The Department of Classics, 1791 to Present

Daniel Houston
The history of Vermont is unique. In the beginning it was an experiment, and it was among America’s first—and most important—ideological communities. The majority of early settlers, leaving behind oppressive religious or economic climates, came to the Green Mountains from the surrounding colonies and Canada; they came to clear the woods and start a new life based, above all, on freedom. Like its state, the University of Vermont was not the product of a cultural inheritance; nor did it evolve from an aristocratic demand for higher education. UVM was founded in the wilderness by men—mostly uneducated—who lived on the fringe of the country’s expanding frontier. In fact, Daniel Sanders, UVM’s first president and professor, was still clearing his land when he began instruction in 1800. It was on this frontier, and in these conditions, that an enterprising group of intellectuals decided to improve mankind one student at a time.

When UVM was founded, the study of classics was synonymous with a liberal education. Whether taken as practical training for the bar or pulpit, or studied for its own sake, the classics formed UVM’s intellectual backbone. This project has traced the development of the Department of Classics at UVM from the first “Professor of Learned Languages” in 1811 to the present company of six professors, a lecturer, and three emeriti. I have focused largely on collecting information and creating a basic chronology for the department. The center of this was, of course, a roster of the faculty containing as much information as possible.

The roster formed a skeleton onto which I continue to add a narrative history, biographies, bibliographies, etc. For these purposes, I have divided the history into three periods: “The Classical College,” which lasts from the founding to 1824. The coming of James Marsh, with his influential philosophy and educational reforms, is “The Transcendental University, 1825-1861.” The years following Justin Morrill’s land-grant college program marked a dramatic shift in policy; this period is “The State University, 1862-1900.” And finally there is “The Twentieth Century, 1900-present.”

The final narrative history will be available on the Classics Department Website in November. In this conclusion I attach the first chapter of the history and the faculty roster.

**The Classical College, 1800-1824**

Vermont was not only a new state in the last decade of the 18th century—it was a new frontier. Most of the new state’s population had left their puritan communities in southern and eastern New England, riding the wave of optimism that followed the country’s independence. In 1777 there were
probably fewer than a half-dozen college graduates in Vermont.¹ But when these frontiersmen drafted the new republic’s constitution in that year, they made a unique provision:

“A school or schools shall be established in each town, by the legislature, for the convenient instruction of youth, with such salaries to the masters, paid by each town; making proper use of school lands in each town, thereby to enable them to instruct youth at low prices. One grammar school in each county, and one university in this State, ought to be established by direction of the General Assembly.”²

Born in Cornwall, Connecticut in 1751, Ira Allen was among those ambitious and idealistic settlers who came to Vermont to survey the wilderness and begin a new life. Ira, like his brothers, had only a taste of formal education; but he had a keen mind and rarely lost an opportunity to educate himself. The Allens did not shy from expressing their opinions; but their lack of training is evident in the extant documents. Perhaps for this reason, Ira’s reputation as founder and intellectual impetus was largely forgotten or subdued by the mid-19th century.

Allen was a member of the Vermont legislature when the constitution was drawn up, and he formally petitioned for the founding of a university in 1780.³ But Allen had other concerns in the years following his petition. After buying some cannon and muskets in France, he was kidnapped on the high seas and spent almost a decade in the British courts. When he returned to the United States he was jailed in Burlington for debt; he died in Philadelphia in 1814, and is buried in an unmarked grave.⁴

As essential as Ira Allen is to the history of UVM, he can only be given credit for the overture. The first act in this story began in 1800—twenty years after Allen’s initiative. The setting was a new house in Burlington, the home of Rev. Daniel Sanders. In this house, Sanders taught the first students at the new Universitas Viridis Montis. While Sanders was religiously liberal (which led dissenters to found the more orthodox Middlebury College in 1800), he adhered to the Masonic principles of education. To illustrate these lofty ideas, Sanders and his fellows designed the university seal in 1807. As the seal reflects, the Masons saw education as the balance of prescriptive elements—illustrated by the quadrant on the right—with creative ones—as shown by the Pythagorean theorem on the left. With these elements

¹ Julian Ira Lindsay, Tradition Looks Forward; the University of Vermont: A History, 1791-1904 (Burlington: University of Vermont, 1954).
² The Constitution of Vermont July 8, 1777, Section XL
³ Lindsay
⁴ Potash
harmonized, enlightenment is possible—symbolized by the sun rising over the college edifice, or “Temple of Knowledge.”

The first university building was in place by 1806; and the first classics professor came soon after. In 1811 Rev. Jason Chamberlain arrived at UVM as “Professor of the Learned Languages.” Chamberlain gave a profound inaugural address in which he chastised “pretended philosophers” who do not appreciate the classics (one wonders if he was referring to one or both of the Allens), and praised Vermonters for recognizing the value of classical learning. Chamberlain not only defended the utility of the classics, he ensured the place of Greek and Latin—for their own sake—in the new university.

