

CLASS OF 1803.

JAMES M. MATHEWS.

FROM: RECOLLECTIONS OF PERSONS AND EVENTS  
Chap. II pp. 30-36.  
Sheldon & Company  
New York 1865.

In May, 1813, I met with a painful occurrence. I was going down Broadway near the Battery, and observed a man before me leaning against a lamp-post, whose clothes showed that he had been taken out of the gutter. Our eyes met as I approached him, and I saw it was my former classmate in college, S-----T-----. Though greatly intoxicated, he recognized me, and turned away his face as I passed him. I could not leave him as he was; and turned back to see what I could do for him. When I called him by name, he burst into tears, and in a low tone of voice begged me not to degrade myself by speaking to him in the street. I insisted, however on taking him home with me, notwithstanding his squalid appearance; where, after a few hours sleep, he told me his melancholy story. His intemperance had led his relatives to cast him off; and he was then on his way to Philadelphia to seek employment from a gentleman with whom, in his better days, he had formed an acquaintance at Saratoga. His chance, he remarked, was very slender; but it was all that remained to him, and he was determined to try it. He did try it, but without success. I never heard of him afterwards, and fear he died by his own hand.

He told me what I well knew, that his bad habits were contracted while at college. He was only one out of many of my fellow students, who had fallen victims to the temptations of a college life. In those days, there were no Temperance Societies; and temperance itself was little understood, and still less regarded. Hot suppers, midnight carousals, were too frequent with us, and sowed the seeds of a vice that in a few years carried off a fearful proportion of our number to an untimely grave. What a wreck of life and high talent do I see when I look back!'

Brilliant and generous-hearted J-----B-----! He seemed to know everything as if by intuition. An hour at study was quite as sufficient for him, as a day for others; and yet averse as he was to protracted or continued labor, no perplexed classmate ever sought his aid in vain. He would sit down beside the slowest and dullest of them all, and would somehow contrive to work the lesson or recitation into their minds, before he would quit them; and in the exuberance of his spirits,

he would laugh at his own patience when the work was done. It might be the Classics, or Mathematics, or Ethics; everything seemed to come to him without effort. He had a voice, too, of great compass and ringing tone, that made him one of the first among speakers; and all was accompanied with that natural ease and gracefulness of manner, that won you irresistibly. With such talents, and with family connections, including some of the most distinguished and influential men in the State, he seemed to have before him the prospect of a most brilliant career in public life. His ambition lay in that direction. How often has he said to me that he would never be satisfied until he had become a leader in the councils of the nation; and much did I hope that his high aim would tend to save him from the habit that had begun to grow upon him. But, no. He had scarcely gained admission to the bar, when he sank down into a sot, and died a dishonored death in the morning of his life. I saw him when he was very low in his misery. He knew all, and confessed all. "I have seen the last of my happy days," he said, "the cloud that is over me will never be scattered. My heart is worse than broken. It has been made a burnt offering to the Demon of Brandy." I well remember the scalding tear and the quivering voice with which he made the confession.

E-----H----- was another of my classmates. He seemed to live in a constant gale of gladness. His wit was sparkling, but always good-natured. He had a wonderful talent for mimicry. He could imitate everything animate or inanimate. He was not a good scholar; but even when his deficiencies were most glaring, he had some humorous remark respecting his studies or himself, which not only disarmed the Professor of all angry feeling, but seemed also to render him equally a favorite with teachers and students. He, too, yielded to the temptation; became so degraded and lost that he was at times taken to the watch-house in the dead of night, and in a few years was hidden in his grave. I have been told, that during the latter part of his life, all that milk of human kindness that so distinguished his earlier years, seemed to be changed into the very gall of misanthropy. He boasted, in his despair, that he would not only "curse God and die," but that with his last breath, he would "curse both God and man."

And there was my affectionate J----- N----- . A nobler or a warmer heart can seldom, if ever, be given to man. Such was our mutual attachment that he had well nigh changed the whole course and business of my life. His father was at this time an eminent merchant in one of our Eastern cities. He was to enter the counting-house, when he left college, and most earnest were his entreaties that I would accompany him. To render the temptation the stronger, his father made every proposition that propriety would allow, as he was anxious that J----- should be gratified. I had almost yielded. Brilliant

prospects in the world, and ardent personal attachment, at times, had very great influence upon my mind, before I finally decided. But reflection restored me to my purpose. Little as I then understood of what the ministry of the Gospelis, or of what it requires, I had for years kept my view fixed on it as my profession; and in the end, I told my friend J----- that I could not abandon it. He was grieved, though not displeased; and we parted, he to "his merchandise," and I to my studies, with vows of an attachment that no diversity of pursuit should be allowed to extinguish or abate.

For years we embraced every opportunity of meeting. Our correspondence was constant and more than cordial. I have sometimes thought it breathed the spirit of David and Jonathan; and so it continued until he became a junior in his father's "House." His letters about that time became less frequent, and he pleaded, in apology, the pressure of business. But they also lost their former freedom. There was constraint, with an effort to conceal it. I could not but be alarmed. I knew "the sin that easily beset him," and often implored him to be on his guard. I wrote to him frankly what I feared. He immediately, and in a manner much like his former self, thanked me for my candor, but assured me that he was safe against the temptation respecting which I was anxious. About the same time he was married to a lovely woman, and his letters on that subject were so like those of former days, that I hoped for the best. He was most happy in his choice, and he was now forming new relations in life, and with new sources of enjoyment opening to him, I pressed on him the importance of increased vigilance, and a total withdrawal from occasions of temptation.

But although for a time he seemed to feel what he owed to his family, to himself, and to his Maker, the habit came back upon him. Before the end of four years from his marriage, his conduct to his wife had become so violent, that she had to return with her two little children to her father's house, after which he soon became a raving madman, and died in the Asylum for the Insane,--- his widow soon after dying the victim of a broken heart, leaving their babies orphans.

Chapter II pp. 30-36.

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JAMES M. MATHEWS.

"Recollections of Persons and Events, chiefly  
in the City of New York, being Selections  
from his Journal." 368 pp.

Published by Sheldon & Company  
New York  
1865.

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18  
33

Columbia University  
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23 November 1933

Dear Mr. Brown:

I have just been looking over the Recollections of Persons and Events by the Reverend James Macfarlane Mathews (Union 1803). In his second chapter, which he entitles Dangers of College Life, he refers to several of his classmates who "went to the dogs" by reason of their intemperance. I think it will be interesting and perhaps fruitful for you to try to figure out who they were for your biographical sketches.

Mathews, James M. b. in Salem, N.Y., March 18, 1875; U.C. 1803, Assoc. Ref. Sem., 1807, l. Assoc. Ref. Presbyt., N.Y., 1807; Assistant Prof. of Bib. Lit. in Dr. Mason's Sem. 1809-18, supplied South Dutch, Garden st., N.Y.C., 1811-12, pastor of South Dutch, 1812-40, Chancellor of University, 1831-9, w. c., d. 1870. D.D. *MSLaf 1807 Mathews J. 0006*

The town of Salem, Washington County, N.Y., has been greatly favored in the number of young men who have entered the gospel ministry. The leading church of that village is of the Associate Reformed connection, and for a number of years was under the pastoral charge of the Rev. Drs. Proudfit, father and son, who were of unusual devotion and of broad, catholic spirit. Dr. Alexander Proudfit had a special gift in addressing the youth of his charge on the subject of personal religion, and of introducing them at an early age into the Church. And it was his habit, when he found a young man possessing special qualifications, and giving the promise of usefulness, to present to him the claims of the ministry, and urge him to enter this noble calling. Many of these young men were thrown providentially into the Reformed Church, and have proved themselves to be among her most useful and loyal ministers. Among this number is the subject of this sketch, James M. Mathews. His father came to this country some time previous to the War of the Revolution, and engaged in agricultural pursuits. During the struggle for independence he enlisted in the army as a common soldier, and served until the conclusion of peace. The son displayed very early a taste for study, and was fond of books, a fact which was noticed by his pastor and encouraged. In the Academy he was popular with his teachers, and made such rapid progress that he entered college two years in advance, graduating with the reputation of being a most excellent scholar. He did not unite with the church until he had completed his course, and was engaged in the work of the farm. Under the judicious instruction of Dr. Proudfit he chose without much hesitation the work of the ministry, and studied in the Seminary of Dr. Mason, being one of the first who passed through that recently organized institution of the Associate Reformed Church. Dr. Mason discovered in his student special qualifications for the work of instruction, and at his solicitation he was called to the Professorship of Biblical Literature, a position which he filled with marked ability, until he was called to take charge of the church in Garden Street, an organization then consisting of but nineteen families, and numbering at the first communion only seventeen members. In a very short time, though unfavorably located, the church became one of great strength and influence, passing through several seasons of wonderful revival. Dr. Mathews continued in the active duties of the ministry until 1840, when he was released from the pastoral office. He took a prominent part in the founding of the University of the City of New York, and was chosen as its first Chancellor, a position which he held for about nine years. His interest in its welfare, and the sacrifices he made to promote its prosperity are important points in its history, and were warmly appreciated by his co-laborers in this great enterprise.

*line or two out here*  
Retiring from these official positions with a constitution very much broken by reason of excessive labors, after a short season of rest, during which he delivered several lectures, these were delivered before intelligent audiences in various cities of the country, and highly appreciated. They were subsequently published, and widely circulated. In addition to these he prepared a volume of great interest, embodying his recollections of eminent men and prominent events. All of these works were valuable, and some of them are still sought for and read, as presenting most excellent views upon the subjects which they discussed. He spent the last few years of his life in works of general benevolence, interesting himself chiefly in the cause of education and promoting the welfare of young men, especially the medical students who came to the city to pursue their studies. He was in public life for sixty years, and in the various fields of usefulness which he occupied he met with an unusual measure of success.

He was highly favored in his personal appearance. He was above the ordinary height, of fine physical development, and possessed a countenance of marked benevolence and intelligence. He would naturally draw observation by his superb and erect form, and his attractive dignity of manner. In any circle he would leave the impression that he was a finely educated and highly polished gentleman. It was supposed by some that he was not easily accessible or friendly; but, with those who knew him, he was a model of kindness and amiability, as well as a cultivated and refined man. The bestowment of favors was a great gratification to him, and he would make sacrifices in order to oblige his friends. In his conversational powers he was very gifted, and in literary and social circles he was the center of attraction, and often fascinated the company by his fund of information and timely anecdotes relating to men and events.

