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THE OLD UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO AT SANTA FÉ

By FRANK D. REEVE

THE quarter century following the close of the Civil War witnessed the growth of educational activity in New Mexico sponsored by religious organizations. The founding of the University of New Mexico at Santa Fé was a part of this general movement, and the story is closely linked with the name of a single individual, the Rev. Horatio O. Ladd of the Congregational ministry. He had received an A.M. degree from Bowdoin in 1862 and studied the year following at Yale Divinity School. At the time of his departure for the Southwest he was pastor of the church at Hopkinton, Mass.

The Santa Fé Academy had been established in 1878 by the New West Education Commission under the leadership of President E. P. Tenney of Colorado College and the Rev. C. R. Bliss. In the winter of 1879 Mr. Ladd had become interested in education during a conference with President Tenney. The following August he received a definite offer from the N. W. E. C. of the principalship of the academy, which he accepted. After winding up his affairs in the East he proceeded to his new field by way of Chicago and arrived in Santa Fé, with his wife and son Maynard, September 10, 1880.¹

Their first acquaintance with this ancient town was a bit disconcerting. In the words of Mr. Ladd, "After a journey of four days from Chicago we landed one evening in Santa Fe. . . This very old settlement . . . was now filled with the rough crowds of a Western mining region. The American traders, lawyers and Government officials were

1. H. O. Ladd, *Diary*, p. 2; Ladd, *Autobiography* (a typewritten copy) p. 2; E. Lyman Hood, *The New West Education Commission, 1880-1893*, pp. 77-78, 1905. [The sources for this article are largely the *Ladd Papers* in the University of New Mexico library, Albuquerque.]

hard to find after dark in a rambling adobe-built town. No rooms were available in the crowded adobe tavern where we were landed. Sitting opposite to us at the table, was a gentleman who, hearing my wife's exclamation of dismay, . . . kindly offered and insisted that we should occupy his room in the hotel. We gratefully accepted his courtesy, and discovered next day that he was the son of Brigham Young of Utah."² This tavern was the Grand Central Hotel, of which Mrs. Ladd said, "I need not describe the room. Nor the dining accommodations with the dirty negro waiters, disgustingly soiled table linen, and unappetising food served in pretended 'style.'"³ The realities of their new environment were again met with when seeking permanent quarters the next day. Even the Santa Fé Academy furnished little inspiration: "an old adobe building on a little placita near Cathedral square . . . I never expected to teach in such a place. It was hard indeed but I had accepted the situation whatever it was, before I came, and girded myself in the Lord for it."⁴ The last gives the clue to the man's character, a determination to carry on, despite many obstacles which were to be encountered in the next eight years.

Unsatisfactory relations developed during the winter between Mr. Ladd and members of the local school board. A dispute arose as to jurisdiction in a case of student discipline. The question of religious instruction was a source of friction. Perhaps, also, there was an underlying difficulty in adjustment to the new environment and life.⁵ Secretary Bliss of the N. W. E. C. came to Santa Fé to investigate the situation. Meanwhile Mr. Ladd planned the founding of a separate school. With the active aid of Wm. M. Berger of Santa Fé, who obtained an offer of ten acres for the university site, and the backing of the Commission, the University of New Mexico was incorporated May 11, 1881.⁶

2. *Autobiography*, pp. 4-5.

3. Mrs. Ladd, "History of the University of New Mexico for our Children," (manuscript), p. 6.

4. *Diary*, pp. 2-3.

5. Mrs. Ladd, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

6. Certified copy of articles of incorporation.

The purpose of the founders of this new institution was set forth in the articles of incorporation: "It was the aim and design of these gentlemen to secure Protestant Christian' education for the people who should make New Mexico their home, and to elevate into good citizenship the native population . . . ; [to act] as a positive Evangelizing power on the people of New Mexico and also of old Mexico . . . ; [and to aid] in the material and moral development of the Territory."

The organization of the corporation provided for a board of seventeen trustees holding office for overlapping terms of six years; an executive committee of five elected by the trustees for three years with power to select a president for the university and to have direct management. The first executive committee were Messrs. H. O. Ladd, Charles H. Gildersleeve, Wm. H. McBroom, Eugene A. Fiske, Henry M. Atkinson, and Wm. M. Berger. The officers of the board of trustees were Henry M. Atkinson, president; Rev. H. M. Hackney, vice-president; Wm. M. Berger, secretary; and Eugene A. Fiske, treasurer.⁸ Rev. H. O. Ladd was elected president of the university.

