On August 26, 1817 a Territorial Act was passed to establish “the Catholepistemiad, or University of Michigania.” This act envisioned the organization of a complete and comprehensive educational system instructing young people in a continuous program at the elementary, secondary and university level, modeled after Napoleon's French system of education. Equally significant, the Northwest Ordinance laid the foundation for public education with the statement, “Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.” This became, in effect, the founding principle for the University of Michigan as the first educational institution created in the new Michigan territory.

Thomas Jefferson's original sketch map of his plan to divide the Northwest Territory into states. The plan was largely followed when the actual division of land took place.

On August 26, 1817 a Territorial Act was passed to establish “the Catholepistemiad, or University of Michigania.” This act envisioned the organization of a complete and comprehensive educational system instructing young people in a continuous program at the elementary, secondary and university level, modeled after Napoleon's French system of education.

The 1817 act established the University of Michigan as a legal entity comprised of thirteen professors or “didactors,” who, along with a president, would govern the concerns of the institution. Furthermore, this body was to function as a Territorial Board of Education with power to establish and supervise “colleges, academies, schools, libraries, museums, athenaeums, botanical gardens, laboratories, and other useful literary and scientific institutions, and to appoint officers, instructors and instructrices in, among, and throughout the various counties, cities, towns, townships, and other geographical divisions of Michigan.”
Gabriel Richard, a Sulpician missionary priest and a refugee of the French Revolution, settled in Detroit in 1798. He served as pastor of St. Anne’s Church, as schoolmaster and Vice-President of the Catholepistemiad.

John Monteith, a Scottish Presbyterian minister, graduated from the new Princeton Seminary in 1816. He came to Detroit and set up the first Protestant Society in Michigan. He served as President of the Catholepistemiad.

Judge Woodward’s plan provided that all of education, from primary school through college, would be controlled and funded by the state. At the head of this system would be a university, or, as Woodward named it, a “Catholepistemiad,” his term for universal science. Woodward organized the knowledge to be taught by the university into thirteen divisions.

**The Thirteen Professorships Recommended by Judge Woodward (In His Handwritten Notes)**

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<th>Professorship</th>
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Less than a month after the Territorial Government accepted Woodward’s plan, the cornerstone was laid for the first building of the new institution. A two-story building on Bates Street in Detroit was begun in the fall of 1817. By August of 1818 the lower story was finished, and Lemuel Shattuck opened a Primary School. The library and Classical Academy on the second floor were completed in 1819.

During the first twenty years the building housed many forms of educational activity. John Monteith taught primary grades, though bearing the title of president. These early founders of education in Michigan were all very practical men who started where the need existed, at the primary level. The educational activities in the building continued under university auspices until 1833.

**The University Building in Detroit**

The Official Seal for the Catholepistemiad
Adopted on September 12, 1817

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**1821**

In 1821 the name, Catholepistemiad, was changed to the University of Michigan. A Board of Trustees was appointed to govern the school, instead of the professors as provided in the original act.

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**1823**

In 1823 Congress permitted the Michigan Territory to elect a slate of eighteen men from which the President selected nine to serve as a Legislative Council relieving the governor and judges of law making.

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**1826**

In 1826 the Legislative Council authorized all townships containing fifty or more families to employ a schoolmaster for six months each year. At the same time the Board of Trustees gave up supervision of primary schools, and the unity of education envisioned by Woodward was lost.

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**1827**

In 1827 the University’s presence in Detroit, which was still little more than an elementary school, disappeared. During this time several University branches continued to operate. These academies provided the necessary academic training for those students planning to enter the University.
In the early 1830s the Michigan Territory was in political turmoil in the effort to form a state, develop a constitution, and seek admittance to the Union. Two men from Marshall—John Pierce and Isaac Crary—were most influential in writing the education provisions for the Michigan Constitution. Both men had read M. Victor Cousin’s “Report on the State of Public Instruction in Prussia,” an elucidation of the system of primary and secondary schools and universities supported and supervised by the state. Pierce was elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction in July of 1836. In 1837 he presented a comprehensive plan for public education for the new state. Primary schools were placed directly under the state superintendent’s office. Secondary education was to be provided through county branches of the University of Michigan, each having its own board of trustees. Higher education was to be provided by the University.

John Pierce was a clergyman who came to Marshall in 1834 under the auspices of the Presbyterian Home Missionary Society. A graduate of Brown University, he also attended Princeton Seminary. In Marshall he served as a missionary and preached.

Isaac Crary was a lawyer and a graduate of Trinity College. He lived with Pierce and his wife when he came to Marshall to practice law at the age of 31. He was chairman of the Committee on Education in the Constitutional Convention.

Michigan's admission to the Union was delayed by a long-standing quarrel with Ohio over their common border. Michigan insisted that the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 set its southern boundary south of the developing community of Toledo. Ohio, which had received statehood in 1803, used its Congressional delegation to argue for a border farther north. When President Jackson accepted Ohio's claim, Michigan Territorial Governor Mason called out the militia and threatened the “War of Toledo” with Ohio. Eventually the U.S. Senate broke the deadlock by detaching the northeastern portion of the Wisconsin Territory and giving it to Michigan as compensation for losing Toledo, resulting finally in its admission to the Union on January 26, 1837.

On March 18, 1837 the Ann Arbor Land Company offered 40 acres as the site for the University. Two days later the offer was accepted by the Legislature of the new state. The town of Ann Arbor had existed for only 13 years and had a population of about 2,000. The village had a courthouse, a jail, four churches, two newspapers, two banks, eight mills and factories, several stores, eleven lawyers, and nine physicians.

The new Board of Regents met for three days in June of 1837 and agreed to establish four professorships. The main business was the selection of the site for the campus. There were two choices: a flat tract east of State Street and a site in the hills to the north overlooking the Huron River. They chose the flat area, part of the Rumsey-Noland farm, which had been cleared of forest trees. Part of the farm was a wheat field, part a peach orchard, and the rest pasture.

