings and once more engage in important campus activities in a manner that it had not been able to in years prior.

Despite this almost miraculous resuscitation, the Society never regained the “absolute dominance in student life” that it had shared with Zelo in their Golden Age. It seems, perhaps, that in addition to having been overcome by the organizations that it spawned it suffered from a lack of direction. Thus, part of the issue in the revival of Philo is that the Society has no distinct central purpose; it is not defined by its role in publishing a newspaper or operating a radio station. Rather, Philo has always been defined by the desires of its members and its purposefully vague mandate to promote learning. This ephemeral and ambiguous purpose has, in times of indecision or tension, created a distinct lack of direction and mission. Further, Philo is often plagued by its own success in that as groups splinter from Philo to run publications or dramatic productions independent of Philo, the Society’s purpose becomes increasingly confusing and esoteric as other groups begin to fill gaps in the University that Philo had once occupied.

Philo’s relevance to the University was diminished not only by its unfortunate interregnum, but also by the changing demographics of the University and the declining interest in the activities of literary societies. Put glibly, when Philo was established, its members comprised the entirety of the graduating class, whereas in the middle of the twentieth century, its fifty members represent only a small fraction of the few thousand students that comprise the undergraduate body of Penn. Consequently, then, Philo is unable, especially when coupled with its own internal problems, to have as integral a role in undergraduate life as it had in generations prior. Additionally, perhaps the failure of the Zelosophic Society to revive itself for more than a brief period after the Second World War contributed to Philo’s inability to occupy the space in University activities that it once had. Organizations of this type are often improved by the presence of a competitor, whose collegial rivalry serves to create drama, tension, and competition which only enhance the experience of their members and the services they provide to the University. This qualification, however, should not be construed as an indictment or criticism of the accomplishments of the Society since its reorganization, but rather an explanation of the changing dynamic of its position within the University.

### **Continuity**

The new Philomathean Hall was opened on Friday, October 5, 1956, in celebration of the Society's one hundred and forty-third anniversary. In the late afternoon, senior and junior Philomatheans, members of the faculty, and University officers filled the Franklin Room of



Houston Hall for dedication ceremonies. Alumni were enlisted to send letters to the University commending the idea. The Society of the Alumni of The College passed a resolution of support. Philo alumnus Earl G. Harrison, a Penn Trustee, requested Ludwig to prepare a memorandum which he brought to the attention of the Trustees' committee on student affairs. Another alumnus, Philip Price, prepared a legal opinion that the Philomathean corporate charter was still in effect. Ludwig filed an application with the Federal Bureau of Internal Revenue to have the Philomathean Corporation declared a tax exempt, charitable, and educational institution so that contributions to it would be deemed charitable deductions behalf of the donor. The application was approved in 1955. Most importantly, alumni Dr. E. Sculley Bradley, George F. Kearney and John F. Lewis, Jr. became devoted to the project. Ludwig had early contacted Kearney whose sagacious advice, ebullient spirit in spite of setbacks, and ever readiness to listen were vital. Bradley's contribution is best set forth in his own account of the munificent cooperation of the University administration:

“I happened to be Vice-Provost, charged with undergraduate affairs of academic significance, and Mr. Ludwig very properly brought the problem to me. Space was desperately short just then, but Provost Rhoads was sympathetic. We easily enlisted the sympathy of George Turner, then the Engineering officer charged with space, but his task was tough. The final road block was the expense of preparing the space - clearing, erecting new partitions, painting, etc. to the tune of nearly \$3,000. When I took the matter to President Harnwell, with the encouragement of Provost Rhoads and Mr. Turner, the Dean of the College, then Lloyd W. Daly supported us with enthusiasm. Dr. Harnwell then accepted our view toward Philo's cultural significance and authorized expenditures to be made from his presidential emergency, fund a very tight budget at any time.”

John F. Lewis Jr. chaired an alumni fund raising committee for the furnishing of the new quarters, and was ably assisted by Pearce M. Gabell, who acted as Treasurer for the effort. Lewis raised five thousand dollars from the Society's alumni for the purpose of assuring that the Philomathean Halls would be as resplendent as they had been before Philo had been expelled from College Hall. This sum was stretched to cover an estimated ten thousand dollars of furnishings and appointments, designed by Ludwig and a committee of junior members who planned and supervised the renovations.