The existence of this new venture in education was not yet assured. The stimulus for the initial step might weaken as the realities of the task developed. In the summer Prof. G. B. Wilcox came to Santa Fé and attempted to renew the alliance between the N. W. E. C. and the academy board. The outlook for the university was gloomy. No substantial material progress had been made, whereas the academy had been a going concern for three years. W. G. Ritch, Atkinson, and Green favored the academy; Hall, McBroom, and Berger supported the university.⁹ The move to bring the two groups together failed. However, the Commission

7. Defined as membership "in the Church of England, or Episcopal, Lutheran, Moravian, Dutch Reformed, Presbyterian, or Methodist Church, or of some Baptist or . . . Congregational Church, or they shall be of Quaker lineage, training, faith, and membership." *Diary*, p. 9.

8. University, *By Laws; First Annual Catalogue, 1881-1882*. Ladd mentions Rev. H. H. Hall as vice-president, *Diary*, p. 9.

9. Letter from Ladd to Berger, Santa Fé, August 11, 1881.

agreed to aid both schools for the next year (which proved to be the last one for the academy). The following summer, after another investigation and some hesitation, the commission withdrew entirely from the Santa Fé field.¹⁰

The university opened September 12, 1881; classes were held in President Ladd's home. Sixty-seven different students enrolled during the first year, the average monthly attendance for nine months being thirty-eight. The tuition was \$3.00 per month. Board and room were offered in the homes of the instructors or elsewhere at \$5.00 per week. There were three departments: primary, intermediate and academic; and college courses were outlined in anticipation of future growth.¹¹ For the school year 1884-1885 free tuition was offered; as a result, 194 students were enrolled, the highest number during President Ladd's administration. This temporary change in policy was probably due to the competition from other schools in Santa Fé.¹² The faculty during the first year were President Ladd, instructor in Ancient and Modern Languages and Instrumental Music; A. D. Mengershausen, instructor in Natural Science and the Spanish Language; George F. Gaumer, assistant teacher of Intermediate School; Mrs. Ida A. Rivenburg, teacher of the Primary School and Vocal Music; Miss Lillie V. Ladd, instructor in Calisthenics; and Miss Julia E. Ladd. At the close of Mr. Ladd's presidency the faculty consisted of five, but three held A.M. degrees and the courses offered were more solid in content.

The most pressing problem was money. President Ladd went east in the fall to solicit funds. The best response to his appeals was met with in Massachusetts; citizens of Santa Fé contributed generously and also people in Michigan, New York, Connecticut, and Ohio. Contributions ranged from fifty cents to \$5,000 given by the family

10. Ladd, *Educational Work in Santa Fé, as connected with the University of New Mexico* (ms. copy), p. 4; Hood, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-8; *Diary*, pp. 32, 35.

11. *First Annual Catalogue, 1881-1882; Autobiography*, p. 10.

12. Ladd to American Colonial Aid Society, October 6, 1884; newspaper advertisement, clipping in *Ladd Papers*.

THE OLD UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO 205

of J. C. Whitin of Whitinsville, Mass.; the N. W. E. C. gave \$750. A variety of gifts also was received. Congregational churches, missionary societies, and unknown donors aided in the good cause. Children contributed dimes toward buying a bell for the school. The church at Franklin, N. Y., sent a Mason and Hamlin organ worth \$200; New London, Conn., furnished a school room at an expense of \$191. Mr. Berger donated land and buildings worth \$1,500. A total of nearly \$28,000 (including tuition) was received during the first three years.

The enrollment in September, 1881, was so encouraging for the future that plans were laid for erecting a suitable building. The cornerstone of Whitin Hall was laid October 21, 1882, at the corner of Garfield Avenue and Guadalupe Street.¹³

It was to be a three-story, red-brick structure, containing dormitories for twenty-five students, three recitation rooms, two cloakrooms, library and cabinet, gymnasium, and an assembly hall 52' x 40'. Progress was slow, but in 1884 President Ladd could say: "Three years ago—nothing. Today the University building finished *financially*, except a debt of \$3,000—which is offset by \$3,500 in the General Endowment fund—and after sustaining a Preparatory school for three years. I look forward to the entrance of a small class on the College studies of the Freshman year—in September."¹⁴

The building was completed and furnished by 1887 at a total cost of about \$20,000. The formal opening was held May 15, 1888, with Gov. Edmund C. Ross making the principal address. E. L. Bartlett expressed the appreciation felt for President Ladd's work: "We fully recognize and appreciate that this has not been the result of accident nor circumstance, but has been accomplished only by the earnest

13. Printed program in *Ladd Papers; Diary*, p. 34. The building, remodeled, is now the Franciscan Hotel.

The Whitin family eventually contributed a total of \$13,500 to this school. *Santa Fé Daily New Mexican*, August 6, 1887.

