Two centuries ago, there were two Commencements, both very small and both held in the “Hall” of the University at its original campus, located at 4th and Arch Streets. The Medical Department graduated ten men on Saturday, May 31. Four were Pennsylvanians; three South Carolinians; two Virginians; and one a resident of New Jersey. The Collegiate Department graduated five men on Thursday, July 3, and all five were Philadelphians. The students requested a private ceremony and the Trustees apparently granted their wish, as there were no newspaper accounts of the College Commencement.

This was a difficult period in Penn's history. College education was intended to train young men for the ministry, but Penn was non-sectarian. Most of Penn's peers—Princeton, Rutgers, Yale, Brown, and Harvard—were closely associated with one of the Protestant churches, but Philadelphia was still largely Quaker—which had no clergy—and it was thought that Penn must appeal to all religious denominations. Professional education was conducted largely by the apprenticeship method, in which students of medicine or the law paid a fee to a practitioner and learned their profession by instruction, demonstration, and practice. Penn conferred no bachelor's degrees at all in 1796, 1798, 1801, 1806, and 1809. In the period between 1795 and 1810, Penn conferred a grand total of 64 collegiate degrees. In 1808, enrollment finally began to increase. There were 21 graduates in the Class of 1811. The Medical Department followed a similar curve. In the decade between 1790 and 1800, Penn conferred the doctor of medicine degree only 86 times. Not until 1805 did enrollment in the Medical Department increase significantly (there were 60 graduates in the Class of 1808).

Penn had taken great strides by 1900. There was a single University Commencement in that year, at which the Trustees conferred a total of 547 degrees in seven academic fields: arts (27), music (2), science (84), laws (83), medicine (180), dental surgery (145), veterinary medicine (11), and philosophy (15). These degrees represented seven of Penn's twelve modern schools: Arts and Sciences, Engineering and Applied Science, Wharton, Law, Medicine, Dentistry, and Veterinary Medicine. The Trustees awarded two honorary degrees: a Doctor of Sacred Theology to Rev. Floyd Williams Tomkins and a Doctor of Letters to Rev. Marcus Jastrow.

The Commencement of 1900 was held on Wednesday, June 13, at the Academy of...
Commencement Day Procession on South Broad Street. The graduating classes assembled in College Hall for the Academic Procession to the Academy of Music at Broad and Locust Streets, in Center City Philadelphia, where the University held its Commencement exercises. The graduates walked down Walnut Street to 22nd Street, turned north and proceeded as far as Chestnut, then east to Broad Street, and then south to the Academy of Music. William H. Rau, photographer, June 12, 1901. Collections of the University of Pennsylvania Archives and Records Center.

Commencement exercises at American universities and colleges traditionally are composed of three essential elements: the Academic Procession, the conferring of degrees, and the Commencement address. This practice has been codified since 1895, when a national conference on academic costume and ceremony was proposed and a plan known initially as the "Intercollegiate System" was formally adopted. The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania incorporated this code in the Statutes of the University in November 1896. Now under the aegis of the American Council on Education, the "Academic Costume Code and Academic Ceremony Guide" was revised in 1932 and 1960.* Throughout the 20th century, Commencement at Penn has, with minor modifications, followed the dictates of the code and its revisions.

By 1896, however, Penn had been granting degrees for nearly one hundred forty years. Like other American colonial colleges, Penn borrowed its 18th century Commencement rituals directly from the English universities. In England the history of academic dress reaches back to the early days of the oldest schools. As early as the second half of the 14th century, the statutes of certain colleges prohibited "excess in apparel" and required the wearing of a long gown. It is still an open question as to whether academic dress finds its sources chiefly in ecclesiastical or in civilian dress. It is often suggested that gowns and hoods were the

Aaron Albert Mossell, first African-American graduate of the Law School. A member of Penn's most important family of early African-American graduates, Mossell earned the LL.B. degree in 1888. His older brother, Nathan Francis Mossell, was among the first group of African-American students to enroll at Penn and was the first to earn the M.D. degree, in 1882. Aaron Mossell's daughter, Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander, earned four degrees at Penn and was the recipient of an honorary degree in 1974. Collections of the University of Pennsylvania Archives and Records Center.

simplest, most effective method of staying warm in the unheated, stone buildings which housed medieval scholars. In any case, academic regalia had evolved to contemporary familiarity by the time Benjamin Franklin was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by the University of St. Andrews in 1759.

