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 EarlyCCTimeline

II. A Timeline of Early Columbia College 1784-1857

Timeline of
GIBBS'S AFFAIR

1783

November 23 -- British evacuate New York City following signing of Peace of Paris; prominent among American negotiators was [John Jay](#) (KC 1764)

1784

January -- New York's Governor [George Clinton](#) calls upon state legislature and citizenry for a "revival and encouragement of seminaries of learning"

March 24 -- "Petition of Governors of King's College" submitted by 4 ex- King's College governors and 9 state officials, whose positions would have made them Governors of King's College, to reopen the College; New York City Mayor [James Duane](#) as prime mover

May 1 -- New York Legislature passes "An act for granting certain privileges to the College heretofore called King's College, for altering the name and charter thereof, and erecting a University in this state"; College to be called "Columbia College in the State of new York" and to be governed by 32 Regents, appointed by governor and drawn statewide; charter made no mention of earlier Trinity Church stipulations about the president being Anglican/Episcopalian and Anglican/Episcopalian prayers

May 4 -- First meeting of Regents lacked quorum; attendance problems chronic with non-NYC members

May 5 -- Regents hold first meeting; Governor [George Clinton](#) elected Chancellor of the University; appoint Reverend [John Peter Tetard](#) as Professor of French; [William Cochran](#) appointed instructor of Greek and Latin; dispatch [Colonel Matthew Clarkson](#) to France and Holland to raise funds for the College; renew leases on College-owned properties

May 17 -- Governor's 15-year old son, [DeWitt Clinton](#), admitted as junior transfer from Princeton; 7 other juniors admitted during summer and assigned to William Cochran, head of a grammar school, for interim instruction

November 26 -- Regents' membership expanded to include 20 more NYC residents; [Alexander Hamilton](#) among the new Regents; Legislature also provided College with £ 2552 for its use.

November 30 -- Regents abandon solicitation effort in France and Holland at Benjamin Franklin's insistence: Princeton and Dartmouth had already tried and failed

December 14 -- Regents recommend creation of 7 regular professorships; 8 medical professorships; 2 law professorships; and 10 "extra professorships"; 4 salaried professorships filled by [William Cochran](#) (Latin), [Rev. Benjamin Moore](#) (Rhetoric); [Rev. John D. Gross](#) (Geography); [Samuel Bard](#) (Natural Philosophy)

1786

February 28 -- Professor Tetard declared insane and removed from faculty

April 11 -- [DeWitt Clinton](#), son of Governor Clinton, among 8 graduates at first commencement of Columbia College [32nd year from 1754]; ceremony held at St. Paul's Chapel

1787

January -- Legislative committee chaired by [James Duane](#) recommended that King's College be governed by its own corporation, separate from State-wide Regents; plan pushed by [Alexander Hamilton](#) and [John Jay](#)

April 13 -- NY Legislature approves new charter for "Columbia College in the City of New York," by which the College reverted to its earlier status as a privately governed college serving New York City; state-appointed Regents replaced by self-perpetuating 24 Trustees with no *ex officio* public members; charter provided basic governance framework that has since prevailed.

May 21 -- [William Samuel Johnson](#), elder son of first KC President Samuel Johnson, attorney, and a signer of Federal Constitution, elected 3rd president of King's/ Columbia College; accepted position in November; Columbia's first lay president and one of the first lay presidents in American higher education.

May 21 -- Five seniors awarded graduation certificates at 33rd Commencement

1788

April 8 -- President Johnson confers degrees on 4 graduating seniors at 34th Commencement ; also confers degrees retroactively upon 1785 and 1786 graduates

1789

April 13 -- [Peter Wilson](#) elected Professor of Greek and Latin; succeeds the departed William Cochran

May 6 -- Degrees conferred upon 10 graduating seniors at 35th Commencement in St. Paul's Chapel; as federal government installed in New York City earlier in the year, President [George Washington](#), Vice President [John Adams](#) and members of the Cabinet were in attendance

1790

March -- NY Legislature provided £1000 for the use of the College

May -- Degrees conferred upon 7 graduating seniors at 36th Commencement

July -- Following a compromise agreement worked out between Alexander Hamilton and James Madison/Thomas Jefferson, the national capital was moved from New York City to Philadelphia, where it was to remain until 1800, when a permanent site on the Potomac was ready for occupancy.

