

AN EPISODE

In the Documentary History of

The University of Oregon

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**THE  
BLUE RIBBON  
UNIVERSITY**

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GEORGE N. BELKNAP

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

EUGENE, OREGON

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## PREFACE

Some years ago, I undertook the assembly and chronological arrangement of copies of contemporary documents basic to the early history of the University of Oregon, as an archival contribution to the approaching observance of the University's centennial year, 1976. As a byproduct, I found myself arranging and annotating several groups of related documents as an experiment with a documentary approach to episodes in narrative history. This pamphlet presents one episode. The reader may judge whether, in this case, the experiment is successful.

Manuscript documents are transcribed as literally as type will allow. The conventional [*sic*] is avoided; should the reader wonder whether some oddities may be my typographical errors, I offer assurance that proofs of all such documents have been checked with special care. In the case of printed documents, typographical errors in the original printing have been silently corrected. The writing habits of the author of a manuscript may be significant, but hardly the errors of a careless compositor. Still, the identification of a typographical error may sometimes require judgment. For example, in no. 14, the *Oregon State Journal* reporter probably wrote "long-winded." But I am rather fond of "long-minded," though the irony I detect may have been accidental.

Side notes for manuscript documents indicate the location of the manuscripts with standard library symbols (OrHi, Oregon Historical Society Library; OrU, University of Oregon Library)—with one exception. The abbreviation, M. C., refers to *Pharisee among the Philistines: The Diary of Judge Matthew P. Deady, 1871-1892*, edited by Malcolm Clark, Jr., which will probably be off the press before this pamphlet appears. I am indebted to the Oregon Historical Society, publisher of the edition, and to Mr. Clark for permission to examine page proofs.

GEORGE N. BELKNAP

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## THE BLUE RIBBON UNIVERSITY

### No. 1.

Eugene Guard,  
Mar. 15, 1879

BLUE RIBBON CLUB.—The meeting of the Blue Ribbon Club last Wednesday night was well attended. Judge Walton delivered a stirring speech on the temperance question, which was well received and applauded. Volunteer speeches were made by several, and the usual good music was rendered by the members of the Choral Society.

EUGENE AHEAD.—Albany has a Blue Ribbon Club, that numbers 757, and the Temperance Messenger says, that Eugene will have to look to her laurels, or Albany will take the lead. They may eventually lead us in numbers as they have a larger population; but when it comes to making a clean sweep, they will have to take a back seat. Out of a population of 1306, as returned by the school clerk, in March 1878, residing in town, and contiguous thereto, the Blue Ribbons have a membership of 1084, lacking but a little over 200 of having the entire population of the school district.

These and four more items in the March 15 *Guard* opened a shrewdly planned political campaign by the Eugene temperance faction to take over the City Council at an April 7 election. "Temperance" was a loaded word; members of the Blue Ribbon Club pledged total abstinence and support of prohibitory liquor laws. The *Guard's* generous contribution of space and the propagandistic overtones of the items do not reflect editorial policy, but only an acceptance of handouts to fill the local news columns—characteristic of Oregon newspapers of the period.<sup>1</sup>

These items are relevant to University of Oregon history for two reasons: (1) Two Eugene members of the Board of Regents, Joshua J. Walton, Jr. and B. F. Dorris,<sup>2</sup> and two professors, Mark Bailey and

<sup>1</sup> On Feb. 8, 1879 the *Guard* had angrily denounced a Blue Ribbon Club speaker who stated that "the editorial fraternity of this city were opposed to temperance, and used the influence of their respective papers against that cause." "Some of the agitators should give heed to him who says, 'Be ye temperate in all things,' and not allow their zeal to override their respect for truth."

<sup>2</sup> Walton was an attorney, Dorris a tinsmith. A reader who may look to the original sources should, to avoid confusion, be warned that the Walton and Dorris families were divided on the temperance issue. J. J. Walton, Sr., Regent Walton's father, was an anti-Blue Ribbon candidate for city marshal in 1879 and 1880 and was defeated in both elections; George B. Dorris, brother of Regent Dorris, was a leader of the opposition. Faculty Blue Ribbon families appear to have remained united.

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Thomas Condon, and their wives, were leaders and diligent workers in the Blue Ribbon Club cause; Condon was president of the club through the 1879 campaign and Dorris was a member of the Executive Committee. (2) The election led to the University's first critical town-gown confrontation and to community wounds that were not easily healed. The temperance propaganda was focused on the political campaign in later items in the local press.

**No. 2.**  
*Guard*, Mar. 22,  
1879

BLUE RIBBON CLUB.— . . . Mr. Horace Knox delivered the principal speech of the evening. He claimed that the saloon men were not as bad as they were painted by some of the more zealous advocates of temperance, and exhorted all temperance men to work for the ticket that would be placed before the people for their suffrages, by the select nine, at the coming city election. Mr. Knox thought that under the existing laws the saloon keeper did nothing that such laws did not grant them the privilege of doing. His remedy was to elect the Blue Ribbon ticket, that laws could be passed that would force them to close their houses . . .

**No. 3.**  
*Guard*, Mar. 29,  
1879

BLUE RIBBON CLUB.— . . . Mrs. Goodchild commenced the exercises with an essay on temperance from a woman's standpoint . . . She hoped the day would soon come when the saloons would be compelled to close or at least be driven from the streets to the back alleys. She thought that this would soonest be brought about, by voting the temperance ticket at the coming city election . . .

**No. 4.**  
*Eugene Oregon  
State Journal*,  
Apr. 5, 1879

There will be a mass meeting of temperance people at the Court House this evening at 7 p.m. to ratify the nominations made by the committee appointed over a month ago. All who are interested in temperance work are invited to attend as this is not the business of the Blue Ribbon Club but the business of temperance people both in and outside the club.

According to the March 8 *Guard*, the ticket was to be nominated by a committee of nine Blue Ribbon Club members and nine additional "temperance men outside the club," chosen by the club nine; the reference to "the select nine" in no. 2 suggests that the committee may not have been enlarged.

The decision to put a temperance ticket before the voters of Eugene had been made after debate at a Blue Ribbon Club meeting on February 19. John W. Johnson, President of the University, attended and seems to have warned against precipitous action. "Observer," in an account of the meeting in the February 22 *Guard*, reported that "Prof. Johnson's was a practical telling speech, the thoughts of a man with a great soul who moves—not too quickly—but for results." The manner of this report suggests that "Observer" may have been the Rev. Edward R. Geary, Eugene regent and Presbyterian minister, who seems to have remained aloof from Blue Ribbon Club intrigues.

There was organized opposition, which assembled its forces without recourse to the press. Neither faction listed its candidates in the newspapers; the temperance ticket chosen by the committee was formally ratified after the papers had gone to press on the Saturday before the election. But voters in the small city would have been adequately informed. The basic issue was clearly defined by the *Oregon State Journal*.