An old oak paneled platform obtained from the Law School was redesigned and placed

upon a platform to serve as the dais for the Moderator and Censors. An abandoned chess table and fine, old book cases were repaired and refinished. A new wall seat and an asbestos lined archives cabinet were constructed and installed. The floors were carpeted, and the memorabilia of the Society were hung on the walls. The famous cast of the Rosetta Stone and its case were carefully removed from the wall of the third floor room in Houston Hall used by Philo before World War II and hung in the new meeting room as a reminder of Philo's past achievements.

The Hon. Jasper Yates Brinton, Philo Class of 1898, framed and presented two steel engravings by Giuseppe Vasi. One of them, "View of Rome-1765" is among the largest steel engravings in the world, nine feet long and four and a half feet high. Albert Bendiner presented one of his own prints in memory of his brother, a former Philo. The undergraduate members purchased high fidelity record playing equipment and established a record collection to complement the book collections donated by alumni to the library. A large number of persons in the audience braved the four flights of stairs of the Hare Building for refreshments and informal discussion with Viereck lasting several hours.

An official ribbon cutting ceremony followed at the entrance of the quarters. The celebrants entered a handsomely furnished suite composed of a large meeting room, a library, and storage and cloak room on the fourth floor of Hare Building. These facilities were created out of two classrooms, a section of hallway, and the room granted to Philo during the previous year. After a banquet in Houston Hall, Vice Provost Roy F. Nichols, an honorary Philo, donned his academic robes and delivered an address in Ballantine Auditorium of Dietrich Hall. His remarks were titled, "The Mind You Find May Be Your Own," and were subsequently published in *The General Magazine and Historical Chronicle of the University*.

The dedication of the new Philomathean Hall culminated four years of negotiations led by Charles F. Ludwig to secure permanent quarters for the Society. Though Ludwig had originally campaigned to reinstall Philo in its ancestral home atop College Hall, this had proven impossible because of a set of prohibitions imposed by the Philadelphia Fire Marshall. Despite such disheartening obstacles, the Society continued to plea for the space and to seek the support needed to give Philo a home. Using a design found in the 1917 minute book, Ludwig presented a Philomathean flag to the Society at the dedication. He also announced that the University had promised Philo the balance of the rooms along the fourth floor corridor of Hare Building within the next two years, and he proposed that the Society establish an art gallery on behalf of the

University when the additional space would be received.

With the move into its new quarters in 1956, the Society returned to the plateau from which it had fallen in 1928. Throughout the post-war period, ambitious plans had been curtailed or abandoned because of a lack of adequate space. As far back as 1947, the reorganizers were unable to reinstitute all of the traditions because of the physical limitations that they faced. During the early Fifties, the absence of a central, unifying force to bind the scattered membership almost brought about Philo's complete disruption. The process of rebuilding was closely linked to the gradual improvement in the Society's physical accommodations. As first a closet, then a desk, then a room were obtained, programs became more varied and of larger scope, growing incrementally with Philo's increase capacities. Hence, the Society did not attempt a full range of activities until a setting for them was assured. With permanent quarters, personal contact among the membership increased and deepened as members had a permanent location in which to interact. A member going up to the quarters to study or to pass a few quiet minutes was sure to find another Philo already there and would, naturally, benefit from the pleasant company and conversation. Members who previously had not known each other could get acquainted and a spirit of greater camaraderie and friendship developed. With an adequate home, Philo could once more become as valuable to its members and the University as it had been before.

The 1962-1963 academic year brought a major development to the University and Philo. In a room adjoining its quarters, the Society opened the first permanent University art gallery on February 25, 1963, with a collection of Japanese prints donated by the Gallery's first Director, Jack Gillmar. Additionally, professor of Philosophy Nelson Goodman donated a collection of American prints to the Philomathean Gallery to improve the collection. The highlight of the 1963-1964 exhibitions was a show of prints by the French lithographer Honoré Daumier. The 1964-1965 season began with an exhibit of etchings by Francisco Goya on loan from the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Roten Gallery in Baltimore. After the inaugural show exhibits were changed almost monthly. The permanent collection began to grow by donation and soon, an art rental program was established whereby a student could rent a picture for a semester for a nominal charge which went into a fund directed toward the acquisition of additional pieces of art. Further, Philo catered the space to student use and planned exhibits of student work which offered the sale of art to students at prices scaled to the student purse, including installment plans. Yet again, Philo recast itself to fulfill a need among the undergraduate population.

