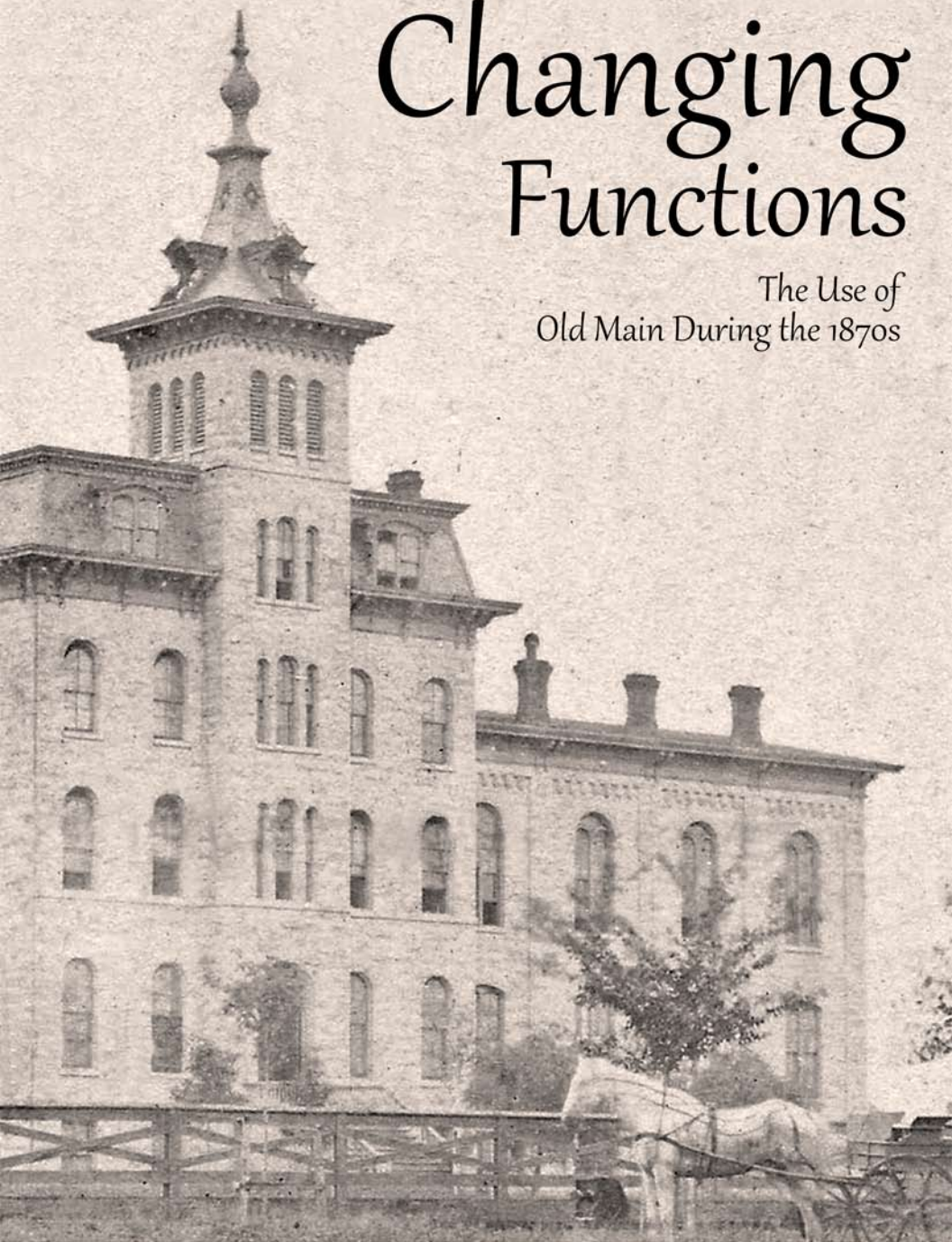


Changing Functions

The Use of
Old Main During the 1870s



By **Brian Failing** '14

North Central College Undergraduate Archives Publication
Number Nine

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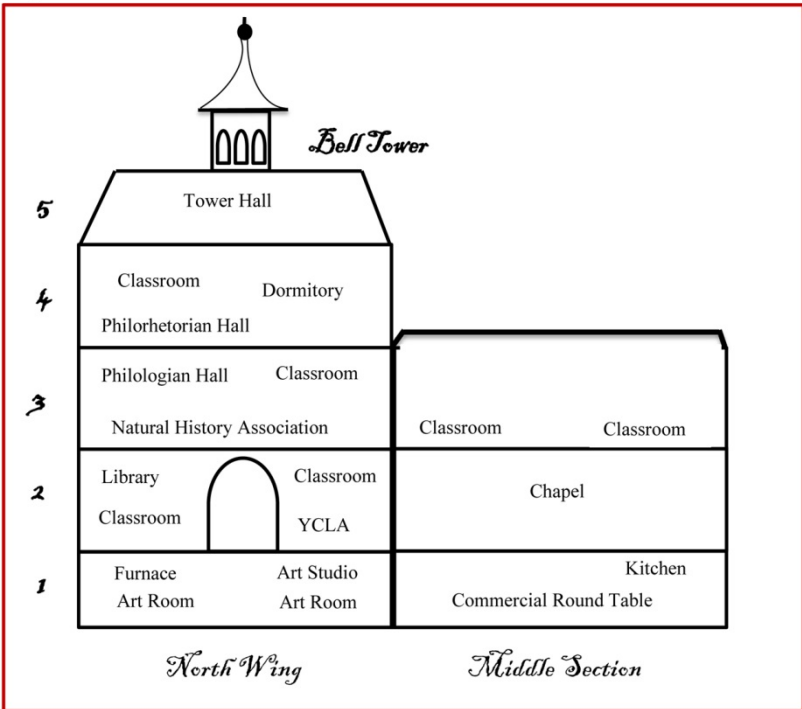
Number Nine

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Figure 1: Functions of Old Main: 1875



Source: Helen Marshall, "Old Main Has Led a Hectic Life for Sixty-Eight Years" *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), September 28, 1938, 1; "Our College Museum," *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), November 1, 1873, 8; "Brevities Loyal," *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), January 1, 1874, 10; "Reading Room Y.M.C.A.," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), November 1, 1874, 11; "Brevities Loyal," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), October 1, 1874, 10; "Chroniclings," *The North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), March 1, 1876, 140; Trustee Meeting," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), February 1, 1875, 9-10; "North Western College," *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), May 1, 1873, 14; H. M. D. "The College Bell," *The North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), December 1, 1875, 51; "Journal Notes," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), October 1, 1874, 7; "Brevities Loyal," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), July 1, 1874, 6; "Brevities Loyal," *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), October 1, 1873, 10; "Monthly Society Record," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), November 1, 1874, 6-7; "Our Literary Societies," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), October 1, 1874, 9; "Chroniclings," *The North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), July 1, 1876, 236-237; "Commencement Week," *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), June 1, 1874, 7; "Chroniclings," *The North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), October 1, 1875, 18-19; "Directory," *The North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), October 1, 1875, 15; "Chroniclings," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), February 1, 1875, 10; *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), February 1, 1884, 4; All of the articles are located at <http://www.arcasearch.com/ncc/initArcaCode.asp> (accessed February 9, 2013).

