

Irving History

THE Irving Literary Society is the youngest of all the Denison literary societies, but there is none in which the spirit of loyalty is stronger, or about which a greater interest is centered on the part of active members and alumni alike. This spirit of loyalty is that which both explains her success in the past and makes the outlook for her future bright indeed.

Irving Society was founded in the spring of 1883 by nine men who withdrew from Cicero. It had long been felt that the stimulus of a competing society would be beneficial, and in view of existing conditions the action was considered justifiable. Irving was founded one hundred years after the birth of Washington Irving, and this is supposed to be the reason for naming the Society after him.

For the first few years there was a lack of a suitable meeting place, and meetings were held in recitation rooms or in the rooms of members of the Society. In 1894, however, both Irving and Cicero were installed in their present quarters in Doane Academy and better work resulted. An added stimulus was found in the literary contests between the Societies. The first of these was in 1893. No contest was held in 1894, but in the following year an annual system was inaugurated, which has been continued every year to the present time. Of these contests—twelve in all—Irving has won eight, losing to her opponents in 1896, 1901, 1904 and 1905.

Later keener interest was aroused by the awarding of scholarships by the University to the individual winners in these contests. This action on the part of the University has quickened the interest, and has given to the annual contest a position among the most prominent events of the school year. The rivalry between the two Societies is great, and each year gives promise of a more rousing time than the year before.

Irving's spirit is never lacking, and whenever an Irving becomes an alumnus he merely joins the increasing number of those who encourage and support the Society. With these to stimulate her, and with the allegiance of all her present members, a successful future for Irving is assured.