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HENRY VILLARD'S AID TO EDUCATION

The visit of Oswald Garrison Villard to the University of Washington on March 9, 1934, revived memories of the pioneer benefactions and early transportation work in the Pacific Northwest by his father, Henry Villard.

On moving to the United States from his native Germany in 1853, he changed his name from Gustavus Hilgard to Henry Villard and then proceeded to carve out a remarkable career in the fields of journalism and transportation. How those two fields merged was much more natural than might be inferred. After studying law, he moved to Chicago and began writing for newspapers. In 1859 he visited the newly discovered gold fields of Colorado as a correspondent of the *Cincinnati Commercial*. This resulted in his book, *The Pike's Peak Gold Regions*, (1860), and also in statistics for the *New York Herald* to influence the location of a Pacific railroad route. Those statistics probably comprise the first change toward transportation work.

He settled in Washington City and became a political correspondent for various papers. During the Civil War he was a diligent correspondent from the fields of action. Late in life he studied carefully the published records of both the Union and Confederate armies and gave the results in his *Memoirs* for those battles he had covered as a correspondent.

On January 3, 1866, he was married to Fanny Garrison, daughter of William Lloyd Garrison, the great abolitionist and editor of *The Liberator*. The couple at once went to Europe where Mr. Villard served as correspondent of the *New York Tribune*. On returning to the United States in 1868, he served for two years as Secretary of the American Social Science Association. Impaired health caused him to return to his loved Germany where he lived at Wiesbaden. There his son, Oswald Garrison Villard, was born.

He engaged in negotiations for American railroad securities. When the financial crash of 1873 occurred he joined several committees of those bond holders in Germany. Portions of their hold-

ings were bonds of the Oregon and California Railroad and the Oregon Steamship Company. To promote salvages and settlements he came to America again in 1874. He soon made a trip to Oregon and there contacted two elements of his subsequent career—development of northwestern transportation and a great interest in Oregon as a state.

His German friends, the bond holders, became discouraged. Mr. Villard formed an American syndicate, purchased the properties and also acquired the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, operating on the Columbia River. These and other transactions culminated in his becoming President of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company. This position he was holding when the famous "Last Spike" was driven with elaborate ceremonies in September, 1883.

On that first visit to Oregon, Mr. Villard became deeply interested in the state, its natural resources, its forceful people and prospects of swift development. Having himself been well educated in the Universities of Munich and Wurzburg, the Oregon pioneers' struggles toward the establishment of a university did not escape his attention. In his *Memoirs*, Volume II., page 304, he mentions this phase of his awakened interest as follows:

"Oregon had an institution which went by the name of a University, of which it represented, however, but a very small beginning. It had received little support either from the state or from the public, and was so embarrassed by indebtedness that it would probably have been obliged to close its doors, had not Mr. Villard come to its relief by paying its floating debt in response to an appeal from the Board of Regents. He also presented it with a nucleus of a library. In May, 1883, he offered to donate fifty thousand dollars to it on condition that the state would levy a tax sufficient for its maintenance on a moderate scale. This being done, he paid over the promised sum, in recognition of which gift a hall was named for him."

That modest account is given a more emphatic statement in *Old Oregon*, the Alumni Magazine of the University of Oregon, for February, 1934, as follows:

"It was Henry Villard who noted an item in the *Oregonian*, soon after the institution was opened in 1876, in which it was stated that the University building, Deady Hall, was about to be sold to satisfy creditors who had furnished material and labor for its construction. Without solicitation, he wired from New York to his friend, Judge Matthew P. Deady, President of the Board of Re-

gents, asking the amount of the indebtedness. Upon receipt of an answer, Mr. Villard telegraphed a check for \$7,000.00, which was sufficient to retire the demands."

That issue of *Old Oregon* was planned as a memorial for the recent visit of Mr. Villard's son, Oswald Garrison Villard, who, like other members of the family, continues a deep interest in the University of Oregon. The cover illustration of the magazine is a reproduction of the portrait painted by Eleanor Bell, a pupil of Lenbach in Munich, which was sent by Mrs. Fanny Garrison Villard. Six months after that gift her husband died at the family estate, "Thorwood," Dobbs Ferry, New York, on November 11, 1900. Other illustrations are a portrait of Oswald Garrison Villard and two old pictures of the laying the cornerstone of Villard Hall and the structure as newly completed. Frederic S. Dunn, of the class of 1892 writes about his memory of the cornerstone ceremonies.