As a preacher he ranked among the most acceptable and impressive of his day. Among the pulpit celebrities of New York in the early part of the century, he held a very honorable position, and maintained the reputation of being a solid, earnest, and powerful preacher. His congregation numbered some of the most wealthy families of the city, and it became the spiritual home of many in the various professions of life. His hearers always found his sermons rich in the exhibition of evangelical truth, full and accurate in their doctrinal statements, and written in a style that was chaste, vigorous, and animated. His voice was full and distinct, and his delivery was strong but unimpassioned. The cast of his mind was rather logical than imaginative, and he depended more on the force of argument and fact than on illustration and ornament. His whole manner in the pulpit was solemn and earnest, exhibiting itself in the favorite topics of his discourses, and in his very tones and gestures. He was active with his pen up to the very last, and intent on doing good wherever an opportunity offered. He was fond of cultivating the acquaintance of young men who were engaged in the work of preparation for the professions of life, inviting them in numbers to the hospitality of his home, and giving them most valuable counsel. He lived a long and useful life, and must be counted among those who were successful in an eminent degree. After a lingering sickness, during which he was sustained by an unflinching trust, he fell asleep in Jesus at the advanced age of nearly eighty-five years.—Rev. Dr. R. H. Steele. See "Duyckinck's Cyc. of Am. Lit.," 1855, vol. ii., 733.

sion Field," 1894.—Also Managing Editor of "The Day Star," Nov. 1896.—Also Sec. for Young People's Mission Work, 1896—

PUBLICATIONS: Editorials, &c., as above indicated; in charge of the Weekly Christian Endeavor Department, in "Christian Intelligencer," 1885-95, and other articles in the same; many Magazine articles, Reports, newspaper articles, &c.—Reports of Christian Endeavor Missionary League, 1873—

Mason, Ebenezer, (s. of Rev. Dr. John M. Mason,) b. in N.Y.C. June 15, 1800; C.N.J. 20, P.S. 23; ord. 2d Presbyt. N.Y., Ap. 20, 26; Brooklyn, 26-7, (Sixth av., N.Y.C., 27-8, North Ch., N.Y.C., 29-33, Blooming Grove, 1848-9, d. Mar. 14.) S.T.D.

He early displayed a docile temper, and a quick and susceptible mind whose powers were subjected to the careful training which so eminent a father as Dr. J. M. Mason would seek to secure for a son. He accompanied his father to Europe in 1816, while still a lad. When settled in Brooklyn conscientious scruples concerning the subject of baptism, according to the usage of that church, led him to resign his charge. In his new enterprise, in Sixth avenue, N.Y.C., he exerted a powerful influence for good, though his pastorate was short. He made two journeys to Europe, and his last trip sought to establish an American chapel in Paris. (McCLURE.)

Mild and retiring, he interfered with the self-love or advancement of none. He was one of the most amiable of men, quick to sympathize, and prompt to aid; so that, while many warmly loved him, none could be his enemy. His mind was of a highly reflective cast. Fond of investigation and discussion, without reckless speculation, he often suggested thoughts which presented views, especially on theological subjects, which were rare, and worthy of careful examination. As a sermonizer, his style was somewhat on the beaten track, and without affectation or obscurity, certainly had the merit of considerable originality. Yet his fancy had hardly been cultivated with that degree of attention which its vast importance, as an aid in the elucidation and enforcement of truth, demands; and hence his preaching, though greatly interesting and instructive to the thoughtful Christian, failed in a measure to produce that glow and excitement in which mingled audiences delight. His natural modesty, moreover, unwillingness to seem obtrusive, diffidence of his own powers, and a slight indistinctness of articulation, interfered with his advancement to prominent positions which his temper, his endowments, and his acquisitions abundantly fitted him to adorn.

(Mason, John. S.S. Hurley, 1834-6.)

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PUBLICATIONS: "The Religious Influence of Mothers." "The Adorable Saviour." "Critical Periods in the Sinner's Life." All three in "Nat. Preacher." 1836.—"What is Your Life?" A ser. on the loss of Lexington, 1840.—"The Bible and Men of Learning," pp. 392. 1855.—"The Bible and Civil Government," pp. 268. 1858.—"Fifty Years in N.Y." 1858.—Articles in "Sprague's Annals" on Revs. Ch. Bork, J. M. Bradford, Alex. Gunn, Wm. McMurray, P. N. Strong.

Matthews, Algernon, b. in Isle of Guernsey, 1841; Elizabeth Coll., Germany; N.B.S. 75, lic. N. Cl. L.I.; Jersey City Heights, 75, Manheim, 76-9. Dismissed to the Presbyt. of Kingston, Canada.

MATTICE, AB., b. in Schoharie, N.Y., 1833; R.C. 58, N.B.S. 62, lic. and ord. as an evangelist by Cl. Schoharie, 62; Miss. to Kewascum, Wis., 62-4, Eden, 64-6, Prof. of Ancient Langs. and Mathematics, in Riverside Seminary, Germantown, N.Y., 67-9, Principal of Hudson (N.Y.) Academy, 69-73, Principal of Fort Plain Female Collegiate Institute, N.Y., 73-9, Principal of Seymour Smith Academy, Pine Plains, Dutchess Co., N.Y., 79-96, Montville, 96-1901.

Mattice, Henry, b. in Schoharie Co., N.Y., Aug. 16, 1822; lic. (N.S.) Presb. Kansas, 61; ord. (O.S.) Presb. Kaskaski (Ill.) Ap. 68; (Miss. A.S.S.U. in Kansas, 59-64.) Agent U.S. Ch. Com., 64-66, S.S. Missions, and Agent Y.M.C.A., St. Louis, Mo., 67-68, supplied Trenton, Ill. 67-68, Missionary, Howard Miss., N.Y.C., 69; supplied West New Hempstead, 69-71, recd. by letter in Cl. Paramus, Ap. 71; Assist. Sup. House of Industry, and Miss. Pastor, Calvary Chapel, N.Y.C., 71-73; pastor, Palisades, 73-78, Jersey City, Free Ch., Morgan st., Miss. Jan. 79-88, Unionville, 88-89, Hoboken, 89-95. Died Aug. 12, 1897.

Always much interested in Sunday School work, he actually took charge of the Sunday School at his home, before making a profession. He was subsequently sent West by a church in Albany, N.Y., and he established chiefly in Kansas, about 150 Sunday schools. He many times rode 100 miles on horseback to attend a convention. Many important churches in Kansas have grown out of his work. He established the first Italian Mission in New York City. In Hoboken, his church was burned, and his efforts secured a new edifice—a monument of his zeal and energy, but at the cost of his health. His life was full of change, but always along the line of consecrated Christian service. He was made a prisoner in the Civil War by a guerilla leader, Quantral, but at once released, when his mission was understood.—"Mints, Gen. Syn.," 1898, 232.

Matzke, Herman, came from Germany, 1878; Silver Creek, Ill., (Ger.) 1878-1887; d. Ap. 9.—"Mints, Gen. Syn.," 1887, 436.

May, Edward H., b. at Lynn, Norfolk, Eng., Jan. 28, 1795; Hoxton Coll. and Sem., London, Eng., 1815, (Bary Lane, 1815-..., Rochford, Essex, . . . . ., Croydon, Surrey, . . . . .) Northumberland, 35-6, Northumberland and Schuylerville, 36-9, Twenty-first st., N.Y.C., 39-48, Sec. Pa. Col. Soc. 1848-9, Sec. Pa. Seamen's Friends' Soc. 1849-57, d. 1858.

His parents were of the Church of England, in which he was baptized and brought up. One of his sisters became a Methodist, and, through her

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He was in public life for more than sixty years and all that time he served God and his generation with the full use of his many talents.

See Manual, 1902.

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Retiring from these official positions with a constitution very much broken by reason of excessive labors, after a short season of rest, during which he recovered his former strength, he turned his attention to another important field. He employed his pen in preparing courses of lectures on topics which had commanded his attention while connected with the university. These were delivered before intelligent audiences in various cities of the country, and highly appreciated. They were subsequently published, and widely circulated. In addition to these he prepared a volume of great interest, embodying his recollections of eminent men and prominent events. All of these works were valuable, and some of them are still sought for and read, as presenting most excellent views upon the subjects which they discussed. He spent the last few years of his life in works of general benevolence, interesting himself chiefly in the cause of education and promoting the welfare of young men, especially the medical students who came to the city to pursue their studies. He was in public life for sixty years, and in the various fields of usefulness which he occupied he met with an unusual measure of success.

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Manual of the Reformed Church in America pp. 605-608  
Corwin  
1628-1902

"The Council declared that "at this juncture it is peculiarly proper that the Council should express their opinion of his character, and services to the University," and resolved that "in him they recognize the principal founder of the liberal system of education on which the University is based"; that "they ~~have~~ have been witnesses to his zeal, devotion, and sacrifice," and "that they have always had entire confidence in his integrity." It is pleasant to close the history of the first administration with these words; but that they should have been needed at all was unfortunate. It is also pleasant to know that Chancellor Mathews continued to serve as a member of the Council for nearly ten years more, and that his memoirs published in 1865, he gives no sign of anything but agreeable memories of the University. It has been difficult to conceal his mistakes. They were doubtless due to excessive zeal; and his efforts in behalf of the Law School and the Medical School, of which more will be said in ~~a~~ later chapters, show that he had at heart more of the University than a college, or even a Gothic chapel.

p. 52

There is a portrait p. 34

New York University  
1832 : 1932  
Theodore Francis Jones  
N.Y. Univ. Press  
1933

.....a meeting of men interested in the foundation of university occurred on December 16, 1829. It was the first occasion of which a record was kept; and it ~~was~~ was attended by the Rev. J. M. Mathews, the Rev. J. M. Wainwright, Dr. J. Augustine, Dr. Valentine Mott, John Delafield, Hugh Maxwell, Isaac S. Hone, and Myndert Van Schaick. Foot-Note says the meeting was held at the invitation and house of Rev. J. M. Mathews, if his own Recollections, published in 1865, may be trusted)

The Rev. James M. Mathews, soon<sup>62</sup> elected the first Chancellor of the University, was an alumnus of Union College (A.B.1803) and at this moment pastor of the South Dutch Reformed Church. His second wife was Ann, daughter of John Hone, Mayor Philip Hone's brother. p. 9

Before the election of the Council, the leading spirits among the subscribers had thought much about the plans for instruction; there had occurred to them the admirable idea of getting the best advice available in America by inviting to New York the most eminent teachers and scientists of the United States for a public discussion of educational problems. Perhaps the idea originated with Dr. Mathews; in any case he was the first to give expression to it at a meeting of the Standing Committee in August, 1830.