Note: In addition to being called floors 1-5, the floors have also been referred to as B-4 since 1874. Figure is as complete as historical reference allows; could not place Clisophic Hall, Young Men's Christian Association, Philogermanian Society, and other unknown spaces.

Introduction

North Central began as Plainfield College in 1861. Expansion of the institution was quickly limited due to Plainfield's distance from the railroad.

The trustees of the college began to discuss the situation in 1867 and considered several Midwestern locations before settling on Naperville. The town welcomed the college and "residents pledged \$25,000 for the construction of a college building and Naperville resident Delcar Sleight donated eight acres of land."¹ This generosity supported the College's move from Plainfield to Naperville.



The placement of the cornerstone on Tuesday May 17, 1870 signified the move of the college from Plainfield to Naperville. The placing of the cornerstone was a joyous occasion and brought together both the College and Naperville community.

On May 17, 1870 the Naperville community gathered as the cornerstone was placed on the one College building to be made of local limestone.

Old Main became the heart of the College from the start, used for a variety of purposes. It is here where the first dorms, societies, library, classrooms, dining hall, and chapel were located. I will examine the ways in which Old Main was utilized by students during the 1870s as well as some of the changes that occurred. The use of Old Main provides evidence of key activities of the college in the 1870s. It is through the use of the building that we understand what was and was not important to the College over the whole of its history. Being the entirety of the campus the College established its identity in Old Main and began to grow.

¹ Kimberly J. Butler, Ann Durkin Keating, and B. Pierre Lebeau, *North Central College, 150 Years. A Promising Start* (Naperville, IL, 2011), 11-13.

The building we see today has had numerous additions and appears quite different than the building students saw in 1871. Construction began



The original College building, what we know today as Old Main, appears differently today than it did in the 1870s. When the building was erected it consisted of a five-story wing with a bell tower and a three story middle section

during the spring of 1870 and the first classes were held that fall in the almost completed building. The original building consisted of a north wing, bell tower, and middle section. From the first floor up to the bell tower, one can only imagine how the College functioned under one roof.