By this point, the Society's library had been reestablished and numbered several thousand volumes. In addition to the numerous current magazines received, there were back issues of many periodicals including a complete file of the *American Scholar* donated by former faculty advisor Otto Albrecht, and a set of *Punch* dating back with occasional gaps to the eighteen forties. New acquisitions were selected each semester by the members and purchased with their dues. Many volumes were added when the Administration gave the Society the remains of the Zelosophic Society's library which had been discovered by accident in a closet in College Hall. Among the numerous alumni gifts was the Cadwalader Collection on World War I, whose addition in 1963 increased the library holdings to the point where the shelves became inadequate to house the collections. Upon petition of the Society, two rooms along the Hare Building corridor leading to the quarters were added to Philomathean Hall in 1960. This was a partial fulfillment by the University of its promise eventually to transfer all of the space along the corridor to the Society. The small room on one side of the hall was immediately furnished as an office much needed by the officers and committees.

At this juncture, Philo felt the need to involve itself more directly and actively in student political life. Undergraduate affairs during this period tended to be dominated by organizations whose principal purposes were either social or athletic. As a result the Society felt that there was insufficient representation in student government for musical groups, theatre troupes, literary publications, and other organizations whose purposes, like its own, were intellectual or creative. Despite its efforts, however, numerous attempts to form an Arts Council with Philo at its head had collapses without success.

The 1959-1960 academic year featured a lecture series by faculty members William Fontaine, Paul Schrecker, Landon Burns, Philip Lockhart, George Gadding, and Elizabeth Flower. Dr. Paul Schrecker, famous historian of Philosophy, had been approached by some Philomatheans to initiate a course in the Philosophy of Science. As a result, the Society officially petitioned the University for the establishment of such a course of study. Eventually, the petition was accepted and Dr. Schrecker taught the course in the Philosophy Department. This, then, resonates with the events a few years before in which, though urgent petitions and the establishment of its own lecture series, Philo succeeded urging the University to establish courses that it had erstwhile lacked. It seems then, given this pattern, that one of the manifestation of Philo, in addition to publishing house and debate squad, is that of the academic

vanguard, ensuring that the University maintain a high standard of education and meet the needs of the Student body, often by meeting that need itself and forcing the University to respond.

Philomathean Hall proved to be an ideal setting for informal seminars was increasingly used for this purpose and for smaller lecture programs. Even the Literary Exercises of a general meeting in December of 1959, became a public event when many students and faculty filled the meeting room benches and even sat on the floor to hear Professor Louis Kahn discuss the philosophy behind his design for the prize-winning Alfred Newton Richards Medical Research Building erected at Penn, thus involving the University in its affairs and fostering an intellectual discourse that, without the Society, would not have had an opportunity to emerge.

After the Society had regained its stability and was no longer in imminent threat of dissolving, Philo's traditional interest in dramatics reappeared. During Ludwig's administration, dramatic readings became increasingly popular and a few were delivered publicly. For several years a standing committee arranged two dramatic readings a year. In 1959, the Society presented Albert Camus's *The Misunderstanding* for two successive evenings under the direction of Professor Robert K. Bishop. The success and reception of this play encouraged some members to institutionalize their interest in modern drama. To this end, they founded the Drama Guild in cooperation with some external assistance and, on May 13, 14, and 15 of 1960, presented Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*, as directed by Dr. Gerald Weales. The Drama Guild became officially independent of Philo the following year. Establishment of the Drama Guild was in part a reaction to the productions of the Pennsylvania Players, which at the time were considered insufficiently representative of contemporary theater, favoring more traditional material. As a result of the challenge, however, the Pennsylvania Players endeavored to improve the quality of their productions. Ironically enough, in this instance Philo had established a rival to an organization that it had itself founded. Philo thus not only contributed an additional student theatre organization to the University community, but also impelled the Pennsylvania Players to adapt.

One of the most obvious signs that Philo had returned to health was the apparent dullness and regularity of the minutes books which revealed a steady routine of Literary Exercises and lecture series, but no breathtaking struggle to preserve the Society and its traditions. For example, the year 1956-1957 saw the successful presentation under the direction of Moderator John Schrecker of a second major lecture series, "Asia in Perspective." The lecturers were experts in the field of international relations and Asian studies. The following

programs were sponsored:

The Interchange of East and West.  
China: Old Society and New Forces  
Indian National Ideals Today (The American View)  
Japan: A Tragedy of Western Impact  
Asia and the West in the New Era

Schuyler Cammann  
Derk Bodde  
W. Norman Brown  
F. Hilary Conroy  
Norman D. Palmer

Eventually, in 1959, Moderator Murray Eisenberg, with the generous financial assistance of the Society of the Alumni of the College, led Philo in the collection and publication of these lectures, including the previously given Lattimore lecture, despite numerous delays in obtaining manuscripts and the refusal of one printer to publish Lattimore's speech.