The convention opened at the City Hall on October 20, 1830. (Dr. Nott was unable to accept the invitation). Dr. Mathews welcomed them (about 50 in number) in behalf of the new University, the aims of which he ably expounded;.... pp.23-24

On January 31, 1831, Dr. Mathews was elected first Chancellor. p. 28

The inaugural ceremonies of New York University were held at Clinton Hall on September 26, 1832..... The Chancellor's address was distinctly rhetorical in elaboration, but vague in details. He emphasized ~~the~~ the importance of the Classics, but at the same time explained that the "practical spirit of the age" required a particular devotion to Mathematical and Physical Science. He was convinced that a "smattering" of Physics led to infidelity; but that a thorough study of it, such as the University would provide, would confirm the ~~truths~~ truths of divine revelation. The day would soon come, he hoped, when the nation would view its institutions of higher learning as nurseries of strength, and ~~its~~ sanctuaries for preservation from evil.

pp. 36-36

The professors had, it seems, expected that Chancellor Mathews would content himself with the general supervision of University interests, and also, it was to be hoped, with the increasing of the endowment; and that he would leave to them the internal economy of the college, its curriculum and discipline. If we may believe the professors, however, Dr. Mathews continually interfered with their attempts at discipline, in order, they suspected, not to alienate those who might be prospective donors; and, in particular, wished for a commencement the first year for its advertising value. The relations between the Chancellor and the faculty were most unpleasant.

pp 39-40

The "second department," for graduate instruction, which the first faculty had expected to organize, was surely incompatible with the very meager endowment achieved. Chancellor Mathews and his friends, moreover, were in haste to buy land and erect a building, in order that the city might see the University. Already in September, 1832, the Chancellor had selected a location; and on October 27, 1832, the Council approved the choice.

p. 41

As early as March, 1835, the professors voted "the present is an important crisis in the affairs of the University." And referred to the existence of certain evils in the administration of the University, especially the entire uncertainty in the minds of the faculty, if not of the Chancellor, as to the relation they held to each other. The professors expressed the hope that, on all matters connected with the internal affairs of the University, the Chancellor would consult them before he submitted an opinion to the council. It is clear that the new faculty resented what they felt to be dictatorial methods of the Chancellor.

pp45-46

In November, 1837, with the salaries of the regular faculty unpaid for six months, the Council proceeded to elect a new professor to the chair of Sacred Literature, whose duties, as Chancellor Mathews presented them, were to reconcile the new discoveries in geology with the eternal truths of divine revelation.

p. 46

The professors insisted that the rents of those rooms in the new building which the college did not use and which were promised the professors by the Chancellor were used by him to pay his own expenses to Albany, (condensed)

It was also charged that the Chancellor frequently suggested to individual professors the great need for retrenchment; but his method was to suggest that it would be unwise to discharge another professor than the one with whom he was conversing.

p/ 46

In the last analysis, of course, the cause of the tragic dissention was the failure of the Chancellor to complete the endowment. Before the crash, early in 1837, he had collected only about \$89,999 of the original pledge of \$100,000 and every ~~cent~~ penny had been sunk in the building.

For some time, the Council had in desperation looked to the State Government for relief; and in February, 1838, Chancellor Mathews, who had made a similar trip in vain the year before, went in person to Albany to appeal to the Legislature. While in Albany the storm broke in New York. The faculty joined in a unanimous appeal to the Council to save the University from ruin by removing from the chancellorship a man "who had completely lost the confidence of the community."

In the Council dissention appeared. On March 3, 1838, while the Chancellor was still in ~~Albany~~ the lobby at Albany, voted to appoint a Bursar, to collect all rents and tuition fees, and to disburse them only on written order of a Committee of Finance. The measures were manifestly taken to remove from the Chancellor's hands the financial control which he had unofficially exercised since his appointment, pp.46-47

The Chancellor reported his success to the Council on May 3, 1838, in a long and eloquent ~~pan~~ paean, of triumph, ending with the words: "For myself I feel it my duty, here to erect my Ebenezer, saying 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped,' and whether I look back to the past or forward to the future, I feel persuaded that in founding the University, we have established an institution which will continue to be a blessing to future generations, long after we shall have rendered up our account."

On June ~~xxxx~~ 5, 1838, the finance committee "were stupefied the divergences between the rosy optimism of the Chancellor's reports to the Council, and the black ~~xxxx~~ reality." None of the treasurers had kept any systematic account. ~~xx~~ A list of the subscriptions pledged before June 1, 1833 was not kept. ~~2~~ "But the greatest surprise was the discovery that the Chancellor's repeated reports of the material prosperity of the College were myths." p. 48

There was dissention in the Council and enough resigned to give the Chancellor a safe majority. The purged Council then proceeded to discipline the refractory professors. On Aug. 30, 1838, the Council voted to reorganize the faculty, in such a way that seven professors found themselves without duties or salaries. p. 49

Possibly he (the Chancellor) had been persuaded in June, 1838, at the time of his request for a leave of absence, that he should stay through the crisis, and then resign. On Feb. 9, 1839, in any case, he presented his resignation, again on the plea of ill health; and two days later the Council accepted it.

Mathews, James M., b. in Salem, N.Y., March 18, 1785; U.C. 1803, Assoc. Ref. Sem., 1807, I. Assoc. Ref. Presbyt., N.Y., 1807; Assistant Prof. of Bib. Lit. in Dr. Mason's Sem. 1809-18, supplied South Dutch, Garden St., N.Y.C., 1811-12, pastor of South Dutch, 1812-40, Chancellor of University, 1831-9, w. c., d. 1870. D.D. Jan 28

## CLASS OF 1803

### JAMES M. MATTHEWS

Mr. Matthews was a native of Salem, being born here March 18, 1785; a son of David M. and his wife, Mary McFarland. He was the last child baptized by Rev. Thomas Clark, D. D., in Salem. His early education was received at Washington Academy, and he was graduated from Union College in 1803. He studied for the ministry under Rev. James Proudfit, and concluded his studies under Dr. Mason. He was licensed to preach by the New York Presbytery in 1807, and afterwards ordained by the same. In 1811 and 1812 he supplied the pulpit of the South Reformed Church, New York City, and in 1813 received a call from that church. He was the assistant of Dr. Mason in the Theological Seminary from 1809 to 1818 and was Chancellor of the University of New York from 1831 to 1839. He died in New York City, January 28, 1870.

During his lifetime he was a frequent visitor to Salem, often preaching in the United Presbyterian Church, and he attended and delivered an address at the Centennial of the church in 1867.

FROM

Salem Book (N. Y.)  
1896

p. 75



Friends of Columbia had the jitters in 1830 and the years immediately succeeding because another college, called the University of the City of New York (later N.Y.U.) was founded in that year by the liberal Livingston group. It was led by ex-Governor Morgan Lewis and Edward Livingston. Three of the nine, Valentine Mott, Hugh Maxwell, and John Delafield, were Columbia alumni. Two others, Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright and James M. Mathews, were Columbia trustees.

The promoters echoed what the Livingstons and other Presbyterians had said at the founding of King's College. Columbia, they said, in substance, was not democratic; it was not giving the kind of education needed at the time. This was the age of Jackson and liberal ideas were sweeping the land. Education in New York, declared the promoters, should be "extending its benefits in greater abundance and variety than at present they are enjoyed and thus make them available to larger numbers of young persons." Columbia was harshly criticized for its entrance requirements: Latin and Greek were demanded and this cut off the possibility of higher education for large numbers. "Columbia does not meet the literary wants of the city."...It is only a preparatory school for the learned professions," they said. And furthermore, "Its president must of necessity be selected from one particular denomination of Christians."

The movement might have wrecked Columbia if it had had a better leader. The Reverend James M. Mathews, pastor of the Garden Street Dutch Church, was highly resourceful in making mistakes. When he was elected chancellor of the new university strong opposition arose, and a number of subscribers withdrew their pledges. Almost at once Dr. Mathews involved himself and the institutions in complicated financial difficulties. A lot in Washington Square was purchased for \$40,000, and a building was started. After paying out the \$82,530 that had been raised, Dr. Mathews ran up a debt of \$175,000. He accepted subscriptions for scholarships and invested the money in the building. Lack of funds meant no salaries. At the beginning of the second year three professors resigned, and soon afterward four others quit because they disliked not being paid. In the third year Dr. Mathews dismissed seven more because he had no money to pay them. Others he tried to hold by promises that were not kept, which led to confusion and bitter re- crimination. The impasse was not resolved until Dr. Mathews resigned in 1837,

Columbia  
Colossus on the Hudson pp.69-70  
Horace Coon  
E.P.Dutton & Company, Inc.  
New York  
1947.

Rev. James M. Matthews, D.D.  
Union College, Class of 1803

Dr. Matthews was the first chancellor of New York University (founded in 1831). His liberal ideas had much to do with shaping the course of the university. He had among his friends in those days DeWitt Clinton, Stephen Van Rensselaer (founder of R.P.I.); Col. Henry Rutgers, after whom Rutgers University was so-called, Albert Gallatin, distinguished Swiss-American financier, and John Quincy Adams, our sixth president. By his second marriage to Julia Hone, at the time <sup>of</sup> a foremost family in wealth and standing in Manhattan, he gained additional resources to aid the institution.

Dr. Matthews was born in 1785 at Salem, Washington Co., and, after graduation from the Associate Reformed Seminary in 1807, he served the old South Dutch Church in New York City during 1812 thro 1840. He was a real pioneer in educational lines while directing the university (1831-1839). It is interesting to note the scope of the planned curricula of Mr. Matthews as revealed in the records of the university. Briefly we may sum them up as follows, - 1. Suitable lines of training for boys who had finished the public schools. 2. Branches of learning for which Americans have gone abroad. 3. The Philosophy of education. 4. A school for artists. 5. A school for medicine. 6. A school for law. 7. Instruction in finance and commerce. 8. The application of science to life. 9. Public Lectures. 10. Science and Religion harmonized. Proposed more than a century ago, this graduate of Old Union reveals an amazing foresight of future educational requirements that sound very much like the accepted principles of a college education.