One College trustee characterized Old Main as a

“fine massive structure of Naperville marble, 46 by 71 feet and 5 stories high.”² Beyond that statement there are few descriptions of how the building appeared.

The histories of North Central College briefly mention the use of the building for dormitories, classroom space, and chapel.³ They focus on brief accounts of changes the building underwent, with most discussing how the building was used after the addition of the south wing in 1891 and subsequent renovations to the building during the twentieth century.⁴ Little attention has been paid to the use of the building during the 1870s when the College was just beginning in Naperville. It is important to understand that the building was constantly being modified to meet the needs of the institution until the College simply could not grow without renovations to its original structure as well as

² Clarence Roberts, *North Central College, A Century of Liberal Education, 1861-1961* (Naperville, IL, 1960), 60.

³ Butler, *150 years*, 12.

⁴ Pierre Lebeau and Ann Durkin Keating, *North Central College and Naperville: A Shared History, 1870-1995* (Naperville, IL: North Central College, 1995), 10-11; Butler, *150 Years*, 18.

the addition of other buildings to the College. When constructed in 1870, Old Main had 60 rooms, a majority of which were used for dormitories, societies, chapel, library, and classrooms. The functionality of the building changed a lot during the 1870s, but it appears to be the most stable in 1875. During that year there seem to be few modifications to the uses of the building. Thus, 1875 provides the best lens through which to view the many functions Old Main served.

Bell Tower

In addition to the building, one way that the community interacted with the College was through the sounds of the bells. When the building was first constructed the area consisted of mostly prairie and you could see Old Main from much of the surrounding community. Situated above the roofline on the north wing, the bell tower serves both the college and the community. Whether it was the bell waking you up for the day, signaling that class was over, or a joyous occasion, the ringing of the bells was important to the all members of the College.

The selection of this poem represents all that North-Western College was during the 1870s.⁵ Throughout the poem, the reader gets a sense of the variety of uses of the building and how the bells complemented those functions. The bells were as symbolically important as the building the tower was on

⁵ H. M. D. "The College Bell," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), December 1, 1875, 51.

THE COLLEGE BELL.

THE College bell, the College bell,
How many a tale its chimings tell!
While memory gives a cheerful blaze,
To light our thoughts to other days,
When joy attended all our ways.

The College bell, that early bell
Rings loudly, for it knows full well,
That slumbering eyes must ope again,
While busy hands and toiling brain
Must form new links in Life's great chain.

The College bell, the warning bell
Now calls for recitation's spell;
The hours come—the hours go,
Still swings the hammer to and fro,
For classes in the halls below.

The College bell, the Chapel bell,
How oft our thoughts go back to dwell,
Where daily we were wont to meet,
And bowing at the Master's feet,
Found love and peace and blessings sweet.

The College bell, the joyful bell,
Who can the many meetings tell
Of those to'ards literature inclined,
Who sought to store the eager mind
With wit and wisdom well combined?

The College bell, the dear old bell,
Our sadness often did dispel,
And turned our sorrow into pleasure,
For Sabbath School has many a treasure,
Bound with goodness none can measure.

The College bell, the hallowed bell
Whose tones upon the breezes swell,
Calls old and young, the grave and gay,
To hear God's word, to sing and pray;
"Remember thou the Sabbath day."

Thus College bell—thou College bell
Dost many a tale of by-gones tell!
Thy music many a joy recalls—
Kind friends who've left the College walls,
Bright scenes in literary halls.

And whene'er I hear thy pealing,
Hope comes o'er my senses stealing
That all thy future tones may tell,
"Behold how good a thing to dwell
Where one can hear the College bell!"

December 9th, 1875.

H. M. D.

In 1875 a poem about the College bells appeared in the *Chronicle*. The tolling of the bells was symbolic to the variety of uses of Old Main and provided a look at how students viewed the College when the entire College was housed in Old Main.

“Tower Hall” and Dormitories

During the 1870-75 academic years, the College provided dormitory space that could be rented out by male students. The top two floors of Old Main were originally designated for this purpose.⁶ The accommodation was heavily advertised in the *College Chronicle*. One such ad appeared May 1, 1873 and proclaimed that “rooms in the College Building are for two students, and are furnished with chairs, tables, wash stands, bed-stands, and mattresses; beddings and other furniture the student provides as best suits his convenience.”⁷ In addition to this, each room had a stove that was either coal or wood burning that provided heating to the room.⁸ Each room had to have access to a chimney that lined the roof of the main tower in order to accommodate all of these stoves.