“...To those of us who look back now with the advantage of 'hind sight,' the mistakes of the first board are obvious. Two tracts of land were considered as possible sites for the University. The choice fell on the wrong one, and we now have the present Campus, undistinguished by any natural advantage, instead of the commanding location on the hills overlooking the Huron. The vote was 6 to 5.” Wilfred Shaw (Michigan Alumnus, January, 1921, p. 223)

A public meeting was held by Ann Arbor citizens to show their indignation that the plan for the grand buildings had not been accepted.

Alexander Davis, a New Haven architect, designed a magnificent building for the University. The Governor and Regents supported the plan, but Pierce refused to approve it because of the cost.

A modest building plan of six buildings was approved. Two were for dormitories and classrooms, and four served as professors' houses.
Four identical Professors’ Houses were completed in March of 1840. Two were located on North University and two on South University. The two-story plan included a central hall with two rooms opening off each side. The same arrangement was repeated on the second floor. Each room had a fireplace. The houses had low-pitched tin roofs. Wood houses, cisterns, and barns were provided for each. The houses were also to be used for the storage of the cabinet of natural history specimens, the library, the philosophical apparatus, and other general purposes of the University until the main buildings could be finished.

In September of 1841 the University opened its doors to seven students, six freshmen and one sophomore. The first student building on the new Ann Arbor campus was completed in 1841. It was known as the University Building. The student quarters consisted of three-room suites or apartments, each with two bedrooms and a common study room with a fireplace. The building was divided into two sections, each a complete and separate unit consisting of sixteen apartments opening on a central stairway. A tutor, who occupied an apartment on the first floor, presided over each of the sections. The first and second floor also included a chapel and a recitation room. The library was on the third floor and a museum on the fourth.

In 1843 the University Building was named in honor of Michigan’s first governor, Stevens Thomson Mason. At the age of 19, Mason led Michigan’s struggle for statehood. He served as acting territorial secretary, and in 1834, at the age of 22, he became the acting territorial governor.

Several students in the early days scratched their names on the window panes of the University Building.

Mason authorized a census and convened a constitutional convention. Michigan voters approved the constitution and elected Mason Governor in 1835. Because of the dispute with Ohio over Toledo, Michigan did not become a state until 1837. Mason served as Governor until 1840.
On August 6, 1845, eleven students received their bachelor of arts degrees from the University. That afternoon the University of Michigan Alumni Association was organized.

By 1847 enrollment had grown to 89, and a new building was needed for additional recitation rooms, student housing, and a chemical and medical laboratory. This second building was designed to be identical to Mason Hall. It was completed in 1849 and named South College.

On September 30, 1845, the Regents decreed that a “Cemetery for the University” should be laid out on the east side of the campus. Professor Whiting was to have been buried there, and an appropriation was made for a monument to him. This “tombstone” is apparently the monument that today stands next to the Hatcher Library.

The “Professor’s Monument,” as it is known, is a broken shaft with memorials to four early members of the faculty: Rev. Joseph Whiting, Professor of Greek and Latin, died July 20, 1845; Douglas Houghton, professor of Chemistry, Mineralogy and Geology, drowned in Lake Superior, October 13, 1845; Rev. Charles Fox, Professor of Agriculture, died July 24, 1854; and Dr. Samuel Denton, Regent and Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine and of Pathology, died August 17, 1860. The cemetery was never used.

Mason Hall and South College were designed originally as dormitories to support instruction by the tutorial system. However, the more immediate need for classroom space reduced the dormitory function to three-quarters of each building. The remaining space was devoted to lecture and recitation rooms, a chapel, a library, space for the mineralogical collection, and two literary societies.
The Reverend **Henry Colclazer**, a Methodist minister of Ann Arbor, was the first University officer to be chosen. On June 5, 1837, he was appointed librarian. His salary was to begin when some books were accumulated.

Dr. **Douglas Houghton** was appointed State Geologist in 1837. In 1839 he was appointed Professor of Geology, Chemistry, and Mineralogy, but never did any regular teaching. He lost his life in a storm on Lake Superior on October 1, 1845, while on a geological survey of the Upper Peninsula.

**Henry Colclazer**

**Asa Gray**

Dr. **Asa Gray** was the first professor, appointed on July 17, 1837. He was a physician who also studied botany and zoology. He was given $5000 to purchase books for the library during a trip to Europe. On his return he sent 3,707 volumes to Ann Arbor, including books on history, philosophy, classical literature, science, art, jurisprudence, and other subjects. Since the University lacked a building to hold classes, Professor Gray agreed to suspend his salary for the coming year. Unfortunately, he was never called to begin his professorship.

**Dr. Asa Gray**

**The Reverend George Williams** served as Principal of the University’s Pontiac branch from 1837 to 1841. In 1841 he was appointed to the chair of Ancient Languages but soon transferred to Mathematics. He was known to all as “Old Punky,” the nickname arising from the dryness of his wit. Dr. Williams welcomed the first students who came to Ann Arbor for instruction. As President of the Faculty, he gave diplomas to the first graduating class.

**George Palmer Williams**

**Louis Fasquelle** was born near Calais, France, in 1808. Educated in Paris and Germany, he went to England to teach French. He came to America in 1832. He bought a farm in Michigan and divided his time between farming and teaching French to private pupils. He was appointed Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures in 1846.

**Louis Fasquelle**

The Reverend **Joseph Whiting** was Principal of the University branch at Niles. In August of 1841 he was named professor of Greek and Latin. Professors Whiting and Williams constituted the faculty in 1841 when classes began. Professor Whiting died just before the first class graduated in 1845.

**Andrew Ten Brook** was appointed to the chair of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy. He was an ordained minister of the First Baptist Church of Detroit. In 1851 he resigned his chair and became the editor of the New York Baptist Register, later becoming U.S. Consul to Munich in Bavaria. In 1862 he returned to the University as librarian, a position he held until 1877.