No. 5.  
Oregon State  
Journal, Apr. 5,  
1879

Before our next issue our city will have passed under the management of a new set of officers. On Monday the 7th day of April are to be elected, a President of the Council, three Councilmen . . . Recorder, Treasurer and Marshal. The city appears to be at present divided into two parties, the temperance and anti-temperance, and the contest will be close and warmly engaged in. If the temperance people succeed in electing the Councilmen some radical changes may be expected in the laws governing the sale of liquor. If they are defeated, the matter will probably go on as it has. It will at any rate be to the interest of every person who lives within the limits of the city to attend the election and vote. No man ought to be so entirely dead to public affairs as to stay away from the polls . . . Let men of sterling worth be elected, men of ability, men qualified for their respective positions, men whose administration will be most beneficial to the town.

The temperance forces were victorious—but the victory was costly for University-community relations.

No. 6.  
Guard, Apr. 12,  
1879

CITY ELECTION.—The election for city officers last Monday passed off quietly with the exception of some excitement caused by the voting of University students who hold free scholarships from other counties . . . Two hundred and eighty-six votes were polled; this is the largest vote that has ever been cast in the city, being 32 more than the vote last year.

A WRONG.—We hear of considerable dissatisfaction caused by the voting of students—at the city election—who hold free scholarships from other counties. We cannot say as to what the law is upon the matter, but it seems to us that persons that come here with free scholarships to go to school, do some hard swearing when they swear that they come here for no temporary purpose, and with the intention of making this their permanent home. A test case should be made of this as every year it causes more trouble. One year ago, only four students voted, while at the recent election about a dozen votes were cast by that class. The University was not created for the purpose of dabbling in municipal, political or sectarian affairs, and should not be weakened by the division of the citizens of Eugene that will inevitably occur, if it becomes a machine to interfere in our local and municipal elections. We cannot believe that the professors have advised and counselled the students to take this step, as some have insinuated, for we believe them to be honorable gentlemen, and of such character as would not knowingly abet a wrong.



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A letter in the May 3 *Guard* signed "Con" asked why the regents did not cancel the scholarships of such students, since they were legally required to be residents of the counties from which they received their scholarships—and recommended a lecture by Matthew P. Deady, president of the University Board of Regents and Federal District Court judge for Oregon, on "Cities and Towns," which had been published in the April 19 Portland *Oregonian*. The lecture favored the restriction of the franchise in municipal corporations to taxpayers. The "Con" letter was reprinted in the *Oregonian*, with the author described as "a prominent citizen of Eugene City" and with editorial comment.

No. 7.  
Oregonian,  
May 6, 1879

We are told that this is one feature of a controversy which is developing into a strife between the "church" and "anti-church" party in connection with the university. A good deal of feeling, attended with no little bitterness, appears to have developed over the matter. It is entirely clear that the students from other counties had no right to vote. It was unwarranted intrusion on their part; and since they have sworn that they are residents of Eugene City they should no longer be allowed the privilege of free scholarship. Why they should desire to interfere with affairs at Eugene City is not clear . . .

Eugene citizens who read the *Oregonian* would have had no difficulty translating "church" and "anti-church" into Blue Ribbon and anti-Blue Ribbon. Blue Ribbon Club meetings were heavily laden with Protestant ritual—prayers, hymns, and discourses on such topics as "The Temperance Question in Relation to the Advancement of the Cause of Christ." The club appears to have recruited its members principally from the evangelical Protestant churches. The atmosphere probably repelled some good citizens who were equally concerned with the problem of alcoholism.

We do not know what the *Journal* had to say about student voting. Its April 12 issue is missing from located files. The *Guard*, in pointing out the increase in number of ballots cast, seems to suggest that the student votes were not only a wrong but a significant factor in the result; but its report does not include the number of votes cast for the competing candidates. What part Blue Ribbon faculty members played in encouraging nonresident students to vote remained a controversial question for some years. The *Guard* professed, rather politely, to believe them innocent (no. 6), perhaps with the intent of calming community passions. Robert B. Cochran, in a letter to Deady, an old political friend from territorial days, condemned the faculty primarily for neglect in failing to advise students to stay away from the polls, but added casually to the charge of neglect "or design."

No. 8.

Cochran to Deady,  
from Eugene,  
May 18, 1879  
(OrHi)

Dear Sir[ :] I will take the liberty to address you this letter as the President of Board of Regents of the University of Oregon. I desire to call your attention to a few things that have crept in to that institution that is disturbing its peace and will finally destroy its usefulness. Perhaps your attention has been called to the controversy growing out of the city election at which the students took a lively interest and voted after being challenged by taking an oath that they were citizens of Eugene City, and the people here are very anxious to have this matter settled, as to whether students from other counties and especially those having free scholarships are entitled to vote in the city, or county elections. I believe the State Constitution settles that question, and there could be no relief granted by the Legislature, and there could be no decree of any court that could set aside or in the least modify that provision of the fundamental laws of the state, and that is the opinion of all who have an opinion on this question. And their case was presented to the grand jury but it was so composed, and the question being such a tender one, that they did not find any bills.

Now permit me as an individual, and friend of that institution, and I will say that I reflect the sentiments of three fourth of the people of this town, to ask of you at the next meeting of your board to give some kind of public expression on this subject—and make some kind of a record of it so that it may ever hereafter be settled. This is the third election in which the students have taken a part and if they presume to take the law into their own hands time after time others will be induced to do the same thing and in all probability at the next election the country will be shocked with the intelligence of a bloody riot in our streets, which can be prevented by you, in placing your opinion on record defining the rights of the students attending any seminaries of learning—but if you think it would be better we can bring this before your board by petition—or any other plan you may indicate.

The other matter that I think requires the attention of the board is that the faculty have permitted the students to get into this trouble when they could have prevented it with a single word and I believe they should be sharply rebuked for not saying it. Men have placed their children under the care of the Faculty and if by their neglect or design misfortune should happen to them they should be turned off at once . . .

Most sincerely yours R. B. Cochran

Cochran, a veteran of political wars and an influential member of the State Senate from Lane County, was not a panicky person. His prediction of “a bloody riot in our streets” if student voting continued was probably a realistic assessment of the bitter resentment of many citizens.<sup>3</sup> Neither the *Guard* nor Cochran commented on the possibility that Blue Ribbon regents, if not the faculty, may have recruited student

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<sup>3</sup> When a nonresident student tried to vote in an Apr. 1884 city election, he seems to have been threatened with horsewhipping. Laurean Society (see note 5) column in Apr. 12 *Journal*: “When, in the recent city election a member [of the society] from Grant county simply stepped up to the polls with a ticket in his hand he was immediately surrounded by a crowd of voters eager to ask his opinion of the crops(?) . . .”