Since the amounts of the gifts by Mr. Villard seemed vague as to total sums, an appeal for definite information was sent to Mr. M. H. Douglass, Librarian of the University of Oregon, who replied on March 17, 1934, as follows:

"We find from the records that Henry Villard made the following gifts to the University of Oregon:

"1876—To save Deady Hall from being sold.....	\$7,000
"1881—To found a library.....	1,000
To purchase additional apparatus.....	1,000
For salary of a Professor of English	
Literature	1,760
For five scholarships for one year.....	250
"1883—For a permanent endowment.....	50,000
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Total.....	\$61,010

"The gift of \$50,000 for endowment now amounts to \$55,000, the increase being made by profit on the securities. One of the conditions attached to the gift of \$50,000 was that at least \$400 a year should be expended for books for the library. A number of years ago, the Regents voted to have the entire income from this gift used for the library."

Those benefactions, beginning in 1876, should be thought of in the light of conditions at that time. As Dean Herbert T. Condon, a native of Oregon, has said: "They seemed more then than a million would now."

The sketch of Henry Villard in Appleton's *Cyclopedia of American Biography*, published in 1889, closes as follows: "He has given a large fund for the State University of Oregon, liberally aided the University of Washington Territory, founded a hospital and school for nurses in his native town, and devoted large sums to the Industrial Art School of Rhenish Bavaria, and to the foundation of fifteen scholarships for the youth of that province."

That paragraph contains one of the main reasons for the writing of this article of appreciation—"liberally aided the University of Washington Territory." That truth has been singularly neglected for half a century. The present writer, as a student in the Territorial University, heard President Anderson announce the receipt of a benefaction from Henry Villard. No sum of money was mentioned then nor is it known to have been published since. At that time the University was vocal with a general expression of gratitude. The catalogues of those two years have been searched. There are numerous paragraphs of general information but not one about Mr. Villard's benefaction. The facts are now solved in an effort toward acknowledgement, however tardy it may be.

The old manuscript volume entitled "Board of Regents' Record from 1862 to 1890," contains the records needed, which will be given here in full, with such other records as can be gleaned.

With feeling running high at the time, it is natural to expect discussions in the newspapers. The files of those in the University of Washington have been searched. Sure enough! Kirk C. Ward, editor of the *Seattle Daily Chronicle* on November 11 and 23, 1881, gave vigorous voice to criticism of the Legislature for apparent opposition to the University. In the issue for December 1, he published the following letter written to President Anderson by Henry Villard just as he was leaving Portland for New York:

"I presume I am indebted to you for the transmission of various printed documents relating to your institution which I have read with much interest. I feel strongly impressed with your pecuniary necessities. I mean to say that should the Legislature fail to meet your just wishes, you will find me perfectly ready to assist you to the best of my ability. I will thank you to write me at 20 Nassau Street, New York, on this subject, after the adjournment of the Legislature.

"As the publicity of this letter might tend to prevent the pecuniary aid you may expect from the Legislature, I trust that you

will agree with me that it will be good policy to keep it private."

His advise against publicity was not followed. Evidently it was thought that Mr. Villard's strong interest would spur the Legislature to favorable action in that last week of its session. The letter was published in the *Chronicle* on December 1, and the Legislature did not adjourn until the evening of December 7.

The moving spirit in the University at this crisis was President Alexander Jay Anderson. Born at Grey Abbey, Ireland, on March 6, 1832, he was but fifteen months old when the family moved to America, where his father was a fisherman on the St. Lawrence River. The boy worked his own way to an education, graduating from Knox College, Illinois, in 1856. After thirteen years of work in secondary schools of Illinois and Kentucky he came to college work in Oregon in 1869. His success there caused the Regents to elect him President of the Territorial University of Washington in 1877. He was thus close at hand when Mr. Villard began his benefactions for the University of Oregon, and quite naturally turned to him in time of need.

Three days after that Legislature adjourned, Editor Ward in his *Chronicle* of December 10, proclaimed the lack of legislative aid and the necessity of accepting the help proffered by Mr. Villard, adding: "It seems to us that before this city can consistently ask Mr. Villard for assistance we should contribute enough to make all necessary repairs to the buildings and build new fences and side-walks about the grounds. Let whatever Mr. Villard gives go toward scholarships and education direct."