The extraordinary cooperation of the Society's alumni in obtaining and furnishing Philomathean Hall inspired such gratitude in the junior membership that they sought to maintain their connections with the alumni who had been so supportive and reach out to the rest of the senior members. In the spring of 1957, the Constitution of the Society was amended to establish an Alumni Advisory Committee composed of prominent alumni and the current Moderator. The Committee met for the first time in December, 1957 and decided that they body should serve as an advisor to the Moderator and his Cabinet in an effort to stabilize the Society and preserve many of its tradition in an effort to prevent such declines as had occurred in the past.

It is at this point that Charles F. Ludwig's direct influence ends, as he had completed his legal education at the University and, as such, was no longer a voting member of the Society. More than any other man in the post-War era, he was responsible for preserving Philo and restoring it to a position of prominence. During the years 1951 to 1957, he changed Philo from a small, disorganized and dispassionate group into an active organization, housed in its own spacious quarters, and recognized by the faculty, Administration, and alumni as the true successor to the old Philo in both name and spirit. Building on the foundation left by the Patton group and Hilary Putnam, he framed the organization and revived the traditions which, even after reorganization, had been forgotten. To remember his legacy, in 1962 the Society introduced the Charles F. Ludwig Award, "presented at the end of each academic year to the non-cabinet junior member who has most furthered the Society's purposes."

### **The Sesquicentennial Year**

Under the leadership of Moderators Peter Rona and Jack Gillmar, Philo's sesquicentennial year of 1963-1964 was by far the most active in the post-war period. Rona and Gillmar exemplified the current status of the Society within the University as campus leaders, involved in many aspects of student life beyond the Society itself. Both Moderators, for example, were among eight students to have their pictures and accomplishments printed as indicative of the achievements of Penn students in a booklet distributed to alumni in an effort to solicit donations. Moreover, each was appointed to several boards and advisory committees of the University Administration as well as of the student body, mirroring Philo's own active role in Undergraduate affairs.

Similarly, the Society's celebration of its Sesquicentennial and assured survival from the peril that had faced it during the last years of the Second World War coincided with the tenth anniversary of Dr. Gaylord Probasco Harnwell's administration of the University. The University had, in a manner parallel to the Society, witnessed in the previous decade a renaissance and restoration to the forefront of American universities after having been relegated to the status of a relatively second-tier, somewhat backwater institution during the Great Depression and Second World War, having fallen from its place as the educator of the Pennsylvania elite. In response to Penn's regained stature and in an effort to ensure that it would retain such prominence in the future, a seventy million dollar building program was completed and another one hundred million dollar project was planned. With these expansions, the University would no longer be subject to the limitations that had forced Philo from its home decades before. Further, as the University reinvested in its facilities, it began to attract increasingly qualified and capable classes of students and began to attract professors from some of the nation's finest Universities, rather than have them leave Penn for offers elsewhere in the academic world. Moreover, the humanities and the College of Liberal Arts were revitalized as the core of undergraduate education, stabilizing the trend toward professionalism that had characterized previous years.

This transformation of the University as a whole buttressed and augmented the progress of the Philomathean Society during the same decade. The cooperation and assistance of the expanded faculty and improved Administration were invaluable in rebuilding Philo and executing its plans, especially when Society desires coincided with administrative aspirations. October 2, 1963, one hundred and fifty years after it had been founded, Society was again in a

state of unquestioned health, evident in the schedule of programs that the membership organized during the anniversary year. For example, in commemoration of Shakespeare's 400<sup>th</sup> birthday, Philo organized a Shakespeare Festival focused on a major lecture series of nationally known Shakespearean Scholars, including Ralph M. Sargent, Fredson Bowers, Maurice Charney, and Maynard Mack. Further, as a continuation of the Shakespeare Festival, in February of 1964 Philo presented the Haverford-Bryn Mawr players' production of *Hamlet* to a capacity audience in Irvine Auditorium. Both the lecture series and the play were overwhelming successes as a result of the efforts of Philomathean Wayne Rebhorn, the Festival's originator and organizer. Further, these efforts would have been impossible only a few years earlier, as the society did not have the resources, the stability, the membership, or the confidence to manage such an undertaking.