**Andrew Ten Brook**

In 1842 **Abram Sager** was appointed professor of Botany and Zoology. He was transferred to the new Medical Department in 1850.

**Dr. Asa Gray**

**The First Faculty**
The Early Diag with Wooden Plank Walks
On the Right Is One of the Professors’ Houses.
In 1849 the Medical Department was organized. The Laboratory Building, later known as the Medical Building, was completed in 1850 and was the center of medical instruction for more than fifty years. This three-story building housed laboratories and lecture rooms. A large lecture room was on the second floor with a small dome above to admit light. A striking feature of the building was the portico with four tall Greek columns. When the Medical Department opened in the fall of 1850, there were ninety-one students, twenty-one from out of state.

“In 1848, a bright-eyed, uneducated German arrived in Ann Arbor. He was employed as a hod carrier in the construction of the original Medical Building. He continued in the service of the University as janitor of the building. In 1850 he rang the bell to summon the first medical class to their lectures and continued to ring through half a century. Many years spent in the dissecting room made Nagele a most proficient anatomist. Students would call upon him to demonstrate the finer details of anatomy, his knowledge being much more complete than some of the instructors. Probably no student became more proficient in practical anatomy then the old janitor of the Medical Building.” Victor G. Vaughan '78m (Michigan Alumnus, October, 1900, p. 15)

Silas Douglas was Professor of Chemistry and Pharmacy and Medical Jurisprudence. Douglas studied medicine in the office of Dr. Zina Pitcher in Detroit. He accompanied Dr. Houghton (his cousin) on his geological surveys of Michigan and was also a physician for the Government. He came to Ann Arbor in 1843 to practice medicine. In 1844 he was appointed assistant to Professor Houghton and had charge of the work in Chemistry during Houghton’s absence. After Houghton’s death he continued in charge of the department and worked for the next 32 years under various professorial titles. He was actively involved in establishing the Medical Department and organizing the Chemical Laboratory. He remained connected with both until his retirement in 1877.

Moses Gunn graduated from Geneva Medical College in 1846. He came to Ann Arbor and opened a medical practice. He also organized classes in Anatomy. In 1850 he accepted the Professorship of Anatomy in the new Department of Medicine and Surgery. In 1854 the chair was divided. Gunn chose Surgery, and his mentor, Dr. Corydon Ford, came to Michigan to accept the chair of Anatomy. In 1867 Dr. Gunn resigned to accept the chair of Surgery at Rush Medical College.

Samuel Denton was Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine and Pathology from 1850 until his death in 1860. Denton was one of the first Regents appointed by the governor in 1837. He also represented Washtenaw County in the State Senate.

J. Adams Allen was Professor of Therapeutics, Materia Medica and Physiology.

Abram Sager and Silas Douglas were transferred to the Medical Department from the Literary Department.

In 1837 Abram Sager was in charge of the Botanical and Zoological Department of the Michigan Geological Survey. He served the University of Michigan as Professor of Botany and Zoology from 1842 to 1850; Obstetrics, Diseases of Women and Children, Botany, and Zoology from 1850 to 1854; Obstetrics and Physiology from 1855 to 1860; Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children from 1860 to 1875. He served as Dean of the Medical Faculty for several years. He gave to the University his herbarium, containing twelve hundred species and twelve thousand specimens collected in the Eastern and Western States. The specimens he catalogued in 1839 formed the foundation of the Zoological Collection in the University of Michigan Museum.
In 1847 there were 89 students in the Literary Department, but this dropped to 57 in 1851 with the abandonment of the University branches. However, the number of students was more than balanced by the registration in the new Medical Department. In 1852 there were 222 students in the University, 162 in the Medical Department and 60 in the Literary Department.

From 1841 to 1852 a faculty committee governed the University. The new state constitution of 1850 established two important changes: First was the popular election of the Board of Regents, one from each of the judicial districts, which then numbered eight. Second, the constitution established the Board of Regents as a coordinate branch of state government, as firmly founded as the legislature, the governor, or the judiciary, and equal in its power over its designated field of state endeavor. The constitution also required the Regents to appoint a president.

Henry Philip Tappan, a well-known philosopher, was selected as the University’s president. He was eager to create “an American university deserving of the name,” which would be a part of a public-school system. During his tenure graduate studies were begun, scientific courses were added to the Literary Department, and the Law Department was added. Space to provide for this rapidly growing institution, whose enrollment tripled during the Tappan years, was obtained by eliminating dormitory quarters in the college buildings and converting them to classroom use. Tappan replaced some of the early faculty of clergymen with well-trained young men of intellectual distinction.

“President Tappan was over six feet tall, stood very erect, walked with a rather long stride, swinging his cane, wore a soft hat with fairly broad brim and was invariably accompanied by a yellowish dun-colored dog.” Dr. John P. Stoddard A.B. ’59, A.M. ’65 (Michigan Alumnus, 1855-59, p. 366)

For many years the campus remained in this pastoral setting. Wheat was grown on the unoccupied land, and the professors’ families gathered peaches from the old orchard.
The University of Michigan Campus
by Jasper Cropsey - 1855
A scientific course was introduced in 1852, which included civil engineering in the third and fourth years. In 1853 Alexander Winchell came to Michigan as the first Professor of Engineering. The first engineering class was held on January 24, 1854. The class, titled Parker’s Aids, was an introduction to English composition for engineering students.

Tappan’s strong interest in science led to the construction of a major observatory, made possible by gifts from several citizens of Detroit. Located on four acres of high ground overlooking the Huron River, the Detroit Observatory was equipped with state-of-the-art instruments, including an astronomical clock and a meridian circle, purchased by Tappan during a trip to Germany in 1853. He also recruited Franz Brunnow from Berlin as director of the Observatory.

The Chemical Laboratory was completed in 1856. It was the first structure on the North American continent that was designed, constructed, and equipped solely for instruction in chemistry.