W.N.P. Dailey, 1884

*Went - use in "Monthly" or file in grad data -*

James Macfarlane Mathews, first chancellor of the University of the City of New York (1831-39), was born at Salem, N. Y., March 18, 1785. His father David Mathews, came to this country some time before the Revolution, and enlisted at the commencement of the struggle for independence. The son displayed very early a taste for study, and was fond of books, which fact attracted the attention of his pastor, Dr. Proudfit, who encouraged him, and took special interest in his progress. In the academy he was popular with his teachers, and made such rapid progress that he entered Union College in 1801, two years in advance, graduating with a high reputation for scholarship. He returned to the former, and under the judicious instruction and advice of Dr. Proudfit, began studying for the ministry in the Seminary of Dr. John M. Mason and was graduated in 1807, being one of the first who passed through that recently organized institution of the Associate Reformed Church. Dr. Mason discovered in his student special qualifications for the work of instruction, and at his solicitation young Mathews was, in 1803, called to the professorship of Biblical literature, a position which he filled with marked ability until he was called, in 1811, to take charge of the South Reformed Dutch Church, in Garden Street, in New York, which was at the time but a struggling organization. In a very short time the church became one of great strength and influence, owing to his careful ministrations. Dr. Mathews continued in the active duties of this ministry until 1840, when he was released from pastoral work. He was one of nine gentlemen who met, Dec. 16, 1829, to consider "the establishment of a university in the city of New York on a liberal and extensive scale." He took a prominent part in the founding of the university and, at the opening of the college in 1831, was chosen its first chancellor, which position he held for nine years. His interest in its welfare, and the sacrifices he made to promote its prosperity, are important points in its history, and were warmly appreciated by his co-laborers in this great enterprise. Retiring in the year 1839 with a constitution very much broken by excessive labor, Dr. Mathews, took a much needed rest, but soon turned his attention to preparing a course of lectures on "The Bible, and Men of Learning," and topics which attracted his attention while chancellor. These were afterwards delivered in various cities of the country before intelligent audiences, and highly appreciated. They were subsequently published and widely circulated. In addition, he prepared, in 1864, a volume of great interest, embodying his recollections of eminent men and prominent events. He spent the later years of his life in works of general benevolence, interesting him chiefly in the cause of education, and promoting the welfare of young men, especially the medical students who came to the city to pursue their studies. He invited them in numbers to the hospitality of his home, and gained their confidence, which enabled him to befriend them with timely counsel. He was above the ordinary height, of erect form and fine physical development, and possessed a countenance of marked benevolence and intelligence. The bestowal of favors was a great gratification to him, and he would make great sacrifices in order to

James M. Mathews.

2.

assist and oblige his friends. It was supposed by some that he was not easily accessible, or friendly, but with those who knew him he was a model of kindness and amiability. He was gifted with rare conversational powers, and in literary and social circles he was the centre of attraction, and often fascinated the company by his fund of information and timely anecdotes of men and events. As a preacher, he ranked among the most acceptable and impressive of his day. Among the pulpit celebrities of New York in the early part of the century, he held an honorable position, and maintained the reputation of being a solid, earnest, and powerful preacher. In 1819 Yale College conferred upon him the degree of D. D. After a lingering sickness, during which he preserved his wonted gentleness and serenity, he died Jan. 26, 1870, in New York city.

The N. C. of A. B., Vol. VI, Page 279.

ROBERT B. PATTON, Professor of the Greek Language and Literature.

REV. JOHN PROUDFIT, Professor of the Latin Language and Literature.

CHARLES L. PARMANTIER, Professor of the French Language and Literature.

LORENZO L. DA PONTA, Professor of the Italian Language and Literature.

MIGUEL CABRERA DE NEVARES, Professor of the Spanish Language and Literature.

CHARLES RABADAN, associate Professor of do.

REV. WILLIAM ERISENPEUTSCH, Professor of the German Language and Literature.

REV. GEORGE BUSH, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages and Literature.

REV. CHARLES W. HACKLEY, Professor of Mathematics.

WILLIAM A. NORTON, Acting Professor of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy.

LEWIS C. BECK, M. D. Professor of Chemistry and Botany.

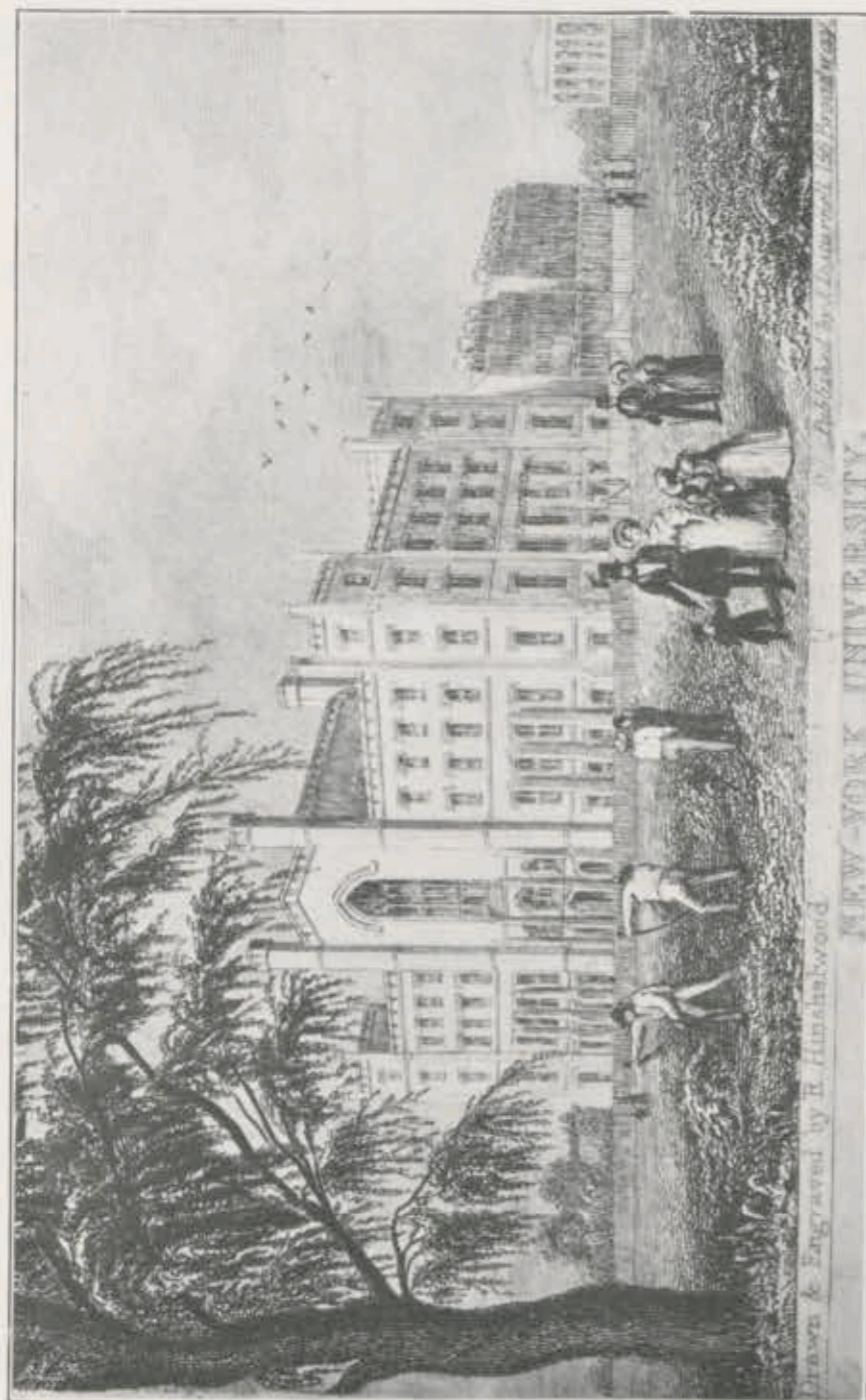
L. D. GALE, M. D. Professor of Geology and Mineralogy.

The University is furnished with an apparatus of uncommon excellence and variety, which is, we believe, surpassed by none in the country. The library has been commenced on a scale commensurate with the other departments of the institution, and has of late been enriched by several valuable donations. Among these is a collection of books recently presented by the King of England, embracing many rare and valuable works.

It now occupies the building represented in the foregoing plate, which is esteemed one of the finest specimens of architecture in our country; and is situated between Washington-place and Waverly-place, fronting Washington Square towards the west. The building is one hundred feet wide, and one hundred and eighty feet long; forming a noble ornament to the square on which it fronts, being built of marble, and exhibiting a specimen of the English collegiate style of architecture. It furnishes Class or Lecture rooms sufficient to accommodate conveniently from one thousand to twelve hundred students; and judging from the progress of the Institution hitherto, it may not be long before that number is found within its walls.

-1867

-1825



## Five years out of college and deep in a rut

"What hope is there for me?" he asked

HE graduated in 1912 from one of the best of New England's colleges, and found a job in a big Eastern business.

For a year or two things seemed to go very well; he moved from one subordinate job to another at nominal advances in salary. Then suddenly progress stopped. After being out of college five years he lost his self-confidence, lost his enthusiasm, almost lost his hope.

One day by chance he was introduced to a representative of the Alexander Hamilton Institute. The Institute man has shared the confidences and perplexities of thousands of business men, and almost unconsciously the younger man began explaining his problem. The result of that conference is best set forth in the letter which the young man wrote two years later.

**"My self-confidence increased; my earning power doubled."**

"It is now two years since I enrolled with the Alexan-

der Hamilton Institute; I call it the best decision I ever made. Next to that is the decision to leave the corporation where I had allowed myself to become merely a cog in the machine. My self-confidence and courage have increased infinitely, and incidentally my rate of pay in the period of one year has nearly doubled. For the first time since I left college I feel that I am equipped to make real progress in business. To the Institute is due most of the credit."

