

* * * The Demosthenian Society. * * *



ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY with the birth of the Nineteenth Century was founded one of the oldest literary societies now in existence—the Demosthenian Society of the University of Georgia. The exact date of the founding of this organization is not definitely known, but has long been held to be the year 1801. Recently there has been a change of opinion in favor of the year 1803, since the earliest records point back no farther, but all true and loyal Demosthenians incline to the former date.

The object of this society, as set forth in its cumbersome and dignified preamble, was “the advancement of science and the cultivation of correct and forceful speaking.” In the earlier years of the society, much more regard was paid to exercises in declamation and oratory than is now the case; and it may be remarked that all sessions of the society were held in the strictest secrecy. Since my advent into university life, the debates have received pre-eminent attention, all other exercises being held subordinate and often dispensed with entirely.

It has been often and truly said that the history of Georgia has been the history of her University. This is certainly a great tribute to Georgia’s noble institution, but no greater than it deserves. But if we trace this expression of praise to its true source, we might say that the history of Georgia’s University has been the history of her literary societies; and in this latter, the Demosthenian Society has played no inconspicuous part. She has furnished to the State and to the nation some of the most illustrious citizens of this century. She has furnished learned jurists, noted lawyers, progressive physicians, enthusiastic scientists, and eloquent divines, all of whom have willingly testified that their success was mainly due to the training received within her hallowed halls. The most illustrious men of Georgia have been members of one or the other of her University’s literary societies; and of this number, Demosthenian can claim a liberal share. Her musty records and faded minutes contain the names of many a noble Georgian who has honored her name.



(Harry Dodd, Anniversarian.)

But of late years the glory of Demosthenian began to wane, and for a time it seemed that she was destined to lapse into a state of inactivity and uselessness. Various causes were assigned to account for this decline, but none seemed satisfactory. Every one had his own theory as to the great underlying forces at work, and also as to the manner of reviving the society; but not until vain theorizing was displaced by earnest and conscientious work did the former glory of Demosthenian resume its accustomed brilliancy. For the last two or three years there has been a tendency to return to the old *regime* which was in vogue during the society’s greatest usefulness, and in this is to be found the solution of all the problems that have perplexed the minds of earnest Demosthenians. Already an increased interest in the exercises of the society is manifest, and ere long the luster of *old* Demosthenian will return to shed its brightness upon *new* Demosthenian amid the plaudits of those who have sought to revive her former glory.



DEMOSTHENIAN ALUMNI.

Williams Rutherford.
W. Y. Atkinson

Benjamin H. Hill

Jno. B. Gordon.
Judge Emory Speer.

★ ★ ★ Intercollegiate Debate. ★ ★ ★

First Annual Contest---North Carolina---Georgia.

University Chapel, Athens, Ga., Saturday Evening, May 8th, 1897.

QUERY.

“Resolved that the principles of the Swiss ‘Initiative and Referendum’ should be incorporated into our scheme of government.”

MASTER OF CEREMONIES.

Mr. Harry Dodd Georgia.



G. M. JACKSON.

DEBATERS.

C. M. WALKER.

AFFIRMATIVE.

NEGATIVE.

North Carolina—

Georgia—

Mr. David B. Smith.

Mr. Cliff M. Walker,

Mr. H. Groves Connor, Jr.

Mr. George T. Jackson.

JUDGES.

Hon. Lewis W. Perrin, of Abbeville, S. C.

Judge Marshall J. Clarke, of Atlanta, Ga.

Judge John P. Shannon, of Elberton, Ga.

GEORGIA WAS THE VICTOR!