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The next twelve years were spent soliciting donations from alumni and former students. Income from the college township in which the campus was located, a considerable amount of money had been accumulated as an endowment, and the state of Ohio made an appropriation to put the buildings and grounds into proper condition. Encouraged by all these events, the trustees decided to reopen the university in 1885. “New Miami” had arrived.

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remained: whether Miami should continue to be an all-men’s college. In June 1887, the board of trustees decided to admit women.

In the first few years following the board’s decision, the number of female students at Miami remained small; with student enrollment of about 200, no more than sixteen were women. However, in March 1902, the General Assembly enacted a bill authored by Representative Charles Seese of Akron that authorized Miami and other Ohio universities to establish new divisions for the professional preparation of teachers. These divisions were to be called Ohio State Normal Colleges. This led significant numbers of women to enroll.

By 1904, a third of Miami’s students were women, so a new residence hall was necessary. When state funds were available for a new building, construction of Hepburn Hall began.

Miami’s trustees chose to name the residence hall in honor of Andrew Hepburn, president of Miami University from 1871 to 1873, a professor in Miami’s English department for many years, and the son-in-law of William Holmes McGuffey.

McGuffey’s daughter, Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn, kept a journal which provides details of her life in Oxford. In her journal entry for June 14, 1905, Mrs. Hepburn documents the new residence hall’s dedication, which was attended by future United States President William Howard Taft.

In the July 1909 Miami Bulletin, President Guy Putter Benton offered this greeting for the university’s centennial:

“In this Centennial year, Miami University, the mother of mighty statesmen, of great preachers and useful citizens, extends greetings to the friends of higher education everywhere. The past is secure – the fathers have made it so; the present is prosperous; the responsibility for the future rests upon
those of us who are in charge of the management of the institution at this time. Ours is a splendid heritage. With
the cooperation of trustees, alumni, students, friends and State authorities, the President and Faculties should be
able to make the “New Miami” in every way worthy of the old.”
Benjamin Harrison graduated from Miami University in 1852. The next year, he married Caroline Lavinia Scott Harrison, an Oxford native who was the second daughter of John Witherspoon Scott, a teacher and Presbyterian minister who founded the Oxford Female Institute. With Carrie at his side, Harrison became a lawyer, a Civil War veteran, and a United States Senator from Indiana.

Two months before her husband’s inauguration as our 23rd president on March 4, 1889, Carrie confided her feelings about the changes ahead to her friend, Miami alumnus David Swing. She wrote, “I hardly yet realize this changes that - I am going to make – I feel a good deal like the Doge of Venice on being carried a hostage to Paris and was asked what surprised him most replied – ‘Myself in this place.’”
Inspired by Miami’s impending centennial in 1909, university leaders and a building committee successfully sought a grant from benefactor Andrew Carnegie to construct a main library on its campus.

Designed by Columbus, Ohio architect Frank Packard, the Alumni Memorial Library was the most lavish building on campus. During its June 16, 1910 dedication, Miami’s acting president, Raymond Hughes, pronounced the center of intellectual activity on the campus as “the greatest blessing and the most valuable asset of the University.” This commemorative program documents remarks made by Professor Andrew D. Hepburn, facts about the building, members of the building committee, and photographs of some of its features.
Miami University presidents have been fortunate to receive correspondence from some significant figures in American history.

For example, Miami University President Guy Potter Benton received this May 2, 1904 letter from Warren G. Harding.

Miami University holds the distinction of being the first university in the United States to offer a fellowship in creative art. With the help of Miami President Raymond Hughes, Percy Wallace MacKaye (1875-1956) lived and worked at Miami from 1920 to 1924. A graduate of Harvard University, MacKaye was a writer of poetry and drama. MacKaye did not have any teaching or formal duties at Miami, but it was hoped that he would come into close contact with students. While at Miami, MacKaye wrote “America Untamed” and “This Fine, Pretty World.”
MacKaye became a spokesman for his appointment at Miami. In his essay, “University Fellowships in Creative Art” (The Forum, June 1921), MacKaye asked, “If it be worth while for a university to provide opportunity to study living author’s work, may it not be equally worth while to provide opportunity for the author to create it?”

These selections show us just how much Miami was changing during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Whether the issue involved the curriculum, the student body, the faculty, social or academic concerns, these writings by Miami’s administrators, alumni and friends demonstrate a deep loyalty and respect for Miami University’s past, present and future. As Miami alumnus David Swing wrote on May 15, 1886, for all of those who have passed time in Oxford during “life’s most susceptible period,” “there can never come a second home half so sacred.”