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The Institute has but one Course; its purpose is to give men, in reading and specific training by the "case system," the all-round knowledge of every department of business that comes ordinarily only by slow progress thru each department in detail.

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### 35% were university graduates

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**ORIGINAL  
AND  
SELECTED MISCELLANY.**

**UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK.**

THE plan for establishing this Institution was adopted by a number of our intelligent citizens in 1831, and in the same year, a charter was obtained from the legislature of this state. The interest which the public take in its welfare may be inferred not only from the amount of funds already contributed towards its endowment, but also from the number of students who have resorted to it, ever since it was opened. It embraces not only a full and complete system of what is ordinarily termed college education, but from its beginning it has also superadded ample means for instruction in the arts and sciences more immediately connected with the practical purposes of life, and with those accomplishments which tend to embellish it. Classes have accordingly been formed in the Greek and Latin languages, in Mathematics, and Natural Philosophy, in Chemistry and Botany, in Mineralogy and Geology, in English Literature and Belles Lettres, in Intellectual and Moral Philosophy; and also in most of the modern as well as in the Hebrew and Oriental languages; in Sacred Literature, in Civil Engineering, in the Literature of the Arts of Design; and within the last few months, measures have been taken to organize a Law Faculty. The Hon. Benjamin F. Butler, Attorney General of the United States, is chosen principal Professor, and is expected to enter upon his duties early in 1837. The other officers of the Institution, the most of whom have been connected with it from its commencement, are as follows:

1803 --- REV. JAMES M. MATHEWS, D. D., Chancellor.

DAVID B. DOUGLAS, Professor of Civil Engineering and Architecture.

S. F. B. MORSE, Professor of the Literature of the Arts of Design.

REV. H. B. TAPPEN, Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy and Belles Lettres.

# MATHEWS The First CHANCELLOR

*He Opened New York University With a Programme Full of Innovations—Present Strength of Our Schools and Colleges to be Found in the Purpose of the Founders Expressed at the Beginning*

By HALOLD deWOLF FULLER, Ph. D.

*(This is the sixth of a series of Historical Sketches about New York University).*

*Through the courtesy of Mr. Frederick Delano Weekes, whose father, John Abeel Weeks, graduated from New York University in the class of 1839, the Alumnus is enabled to reprint the following verses, which were read at a dinner given to members of that class by John Taylor Johnston at his home on North Washington Square to celebrate their twentieth anniversary. The author, Edward Hopper, punned his way around the class; the following are excellent samples:*

Friend B. F. Stead is steady yet,  
And Champlain does not stagger;  
Calm Liebenau the world can't fret,  
And Beers eschews all lager.

Our *Weekes* has gone through months and years,  
The same old sober deacon,  
And to this day no "humbug" fears,  
"No humbug!" is his beacon.

Josh Foster, who was never mum,  
Whose ears no word could skip;  
Tall Josh is now both deaf and dumb  
In his professorship.

Dick Bull, like Irving's Ichabod,  
(The little urchins, dro't 'em!)  
Improves the nob of many a squab  
By hammering at his bottom.

Of Bulkley, Brown, Hoyt, Cox, Magie,  
Reid, Patton, Ganse and White,  
Horn Hughson, Smith and Tommy T.  
(Where's Tommy?) need I write?

One other chap, whose house today  
We chaps take pride to enter,  
A "Central" chap, like Sol, always  
Stands in our midst the centre!

Attractions his are heavy on  
The stomach of a sinner;  
We love you much, beloved John!  
And don't we like your dinner!!!

INSTRUCTION at New York University began in the autumn of 1832, as stated before, in Clinton Hall at the southwest corner of Beekman and Nassau Streets. The inauguration of the Chancellor and instructors took place on September 26. Though the Hall, in the words of the daily press, "was easily thronged to overflowing with an audience of the first respectability," the occasion was somewhat sombre, owing to an epidemic of cholera. In the city of New York alone five thousand and fifty-seven persons had died since the first of July.

The Rev. Dr. Milnor, of St. George's Church, a member of the University Council, inducted Chancellor and Faculty into office. An important announcement by Dr. Milnor stated that the University would be prepared to furnish those who did not wish to pursue a full academic course with the means of receiving instruction in such branches of science and literature as they desired to cultivate. This was a very progressive policy and one

which, in its modern developments, furnishes the public today with a rich array of opportunities.

The first Chancellor, also a member of the Council, was the Rev. James M. Mathews, D. D. He was born in 1785 on a farm in Salem, Washington County, New York. He was graduated from Union College in 1803 and four years later from the Theological Seminary of the Associate Reform Church, in which institution he was Assistant Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Biblical Literature for nine years. After 1812 he held the pastorate of the South Dutch Reformed Church in Garden Street (Exchange Place) until 1836. On account of the great fire in that year Dr. Mathews found a new home for his parishioners at Washington Square—a fact which probably accounted for the choice of the northeast corner of the Square as the site for the new University building (1833).

By his second marriage, to Julia Hone, Dr. Mathews became linked to a family which at that time was foremost in wealth and social standing. He had a wide acquaintance with the leaders of his day. He knew De Witt Clinton well, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Colonel Henry Rutgers, and belonged to a small circle, including Albert Gallatin, that usually entertained John Quincy Adams when he passed through New York.

It was in a company of his literary friends that the idea of a new kind of University was broached. In his memoirs he has told the various objects that were had in mind: (1) lines of suitable training for boys who had completed merely the public and common schools, with scholarships to be founded for this class of candidates; (2) higher branches of learning for which Americans had been compelled to go abroad; (3) the Philosophy of Education, i. e. the history and science of teaching—a new departure; (4) a school for artists; (5) Medicine; (6) Law; (7) a school of Commerce and Finance—another great innovation; (8) the applications of science to all the great pursuits of life; (9) public lectures; (10) harmony of science and religion.

This was an enlightened programme. How "radical" it was may be appreciated by a glance at the curricula of other institutions, which in the vast majority of cases limited their instruction to preparation for the learned professions, mainly the ministry. Item 8, in particular, sounds highly modern. It is that line of attack which has won for universities of our own time the great esteem of the general public. Fortunately the first Chancellor was present at the conception of the new ideas. Otherwise he might easily have diverted New York University from the path intended, and the course of the institution today would be very different from what it is. Its present strength is to be sought, not least, in the purposes of the founders.

Dr. Mathews stepped down rather precipitately from the Chancellorship in 1839, owing to the financial difficulties in which the University found itself at that early



day, and until his death, in 1870, lived as a private gentleman in New York.

The first Faculty included men who were soon to attain great distinction in their various specialties:

The Rev. Edward B. Robinson was destined to become the foremost scriptural antiquarian in America.

The Rev. Henry P. Tappan, Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, was later elected the first president of the University of Michigan.

John Torrey, though a doctor of medicine, had found his main interest in other studies. For some years he had taught Chemistry, Mineralogy, and Geology at West Point. At the new University he taught Chemistry and Botany, and in the latter subject obtained a national reputation.

Henry Vethake, Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy, had been on the faculties of Queen's College (Rutgers) and Princeton. At the educational convention of 1830 it was he who first sounded a warning as regards the tendency to make the study of the Greek and Latin the be-all and end-all of higher education. In later years he was chosen Provost of the University of Pennsylvania.

Major D. B. Douglass, A. M., Professor of Natural

Philosophy, Architecture, and Civil Engineering, had been active in the construction of the Morris Canal in New Jersey. He was consultant in the designing of the University building at Washington Square and he laid out the general plan of Greenwood, where later he was buried.

Samuel F. B. Morse, about whose work more will be said later, gave at the University the first course in the History of Art offered in this country. His portrait of Lafayette is still to be seen at the City Hall.

In the case of such subjects as Art, German, French, Spanish, Engineering, the instructors were merely authorized to collect fees from such students as presented themselves. The studies were optional. The following popular lectures were projected: on History, by Vethake; on Moral Philosophy, by the Rev. Dr. Samuel H. Cox, father of Bishop Cleveland Coxe; on the History of Commerce, Agriculture, and the Mechanic Arts, by Dr. Francis Lieber, one of the representatives at the Convention of 1830 on Physical Astronomy, by Major Douglass; and on Chemistry, by Dr. John Torrey. Thus, at the very start it was the hope of the authorities to put the University at the disposal of the general public.

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## EXPANSION Of MUSIC Instruction

By ALBERT STOESEL, A. M.

(Professor of Music at New York University)

THE response on the part of students of the University to the courses offered in 1923-1924, was definite enough to warrant including a most comprehensive expansion of activities in the plans for the following academic year.

Of prime importance in the departmental development was the inauguration in Washington Square College of a four-year course leading to the degree of bachelor of music.

The purpose of this course is to enable students to pursue the required technical studies of musical art in combination with such subjects as are necessary in the attainment of the broadest culture. The New York State educational authorities, in spite of a disinclination toward special degrees, promptly gave this new degree their official sanction.

### NEW COURSES IN WASHINGTON SQUARE COLLEGE

The course leading to the degree of bachelor of music necessitated the establishing of a number of new music courses in Washington Square College. Including the courses offered during the previous year, the courses given during 1924-1925 at Washington Square College and the total number of registered students were as follows:

	STUDENTS
1. The Understanding and Appreciation of Music .....	68
2. The Viennese Period and the Era of Romantic Music .....	10
3. Elementary Harmony and Counterpoint.....	27
4. Advanced Harmony and Counterpoint .....	6
5. Musical Form and Analysis .....	9
6. Instrumentation .....	10
7. Theory and Practice of Conducting.....	10
8. Sight Singing (Solfeggio) .....	12
9. Orchestral Playing and Ensemble .....	5
10. Organ .....	1
Total .....	158

### COURSES IN MUSIC GIVEN AT THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND PURE SCIENCE

	STUDENTS
1. Appreciation and Understanding of Music .....	7
2. Theory of Music .....	6
Total .....	13

The total number of students registered in the various music courses during the year 1924-1925 was 171, an increase of 100 over the 71 registered students in 1923-1924.

All musical instruction in music during 1924-1925 was given by Professor Albert Stoessel, and the newly appointed instructors Mr. Charles Haubiel and Mr. Hugh Porter. Mr. Philip James, who was instructor the previous year, resigned his position to become organist at St. Mark's on the Bowery.

