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## Kenyon Collegian - March 4, 1949

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# Spirit of Kenyon Is One of Recovery

## EARLY STAGES OF FIRE



The tragic flames that took lives and property from Gambier last Sunday morning left in their wake the same spirited energy that has been the lifeblood of Kenyon for 125 years. Alumni, faculty, students, and friends of the College have consistently shown determination and direction in their efforts to keep Kenyon as strong as ever.

On Sunday, Mr. Albert C. Whitaker, an alumnus and for many years a member of the Board of Trustees, sent his sympathy and a pledge of \$25,000 toward the rebuilding of Old Kenyon. This hearty encouragement in the face of disaster is only one of many which have come from Kenyon alumni.

Friends of the College nearby and from afar have helped by offering temporary housing and clothing for those who lived in Old Kenyon.

One day after the fire, faculty administrators made out emergency rooming arrangements and everyone at the College was able to sleep on the Hill. Since then, in the classroom, individual faculty

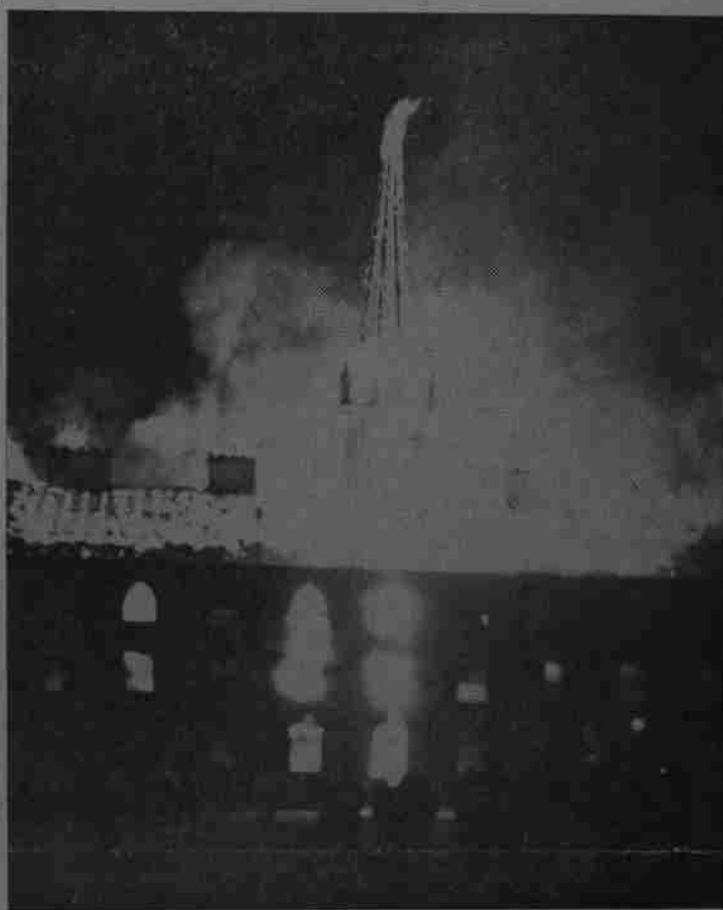
members have shown restraint and extreme good judgment in carrying on the prime college functions without making it a too great burden on those who are emotionally upset.

In the college assembly held Monday evening President Chalmers announced that everything taken into consideration, the best over-all plan for the College to take would be one of simply "going ahead."

President Chalmers compared the general attitude of "sticking it out" without any break, shown from the start at Kenyon, with the attitude of the English when they are under great stress.

From the beginning the Student Council led by Bill Porter has shown itself a valuable asset to the student body. Through their leadership, the students have worked together efficiently at Mercy Hospital and on the campus.

## TOWER ABLAZE



## The Kenyon . . . COLLEGIAN

Vol. LXXIII

March, 4, 1949, Gambier, Ohio

No. 13.