The Detroit Observatory was not only one of the finest astronomical observatories in the world, but it firmly established the importance of research at the University. In fact, one could well argue that such facilities, coupled with Tappan’s personal interest in scholarly pursuits, established Michigan as one of the nation’s earliest research universities, in sharp contrast to the colonial colleges of the East (e.g., Harvard, Yale, and Princeton).

““We propose to establish a scientific course parallel to the classical course. In this scientific course a more extended study of the Mathematics will be substituted for the Greek and Latin. There will be comprised in it, besides other branches, Civil Engineering, Astronomy with the use of an Observatory, and the application of Chemistry and other Sciences to Agriculture and the industrial arts, generally.”” Henry Tappan (Tappan, p. 40)

“Engineering classes were given in South College. The classrooms were heated by wood stoves stoked by the professor or by an obliging student with wood from immense wood boxes, filled daily by the custodian, Jimmie Ottley. Water was supplied from a battered zinc pail, refilled from time to time as use demanded.

““The chemical laboratory was a small one-story building with tables for about thirty students at one time. There was no water on the campus except wells, and no sewerage. No gas. In the chemical laboratory we used alcohol lamps instead of Bunsen burners for evaporating purposes, and worked only by daylight.”” W. F. Breakey ’59m (Michigan Alumnus, 4/01 p. 266)
Erastus Haven was a Professor of Latin Language and Literature from 1852 to 1856. A Methodist clergyman and Wesleyan graduate, he was an academy principal before coming to Michigan.

James Boise, a graduate and faculty member of Brown University until 1852, came to Michigan as Professor of Greek Language and Literature. He served on the faculty for sixteen years.

Erastus Otis Haven

Alexander Winchell was appointed Professor of Physics and Civil Engineering in November of 1853 and arrived in Ann Arbor in January 1854. Winchell taught the first engineering class on Parker’s Aids (technical writing) on January 20, 1854. Winchell proved to be unqualified to teach engineering, and the following year a position was found for him in natural history (zoology, geology, and botany).

In 1854 Corydon La Ford came from the University of Vermont to the professorship of anatomy in the Medical Department. His tenure with the University lasted for forty years.

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Henry Frieze was Professor of Latin Language and Literature from 1854 to 1889. Frieze was born in Boston and educated at Brown. A much beloved teacher, he served as president pro tempore from 1869-71 and later as acting president from June 1880 until February 1882.

William Guy Peck succeeded Alexander Winchell in 1855. Peck was a brevet second lieutenant of Topographical Engineers and a graduate of West Point. He was appointed professor of Physics and Civil Engineering. Major Peck went to Columbia in 1857, where he became a professor of mathematics and astronomy.

DeVolson Wood was the founder of engineering education at the University of Michigan. He was appointed assistant professor of Physics and Civil Engineering in 1857 and professor of Physics and Civil Engineering in 1859 when he was granted his master’s degree from Michigan. Wood resigned in 1872 to accept an appointment at Stevens Institute of Technology.

DeVolson Wood

Andrew White filled the first permanent chair of history in the country at the University of Michigan from 1857 to 1864. In 1864 White served as a State Senator in New York. One of his associates was Ezra Cornell. Together they developed the ideas for organizing a university. In 1867 Andrew White was elected the first president of the newly established Cornell University.

Andrew White

Franz Brunnow, assistant to the director of the Royal Observatory in Berlin, came to Ann Arbor to head the new Observatory. With a doctorate from the University of Berlin, he had already published work on spherical astronomy. He married Tappan’s daughter, Rebecca (Barbie). When Tappan was dismissed in 1863, Brunnow resigned and returned to Europe, becoming professor of astronomy at the University of Dublin and Astronomer Royal for Ireland.

Henry Simmons Frieze

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The Law Department was established in October of 1859. For the first four years classes were held in the chapel in Mason Hall, and the law library was housed in the Library Room. The Law Department also held classes in South College until 1863 when the Law Building was completed. Enrollment was 92 the first year and 159 the second.

The first law faculty included Charles I. Walker, Thomas M. Cooley, and James V. Campbell.

The first law class graduated in 1860.

*Charles Walker* served as Professor of Law from 1859 to 1876, giving one day a week to the Department. He had a very successful and lucrative law practice in Detroit. He was very interested in Michigan’s early history and wrote extensively on the subject.

*Thomas Cooley* was named Professor of Constitutional Law and History in 1859. One of the state’s most distinguished lawyers, he served as the Jay Professor of Law for twenty-five years. During his tenure he also served as a justice of the Michigan Supreme Court.

*James Campbell* taught law from 1859 until 1885. On his acceptance of the Marshall Professorship, the Law Faculty elected him Dean. He practiced law in Detroit and served on the Michigan Supreme Court. Campbell was also an accomplished scholar in history and literature.

“The Campus itself was a wide and beautiful park-like meadow, where cows roamed at will, and where, in season, the hay was harvested and stood in cocks waiting to be hauled away. The library occupied a single room in the North College, not a large room either. There was no art gallery or art collection. I believe that Professor Asa Gray’s herbarium was stored away somewhere in closets, or cases, but was rarely ever seen. In the central portion of the North College, in my student days, was the chapel. A large furnace, or heater, stood in the central portion of it, which warmed the library, then directly over it. The chapel was not a large room, and yet it was sufficient in those days to hold the entire Literary Department. The seats were all numbered conspicuously; a number was assigned to each student, and he was expected to ‘cover his number’ at morning prayers, or he was marked for absence. Five such marks, unexcused, brought him before the faculty, and a certain number additional made him liable to suspension. ‘Jollie’ the janitor stood in front during chapel exercises, and, with eagle eye, sought out the vacant numbers, and acted as recording angel. When the ‘last bell’ began to toll, the stately form of the Chancellor could be seen emerging from his garden, and, passing near the ‘Tappan Oak,’ advance with measured and dignified pace toward the chapel, accompanied by his two big dogs, Buff and Leo.” — Gabriel Campbell ’65 (Michigan Alumnus, The Days of Auld Lang Syne, 1901)
In 1862 a small room was attached to the north end of Mason Hall to house Randolph Rogers’ statue “Nydia.” Funds to purchase “Nydia” were obtained from benefit lectures and concerts by citizens of Ann Arbor and the University. The small room was removed in 1899 and replaced by a bay window.