1791

May -- Degrees conferred upon 21 graduating seniors at 37th Commencement

1792

February 13 -- Trustees vote to create a Faculty of Medicine

April 11 -- New York state authorizes £7800 to repair College Hall and improve the Library; also authorizes an annual subsidy for five years of £750 for faculty salaries

College uses infusion of state funds to undertake extension of College Hall and expand faculty

May -- Degrees conferred upon 12 graduating seniors at 38th Commencement

June -- Trustees vote to expand faculty with several new appointments

July 9 -- Trustees appoint Dr. [Samuel L. Mitchell](#) as Professor of Natural History; Dr. [Johann Christophe Kunze](#) as Professor of Oriental languages; Mr. [Villette de Marcellin](#) as Professor of French

1793

State capital removed from New York City to Albany

May -- Degrees conferred upon 26 graduating seniors and 4 graduates of the Medical School at 39th Commencement

[December -- James Kent](#) appointed Professor of Law; his courses draw few students; resigned professorship in 1798

1794

May 7 -- Degrees conferred upon 15 graduating seniors and 3 graduates of the Medical School at 40th Commencement held in St. Paul's Chapel

1795

May -- Degrees conferred upon 26 graduating seniors and 2 graduates of the medical School at 41st Commencement

[Rev. John McKnight](#) succeeds Gross as Professor of Moral Philosophy

[Union College](#) founded in upstate Schenectady; the second college founded in New York; soon to become an aggressive seeker of state funds under President Eliphalet Nott

1796

April 17 -- NY legislature extends annual subsidy of £750 for two more years

May -- Degrees conferred upon 15 graduating seniors and 2 graduates of the medical school by President Johnson at 42nd Commencement

Trustees authorize construction of a west wing to the Main Hall; shortly thereafter halted for want of funds

1797

State announces end of its support of the College; faculty cut to two (Peter Wilson/John Kemp)

May -- Degrees conferred upon 9 graduating seniors and 1 graduate of the medical school by President Johnson at 43rd Commencement

1798

May -- Degrees conferred upon 18 graduating seniors by President Johnson at 44th Commencement

1799

May -- Degrees conferred upon 18 graduating seniors by President Johnson at 45th Commencement

Trustees establish new academic calendar: Commencement moved from May to late July; Exams in March and July; Vacation in August and September(to have College closed during epidemic season)

1800

July 16 -- Degrees conferred upon 16 graduating seniors by President Johnson at 46th Commencement; the 73-year-old Johnson, hobbled by gout in the toe, resigned the presidency, left NYC and lived on in Connecticut until 1820.

1801

Dr. David Hosack, Columbia Professor of Botany and Materia Medica, purchased 20 acres of land 3 1/2 miles north of the settled part of Manhattan, for \$4800, intending to develop it as a botanical garden. He named it the Elgin Botanical Garden.

May 25 -- Trustees elected Rev. Charles H. Wharton elected 4th president of Columbia;

August -- Degrees conferred upon 15 graduating seniors at 47th Commencement in the absence of a presiding president

December 11 -- Wharton resigned presidency without ever having set foot on the Columbia campus; remained a clergyman in New Jersey and later became a Princeton trustee.