### CONCERTS

In addition to the regular courses of instruction, the music department arranged a series of seven concerts given at the auditorium in the Washington Square building and in Town Hall on West 43rd Street.

The programs of these concerts were as follows:

1. String Quartets of Haydn
2. String Quartets of Mozart
3. String Quartets of Beethoven
4. Piano Recital by Mr. Charles Haubiel
5. Concert by the Washington Square College String Orchestra
6. Concert by the American Orchestral Society  
Mr. Chalmers Clifton, Conducting  
Mr. Nathan Berkovitz, Soloist
7. Concert by the American Orchestral Society  
Mr. Chalmers Clifton, Conducting  
Miss Bianca del Vecchio, Piano Soloist  
Mr. Boris Saslawsky, Baritone Soloist

The American Orchestral Society concerts were given by full Symphony orchestra and were made possible by the generosity of Mrs. E. H. Harriman and a New York

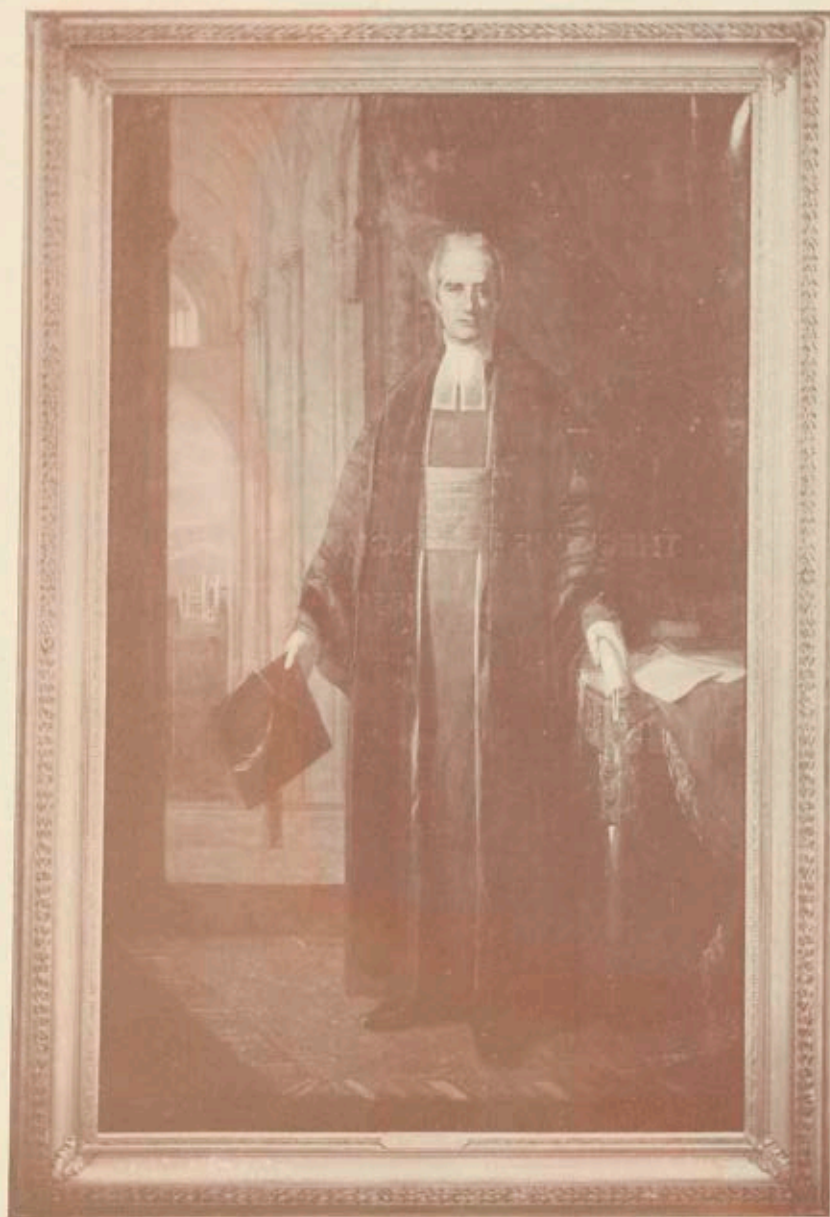
(Continued on Page 12)

Rev. James M. Mathews, D.D. Union College, Class 1863

J.M.Mathews was born in Salem, N.Y (Washington Co.) March 18.1785. He entered Union from Salem and his last residence was in N.Y.City, where he died in 1870. He was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa. He graduated from the Reformed Seminary (Associate) in 1807, and was licensed to preach by the Associate Reformed Presbytery of N.Y. in 1807. From 1809 thro 1818 he was the Assistant Prof. of Biblical Literature in the Seminary of Dr.Mason, a N.Y.City Private Theo. School where a 100 young men were educated for the ministry.

Dr.Mathews ranked among the most acceptable and impressive preachers of his day. He took a prominent part in the founding of the University of New York, and was its first chancellor. He was in public life for more than sixty years. Among his works were, -"The Religious Influence of Mothers", "The Adorable Saviour", "Critical Periods in the Sinner's Life", - all three being found in the "National Preacher"(1836). Also "What is Your Life", and a sermon "The Loss of the Lexington"(1840). He also wrote "The Bible and Men of Learning"(302pp1855), "the Bible and Civil Government" (268 pp 1858), and "Fifty Years in New York"(1858). In "Sprague's Annals" he wrote biographical sketches on Rev.Christian Berk, Rev.J.M. Bradford, Rev.Alexander Gunn, Rev.Wm.McMurray and The Rev. Pascal N. Strong

W.N.P.Dailey-Union 1884-



JAMES M. MATHEWS, D.D.

1831-1839

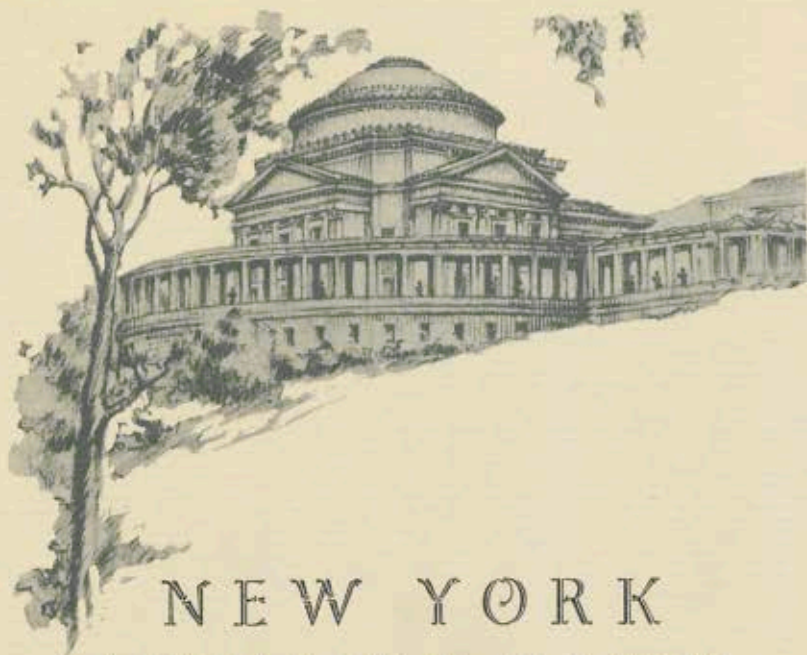
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THEODORE FRELINGHUYSEN, LL.D.

1839-1850

1803

*See p.*

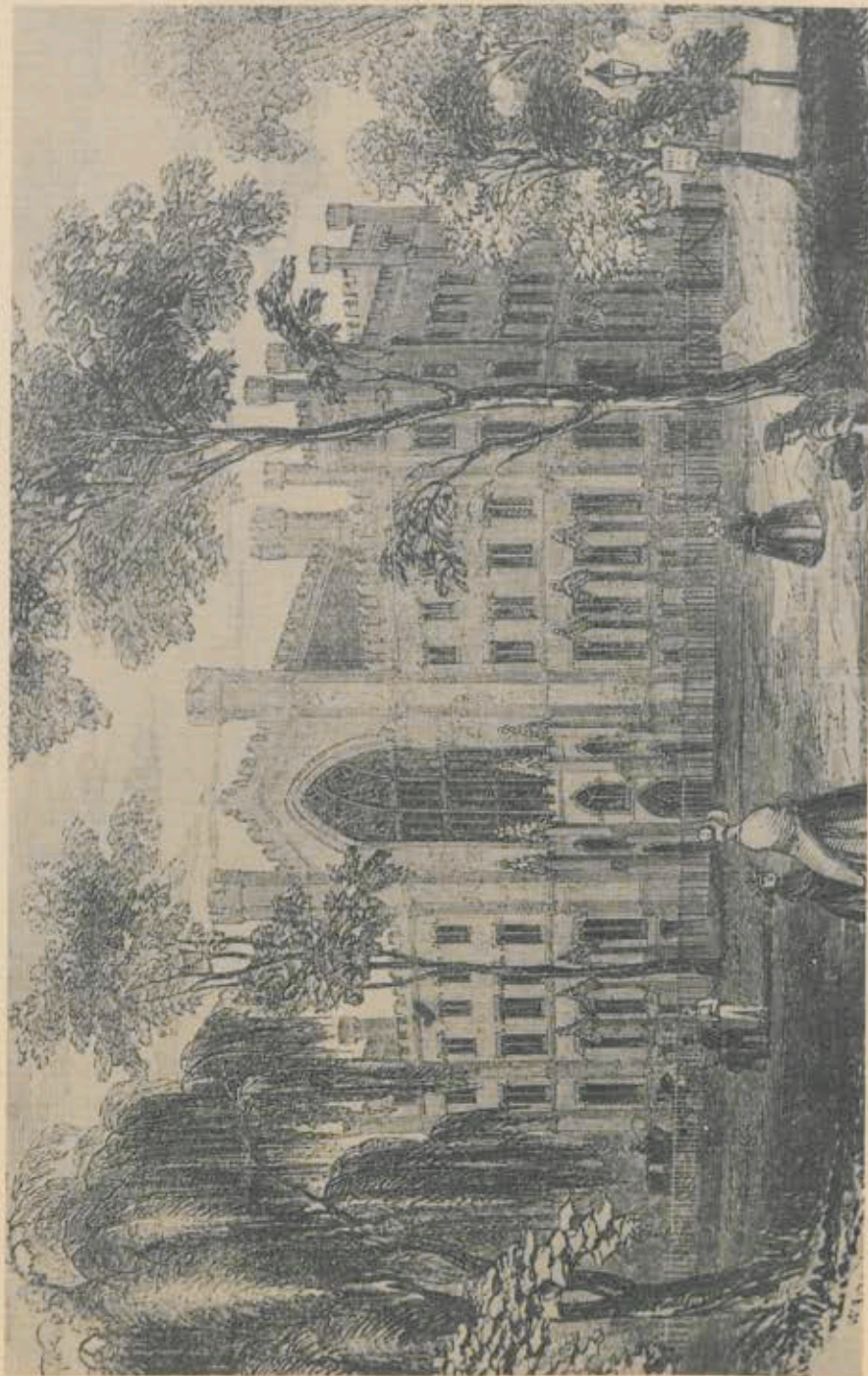
12.