During the first two academic years, the *Catalogue of North Western College* advertised that the building had rooms for about seventy students and during the subsequent two years it stated that accommodation could be had for fifty students.⁹ It is hard to imagine how those two floors could accommodate seventy students. The Boarding Department Ledger showed that during the fall term of 1870 (the first term in which the building was used), 61 male students resided in the top two floors of the building.¹⁰ If these two floors indeed could hold seventy people and two students shared each room, there would have been approximately 18 rooms on each floor.

⁶ Lebeau, *A Shared History*, 6.

⁷ “North Western College,” *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), May 1, 1873, 14.

⁸ Helen Marshall, “Old Main Has led a Hectic Life for Sixty-Eight Years” *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), September 28, 1938, 1.

⁹ *Tenth Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of North Western College 1870-'71* (Evangelical Association: Cleveland, OH, 1871), 10; *Eleventh Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of North Western College 1871-'72* (Evangelical Association: Cleveland, OH, 1872), 11; *Thirteenth Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of North Western College 1873-'74* (Evangelical Association: Cleveland, OH, 1874), 28; *Fourteenth Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of North Western College 1874-'75* (Evangelical Association: Cleveland, OH, 1875), 27, North Central College Archives.

¹⁰ Boarding Department Ledger, 1870-1871, North Central College Archives.

NORTH - WESTERN COLLEGE.

NORTH-WESTERN COLLEGE has the following courses of study :

CLASSICAL COURSE.—This course is similar to that pursued in other Colleges. It embraces Latin, Greek, Mathematics and Science. German is optional.

SCIENTIFIC COURSE.—This is a four years' course similar to the Classical, except that it includes only one of the Ancient languages, and the study of German is required.

ENGLISH SCIENTIFIC COURSE.—This is a three years' course, designed for those preparing to teach, and for others who do not wish to study the Ancient Languages.

PREPARATORY COURSES.—There are Preparatory Courses intended to fit students for the above courses.

GERMAN DEPARTMENT.—In this Department thorough instruction is given in the German language, and in various other branches; such as History, Logic, Rhetoric, Mental and Moral Science. There are two courses: one English German of two years for English students, and another purely German of two years. English students having completed the English-German course, can profitably enter the purely German, and thus acquire a high degree of perfection in the language.

EXPENSES.—TUITION PER TERM OF THIRTEEN WEEKS.—German and common English Branches, \$4.00; Algebra, Natural Philosophy, Physiology and Elocution, \$3.00; other Higher English Branches, and Ancient Languages, \$6.00; Incidentals per term, \$3.00. Board, room, and fuel in the College Building, on fourth floor, \$3.00; on fifth floor, \$2.75 per week. In private families from \$3.50 to \$3.75 per week.

The Rooms in the College Building are for two students, and are furnished with chairs, tables, wash stands, bed-stands, and mattresses; bedding and other furniture the student provides as best suits his convenience.

The Spring Term, of thirteen weeks, will begin Wednesday, March 10th.

✉ All letters on business should be addressed to the Treasurer, REV. WM. HUELSTER; those asking for information concerning the School, to the President, REV. A. A. SMITH.

Advertisements for the College appeared consistently throughout the 1870s in the *Chronicle*. The ads included the courses of study as well as the expenses of attending the College and residing in the College Building

The cost to live in the College building was \$3.00 per week on the fifth floor and \$2.75 on the fourth floor.¹¹ This included room, board, and fuel. At the time of construction in 1870 the College also put in a well, coal house, and toilets. Rooms had to be lit by kerosene lamps.¹² Once darkness fell, students had to take a lantern with them wherever they went. Needless to say this was extremely dangerous, especially in combination with the coal or wood stoves in many of the rooms.

The top floor of Old Main quickly became known as “Tower Hall.” The origination of this name is unclear, but it is used both by the boys who lived there and students of the College as a way of referring to those who lived

¹¹ “North-Western College,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), April 1, 1875, 13. Advertisements for room and board in the College building appeared in a majority of *Chronicle* articles and in the North-Western College Catalogues. If these rooms were still for rent in 2010 the cost would be equivalent to \$51.70 a week on the fifth floor and \$47.40 per week on the fourth floor. Samuel H. Williamson, “Seven Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1774 to present,” *MeasuringWorth*, www.measuringworth.com/uscompare/ (accessed February 11, 2013). The price was calculated using the year of 1870, as the years go by the rate continues to increase.