### For The Future

The headline of this COLLEGIAN states that the spirit of Kenyon is one of recovery. This is true and this is the way it should be. When catastrophe strikes a weak victim the result is usually ruin, but when catastrophe falls on a strong community like Kenyon College — strong with the love and energy of America's most vigorous citizenry — the result is never ruin, never a regression, never a falling but an ever stronger "going ahead."

We live for the future; work for the future; hope for the future. Nine of our friends have gone from us forever; the building which we all knew as the heart of our college has gone with them. Not one of us can escape the heart-filling sadness and depression which these losses bring. Yet we are "going ahead."

How do we carry this weight of tragedy as if we were accustomed to the burden, not stopping for even a day to break the routine of our work? Some might bitterly accuse us of being too hard-hearted, too calculating; too unemotional, too logical, and worst of all too self-centered. But such an accusation would merely indicate the most gross misunderstanding. Healthy tears blind the eyes without rusting the mind. If what we have done this last week predicts what we shall continue to do next week, next month, next year, throughout our college career, then and only then can we find justice in the eyes of God; then and only then can we believe that Ernest Ahwajee, Edward Brout, Albert Lewis, Martin Mangel, Jack McDonald, Marc Peck, George Pincus, Stephen Shepard, and Colin Woodworth lived lives of fulfillment.

A. W. S.

### Thanks

### from the President

In the awful misfortune which has befallen us our neighbors have helped in many many ways, and from all parts of the country and more distant places offers have come not only of sympathy but of practical assistance. We are especially grateful to the Mount Vernon Fire Company, the Mount Vernon Police Department, the State Patrol, and the Fire Companies of Danville and of Newark. The Mount Vernon Fire Company under the skillful leadership of Chief White did a willing and excellent job.

Mayor William Rohler and Director of Public Safety Sheridan Loyd called at my office to offer any of the numerous and valuable facilities at their charge, notably for housing and for communications. Numerous individuals have done the same, especially a large number of the residents of Gambier and of Mount Vernon.

Mercy Hospital as usual was equal to emergency needs, and I cannot express too highly my admiration of the way in which the staff improvised, acquired extra nursing help, and absorbed into its routine the volunteer assistants from the undergraduate body. The Col-

lege Doctor, Dr. Lee, and the Consultant in Traumatic Surgery, Dr. Drake, were ably assisted by several of their colleagues in the medical profession, notably Doctors Eastman, Baube, Cassidy, Hoecker, and Schamansky.

The Shellmar Company and other of the leading institutions in Mount Vernon also offered us practical aid, and many of our sister colleges far and near, among them Denison University, College of Wooster, Mount Union College, Marietta College, Brown University, Bowling Green State University, Lake Erie College, Haverford College, Oberlin College, Cranbrook School, the Ohio Wesleyan University, The American Red Cross offered us aid.

In rehearsing this long list I undoubtedly have missed several of those who have offered us practical help and who have given us help in our need. Some of the offers came by telephone to offices other than mine, and officials of the College on hearing them and knowing that we had for the time being at least adequate provision of bedding and housing space for students, declined the offers with our very great

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### Memorial Service Held For Nine

Monday afternoon at 3 o'clock in the college chapel a memorial service was conducted for the nine who lost their lives in the Old Kenyon fire: Ernest Ahwajee, Edward H. Brout, Albert J. Lewis, Martin E. Mangel, Jack B. McDonald, Marc S. Peck, George L. Pincus, Stephen M. Shepard and Colin M. Woodworth.

The interdenominational meeting was opened with a prayer of hope and consolation by the Rev. Thomas Van B. Barrett. Fenton R. Goldberg chanted a Hebrew hymn of exultation in God and was followed by a reading from Romans and Revelation by President Chalmers. The Rt. Rev. Henry Wise Hobson, D.D., Bishop of Southern Ohio and Chairman ex-officio of the Board of Trustees closed the service with a short commendation of the departed souls to God's mercy.

