

A Pictorial History of Mount Holyoke 1900-1935: Asa Kinney's View Camera Photographs

Robert Herbert, with the collaboration of James Gehrt

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Introduction

About 2000 glass plate negatives by Asa S. Kinney (1873-1961), dating from 1898 to the 1930s, are in the Archives and Special Collections of Mount Holyoke College. They are a treasure house of images of buildings and grounds, celebrations and rituals of the college, as well as of portraits and informal views of the college's students and teachers. They add up to nearly forty years of the college's everyday life and its special occasions. Kinney made views of the campus across the decades, some astonishing ones like the spectacular fires that destroyed Williston Hall in 1917 and Rockefeller Hall in 1922. He recorded annual Mayday festivals showing costumes, dances and scenes from plays. Canoeing on Lower Lake accompanies his views of Stony Brook and its waterfalls. Individual buildings are featured, some of them later demolished (Judson Hall, Cowles Lodge, Peterson's Hall) to make room for other facilities. He portrayed campus life in many ways including engaging photographs of "farmerettes" working in the War Garden in 1917-18. There are also some photographs of South Hadley's nearby streets and buildings so the college is well settled in the village.

Kinney was a teacher of plant culture and gardening at the college from 1898 until his retirement in 1939. In online contributions his remarkable archive has recently been made known by James Gehrt, Digital Project Lead of the college's Digital Assets and Preservation Services.¹ He began by scanning the glass plates as negatives, and then inverting them into positives. Since

¹ At great sacrifice of time, Gehrt made positives from the glass negatives. In addition to photographs, he's also made important contributions to the present essay by commenting on the photographs and the ideas that spring from them.

there was no guide to how Kinney would have had prints made, Gehrt tried to create the best possible images as though he were printing them in a traditional darkroom. This gave him control over the tones of shadows and highlights. He didn't do any localized adjustments but tried to represent the information in the negatives as honestly as possible while producing a pleasant contrast range for the viewer. In other words, he had to make aesthetic decisions while processing the images. It was as if Kinney wrote the score and Gehrt played the music. The glass plates hold more detail and information than the offset press that Kinney used for publishing his postcards. Aside from these scattered prints, Kinney never would have seen a complete collection of positive images from his life's work.

When Gehrt, a professional photographer, looks at Kinney's photographs he's aware that a century ago this craftsman with a view camera was sensitive to the quality of light at different times of day and in different seasons. In the morning it rolls down Prospect Hill and illuminates Lower Lake and then spreads evenly across the campus. In the afternoon it makes the building's bricks glow and casts shadows that give three-dimensional substance to the architecture. As he worked, he positioned his camera to take advantage of the quality and direction of the light and its reflections from grassy lawns and vertical walls. He arranged his compositions like so many stage settings to lead the viewer's eye to his subject.

Kinney used a 5 x 7 inch view camera, mounted on a tripod, that required a glass plate for each photograph. Both the lens plane and the film plane could be moved relative to one another, so he had control over focus, perspective and depth of field. This accounts for the crisp clarity of positives that Gehrt has made from his plates. He regularly photographed his floriculture classes, and colleagues and students on botany expeditions, the last of these dated 1929. Photographs of his family, beginning with his children's infancy, are a rare set of images detailing a middleclass life as it unfolded from the beginning of the century. His plates also include South Hadley homes, public buildings and streets, and his own home and garden. Besides all these he also left several hundred glass slides, 3^{1/4} x 4 inches, some of them colored by hand; a few were autochromes. Like the larger images from his view camera, he made autochromes one at a time by inserting sensitized glass plates, into a smaller camera. He regularly projected his slides in classes and in public lectures. His botanical colleagues probably used them sometimes, but they were regarded as his when they came to the college after his death. When these slides are added to the 5 x 7 photographs, they add up to a truly staggering output.

If it were not for the prodigious yield of his photographs, Kinney would fall into the oubliette of college teachers who did not publish significantly and whose lives and careers are relegated to institutional records. True, he was a member of the college's Botany Department, and a well-known and active member of the South Hadley community but to our great regret nothing more than the bare facts of his life are known from college and public records. There are no diaries, no autobiographical writings, and only one letter.² Furthermore, the college often used his photographs but did not credit him with them, so this anonymity has pushed him further down in the oubliette.

In two blogs Gehrt has written an insightful introduction to Kinney's work with a view camera and offers many hundreds of his photographs in readily accessible form.³ What remains to be done is a biography of this shadowy man, and that is the purpose of the present essay.

² A short note of thanks to the class of 1939 for dedicating their yearbook to him.

³ Gehrt's two online publications are "The Asa Kinney Collection" and "Selected Images from the Asa Kinney Collection."

Because Kinney left no personal records whatsoever, the story of his life is necessarily limited to the rudiments of college records supplemented by one colleague's memoir and an interview of 1954. It's a challenge to the historian but something of his life can be deduced from his plates, including pictures of his family.⁴

Part One: Teacher and Citizen

Asa Stephen Kinney was born August 23, 1873. His father Frank Joel Kinney (1833-1917) owned a nursery and doubtless made working with plants a normal feature of the son's youth. His mother Ann Marie Foster Kinney (1836-1890) bore three sons and two daughters. Frank Kinney's second marriage was to Fanny Dodd (1858-1906) who was in her forties when she gave birth to two sons and a daughter. Asa was nearly grown up then, and little is known of his siblings and half-siblings. Indeed, nothing is known of his life before he entered Rhode Island State College in Providence in 1891 for his first year in college. He then transferred to Massachusetts Agricultural College (MAC) in Amherst (later the University of Massachusetts). Over the years, several of his handwritten notes about his education given to the college specify that he attended MAC from 1892 to 1898, but also that he received his BS from Boston University in 1896. He taught botany at MAC from September 1896 to June 1898, when he earned his Masters Degree in botany. In January 1897, his *Electro-Germination* was published by the college, a study of the effects of electricity on the germination and growth of selected seeds.⁵

Kinney moved to South Hadley in June, 1898, to take up his appointment as instructor in botany and director of the botanical garden. In his first few months at the college, according to Alma Stokey, his departmental colleague, he gave a demonstration of "the new art of tree surgery" by using cement to treat a horse chestnut injured in the Seminary fire.⁶ For a year or two he flirted seriously with Nellie E. Goldthwaite (1873-1946), head of the chemistry department from 1897 to 1905,⁷ but in 1903 he married Jean Tucker (1879-1952). They had two children, Elizabeth (1904-2004), who married Leonard G. Worley, and Asa Foster (1908-?). In 1962 Elizabeth gave her father's glass plates and lantern slides to Mount Holyoke, and it must be

⁴ In this essay specific archival location of photographs will not be given. They are in miscellaneous boxes that came from Kinney's estate in a curious order that he had devised but not a systematic one. Some plates had been helpfully gathered in groups according to subjects but many fell outside these categories. Kinney was the proverbial packrat who put aside in various repurposed envelopes and boxes a huge assembly of glass plate negatives, mostly untitled but a few captioned in his hand on disintegrating envelopes. In these boxes, folders, and envelopes are also an abundance of postcards (nearly all of Kinney's manufacture), advertisements for photographic supplies, and scattered pamphlets. Wherever the envelopes give his titles for photographs, I've put them in quotation marks; those without marks are my own titles.

⁵ *Electro-Germination*, Hatch Experimental Station, Massachusetts Agricultural College, *Bulletin* No. 43, January 1897, Division of Botany. Kinney is recorded "class of 1896." His pamphlet has 32 pages with many tables and five photographs of his apparatus.