<Chamberlain’s speech available at www.uvm.edu/~classics>

Posterity is fortunate enough to have a snapshot of student life in these early days. Erastus Root had been a pupil of Chamberlain at the congregational church in Guilford, Vermont. After studying for a year at Williams College, Root transferred to UVM when Chamberlain was appointed. In his journal—begun when he was twenty-five—he paints a vivid picture of the early student’s zeal for learning.

<Root’s journal available at www.uvm.edu/~classics>

Although UVM was off to a promising start, the years following Root’s experience were hazardous. In 1814 the U.S. Army occupied the campus; Sanders, Chamberlain, and the rest of the small body of professors and tutors promptly quit the university. And on the heels of this controversy, in 1824, the college building—with all its books and other property—burned to the ground.

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Faculty of the Department of Classics at the University of Vermont
* Represents a forthcoming biography

Jason Chamberlain 1811-1814*
James Murdock 1815-1819
Lucas Hubbell 1819-1824*
John Robertson 1824-1825
William Porter 1825-1827
Joseph Torrey 1827-1866*
Calvin Pease 1842-1855
Nathaniel G. Clark 1852-1863
Leonard Marsh 1855-1857
Mathew Buckham 1857-1871
Charles Thompson 1863-1867
Henry Haynes 1867-1873

1874/75
Rev. John Ellsworth Goodrich, A.M, Professor of Latin, Rhetoric, and English Literature*
William Cowper Simmons, A.B. Professor Pro Tempore of Greek

1875/76
Goodrich
Simmons

1876/77
Goodrich
Simmons

1877/78
Goodrich, Professor of Latin and Greek
Samuel Warren Davis, A.B., Instructor of Greek and Latin

1878/79
Goodrich
Richard Austin Rice, A.B. Professor of Modern Literature and Latin

1879/80
Goodrich

1880/81
Goodrich

1881/82
Goodrich, Professor of Latin
Samuel Franklin Emerson, A.B. Professor Pro Tempore of Greek and Modern Literature

1882/83
Goodrich
Emerson

1883/84
Goodrich
Emerson

1884/85
Goodrich
Emerson

1885/86
Goodrich
Emerson (now full professor and PhD)

1886/87
Goodrich
Emerson

1887/88
Goodrich
Emerson

1888/89
Goodrich
Emerson
Joseph Knowlton Chickering, A.M., Professor Pro tempore of Rhetoric, English Literature, and Latin.

1889/90
Goodrich
Emerson
Chickering
James Ringall Wheeler, PhD, Professor of Greek

1890/91
Goodrich
Chickering
Wheeler
(Emerson now Professor of History)

1891/92
Goodrich
Chickering
Wheeler

1892/93
Goodrich
Chickering
Wheeler
Carroll Neide Brown, A.M., Instructor in Greek

1893/94
Goodrich
Chickering
Wheeler
Stockton Axson, A.M., Professor of Rhetoric and Latin

1894/95
Goodrich
Wheeler
Bert Hodge Hill Graduates
1895/96
Goodrich
George Edwin Howes, PhD, Professor Pro Tempore of Greek
*The first separation of the modern languages from the classical

1896/97
Goodrich
Howes

1897/98
Goodrich
Howes

1898/99
Goodrich
Howes

1899/1900
Goodrich
Howes
Arthur Llewellyn Eno, A.M. Instructor of Rhetoric, German, and Greek

1900/01
Goodrich

1901/02
Goodrich

1902/03
Goodrich (also Dean of Arts)
Carlton Beecher Stetson, A.M., Professor Pro Tempore of Greek
Howes on leave at the American School of Classical Studies, Athens.
1903/04
Goodrich
Howes
Oliver Samuel Tonks, PhD, Instructor of Greek and German

1904/05
Goodrich
Howes
Alfred Reynolds Whiteman, A.M., Instructor of Greek and German

1905/06
Goodrich
Samuel Eliot Bassett, PhD, Professor Pro Tempore of Greek*

1906/07
Goodrich
Bassett (now full professor)

1907/08
Goodrich
Bassett
Marbury Bladen Ogle, PhD, Assistant Professor of Latin*

1908/09
Goodrich (now Emeritus)
Bassett
Ogle

1909/10
Goodrich (em.)
Bassett
Ogle

1910/11
Goodrich (em.)
Bassett
Ogle
1911/12
Goodrich (em.)
Bassett
Ogle

1912/13
Goodrich (em.)
Bassett
Ogle

1913/14
Goodrich (em.)