The sesquicentennial year also witnessed the establishment of a new Philomathean publication, *Era*, the Society's new biannual scholarly and literary magazine. The first issue, under the editorship of Daniel Alkon, contained four articles by prominent members of the University faculty: Roy F. Nichols, Alexander V. Riasanovsky, Robert E. Spiller, and Adolf D. Klarmann. Subsequent issues included student writings as well as faculty contributions on a variety of subjects. Similarly, painstaking research by Recorders Miriam Kotzin and Judith Sepowitz led to a compilation of alumni and their addresses and the publication of alumni newsletter informing senior members of current Society activities. Thereafter, at least one such newsletter a year was to be published, providing steady, direct contact between Philo past and Philo present for the first time in the Society's history, continuing the close relationship between Senior and Junior members that had characterized the reorganization period. In breaking with its own tradition, the Society stated its intention to maintain *Era* and the Art Gallery under its own auspices rather than relinquishing control of them to the general student body after a sufficient gestation period. This intention is interesting as it reflects Societal acknowledgement of the fact that, until this point, it had been gradually writing itself out of University life, allowing groups to splinter off and fill roles that had initially been filled by Philo, thereby obviating the need for the Society to engage in that activity.

The Society's budgets also reflected its expanded activity and the expansion of the University as a whole. By the sesquicentennial year, the Student Government allocated the Society nearly eighteen hundred dollars, a sum that contrasted quite starkly with the relatively paltry one hundred dollar appropriations of the early fifties. This renewed financial endowment



not only indicated the rejuvenation of the University and the esteem of the Society within the institution, but also allowed Philo to take on additional projects and better serve the general student population. As such, Philo sought to produce an enhanced lecture series, selecting for its Annual Orator philosopher Henry Aiken, who spoke on “Intellectual Honesty and Religious Commitment.” Similarly, in an effort to diversify the topics of its lecture series, the society invited Dr. Ludwig Gross, winner of the Pasteur Silver Medal and the World Health Organization Prize to deliver an address titled “Is Cancer Caused by a Virus?,” which was reported in the Philadelphia newspapers and given before a capacity audience, evincing Philo’s success in casting itself beyond the Humanities.

These efforts did not go unnoticed by the community. On March 1, 1964, the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* devoted a feature article and picture to the Society in its Sunday edition, reporting the recent programs undertaken and upcoming events that the Society was to offer. The Winter 1964 issue of *From College Hall*, a newsletter sent by the University to the parents of all undergraduates, contained a full page article on Philo titled “A Call To Arms: ‘Raise hell With Your Brains’” lauding the society in its projects. Although this publication is certainly not rigorous in any journalistic way, it is indicative of the Society’s esteem that the University chose to highlight Philo in a pamphlet designed to placate parents and encourage them to donate money by touting its recent successes. Moreover, in his April 1964 letter to Penn alumni, Walter P. Miller, Jr., President of the General Alumni Society referred to the “raise hell with your brains” slogan as being characteristic of Penn’s vibrant approach to intellectual endeavors, again employing Philo as an exemplar of the possibilities of undergraduate life. Similarly, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, the magazine of The General Alumni Society, devoted six pages of articles and pictures to Philo in its March, 1964 issue. In the span of just a few years, then, Philo transformed itself from the relative obscurity of the early fifties into a venerable campus institution, commanding the respect of the administration and local publications.

The University maintained a number of authors in residence during the year and Philo entertained each in its quarters for a talk with members and the general public. These guests included Archibald MacLeish, Elizabeth Janeway and Philip Roth. The Irish critic, Dennis Donoghue, spoke on “Three Directions in Modern American Poetry” at a Society lecture open to the University community. As a result of these talks and the other events that the Society arranged, Philo received the Friar's Senior Society's Activity Award, presented to the campus

organization that showed “overall excellence and significant contribution to the University” during the academic year.