⁶ Alma G. Stokey, "Mr. Kinney," *Alumnae Quarterly*, August 1939, pp. 56-57. In this essay "Stokey 1939" will refer to this memoir. Her departmental reports will be separately referenced.

⁷ Rogers and Sarah Rusk, *Reminiscences by Asa Kinney*, typescript of interview, Mount Holyoke College, 1954. "She was a young woman and really very attractive and I was really quite taken with her. She was some older than I was but for the first year that I was here I saw quite a lot of her and I think went places with her." Hereafter mention of "Rusk 1954" will refer to this typescript in the college archives. Sarah E. Rusk (1905-1995) taught art episodically at the college as Reader or Instructor from 1929 to 1962; Rogers D. Rusk (1892-1985) was a professor of physics from 1929 to 1958.

she (evidence lacks) who gave the Gaylord Library her father's notes on the history of the college and South Hadley, and many dozens of photographs of local homes, some of them (perhaps most) her father's work. The Gaylord also has her mother's typescript history of South Hadley.⁸ All of these documents will be discussed in due course, principally in "The antiquarian."

Right away Kinney began taking pictures of the college and South Hadley. The only known set of photographs he took elsewhere are from a trip he made in August, 1904, to the western part of the state where he photographed several sites in Pittsfield, North Adams, and Lenox.⁹ He probably journeyed alone because his wife would have been caring for their first child Elizabeth, born two months earlier on June 15th. Of twenty-nine glass negatives in Pittsfield's Berkshire Athenaeum, thirteen are approaches to famous buildings, eleven in Lenox and two in Pittsfield. Curiously, most of these are of gateways seen from adjacent streets, perhaps because the grounds of these estates were private. Among them are three mansions in Lenox built in the 1890s for new fortunes: Wheatleigh House for H. H. Cook, Bellefontaine for Girard Foster, and Belvoir Terrace for Morris K. Jessup. Their gateways, seen from a few yards' distance, hint at opulent estates but these hints do not make enterprising photographs.

Several of Kinney's plates represent Berkshire's rolling landscape, including two of glacial erratics, Pittsfield's Split Rock and Balance Rock just north of the city. These are isolated boulders transported by moving glacial ice, the kind found frequently in the Northeast that became local sights.

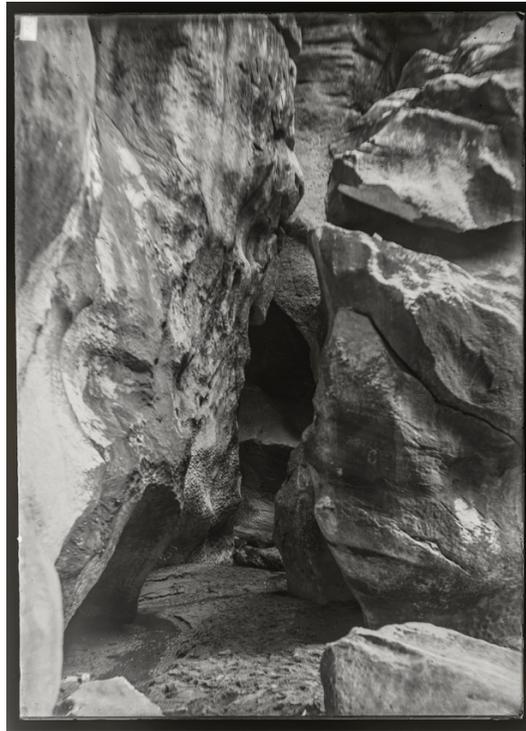


Balance Rock, Pittsfield, 1904

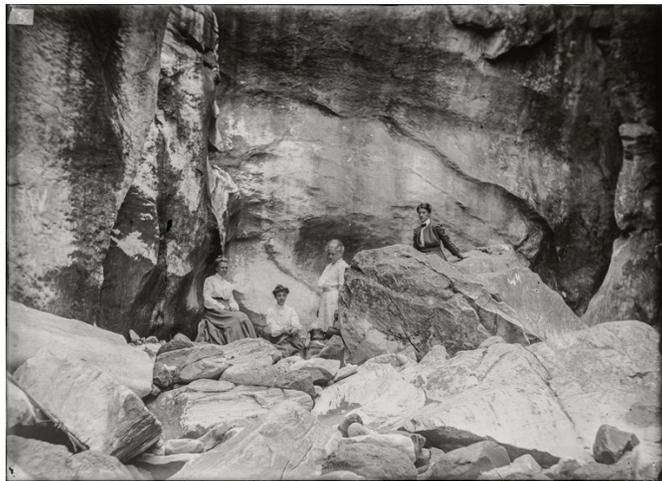
The most engaging of Kinney's photographs from this trip are six he took in the Natural Bridge Park in North Adams, a quarry built around a dramatic white marble arch formed by glacial meltwater. Taking advantage of the site's declivitous gorge, he took five head-spinning views of twisting water-formed slots, exploiting the dramatic irregularities of light and dark. He also took a more prosaic photograph of four fellow visitors seated among a tumble of huge rocks.

⁸ The documents in Gaylord are housed in two boxes, one labeled "Kinney Collection," the other "Mount Holyoke College Documents," folder 2, "Kinney notes on MHC." There's no record of the donation but everything points to a gift from daughter Elizabeth.

⁹ A letter of May 11, 1993, from the Berkshire Athenaeum to Patricia Albright, college archivist, thanks her for a "gift of glass plate negatives of sites in Pittsfield, North Adams and Lenox, taken by Professor Asa Kinney." No documents have surfaced that tell of Kinney's visits to the west. On July 21, 2016, James Gehrt photographed the Athenaeum's glass plates and Robert Herbert annotated a list of them.



Natural Bridge State Park, North Adams, 1904



Visitors, Natural Bridge State Park, 1904

The sites Kinney chose that summer make him out to be a tourist drawn like so many others to the splendors of the Berkshires. Given the paucity of biographical evidence, this summer trip looms up curiously in the account of Kinney's life. No photographs survive from a few trips that Kinney took with his family in other years, known only from the titles on some decayed envelopes that have become separated from their glass plates. In 1922 the Kinneys took an "auto trip" to Kingston, Rhode Island, and to "Horseneck Beech." Horseneck Beach is in Westport on the southeast coast of Massachusetts. In 1925 they visited "Osable Chasm" (Ausable Chasm), a sandstone gorge in Keesville in the Adirondacks; it would have recalled to Kinney his excursion in 1904 to Natural Bridge. (His two misspellings are curious but so few

words survive from his hand that we don't know if these were characteristic.) The only other trip recorded on one of the deteriorated envelopes was in June 1926, "Auto from Washington IL." This small town was known chiefly for its Heyl Pony Farm, a nationally known breeder of Shetland ponies. Alas! Why on earth Kinney went there won't be known.