The same paper on January 28, 1882, recorded the meeting of the new Board of Regents, where a letter was read from Mr. Villard extending the help needed. President H. G. Struve of the Board of Regents appointed Regents A. A. Denny, O. Jacobs and Dr. G. A. Weed a committee to appeal for funds from the citizens for necessary repairs to buildings and grounds.

Fortunately, the official records of the Board of Regents carry the text of Mr. Villard's letter. At that meeting the record says: "The Secretary then read the following letter from Mr. Henry Villard and also produced the check of \$1,000 received the previous evening as indicated in the letter."

"82 Broadway, New York, 9th, January, 1882.

A. J. Andreson, Esq.,

President University of Washington, Seattle, W. T.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 10th ult. only reached me a few days since.

"I had already learned through the papers that the Territorial Legislature had failed to do justice to your institution. Expected to hear from you on the subject of the University's needs in accordance with my own suggestion.

"It is a great pity, nay, indeed a shame, that those charged with the Legislative welfare of the people of the Territory should be so short-sighted as to permit your institution to languish, but this is not an uncommon experience in this country, even in some of the older and more flourishing states the interests of high education are sadly neglected. Under the circumstances nothing remains but to bring about such voluntary action for your relief as can be secured by proper appeals to those interested in the future development of the Territory.

"You do not make a direct or distinct statement of your pecuniary requirements till next meeting of the Legislature, but I infer from the contents of your letter that they will not exceed say \$2,000 per annum.

"I will thank you to address me on this point an official communication endorsed by the Regents. In the meantime I have given directions to our Manager at Portland to send you for my private account one thousand dollars that you may be able to meet your immediate necessities.

Respectfully yours,

H. Villard."

The Regents acted promptly. President Anderson was asked to prepare the statement of salary expenses requested by Mr. Villard and the President of the Board of Regents was asked to appoint a committee to draft resolutions "expressive of thanks of the Board to Mr. Villard for his generous aid to the University in the hour of its extreme need."

Those resolutions were prepared by Henry G. Struve, President of the Board. At the meeting of February 4, 1882, they were unanimously adopted on motion of Regent Orange Jacobs and were spread upon the minutes as follows:

"RESOLVED by the Board of Regents of the University of Washington Territory—That the Board in behalf of said University hereby expresses its profound sense of obligation and gratitude to Henry Villard, Esq., for his generous gift of \$1000 to relieve the

pressing immediate wants of the institution. This donation will secure the continuance of the present advanced standard of instruction during the present collegiate year and incites us with hope that Mr. Villard's example of liberality and magnanimity will induce other public spirited citizens to donate means, which will aid in preserving the University buildings and grounds as well as keep up its library and present course of studies. This timely generosity of Mr. Villard will be held in gratified remembrance by all the friends of education and is a fitting rebuke to the representatives in our late Legislature, who unjustly withheld the public aid which the University was fairly entitled to receive.

"Resolved—That the Secretary of this Board transmit a copy of these resolutions to Mr. Villard."

Apparently these resolutions were deemed sufficient to cover the second donation which arrived the following month. No other official record is found of subsequent resolutions. At the meetings of March 11 and May 30, two quarterly payments of \$666.66 each were recorded as paid to President A. J. Anderson from the "Villard Salary Fund." One more official echo is found in minutes of the meeting on April 13, 1883. Leonard J. Powell had succeeded A. J. Anderson as President of the University. The record says: "A resolution was adopted appointing the President of the Board of Regents and the President of the University a committee to extend to Mr. Henry Villard, on the occasion of his expected visit to Seattle, an invitation to visit the University." That, of course, was in anticipation of the "Last Spike" ceremonies.

The larger portion of Mr. Villard's gift is recorded in the minutes of the Board of Regents on March 11, 1882, as follows:

New York, February 24, 1882.

Pres't. A. J. Anderson,
University of Washington,
Seattle, W. T.

Dear Sir: Yours of the 4th inst. is duly at hand.

In reply I take the pleasure in informing you that I will gladly contribute the amount of the deficiency for the salaries of professors and teachers during the next two years, stated by you to be \$3,000. I will arrange to send you \$1,000 every six months for this purpose.