A High Mass of Requiem, requested by the Catholic students here, was held yesterday in St. Vincent's Church in Mt. Vernon for Jack McDonald and Ernest Ahwajee. Earlier in the week, a memorial service took place in the Speech Building for the Jewish victims of the blaze.

### Old Kenyon, Symbol of College, Has Rich, Impressive History

The symbol of Kenyon College and the center of its activities for many years was destroyed by fire early Sunday morning, Feb. 27. Its history is rich and impressive; its reconstruction is a challenge to the future. As an architectural structure it was one of the most interesting in the country. Following is an excerpt from Dr. Richard Salomon's article in the *American Antiques Journal*:

"The oldest and, in a sense, the most remarkable of the buildings [on the campus] is Bishop Chase's 'Kenyon College,' now known as Old Kenyon. Built in 1827-1836, it is the first example of college Gothic in the United States . . . a respectable sample of what the American gentleman-architect of the early 19th Century could achieve. . . . The original design was made by a dilettante, the Reverend Norman Nash (1790-1870) who worked together with Bishop Chase. Charles Bulfinch contributed a very advantageous correction of the original design of the spire. . . . Lack of money and material made it impos-

sible to carry out the original plan; the building was finished only after Bishop Chase had left Kenyon and Ohio in 1831. The wings were built (1834-1836) in their present form, which fortunately avoided the somewhat somber grandiosity of the old plan and served the purpose of the building much better."

In research conducted for the Church Historical Society, Dr. Salomon stated: "Chase's impressions in England were in harmony with the growing trend within the Church. Combined with each other, these influences produced the idea of imitating, for the first time in America, the English type of Gothic college buildings."

Part of Old Kenyon's purpose was originally to provide homes and classroom space for early divinity students. As years passed and the college grew, its function changed until it provided living quarters for 122 students within its 190-foot-long, four-story ivy-covered walls.

Suspected as members of an

### Old Kenyon to Rise Again

President Chalmers reports that it is too early for the Board of Trustees to formulate definite plans for the building of a college dormitory. However, the President favors completely rebuilding Old Kenyon on the same location, in the same design, with the interior modernized and fireproofed. In addition to the Whitaker contribution, the Rotary Club of Mt. Vernon is endeavoring to raise \$10,000 and Ohio University is now conducting a drive for contributions in Athens.

Mr. John Dempsey, Kenyon alumnus, has contributed approximately \$1200 for reconstruction purposes.

### Faculty, Council Work Together on College Program

Following a series of meetings held among the faculty, the faculty committee and the Student Council late Monday afternoon, it was decided to assemble the entire student body at Peirce Hall in the evening for the purpose of making plans to carry on College activities.

The Student Council, under Bill Porter, formed a temporary body to direct the work of aiding those directly effected by the fire and of continuing a regular student schedule. President Chalmers announced the formation of a faculty-student committee, with Father Barrett and Charles Williams as chairmen, to supervise the collection of clothing and books for Old Kenyon men.

It was revealed by President Chalmers that the faculty had decided to require only one down period later this semester. In accordance with this plan, there will be no down tests before the Spring vacation. Classroom work, however, will continue as usual.

In the discussion following the announcement of college policy, provisions concerning shelter and clothing were clarified. Students were urged to bring needed clothing to the basement of North Leonard. Most requirements were filled Monday evening.

English wilderness outpost by the anti-British natives, Old Kenyon's founder and students were often accused of being agents and soldiers of the British Crown. The inclusion of fraternity divisions within college-owned dormitories was pioneered as the Greek societies grouped together in vari-

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## OLD KENYON

(Continued from Page 1)  
ous section of the building. Its  
past residents, including Ruther-  
ford B. Hayes, have been men  
who have risen to high positions.

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## PRESIDENT CHALMERS

(Continued from Page 1)

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far and near, Trustees, par-  
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sent us messages of sympathy  
and offers of aid.

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