

25 Years of Co-Education at Georgia Is Tribute to Valiant Mary Creswell

By CELESTINE SIBLEY,
Constitution Staff Writer.
ATHENS, Ga., June 3.—The man in the photo finishing department at the corner drugstore held up a couple of negatives up to the light and sighed philosophically.

"Women, women, women" he murmured. "All the time women! The new managing editor of the Red and Black? A woman. The head-knocker at the commencement exercises? A woman."

He hung the negatives up to dry and sighed into his hypo. "Yep, the girls have taken over the University of Georgia."

If Miss Mary E. Creswell could have heard him she would have thrown back her carefully coiffed gray head and laughed long and appreciatively.

"RETURN UNIVERSITY"

Miss Creswell remembers too well another sunny day 25 years ago near the close of another World War when 12 timid but determined co-eds shakily set foot on the University of Georgia campus—and the male editors of that same Red and Black voiced their rage in headlines which screamed: "Give us back our University!"

As the first and only director of home economics at the university, Dean Creswell was one of the pioneers in the movement to open the school to girls—and that first group of militant maidens owed their chances at higher education in great part to the steady-voiced little woman with the blue-gray eyes.

"Heaven, it was a bitter fight," laughed Miss Creswell, raising her eyes to a yellow brick building on "Ag Hill," the first to be built for the influx of female students.

"See that cornerstone?" she asked, pointing to a rectangular block half-hidden by shrubbery. "That contains a chemistry paper showing that a girl student made the highest grade. And there's also a copy of one of those editions of the Red and Black. We put in the minutes of the first faculty meeting attended by women, too. They had been holding faculty meetings for more than a hundred years—and then one day six women teachers had the nerve to show their faces!"

GIRLS NOT WANTED

Miss Creswell chuckled at the joke and led the way down the green slope of the campus to the handsome open courtyard formed by five, student-run "home management houses."

"They didn't want us at all in those days," she remarked. "But you know, I believe they've gotten used to us now."

The first World War provided the final pressure necessary to break down resistance to co-education which had been bitter and uncompromising since 1899 when Mrs. Sarah B. C. Morgan headed a group of women from the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Colonial



—Photo by John Y. Coffey

FIRST LADY—Mary E. Creswell, beloved dean of the School of Home Economics at the University of Georgia, will enjoy a sort of personal triumph tomorrow when the school celebrates the 25th anniversary of co-education. Her school brought the first 12 co-eds to the campus and she conferred the first degree upon a woman.

Dames that sent a petition to the university asking that women be admitted.

The petition was not only bitterly opposed but after declining it, the trustees voted to have all reference to it expunged from the records of the meeting.

In 1918 when approval finally came it was in answer to the crying need for technically trained women for government work in foods. Until then there had been only three state normal colleges in Georgia open to women. If a woman desired further education than the two-year course offered by these colleges, she had to go to a private college or out of the state of Georgia.

OPENING WEDGE

"It was the need for food conservation and food production that gave us the opening wedge," Miss Creswell said. "The first degrees received by women at the University of Georgia was in home economics. Since then I guess they've gotten about every other degree offered."

A resident of Athens who had gone to Washington in 1913 to serve the United States Department of Agriculture as field agent for 15 southern states, Mary Creswell was recalled to Georgia in 1918 and made director of the division of home economics.

"We borrowed laboratories here and there on the campus and set up the equipment we had to have," the dean recalled. "It was the best we could get in those days but, of course, nothing to compare with what we have today."

"The girls, I remember, were older and more mature. All of them entered as juniors with two years' education at some other school. Many of them had had jobs and they were all terribly

intent on receiving training that would help them to win the war."

Miss Creswell's sister, Edith, who now keeps house for the dean and their mother, Mrs. A. E. Creswell, at 633 Milledge circle, was a member of the first class. Others are: Mrs. Cully A. Cobb, Mrs. Fred Whelchel, Mrs. A. P. Dean, Miss Susie Burson, Mrs. C. N. Walker, Mrs. Walter Moran, Mrs. Meade Feruson, Mrs. Paul Tabor, Miss Mattie Rampley, Miss Edith Robertson, and the late Mrs. Ora Hart Avery.

Born in Pennsylvania, Dean Creswell came to Georgia during the Cotton States Exposition of 1881. Her father, a physician who contracted rheumatism riding horseback through the hills of Pennsylvania during all kinds of weather, brought his family to Georgia after sampling the climate of many other southern states.

"We liked Georgia and here we stayed," said Miss Creswell. She attended high school here and was graduated with first honors from the Johnston Institute at Monroe, receiving her diploma from the State Normal School at Athens in 1902.

COUNTRY TEACHER

As a country teacher living and teaching in Walton county at the turn of the century, Mary Creswell had an opportunity to observe first-hand the need of the farm woman for more education and assistance in handling her problems.

"I saw how hard the rural women of Georgia worked, how little help most of them had, and how eager they were to make the most of anything that would improve their way of living," Miss Creswell said.

That understanding later helped her to pioneer in the establishment of extension work and home demonstration programs in Georgia. In 1936 Dean Creswell, who suggested the name "home demonstration" for this type of rural adult education, was awarded a national certificate by the Grand Council of the National Extension organization.

In announcing the award the organization said: "No extension worker in the United States contributed more to the foundation of home demonstration work than Miss Mary E. Creswell. She had great foresight and laid very firm and sound plans on which we have built. She was the first woman employed in the Federal Extension Office in Washington."