Respectfully yours,

H. Villard.

The Regents' resolutions of gratitude were adopted before the above letter was received. While we have no record of resolutions recognizing the larger gift there is an account of the University Commencement Day exercises in the *Seattle Daily Chronicle* of May 25, 1882, containing the following paragraph:

"Hon. H. G. Struve, President of the Board of Regents, made a statement as to the conditions of the institution and, in the course of his remarks, paid a glowing tribute to the liberality of Mr. Villard in generously aiding the University."

One other tribute to Mr. Villard was the response of citizens in following his example. References have been made to the need of money for repairs to buildings and grounds. In the tiny *Catalogue* for 1882-3, there is the statement that the citizens had contributed \$3,000 for such repairs, while the faculty and students had raised enough money by entertainments to purchase "a fine Weber piano, an excellent Estay Chapel organ and two hundred dollars' worth of Philosophical apparatus." Those entertainments received newspaper praise showing that five entertainments had earned the net sum of \$617.

It is not here attempted to give even a summary of Mr. Villard's remarkable career. For example, the *New Standard Encyclopedia* (1931), closes a brief sketch with: "In 1881 he bought a controlling interest in the New York *Evening Post*, and his interest in Edison's inventions caused him to organize the Edison General Electric Company, of which he became president." Such hints of wideflung activities are held to one side to give a record of his aids to education and specifically to the Territorial University of Washington. This is not an easy task. His *Memoirs*, in two volumes, were published by his family in 1904, four years after his death. Their preface closes as follows:

"The man speaks for himself. His character shines through his manifold large undertakings, his achievements and disappointments, as also in his love of his native and adopted countries, his championship of every cause which made for political and social uplifting, and his delight in doing good. But his philanthropy is only faintly portrayed by his own hand; of its full extent he alone was aware."

We have seen from the reproductions of his letters what aid he gave the Territorial University of Washington at a critical time in its history. In Volume II., page 304, of his *Memoirs*, after mod-

estly telling of his help for the University of Oregon, he gives this brief additional sentence: "About the same time, he intervened to save the Territorial University of Washington from suspension by the failure of the Territorial Legislature to make an appropriation for it." That is all. He mentions no sum and apparently kept no record except the cancelled checks. His son, Oswald Garrison Villard, on March 9, 1934, said he did not know the amount of the aid granted. Evidently the family looked upon the transaction as a loan, as they added this footnote: "This 'intervention' meant the support of the institution for two years. Mr. Villard was never reimbursed for this outlay by the Legislature."

This thought and the great difference in the amounts of aid granted the two institutions will cause wonderment to present-day readers. But that is easily explained. His transportation work was much greater in Oregon, resulting in many more acquaintances and friends. Oregon was far ahead of Washington in those days. The United States Census Report for 1880 shows Oregon, 174,768, and Washington Territory, 75,116.

Those benefactions granted by Mr. Villard were vital. In each case they prevented the closing of the institution. The University of Oregon has given substantial manifestation of its gratitude by the naming of Villard Hall. The present writer readily confesses a sense of shame that his alma mater, the University of Washington, has allowed a half-century to elapse without an adequate expression of appreciation of the timely assistance bestowed by Henry Villard.

One of the first questions asked by Oswald Garrison Villard, during his recent visit was "What has become of Nellie Powell?" He was very sorry to hear that she had passed away a few years ago while visiting in California. He then went on to say that while he was only eleven years old he was with the other members of his family during the "Last Spike" ceremonies and remembered how his father and mother, Carl Schurz and other members of the party had never ceased to praise Nellie Powell's address of welcome on the old campus, where the Olympic Hotel now stands. His father's *Memoirs*, Volume II., page 312, has this record:

"Seattle was reached with an escort of more than a score of steam vessels. The last scene of the transcontinental celebration was fittingly enacted in the grounds of the University of Washington, which Mr. Villard had relieved from distress. An address to him,

the most eloquent and moving of all, was delivered by the daughter of the president."

Surviving pioneers remember that address by Nellie E. Powell. They remember also the lavish preparations, decorations of the old University building, the receptions, speeches, the barbeque for the multitude and the general glow of enthusiastic gratitude. Not so many, perhaps, remember that Mrs. Fanny Garrison Villard took Nellie Powell to her home in New York and entertained her there as a guest for more than a year. Miss Powell returned and graduated from the University of Washington in the class of 1886. Later she became the wife of Daniel Montgomery Drumheller, a pioneer of Spokane. Her children gladly became students at the University of Washington.

EDMOND S. MEANY