NEW YORK  
UNIVERSITY



*Matthews.*



THE FIRST UNIVERSITY BUILDING ON WASHINGTON SQUARE

## THE IDEA OF NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Two objects are in contemplation. One is to elevate the standard of learning, to complete the studies commenced in the colleges, to embrace in the plan of education those branches which may not be included in that of the existing seminaries of learning; in a word, to assimilate the University to the most celebrated establishments abroad which are designated by that name. The other is to diffuse knowledge and to render it more accessible to the community at large.

—ALBERT GALLATIN *in the Convention of 1830*

EDUCATION at once high and broad was clearly the twofold aim of those associated with the founding of New York University. The desire “to elevate the standard of learning” was no strange or new aspiration; for a decade the current criticism of American colleges had been their lack of opportunity for the pursuance of advanced studies, a criticism emanating often from those who had taken graduate work in foreign universities, especially the German universities.

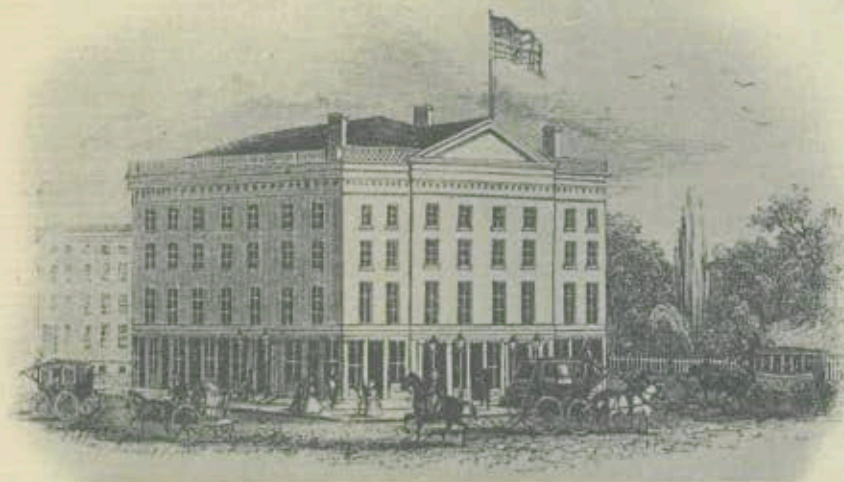
But the other object, “to diffuse knowledge and to render it more accessible to the community at large,” was but little short of revolutionary. The nine distinguished Founders were not unmindful of the radical nature of this part of their proposal; to its support they marshaled their strong arguments, arguments clearly and eloquently set forth in the first formal statement of their purposes, the “Considerations upon the Expediency and Needs of Establishing a University in the City of New York.”

This pamphlet, sent to leading citizens of the City in 1830, boldly advanced the following contentions: that the conventional colleges

and universities of the day were "the places of education for a privileged class"; that although current college training was indeed necessary to "respectability" in the learned professions, the time and the place also required a "different kind of institution . . . one so conducted that not only the young man designed to be a lawyer, physician, or clergyman may there carry on the preparatory discipline in language, philosophy, and mathematics . . . but one, also, in which young persons designed to be merchants, mechanics, farmers, manufacturers, architects, civil engineers . . . may resort with equal privileges and equal advantages, and pursue those studies respectively which will aid them in their future occupations"; that the proposed university, furthermore, should be open to those students who wished to pursue studies only for a year or even for a single session; finally, that such truly popular instruction could best be given not in the seclusion of cloistered halls but in the throbbing heart of a great city.

How striking a fulfillment of the ideas of the Founders was the University the end of its first century, a distinguished historian pointed out in the centennial commencement address in 1932: ". . . if you seek a monument for that first President of your Council," declared Dr. Robert McElroy, "look about you at this great democratic University, with its 40,665 minds, not chanced but chosen. Look at its two centers of liberal arts: the one on the original site at Washington Square, the other the lovely campus of University College, in the Bronx; and lying between, at such points as the strategy of its intellectual campaign has designated, buildings and faculties and twelve divisions, devoted to 'all that the world is thinking about,' to quote the expansive phrase of your present distinguished Chancellor, and dominated by the scientific spirit which, as your Chancellor again says, 'seeks light from all sources.' "

Who were the men responsible for this idea of a university that was to be different and what were the circumstances of its actual establishment? The first recorded meetings show a nucleus of nine men—two merchants, a banker, a mineralogist, two physicians, a lawyer, and two



CLINTON HALL, THE FIRST HOME OF THE UNIVERSITY

ministers—all leading citizens of New York in their day, who may be regarded as the Founders of New York University:

- REV. J. M. MATHEWS, A.B., *Union College, 1803*
- REV. J. M. WAINWRIGHT, A.B., *Harvard, 1812*
- DR. JOHN AUGUSTINE SMITH, A.B., *William and Mary, 1780*
- DR. VALENTINE MOTT, *Columbia Medical School, 1806*
- HUGH MAXWELL, A.B., *Columbia, 1808*
- JOHN DELAFIELD, A.B., *Columbia, 1802*
- JOSEPH DELAFIELD, A.B., *Yale, 1818*
- MYNDERT VAN SCHAICK, *merchant*
- ISAAC S. HONE, *merchant*

At a public meeting on January 6, 1830, the nine Founders gained a strong addition in General Morgan Lewis, graduate of Princeton, who became one of the chief movers for the foundation of the University and was elected the second President of its Council. As a result of this meeting, the memorable pamphlet of "Considerations" was addressed to the citizens and appealed for their support.

Six months later, in July, 1830, the announcement was made that "more than one hundred thousand dollars have been subscribed or



CITY HALL

THE CONVENTION OF 1830 MET IN THE "COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBER" OF CITY HALL ON OCTOBER 20



COUNCIL CHAMBER

secured to the objects of the Institution." Those who had subscribed funds were made shareholders with voting privileges. On October 13, 1830, they elected the first Council of New York University. Among the members was Albert Gallatin, graduate of the University of Geneva, Secretary of the Treasury under Thomas Jefferson, president of the National Bank of New York. On October 18, 1830, Gallatin was elected chairman of the first Council of New York University.

With the funds raised and with the organization completed, the newly elected Council turned to the practical task of opening the Uni-

THE PHOTOGRAPH WHICH DR. DRAPER TOOK OF HIS SISTER—THE FIRST TAKEN OF THE HUMAN FACE BY THE LIGHT OF THE SUN



MISS DOROTHY CATHERINE DRAPER



DR. JOHN W. DRAPER

versity. They faced immediately the necessity of formulating plans for the organization of instruction, of determining just how the idea of a University created on a "liberal and extensive foundation" could be materialized. To assist them, they called a conference in New York of the most eminent teachers and scientists of the United States for a public discussion of educational problems.

On October 20, the Educational Convention of 1830 opened in the Common Council Chamber of the New York City Hall. In addition to the members of the Council, about fifty men were in attendance. Among them were Edward Livingston of New Orleans, soon to be-



come Jackson's Secretary of State; S. R. Betts, judge of the Federal District Court in New York City; Professors Hodge and Patton of Princeton; Silliman and Henry E. Dwight of Yale; Theodore Dwight Woolsey, later president of Yale; Thomas H. Gallaudet; Francis Lieber; and Jared Sparks, later president of Harvard.

Following the convention, the main lines of the organization of the University were established. It was to be known as the University of the City of New York.\* The Council elected by the shareholders was given supreme control, with power to elect as their chief executive officer a Chancellor, for a term of four years, but reëligible. Adoption of statutes and first election of officers took place on January 31, 1831. Gallatin was elected President of the Council. General Lewis was made Vice President, John Delafield, Secretary, and Dr. J. M. Mathews, the pastor of the South Dutch Reformed Church, was elected the first Chancellor.