Traditions and Current Practice at Penn
In April 1887, on the recommendation of a committee of the faculty, the Trustees adopted the "Pennsylvania' System of Academic Costume." The colors and trimmings of hoods and caps were regularized according to faculty and degree. Beginning with the Commencement of 1887, the "Pennsylvania' System" was published in each year's program and adherence to its rules was expected of trustees, faculty, and students alike. Beginning in 1896, the "Pennsylvania' System" was superseded by the "Intercollegiate System," which has continued in effect to the present time.

The gowns used in American academic ceremonies vary according to the highest degree awarded to the wearer. The gown for the bachelor's degree has pointed sleeves; it is designed to be worn closed. The gown for the master's degree has an oblong sleeve, open at the wrist. The sleeve base hangs down in the traditional manner. The rear part of its oblong shape is square cut and the front has an arc cut away. The master's gown may be worn open or closed. The doctoral gown is a more elaborate costume faced down the front with black velvet and across the sleeves with three bars of the same; these facings and crossbars may be of velvet of the color distinctive to the field of study to which the degree pertains. The doctoral gown has bell-shaped sleeves and may be worn open or closed. Some institutions have authorized doctoral gowns in colors other than the customary black; holders of the University of Pennsylvania Ph.D. may wear red and blue gowns.

The hoods are lined in silk with the official color or colors of the college or university which granted the highest degree held by the wearer; more than one color is shown by division of the field color in a variety of ways, such as by chevron or chevrons. The binding or edging of the hood is in velvet, with widths of two inches, three inches, and five inches for the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, respectively. The color of the border indicates the field of study to which the degree pertains. University of Pennsylvania graduates wear a hood lined in red with a blue chevron. The mortarboard cap is standard, though

Penn Facts and Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1899-1900</th>
<th>1999-2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total students</td>
<td>2,673</td>
<td>21,855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total faculty</td>
<td>260*</td>
<td>3,942**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>55 acres, 29 buildings</td>
<td>260 acres, 134 buildings***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This number includes professors, lecturers, and instructors
** This number includes standing and associated faculty
***This number doesn't include New Bolton, fraternities, sororities, commercial buildings, and hospitals

• The cash receipts between September 1, 1899 and August 31, 1900 from donations from all sources for University purposes were $531,154.39. Total receipts from tuition that year were $323,120.60. Board and lodging for students cost $185-$250 for 37 weeks. Students were estimated to spend between $10 and $50 per year for textbooks.

• In 1899-1900, 1,858 of the students were from Pennsylvania, 815 from other states and US territories, and 92 from other countries including 20 from Canada, 9 from Australia, 8 from Germany, 7 from New Zealand, 5 from England, and 4 from Nicaragua. The University published a booklet in Spanish that year to try to encourage more students from Latin America to come to Penn.

• In 1899-1900, 14% of the total 2,673 students were women.

• In 1999-2000, Penn's student body includes 18,640 men and women from all 50 states, and 3,215 from 118 countries.

• In 1999-2000, 50% of the total 21,855 students are women.

• In 1994, Judith Rodin (Class of 1966) returned to Penn as the first female president of an Ivy League university. Under her leadership, Penn now offers the most options for interdisciplinary study of any American university. In addition, $1.3 billion in renovation and construction of academic and support facilities has been accomplished during her first five years as president.
soft square-topped caps are permissible. Recipients of doctorates may wear a gold tassel fastened to the middle point of the top of the cap; all others wear black.

Degrees shall be conferred today according to the following order:

- Arts & Letters, white
- Science, golden yellow
- Business Administration, mustard
- Nursing, apricot
- Medicine, green
- Law, purple
- Fine Arts, brown
- Dental Medicine, lilac
- Veterinary Medicine, gray
- Education, light blue
- Social Work, citron
- Philosophy, dark blue

The Academic Procession
The order for today's Academic Procession is as follows:

- Mace Bearer
- President and Provost
- Chairman of the Board of Trustees
- Commencement Speaker
- Candidates for Honorary Degrees
- Deans
- Trustees
- Officers of the University
- Faculty
- Overseers
- Visiting Dignitaries

The Secretary of the University carries the University mace, the symbol of authority of the University, at the head of the Academic Procession. It was a gift of the family of William Murray Gordon, M.D. 1910. It is adorned with the seal and arms of the University, the Penn and Franklin coats-of-arms, a depiction of the Rittenhouse orrery, and a thistle symbolizing the early ties of the University with Scotland.

The President wears as a badge of office a silver medallion of which one face is engraved, like the mace, with the University seal. The obverse of the President's medal bears the "orrery seal," designed in 1782 by Francis Hopkinson, A.B. 1757, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The medal, suspended on a chain composed of silver links, was given by the late Trustee Thomas Sovereign Gates, Jr., A.B. 1928, LL.D. 1956, on the occasion of Sheldon Hackney's inauguration as President in October 1981.