¹² Roberts, *Century of Liberal Education*, 61, 125.

there.¹³ The students who resided in Tower Hall appear to have been a mischievous bunch. The school paper noted that on September 7, 1874 a Directory and Bulletin Board had been added to the building “partly for the benefit of the Laundry women of town who may be in quest of Tower Hall preps who are delinquent in the matter of pay for ‘biling’ their shirts.”¹⁴ One student, or group of students, went so far as to take the clapper from the bell tower. These boys, “climbed up to the steeple and stripped off the clapper, hiding it very well, but they left the toller on the bell.”¹⁵ Members of the faculty could not find the clapper and hired a detective to find both the clapper and the culprit. They were never found, but the location of the clapper was told to the janitor and it was reinstalled. In addition to this, the boys also decorated the trees around campus with chairs from classrooms.¹⁶

Beyond the mischief of the Tower Hall boys, they also raised more points. In 1874 the *College Chronicle* questioned why students could not have access to the tower of the College building. The article claimed that when the building was erected, the College was planning to complete an observatory on the roof of the building and at the time this article was published in 1874, it had not yet been done. The grievance writes:

Will not the Executive Committee take measures to open a stairway at once? We don’t blame the boys much for getting on top of the roof through their dormitory windows. Its [*sic*] but the result of a natural desire to get up in the world. Let us up.¹⁷

Yes, the boys had been known to be mischievous, but does the fault for that lie in the hands of the administration? It is unclear whether or not an observatory was ever promised to students. However, this is yet another example of the actions of those who resided in what was known as “Tower Hall”.

¹³ “Brevities Loyal,” *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), October 1, 1873, 10.

¹⁴ “Journal Notes,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), October 1, 1874, 7.

¹⁵ Marshall, “Old Main,” September 28, 1938, 1.

¹⁶ Marshall, “Old Main,” September 28, 1938, 1

¹⁷ “Brevities Loyal,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), July 1, 1874,

In the fall of 1875, the College decided not to offer formal boarding. This decision was made because “it was found that it did not meet current expenses, and was annually sinking such large amount of money that its continuance was no longer justifiable.” The College instead guided students towards boarding in private residences in the surrounding community and the rooms were repurposed and served as space for additional classrooms and society hall. However, the large dormitory rooms on the top two floors remained in use as dormitories only through the 1875-1876 academic year. The College closed the dormitories completely in 1876. Upon their dismissal, “the treasurer was directed to dispose of the furniture of the boarding department at public sale.”¹⁸ It is evident from the continual shift in the usage of the building that the College was outgrowing the building and wanted to provide as much as they could under one roof in terms of academic opportunities.

Chapel

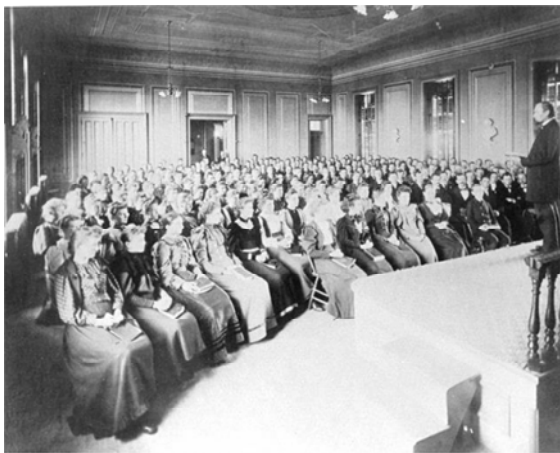
Throughout much of the College’s history the chapel has been a place for gatherings and a place for religious activities. The chapel was very important to the college community in the 1870s. The chapel was located in the middle section of the second floor.¹⁹ The chapel was the largest meeting space in the building and so that is where many events were held. It is interesting to see the variety of functions the chapel served throughout the day. The pages of the *Chronicle* illustrate that it was used for public meetings, society entertainment, and lectures.²⁰

¹⁸ Roberts, *Century of Liberal Education*, 103.

¹⁹ Lebeau, *A Shared History*, 6; Marshall, “Old Main,” September 28, 1938, 1; Butler, *150 Years*, 6-7. The Butler text includes a picture of the chapel. Examining the picture reveals that the room is quite large and reflects similar architectural characteristics, such as the windows, that would suggest it is located on the second floor. This is also confirmed by Marshall’s article.

²⁰ “The Close of Collegiate Year of 1872—’73,” *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), July 1, 1873, 8; “The Baccalaureate Sermon,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), July 1, 1874, 8.

An unusual incident in the chapel occurred in April 1875 when the *Chronicle* talked about a smoking ban in the College building. “Strange to find the chapel filled with smoke, the very morning after the reading of the special rule prohibiting smoking.”²¹ This article was the only mention of the smoking ban. It is possible that the rule was not being enforced or simply that the students were protesting the ruling.



