

0/17/  
1873

Mother's memories of the  
first commencement

Dictated by Mother -  
at the request of friends -  
Martha S. Brown

The following is a statement dictated  
by my mother -  
to M. S. B. ← Martha Snow Brown

I cannot understand why I recall so few of the incidents of that most important day when the University of Kansas graduated its first class, seven years after the opening of the institution - Such a proud day as it has to be for all of us, which means largely the whole town.

As the Faculty + student body were both so very small the people of Lawrence were most happy to comply with the request that they should furnish a picnic lunch, to be served after the exercises were over - and a general invitation was given out to the townspeople to attend them. ~~at business.~~

As many hands were needed to help prepare the lunch I went at 8 o'clock with Mrs. Snow to the then unfinished Fraser Hall - In the pleasant company of Mrs. J. D. Thatcher + Mrs. Babcock I worked for two hours making sandwiches in one of the lecture rooms where many busy hands were employed.

(2)

At 10 o'clock my husband came for me to go into the unplestereed chapel where he listened to the Commencement addresses of the students of the graduate class, General Fraser presiding.

Although it was such a momentous occasion, the students seemed unembarrassed and thus relieved the mind of Prof. Kellogg who had criticized their orations & drilled them as severely as is customary & brilliant a teacher must needs do.

And yet, with all allowance for their want of previous training, it was a look satisfied & amused smile that he turned to receive my enthusiastic congratulations when the exercises were over.

We were seated on a temporary arrangement of boards, if my memory serves me rightly, but I cannot remember the position of the small stairs erected for this occasion. The hole in the center of the ceiling which met our gaze later though several years had not then appeared.

I recall few details of the luncheon served on board tables, but the post-presidential speaker whom I remember particularly, was

General Miles of the United States Army  
 who, I suppose, was invited from Ft.  
 Leavenworth to be the guest of honor for  
 the day. He was a remarkably hand-  
 some & distinguished looking officer and  
 he delighted us with his ready words of  
 sympathy & approbation.

The general lunch habit for Commence-  
 ment day has continued for three  
 years, then it became so very popular  
 that even the men of the Kimball  
 foundry brought their wives & children  
 to be fed - and the citizens of the town  
 came in such large numbers that an  
 entire change in the proceedings became  
 necessary.