A gala Sesquicentennial Banquet was held at the Barclay Hotel on Friday night, October 2, 1964, the exact date and day of the week that Philo was founded one hundred and fifty years before. Under the guidance of Leonard P. Dill, Jr., Vice-President of Alumni Affairs, the General Alumni Society sponsored the banquet, and created special Alumni Awards of Merit. These awards were normally given only at Penn's Founder's Day exercise, but the Alumni made an exception in this instance. Walter P. Miller, Jr., President of The General Alumni Society Presented the awards at the banquet to three Philo alumni, Dr. E. Sculley Bradley, former vice-Provost of the University and preeminent Walt Whitman scholar, Charles C. Parlin, learned member of the Bar and President of the World Council of Churches, and C. Canby Balderston, former Dean of the Wharton School and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve, thus honoring their contributions to the University and their respective professions. Moderator Neil Jokelson presided as a hundred and thirty alumni from across the country and officials of the University gathered to honor the occasion. John F. Lewis, Jr. was Chairman of the banquet committee and delivered an opening address. Charles F. Ludwig announced plans for an expanded Philomathean Hall, a full cultural center to include a meeting room, library, music room, experimental theater, art gallery, and editorial offices for *Era* in space to be provided by the University.

Pulitzer Prize winning historian and Vice-Provost Roy F. Nichols delivered the principal address, entitled “A Century and a Half of Intellectual Competition.” In his 1956 speech, “The Mind You May Find to be Your Own,” Dr. Nichols spoke of Philomathean in the following terms, “The University of Pennsylvania over its long history has been striving in countless ways to define and reach its objectives, and Philomathean has been one of its instruments... The University of Pennsylvania and Philomathean have been primarily concerned with the problem of aiding youth to achieve as early and as completely as possible the great goal of self-realization... The whole program of Philomathean as it was conceived by its founders and as it was developed in certain periods of its existence depended upon the formulation, the expression, and communication of ideas, concepts, and product of man's own creation. These college men of the early nineteenth century, whether consciously or not, felt that their classroom experience left something to be desired. And so eager were they to have that which was left undone, that they

were willing to devote their spare time to attempting to secure it... They met not to play football, not to have bull sessions, not to roam the streets of the town, but to express ideas, to debate, to present ideas in essays and orations, and to hear the ideas of each other. They found that this program of formulation and communication gave them a sense of great satisfaction, of recreation, not from aimless play or idleness, but coming from the exercise of their own creative facilities which in turn enabled their own capabilities, and thus to gain a sense of status, a greater sense of security. This they did by learning the potential of their own personalities as creating and communicating individuals. In other words, they progressed along the road toward knowing themselves.”

“The fact that this was done after hours, extra-curricularly, meant that they were using their minds not as professionals but as amateurs. They were not learning just law or medicine or theology. These exercises were not consciously designed so much to increase their professional capacity, as to develop amateur intellectual sportsmanship. That they and their successors have found this form of adventure through their association after hours satisfying, the longevity of the Society and the adult interest of so many indicate. More important is the fact that many of those who participated in this activity found in it a constant challenge, and looking over the role of those who have been members of this society, it is quite obvious that many continued these creative interests, continued the search throughout their lives.”

In this way, Philomatheans have asserted their motto, *sic itur ad astra*, “Thus we climb to the stars” and on threshold of its next fifty years, the Society can justifiably look back over its first one hundred and fifty with pride. It has continually changed along with Penn, while maintaining the spirit which created it and always remained its guiding force. Born out of its founders' need to understand their world, each other, and themselves, Philo continued to serve that purpose consistently throughout its existence, allowing generations of students to enrich their educations outside of the structure of the University. Philo has manifested itself differently throughout its history, molded by the needs and desires of its membership, occupying whatever vacancies existed in their intellectual lives. In this way then, the Society remains fundamentally unchanged one hundred and fifty years after its founding, despite the differences evident between the present society and that of the past.

## Conclusion and Apology

An inherent problem in attempting to produce a synthetic analysis or guiding narrative from Philo's history is that, since its inception, Philo has always been something of a chameleon, shifting its role and aspect in order to fulfill its admittedly ambiguous mandate and meet the needs of its members. Philo's flexibility is one of the features most responsible for its longevity, allowing it to facilitate the intellectual desires and curiosities of the members. This composition stands in contradistinction with the organization of most other student groups, where, despite changes in membership, the group still produces the same final product as it has in the past. Hence, Philo exists for its members in a way that most other student groups do not. Further, as opposed to the case of other student groups, Philo's achievements are always double-edged in that, in most instances where one of Philo's endeavors has succeeded, the section of the Society responsible secedes in order to take on that project on its own. The history of the Society furnishes several such instances, namely the separation from Philo of the *University Magazine*, the Pennsylvania Players, and the Mask and Wig Club. This pattern, while perhaps beneficial to the University, is detrimental to Philo, as its lack of explicit purpose becomes increasingly apparent with each schism, making Philo's course irregular and disjointed. These facts, coupled with the fact that its membership is completely renovated every four years, mean that any attempt to devise an authoritatively cohesive historical system falls short, as Philo's past is kaleidoscopic and mercurial.

