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THE FIRST CHARTERED COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA

ROCKWELL D. HUNT

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THIS is Centennial Year for the College of the Pacific, located at Stockton, California, and chartered on July 10, 1851, by the Supreme Court of the young state of California as California Wesleyan College.

Preliminary plans for the Methodist school had been made well in advance. Prominent among the founders were Isaac Owen, William Taylor, Edward Bannister, and Martin C. Briggs—missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church—and Annis Merrill, prominent San Francisco attorney who drafted the petition for the charter. The name of the institution was soon changed to University of the Pacific; the name continued until 1911, when it was changed to College of the Pacific.

The opening of the preparatory department occurred in Santa Clara May 3, 1852, with Edward Bannister as principal, with "more promise than was anticipated." The enterprise was launched with meager substance but with unquenchable faith and high courage. The first administrator with the title of president was Martin C. Briggs (1854); and in 1858 the first regular college class graduated with academic degrees, under President A. S. Gibbons.

From the beginning the problem of financing the college was difficult. Isaac Owen was exceptionally active and, although never president, his many services and contributions earned for him the title of chief founder.

During the early years great stress was laid upon Latin and Greek, mathematics, and Bible study. Embroidery, painting, and "hair work" were stressed in the Female Institute. "Lady-like accomplishments" were insisted upon by the preceptress.

Reference to a proposed School of Theology was made at various times; actual instruction in theology was given to those desiring to enter the Christian Ministry. Steps were taken looking to the establishment of a regular theological department, particularly by President C. C. Stratton (1877-1887), but such plans were never fully consummated. However, the religious atmosphere prevailed on the campus at all times—a chief objective being to emphasize "personal character based on Christian principles." To that end a strong department of Bible and religious education has been maintained; today the College of the Pacific enjoys exceptionally fine facilities in this basic field. While related to the Methodist Church, it does

not enforce sectarian limitations either on the faculty or on the student body.

Under the brilliant leadership of Greenberry Baker the trustees acquired title to a 435-acre tract of the Stockton Ranch, between Santa Clara and San Jose, reserved 21 acres for a campus (at College Park), and proceeded to subdivide the balance for the support of the institution. The move to the new campus was signaled by the laying of the cornerstone of West Hall in September, 1870. Following the initial struggle of difficult financing under President Thomas Sinex and A. S. Gibbons came the "Era of Good Feeling" under President C. C. Stratton. Stratton was followed by A. C. Hirst, during whose administration occurred the "Hirst Trouble," which led to an exodus of many college students to enter Stanford University, then just opening (1891).

In 1895-96 consolidation with Napa College was completed: James N. Beard was president of the consolidated University of the Pacific. Beard's resignation was followed by the election of Eli McClish to the presidency. He in turn was succeeded by William W. Guth, after an interim of two years. John L. Seaton succeeded Guth; but after a term of five years he resigned to become assistant secretary of the Board of Education of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Then came Tully C. Knoles, now chancellor, whose incumbency was almost three times as long as that of any predecessor (1919-1946). It was during his administration, which marked the beginning of a new era, that the college was moved from College Park (San Jose) to a spacious site in Stockton. This daring but long-sighted act has been amply justified by experience. Another important innovation of the Knoles administration was the dropping of the freshman and sophomore years and the organization on the Pacific campus of the public Junior College of Stockton, with use of Pacific's buildings and equipment under a carefully worked out co-ordinating contract. Only this year did the trustees vote to re-establish lower-division classes.

Robert E. Burns became president in 1946. He is an alumnus of the college and has entered upon his administration with zest, with a vigorous pioneering spirit. He is Pacific's head as she celebrates the first one hundred years of history under the slogan, "1851 — A Golden Century Crowns Pacific — 1951." Foundation stones of the structure include the strong department of Bible study and religious education, the distinguished Conservatory of Music, the well-recognized School of Education, the highly developed summer session, the department of speech and drama of

enviable reputation, the Marine Station at Dillon Beach, and a wide variety of courses leading to the master's degree and teaching credentials. The college maintains a complete athletic plant and equipment, with keen interest in intercollegiate sports.

Among special features mention should be made of the literary societies, fraternities and sororities, student publications, and various activity organizations. The current centennial year witnesses the installation of chapters of Phi Kappa Phi (all-college scholarship honor fraternity) and Phi Delta Kappa (educational professional fraternity), affiliated with national organizations.

Among numerous schools and colleges in California founded under Protestant auspices, the College of the Pacific is the only church-related college of first rank

that has survived from early pioneer days. As President Guth pointed out, the Methodist Church "has played a most important part in the educational development of California." Each month of the Centennial Year to July has been marked by one or more significant events: in January there took place the gala Festival of American Music, featuring Howard Hanson; in February the brilliant presentation of "Sing Out Sweet Land" by the department of drama; in March the expanded Institute of California History; in April the Mardi Gras Festival; in May a special program featuring the College of the Pacific Radio Clinic; in June the culmination during Centennial Commencement Week, ending with the out-of-door convocation, with an address by Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam of New York, June 10.