December 31 -- Rt. Rev. Bishop Benjamin Moore (KC 1768) elected 5th Columbia president; continued duties as New York bishop and Trinity Church rector; first president not expected to teach regularly; first graduate of College to become its president

1802

State legislature made grant of lands at Lake George, Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point jointly to Union College and Columbia; Union president Eliphalet Nott emerges as a formidable fundraiser among New York legislators

College borrowing \$20,000 to renew construction of west wing

August 7 -- Degrees conferred upon 20 graduating seniors and 3 graduates of the medical school by President Moore at 48th Commencement at St Paul's

The Philolexian Society established by Columbia students; the College's first literary society

November 18 --Upon Mitchill's resignation, [Dr. James S. Stringham](#) elected Professor of Chemistry; position unsalaried bu Stringham to be paid by direct payments of \$4 per year by all Juniors and Seniors.

1803

August -- Degrees conferred upon 18 graduating seniors and 2 graduates of the medical school by President Moore at 49th Commencement

1804

July 10 -- Alexander Hamilton shot and killed by political rival Aaron Burr (Princeton 1772) in a duel in Weehawken, New Jersey.

July 14 -- Faculty and students of Columbia College attend funeral of Alexander Hamilton, the College's most famous alumnus. Hamilton's oldest son, Alexander, Jr., is a member of the Class of 1804; next oldest, James Alexander, Class of 1805. Gouverneur Morris (KC 1768) delivered the principal eulogy.

August -- Degrees conferred upon 31 graduating seniors and 3 graduates of the medical school by President Moore at 50th Commencement

1805

College 20-year leases on property adjoining the College let in 1785 now up for renewal at five times their earlier rents; welcome source of need income

August -- Degrees conferred upon 19 graduating seniors and 2 graduates of the medical school by President Moore at 51st Commencement

1806

August -- Degrees conferred upon 20 graduating seniors and 1 graduate of the medical school by President Moore at 52nd Commencement

The Peithologian Society created by Columbia students; the College's second literary society (Philolexian founded in 1802)

1807

August -- Degrees conferred upon 21 seniors and 1 graduate of the medical school by President Moore at 53rd Commencement

College of Physicians & Surgeons opens in New York City, in direct competition with Columbia's medical school.

1808

February 1 -- Trustees appoint a committee chaired by [Rufus King](#) to inquire into "the present state of education in the College." Other Trustees on committee: The Revs. [John Henry Hobart](#), [John Mitchell Mason](#) and [Samuel Miller](#)

College faculty acknowledge regularly accepting 13-year old boys into the College despite minimum age set at 14; contended these admits were "among the best scholars"

August -- Degrees conferred upon 22 graduating seniors by President Moore at 54th Commencement

October 15 -- Trustees adopt early recommendation of King Committee by publicly reasserting stiff entrance requirements

1809

July 12 -- Trustee Committee chaired by Rufus King made "Report on the State of the College;" hard on faculty, especially Wilson; proposed building a dormitory to house 100 residential students.

August -- Degrees conferred upon 27 graduating seniors by President Moore at 55th Commencement

1810

February 28 -- Trustees published Report of King Committee

March 23 -- 1787 College charter amended and reenacted; new curriculum introduced

July 30 -- Trustees publish a fundraising appeal "To the Citizens of New York" at instigation of Rufus King

August -- Dr. Hosack, unable to maintain his Garden despite expenditures of \$110,000, sold the property to the State of New York for \$74,000.

August -- Degrees conferred upon 29 graduating seniors and 1 graduate of the medical school by President Moore at 56th Commencement; Disturbances by outsiders prompt College to request City block off streets around College at Commencement

1811

March -- President Moore, long in failing health, resigned the presidency

June 19 -- Rev. [William Harris](#) elected 6th president of Columbia (to 1829); shared authority with Provost (and Presbyterian) [John Mitchell Mason](#) until 1816; both simultaneously ministering to churches

August 5 -- College faculty recommend 24 seniors for graduation, although 8 adjudged to be unqualified on the basis of their exam performance; "special circumstances" cited in deciding to go ahead with granting the degrees

August 7 -- "The Riotous Commencement" -- 57th Commencement services in Trinity Church disrupted by riot that followed on the refusal of President Harris, Provost

Mason and the faculty to confer a degree on senior [John B. Stevenson](#) because he reinserted objectionable lines into his commencement speech; several spectators, including aspiring politician [Gulian Verplank](#) (CC 1801) urged the students on in their defiance of the faculty's authority. Four participants were brought to trial, found guilty and fined.