Given these limitations, it is best to understand the history of the Society during this period as one characterized primarily by its role as a foil to the University. A somewhat crude, but nonetheless apt, analogy describing the relationship of Philo to the University might be that of a small business to its competitor. Ultimately, of course, both groups are influenced by and subject to the same external forces, evident in Philo's mirroring of the University's decline and resurgence, but within the relative context of their shared framework, Philo has acted generally as an upstart competitor. That is, when Philo noticed an absence in the service that the University provided, it acted to fill this role itself, forcing the University, by virtue of competition, to fill this role itself or sanction the creation of another student group whose purpose directly addresses the need. Philo's history is filled with such examples, such as the institution of a Comparative Literature series to match the University's failure to institute such a course. There are problems with this analogy to be certain, namely that most enterprises do not occasionally petition their

competitors to reform themselves so as to preempt the need for action, but, generally speaking, the analogy stands. Alternatively, one might characterize Philo as a whistle-blower, exposing flaws or deficiencies in the University system and installing stop-gap measures until the institution can respond effectively and rectify the problem. In either case and in whatever incarnation, it is apparent that Philo has played an important role in the history of Penn, serving as an innovative force in a large institution and offering a space in which to experiment on small scale before implementing a policy or program across the entire University.

### **A Discussion of Sources**

This work, as it is largely informed and based upon source material that does not readily lend itself to citation, lacks formal footnotes or endnotes. Instead, I have included this postscript to discuss the materials relevant to the construction and verification of such a history. Of course, for anyone interested in the history of the Philomathean Society, *The History of the Philomathean Society, 1813-1913*. This work clearly and succinctly lays out the first century of the Society's life and is invaluable as a secondary source; it is available in the Philomathean Archive, the University Archive and Records Center, and as a free PDF from Google Books. Ironically, the copy digitized by Google was the property of the University of California Library System, not the University of Pennsylvania.

In terms of primary source material, the most ample repository is the Philomathean archives in the Halls of the Philomathean Society, on the fourth floor of College Hall. To this end, it is expedient to enumerate and explain some of the principle types of sources available in this archive and their relevance to this composition. The most apparent such group of documents is the collected Minute Books of the Society. These volumes, which have varied over time from enormous leather-bound tomes to more modest specimens, contain the minutes of the meetings of the Society as recorded by the Scriba and formally accepted by a motion of the Society at the opening of the next general meeting as a matter of procedure. By custom, they generally reflect the start and end time of the meeting, as well as the date, the pertinent motions accepted and rejected, the topic of Literary Exercise of the evening, and any relevant debates or miscellany throughout the meeting. Hence, they are invaluable in understanding not only the events as matters of parliamentary procedure essential to the functioning of the Society, but also the personality of Philo at the time, evident in the editorial commentary of the Scriba. Moreover, on

a larger historical level, they reflect the general health of the Society, for during periods of intense distress, as with the extended nomadic phase of Philomathean history, the practice of keeping minutes is generally one of the first practices to suffer, especially as the Scriba is often chosen on his merits as a scamp, rather than his ability to keep an accurate record of the happenings of the Society. Further, as accurate and complete records are often seen by contemporaries something of a luxury, especially when the existence of the Society is in jeopardy, they remain a crude, but effective indication of Society health.

These books are housed in the Philomathean Archives and the volumes relevant for the time period in question extend from Volume One, which begins on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1813 and ends March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1817 through Volume Eighteen which ends in February of 1964. There Society continues to keeps regular minutes into the present, all of which are available in the Society's archives, excepting, of course, the present volume, which resides in the Scriba's desk. For the purposes of this history, however, the volume ending in 1964 is the last pertinent portion of the minutes. It is important to note that, as mentioned above, the minutes from the end of Volume Sixteen in November 15, 1940 through the Dark Ages of Philo until the reorganization of the Society in 1953 are sporadic. Additionally, the numbering of the Minute Books is my own and does not reflect any coherent archival mechanism employed by the Society. Those interested should consult the inventory of the Philomathean Archive and then check the first date given in the corresponding volume. There are minutes as early in the post war period as 1947, but these are not as regular or formal as those of other periods in Society life. Similarly, the Literary Exercise books and Roll books offer similar evidence of Society Life, though the last apparent "Literary Exercise Book" ends in May of 1881 and while the Roll Books have continued throughout the present day, they reflect the same tendency toward chaos that the Minute Books do during periods of confusion in Philo History, which only serves to exacerbate the uncertainty. During the early period of this history, moreover, the issues of *University Magazine* and *The Pennsylvanian* often provide an accurate and regular record of the Philomathean meetings and events, if only in a general way.