Randolph Rogers was born in Waterloo, near Auburn, New York on July 6, 1825. Until the age of 23 he lived in Ann Arbor, engaged in mercantile. From 1848 until 1850 he studied with the great sculptor Lorenzo Bartolini in Rome. On his return, he opened a studio in New York, returning to Italy frequently. Nydia, the Blind Girl of Pompeii, was one of his best-known works. Rogers gave the University a complete collection of the models and casts of his works totaling more than seventy pieces. Unfortunately due to a lack of space they were stored in a steam tunnel and destroyed.

The Law Building was completed in 1863. The new building also housed the University Chapel until 1873 and the University Library until 1883. It was twice remodeled to provide for increasing enrollment. It was the home of the Law School for 60 years.
When Henry Tappan accepted the Presidency of the University of Michigan in August of 1852, he saw the possibilities for building a great educational system. President Tappan’s ideas and influence transformed Michigan from a mere college, teaching only the studies of the established college curriculum of his day, into a true university. He set out to lay the foundation of an institution of learning, which would cover the widest range of knowledge, with postgraduate courses, laboratories for scientific investigation, and libraries.

Yet both his vision and his personality stimulated considerable opposition. Led by the editor of the Detroit Free Press, the state’s newspapers were strongly opposed to his goal of building a true “university” in the European sense, but instead believed that a “high school” was the only goal deserving of state support. Within a few months after arriving on campus, Alexander Winchell developed a strong dislike for Tappan, both because of his personal assignments to various academic programs that he disliked (civil engineering and mathematics) as well as Tappan’s refusal to countersign an order for a microscope he wanted. Working closely with his friend Erastus Haven, Winchell sent a private communication to the Regents claiming that Tappan had assailed his professional character. He then began to write letters under the anonymous name of “Scholasticus” to the Detroit newspapers criticizing Tappan and his ideas. He also encouraged a resolution at the state Methodist convention questioning the moral conditions at the University. It was clear that by 1857 Tappan had made a profound enemy in Winchell, and that Winchell had a strong ally in Erastus Haven. Both men believed Tappan must go, and Haven was toying with the idea of someday replacing him. (as indicated in his letters).

When the new Board of Regents was elected, both men began to work with a Detroit Regent, Levi Bishop, who also started to write hostile anonymous letters concerning Tappan to the Detroit papers. Most of the other Regents were not initially opposed to Tappan, but Bishop soon found a way to drive a wedge between them by being appointed chair of a committee to report on rules and regulations. His report recommended a committee structure that would assume most of the executive functions of the President and the faculty. Tappan fought against this, noting that not only was this committee unconstitutional, but that the “president and the faculty are not mere ‘employees’ but are, in fact THE university.” Bishop launched a counterattack, with vicious diatribes against Tappan’s “bundle of nonsense.” Winchell continued to ingratiate himself with the Regents and lobbied against Tappan. As the Regents approached the end of their tenure, they quietly moved to replace Tappan. Haven wrote to tell Alexander Winchell that he had been asked whether he would accept the presidency if it were open, and he replied that he would probably accept an offer. He let his Michigan friends know that he was “profoundly interested in educational matters.”

On June 25, 1863, the day before commencement, the Regents passed a motion to remove Tappan both as president and as Professor of Philosophy. They then unanimously elected Erastus Haven as president. Tappan was offered the opportunity to resign the morning of the motion but refused. The same day Haven wrote a letter to Winchell conveying his “surprise” and pleasure at the action of the board and asking for Winchell’s assistance in preparing for the fall. Winchell wrote that “my worst enemy has been displaced and my best friend put in his stead.”

(UM Encyclopedic Survey, p. 39)
(Paul Lingenfelter, The Firing of Henry Philip Tappan)

President James Angell was to have the last word on the sordid incident: “Tappan was the largest figure of a man that ever appeared on the Michigan Campus, and he was stung to death by gnats!” (Peckham, p. 56)
Henry Tappan’s Contributions to Higher Education in America

Henry Philip Tappan, Michigan’s first president, captured the excitement of the early regents with his vision of building a true university, which would not only conduct instruction and advanced scholarship, but also respond to popular needs. The university would demonstrate to a skeptical public the true value of scholarship. In Tappan’s words: “We shall have no more acute distinctions drawn between scholastic and practical education; for, it will be seen that all true education is practical, and that practice without education is little worth; and that there will be dignity, grace, and a restless charm about scholarship and the scholar” (Rudolph, p. 234).

Tappan arrived in Ann Arbor in 1852, determined to build a university very different from the aristocratic colonial colleges of 19th-century America. Like the English public schools, these colleges stressed moral development over a liberal education and were based on a classical curriculum in subjects such as Greek, Latin, and rhetoric. In contrast, Tappan was strongly influenced by European leaders such as von Humboldt, who stressed the importance of combining specialized research with humanistic teaching to define the intellectual structure of the university. Tappan articulated a vision of the university as a capstone of civilization, a repository for the accumulated knowledge of mankind, and a home for scholars dedicated to the expansion of human understanding. In his words, “a university is the highest possible form of an institution of learning. It embraces every branch of knowledge and all possible means of making new investigations and thus advancing knowledge” (Peckham, p. 37).

In Tappan’s view, the United States had no true universities, at least in the European sense. With the University of Michigan’s founding heritage from both the French and Prussian systems, he believed he could build such an institution in the frontier state of Michigan. And build it he did, attracting distinguished scholars to the faculty such as Andrew D. White and Charles Kendall Adams, and placing an emphasis on graduate study and research, while investing in major research facilities. Henry Tappan’s vision of Michigan as a true university, stressing scholarship and scientific research along with instruction, predates other early American universities such as Cornell University (founded by Andrew D. White, one of Tappan’s faculty members at Michigan) and Johns Hopkins University by two decades.