1812

[Hamilton College](#) founded in upstate Clinton; 3rd college chartered in New York State

August -- Degrees conferred upon 23 graduating seniors by President Harris at 58th Commencement; Provost Mason introduced the awarding of class medals at Commencement as a spur to "emulation" among the underclassmen

1813

Columbia's medical school closed; remnant of the medical faculty merged with [College of Physicians and Surgeons](#); Columbia to be without a medical affiliation until 1861, without its own medical school until 1891.

August -- Degrees conferred upon 18 graduating seniors by President Harris at 59th Commencement

1814

April 13 -- NY State passed "An Act for the Promotion of Literature and other Purposes" by which Columbia acquired the 20-acre botanical garden it acquired in 1810 from the botanist [David Hosack](#); its value at the time about \$10,000; came to Columbia in lieu of the \$200,000 received by Union College, \$40,000 by Hamilton College, and \$30,000 by The College of Physicians and Surgeons; use of the land specifically limited to future college site.

August -- Degrees conferred upon 11 graduating seniors by President Harris at 60th Commencement, although 5 who received degrees deemed unqualified by faculty

October 6 -- Students petitioned for permission to form a military company; Trustees declined to express an opinion. College's political sentiments preponderantly opposed to the ongoing War of 1812.

1815

August -- Degrees conferred upon 19 graduating seniors by President Harris at 61st Commencement

1816

May 6 -- Provost Mason resigns (later becomes president of Dickinson College); marks decline of Presbyterian influence on the Board; William Harris now becomes full-time president

August -- Degrees conferred upon 17 graduating seniors by President Harris at 62nd Commencement

October 16 -- Group of Columbia alumni request recognition by Trustees; marks establishment of first alumni organization of an American college

November -- Trustee "Report on State of the College" prepared by Bishop John Henry Hobart; hard on faculty moonlighting

1817

January -- NY Governor [Daniel Tompkins](#) (CC 1795) proposes scheme where state would assist Columbia moving to Staten Island and merging with newly chartered Washington College

March 27 -- Trustees reject relocation proposal; borrow \$20,000 to undertake building-expansion program to construct east and west wings to main building

August -- Degrees conferred upon 18 graduating seniors by President Harris at 63rd Commencement

1818

August -- Degrees conferred upon 18 graduating seniors by President Harris at 64th Commencement

1819

April 5 -- Governor [DeWitt Clinton](#) (CC 1786) and state legislature permit College to lease property ("Hosack's Garden") acquired in 1814 and drop requirement that it be a future college site; also make grant of \$10,000 to College to compensate for land's poor returns to College. Trustees unhappy with this deal and over next three decades came close several times to selling the property. The Garden's 260 city lots (six city blocks referred to as the "Upper Estates") later became the principal endowment of Columbia and a major revenue producer from the 1860s until sold in 1985 for \$400,000,000; land is the site of Rockefeller Center.

August -- Degrees conferred upon 19 graduating seniors by President Harris at 65th Commencement

1820

College experiences a surplus of \$2000 in a \$15,000 budget; completes expansion of main building; Trustees contemplate separating heretofore joined professorships

August -- Degrees conferred upon 13 graduating seniors by President Harris at 66th Commencement

1821

Previous year's financial windfall erased as College generates deficit of \$1600; first of several years of deficits

July 21 -- Faculty places all 30 graduating seniors into 5 groups according to their academic performance in an experiment designed to encourage academic emulation among the students

August 10 -- Degrees conferred upon 30 graduating seniors by President Harris at 67th Commencement; graduates receive their degrees in order of their academic grouping

1822

Second year of budgetary deficit; difficulties in collecting rents

August -- Degrees conferred upon 23 graduating seniors by President Harris at 68th Commencement

1823

Third successive year of budgetary deficits

August -- Degrees conferred upon 29 graduating seniors by President Harris at 69th Commencement; graduates receive their degrees in the numerical order of their academic ranking by the faculty (i.e., 1 to 29), placing senior George Ogden, son of a Trustee, # 29.