In Memoriam
John E. Goodrich

During the past few months there has passed from our midst a great and good spirit. John E. Goodrich, teacher, scholar, soldier and man of God was touched by the finger of the Almighty and we see him no more. His was a life full of interest; a strenuous life, a life of highest joys and deepest sorrows, a stern life, yet outsurging with deep and passionate devotion for man and all his perplexing problems. The University of Vermont has loved him for sixty-six wonderful years and in turn has rendered this University a service which will never fade, and in the years to come, whatever befalls this college of the mountains, the great white soul of John E. Goodrich will be with it to the end.

Bassett
Ogle

1914/15
Bassett
Ogle

1915/16
Bassett
Ogle

1916/17
Bassett
Ogle

1917/18
Bassett
Ogle

1918/19
Bassett
Ogle

1919/20
Bassett
Ogle

1920/21
Bassett
Ogle

1921/22
Bassett
Ogle
Lester Marsh Prindle, PhD, Assistant Professor of Latin*

1922/23
Bassett
Ogle
Prindle
George Vincent Kidder, A.B., Research Fellow in Latin

1923/24
Bassett
Ogle
Prindle
Benjamin Dean Meritt, A.M., Instructor of Greek
Doris Eleanor Perry, A.B., Instructor of Latin

1924/25
Bassett
Ogle
Prindle
Warren Everett Blake, PhD, Instructor of Greek and Latin

1925/26
Bassett
Prindle

Frank Russell Hamblin, PhD, Assistant Professor of Greek and Latin
Hazel Marjorie Freeman, A.B., Research Instructor in Latin

1926/27
Bassett
Prindle (now full professor)
Hamblin

1927/28
Bassett
Prindle
Hamblin

Philip Barrows Whitehead, PhD, Assistant Professor of Latin

1928/29
Bassett
Prindle

Edward Yeager Lindsay, A.M., Assistant Professor of Latin
James Eugene Pooley, A.M., Assistant Professor of Greek and Latin
George Vincent Kidder, A.B., Assistant Professor in Greek and Latin

1929/30
Bassett
Prindle
Lindsay
Pooley

Kidder (Associate Professor)
Arthur Ernest Gordon, PhD, Assistant Professor of Greek and Latin
Elizabeth Wiss, A.B., Research Instructor of Greek

1930/31
Bassett
Prindle
Lindsay
Pooley
Kidder (on leave)
Wiss
Herrick Mower Macomber, A.B., Instructor of Greek and Latin

1931/32
Bassett
Prindle
Lindsay
Pooley
Rozelle Parker Johnson, A.M., Assistant Professor of Latin
Bertha Elizabeth Knight, Fellow in Latin

1932/33
Bassett
Prindle
Lindsay
Pooley (on leave)
Kidder (Assistant Professor)

1933/34
Bassett
Prindle (on leave)
Lindsay
Pooley
Kidder

1934/35
Bassett
Prindle
Lindsay
Pooley
Kidder
Doris Estelle Cook, Fellow in Latin
1935/36
Bassett
Prindle
Kidder
Lindsay
Pooley
Ida Saiger, Fellow in Latin

1936/37
Bassett (deceased December 20, 1936)
Prindle
Kidder
Pooley
Saiger
Helen Frances Bellows, A.B., Fellow in Greek

1937/38
Prindle
Kidder (now PhD)
Pooley

Alfred Carlton Andrews, PhD, Assistant Professor of Latin

1938/39
Prindle
Kidder
Pooley

Andrews

1939/40
Prindle (now listed as Professor of Classical Languages and Literature)
Kidder
Pooley (now listed as Professor of Classical languages and History)
Coleman Hamilton Benedict, PhD, Instructor of Classical Languages

1940/41
Prindle, on leave
Kidder
Poolley
Benedict
Ethyle Renee Wolfe, A.B., Fellow in Latin

1941/42
Prindle
Kidder
Pooley
Benedict
Wolfe

1942/43
Prindle
Kidder
Pooley

1943/44
Prindle (now listed as Roberts Professor of Classical Languages and Literature)
Kidder

1944/45
Prindle
Kidder
Pooley (now resides in Handy, CT)

1945/46
Prindle
Kidder (now Full Professor)
Pooley

1946/47
Prindle
Kidder
Pooley
Walter Harding Maurer, B.A. Assistant Professor of Classical Languages

1947/48
Prindle
Kidder

1948/49
Prindle (deceased, February 14, 1949)
Kidder
Pooley
James Hamilton Turner, PhD, Instructor of Classical Languages

1949/50
Kidder (now Roberts Professor)
Pooley
Turner

1950/51
Kidder
Pooley
John Harvey Kent, PhD, Professor of Classical Languages

1951/52
Kidder (now listed as Dean of Arts)
Pooley
Kent
Robert Edwin Lane, M.A., Instructor of Classical Languages