Following his dismissal at Michigan, Tappan and his family moved to Europe, never to return to America. Tappan’s son John, the University Librarian, was also dismissed. Franz Brunow, the director of the Observatory married to Tappan’s daughter Barbie, resigned and became professor of astronomy at the University of Dublin and Astronomer Royal for Ireland. Late in his life, Tappan settled in a chalet on the shores of Lake Geneva in Vevey, Switzerland. (The Tappan chalet still exists today, although has been transformed into a trattoria.) In 2005, a University of Michigan Historical Marker, was placed on his final home, commemorating Tappan’s contributions to higher education.

On the foundations of this building stood Châlet Beauval, the home from 1880-1881 of the distinguished American philosopher, scholar, educator, and patriot, Rev. Dr. Henry Philip Tappan. As the first Chancellor of the University of Michigan (1852-1863), Dr. Tappan transformed the fledgling institution in the frontier state of Michigan into one of the leading research universities in America. Dr. Tappan was a man of commanding strength, vision, intellect, and achievement. He was also a family man with a great love of animals, and mountains, and gardens.

Dr. Tappan considered Vevey his spiritual home. Of Vevey he wrote: “Vevey is one of the most glorious and inviting spots on our globe.” It is “…a scene of beauty, grandeur, and dazzling splendor which no language can describe.”

Henry Philip Tappan died at this place on November 15, 1881 and was buried on the hillside overlooking Lake Geneva.
The University of Michigan Campus circa 1863
Law Building, Mason Hall, South College on State Street
A Professors' House on North University (beside South College)
Erastus Haven succeeded Tappan as president in 1863. He returned to a campus and community that was upset over the removal of President Tappan. Having been a professor from 1852-1856, he had many friends in Ann Arbor. His calm, friendly manner served him well.

Haven broke no new ground in moving further toward Tappan’s vision of a university. He sided with the Regents to deny admission to women. The unusual nature of his appointment in the wake of Tappan’s firing would continue to deprive Haven of strong faculty and regental support.

“Haven devoted himself to caring for the material affairs of the University rather than the problems of future development.”
Wilfred Shaw (Michigan Alumnus, April, 1916 p. 326)

1864 Medical Building Addition

With the rapid growth of the Department of Medicine, an addition to the Medical Building became necessary. Half of the $20,000 cost of the addition was raised by a general tax on the citizens of Ann Arbor. The four-story structure, located to the west of the original building, held offices and two large lecture rooms or amphitheaters. The top floor provided an enlarged dissecting room. The lecture system was considered the only acceptable method for work in the Department of Medicine and Surgery.

“The students attended four lectures each morning during five days in the week, the afternoons being devoted to laboratory work and dissection. On Saturdays the students read their theses.”
Victor C. Vaughan ’78 (Michigan Alumnus, April, 1900, p. 279)

“There were no very stringent regulations existing governing the admission of a student to the department of medicine beyond a proper knowledge of English, ‘such knowledge of the Latin language as will enable one to read current prescriptions,’ and a certificate of good moral character. The medical student also at the most came only for two courses of lectures of about six months each, and did not become identified with the life of the University.”
Henry M. Hurd ’63 (Michigan Alumnus, February, 1902, p. 219)
The Observatory was located north of the campus in an isolated spot with poor roads leading to it. There was a push to move it closer to campus. A decision was made to leave it at its location but to add a residence for the professor of astronomy and to improve the road. Ann Arbor provided $3,000 with the agreement that the University would match the sum.

In 1868 the first African American students entered the University, John Summerfield Davidson and Gabriel Franklin Hargo. (Women would be admitted two years later in 1870.)

In 1868 a course in pharmacy was introduced.

In 1868 Dr. Alonzo B. Palmer, Professor of the Theory and Practice of Internal Medicine, headed a movement in the American Medical Association to obtain more clinical instruction in American medical schools. As a result of his efforts along with the increasing community demand in Ann Arbor for a hospital, the faculty asked to be allowed to establish a hospital.

Using hospitals as centers of clinical training was well advanced in Europe, especially in Germany and France. Although the desirability of actual bedside experience for the young physician was recognized, it was difficult to obtain such instruction except under the supervision of a preceptor—an actual practitioner with whom the young doctor served an apprenticeship as assistant.

In 1869 the east Professors’ House on North University became the first University Hospital. It had twenty beds. There were no operating or dressing rooms. It was merely a receiving home in which patients brought in for the clinics could be kept before and after presentation to the class. The little hospital, although inadequate, served its purpose by demonstrating that such an addition to the facilities of the Medical Department was both desirable and practicable.

“When I went to Ann Arbor in the seventies one of the professors’ houses on the north side of the campus was known as ‘University Hospital.’ It was, however, nothing more than a receiving home, in which patients brought in for the clinics could be kept before and after presentation to the class. There were no wards and no operating or dressing rooms, no place where students might receive bedside instruction. On Wednesday and Saturday mornings students carried patients on stretchers across the campus to the medical building, where the procedures were carried out.”

Victor Vaughan ’78 m (A Doctor’s Memories, p. 197)
The Detroit Observatory and Director’s Residence
The early Campus was enclosed by a picket fence, with sidewalks made of wooden planks.