At Mount Holyoke in 1898 Kinney joined a distinguished department of botany. Mary Lyon herself had taught botany. Among her sustainers and mentors were Orra White and Edward Hitchcock, with whom she had lived just before founding the Seminary in 1837. Orra White had taught botanical science at Deerfield Academy and was a gifted botanical illustrator. She provided the logo for Mount Holyoke's diploma, and was a model for the seminary's women. Edward, professor at Amherst College, was an internationally known geologist and a theologian whose melding of science and religion—he lectured at the Seminary—was emulated by Lyon. His sons Edward and Charles later lectured often at the Seminary and were consultants for the school's natural sciences. Mount Holyoke developed a well-known department of botany, first led by Lyon's student Lydia M. Shattuck (1822-1889) and then by Henrietta Hooker (1851-1929), who taught from 1875 to 1908. Miriam Levin has observed that "the teachers still divided the labor with male lecturers . . . in the fields of chemistry, astronomy, physics, and geology—that is, the physical sciences most closely associated with industrial growth and national economy and traditionally with interpretations of natural law. [Women] retained the right to have charge of botany and physiology, those biological sciences most identified with laboratory work, the manipulation of living organisms, systematics, and evolutionary theory and least with economic and industrial interests. Those fields, at least botany, in these years were becoming feminized."¹⁰



Botany Faculty, 1908

A photograph taken in 1908 shows Kinney to the right of some members of the Botany Department. Fourth from the left is Henrietta Hooker, about to retire.¹¹ After her departure Kinney's most distinguished botanical colleague was Alma G. Stokey (1877- 1968), who taught from 1908 to

¹⁰ Miriam R. Levin, *Defining Women's Scientific Enterprise: Mount Holyoke Faculty and the Rise of American Science* (University Press of New England, 2005), p. 64.

¹¹ From the left: Ethel Jackson, Marion Weston, Mary Kennedy, Dr. Henriette Hooker, Sarah Agard. For this photograph Kinney is either hiding the cable release or he depended upon a colleague to take over his view camera. In pencil verso by Jean or Asa, the identifications and "Taken in front of our house on Park St. where we lived from 1903-1913."

1942; she published widely on ferns and was a pioneer scholar of the fern *Prothallia*. Mary E. Kennedy taught botany from 1906 to 1911, and Anna M. Starr from 1911 to 1927. Through most of these years, Sarah J. Agard (1858-1933) was associated with Kinney as curator of the Botanical Museum. At the college's Seventy-Fifth Pageant in 1912, Kinney represented the department by two charming human flowers: "*Botany & Physics*"; physics appears as a dual pine cone.



Botany & Physics, 1912

Before Kinney began teaching, men had given lectures in the physical sciences at the college, but he was the first male on regular faculty appointment. He began teaching a course in floriculture in the spring of 1899. For years he alternated a well attended beginners' course in plant culture with an advanced course in the following year. This had few students, probably because most of them regarded the beginners' course as a feeder to other science classes and didn't go on with botany. It also committed the students to a lot of time: two lectures and four hours in the lab each week. The course progressed from the stages of growth of plants through chemistry, pot culture, open ground culture and greenhouse work. It concluded with a "School Garden" for children, appropriate because many students went on to teach in elementary schools.¹² Kinney usually taught the most prominent plants such as mums, carnations, violets, and roses while giving lessons in propagation, grafting, diseases, cross-pollination and the making of new varieties. Much of this work was done in plant houses and college gardens, with some instruction in greenhouse construction and management. His other courses were in landscape gardening, which reviewed the history of "landscape architecture" (that is, landscape design) and the planting and care of trees and shrubs, as well as their "artistic arrangement" in public parks and on private estates. Surprisingly, his courses in landscape gardening did not count for required work in science, presumably because of its practical rather than scholarly nature.

From 1910 onward, Kinney's "Floriculture" became "Plant Culture." He was evidently fond of his classes, which he often gathered together for a photo.



Plant Culture Class, 1927

"*Plant Culture Class, 1927*" is one of these, the students arrayed under a symbolic rustic arbor. The catalogue description of his course stated that "The school garden is considered, also its use in nature study in the secondary schools, and each student is required to make and care for such a garden." This indicates that some graduates would apply for teaching positions in botany, in keeping with Mary Lyon's aim to send teachers and missionaries out into the world. "Landscape Gardening" changed to the more impressive "Landscape Architecture," but it still did not count as a course in the sciences. Until 1939, his final year of teaching, the description of his two kinds

¹² *Plant World*, vol. 8, no. 9, Sept. 1905. "Outline of a course in plant culture by Asa S. Kinney, M.S., Mt. Holyoke College."

of course remained virtually unchanged. His title was “instructor” until 1928 when he was named Assistant Professor. He was elevated to Associate Professor for his final year of teaching.



Williston Hall

In December 1917 a disaster struck the department and other sciences when Williston Hall was destroyed by fire. It had been a major feature of the north campus. Abby Howe Turner, professor of physiology, was among the first to enter the burning building.¹³ In a lively witness account, she wrote that many things from her office and Stokey’s were taken out, Miss Woolley herself assisting, but that nearly all of the building’s contents were destroyed. The most grievous loss was the fossil dinosaur, *Podokesaurus holyokensis*, unearthed in 1910 by Mignon Talbot, professor of geology, the first woman to name a non-avian dinosaur; she published it in 1911. Fortunately, complete casts had been taken and kept elsewhere. In *The Bryologist* Stokey wrote that the fire “destroyed the building in which the botanical department was located, all the collections and most of the botanical library were burned.”¹⁴ It was a shattering loss of its casts, fossils and natural science exhibits including Lucius Hyde’s stuffed birds (see below, “The antiquarian”). Stokey asked her readers for donations of “duplicate materials.”

Kinney’s role in the fire was recounted in Turner’s January typescript. “Mr. Kinney came [. . .] almost as soon as I did though we did not meet at once. He tried to get into the botany laboratory to save their microscopes” but the fire was too intensive. “He thought of Miss Talbot’s fossil, her famous dinosaur, but that was inaccessible to one man though two perhaps might have dashed up through the smoke and carried the heavy thing out. [. . .] there were men going into my laboratory windows! [. . .] The flames were rolling out of the windows above but the men under Mr. Kinney’s direction went in again and brought out 26 microscopes and two cases containing dissecting instruments, in all about \$1800 worth of apparatus [. . .].”

The day after the fire, Kinney made a wintertime view of its shattered body, *Williston Fire*. His photo calls up an early nineteenth century Romantic ruin. Given his devotion to the picturesque, he well might have been conscious of this. Turner was thinking that way because in an article three months after her January account, despite the trauma she had so graphically sketched, she wrote that “Williston was never more appealing than when its empty windows framed rosy clouds of steam and drifting smoke as the fire died down. The night mercifully covered the harshness of destruction while the clustered windows showed their dignity and grace of outline as never before.”¹⁵ Kinney also photographed Professor Talbot and her students searching for fragments of her famous fossil. *After the Williston Fire*

¹³ Abby Howe Turner, “Williston Hall Fire,” 4 pp. typescript of January 21, 1918 (B & G series 3, Williston Hall, box 106, folder 2). Hereafter “Turner Jan. 1918.”

¹⁴ Stokey, “Miscellaneous Notes” in *The Bryologist*, XXI, 1918, pp. 35-36.

¹⁵ Abby Howe Turner, “The Williston Hall Fire,” *Alumnae Quarterly*, II, April 1918, pp. 6-13.

is one of two posed photographs of this group at work, with Talbot in the left foreground; there are only slight differences in the two.