14. *Diary*, p. 65.

and well directed efforts of yourself. In the halls of Congress, on the rostrum and from the pulpit you have labored for this cause, with a zeal and singleness of purpose which alone could have brought about the present gratifying condition of your University and its auxiliary branches."¹⁵

The "auxiliary branches" referred to was a school for the education of Indian children; at first called the Indian Industrial school department of the university, it was later named Ramona school in honor of Helen Hunt Jackson. President Ladd had been interested in the Indians of the Southwest and was probably moved to promote their welfare by personal contact through visits to the Pueblos and reservations. He attributed the specific impulse to found such a school to a plea made for the Indians by San Juan, chief of the Mescalero Apaches, at the territorial fair, Santa Fé, in the summer of 1883.¹⁶ Encouragement was given by United States government officials early in the next year, and assurance of aid came from officers of the Indian Rights Association.

President Ladd left for the East in July, 1884, to start his campaign to raise funds for this new venture. The N. W. E. C. was not interested, but the American Missionary Association appropriated \$3,000 annually for teachers' salaries. With definite assurance from a representative of the Department of Interior that the government would aid, the Santa Fé board of trade pledged support.¹⁷ The appeal for help met with a varied response. L. F. Shuman of Shelbyville, Tenn., contributed seventy-five cents. The church congregation at Toledo, Ohio, wrote: "We are not a wealthy people, but we greatly admired Helen Hunt Jackson and we

15. *Santa Fé Daily New Mexican* quoted in *Ramona Days*, II, No. 2 p. 19. Ladd lobbied at Washington in the winter of 1884-1885 for an appropriation for the later United States Indian School.

Ramona Days was published quarterly from March, 1887, to October, 1888. It was mailed regularly to about 600 people. The last number was issued under the personal control of Ladd in an attempt to continue it by support from subscriptions.

16. Ladd, "Founding of Santa Fé Indian Industrial School," *Santa Fé New Mexican*, September 25, 1925.

17. Arthur Boyle to Ladd, Santa Fé, December 23, 1884.

sympathize with you in your work."¹⁸ A personal conference with President Cleveland resulted in a remittance for \$50: "Since our conference this evening upon the subject of Indian education, I have reflected a good deal upon your plan, and all that you said . . . Indeed I have arrived at the conclusion that Christian and secular education, are the surest, if not the only [way] to reach the end we all so much desire—the civilization and the citizenship of the Indian."¹⁹ The success of the Ramona school was assured when the Government contracted to educate up to 100 students at an annual cost of \$120 per student.²⁰

The Indian School department opened April 1, 1885, in an adobe house secured from J. H. Taylor. There were thirty-three boys and eleven girls in attendance, taken from the Pueblos.²¹

With the opening of St. Catherine's industrial school for Indians in April, 1887, the Pueblo students were transferred to that institution and Ramona school confined its work to girls from the Apache:²² "girls of these heathen tribes are taken at the age of eight or ten years, and, by written contract with their parents, and with the United States Indian office, kept from three to five years, or longer . . ."²³

The trustees of the university assumed formal responsibility for this undertaking at their annual meeting, on August 26, 1886.²⁴ Eliot Whipple was superintendent of the Indian school during the following year. He resigned because of ill health, returning to Wheaton College, and was

18. H. M. Bacon to Ladd, Toledo, November 30, 1886.

19. Letter to Ladd, December 9, 1886.

20. A. B. Upshaw, Washington, April 2, 1886, in *Santa Fe New Mexican*, April 8, 1886; *Diary*, p. 68; C. B. Hayward, "Santa Fé's Indian School," reprint from *Santa Fé New Mexican*, April 8, 1886.

21. *Ramona Days*, I, No. 1, p. 2; Ladd, *Educational Work in Santa Fé . . .* pp. 5-6.

22. *Ramona Days*, I, No. 2, p. 34; *Santa Fé Daily Herald*, August 3, 1888.

23. *Ramona Days*, I, No. 1, p. 3.

24. Annual Financial Statement of the University of New Mexico, 1885-1886.

succeeded by Elmore Chase, appointed by the trustees in their annual meeting July 13, 1887.²⁵

An ambitious building program was planned. Stanford White designed a three-story dormitory of modified Spanish style. This never materialized, but a more modest structure was finally constructed costing about \$8,500. W. S. Houghton of Boston gave \$5,000 towards its cost. It was completed in the spring of 1886.²⁶ The building was destroyed later by fire, after Ramona school had been closed.²⁷