October -- Chancellor [James Kent](#) returns to Columbia as Professor of Law; not part of regular faculty; unsalaried; lectures in 1824 and 1825 poorly attended; thereafter does no teaching though continued to be listed as member of the faculty

1824

Fourth year of budgetary deficit (\$1400); President's and faculty salaries cut by 15%; tuition raised from \$80.00 to \$90.00

Professor [John McVickar](#) called for some student choice in selecting courses; other faculty and trustees opposed; reform not adopted

March 1 -- Trustee [Thomas L. Ogden](#), father of George (CC 1823) and [Waddington Ogden](#) (CC 1824), protests rank ordering of graduating seniors at Commencement

August -- Degrees conferred upon 23 graduating seniors by President Harris at 70th Commencement; graduates receive their degrees in the numerical order of their academic ranking by the faculty; yet another Ogden, Waddington, #23

[Geneva College](#) (later Hobart) opens in upstate New York; 4th college in state

1825

College experiences first budgetary surplus (\$662) in five years

May 4 -- [Clement Clark Moore](#) [CC 1798], the son of President Benjamin Moore and Clerk of the Trustees, delivered an address to the Alumni of Columbia College on "The Early History of Columbia College," making him the first of Columbia's institutional historians

August -- Degrees conferred upon 21 graduating seniors by President Harris at 71st Commencement; order of receiving degrees unclear

1826

Second year of budgetary surplus (\$1320)

February 6 -- Trustees petition state legislature for "pecuniary aid;" complain about the absence of any income from the Botanic Garden

May 22 -- Senior [Thomas Minturn](#) expelled by faculty for being a leader of a senior class "combination" defying faculty authority; his appeal to Trustees effects his readmittance to class and timely graduation

July 6 -- Trustees voted that graduating seniors not be ranked academically or have their degrees conferred accordingly; experiment with encouraging emulation abandoned

August -- Degrees conferred upon 25 graduating seniors by President Harris at 72nd Commencement; seniors receive their degrees in alphabetical order

September 4 -- Trustees agree to have freshmen seated by rank after intermediate exams

1827

August -- Degrees conferred upon 36 graduating seniors by President Harris at 73rd Commencement; largest graduating class in the history of the College; receive degrees by scholarly rank, with [Hamilton Fish](#), son of Trustee Nicholas Fish, ranked #1

1828

May 6 -- Trustees sell upstate Crown Point land acquired from the state for \$3213.

August -- Degrees conferred upon 29 graduating seniors by President Harris at 74th Commencement; seniors receive degree in order of academic merit [John M. Ogden #28]

1829

January -- Trustees authorize borrowing of \$22,000 to build a grammar school across Murray Street from the College; eighteen-year old College junior [John Ogilvie](#) appointed Headmaster.

August -- President Harris terminally ill; Professor McVickar presided at conferring of 20 degrees at 75th Commencement

October 10 -- Trustees informed of Harris's death; McVickar named acting president

December 1 -- Retiring state judge [William A. Duer](#) elected 7th president of Columbia (to 1842); Professor John McVickar a disappointed candidate for the office

1830

January 16 -- Trustees issue new statutes in anticipation of the establishment of the "University of the City of New York" (later, NYU), which aimed at attracting sons of the City's commercial middle class; Columbia curriculum revised to include Literary and Scientific (i.e., no classics) Course to appeal to same constituency.

January 30 -- Trustees offering City of New York places on Board in exchange for gift of the old alms house; also invite scholarship support and endowment of professorships by City's various religious and ethnic groups

February -- Trustees propose offering instruction in mathematics, astronomy, navigation and steam engines to cadets of US Navy

March 3 -- Faculty abandon support of academic ranking; acknowledge it not done elsewhere.