Williston Fire, 1917



After the Williston Fire

Throughout the years, the botanists made intensive use of the gardens and varied plantings on campus and in nearby South Hadley. Regular field trips to the woods, hills and meadows of the Pioneer Valley were built into courses. Mount Toby in Sunderland was particularly important because its east and west sides had very different patterns of growth. Kinney went on these outings and also accompanied students on Mountain Day trips. Closer to home, he had been given charge of campus plantings soon after his arrival at the college. Even before his first class he had applied the new art of tree surgery to a damaged horse chestnut, which for years was a landmark tree near Mary Lyon Hall. Among his duties was the supervision of the greenhouse and its planting laboratory where students worked under his direction. We know he had contacts with other botanical gardens because in the botany department files is a handwritten “exchange list number 2,” dated 1901, in which surplus seeds from the Clara Leigh Dwight Botanical Garden are offered for exchange.

A rare surviving example of his work is the magnificent copper beech which he planted in 1904 near the Dwight Art Memorial (now part of the college library). He also took on the implementation of the Olmsted firm’s 1900 plan for the campus and for years was responsible for the choices of plantings across the campus and in Goodnow Park on Prospect Hill. For the latter he inherited a supplemental nursery of shrubs and trees dating from the early 1880s. His colleague Stokey thought well of his “landscaping for concealment.”¹⁶ She mentioned the willow hedges he planted to hide townspeople’s chicken yards and barns between Brigham Hall and College Street, as well as elsewhere near the college. He did not have an entirely free hand,

¹⁶ Stokey 1939.

because Stokey wrote that he described the hedges “to his skeptical colleagues in faculty meeting.” This suggests that he regularly consulted the faculty about the placement of trees and bushes.

The Clara Leigh Dwight Botanical Garden fell under his care shortly after he began teaching; in 1905 he was formally appointed “Director of the Dwight Gardens.” These consisted of rectangular beds of plants grouped by families and used for instruction in botany. Some of Kinney’s photos show these early geometric gardens and some more natural areas, including the lily pond.



Lily Pond and Ferns, c. 1905



War Garden Spraying, 1917-18

In March, 1917, the college decided to establish a “war garden” on land south of the campus beyond Ashfield Lane. Manned by students (the National War Garden Commission was formed in March of that year), Kinney was made director and a man was hired to assist him. 400 students were assigned to work in the garden that spring, and three groups of twenty each, in the summer. The vegetables produced exceeded in value the money put into it, so it was a resounding success.¹⁷ Stokey described Kinney as “the hard-working and cheerful manager of the college farm and student farmers during the war; the vigorous manipulator of an inadequate

¹⁷ Mary Woolley, *Report of the President*, 1916-17.

machine for capping cans of corn, beans, and tomatoes grown on the war farm . . .”¹⁸ She herself was evoked by one of her students. “In 1917-18 she ably assisted Mr. Kinney in the War Garden, one of the first of its kind in women’s colleges. There were crops to cultivate and a cannery to operate but still she found time to organize picnics and walks for the ‘farmerettes’ in their off hours, and I remember her joining in the parodies we made up and sang to relieve the monotony of peeling tomatoes and capping cans.”¹⁹ “Farmerettes” was a widespread term in 1917-18 used also at Vassar and other women’s institutions for their war gardens.

Kinney mentioned and illustrated the war garden in the only public lecture among many he gave for which a good account exists. He spoke on plants on several occasions to local garden clubs, but this lecture was given before a Mount Holyoke audience. A Springfield paper in 1930 published a two-column account, “Girls’ Styles Change More Than Modesty.”²⁰ It was accompanied by two of Kinney’s photographs, “This is how the class dressed in 1907” and “Plant culture class of 1929 has changed its style of attire.”



Plant Culture Class, 1907



Plant Culture Class, 1929

The earlier shows ten women in skirts reaching to their feet, the later has seven women in skirts just covering their knees. The contrast is not only in fashion but in the greater degree of naturalism in the later photo. In 1907 the women’s full dresses and their sober demeanor give them a stiffness for the long moment required. In the 1929 photo, the group smiles warmly at their teacher, their arms are not in the rigid positions seen in the earlier photo, and their modern

¹⁸ Stokey 1939

¹⁹ Lenette Rogers Atkinson ’21, “In Memoriam, Alma Grace Stokey” *Alumnae Quarterly*, 52, 2, Summer 1968, pp. 87-88.

²⁰ *The Springfield Sunday Union and Republican*, May 18, 1930, p. 12.

clothing gives them an individuality that lacks in the nearly manikin sameness of the 1907 students.

These two were among the slides he projected of which there are hundreds preserved in the archives, some colored by hand by himself and perhaps also by his daughter or wife. The central purpose of the lecture was to deny that girls were less modest in 1930 than in 1900. “The average girl does not depart in any greater measure from standards today than did her predecessor of 1900, and she is just as much embarrassed to break with society’s dictates now as she was then, the chief difference lying in the fact that modesty ‘that used to begin with the ankle, now begins with the knee.’”

Knickers and bloomers were worn early in century by “pioneers,” but the students wore skirts over bloomers when they passed through the village to the war garden in the Button Field. Permission “to wear bloomers while working in the gardens had been a considerable concession and knickers were still banned.” Even in 1918, wearing knickers and bloomers “was a defiant break with sanctioned behavior, as a censored photograph of the first pair of knickers at Mount Holyoke College taken by Mr. Kinney in that year illustrates.” So daringness before 1930 show that “What had existed without comment has in recent years merely been taken notice of, giving it the misleading appearance of being a new trend.”

Kinney also projected slides in his 1930 lecture that showed comparable changes in faculty fashions. “A photograph of the botany department taken in 1908 pictures a group of primly attired young women in long skirts and shirtwaists, their hair piled high on the tops of their heads, standing quite solemnly in a row. The scene taken in 1930 is a fireplace about which the faculty are informally and amiably sipping tea, their sport clothes and general attitude of ease in harmony with this modern academic office . . .” The audience was pleased to see slides of seniors over the years as they left for the Commencement council on Mount Holyoke. The “old buggies, flourishing under trimmings of fringe, were in time succeeded by hay wagons, small carriages for two and four, lumbering busses, and now dapper ‘senior cars.’” Headgear changed as well, “the small sailor straws perched on the top of one’s head having given way slowly but surely to rakish bandannas and chic berets.” Also shown were “Mountain day hikers in varied and curious garb.”

Because Kinney’s 1930 lecture is so revealing, we have to regret that it’s the only one for which the content is known. In the academic year 1933-34, Stokey wrote in her department’s annual report, “Mr. Kinney has given several talks this year; one before the Holyoke Garden Club, one before the Gardener’s Club of the Massachusetts State College and one at the Alumnae College.”²¹ Occasional references in earlier years to his lectures makes it clear that he often made good use of his numerous lantern slides outside the classroom. These public supplements to his teaching were encouraged by his colleagues, for Stokey mentioned them in the context of the department’s vigorous opposition to the growing specialization of the college’s curriculum. In successive annual reports Stokey regretted that the expansion of required courses in science majors didn’t leave room for these students to add botany to their general culture. A parallel complaint was that students walked much less (“we make use of the village automobiles to convey the students to Moody Corners, the Gorge, and other places within range for a 2-period trip.”) so that the field trips which Kinney regularly accompanied and often photographed were much shortened. It was a great pity, Stokey continues, “that the movie is made a substitute for almost every kind of optional activity. It seems unfortunate that a country college with

²¹ Botany Department, Series B, Reports.

exceptional opportunities for the outdoor life has given up much of it and is trying to become a city college.”²² Nonetheless, by 1938 Botany had to accommodate the trend for more specialization by allowing “enterprising students” to pursue special topics for which Kinney and the gardener Daniel Connor had to face extra demands “for plant house material.”²³

Kinney’s customary work on college gardens took a turn in 1934 when the alumnae of that class established a fund to prepare the “Class of 1904 Garden.” In her memoir of Kinney, Stokey wrote that the new garden was “designed by Mr. Kinney and much of it planted with his own hands.” He met with President Woolley, members of the class, and Robert Sturtevant of the Groton School of Landscape Architecture. “Mr. Kinney undertook the work of laying out the new paths and flower beds. The shape of the garden is roughly oblong in four quarters divided by the main path leading from seat to pool and a cross axis. All paths except the one leading around the entire garden are of grass. The four grass plots of the garden are outlined in flower beds. There are also flower gardens filling in the space between the enclosing paths and the background planting.”²⁴ In her report for 1934-35, Stokey wrote that the new 1904 garden would be a “picking garden,” intended to be a “much more artistic garden” than the “equally useful one,” the Clara Leigh Dwight Garden. Usually the two gardens were grouped together as the Dwight Gardens. Laying out the Class of 1904 Garden in 1935-36 was Kinney’s last major contribution to the campus.