“The Campus, as I first saw it in September 1857, looked like a small farm spacious for college grounds compared with anything I had seen in the east—and unlike ever to be crowded with buildings. It was fenced in with a turnstile at the principal entrance on the northwest corner. The stile often was broken in the effort of students to go through both sides at once. The stile gave way—literally—to steps over the fence and these in time gave place to posts with room enough between them for one man at a time, but not for a cow.” W. F. Breaker ’59m (Michigan Alumnus, April, 1901, p. 266)
One of Michigan’s most distinguished faculty members (and later Cornell’s first president), Andrew White, began to plant trees on the young campus, as noted in his autobiography. “Without permission from anyone, I began planting trees within the university enclosure; established, on my own account, several avenues; and set out elms to overshadow them. Choosing my trees with care, carefully protecting and watering them during the first two years, and gradually adding to them a considerable number of evergreens, I preached practically the doctrine of adorning the Campus. Gradually some of my students joined me; one class after another aiding in securing trees and planting them, others became interested, until, finally, the University authorities made me ‘superintendent of grounds’ and appropriated to my work the munificent sum of seventy-five dollars a year. So began the splendid growth which now surrounds those buildings.” (White, p. 282)

“In the early morning of a spring day in 1911, I was hurrying along the diagonal walk across the campus, on the way to my laboratory to see how my guinea pigs and rabbits were responding to my treatments, when I saw a man behaving queerly. He seemed to be consulting a sheet of paper which he carried in his left hand; then he went from tree to tree, patting each in a caressing manner with his right hand. Thinking that I had detected a patient escaped from the psychopathic ward, I left the walk and approached the strangely behaving individual. He was standing by a tree and patting it when he heard me approach and turned quickly. In my surprise I cried out: ‘Mr. White! What does this mean?’ He said: ‘Yesterday while sitting in my library at Ithaca I happened to think that fifty years ago today the class of 1861 planted these trees under my direction. I had among my papers a plot of the ground, the location of each tree and the name of the student who planted it.’ Then he added, with tears in his eyes: ‘There are more trees alive than boys.’” Victor C. Vaughan (A Doctor’s Memories, p. 126)
President Haven did not have an agenda, nor did he offer any reforms. Rather he simply continued the policies of Tappan. He did so with quiet competence and diplomacy, and the faculty found him considerate. With two-thirds of the enrollment from out-of-state, the University began to take criticism from the Legislature. Haven reminded them that the University had not been founded by state money, but by a land grant from the United States Congress, which support rendered its obligations national.

On April 2, 1868, in a letter to Alexander Winchell, Haven expressed his discontent with his position:

“As it regards ferreting out the authors of the vile burlesque [a mock or false program for the Junior Exhibition, March 24, 1868, which is aptly described by the term “vile”] I am uncertain what to do. Such work required time & attention, but I am confined by two recitations a day & other matters that occupy the time. I am inclined to think that had the Faculty taken no notice of the affair from the beginning there would have been no trouble. However, the Faculty must decide. It is made an occasion of very bitter adverse criticism upon myself, who unfortunately must bear all the blame of all that is deemed to be wrong about the University, with but little credit of any good. This, to speak plainly, more than all things else, prompts me to think of retiring from the place. I started with an unfair sentiment against me & can never secure impartiality. Why should I work all my life to sustain a cause at a dead lift? Nothing whatever would, or should, induce me to remain here but a belief that I can do more for truth & good here than anywhere else.

A man who is breasted difficulties & wearing out his life wants to know that he is working in a good cause, & for what will be a permanent good, & that after he is gone there will not be persevering effort to conceal & pervert what he has done.” (UM Encyclopedic Survey, p. 57)

Haven accepted the presidency of Northwestern University and remained there three years. From 1873 to 1877 he served as Chancellor of Syracuse University. In 1880 he became a Bishop in the Methodist church and went to San Francisco. Haven died in Salem, Oregon, August 2, 1881.

In 1867 in response to a request for state support from the Regents, the Legislature responded by granting to the University one-twentieth of a mill on every dollar of state property tax. The state added a constraint: the University would have to build a program in homeopathic medicine. The Regents balked, and eventually this constraint was removed. But the state capped the “mill tax” at $15,000. The Legislature also demanded that the University admit women. Haven and the Regents refused.

After the Civil War, enrollments increased to 1,205, edging out Harvard and prompting a Harvard professor to note: “In 25 years in a country 500 miles from the sea known 50 years ago only to the fur trade, a university has sprung up, to which students flock from all parts of the land, and which offers to thousands free of expense, the best education this continent affords.” (Peckham, p. 63)
Following Haven’s departure, the Regents asked Professor Henry Simmons Frieze to serve as President pro tempore, which he did from 1869 until 1871. Frieze had earlier accepted a Professorship of Latin Language and Literature in 1853 at the urging of a colleague from Brown, Professor Boise, who also came to Michigan. During Frieze’s 35-year tenure (1854 to 1889) as professor, president pro tempore, and acting president during the absence of his successor, James Angell, Frieze had some remarkable accomplishments. In 1870 he quietly arranged for women to finally be admitted to the University. His love of music and talent as an accomplished organist and composer were instrumental in his role as one of the founders of the Choral Union and the Musical Society. His great interest in painting and sculpture led him to secure the first works of art for the University’s museum and art gallery.

But of particular importance was Henry Frieze’s role in creating the secondary school system in America. Prior to the Civil War, most public education occurred at the primary level, and colleges and universities were obliged to create associated academies to prepare students for college work. Frieze instead began the practice of certifying select Michigan public schools as capable of offering respectable college preparation, thereby freeing the university from preparatory commitments and stimulating the schools of the state to extend their responsibilities into secondary education. This was the device that unleashed the high-school movement in the Midwest and later the nation, not only enabling the state universities to cultivate scholarly aspirations, but reshaping public education into clearly differentiated elementary and high schools.