ONE OF A HUNDRED

A charter member of the University chapter of Phi Kappa Phi and Phi Upsilon Omicron, Miss Creswell's name is listed as one of "One hundred women from many lands who have given devoted service to country homes and communities," by the Associated Country Women of the World with headquarters in London.

Girls Dominate Georgia Class

Special to THE CONSTITUTION.
ATHENS, Ga., June 3.—Coinciding with the 25th anniversary of co-education at the University of Georgia, the most predominantly feminine senior class in the history of the school will hear a valedictory address by the first co-ed valedictorian and receive its degrees at war-streamlined commencement exercises here at 10:30 a. m. Monday.

Miss Eugenia Neel, of Atlanta, is the first woman valedictorian named at Georgia since the school let down the bars to admit co-eds during the last World War in March, 1918.

This year's graduating class, the smallest in recent years, due to the absence of male students in the armed forces, has 192 girl members and 106 men.

EXERCISES CUT

Commencement activities which usually run over several days have been confined to one day this year, with the exception of the baccalaureate sermon, which will be delivered at 11 a. m. tomorrow, to permit parents and other out-of-town visitors to make the trip in one day. Many of the graduates are also rushing through commencement to enter the armed forces or to take jobs.

Bob Sherrod, Life and Time war correspondent and a graduate of the Henry W. Grady School of Journalism, was to have been principal commencement speaker, but again war intervened and Sherrod cancelled his appearance at the last minute to sail overseas.

Chancellor S. V. Sanford and President Harmon W. Caldwell will make short talks preceding the conferring of the degrees, and Judge Frank Foley, of Columbus, president of the Alumni Society, will induct the graduating class into the organization.

CAPS AND GOWNS

Members of the faculty and the senior class, all wearing caps and gowns, will form the academic procession in front of the military building at 10:15 a. m., marching to the fine arts auditorium. Music for commencement has been arranged by Hugh Hodgson.

Presentation of two paintings—one of Miss Mary E. Creswell, dean of the school of home economics, and the other of Dr. Joseph LeConte, late professor of geology—will feature the meeting of the Alumni Society at noon. More than 500 graduates are expected to attend the meeting, and seven class reunions are scheduled, including those of 1894, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903 and 1904. Three of the present members of the Board of Regents are members of the class of 1903, Chairman Marion Smith, Sandy Beaver and Ed Jerger.

Mrs. Marie Anderson Vaughan, of Cartersville, a member of the class of 1920, will present the portrait of Dean Creswell, which was painted by Welford S. Conrow, famous New York artist, by subscription of alumnae of the school of home economics. President Caldwell will receive the portrait, which will be hung in the lobby of Dawson Hall.

LECONTE PICTURE

The picture of Dr. LeConte was painted by Miss Kate Edwards, of Atlanta, and will be presented by Mrs. Jeannie Alexander Stevens in memory of Joseph Percival Stevens, of Atlanta. The portrait will be placed in LeConte Hall in the biology science building.

Dr. Nathaniel G. Long, of the Peachtree Road Methodist church in Atlanta, will deliver the baccalaureate sermon. The president's reception honoring the graduation class will be from 5:30 to 7:30 p. m. Sunday on the lawn at Lucy Cobb.

of her students enter Miss Creswell's "Home Ec" school with their eye on professional jobs outside the home, most of them have better homes of their own as a result of their training, she believes. Her own small, beautifully kept home is the little lady dean's principal interest when she leaves the campus.

"I am not perhaps as good a cook as my sister, Edith," she confessed, "but I do enjoy the house."

Miss Creswell also enjoys the five big home management houses where her students get their practical instruction their senior year by actually doing the work of running the house and the nursery, which is attended by moppets from town and faculty row.

She has a private joke about the way the home management houses have been attracting the late from the New V. 12 classes.



THEY EDIT THE NEWS—Miss Sara Brown, Ga., has been named managing editor of the Red and Black, University of Georgia student newspaper. Robert Mitchell, of Atlanta, is its new managing editor. Miss Brown is the first girl to hold an editorial position on the paper, university observers said.

Decatur Woman Hopes Mate Will Enter Rome First

For the second time in a week the advances of Lieutenant Colonel Bogardus Cairns, of 326 Adams street, Decatur, and his tank battalion in the Valmontone sector on the road to Rome, have made the press dispatches.

In Monday's Constitution, an article by Daniel de Luce, Associated Press correspondent, describing the advances of the Fifth Army, mentioned a tank battalion led by Cairns. Mrs. Cairns notified The Constitution that before reading the article she had believed her husband to be around Cassino, but now that she knew he was leading a battalion to Rome, she wanted him to be the first to enter the ancient city.

A second dispatch yesterday advised that in a section northwest of Valmontone, the tanks of a battalion commanded by Cairns had "smashed forward to the highway, expanding American control of it."

Also mentioned in a dispatch was Captain Charles Morgan, of Talladega, who is in command of one of the companies, which, according to the release, have taken up "strong positions south of the highway to assure the absolute elimination of its use by the withdrawing enemy."

GUERRILLAS BLAST BRIDGE

ISTANBUL, Turkey, June 1.—(Delayed)—(P)—Greek guerrillas have blown up a bridge on the Istanbul-Sofia railway, a vital link between Turkey and the Balkans, passengers arriving here today said.

Red & Black Editor

ATHENS, Ga.—Sara Brown has been elected editor of the Red and Black newspaper, the first woman to hold the position.

Miss Brown, who is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, is a member of the Sigma Xi Sorority, the Sigma Chi Fraternity, and the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society.

She is also a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and the Sigma Xi Sorority.

Another member of the staff is Robert Mitchell, who is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society.

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