Housed on the second floor of Old Main, the chapel was the largest meeting space on campus. In addition to chapel service, the room served as a gathering space for many College events, including those of the literary societies.

Societies

Within the College there were several ways in which students could get involved. Society Halls were located throughout the first four floors. By 1875 the College offered five literary societies; The Cliosophic Society, The Philologian Society, The Commercial Round Table, The Philorhetorian Society, and The Philogermanian Society. In addition to these literary societies there were The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), The Young Ladies’ Christian Association (YCLA) and The Natural History Association.²² All of these societies were important pieces of the moral and mental character development in students.

²¹ “Chroniclings,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), April 1, 1875, 10.

²² *Sixteenth Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of North Western College 1876-'77* (Clarion Newspaper: Naperville, IL, 1877), 27.

These societies offered a way for students to come together outside of class and add a practical application to their knowledge. During 1874, an editorial in the *College Chronicle* described the importance of literary societies.

The object of a literary society, we think, is to enable its members to express in the best way the facts they gather from their books, to keep them interested in what is going on about them, and, by bringing mind in contact with mind, to teach them how to use the knowledge they acquire.²³

The literary societies were open to all students. Despite this claim, women students appeared to be more hesitant to participate in these societies, as an article in the *Chronicle* stated, “It would seem that some do not realize the necessity of such cultivation as these exercises afford”.²⁴ Although based on the same principle, each society was a little different than the others.

Organized in 1870, The Cliosophic Society, which met in Cliosophic Hall, was described as being a place where people came to “hear new and *wonderful* things.”²⁵ The organization had a reading room within the hall and purchased reading tables. In addition to this, the society made a purchase of *The New American Cyclopaedia*, which they donated to the College’s library.²⁶ According to a monthly report from the Cliosophic Society, their membership “encompasses nearly all of the graduates of North-Western College since the College’s move to Naperville” and “currently boasts the membership of some of the teachers and advanced students”.²⁷

²³ Will Caton, “Literary Societies,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), May 1, 1874, 10.

²⁴ “To The Lady Students,” *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), October 1, 1873, 8-9.

²⁵ “Cliosophia,” *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), December 1, 1873, 6.

²⁶ “Cliosophia,” *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), December 1, 1873, 6.

²⁷ “Monthly Society Record,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), November 1, 1874, 6; “Our Societies,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), October 1, 1875, 14.

THE FIFTH

LITERARY AND MUSICAL

ENTERTAINMENT

— { OF THE } —

Cliosopic Society,

Wednesday Eve., June 26, '72.

Programme.

Music.	Prayer.	Music.
PANEGYRIC—The People's Author.....		P. N. EDWARDS, East Paw Paw.
ORATION—"Root Hog or Die".....		G. C. KNOBEL, Naperville.
MUSIC.....		Cupid and Mammon.
DISCUSSION—Does Animate or Inanimate Nature open to the Scientist the Greater Field for Investigation and Discovery?.....		Aff—WM. CATOS, Dixon. Neg—J. W. FEEVER, Washington.
MUSIC—Dolly Varden.....		BY LADIES.
OUR REPERTORY	J. L. ROCKEY, Cedarville; Miss VICTORIA WITMER, Juda, Wis.	
IMPROMPTU.....		D. F. HIGGINS, DuPage.
MUSIC—Teach me how to ——— What?.....		MALE VOICES.
HISTORY OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.....		Miss ROSE M. CODY, Naperville.
RE-REHEARSAL—Love in a Cottage.....		J. W. TROGER, National, Iowa.
MUSIC—Jolly Jonathan and his noahual naburs.....		MALE VOICES.
REPERTORY.....		SUPPLEMENT.
MUSIC.....		Home again Returning.

BENEDICTION.

Doors open at 7½ o'clock. Exercises to commence at 8.

The Cliosopic society, like many other societies on campus at the time combined orations, music and discussions on various occasions throughout the school year. Pictured is a program from a Cliosopic Society event on June 26, 1872.

This society is considered to be the most valued by the College and society President Goldspohn stated in 1874 that the “society shall not retrograde under his administration, and is untiring in his efforts to advance it.”²⁸ The society was also known for their singing.

The Philologian Society was founded in 1864 and was the oldest society at the college, predating the move to Naperville. The society, though older, is quite similar to the Cliosophic.²⁹ The group had regularly scheduled debates and discussions and was housed on the third floor of the College building.



The Philologian Society was the oldest society. Founded in 1864, it predated the College’s move to Naperville.

The Commercial Round Table was located on the west side of the first floor, under the chapel. Founded in 1874, the Commercial Roundtable was comprised mainly of students from the Commercial Department. The boys in the society had a business demeanor and sense of purpose as the society brought the literary abilities and business capabilities of members together in

²⁸ “Monthly Society Record,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), November 1, 1874, 6-7.