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votes—in a small college in a small town, the local regents would have had ample opportunity.

It would be interesting to have the text of an address by Condon before the Blue Ribbon Club that was reported briefly in the May 24 *Journal*: “Prof. Condon closed with some well timed remarks and stinging reflections on some of the prominent enemies of the Temperance cause who have been seeking notoriety through the journals of the State at the expense of the Prof’s. and Students of the University.” The reference is apparently to the “Con” letter in the *Guard* and the reprint, with comments (no. 7), in the *Oregonian* and perhaps in other papers—though “Con” said nothing about temperance or “Prof’s.” and the *Oregonian* nothing explicitly about temperance. But, as has been suggested, Eugene citizens would have understood the reference.

As for the local Blue Ribbon regents, Deady may have been suspicious. The voting issue came before the Board of Regents at a special meeting on May 23-24; Deady wrote in his diary:

No. 9.  
Deady Diary,  
May 24, 1879  
(M.C., I, 280)

Friday went to Eugene to attend meeting of Regents . . . Stopped with Dr. Geary at Eugene. Meeting in evening and morning. Voted that if students voted in Eugene elections should be expelled. Dorris kicked against it, but yielded at last.

Dorris had been elected president of the City Council on the Blue Ribbon ticket.<sup>4</sup> The by-law adopted by the Board, once Dorris “yielded at last,” was stringent and apparently effective.

No. 10.  
Regents Minutes,  
May 23-24, 1879  
(OrU)

On motion of T. G. Hendricks the following By-Law was adopted, Whereas the Constitution of this State at Article 2 Section 4, provides that, “For purpose of voting no person shall be deemed to have gained or lost a residence by reason of his presence or absence while a student of any Seminary of learning.” Therefore be it Resolved:

That any student attending the University upon a free scholarship who shall vote in any local election in the City of Eugene shall be expelled therefrom for such unlawful act by the Faculty:—and in case any other student attending the University shall vote at any such election unlawfully he shall be expelled by the Board of Regents, and it is hereby made the duty of the Faculty to admonish the student of this by-law and to see that it is duly enforced.

One wonders what arguments Dorris used in the presence of Deady, proud father of the Oregon State Constitution. The *Journal* commented

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<sup>4</sup> While “tinkering with the water pipes” in the University building shortly after the election, Dorris loosed a flood that deluged the building. The *Journal* reported the event on Apr. 19 in an item beginning: “Our enterprising tin-smith is a cold water man clear to the spinal column, but he got more than a sufficiency on Tuesday.”

on May 31: "This will probably settle this much vexed question for all time to come." The peculiar distinction between offending nonresident scholarship students (to be expelled by the faculty) and other offending nonresident students (to be expelled by the regents) suggests a distrust of the faculty's willingness to follow Board policy in cases where the question of guilt would call for individual judgment—as it would not in the case of scholarship students, since the award of a county scholarship was conclusive on the point of residence. The regents usually avoided direct involvement in student discipline. As Deady was doubtless aware when he wrote a provision in the 1876 University charter delegating this responsibility to the faculty, one among other advantages would be the protection of the regents from many hard problems. Though the by-law was moved by Hendricks, an anti-Blue Ribbon Eugene businessman, it has marks of Deady drafting (see no. 12, below, where Harvey Scott stated that the by-law had been moved by Deady; though this was strictly speaking inaccurate, Scott may have reflected correctly what he had been told by Deady concerning the origin of the by-law).

Deady apparently did not find it necessary, in spite of Cochran's advice, to oppose a resolution introduced by a Blue Ribbon Club regent after the adoption of the by-law—though he was perhaps skeptical (see no. 13, below, Scott's note, and my comment).

No. 11.  
Regents Minutes,  
May 23-24, 1879

On motion of Joshua J Walton it was resolved that it is the sense of this Board that the Faculty were in no way to blame or censurable for the conduct of the Students in voting at the late city election.

Writing to Deady on June 11, President Johnson reported that "The excitement in regard to student voting has abated."<sup>5</sup> But the memory

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<sup>5</sup> The activist student allies of the anti-establishment Blue Ribbon Club were probably a minority faction. Majority student opinion was probably reflected in the regular Laurean and Eutaxian columns published in the *Journal* and the *Guard*, which rather consistently treated the edicts and exhortations of the faculty on liquor and saloons with mild amusement. The Laurean (men) and Eutaxian (women) literary societies were autonomous student organizations incorporated under Oregon law and without "faculty advisers." Their newspaper columns, however, date from the late months of 1879 and provide no direct evidence of student opinion on the voting issue in the spring of 1879. The Laureans, who were quick to exploit live issues—local, national, and international—for their weekly debates, were content to leave this one alone until Feb. 1880, when its debaters contended on the topic: "Resolved, That the Board of Regents of the State University have no right to decide who shall vote at the Eugene City Elections." Eutaxians were present as guests and "President Johnson, also present, seemed considerably interested in the debate, much to the encouragement of the young debaters. The question being thoroughly discussed both pro and con, was decided in favor of the affirmative." Eutaxian column, *Guard*, Feb. 14, 1880. Nothing can be inferred concerning student opinion from this decision, by the president of the society, since he

lingered on, not only in Eugene but elsewhere in the state. In 1886 a similar problem with Willamette University students in Salem evoked a blast from Harvey Scott in the *Oregonian*.

No. 12.  
Oregonian,  
Dec. 10, 1886

At the various school towns in this state it has been a common practice for students to vote in local elections, notwithstanding the fact that they are mere sojourners and not citizens. An attempt to break up this practice at Salem was made early this week but failed through the fault of a deputy prosecuting officer who moved dismissal of a case on the ground that the offending student believed himself entitled to vote and that he (the prosecutor) having been advised by his "associate Mr. Knight" had come to the same opinion. By what authority and through what processes of reasoning the officer and his "associate Mr. Knight" reached this extraordinary judgment we are not able to understand, since the voting of a person not a resident of the city in which his vote is cast, is a clear and positive violation of both law and common sense. One does not need to be a lawyer to know that a man leaving his established home for any purpose with the intent to return to it does not lose his residence, no matter how long he remains away; or that a man sojourning in a place not his established home does not acquire residence, no matter how long he stays. These are principles of law common and familiar and it is strange that anybody old enough to vote should be ignorant of them. A student in Salem or at any other place not his established home has no right to vote of course, and any one who does vote is guilty of a misdemeanor and liable under the laws to punishment.

Two or three years ago one of the professors of the State University at Eugene City, with the lack of judgment common to college professors, marshaled all of the students of legal age that he could muster to the polling booth in a local election and "voted" them. The matter came before the Board of Regents, where it was condemned as an unwarranted interference in the affairs of the town and an act directly in violation of law. Out of this incident grew a permanent rule of the University that an attempt on the part of any student not a citizen of Eugene to vote in any local election should be considered sufficient cause for his dismissal. This rule was adopted upon the motion of Judge Matthew P. Deady, president of the regents, who, let us add, probably knows as much of the law as it applies to this case as Deputy State Attorney Courtney, of Salem, or his "associate, Mr. Knight."