In 1935 there came one of the rare moments when national events impinged upon the college. On October 7, Kinney signed the “Oath of Allegiance” before a notary. It was required of all public and private school teachers in response to the rise of current political radicalism. Kinney signed, but there was widespread resistance to this controversial demand; two professors of Tufts University resigned in protest. The requirement was in force for three years, because Kinney’s departmental colleague Fredda D. Reed (1894-1988) signed it on April 15, 1937. It’s not known if others in the department signed, because personnel folders are all too often incomplete. And documents lack that could inform us of campus opinions and discussions of the oath.

By the mid-1930s, and probably years before then, Kinney was known as a source of stories about the college and South Hadley. Frances Lester Warner consulted him as she wrote *On a New England Campus* (Cambridge 1937). Her book is a very chatty and personal history of the college in which Kinney is quoted several times and more often credited with contributions in indirect discourse.²⁵ It was Kinney who introduced her to the daughter of the former owner of Button Field. He told her about campus plantings including descriptions of the gardens, and about his specialty of raising blue fringed gentians from seed. He also commented on his predecessor Lucius “Toot” Hyde who, with Levi Allen, had set out avenues of trees in the early years of the Seminary. Hyde whittled walking sticks for Mountain Day hikes by Miss Lyon’s students; perhaps Kinney told later students of this when he accompanied them on their hikes. A particularly charming story is recounted by Warner:

“Mr. Asa Kinney remembers a controversy on the subject of a small spring-fed pond that used to collect in a hollow between College Street and the place where the buildings of South Campus now stand. When the College decided to drain that pond and make a good lawn beside

²² Ibid., report for 1932-33.

²³ Ibid., report for 1937-38.

²⁴ An unsigned typescript apparently by Mrs. Herbert W. Cowan ’04, in Buildings and Grounds, Campus maps and plans, box 2.

²⁵ Kinney is quoted and referred to on pages 257-263.

the highway, Mr. Bates (locally known as ‘Posy’ Bates because of his gift with gardens) objected. He said there would always be a pond there no matter what the College might do Sure enough the pond did come back; ‘Although,’ remarked Mr. Kinney when he told me the story, ‘I unintentionally helped the Lord a little to bring it back. I planted a row of willow trees on South Campus to screen out Byron Smith’s barn which used to stand near the orchard, and the willow roots got into the place where we were draining the pond and choked it up. So the pond came back for a while. And Mr. Bates was quite delighted.’”

If only Warner had published her book two years later, we might have Kinney’s reaction to the hurricane of September 21, 1938 when it swept up from the south and devastated the campus. Kinney’s home on Woodbridge Street would have suffered also, and it’s a great regret that we don’t have his own account of the damage to college and village, nor of his work of remediation. His experience as director of college plantings would have given him a major role. With customary exactitude he reported that the college lost 1127 trees, 670 on Prospect Hill, 248 around Upper Lake, 121 in the “wooded section back of the President’s House and around Button Field” [Ashfield, Jewett and Pheasant lanes], and 88 on the main campus.²⁶ Kinney was interviewed by *The Mount Holyoke News* but he was not directly quoted.²⁷ He told them that no new trees would be planted until the landscape architect has been consulted. This proves that he didn’t have a free hand in the remediation planting although in other years he seems to have acted on his own. He also said that nearly 100 trees had been planted in the previous two or three years, so he didn’t expect new trees to be needed for some time; Prospect Hill had the greatest need.

Gardens and bushes were savagely mauled by the storm and a number of buildings damaged. Stokey’s departmental reports for 1938-39 and 1939-40 lamented the loss of trees on the campus and Prospect Hill, especially less common ones like the Kentucky Coffee Tree, Black Walnut, Butternut, and Honey Locust. She hoped that the department would be consulted about the replanting “of an interesting variety of trees, since the campus, upper lake woods and Prospect are much used by the department for field work.” Spring term courses by Kinney and others were troubled “because of the difficulty of finding suitable places which were available to the class in Local Flora. For the first time in my memory which extends to 1908 we were unable to visit Mt. Toby.” Much of Kinney’s work of nearly forty years was undone, and he spent the final year of his college position working on the clean-up and proposing new plantings.

If we have no comments by Kinney on this disaster, at least we have some photographs of it. In his archive are six mounted photographs of the hurricane’s aftermath in various sizes with labels carefully printed by hand as though to be displayed. They are unlikely to have been taken by Kinney because they lack the customary care he exercised in framing his scenes. None represent the college. They represent “Holyoke Dam,” “At Old Hadley,” and other nearby banks of the river, all additionally marked in pencil “Hurricane & Flood Damage, Sept. 21, 1938.” Kinney also kept photographs of the Connecticut River in flood in March, 1936, when the whole northeast of the country suffered from the consequences of catastrophic rains. Seven photos are mounted like those of the 1938 hurricane, also carefully labeled: “Ice jam, Mt. Tom Junction,”

²⁶ *Alumnae Quarterly* 22, Nov. 1938, p 175. Detailed descriptions of hurricane damage were published in *The Mount Holyoke News*, Sept. 23 and 30, and October 7, 1938.

²⁷ “Mr. Kinney Reminisces on Tree Histories, Interesting Sidelights of College Past,” *The Mount Holyoke News*, Sept. 30, 1938, pp. 3-4.

“River at level of bridge Holyoke-Hadley Falls,” etc., and in pencil “Flood March 1936.” Probably these two sets of photos were exhibited in some town event.

In anticipation of his retirement at the end of the school year 1938-39 Kinney was promoted to Associate Professor. The class of 1939 dedicated their yearbook *Llamarada* to him. “‘Work is love made visible.’ To him whose appreciation of beautiful and growing things, whose years of vision and care have cultivated a campus of beauty, we dedicate the 1939 *Llamarada*.” In his reply to the class (his only surviving manuscript letter) he said “if I have succeeded in making the campus a little more beautiful and attractive to those who have attended the College I shall feel repaid for my labors.”

In August of that year, Alma Stokey published a testimonial to Kinney which is the only substantial account of his career, fortunately by someone who knew him intimately.²⁸ She repeated many of the comments in her recent departmental report, but more closely characterized his work over the years. “In his earlier years Mr. Kinney’s work consisted partly in landscaping for concealment. The willows which were so long a border of the ‘Rocky chute’ were the remains of a hedge which partially concealed the barns and chicken yards of the houses along College Street in front of Brigham and to the south where Skinner Hall now stands. Another clump of the same ‘quick-growing willows’ . . . not only screened the old Byron Smith barn from Rockefeller Hall, but remained a delight to the eye until they were uprooted in the hurricane of 1938.” Stokey is the only contemporary who acknowledged Kinney’s photography. He was, she wrote, “an unofficial college photographer preserving records of all aspects of college life and in recent years taking the individual pictures of all freshmen.”

