NARRATIVE OF MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

1893—1935

Mary Brennan Clapp
CONTENTS

Dedication
    Foreword
Acknowledgements
    Chapter I---The Idea of State Universities
    Chapter II---A Man Casts His Lot With Montana
    CHAPTER III---The Impatient Scholar
    Chapter IV---Storms of State
    Chapter V---An Interim
    Chapter VI---"A Verry Parfit Gentil Knight"
    Chapter VII---One For All And All For One
DEDICATION

To the Treasure State, whose greatest treasure is its young people, for whom the University was chartered.
FOREWORD

In 1927, President Clapp, Mr. Speer, Dr. Phillips, Professor Spaulding, Dr. Elrod, and probably some others, including Miss Buckhouse, Miss White, and Miss Feighner of the University Library, began to gather material on the history of the University. The Treasure Room of Northwest History had been set up in the new library building, and such records of University life as the early files of the Kaimin and the Sentinel were placed there. The collection of papers in the President's Office became enriched with letters and what might almost be called depositions by early residents, early faculty, and alumni. There was a general checking of records and bulletins. Part of this process was of course merely reviewing, but basically it was a gathering of material that might otherwise be lost in changes on the campus and diminishment of the number of persons who saw the University begin.

On President Clapp's agenda for 1930 was the appointment of a history committee, but depression problems absorbed attention. It was not till 1945, fifteen years later, that the project of a written history rather suddenly again seemed important.

President McCain was to be inaugurated and, for the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the University, was planning events that would emphasize its coming of age. He appointed a History Project Board consisting of Mr. J. B. Speer, Professor T. C. Spaulding, and Miss Catherine White. Later Dr. Paul C. Phillips and Mrs. Mary
Elrod Ferguson were asked to assist.

It was not until the spring of 1947, however, that Dr. McCain asked the author to write the history. He did this on the committee's recommendation and with the approval of Dr. Merriam in whose department she was teaching. At first the idea was to get together quickly a mere brochure of not more than 100 pages that fall, but a look at cartons of still unclassified archival material indicated that a history worthy of the subject would take much more time and many more pages. The President eventually told the author to write it as she pleased, use what pages she needed, and forget a deadline.

The actual work of writing was started that summer, during which the author was relieved of teaching. The President was pleased when she submitted three chapters in September, really only reconnaissance work. Dr. Merriam who also kindly read them said she should certainly continue, and Mr. Speer, chairman of the History Board, warmly approved. With this encouragement and the project's being continued under President McFarland, she spent her spare time over the next ten years investigating sources, and writing and re-writing. More concentrated effort, following her retirement from teaching in 1954, brought the book to completion. Someone recently said it takes ten years to write a book. The author wholeheartedly agrees!

The President and the Board decided at the beginning that the book should be not so much scholarly as readable and that no footnotes should be used. Partly for this reason she chose the title *Narrative of Montana State University*. She also decided to terminate this narrative
with the year 1935, the end of President Clapp's administration. It is sincerely hoped that in the future, when more recent events are brought into a clearer perspective, someone else will add another volume.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To list the names of all who have helped in this work would fill a chapter. Many persons not connected with the University have quite casually made remarks that for this "child among" them "taking notes" became clues to possible sources. Most of her references she has mentioned in the text. From every office on the campus she has had gracious permission to use files, and assistance in finding what she needed, as well as from sorority and fraternity groups and from alumni who kept scrap-books. In this sense the book is a co-operative product.

It seems necessary, however to name some individual helpers.

Mr. Speer made the project his foster child. He wrote countless letters of inquiry, tested statements with official records, and persuaded Mrs. E. O. Sisson to write a biography of President Sisson as she had known him at Carmel. In the course of this she made a valuable study of the papers he left. Mr. Thomas Swearingen of the Maintenance Office and his secretary Mrs. Smith looked up dates and costs of campus changes, displayed early maps of the campus, and were never too busy to trace down inconsistencies in what one might call legendry. Dean Ford sent over archival material filed by Dean Stone. President Emeritus Scheuch and former Chancellor Elliott read parts and cleared up some confusions in names and dates, as did Dr. Phillips and Dr. Jesse. Dr. Merriam read several chapters, commented wisely, and loaned material from the English Department and the Frontier files, Miss Campbell, Miss White,
and Miss Speer of the University Library gave ever-gracious and skilled help, as did the librarians of the Law School, beginning with Miss Charlotte Russel, and of the School of Journalism. Miss Helen Stoddard checked many items and found their source in records. Mrs. Armsby's long familiarity with the life of the University and office files saved many an hour of searching through dusty newsprints and unreliable memories. The President's Office made possible the typing of chapters as they approached acceptability and also sponsored the micro-filming of President Duniway's papers, which his son David Duniway, State Archivist of Oregon, put in order for filming. Dr. W. P. Clark gave careful study to the symbolism of the first University seal. Mrs. Mary Elrod Ferguson checked with papers in the Museum, with her father's collection, and with letters and visits from the early alumni. Mrs. Ralph Fields was generous with classified alumni data and resourceful in ways of finding more than was at hand. Miss Dorothy Green, Executive Secretary of the University System, gave invaluably help with data from the hand-written minutes of the first boards.

The As You Like It, the Faculty Women's, and the Authors' clubs of Missoula invited Mrs. Clapp to read parts of the History at meetings, and their comments cleared up many small points not quite understandable from terse official records and from news print, and added details not recorded.

The author feels a special indebtedness to her children and to her sons- and daughters-in-law, who have been students at the University. They have read, typed, commented, and raised questions. Their interest
and objective attitude have helped her in the attempt to re-create a time that is past so that it may live on as inspiration, guidance, and encouragement. Thanks are due also to the Baker Library at Dartmouth College for use of the viewer to read additional micro film sent by Mr. David Pliny Way while the writer was working there on the last chapters.

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