The pained faculty of the University of Oregon instructed its secretary "to write the 'Oregonian' denying the charges" (faculty minutes, December 13, 1886).

No. 13.  
Oregonian,  
Dec. 16, 1886

To the Editor of the Oregonian: An editorial in *The Oregonian* of Friday, December 10, entitled "Sojourners, Not Citizens," contains the following: "Two or three years ago one of the professors of the State

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was required to base his judgment solely on the debating skills of the participants. But the statement of the question gave an advantage to the affirmative—which was perhaps deliberate, if the Laureans knew that President Johnson would attend. The societies were fond of needling the President of the Faculty.

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University at Eugene City, with the lack of judgment common to college professors, marshaled all the students of legal age that he could muster to the polling booth in a local election and 'voted' them."

I am requested to say that this statement is wholly incorrect and does the faculty great injustice. Neither two or three years ago nor at any other time before or since, has any professor of this institution "voted" a student, or in any way encouraged him to vote; but, on the contrary, some years ago members of the faculty, on hearing that certain students from abroad intended to vote, went to them personally and advised them not to vote, giving as their opinion that such students had no legal right to vote in city or county elections.

As we do not suppose it your desire to misrepresent the faculty, we ask you to give this article the same prominence and publicity that you gave the lines quoted in this communication. Respectfully yours, John Straub, Sec'y Faculty.

By authority of the faculty.

[*The Oregonian* has only to say that the statement came to it in a very direct manner and that its correctness was not doubted. However, it cheerfully prints the communication.—ED.]

Scott's "very direct" source was almost certainly Deady, with whom he was closely associated and from whom the *Oregonian* got much of its news of University affairs, as many entries in Deady's diary show (see note 7, below). The faculty, nearly eight years after the 1879 election, was acting on faith rather than knowledge when it protested that not one professor had encouraged students to vote. Such certainty would not have been justified even in 1879 unless the faculty had questioned the students who voted; and it is extremely improbable that there was any such investigation. That some faculty members would have tried to discourage student voting is probable—certainly President Johnson and perhaps John Straub, a popular young tutor in modern languages who had come to the University in the fall of 1878, though he may have been still rather innocent concerning problems of University-community relations.

An immediate result of the Blue Ribbon Club victory was a May 12, 1879 ordinance "prohibiting the sale of liquor or the keeping of drinking shops"; by May 21, however, the Council had second thoughts and substituted an ordinance for Sunday closing of saloons (*Guard*, May 17, 24). But even this measure did not have the support of a united community. Twenty-five Eugene businessmen led by Regent Hendricks petitioned the Council in October for its repeal because it was discriminatory against one class of legitimate businessmen; but a motion to repeal was defeated (*Guard*, October 18, November 15).

The Blue Ribbon Club forces, however, failed in a further move toward their goal in February 1880, when the Council defeated a proposed ordinance, supported by the club, which would have required that

each application for a license to sell spirituous liquors must be accompanied by a petition signed by a majority of the voters of Eugene; the ordinance came to the Council on petition by 39 voters, including Walton and Condon (*Guard*, January 17, February 14). On this issue the club lost the votes of two of the three councilmen it had elected in 1879. The *Journal* described the scene at the Council meeting.

**No. 14.**  
Oregon State  
Journal, Feb. 14,  
1880

The lobby in the City Council last Monday night was large and enthusiastic. The ordinance to amend the city law in regard to the matter of issuing licenses to sell spirituous liquors was the all-important topic, and numerous long-minded [long-winded?] speeches were made for and against. On taking the vote, it stood one for adoption and five against it.

The *Guard* complained that the Council was wasting its time arguing about liquor and neglecting the pressing problem of inadequate fire protection in the downtown district.

**No. 15.**  
*Guard*, Feb. 14,  
1880

. . . Let the Council instead of wrangling over vexed questions, calculated to divide and antagonize our citizens, take some step by which at least a partial protection from the flames, which are liable at any moment to consume our city, may be afforded . . . A city election is near at hand, and we shall advocate the election of men who are known to favor this matter. We want men for councilmen who are willing to do something that will afford a reasonable protection to the city, rather than those whose whole souls are bound up in a pro or con whisky question.

The same theme was pursued in more general terms in the February 28 *Guard*, in comment on a meeting of the State Temperance Alliance in Eugene: "It is a great mistake of temperance reformers that their ideas are narrow and confined. They say, give us men who will pledge themselves to do all in their power to secure restrictive legislation. No other qualifications are required. Whether he be honest, and competent to fulfill the duties devolving upon him, whether he had experience and learnt wisdom necessary to legislate wisely, is not asked. The only standard by which they would try all candidates for political preferment, is that of a blind adherence to a prohibitory faith." The *Journal* had another complaint.

**No. 16.**  
Oregon State  
Journal, Feb. 28,  
1880

In the numerous public meetings in this city, and especially those pertaining to the temperance work, the speakers are in the habit of bringing up the life and habits of persons both living and dead whose near relatives and friends are often in the audience, and parading their faulty lives and sad deaths before the public in a manner that is harrowing to the finer feeling of those who hear it . . . About a year ago, many of us remember that a great deal of comment and hard feelings were

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engendered by remarks of this kind, and Prof. Condon as president of the Blue Ribbon Club demanded that the thing be stopped. Many times these incidents are reported as absolute facts when in truth and reality they may never have transpired, but are mere floating rumors . . .

The two-year terms of three councilmen would expire in April 1880, and the Blue Ribbon Club faced another battle to strengthen its hold on the city government. The *Guard* reported on March 20 that the president of the club had appointed a "senate to transact all business and select a ticket for the coming city election." Walton was a member of the "senate." The opposition held an open Citizens Convention on April 1, nominated candidates, and took the offensive with a strong resolution.

**No. 17.**  
Guard, Apr. 3,  
1880

WHEREAS this convention has met without regard to politics or any particular faction or creed for the purpose of nominating candidates for city officers. Therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the present good and future prosperity of our city demand that all good citizens should give their support for the election to officers who are wholly identified with the interest of the city and who can and will enter upon their duties unbiased and untrammelled by peculiar dogmas and petty alliances which only engender discord and dissension among the people.

RESOLVED, That while we have no fault to find with the so-called "Blue Ribbon Club" in any efforts it may put forth for the worthy purpose for which it was organized, yet we deprecate its efforts to control our politics and to assume exclusive management of our city affairs.

RESOLVED, That we believe the issue put before the so-called "Blue Ribbon Club" is one that can no longer lead to any good to our city, and we believe our best citizens should be elected without regard to politics or any peculiar dogma. Therefore we hereby pledge ourselves to give the ticket nominated our unqualified support at the city election on Monday, April 5th.