Stokey lamented the end of Kinney’s contributions to the college, and worried “that just at the time when the hurricane has made so many problems in connection with the care of trees and planting that the campus should be turned over to an inexperienced man [. . .]. We have never been in greater need of his training, experience and real spirit of devotion to the campus. We regret, too, the omission even for a year of the courses in Landscape Architecture and Plant Culture [. . .]. There is a steady demand for these courses which represent the practical applications of plant study best suited to a college of liberal arts.” In this latter phrase we’re reminded of Stokey’s worries about what she regarded as the over-specialization of the sciences. She also feared that Kinney’s replacement wouldn’t have his zeal for working even “late hours and Saturday afternoons when the pressure was greatest.” At least he was going to keep up “experimental work in germination of native orchids and hydroponics. He is also planning to put in shape a wood collection of his own which is to be given to the college, and to prepare the wood specimens made fresh from hurricane timber.”²⁹

Stokey’s memoir also offers glimpses into Kinney’s life that are unique. In a few words she told about the many activities that engaged him apart from his teaching. He was “an actor in many faculty plays doubling and tripling in parts when men on the faculty were scarce, or even quadrupling or quintupling as a prom man in the famous ‘Jennie Junior’ of 1909; a distinguished reincarnation of the Reverend John Woodbridge in the bicentenary pageant of the village church in 1033; [. . .] a visitor at auctions picking up bits of cloisonné or a bargain in black walnut;³⁰ an adviser to collectors on how to repair a clock or polish old furniture; an unofficial adviser to

²⁸ Stokey 1939.

²⁹ No such collection or wood specimens have been found.

³⁰ Among miscellaneous boxes in the college’s Kinney archive are about thirty unlabeled plaster molds for casting medallions in bronze, a heterodox mix of heads of famous statesmen and of antique and Renaissance relief sculptures.

students in multifarious problems such as how to cure the skin of a black cat before making it into a cap; an adviser to all amateur gardeners of the community telling them when and how to transplant seedlings, what kind of spray to use, what kind of Phlox to order, or how to plant an asparagus bed” How we wish that others had also written about Kinney’s daily life! We can add to Stokey’s account the fact that Kinney raised bees (see the two photographs below) and gave honey to friends and neighbors. Otherwise his biography lacks anything like the warm human detail of Stokey’s homage.

To learn from this paragraph that Kinney was something of a ham actor helps us envision a life beyond the classroom, the greenhouse and the garden. He took roles among his peers in faculty plays and took the stage in student productions, so he was far from the image of an aloof teacher. Perhaps he put himself forward as the town father in the bicentennial in 1933, or maybe he was courted for that role by fellow citizens who knew about his thespian performances at the college. It’s no surprise that he gave advice and lectures on gardening to South Hadley and Holyoke, but it’s only from this paragraph by Stokey that we know he shared his knowledge as an antiquarian, story teller, and hands-on craftsman with townspeople and the college community. He mingled with students on Mountain Day and field trips, and even gave them lessons in making a cap from the skin of a cat.³¹



Mountain Day, 1922

From Kinney’s teaching, students learned much and they now “refrain from indulgence in unmotivated rock gardens.” He was “an energetic guide and companion on Mountain Day trips,” missing only one time. Occasionally he took photos of the students enjoying an outing: “*Mountain Day, 1922.*” Over a small fire students are roasting what appear to be nuts; one is drinking from a metal cup.

³¹ The former Pump House was used for vivisection hence it was known as the “Cat House.”



Kinney, Jean and Elizabeth, 1941

In 1939, aged sixty-six, Kinney gave up his faculty position. He is shown alongside Jean and Elizabeth in 1941 in a photo taken by an unknown acquaintance that he copied. It's a relaxed view; Asa is smiling contentedly. The Botany department had given him a party in the Class of 1904 Garden upon his retirement, attended by friends from the college and from Smith and Massachusetts State Colleges. He said then that he and his wife were "planning a motor trip to the west and expect to visit several national parks."³² He didn't go into an entirely quiet retirement. In 1942 he contributed several photographs to a Springfield newspaper, two of them credited to him, a very rare public reference to his work.³³ It was a piece on Mount Holyoke's students at the time of the Civil War, the First World War, and the ongoing war. From 1941 to 1945 Kinney regularly assisted courses on gardening. He also gave lectures on vegetable gardening for students, faculty and the public, covering soils, vegetable varieties, sites and garden plans, diseases and controls. A few of these are mentioned in college press releases. In March to April 1943 he gave public lectures in the evenings on all aspects of vegetable gardening, and on March 13, 1944, he spoke on bees for South Hadley Grange. He maintained his devotion to the history of South Hadley and its homes, a life-long preoccupation that he shared with his wife.

Kinney lost his wife Jean Tucker Kinney, aged seventy-three, on January 23, 1952, a month before their 49th wedding anniversary. Her obituaries give an idea of her solid presence in the community. "Long active in Women's club work in South Hadley, Mrs. Kinney was a past regent of Dolly Woodbridge Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, a member of the First Congregational church of South Hadley and the Woman's Guild of that church. She also held membership in the King's Daughters of the Woman's club and the Holyoke Garden Club."³⁴ (With these words we can conjure up the couple as a New England version of Grant Wood's *American Gothic*.) We can imagine Kinney's mourning after their long lives together, but no accounts by him or his two children have been found.

³² *The Mount Holyoke News*, June 12, 1939, p. 2.

³³ "Even in Civil War days, college students did the part, and pins helped," *Springfield Sunday Union and Republican*, June 7, 1942, p. 2E.

³⁴ *Holyoke Transcript-Telegram*, Jan. 24, 1952.

Two years after Jean Kinney's death, neighbors and fellow teachers Sarah and Rogers Rusk interviewed Kinney but no mention is made of her.³⁵ It's the only known interview with him but regrettably the Rusks didn't ask him about his teaching nor indeed about his intellectual life or that of the institution, nor about his photography. It's exasperating that their fifteen-page typescript reveals all too little, but at least it's well flavored by Kinney's stories about the college. His memory of earlier days had been steadily bolstered by years of writing out extracts from publications about college and town, and by several pages where he recorded the chronology of Mount Holyoke from its origins with Mary Lyon. (See below, "The antiquarian.")

The Rusks asked questions that mostly resulted in chatty anecdotes such as the first teacher to smoke a cigar on campus and the "revolutionary girl" around 1901 or 1902 who tossed her forbidden cigarette box out of her window. We learn that at first Kinney lived "at the other end of town," but before 1910 he bought three acres from Miss Hooker on Woodbridge St. at the juncture with Park St. This property included no. 68, the Rusk's house, and his own no. 70. He sold a piece of his land, but then bought an adjacent property and fixed up its house for rent. It's not known where he found the money for these transactions. His salary surely would not have sufficed, so perhaps his father provided funds; he was a widower when his second wife died in 1906.