1952/53
Kidder
Pooley
Kent
Lane

1953/54
Kidder
Pooley
Kent
Lane

1954/55
Kidder
Pooley
Kent
Lane

1955/56
Kidder
Pooley
Kent
Lane

1956/57
Kidder
Pooley
Kent
Frank Givens Pickel, PhD, Assistant Professor of Classical Languages
Jean Margaret Davison, A.M. Instructor of Classical Languages

1957/58
Kidder
Pooley
Kent
Pickel
Davison (now PhD and Assistant Professor)
Richard L. Brown, A.B., Fellow in Classics

1958/59
Kidder
Pooley
Kent
Davison
Brady Blackford Gilleland, PhD, Assistant Professor of Classical Languages

1959/60
Kidder
Pooley
Kent
Davison
Gilleland
1960/61
Kidder
Pooley
Kent
Davison
Gilleland

1961/62
Kidder
Pooley
Kent
Davison
Gilleland

1962/63
Kidder
Pooley
Kent
Davison
Gilleland
Z. Philip Ambrose, M.A., Instructor in Classics

1963/64
Kidder
Pooley
Kent (on leave, second semester)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose (PhD and Assistant Professor)
Richard Peloquin, A.B., Instructor of Classics (appointed in February, 1964)

1964/65
Kidder
Pooley
Kent
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose

1965/66
Kidder
Pooley
Kent
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose

1966/67
Kidder
Pooley (Associate Professor, em.)
Kent (deceased, September 27, 1966)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Francis Royster Bliss, PhD, Associate Professor of Classics
Sue Lane Chinchon, M.A., Instructor in Classics

1967/68
Pooley (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Bliss
Robin Rudolph Schlunk, PhD, Assistant Professor of Classics
Thomas Gordon McCarty, M.A., Instructor in Classics

1968/69
Pooley (em.)
Davison
Gilleland (on leave)
Ambrose
Bliss
Schlunk
McCarty
1969/70
Pooley (em.)
Davison (Professor of History and Classics)
Gilleland
Ambrose (on leave)
Bliss (now Professor of Classics)
Schlunk
McCarty

1970/71
Pooley (em.)
Davison (listed as Professor of Classics)
Gilleland
Ambrose
Bliss
Schlunk

1971/72
Pooley (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Bliss
Schlunk

1972/73
Pooley (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Bliss
Schlunk

1973/74
Pooley (em.) (deceased, January 1978)
Davison (Lyman-Roberts Professor of Classical Languages and Literature)
Gilleland
Ambrose
Bliss
Schlunk

1974/75
Pooley (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Bliss
Schlunk

1975/76
Pooley (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Bliss
Schlunk

1976/77
Pooley (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Bliss
Schlunk

1977/78
Pooley (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Bliss
Schlunk

1978/79
Pooley (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Bliss
Schlunk

1979/80
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Schlunk
Barbara Saylor Rodgers, PhD, Assistant Professor of Classics
Robert H. Rodgers, PhD, Adjunct Professor of Classics

1980/81
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1981/82
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers (Visiting Professor)

1982/83
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1983/84
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1984/85
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1985/86
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1986/87
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers
1987/88
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1988/89
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1989/90
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1990/91
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1991/92
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1992/93
Bliss (em.)
Davison
Gilleland (em.)
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1993/94
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Gilleland (em.)
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1994/95
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Gilleland (em.)
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers
John Cirignano, PhD, Adjunct Professor of Classics

1995/96
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Gilleland (em.)
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers
Cirignano

1996/97
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Gilleland (em.)
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1997/98
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Gilleland (em.)
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers

1998/99
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Gilleland (em.)
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers
Jacques A. Bailly, PhD, Lecturer in Classics

1999/2000
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Gilleland (em.)
Ambrose
Schlunk
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers
Bailly

2000/2001
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Gilleland (em.)
Ambrose
Schlunk (em.)
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers
Bailly
Mark David Usher, PhD, Associate Professor of Classics

2001/2002
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Gilleland (em.)
Ambrose
Schlunk (em.)
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers
Bailly
Usher
Brian Thomas Walsh, PhD, Lecturer in Classics

2002/2003
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Gilleland (em.) (deceased, February 15, 2003)
Ambrose
Schlunk (em.)
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers
Bailly
Usher
Walsh

2003/2004
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Ambrose
Schlunk (em.)
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers
Bailly
Usher
Walsh

2004/2005
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Ambrose
Schlunk (em.)
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers
Bailly
Usher
Walsh

2005/2006
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Ambrose
Schlunk (em.) (deceased, January 20, 2006)
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers
Bailly
Usher
Walsh
2006/2007
Bliss (em.)
Davison (em.)
Ambrose (em.)
B. Rodgers
R. Rodgers
Bailly
Usher
Walsh
Angeline Chiu, PhD, Assistant Professor of Classics
John Franklin, PhD, Assistant Professor of Classics