In the same issue the *Guard* published the competing tickets but, in spite of its promise in February (no. 15), endorsed no candidates; all candidates were probably in favor of fire protection. In another item, the editor commented ironically on the coming election.

**No. 18.**  
Guard, Apr. 3,  
1880

On Monday next this city will pass through the trying ordeal of a city election. For the interest manifested, a Presidential election is no comparison, and if we could believe the different orators, the whole future existence and prosperity of the city depends upon the election of both tickets. But this cannot be and we await with anxiety the disasters and tribulations that the impossibility of accomplishing that feat involves . . .

The Blue Ribbon Club changed its tactics in 1880, making little use of the press and, of course, placing no dependence on student voting. But its new tactics—again involving the University—seemed to many



citizens even more reprehensible. Cochran reported to Deady after the election.

No. 19.

Cochran to Deady,  
Apr. 12, 1880  
(OrHi)

Dear Sir and Friend[ :] When I saw and talked with you the other day in Portland in reference to the condition of . . . the University you will doubtless remember that I gave you quite a flattering account of its condition, but to my surprise and regret, when I got home on last Friday I learned there was trouble in the school. The Faculty had fifteen or twenty of the young men students on trial for the disobedience of a rule for the government of the school in regard to frequenting the Saloons, and it seems to be true that they are guilty to some extent of the charge, but it is to be hoped the charges have been magnified and the students not as guilty as some are wont to make them. I think it can be bridged over without expelling anyone. The Faculty I think has been very vigilant in looking after the conduct of the students under their care, and all of this happens to come to light about the time of the city election, and our community is most terribly stirred up on the Temperance question so much so that it would be hard to tell who was the drunkest—the Temperance people or the whisky people. If the Boys can pull through under the peculiar circumstances, I hope it will be a sufficient lesson to them not to do it again. I think all the good part of this community will do all they can to guard against anything happening [to] the students. There is but little danger of the President of the Faculty being unreasonable, but there are others among the teachers who are nothing less than fanatics on the Temperance question. I understand they attend most all the meetings, which is once a week—and oftener just before the Town election times, and make speeches and go on to a terrible rate, and my opinion is they have carried this matter beyond the point where prudence would dictate, and I fear our City Election last Monday had something to do with this difficulty in the school. I am one of those individuals who does not believe that the man who says the most can do the most. This is like everything else it can be overdone.

I see that your finding in the case of F. W. Osborn is like all you[r] findings based on a high sense of justice. He no doubt violated a Statute, but done so innocently, and I think the law as it stands is a disgrace to the advanced age in which we live.

Excuse me for detaining you so long and believe me as one of

Your best friends R B Cochran

As in his 1879 letter (no. 8), Cochran was remarkably restrained: "I fear our City Election last Monday had something to do with this difficulty in the school." Surviving records provide no information about the student trial. There are no faculty minutes before the fall of 1880; the annual report of President Johnson, which would normally be spread in the minutes of the Board of Regents, was omitted for 1879-80 only (one wonders whether what Johnson had to say was displeasing to Walton, Blue Ribbon secretary of the Board);<sup>6</sup> and Deady's annual report to the

<sup>6</sup> Deady, who seems to have kept a close eye on Walton's minutes, was in Alaska and missed the June 1880 Board meeting at which Johnson's report was submitted.

Governor for 1879-80, in which some mention of the difficulty might be expected, seems not to have been published as an official document (for reasons that are not relevant to the present question). But the report was published, unofficially, in the *Oregonian*.<sup>7</sup>

No. 20.

Deady's Report,  
*Oregonian*,  
Oct. 6, 1880

... The report of the President states that "the attendance has been good and the general deportment of a large majority of the students all that could be required," but that 18 of "the students had violated the rules of the faculty in regard to use of spirituous liquors and visiting saloons"; and recommends that the "legislature should take vigorous action to protect the students" from such practices.

The law ... already provides for the punishment of any person who shall sell or give "any intoxicating liquor to any minor under 18 years of age" without the consent of the parent or guardian of such minor, and this, if enforced, as it ought to be, is probably sufficient as to them. In addition to this, the law might be amended so as to apply to all the students without respect to age; and ... the power of expulsion, if properly used, would preserve the school from the presence and example of those whom neither legal nor moral restraints could control ...

Deady's suggestion that "the law might be amended so as to apply to all the students without respect to age" should not be taken as an endorsement of such an amendment, which would only reinforce an existing city ordinance (see no. 21, below) with the authority of state law. Deady was a master of the English language; his serious recommendations for the good of the University in his magisterial reports were not stated in the subjunctive mood. His endorsement of the power of expulsion with the qualification, "if properly used," suggests that he had Cochran's April 12 letter (no. 19) at hand and agreed with Cochran that the threat of expulsion was not properly used in the April charges. One can only guess at the fate of the 18 students; but it seems probable that they escaped expulsion through the unspectacular influence of Johnson, Deady, anti-Blue Ribbon regents, Cochran, and public opinion.

Though charges of frequenting saloons are common in faculty minutes through the 1880s, there is no other case remotely approaching a mass trial of 18 students (about one-fourth of the men students in the Collegiate Department). It seems apparent that the well-timed 1880 charges were politically motivated, to convince voters that drastic action was needed to protect student morals—first of all the election of the Blue Ribbon ticket.

The case of F. W. Osborn, to which Cochran referred in his letter, is a documented example of temperance tactics in the 1880 campaign.

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<sup>7</sup> Throughout his long tenure as president of the Board of Regents, Deady was in the habit of taking the manuscript of his annual report to the *Oregonian* immediately after it was completed for prompt publication, sometimes before it was received by the Governor.

Osborn was a Eugene druggist and secretary of the anti-Blue Ribbon Citizens Convention, in which Cochran also played a leading role. In February 1880 he had sold a pint of alcohol to an Indian, believing that he was an off-reservation halfbreed living with a white family and that the alcohol was for family use; but the Indian drank it on the streets of Eugene and boasted of the purchase to bystanders. No attention was paid to the incident at the time. But early in April the U. S. marshal, passing through Eugene, heard about it, arrested Osborn, and took him to Portland on the morning of election day for trial before Judge Deady in Federal court.

