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THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS

PAUL BROSMAN†

I

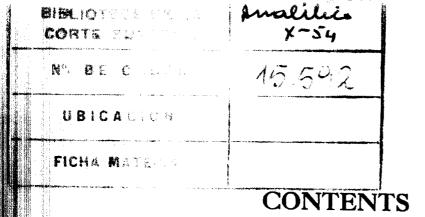
One hundred years ago last December the first law class of the old University of Louisiana-direct predecessor to the Tulane of today-attended its first lecture, and one hundred years ago last May that same law class was graduated. We are accustomed to regard this remote period as one generously characterized by leisure as well as by dignity, and on occasion to describe it patronizingly in terms unflattering to the intensity of its effort. It must be admitted, however, that its academic processes operated somewhat more rapidly than our own! Unfortunately there is no record in local newspaper accounts or elsewhere of a public commencement ceremony to celebrate the graduation of the initial class of sixteen members.1 Indeed it appears that it was even impossible to award diplomas immediately. This seems to have been due to an oversight on the part of the University's Board and the faculty, neither of which agencies remembered in appropriate time to arrange for the drafting and engraving of a Law Department diploma.

II

The first Tulane law lecture was held at seven o'clock in the evening of December 6, 1847, in the Customs House federal courtroom of Judge Theodore Howard McCaleb, himself a member of the original faculty. In keeping with the custom of the times, this

†W. R. Irby Professor of Law and Dean, College of Law, Tulane University of Louisiana. Warm thanks are due Mr. Samuel Lang, of the New Orleans bar, an alumnus of the College of Law, and at present a member of its faculty, whose able unpublished research in the history of Tulane is the source of many statements made herein concerning the early days of the College and its personnel.

It may be of interest to set out the names of the members of the first graduating class. The following persons were the first to receive the University's Bachelor of Laws degree: Eugene William Blake, Henry Charles Castellanos, William E. T. Griffith, Charles A. Kellogg, David Ker, John Ker, David Cohen Labatt, William Mosby Mercer, Ayres P. Merrill, Anthony A. Peniston, Hypolite Alfred Perrilliat, William L. Perrilliat, John Barker Smith, E. T. Reine, Charles Wilson and W. R. Young.





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