²⁹ “Our Literary Societies,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), October 1, 1874, 9.

one group.³⁰ One of the most notable purchases made by the society discussed in the *North-Western College Chronicle* was that of a “splendid Smith’s American Organ,” which they described as the “best instrument in the building.”³¹

The Philorhetorian Society was the College’s German language society. Located on the fourth floor of the College Building it was founded in 1870.³² The society gave students an “ample opportunity for drill in debate, oratory, and all exercises incident to a literary society, all in the pure German language.”³³ As The Philorhetorian Society showed much growth in 1874, and split into two organizations in 1875. The new group, the Philogermanian Society, met during the afternoon and the Philorhetorian in the evening in order to accommodate all of the members. Presumably the two societies shared the same space, given the alternate meeting times. It was stated that it “does not differ from the first (Philorhetorian) in anything, but age.”³⁴

In addition to the literary societies, North-Western College at this time had several other associations for students, including The Young Men’s Christian Association, The Young Ladies’ Christian Association, The Emanuel Society, and The Natural History Association.

The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) was founded in 1873. Also referred to as The Christian Association, the YMCA was “composed of young men who have banded together for the purpose of benevolent work among the students.”³⁵ Additionally, the YMCA opened a reading room to the public on Saturday, October 31st.³⁶ The association wanted

³⁰ “The Societies,” *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), December 1, 1873, 6; “Commercial Round Table,” *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), December 1, 1873, 8.

³¹ “Monthly Society Record,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), November 1, 1874, 7.

³² “Our Literary Societies,” October 1, 1874, 9.

³³ “Monthly Society Record,” November 1, 1874, 7.

³⁴ “Our Societies,” October 1, 1875, 14.

³⁵ “Our Societies,” October 1, 1875, 14.

³⁶ “Reading Room Y.M.C.A.,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), November 1, 1874, 11; “Brevities Loyal,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), October 1, 1874, 10.

to ensure that the reading room be free and open to all who should want to use it.

Located on the second floor of the College building, The Young Ladies' Christian Association was formed in 1875. The association had their own reading room, which they decorated with "artificial leaves of every color in the various mottoes, floral designs, and crosses, that the place has been made one of the most attractive in the building."³⁷ Of the many organizations offered by the College, the Young Ladies' Christian Association was a way for the female students to interact with each other without being in a coed environment.

Upon examining the *Chronicle*, I discovered another society that was not mentioned elsewhere. Founded in 1873, the Emanuel Society was a society with activities similar to that of a literary society except the subjects they considered were "strictly religious."³⁸ Participation in this group allowed for practice of all things that pertained to ministerial office. It is not clear if this society had a room to themselves and it is possible this group had ties to the Union Biblical Institute. It is only mentioned in one article and never appears again during the 1870s.

Although the Natural History Association was not formally organized until 1874, it traces its roots back to the opening of the College. One of the main purposes of the organization was to operate the College's museum. This museum included a Geological and Mineralogical collection, Zoological cabinet, and a Botanical Cabinet. Open to the public, this museum provided not only a service to the community, but also added to the classroom experience as these were teaching aids for students. In the early years there was a plea to get items for the museum.

Teachers and Students, Trustees and Patrons – everybody who is interested in the prosperity of North-Western College should lend us

³⁷ "Chroniclings," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), November 1, 1875, 43; "Chroniclings," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), March 1, 1876, 140.

³⁸ "Our Societies," October 1, 1875, 14.

a helping hand, or a helping contribution whether in dollars and cents or specimens.³⁹

Several years later there were donations coming in quite regularly. In the November 1, 1875 issue of the *Chronicle*, the museum acknowledged donations from ten people. Donations included a Gold Nugget from Oregon, a Human Larynx, and a collection of Petrified Woods from Colorado, amongst others.⁴⁰

Each society received its own hall within the College building to which they were welcome to decorate in any way they wished. The rooms were well-furnished and had a variety of furniture and works of art donated by members of the societies as well as citizens of Naperville.⁴¹ Each society routinely met: most of the literary societies met every Friday and the others met more often because of the religious nature of their organizations. North-Western College viewed these societies favorably as they “afford members regular opportunities of becoming acquainted with forensic and parliamentary usages, providing exercises that form an excellent preparation for public life.”⁴²

Although the use of space by societies stayed pretty consistent during the 1870s, there were many changes that occurred in the building. Several of these include the takeover of the original dining hall and the transformation of dorm space. In 1874 the Commercial Round Table took over the dining hall in the basement of the building, but the College still rented out the use of the old kitchen.⁴³ Space was at a premium in the building and so uses were altered constantly to meet the changing needs of the institution. This is evident at the

³⁹ “Our College Museum,” *College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), November 1, 1873, 8.