The story, without the extenuating circumstances, spread through the town before the polls opened, with an added tale that Osborn and Cochran had tried to kidnap the Indian witness. On April 8 Deady found Osborn guilty but, believing his explanation, assessed a nominal fine of \$1.00.<sup>8</sup> The story as it was told on election day was published in the April 7 Salem *Oregon Statesman*, on the authority of an anonymous "Correspondent." In a "card" in the April 10 *Guard*, Osborn denounced those responsible for the rumor of kidnapping as "wilful and malicious liars" and added that, if the *Statesman's* informer "will call at my drug store he may get the fifty cents, that he is entitled to as an informer." In the April 23 *Statesman* he replied in detail, giving his side of the story and concluding: "I am satisfied that this whole affair was gotten up by a few fanatical and self-righteous individuals for the purpose of carrying the city election and that they had been to work on the plot for a month or more." A slightly modified version of the reply also appear in the *Guard* on May 1. "Correspondent," still anonymous, apologized briefly in the April 30 *Statesman* for being taken in by false rumors: "It ill becomes any man to peddle hearsay."

Finally, on December 25, 1880, the *Guard* published an abject though strangely delayed "Explanation . . . to the Public" by the Rev. Isaac D. Driver, a prominent Methodist minister whose name appeared occasionally in accounts of Blue Ribbon Club affairs, admitting that he was responsible for spreading the false rumors: "The statements made by me in public were based on information then regarded as reliable, but now found to have rested on unjust inference and mistake. I trust that the gratification it affords me to make this explanation will be shared by all the just and fair minded lovers of peace and truth." Driver added that his informant had been J. E. Attebery, the Blue Ribbon candidate for re-election as city marshal. Driver's recantation dwelt principally

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<sup>8</sup> Deady's decision was published in full in the Apr. 13 *Oregonian*. There is no mention of kidnapping. The decision was also published in Sawyer's Reports, VI, 406-409, and in the Federal Reporter, II, 58-61.

on the kidnapping rumor. He may have been spurred to action through the possibility of a slander suit by Osborn and Cochran—who would have had an excellent case.

As for the 1880 election—the tactics of the Blue Ribbon Club backfired, and the Citizens ticket (except Walton, Sr.) was swept into office. In spite of the heated campaign, 32 less votes were cast than in 1879—the number by which the 1879 vote exceeded all previous records. On April 10 both Eugene newspapers mentioned this, perhaps in oblique comment on the extent of student voting in 1879; and both papers praised the winning candidates, the *Journal* stating “that the men elected on the Citizen’s ticket are temperance men, and good men, though they are not members of the Blue Ribbon Club.” The *Journal* also reported that “There was great rejoicing among friends of the victorious side on Monday night over the result of the election, and [the] Blue Ribbon element was treated to hoots and jeers . . .”

It is hardly credible that the coincidence of the charges against the students or the Osborn incident, or both, with the 1880 election was accidental. And, if not accidental, it is hardly credible that Walton, Dorris, Condon, Bailey, and other University leaders of the Blue Ribbon Club were unaware that these incidents were being plotted. All evidence indicates that the club was tightly and efficiently organized at the level of political action. Certainly, active faculty cooperation would have been required for the timing of the case against the students. Still, it is possible that the Blue Ribbon faculty members, though not the politically sophisticated regents,<sup>9</sup> were more or less innocent figureheads, caught up in a ruthless drive for power that they never fully understood. If so, their oratory each week at club meetings, and more frequently as election time approached, roused passions that they could not control for the decisive reason that they did not know what they were doing. There are obvious academic parallels in our own day, which are better left to the reader’s assessment.

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<sup>9</sup> Both Walton and Dorris were active and influential in Democratic Party politics. There was, however, no alliance between the Democratic Party and the Blue Ribbon Clubs. Cochran and Hendricks were also influential Democrats and President Johnson was a loyal party member. Deady had been a major force in the territorial Democratic Party, though, as a Federal judge after statehood, he maintained a posture of nonpartisanship and emerged from the Civil War a Republican in general point of view. But he retained close personal associations with his early Democratic friends, and used these contacts and the shrewdness he had acquired as a Democratic politician for effective promotion of the welfare of the University. The Laurean column in the Oct. 20, 1883 *Journal* commented that “All the professors of the State University are Republicans except the *caput* and the *cauda* [i.e., *cauda*].” The *caput* was, of course, Johnson; the *cauda* was probably Emory Burke, a new tutor—but possibly, if student wit could have been that subtle, Frederick Dudley, the janitor. At any rate, Condon and Bailey were Republicans.

Condon's involvement, however interpreted, is especially regrettable. Apart from Deady, a legal scholar of national reputation, he was the only real productive scholar associated with the University of Oregon in its early days and in many ways a liberal spirit, as we understand that term. He was also an orator with great popular appeal. His use of these powers to lead the citizens of Oregon rather peacefully to acceptance of the theory of evolution was a major cultural achievement. But he lent the same powers, however innocently, to a cause tainted with fanaticism, self-righteousness, contempt for the will of the majority, and disregard for truth that might have destroyed his University, except for the effective intervention of such temperate citizens as Hendricks, Cochran, and Johnson.

Yet assessments of President Johnson frequently picture him as a devout puritanical Baptist and a stiff-necked classical academic, aloof from the community, the students, and the faculty. In fact, his ties with the community through the 1880s were closer than those of any member of his faculty—if it is recognized that the Blue Ribbon Club represented only a highly vocal minority. The local press distinguished him from expected faculty elitism when he was seen with a team and scraper moving dirt on the site of the house he was building. As a boy of fourteen, he had driven an ox team and wagon over the Oregon Trail when his family emigrated in 1850. In 1864 he had interrupted a teaching career to work with pick and shovel in the Idaho mines—surely unusual for a graduate of Yale.

In Eugene Johnson was a man among men in circles with which other faculty members probably had little contact. In vacation times he found relaxation in hunting and fishing with ordinary citizens. He was a long-time member and officer of the Lane County Sportsmen's Club and a regular attendant at social meetings in a clubroom on the second floor of a Willamette Street building. The club cut across economic classes, from workingmen to bankers. Johnson seems to have been the only member from the University faculty; the names of Blue Ribbon Club activists are conspicuously absent from frequent press items concerning the affairs of the Sportsmen's Club. In his early years at the University he was associated with Hendricks in financial and banking ventures, which may account for the occasional appearance of his name in published lists of Lane County's heaviest taxpayers. He was fond of tobacco; at home he changed to a pipe from his favorite cigars; his wife disliked the smell of cigars. There is a still-surviving tale that he cherished a cud of chewing tobacco while he taught his classes. A probably reliable reminiscence, by a former student and son of a Blue Ribbon faculty colleague, tells of Johnson's daily visits on his way home from tiring

days at the University to the back room of Osborn's drug store for a friendly glass with his town cronies. (By the mid-1870s Oregon Baptists were becoming involved in the temperance movement. But Baptist churches in Oregon and elsewhere had had a long tradition of tolerance that was not characteristic of other Protestant denominations, and were slow to embrace a political approach to the problem of alcoholism. Johnson's habits would not have been unusual among his fellow-Baptists. See Albert W. Wardin, Jr., *Baptists in Oregon*, Portland, 1969, pp. 42, 103 ff.) Cochran, a friend and fellow-sportsman, had reason to believe that Johnson would not be unreasonable—though he might take stern nonpolitical action to control the nuisance of student drinking.