To the history of the college and grounds, Kinney told the Rusks a few things that are otherwise unknown or only known incompletely. Drinking water for the campus was initially supplied by the springs on Prospect Hill, "known as Peak's Hill in olden times," that are outlined in the 1882 plan for Goodnow Park. At some point before the 1896 fire, it was supplied by an artesian well that was across the road from Safford Hall, near the Grove. The well was still there at the time of the interview but long since had been supplanted by the public water supply. After the great fire, in keeping with the determined spirit of Mary Lyon, the students were housed in nearby village homes, "and they went right on with college exercises — there wasn't much interruption."

Kinney's involvement with the college gardens is laid out in several responses to the Rusks. The naming of the Clara Leigh Dwight Gardens came about this way: He and Miss Hooker schemed to get \$10,000 from John Dwight for a greenhouse ("It was sort of a scheme to get some money out of John Dwight, sort of my plan"), but when she visited Dwight in New York, he offered instead to give money for a building. This became the Dwight Art Memorial, built in 1902 on the site of the Dwight homestead (moved down the street as Everett House). As a response to his generosity, Kinney and Hooker named the botanical garden after his late wife, whose love of botany had engaged his interest in the garden. Years later, just before his retirement, Kinney became involved in the "Class of 1904 Garden," being planned for their 35th reunion. The class officers

wanted to give the college a picking garden where they could go and pick flowers, and we had all that big garden space as a botanical garden, so I suggested to them that instead of a picking garden they make it into a formal garden since we had [none]. So I presented this plan to them and they fell in with it.

A part of the Clara Leigh Dwight Garden was used for the "Class of 1904 Garden," but after the art building was erected in 1971, only the northern part of this 1904 garden was retained.

³⁵ Rusk 1954.

In June 1956, two years after the interview with the Rusks, Kinney attended the sixtieth reunion of his class of the Massachusetts Agricultural College class [University of Massachusetts]. Perhaps he had maintained contact with his classmates, but nothing can be found of this. Five years later he died on March 2, 1961, aged eighty-seven. His obituaries pointed especially to his campus plantings. “Professor Kinney’s genius at harmonizing landscaping with natural contours of the land is richly evident on the campus today. The ‘treeing’ of the Mount Holyoke campus was Prof. Kinney’s work.”³⁶ Another commentator added that “He knew the ways and value of bees and supplied his neighbors with honey as a happy side-line. He was one of the relatively few men who knew the secret of growing fringed gentians and supplied them to Senator George S. Aiken of Vermont when the latter was in the wholesale garden production at his Putney, Vt. Farm.”³⁷

Kinney’s family

Kinney’s devotion to the college did not mean that he neglected his own family. Over the years he made portraits of his wife and their two children, as well as rendering their houses and the well-managed grounds of their homes. His family portraits are of two kinds. Some are casual shots taken as trials or studies, and others are carefully managed compositions. Several of the former have Elizabeth (born 1904) or Foster (born 1908) standing in front of cloth sheets pinned roughly to walls.



Asa Foster Kinney, c. 1910

The very charming *Asa Foster Kinney*, c. 1910, is one of these studies. More formal is a handsome picture of his wife Jean holding infant baby Foster while Elizabeth looks on somewhat sternly (jealous perhaps?) with arms akimbo. They’re posed before a three-paneled textured

³⁶ *Springfield Republican*, March 3, 1961.

³⁷ *Holyoke Transcript-Telegram*, March 6, 1961. Aiken (1892-1984) was governor of Vermont and then U. S. senator from 1941 to 1975.

screen or wall, with strong light coming from the left to create sculptural shadows. After that date, photos of Jean are infrequent but there are many of the two children together and singly.



Jean Kinney and Children, 1908



Asa and Elizabeth before the Fireplace, c. 1912

In one of about 1912, *Asa and Elizabeth before the Fireplace*, they sit reading books. Light comes strongly from a window behind them to pick out their clothing and the edges of their open books, but the rest of the room is in subdued greys except for the light sparking off brass andirons and lamp. To limit the light source, Kinney lowered the shade of the window on the rear wall.

In addition to portraits of the family, Kinney also took scenes from daily life. Especially charming are pictures of the two children by the family's bee hives, shortly after they moved to 74 Woodbridge Street. In one, five- or six-year old Foster grins toward his father's camera from underneath a bee keeper's netted hat; he holds a smoker. In another, after the smoker has done its work, he's scraping a honeycomb he's removed, while Elizabeth looks on, similarly protected. With her hands clasped below her waist, she gives the impression of not being engaged by the operation.



Foster Caring for Bees, c. 1913



Foster and Elizabeth at the Beehives c. 1913



Cat and Goldfish

In some photographs of the household Kinney took time to make artfully composed images. In *Cat and Goldfish*, the cat, silhouetted against broad folds of a curtain, peers down at a goldfish bowl. The light comes toward us from a window whose outdoors objects are veiled in a vaporous bright grey: pure light without objects. It illuminates only a third of the room which is otherwise so dark that it's difficult to pick out its furnishings. Thanks to contrast, it renders glass bowl and water as tactile translucent receptacles. They mesmerize the cat who stretches atop a

bureau whose black mass is impenetrable except for a thin line below the animal's belly and the dim reflection of two drawer knobs. It's hard to resist giving the picture a familiar cat-and-fish legend. We also see that Kinney was intent upon creating a beautiful image. Less pretty but more informative is a picture of the whole family taken at Christmastime, 1922. It has a formal, almost frozen aspect because Kinney—his left hand disguises his cable release—has called the family to strike a pose.



The Kinney Family, Christmas 1922

The antiquarian

When the Rusks interviewed Kinney in 1954 they knew that he was full of anecdotes about the college and the town, and he readily responded to their promptings, just as he had to Frances Warner in 1937. He had made himself familiar with the college's history from before 1898, reading books and learning much from old timers, especially from Lucius Hyde, an elderly handyman for the college who had planted trees including the memorial "Grove," and the avenues of rock maples which led down to Stony Brook. He was a self-taught naturalist whose skills as a taxidermist were embodied in a collection of birds of prey that he caught and stuffed; they were lost in the fire that destroyed Williston Hall in 1917 (see above). Kinney benefitted from his knowledge on walks with him in nearby woods. Hyde also accompanied classes on field trips.

Kinney also told the Rusks about Byron Smith, from whom the Seminary bought Prospect Hill and later other portions of his nearby farm. Smith's father Erastus once owned "The

Sycamores” on Woodbridge St. but sold it because it couldn’t be sufficiently heated in winter. As a boy Byron had worked for Mary Lyon and later was a conspicuous friend of the institution. “He had a nice span of horses and he used to take the college girls out for rides [. . .].” He regularly led the Senior Promenade, the annual walk to the church for Commencement Day, heading the procession with a gold-headed cane used exclusively for this occasion. The Promenade, Kinney told the Rusks, was then a stately walk. There was no dancing either at the Senior Prom which was another promenade. When Miss Woolley came, dancing was permitted “but each year they had to petition the faculty to find out if they could dance at their senior prom—nothing was taken for granted.”

Kinney spoke familiarly about John Dwight, one of the best known patrons of the college who, as we saw, provided the money for the Dwight Art Memorial. His father was the town doctor whose lab the son used to formulate a baking soda, the Cow Brand, whose box featured a picture of Mount Holyoke. Established in New York, the business prospered and became Arm & Hammer Baking Soda. Kinney told the Rusks that eventually Dwight owned Mount Holyoke

and they ran the hotel up there, and he used to come up all summer and lived up there in the Mount Holyoke House for a number of years. When I came I got acquainted with him by his coming down to the college for his morning drive. He had this sort of coach and a span of black horses and a coachman and they used to drive down from the mountain every day that it was fair and visit the garden and the college.