The connection of Mr. Ladd with these two educational undertakings in New Mexico was soon to be ended. Some unfortunate affair, the details of which remain yet to be disclosed, developed in 1887. The Rev. E. Lyman Hood, a newly appointed pastor of the Congregational church in Santa Fé,²⁸ was in direct charge of the university for that year. President Ladd devoted his time to a variety of tasks: cultivating his farm land, soliciting funds for the institution, and acting as real estate agent for an eastern capitalist.²⁹ He was eventually removed from the formal position of president: "The Eastern members of the board outvoted the local trustees and effected my separation from the Faculty . . ." He appealed to the association of clergymen, who, after the hearing "withdrew from fellowship with me, without giving the reason for such action."³⁰ In 1891 he joined the Episcopal church.³¹

The years of effort in behalf of education evidently did not bring personal prosperity. Mr. E. A. Fiske wrote to

25. *Ramona Days*, I, No. 1, p. 13; *Ibid*, No. 3, p. 18; *Santa Fé Daily New Mexican*, July 13, 1887. It is not clear whether a superintendent was appointed for the first year.

26. White to Ladd, December 12, 1886; *Ramona Days*, II, No. 2, p. 26; *Santa Fé Daily New Mexican*, August 17, 1887; *The Santa Fé Herald*, May 19, 1888.

27. *Autobiography*, p. 15.

28. *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican*, August 29, 1887.

29. *Santa Fé Daily New Mexican*, February 26, March 3, 6, 1888.

30. *Autobiography*, pp. 14, 17-18.

31. Lyman Abbot's endorsement, (n.d.): "I have also had recently occasion to make a tolerably careful examination into the cruel charge made . . . I am satisfied of his consistent Christian character . . ." A member of the committee later wrote acknowledging the insufficiency of the charges for sending Ladd out of the ministry. F. N. Peloubet to Ladd, Waterville, N. H., August 30, 1896 (copy).

him August 20, 1887: "With this knowledge and for the purpose of testifying to my own appreciation of your intelligent services I beg to enclose herewith my check for three hundred dollars, the money to be applied to such personal uses as you may deem proper." Again, later, a letter of encouragement was received with a check for \$500 "payable to your order, the proceeds of which, please use for *your own personal needs* and that of your wife, in just such way, as will do you most good."³²

The New West Education Commission assumed control of the university in the fall of 1888, with the Rev. Mr. Hood in charge.³³ The school lingered on with increasing difficulty for five years, eventually being termed the Whitin Hall school or the New West Academy. The competition of the new public schools, established under the law of 1891, no doubt was instrumental in bringing to a close the career of this pioneer institution. In the fall of 1893 the building was rented to the Santa Fé board of education for the new high school.³⁴

The Ramona school was transferred to the American Missionary Association in the same year and was continued under the charge of Elmore Chase for six years when the work of Indian education was concentrated in the United States Indian school that had been opened in November, 1890. It was taking care of sixty-five students during the last year.³⁵

The Rev. Mr. Ladd did not succeed in leaving a permanent monument to his name in Santa Fé, but he belonged to, and participated in, the work of those pioneers in the field of education who were laboring in New Mexico before the state took over the task of providing schools. His work

32. Jeannie W. Lasell to Ladd, Whitinsville, December 28, 1888.

33. *Santa Fé Daily New Mexican*, August 26, 29, December 12, 16, 1890; August 22, September 1, 6, 1892; September 5, 1893.

34. *The Santa Fé Herald*, August 25, 1888; *The Daily Herald*, August 24, 31, 1888.

35. *Ramona Days*, II, No. 1, pp 1-2, 15; *Santa Fé Daily New Mexican*, September 26, 1893, September 4, 1894, ff; *The Daily Herald*, August 24, 1888.

was carried on under difficulties, some of which can only be surmised from a reading of the records; but that they existed can hardly be doubted when Mrs. Ladd could write that "The experiences of the four years of our life in Santa Fé are branded with the fire of persecution, obloquy and falsehood upon my loving and loyal heart and brain."³⁶

During his seven years of active work in New Mexico, Mr. Ladd secured from eastern people about \$140,000,³⁷ erected a substantial three-story building, and matriculated some 500 students in his school.³⁸ He furthered the cause of the Indians in their adaptation to the ways of the white man. It was unfortunate that he could not have built more directly on the work already started by the N. W. E. C. Nevertheless, in the interval until the state took over the burden of providing for schools, the Rev. Horatio O. Ladd promoted the cause of education in New Mexico, as much in carrying the American ideal to the frontier as in material accomplishment.

University of New Mexico.

36. *Op. cit.*, p. 2; see also *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican*, August 6, 1887, and Ada Knowlton Chew to Charles J. Rhoades, March 1, 1932 (copy).

37. *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican*, August 6, 1887.

38. *Santa Fé Daily New Mexican in Ramona Days*, II, No. 2, p. 19.