Henry Frieze’s good friend James Angell said of him: “We owe to him the introduction of the so-called diploma relation of the schools to the university and the provision for musical study. He actively encouraged the development of graduate work. He was ever seeking to elevate the range and to enrich the character of university teaching. No man except President Tappan has done so much to give to the University its present form and spirit. No one was ever more devoted to the interests of this institution or cherished a more abiding hope for its permanent prosperity and usefulness.” (Michigan Alumnus, January, 1906, p. 164)

“One of the homes into which we had an early introduction was that of Professor Henry Frieze. The house, with a large garden, occupied the space now covered by St. Joseph’s Hospital. At the time of which I am writing (1877-89) Doctor Frieze was engaged in revising his Virgil and writing of Italian artists and their works. We spent an evening or two a week, sometimes more, in his parlor. He would read us what he had written since our last visit, illustrating Italian art with photographs, and then he would play Beethoven, of whom he was a great admirer, and of whose compositions he was a skilful interpreter.” Victor Vaughan, (A Doctor’s Memories, p. 121)
On January 5, 1870 a resolution was passed by the Regents asserting that “no rule exists in any of the University statutes for the exclusion of any person from the University who possesses the requisite literary and moral qualifications.” Within a few weeks Madelon Stockwell enrolled in the University. More women came in the fall of 1870, and before many years “co-eds” became a part of University life.

“When it was announced that a ‘Miss Stockwell would be in the Class of ’72, Second Section, L to W,’ it was up to us what to do—strike, walk out and leave her alone in the class-room, or scuff and make a noise when she was called to recite, and boo her off the Campus. One sunny afternoon she appeared in Professor Walter’s classroom—recitation, Latin, Horace. When her name was called the silence was almost audible; you could have heard a pin drop. Her reading of the Latin text and translation were perfect, her answers to the questions on grammar, prompt and correct, a perfect recitation. The class was dismissed, and without any previous arrangement, we all lined up outside to take a good look at our new classmate. She appeared in the doorway, timid, and a little scared at the array. But when a brawny young man stepped out, asking to escort her, and was accepted with a pleasant smile for him and for all of us down the line the smiles were returned with not a single boo or groan. And so Miss Stockwell, the first co-ed, was received in the University by the Class of 1872. Coeducation at the University of Michigan was settled.” Henry Nelson Loud ’72 (Michigan Alumnus, June 11, 1938)

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“In the fall of 1870 the first class of Freshmen women entered the University of Michigan. We were nine in number in the Literary Department, and I was overjoyed to find eight others after my fears in June that I might be the only one. There were Sarah Hamlin of Boston, Emma Hall, a graduate of C again Seminary, New York; Eliza Benton and Anna Chandler of Coldwater; Josephine Agnes Dox, and Delia Hemingway of Ann Arbor; Annie Granger from a small town in Michigan; Mary Hapgood, and Julia Knight from Adrian. Miss Laura White entered the Law Department. She was outstandingly tall and so was known as ‘Alba Longa.’ A mother of seven children entered the Medical Department.” Julia Knight Edwards ’70-71 (Michigan Alumnus, 1938, p. 423)

“Madelon Stockwell ’72 entered the University as a sophomore. She was seated alphabetically next to a young man by the name of Turner (Charles King Turner) ’72, ’73. A few months after her graduation in 1872, Dr. Benjamin F. Cocker, a member of the faculty, dismissed his class early one day, saying that he was ‘called away by some of the mischief that had been done by admitting women to the University.’ He was going to Kalamazoo to perform a marriage ceremony for Miss Stockwell and Mr. Turner.” (Michigan Alumnus, June 11, 1938, p. 423)
Alice Freeman was instrumental in starting the Women's League. She taught history and served as President of Wellesley. She also served as the first dean of women at the University of Chicago.

This faded photograph of the Quadrantic Club, the forerunner of all campus women's organizations, was prized among the possessions of Alice Freeman Palmer '76. Of the 29 women in the University in 1873, 23 belonged to this club. Thirteen years after it was taken Mrs. Palmer discovered that five of these women had died in the period, 1873-1886, while nine had married. Fifteen were teachers, one an architect, and two were lawyers. One had become a writer and one a foreign missionary. The woman seated at left in the first row was Laura R. (Alba Longa) White '74 (see quote on page 30).

While traveling in Asia, Regent Levi Barbour was impressed with the remarkable work of three women trained in medicine at Michigan: Mary Stone '96m, and Ida Kahn '96m from China, and Tomo Inouye '01m, from Japan. He established the Barbour Scholarship so that Asian women trained at Michigan could return to their home for a life of service to their countries.

The University of Michigan Campus circa 1870
Left to right - Medical Building, Chemical Laboratory, Law Building, Mason Hall, and South College
By 1871 there were 1,110 students and 35 faculty at the University, which had an annual budget of $76,702. The Department of Literature, Science and the Arts offered six “courses,” each four years in length—classical, scientific, Latin and scientific, Greek and scientific, civil engineering and mining engineering.

The scientific course was subdivided for more than ten years into special four-year programs in general science, chemistry, and biology. Since the first half of both of the engineering programs was largely scientific, they were also regarded as subdivisions of the scientific course until 1895, when Engineering became an independent department.

In 1871 both the Law and Medical Departments consisted of two courses of lectures, each of six-month duration, with no significant examination required for admittance. However by the early 1900s, the increasingly technical content of these programs required three and four years of nine months each, as well as two years of work in the Literary College.

After a two-year-long search and negotiation, in 1871 the Regents elected the president of the University of Vermont, James Burrill Angell, as the third president of the University. Ironically, Angell had studied at a grammar school in Providence under Henry Frieze before he entered Brown University. After graduation with highest honors, he accepted a position as a civil engineer in Boston. When he later returned as a faculty member at Brown, he was given a choice of a professorship in either civil engineering or modern languages. Choosing the latter, Angell remained on the Brown faculty for seven years before becoming editor of the Providence Journal during the Civil War. He accepted the presidency of the University of Vermont in 1866.

Angell served for 38 years, presiding over the University’s extraordinary growth into the largest institution in the nation in the early 1900s. He was persuasive both with the Regents and the state legislature. He managed to convince the state to fund the university through a “mill tax,” a fixed percentage of the state property tax, thereby avoiding the politics of having to beg the legislature each year for an operating appropriation (as is the practice today). This provided ample funds for the construction during his tenure of fifty buildings to accommodate the rapid growth of the campus. While neither palatial nor a model of architectural beauty, the growing campus was adequate to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding student enrollments.