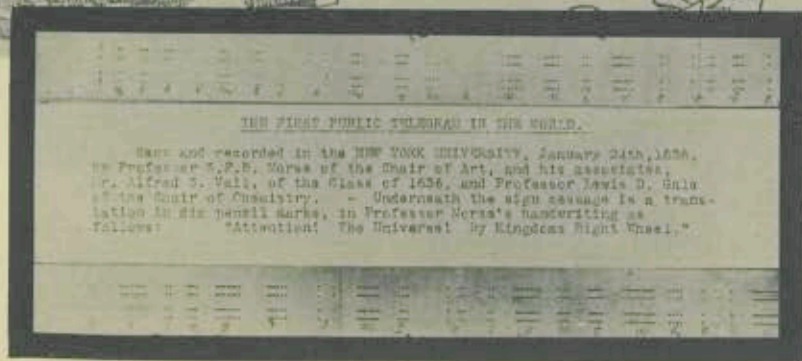
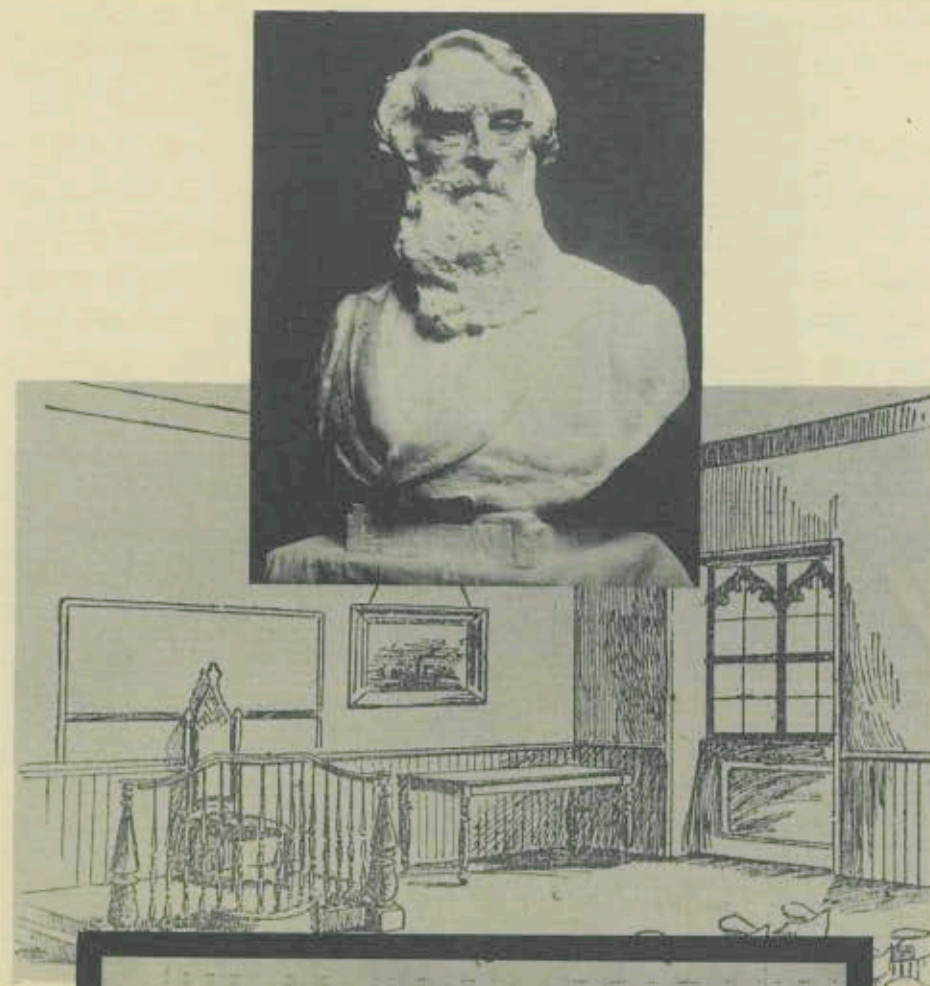
The legislature of the State was immediately petitioned to incorporate the University along the lines previously determined and on April 21, 1831, the charter was granted. Arrangements for the opening of the new institution proceeded apace, although the inaugural ceremony did not take place until September 26, 1832. October, 1832, found 108 matriculants in the new University. These aspirants for a higher education sat under a distinguished faculty which included:

*JOHN TORREY, professor of chemistry, mineralogy, and botany, teacher of Asa Gray, author of two volumes on the Flora of the State of New York*

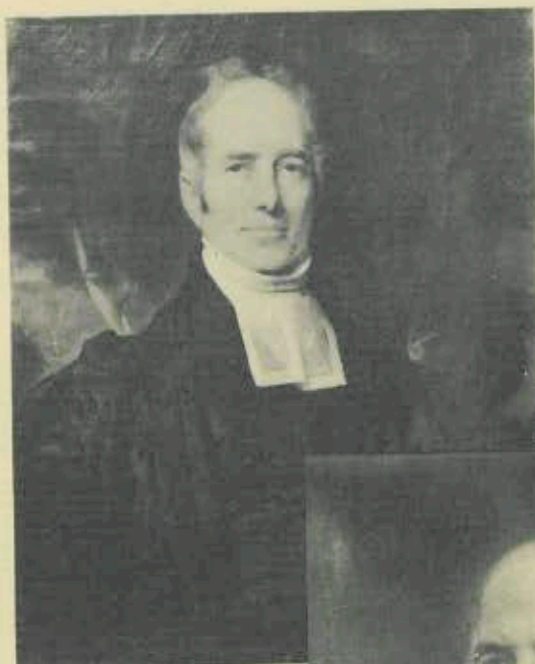
*DAVID B. DOUGLASS, professor of natural philosophy, architecture, and civil engineering, graduate of Yale, formerly professor at West Point, later president of Kenyon College*

*HENRY VETHAKE, professor of mathematics and astronomy, graduate of Columbia, formerly teacher at Princeton and Dickinson, later provost of the University of Pennsylvania*

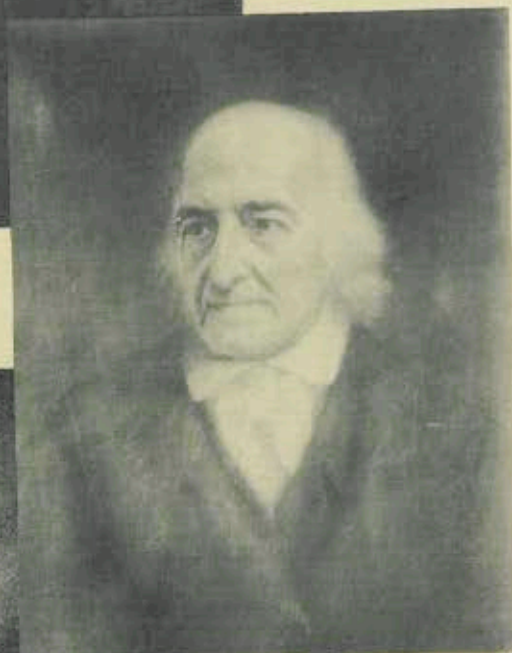
\*The name was changed to New York University in 1896.



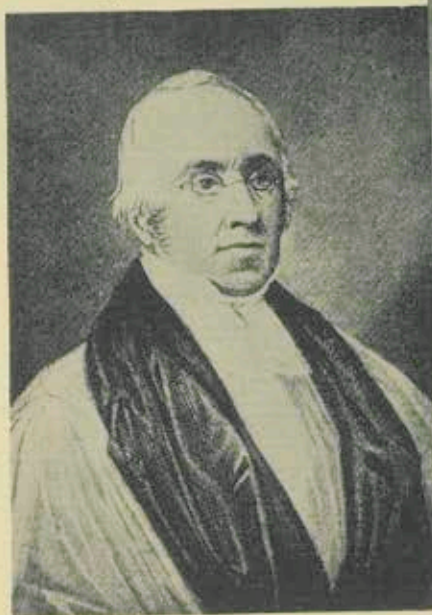
THE BUST OF SAMUEL FINLEY BREESE MORSE IN THE HALL OF FAME  
THE ROOM FROM WHICH THE FIRST TELEGRAM WAS SENT  
THE FIRST TELEGRAM



THE REVEREND  
JAMES M. MATHEWS



THE HONORABLE ALBERT GALLATIN



THE REVEREND  
J. M. WAINWRIGHT

THE SIGNERS OF THE CALL  
TO THE CONVENTION OF 1830  
WERE THE REVEREND JAMES  
M. MATHEWS, THE HONORABLE  
ALBERT GALLATIN, THE  
REVEREND J. M. WAINWRIGHT,  
AND MR. JOHN DELAFIELD

HENRY P. TAPPAN, *professor of philosophy and belle-lettres, graduate of Union, later in 1852 the first president of the University of Michigan*

Although classes began and were continued until 1835 in the building known as Clinton Hall, at the corner of Beekman and Nassau Streets, the ambitious and zealous Chancellor Mathews did not wait for instruction to begin to select a site for the University's own building. On October 27, 1832, New York University purchased for forty thousand dollars the ground opposite the northeast corner of Washington Square.

Chancellor Mathews was determined the city should *see* the University and after the purchase of the plot plans were prepared for the erection thereon of the University's first building. Construction began in 1833 and the University was able to move into its own quarters in the autumn of 1835, although the building was not completed and dedicated until 1837. It was four stories high and for two generations Washington Square was beautified by its crenelated towers. It contained fifty-nine rooms, exclusive of two chapels. The great chapel—modeled after King's College Chapel, Cambridge, and described in William's Annual Register for 1836 as "in the pointed style of the Tudor age, furnishing, probably, the only specimen of a fine Gothick interior in the country"—was the particular project of Chancellor Mathews.

### EARLY CONTRIBUTIONS TO ART AND SCIENCE

**A**LTHOUGH the old Gothic building at Washington Square never witnessed the realization of the Founders' plan for a broader form of University education, it was the scene of some notable contributions to art, science, and industry. The very fact that its student body was never large enough to make full use of the space made it possible for the

building to become an important art center. The surplus rooms had to be rented to desirable tenants, and somehow they became the favored habitation of artists and men of artistic bent, not a few of whom were justly renowned.

The most plausible explanation of this fact lies in the early presence here of Samuel F. B. Morse, who had been appointed professor of the literature of the arts of design at the beginning of the first term in 1832. Morse was already a painter of distinction before he achieved fame as an inventor. He took rooms in the building even before it was completed.

If the early curriculum of New York University did not fulfill the aims of its Founders in meeting the practical needs of men, the specific contributions of two of its professors, nevertheless, did write its name high in the annals of science and industry. For during the year 1837 in a room of the old building at Washington Square, Professor Samuel F. B. Morse perfected the recording telegraph; and in 1840 on the roof of the building, Professor John W. Draper, giving practical usefulness to the principles of Daguerre, was the first to photograph the human face by the light of the sun.

Samuel Finley Breese Morse, native of Massachusetts, graduate of Yale in 1810, was a member of the University's first faculty and held the chair to which he was appointed until his death in 1872. On the very day of his appointment in 1832, he embarked from Havre for home after a two-year stay in Europe. It was on his homeward voyage that he made to a companion the remark, "If the presence of electricity can be made visible on any part of the circuit. I see no reason why intelligence may not be transmitted instantaneously by electricity." The thought struck fire in him, and the next five years marked his labors on his great invention. In 1837 he exhibited the telegraph to a professor in the University building. On January 24, 1838, in a public test in the University was sent the noted dispatch,

Attention, the Universe!  
By Kingdoms, Right Wheel!

James MacFarlane Mathews - AB 1803  
(Melancthon?)

James MacFarlane Mathews <sup>H.B.</sup>  
1803