June 21 -- Seniors petition that "all distinction of place should be abolished;" ask to graduate in strict alphabetical order.

August -- Degrees conferred on 19 graduating seniors by President Duer at 76th Commencement; degrees awarded in alphabetical order

November -- Professor Charles Anthon installed as headmaster of Columbia Grammar School, located across Church Street from the College.

1831

April -- University of the City of New York receives state charter. Backers of new college included several disaffected Columbians.

August -- Degrees conferred upon 24 graduating seniors by President Duer at 77th Commencement; degrees awarded in alphabetical order, though individual medals awarded to top students in each of the classes

1832

August -- 78th Commencement for 28 graduating seniors cancelled by President Duer because of Yellow Fever epidemic

October -- "New University" (NYU) opens for instruction in Clinton Hall, opposite City Hall Park from Columbia College; immediately draws some Columbia students as transfers

December 3 -- Finances of the College show it again in deficit of \$2000; long-term debt exceeds \$30,000

1833

January -- College running recurring deficits; debt mounting to \$31,650

May 1 -- Professor Anthon takes Grammar School "into his own hands;" to pay the College a yearly rental and keep whatever profit there is after paying staff

October 8 -- Degrees conferred upon 24 graduating seniors by President Duer at 79th Commencement; first commencement scheduled in early October at start of academic year

1834

October 6 -- Degrees conferred on 24 graduating seniors by President Duer at 80th Commencement in St. John's Chapel on Varick St. Graduates included Evert A. Duyckinck, later a well known author-publisher

1835

February 10 -- Trustees confront fact that "for the last twelve years the debt has been steadily increasing." Next year to be \$35,000. Trustees reduce faculty salaries, but also

offer them the tuition income on all enrolled students in excess of 100. Propose a fundraising campaign among alumni to raise \$50,000.

October 5 -- Columbia College sophomore [George Templeton Strong](#) (CC 1838) commenced his diary; to continue until his death in 1875.

October 6-- Degrees conferred on 24 graduating seniors at 81st Commencement

1836

Spring -- A chapter of the fraternity Alpha Delta Phi organized at Columbia; the college's first national fraternity

October 3 -- Degrees conferred on 21 graduating seniors by President Duer at 82nd Commencement

1837

April 13 -- 50th anniversary of the reorganization of the College celebrated by students and alumni in parade from College to St. John's Chapel.

October 3 -- Degrees conferred upon 23 graduating seniors by President Duer at 83rd Commencement

1838

October 2-- Degrees conferred on 20 graduating seniors by President Duer at 84th Commencement; among the medal-winning graduates was the diarist George Templeton Strong

1839

October -- Degrees conferred on 25 graduating seniors by President Duer at 85th Commencement

1840

October -- Degrees conferred on 32 graduating seniors by President Duer at 86th Commencement

1841

October -- President Duer seriously ill; degrees conferred upon 31 graduating seniors at 87th Commencement

Fordham University founded under Roman Catholic auspices in New York City.

1842

May 2 -- President Duer resigns; provided a \$1200 lifetime annuity

June -- Trustees unable to settle on a successor to President Duer; Professor McVickar among the candidates

August 2 -- [Nathaniel Fish Moore](#) (CC 1802/nephew of Benjamin Moore) elected 8th president of Columbia (to 1849); became compromise candidate at urging of his cousin, [Clement Clark Moore](#), clerk of the Trustees

October -- Degrees conferred upon 30 graduating seniors by President Moore at 88th Commencement

1843

April -- Columbia received its first bequest for an endowed chair -- in German -- from estate of [Frederick Gebhard](#); bequest of \$20,000; largest received until 1889; [Johann Tellkampf](#) appointed 1st Gebhard Professor

July -- College abandons the Literary and Scientific Course in face of faculty subversion and there having been no students enrolled in it for some years; Faculty salaries again reduced in cost-cutting effort

