

A look at what lies behind the

By SHEENAGH MURPHY

New Year's Day 1979 marked the 150th anniversary of well known Fredericton campus of the University of New Brunswick. New Year's Day, 1829, Fredericton townspeople and the small staff of the University gathered at the newly constructed Arts Building to commemorate the establishment of this university.

Yet UNB's history goes back even farther than that, starting in essence, in 1783, when Loyalists, driven from their homes by the Treaty of Paris, took refuge on the east coast of Canada. One of the first affairs to be looked after was the petition for a college. In the beginning the college was established in a two story wood frame house at the same time that many pioneers faced starvation and freezing in animal hide tents. The College, whose students were in fact children under nine years of age, was called the University of Fredericton or the College of New Brunswick when it was first chartered by governor general Sir Thomas Carleton. Carleton had modeled the institution on the university founded in New York, also called Kings College.

From the very dawn of its existence the University of New Brunswick met with resistance and controversy, a state which was to plague it right up to modern day times. Arguments raged concerning what the institution should offer, while anti-Loyalists bemoaned the Anglican nature of the college. The Bishop of Nova Scotia at the time vehemently opposed the institution, seeing it as a rival for the King's College of Windsor Nova Scotia, established 11 years before.

Yet despite opposition, on February 12, 1800 a charter for the University of Fredericton was granted. Managing on a government grant of two hundred pounds, the University of Fredericton managed to gain the monopoly of the St. John River for the operation of a ferry boat, to supply extra income.

The first and only president of the University of Fredericton was John Somerville, and it was through his efforts that the college actually began a curriculum of university level courses. In February 21, 1820 the first degrees were conferred.

The town of Fredericton was, at this time, rapidly expanding, but conditions were harsh and second generation Loyalists seemed more concerned with farming than the classics. In addition, the college was not attracting good quality teachers because of their tight financial position, and it looked like the University of Fredericton was on its way out. The registration at the University of Fredericton remained small and many felt that this was due to the exclusively Anglican nature of the institution. In an attempt to save the college, members of the college applied for a royal charter, and the application was granted by the governor at the time, Sir Howard Douglas. The charter itself

was granted on the stipulation that non-Anglicans could attend, although the council in charge of the university affairs remained of that order. A more generous financial provision from the government was made available to the college, as it was at this time that Napoleon's blockade of the English Channel necessitated Britain turning to her colonies for wood for her ships. New Brunswick's abundance in that commodity brought an influx of money into the government till.

From its temporary quarters on Brunswick Street the College was able to build the original and oldest building on the present University of New Brunswick campus, The Old Arts Building. Officially opened as Kings College, N.B. a new president, Reverend George Best was appointed. He, along with Vice President, Dr. Edwin Jacob, and John Somerville as teacher of divinity and metaphysics received a \$150.00 per annum for their time.

Meanwhile, controversy raged on. The Kings College was known by many as a Tory stronghold and arguments in the provincial legislature denounced the college for its narrow curriculum as well as the absence of practical skills in the courses offered. The controversy culminated in 1846, when an Act of Amendment to the Charter opened up the college to other religious denominations.

Students by this time had a wider curriculum to choose from, as the college studies had branched from the original math and classics to include chemistry, natural history and astronomy. In 1840, Brydone Jack, a professor at the time, had persuaded the college to buy a telescope, then the best of its kind. To this day the telescope resides in the small observatory near the Old Arts Building on campus.

It was around this period that perhaps the most conspicuous figure in education in the mid-century joined the small ranks of professors at the Kings College. Marshall d'Avray instigated major educational reforms all of which took place under the governorship of Sir Thomas Head and his successor J. Henry Thomas Manner Sutton. D'Avray not only was a major force behind the improvement of Kings College, but was also chief superintendent of education for the province and editor of the Fredericton Head Quarters, the only newspaper at the time.

Despite the goodly number of graduates which the college turned out, controversy once again arose concerning the usefulness of the college. In 1859 The Final College Bill became the act to establish the University of New Brunswick as it is now called. Supported by a government grant of \$8,844.48, The University of New Brunswick opened the academic year 1859-1860 with its new name and a new president, J. Henry Thomas. The Act also insured that any discrimination towards religious interests of



either the professors, students or administration was no longer allowed.

Thus by 1867 the College had 5 professors, and served approximately 30 students who were expected to take the three year program. (It wasn't until 1886 that the 4 year program was introduced.)

Classics and math still remained as the basics, but chemistry, the natural sciences, french, english, history, geography and engineering courses were also offered. Students needed 1000 points a year to graduate and tuition stood at \$16.00 for a 40 week session. (Not long after tuition increased to \$25.00.) Board and room could be booked in the college building itself for the sum of \$2.50 per week, although much cheaper accommodation could be found in the town itself.

In addition, while finances remained extremely short at the University, a large number of students received free tuition through various scholarships and grants from different sources. The year 1862 had seen the establishment of scholarships for 1 candidate from each of New

Brunswick's 14 counties, while the Foundation of the Alumnae in 1863 "for the purpose of promoting sound education and furthering interests of the university" established several small, and one large scale, annual contribution.

By 1885 more than 65 full time and 8 part time students were attending the University of New Brunswick. In that decade the publication, The University Monthly heralded the first appearance of student journalism. Many names renowned throughout Canada and the world appeared on that masthead. Graduates Charles G.D. Roberts and Bliss Carmen - both poets of note - were one time editors while W.F. Ganong of Ganong chocolates was business manager in 1883.

Notables on the professorial staff at the time included W.F. Stockley from Trinity University, Dublin and Douglas Hyde, a man who occupied a leading position in the Irish Literary movement as well as becoming the first president of Ireland.

The University campus today has as one of its women's residences Mary Tibbits Hall,

named in honour of UNB proxy lady student. In 1886 she and Miss Florence A. Cail became the first to make UNB co-educational. Criticism remained strong against the University until 1893 when the chief superintendent of education became ex-officio the president of the Senate.

Establishing the English department in 1893, George M. Dyer introduced a more liberal system of education than was first known. By 1899 a Bachelors in Science and a Master's degree in Arts was available at the University of New Brunswick. It was also that year that the foundation stone was laid for the \$25,000 engineering building which was completed in 1900.

The gym was also built in 1900, paid for largely by pledges and additional governmental aid. 1907, the government once again increased its support, allowing for the establishment of the University of New Brunswick School of Forestry and the recognition of the Department of Engineering.

World War I brought drastic registration and loss of students from the University.