It would be gratifying if one could believe that Condon had learned something about responsibilities of citizenship from the events of 1879 and 1880. But surviving fragments of the 1886-87 minutes of the Eugene Temperance Alliance (in OrU), which had succeeded the Blue Ribbon Club as the agent of temperance political action, still show him in a context of fanaticism. On January 11, 1887 "Prof. Condon . . . read the recent decision of the supreme court declaring the Keady law null and void. Which drew out some short indignation speeches on the criminality of clerical officials in defrauding the people of this their just right." The Keady law had set a high uniform state-wide license fee for saloons which cities and counties were required to assess. The Oregon Supreme Court ruled that the statute was in effect an amendment of all city charters in the state, and that it was unconstitutional because it did not specify in its title all charter statutes amended and because it dealt with more than one subject—that is, more than one city charter.<sup>10</sup> The defect, which may have reflected an intent by its temperance sponsors to deceive unwary legislators (a tactic which the constitutional provision was intended to prevent), could hardly be blamed on "the criminality of clerical officials." And "defrauding the people of this their just right" anticipates the sophistic appropriation of "the people" by our own anti-establishment. The rhetoric also reminds one of Condon's 1879 attack on "prominent enemies of Temperance" for objecting, on obvious constitutional grounds, to nonresident students voting in Eugene elections.

That the new Eugene councilmen elected in 1880 were, as the *Journal* said, "temperance men," and at the same time men endowed with shrewd practical wisdom, is indicated by the first act of the new Council on April 12.

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<sup>10</sup> Oregon Laws, Spec. Sess., 1885, p. 38; Oregon Reports, XIV, 365-375; Oregon Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. 20: "Every act shall embrace but one subject, and matters properly connected therewith, which subject shall be expressed in the title . . ."

No. 21.  
Guard, Apr. 17,  
1880

An ordinance to prohibit furnishing minors and student spirituous or malt liquors.

Be it ordained by the Common Council of the city of Eugene :

SECTION 1ST. If any person shall sell or give or cause to be sold or given, or in any way furnish any intoxicating liquor within the corporate limits of Eugene City to any minor, or to any student or pupil attending the State University or the public schools or any private school at or in the vicinity of said city, except upon the prescription of a practicing physician, with his certificate thereto attached, that such liquor is for medical use and is actually required by such minor, student or pupil in consequence of some sickness or indisposition, such person shall be fined upon conviction thereof, not less than twenty-five nor more than one hundred dollars and be adjudged to pay the costs of the proceedings.

SEC. 2ND. If any physician or other person representing himself to be such, shall give or cause to be given to or for any student, pupil or minor, within the limits of said city, any certificate provided for in the preceding section, which shall be false or given without reasonable cause, such physician or person shall, upon conviction thereof, be fined not less than twenty-five nor more than one hundred dollars and costs of the proceedings.

SEC. 3RD. If any keeper of any saloon or barroom or any vender of spirituous or intoxicating liquors, within said city of Eugene, shall harbor, permit or suffer any minor, or student or pupil to loiter or remain in or about such saloon, barroom or other place where such spirituous and intoxicating liquors are sold or kept for sale, or to engage in any game of cards, billiards, bagatelle or other game in such saloon, barroom or place aforesaid, such person upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than twenty-five dollars nor more than one hundred dollars and the costs of the proceedings.

SEC. 4TH. Any person who shall violate any of the provisions of the foregoing section, upon conviction thereof, in addition to the penalty therein provided, shall forfeit any city license which such person may have to sell spirituous or intoxicating liquors within the corporate limits of said city.

SEC. 5TH. All ordinances and parts of ordinances in conflict with the foregoing or any of the provisions thereof be and the same are hereby repealed.

There seems to be no evidence that this extraordinary ordinance was ever enforced—if it could have survived a court test in its application to University students over 21 years of age. The faculty continued to discipline students for visiting saloons and frequently named the saloon in its minutes, but apparently never availed itself of the opportunity to attack the evil at its source under the provisions of Sec. 4. However, the ordinance effectively defused student drinking as an issue in city politics, and provided saloon keepers with a probably welcome tool for the discouragement of student patronage ; one may imagine that their regular customers would have endorsed the ordinance and its uses.

Cochran's assurance to Deady that there was "little danger of the

## The Blue Ribbon University

President of the Faculty being unreasonable" was confirmed in 1881, when the terms of the Blue Ribbon Club councilmen expired. A Citizens meeting on March 30, chaired by Cochran, resolved:

No. 22.  
Guard, Apr. 2,  
1881

That we the citizens of Eugene City hereby express our entire approbation of the corporate laws of our city so far as they relate to the temperance question and desire a continuance of the same order of things as connected with our city government.

Having adopted this platform, the Citizens nominated a ticket—including President Johnson for councilman and Regent Hendricks for president of the Council. In the election on April 4, which the *Guard* called "the quietest that has taken place in several years," the Citizens ticket prevailed. The 1880 ordinance may have been helpful. Johnson's term as councilman seems to have been relatively uneventful and free from University partisanship. He did, however, introduce an ordinance "To suppress bawdy houses and to punish the inmates thereof," which was approved only by the breaking of a tie vote by Hendricks as Council president (*Guard*, December 17, 1881).

The political arrogance of the Eugene Blue Ribbon Club had been checked, with the quiet help of President Johnson. But his venture into local politics was hazardous, and its hazards were perhaps the subject of a conversation that Deady mentioned laconically in his diary on July 16, 1881: "Had a good plain talk with Pres. Johnson." At any rate, Johnson did not run for re-election in 1883. However, in a maneuver for which he was probably not responsible, his name was placed in the field to draw votes away from a Citizens candidate who had been a Blue Ribbon candidate in 1881; neither Johnson nor the mugwump was elected (*Journal*, April 7, 1883). The hazards, underlined by this bit of politicking, may have led the regents to the adoption of a by-law in June.

No. 23.  
Regents Minutes,  
June 15, 1883  
(OrU)

That if any professor or teacher of the University shall become a candidate for any public office, or for a nomination thereto, or be a delegate to any political convention, or openly seek a nomination thereto he shall be taken and considered as having resigned his position as such professor or teacher as the case may be.

When Deady was in Eugene for a Board meeting on December 21, he had another and not very amicable "plain talk" with Johnson.

No. 24.  
Deady Diary,  
Dec. 22, 1883  
(M.C., II, 431)

... Had a full plain talk with Prof Johnson about his objections to the 2 by-laws on[e] prohibiting the faculty from engaging in politics and the other to keep them out of the meeting of the Regents. He is a perverse little feist and not altogether ingenuous.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> In the manuscript in OrHI, the last sentence is lightly deleted, perhaps by Mrs. Deady when she "edited" the diary after her husband's death.



