

November 23, 1966

Mrs. William G. Bale
Editor, Otterbein Towers
Otterbein College
Westerville, Ohio 43081

Dear Evelyn:

Thank you for your letter of November 3rd and for your comments on my contribution to the "Spirit of Otterbein" collection. If it proves helpful to Dr. Hancock or to you I shall be amply rewarded for its writing. It really was a pleasant task.

The questions in the fourth paragraph are difficult ones. First, let me say however, that I think Dr. Clippinger's administration demands full coverage in any history recording 125 years of the life and growth of Otterbein. His 30 years comprise almost one fourth of that period and certainly laid the foundation we built upon for the Centennial and upon which the subsequent expansion rests. It was progressive, aggressive and constructive, leaving the college far advanced at every point of comparison with the levels at which he found it. While winning the support of influential educational interests outside the church, he kept the college actively identified within the church and built up there an increasing interest and devotion to Christian higher education as well as to Otterbein itself.

The reasons for his resignation are not readily assessed after almost 30 years. Personally, I feel the criticism he received during the final years of his administration was not the chief cause but rather a contributing one. I think it was the failure of more of "his" students - then alumni- to come vigorously to his support when the criticism came that led to his discouragement and ultimate resignation. He read into their attitude a lack of understanding and appreciation of all he and Mrs. Clippinger had done and of the many personal sacrifices they had made for Otterbein.

To a limited extent this interpretation was correct but in many instances, the alumni attitude simply was a reflection of the fact that during their years on campus he had not won the warm-hearted confidence and cooperation of the students whose diplomas he signed. It was not that he did not try. It was merely that his

exceptional executive ability, coupled with a rigid code of ethical and moral conduct, plus a large amount of conservatism made him seem cold and distant to the average student. His sternness as a disciplinarian, although impartial, often won him bitterness from a culprit rather than respect or repentance. The result was the building of a "wall", largely in the imagination of the students, which in reality did not exist and of which he was unaware.

He was zealous in his desire to make Otterbein a truly Christian college. He thus was extremely conscientious in the matter of carrying out the actions of the Board of Trustees and the ideals of the church. By nature he was inclined to interpret these literally rather than liberally. Thus he clashed "head on" with many advocates of the social groups. They read into his attitude an inflexible, ultra conservative, almost arbitrary viewpoint. He, on the other hand, merely felt he was doing ~~only~~ his duty.

As the years advanced he ^{was} loath to delegate authority. He was working - always with great desire and often under great duress - toward a better Otterbein. He knew what the vision was and how it could become reality. But he feared for its accomplishment in the hands of others. This brought additional criticism.

All of these factors, and possibly others unknown to me, finally crystalized in a flood of public dissatisfaction to which he yielded. As stated in my manuscript, I was one of the few students privileged to enjoy a warm, personal relationship with Dr. Clippinger. Even in reprimand, which on an occasion or two he found necessary, I remember him as considerate, helpful, always interested in my best interests. I was extremely sorry when his resignation came although I reluctantly agreed it was the wisest course to follow.

Cordially,

James B. Hine

P.S. Your letter came while we were out of town - hence the delay in answering. Also, please excuse my typing; it is pretty bad.