Another group of sources, especially invaluable when discussing Philomathean dramatic productions and the woes that ensued are the Treasurer's Books and associated loose documents, including checkbooks, budgets, and other financial records. The most interesting volume for this period is the one covering the Period from May 28, 1913 through October of 1919. There are, of

course, other volumes, especially in the period preceding this volume, but this volume helps to corroborate a good portion of the Philomathean misadventures with money, including the unmitigated debacle surrounding *The Masque of the American Drama*, which nearly crippled the Society. These documents are interesting not only in discussing Philo's occasional flirtations with calamity, but also examining the Scope of the Society and its relative prestige and clout within the University, evident in the budgetary allotment from student government and its dues from members which indicate both the relative value of the Society and govern the ability of the Society to engage in various activities, relative to its financial capacity.

There are, of course, more specific records of particular aspects of the Society as well. For example, with respect the aforementioned Philomathean dramatic productions, the Philomathean archives had an extensive collection of documents pertaining to the plays of the early twentieth century, especially from 1904 through 1921. These documents include a report entitled, "Record of Plays given by Philo from 1904 – 1914," several handbills of various plays, correspondence, bills, and accounts of the plays from the years after 1914, and, most interestingly, an undated agreement of several cast members to underwrite personally any deficit that the production might incur. This agreement probably pertains to a year between 1913 and 1920, most likely the year 1917, in which the Society produced *The Masque of American Drama* and thus this decision no doubt proved to be disastrous, though, it was probably the only way to secure the financial resources to produce the play at all.

In the same way, there is a small collection of records specifically relevant to the debating portion of the Philomathean Society. Hence, there is an entire file-folder devoted to the recording of the debates between the Philomathean and Zelosophic societies, as well as delegations from other colleges and universities. There is also a collection of correspondence pertaining to the Philomathean Interscholastic Debate League of Philadelphia founded by the Society in 1917 which lasted until the Second World War. These materials not only provide evidence of the existence and extent of Philomathean debating, but also information as to the content of said debates. The subject of such debates provides the basis for inferences about trends in Society and University opinion.

Further, there are collected copies of Philomathean publications stored in the archives. The presence or absence of these publications is in and of itself a bellwether of Societal health, but they also serve as sources in and of themselves. It would be overly cumbersome to enumerate

every such publication, but a few important examples are *The Philomathean*, a weekly bulletin collected from October 14, 1914 through January 8, 1915, *The Garret Gazette*, an internal publication, later bound into five volumes from October 29, 1919 through May 27, 1932, and copies *Era* beginning in 1964. Along similarly lines, there is a compilation of the complete text of the Annual and Biannual orations delivered before Philo from 1825 through 1962, giving another indication of Society activity as well as a measure of its health throughout the period in question.

Finally, the History Committee of 1964 and the Alumni Relations Committee of 1988 produced, mailed, and received completed Alumni questionnaires, as well as correspondence with particular members as part of their duties. These records, especially the reflections by senior members as to their impressions of the Society are valuable in charting the change of the Society, particularly with respect to its significance to its own members. These questionnaires, responses, correspondence, and associated documents are collected in several boxes generally marked “Alumni/Membership” housed in the Philomathean Archives. Additionally, there are audio recordings of several interviews conducted during the 1990-1991 oral history project for those interested.

This bibliographic note by no means constitutes an exhaustive list of all the documents available on the subject of the Philomathean Society. It is, rather, an indication the sources that verify and corroborate the above history, serving as a substitution for a more formal citation style, given the somewhat chaotic nature of the documents and archives in question. For those interested in a more complete registry of the documents of the Philomathean Society, please consult the inventory of the Philomathean Archives, which is an updated and relatively accurate assessment of the items in the possession of the Society.