

Editor's Note

The Diary of Horatio Collins King Dickinson College Class of 1858

Transcribed July 1998 - January, 1999
By David Kates

Introduction to the Journal

Horatio Collins King kept his journal at Dickinson College from September, 1854 to August, 1858. The diary is the only known account of the full four years of a Dickinson College student. The journal is 596 pages, plus an index. The index references major events in his journal with page numbers. The fact that he bound the diary with an index suggests that he may have recopied it. King additionally pasted or bound into his journal Commencement and society programs, newspaper clippings, tickets, letters, cartoons and certificates. He pasted in two obituaries from 1860 and 1861 which further suggests that the journal was completed years after he was graduated.

The journal is a fascinating resource to any researcher interested in nineteenth century small town and college cultures. He discusses Carlisle businesses, churches, private homes and streets. His descriptions of Dickinson College academic buildings and residence halls is also interesting. He talks about College professors, students, subject areas, discipline, grading and extracurricular societies. Other areas of note are the relationship between College men and Carlisle women, food, College and national politics, saloons and recreation.

I have tried to include the full names and years of association with the College for the students and staff that he cites. This information can be found in the *Dickinson College Alumni Record of 1905* and in *Dickinson College: A History* by Charles Coleman Sellers (Wesleyan University Press, 1973). If people were not a member of the Dickinson community, I was not able to provide full names.

My transcription is literal in that I did not correct King's misspelling of words. Most misspelled words are easy to decipher. For instance, he sometimes used British spellings. Other words and spellings appear to be particular to the 19th century, to Dickinson or to King himself. I have provided notes in the transcript where King included a document within his text.

Unfortunately, about one-hundred pages was cut out of the journal with a razor blade. King's diary is nevertheless comprehensive and fascinating. His handwriting is very easy to read. Also, it is interesting to note how King prepares himself at Dickinson (or should I say Dickinson prepares him) for his career as a lawyer and a politician. Emma King Gray appears to have donated the diary to Special Collections, most likely after her father's death.