October -- Degrees conferred upon 23 graduating seniors by President Moore at 89th Commencement

1844

October -- Degrees conferred upon 14 graduating seniors by President Moore at 90th Commencement

1845

October -- Degrees conferred upon 24 graduating seniors by President Moore at 91st Commencement

1846

October -- Degrees conferred upon 24 graduating seniors by President Moore at 92nd Commencement

1847

June -- Free Academy of New York approved by NYC voters; to open in 1849 [after 1866, City College of New York]; to be city-funded and tuition-free; New York City now has four competing competing colleges for a annual college-going population of under 500 young men

October -- Degrees conferred upon 28 graduating seniors by President Moore at 93rd Commencement

1848

July (changed from previous October date) -- Degrees conferred upon 25 graduating seniors by President Moore at 94th Commencement

1849

October [moved because of Cholera threat]-- President Moore resigned as president; degrees conferred upon 32 graduating seniors at 95th Commencement

November 5 --Former newspaperman and son of Rufus King, [Charles King](#), elected 9th president of Columbia (to 1864). McVickar again a disappointed aspirant.

1850

[University of Rochester](#) founded in western NY; becomes the state's ninth college

June -- Proposal for having alumni elect three of the College's 24 trustees rejected by Trustees

October 8 -- Degrees conferred upon 23 graduating seniors by President King at 96th Commencement

1851

July -- Degrees conferred upon 21 graduating seniors by President King at 97th Commencement

1852

April -- Trustees begin leasing "Upper Estate" in 202 separate parcels for twenty-one years;

July -- Trustees considered a proposal presented by President King calling for the abolition of tuition fees altogether;

Degrees conferred upon 27 graduating seniors by President King at 98th Commencement

October 4 -- Trustees form a committee to consider making the College into a University

1853

July -- Degrees conferred upon 19 graduating seniors by President King at 99th Commencement

November 7 -- Committee of Trustees urges move uptown

December 5 -- [George Templeton Strong](#) [CC 1838], son-in-law of Trustee Samuel Ruggles, elected Columbia Trustee; to serve until his death in 1875

1854

January to April -- Trustees fallout over appointing Columbia graduate [Wolcott Gibbs](#) (CC 1841) as professor of chemistry; clergy on Trustees opposed candidacy because of his Unitarianism; trustee supporters [Samuel Ruggles](#) and [George Templeton Strong](#) seek alumni support for their case; compromise candidate [Richard McCulloch](#), a professor at Princeton, chosen for post; Gibbs went on to a distinguished career at Harvard. [For more, follow link to ["The Gibbs Affair"](#)]

July -- Degrees conferred upon 29 graduating seniors by President King at 100th Commencement

October 30 -- Modest alumni dinner in recognition of Centennial of issuing the charter for King's College; bigger turnout precluded by alumni-trustee controversy over the Gibbs affair

1855

July -- Degrees conferred upon 19 graduating seniors by President King at 101st Commencement

1856

October 61 -- Trustees buy the Deaf and Dumb Asylum property on Madison, between 49th and 50th Streets; a bargain at \$63,000; seen as temporary site for the College

October -- Degrees conferred upon 45 graduating seniors by President King at 102nd Commencement; the largest graduating class to date and the last to graduate from the Park Place campus

1857

January -- Trustees sell College site on Park Place for \$600,000; retain rental properties around the original campus (hereinafter "The Lower Estate")

May -- Columbia College moved from original site on Park Place to grounds of the New York Institution of Deaf and Dumb on Madison and 49th St; College Hall promptly demolished; site now contains the Internal Revenue Service Building

July 6 -- Trustees adopt a statute providing for post-graduate education in Letters, Science and Jurisprudence; course to be open to College seniors and graduates from other colleges

Tuition dropped to \$50 per year

October -- Degrees conferred upon 27 graduating seniors by President King at 103rd Commencement; first commencement held on the Madison Avenue campus; President King declares Columbia a "university."

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Last revised: September 11, 2003