⁴⁰ “Natural History,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), November 1, 1875, 33.

⁴¹ *Thirteenth Annual Catalogue*, 30.

⁴² *Sixteenth Annual Catalogue*, 27.

⁴³ North Western College Faculty Meeting Minutes, March 16, 1874, Box 1, NCC College Archives.

close of the 1875-1876 school year when the College converted the fourth floor of Old Main from dormitory to society meeting halls.⁴⁴

Library

Like the chapel, there is little mention of the College library during this time examined. A library did exist and was located on the northwest corner of the main building on the second floor. Although there was little mention of its existence, the College did solicit donations in the form of books or funds from the College community.⁴⁵ Interestingly, however, many of the societies operated their own library or reading room for the benefit of their members.

Classrooms

It is unclear whether societies shared space with classrooms and offices. During 1874, the College had a minimum of seven classrooms in the College building; Basement, Room 6, Room 7, Room 16, Room 18, Room 19, and Room 20.⁴⁶ When the Young Ladies' Christian Association was formed they received a room that had once belonged to Miss Cunningham, No. 9. However, the classroom in which Miss Cunningham taught Grammar and Botany in was No. 7.⁴⁷ Although it seems probable that societies occupied several of the classrooms, it is hard to determine that.

The College was pressed for space and it is very likely that rooms served both as a classroom and society space. A plea for more space appeared as early as 1874 when the *North-Western College Chronicle* wrote:

⁴⁴ "Chroniclings," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), July 1, 1876, 236-237.

⁴⁵ Marshall, "Old Main," September 28, 1938, 1; *Sixteenth Annual Catalogue*, 27.

⁴⁶ "Commencement Week," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), June 1, 1874, 7; "Chroniclings," March 1, 1876, 140. Through analysis of where finals were held it was possible to establish some of the classrooms in Old Main. When this information was coupled with the locations of the Societies and the individuals who ran them I was able to place where the classrooms were located. Basement, Floor 1: room 6 and 7, Floor 2: room 16, 18, 19, Floor 3: room 20.

⁴⁷ "Commencement Week," *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), June 1, 1874, 7; "Chroniclings," March 1, 1876, 140.

The college has increased so much during the last few years, both in the extension of her departments of instruction and in the number of students attending, that more room has become an urgent necessity.... During the present year the assistant teachers have been obliged to “double up” in the use of rooms with the Professors whom they are assisting.⁴⁸

If space was not available, space was made. Instances of this occurring are the replacement of the Dining Hall with the Commercial Round Table in 1874 and the dismissal of dormitories in 1876 to make room for more society space.⁴⁹ The Commercial Round Table was specifically created for students of the Commercial Department and the name was used interchangeably.

Located on the first floor, Professor Cross was in charge of the Art Studio and the “two elegant rooms on the west side of the hall... exclusively devoted to music.”⁵⁰ Although there were these classrooms, it is possible that they operated within some of the rooms of the various societies. The Natural History Association, for example, had cabinets full of specimens that belonged to the society, but were instrumental as teaching aids. The above instances suggest that the use of space was constantly changing and that there were

many more functions for Old Main than meet the eye.



Bird Room of the Natural History Museum in Old Main. The museum also consisted of rooms with various other animal and geological specimens.

⁴⁸ “More Room,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), June 1, 1874, 8.

⁴⁹ North Western College Faculty Meeting Minutes, March 16, 1874, Box 1, NCC College Archives; “Chroniclings,” July 1, 1876, 237.

⁵⁰ “Chroniclings,” *North-Western College Chronicle* (Naperville, IL), October 1, 1875, 18-19.

Conclusion

Old Main saw a wide variety of uses throughout the first ten years of the College's existence in Naperville. While some of the rooms at the end of the decade still served their original function, many differed by 1880. The school we know today can be traced back to this period; it is here where the first dorms, societies, library, classrooms, dining hall, and chapel originated. The functionality of the building continued to change as the years passed and the services of the College continued to grow. The need for more space was not fulfilled with the addition of the south wing in 1892. At this time the College added a steam furnace and electricity to the building. This addition allowed societies and departments to take up more space, libraries to expand, and dormitories for a select amount of female students. The addition was necessary to allow the College to continue to grow and offer all of its services under one roof. Renovation and changes to Old Main continued throughout the twentieth century, capped by a major rebuilding effort that resulted in a new appearance, both inside and out. The building remains as the heart of the College community.

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