Sheldon believed that both of Deady's plain talks and the by-law on political activities were related to Johnson's participation in Democratic Party politics.<sup>12</sup> But neither Johnson nor any other faculty member was a delegate to the Lane County Democratic Convention in 1880 or 1882 (the two most-recent general election years), or sought nomination for any public office at either of these conventions, or was a candidate for election as a delegate to the state convention in either of these years. See *Guard*, April 3, 1880, April 1, 1882, where there are full reports of delegates by election or proxy and of nominees. From the evidence it seems certain that the immediate issue was city politics, where the divisions did not coincide with state or national parties (see note 9, above).

It is difficult to assess the actual impact of the Blue Ribbon disturbance within the University, as distinct from its potential dangers. Apart from the threat of mass expulsions for voting or frequenting saloons, which was probably understood to be no serious threat, it seems to have been of little concern to the students. It was, no doubt, more troubling to the regents and the faculty and to regent-faculty relations. But the years of the disturbance were also troubled by other crises: Board of Regents pressure on the faculty to organize its instruction to facilitate objective evaluation and reports of accomplishment; faculty pressure on the regents to phase out the Preparatory Department and the beginning of community resistance to the loss of its state-financed high school; the Gatch affair, devised by some Eugene regents, perhaps with some faculty support, to get rid of President Johnson; liens against the University building for debts of the Union University Association, which stunned the regents, the faculty, and the community after they were confirmed by the Oregon Supreme Court just weeks before they would have been outlawed under the Statute of Limitations.

The intrafaculty impact of Blue Ribbon ambitions is the most intriguing question, and especially the impact on relations between Johnson and Condon. Their relations were not friendly in the months before the 1879 campaign; Deady wrote in his diary on November 3, 1878: "Johnson is dissatisfied with Condon and I am not surprised." They had not improved by June 17, 1882, when Deady wrote: "There is a quarrel on hand between Profs Johnson & Condon and I suppose it will have to take the course and let the fittest survive"—an ironic echo of Darwinism. Early in 1885 Deady received several letters from Eugene warning him that there was opposition to his reappointment as a regent and a letter from Johnson urging that he accept reappointment. Deady wrote in his diary on March 8, after attending a regents meeting in Eugene: "Some persons told me that Prof. Condon was the source

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<sup>12</sup> Henry D. Sheldon, *History of University of Oregon* (Portland, 1940), p. 67.

of the opposition to my reappointment as Regent, whatever there was of it. But it is just as well for me to know nothing and think nothing about it." The evidence we have seems to indicate that the quarrel between Johnson and Condon stemmed principally from Condon's rather devious evasion of policy concerning course organization and reports, on which Deady and Johnson were firmly allied. Johnson informed the Board of Regents on June 15, 1882 that Professor Condon's "report is very brief and furnishes no information as to standard authors used or the scope of the subject-matter discussed and presented in the several classes during the term. I do not wish to be understood as reflecting on the Professor's work. He is attentive and faithful, but the report is too meager." However, Condon's involvement in Blue Ribbon affairs may have been a contributing factor in their troubles.

Another event, in June 1883, gave solace to the temperance faction and its University leaders, and brought the Blue Ribbon episode to a fitting close. Frances E. Willard arrived in Eugene unheralded during Commencement Week. At the annual meeting the Oregon W. C. T. U., "Mrs Prof Bailey" reported Miss Willard's own account of her reception.

No. 25.  
Guard, June 23,  
1883

Miss Willard desired to add for the comfort of the temperance people of this state, her hearty commendation of the city of Eugene and the State University. When she and Miss Gordon were there they were in the midst of the commencement exercises and yet they gave way for her meeting. And it was not a meeting as if thrown together with a pitchfork, but was a well prepared, well organized meeting and participated in by the faculty and others of the University. A warm welcome was extended by Rev. Condon. This state of things does not exist in all the educational institutions in the country. She cited some instances. Miss Willard said she was proud to find such a state of things in the leading educational institution of this state, and she would take occasion to tell this wherever she should go, and let the less civilized states of the Atlantic coast know of the advancement made here. She further said that if any parents in this state had any fears about Godless schools they need not be afraid of your State University. A city that has 1000 names enrolled in its Blue Ribbon Club is a good moral city.

What President Johnson thought of this item, which the *Guard* headed "Handsome Compliment," is hard to guess. His sense of humor has been affirmed<sup>13</sup> and denied. Deady, who was in Eugene for the Com-

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<sup>13</sup> Notably by Arthur L. Veazie, Class of '90, in an address delivered at the dedication of Johnson Hall in 1915 (manuscript in OrU). Veazie recalled that, a few weeks after the University adopted its motto, "Mens Agitat Molem," Johnson gravely announced at a student assembly that Oregon Agricultural College had borrowed the motto for its catalogue, but had amended it to read, "Men's and Women's Agitat Molem." The story is perhaps apocryphal. Its point, before the

mencement Exercises, wrote in his diary on June 16: "In the evening [Wednesday] heard Miss Willard in the Presbyterian Church. A sweet spoken, smart little woman." Nothing more—though Deady was not fond of zealous prohibitionists and enjoyed a civilized tippie.<sup>14</sup> But he was attracted by smart little women, and by celebrities of all shades.

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days of women's lib, was "cow college" illiteracy. But that University tradition was not yet born in 1878, when Deady chose the motto; it was, however, firmly established in 1915, when Veazie addressed a prejudiced audience.

<sup>14</sup> When the Rev. Thomas H. Pearne, editor of the *Pacific Christian Advocate*, asked him in 1856 to circulate a petition for a prohibitory liquor law, Deady replied in an Oct. 18 letter: "[I have] long since been convinced that a little good whiskey with even its occasional abuses is far less dangerous to the 'morals, social happiness and domestic peace' of a community, than an inspired generation of fanatical, world reforming and self-neglecting 'wives mothers sisters and daughters.' Your Maine law petition like all other diatetic reforms of the Bran Bread school I humbly conceive to be arbitrary and visionary in the extreme. In a great measure they all have their origin in the self exalting vanity and rigid but unequal righteousness of those who 'are wise above what is written.' In all kindness I hope you may find in the vineyard of the Lord some more rational employment for your respectable abilities." He wrote in his diary on Mar. 23, 1874: "Went into Greens saloon and heard the Female Crusaders. Mrs. Sutherland made an address of about 15 minutes in length full of feeling and eloquence. The poor people they are the victims of zeal without knowledge, but they ought not to be laughed at." And on Mar. 24, 1888: "A meeting of the Regents was held in my chambers last evening . . . at the close of the meeting I took the Regents to Aliskeys, where we had some oysters and beer." Walton, still secretary of the Board though no longer a regent, did not attend the meeting; Dorris's term of service had expired.

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