Although the Rusks’ interview gives a good idea of Kinney’s absorption in the history of the college, the principal evidence for his antiquarianism is found in the many documents held in the Gaylord Memorial Library, presumably donated by Elizabeth Kinney Worley in 1962, when she gave the college Kinney’s glass plates and lantern slides. Although there are literally hundreds of these documents in the Gaylord, many in Kinney’s hand, none of them are reflections upon his life and thoughts. They are so varied, however, that they give us a good idea of his life-long devotion to the history of college and town. For South Hadley as distinct from the college, his voluminous notes, if organized into a coherent chronological story, would make him the premier historian of the town’s houses through several generations of owners.

Among the documents is a handwritten sourcebook, 10 x 8 in. It has about ninety pages of scattered excerpts from published articles and books, many from Stow’s 1887 history of the college and Eastman’s 1912 history of South Hadley.³⁸ (Another lengthy set of notes is in the college archives, extracts from “Historical Address by R. O. Dwight, Esq., the Story of South Hadley’s one hundred and fifty years.”) These various notes list several nineteenth-century owners of properties bought by the college. The most interesting of these are about the mills near the falls along Park Street, buildings that the college eventually tore down. Kinney’s large hand, mostly in pencil, covers these pages except for occasional marginal notes and quotes in another hand, probably his wife’s. A photograph of three women was thrust in the sourcebook, identified as “Ann Elliott’s house, Park Street. Miss Talbot. Elizabeth Kinney in canoe.”

Another large document is a forty-one page typescript with an amateurish cover made of thick paper bearing a small seascape chromo, and a handwritten title, “South Hadley / Jean

³⁸ Another lengthy set of notes is in the college archives, extracts from “Historical Address by R. O. Dwight, Esq., the Story of South Hadley’s one hundred and fifty years.” The original of this address of 1903 has not yet been found.

Tucker Kinney.” This is a competently written chronological history of the village, neatly composed with introduction and conclusion. It begins with prehistory, principally the evidence of dinosaur footprints, then briefly deals with native American inhabitants, the founding of South Hadley in 1732, and then more fully with the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Major events and people are introduced, local industries and commerce are described, and the history of Mount Holyoke seminary and college is summarized. Notable houses take their places, more so than in Mrs. Kinney’s principal sources, the books by Stow and Eastman.

Upon reading this typescript, we deduce that many of the scrappy notes in Kinney’s sourcebook were taken with this little history in the minds of both husband and wife. We’ll never know the extent of their collaboration, but the mass of Kinney’s handwritten notes gives him the priority, and it’s likely that his wife deferred to him. They shared a passion for local history, and both contributed to miscellaneous notes on a chronology of Mount Holyoke. Kinney wrote out nine pages on the Seminary’s and College’s key events and persons, and there is an eight-page typed chronology of the institution’s history from 1834 to 1936. Also among these many papers is a sheet torn from the 1943 commencement program with a chronology from 1834 to 1943. These several chronologies provide much more detail than is found in the published history of the college by Anne Carey Edmonds.³⁹

More than half of all of Kinney’s notes in the Gaylord deal with individual houses and their owners that he wrote on sheets of different sizes and in one case, on deposit slips of the Springfield Safe Deposit & Trust Co. Obviously he used whatever paper was at hand when he was jotting down his findings. His searches took him back to the colonial era. He used both sides of seventeen 8^{1/2} x 6^{3/4} in. sheets to write about “Colonial Homes of our Town.” From this era is an original receipt dated November 1775. It’s deteriorated and almost illegible, but one can read “Received of Col. Ruggles Woodbridge . . .” Most of Kinney’s jottings are about nineteenth- and early twentieth-century houses. Among them are two 8 x 11 sheets with his notes from the town’s deed book on grantors of individual lots from 1824 to 1916, and several pages of the same size devoted to locally renowned homes and buildings such as the Sycamores, the “Divine House” and the William Gaylord home on College St. Some of Kinney’s annotations are devoted to public structures, including the Croysdale Inn and the Bookshop Inn. He also kept clippings from newspapers and articles on several houses and on Mount Holyoke and its Cable Railroad. Occasionally photographs are sprinkled among these clippings and notes.

A puzzling but important portion of the Gaylord’s documents consists of nearly 100 folders of individual South Hadley houses, named for their successive owners and sorted by street addresses. Fifteen are from his view camera, mounted with photo corners on heavy three-ring sheets of paper, and bearing labels and occasional remarks in his hand. The rest are rather small. Some are possibly reductions of view camera photos, but most seem to be snapshots. A few of the latter are identified in ink in the margins, and several are noted “1975” in pencil. What seems to have happened is this: The town was preparing a folding calendar for the bicentennial of 1976, “Know Your Town Historic Houses.” There’s a typed excerpt of a letter from Elizabeth Worley Kinney saying that she was glad to have helped the publication. It would appear, then, that she sent the calendar committee some of her father’s photographs and that others supplemented these by the snapshots. However, Kinney surely had an ordinary camera and might have taken many of the small photos. The whole collection of the town’s houses is obviously beholden to Kinney and his wife. Along with his glass plates and lantern slides in Mount Holyoke’s archives, the Gaylord

³⁹ *A Memory Book. Mount Holyoke College 1837-1987.*

collection adds up to a singular contribution to town and college. Anyone concerned with the history of South Hadley homes would find the documents and photos an indispensable source.

Part two: The photographer



Kinney's Worcester Family, c. 1896

The vast number of Kinney's photographs is an exhilarating bounty but it's more than a little frustrating when it comes to discussing them. How to choose a reasonable number to discuss while being fair to the whole archive? So few are reliably dated that there's no hope of using chronology as an organizing scheme. His technique showed no evolution of early, middle and late that could have given stylistic sequences and approximate dates. Moreover, his subjects are so varied that there's no satisfactory set of categories that offers a logical way of sorting them. As a consequence, I've simply divided them arbitrarily into groups that loosely cohere and that seem to me to evoke the college's culture and its physical setting in the first three and a half decades of the twentieth century. Another person would probably include many of the photos I've chosen but in different configurations and with different exemplars. I nonetheless believe that my choices will form an attractive sampling that fairly characterizes this abundant treasury of images.

Before he came to Mount Holyoke Kinney already had a view camera. In a photo of his large Worcester family taken about 1896 he holds his camera's cable release in his hand. In his first month at the college, June, 1898, he made a photo of the Glee Club, and a year later dated

another of the club.⁴⁰ So from the beginning, he made photography an integral part of his life at the college. Shortly after he began teaching, he captured college buildings and landscapes with his tripod and camera, revealing his ambition to enter the commercial and public realm. He began publishing postcards of picturesque views of Stony Brook and its bridges, of Prospect Hill and its Goodnow Park, and of college gardens and buildings.⁴¹ Given his work on gardens, it's not surprising that he produced postcards entitled "Lily Pond," "Dwight Botanical Garden," "Clara Leigh Dwight Garden," and the like, each with the legend "Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Mass."



Dwight Gardens Postcard, c. 1905

The market for his cards would have included undergraduates, faculty and staff, alumni (whose numerous cards are in the archives), townspeople, and visitors, but sales at the college and local stores must have been modest. They were printed by "Excelsior, Germany," but there's no way of knowing Kinney's costs nor his revenue. Some postmarked copies give dates when the cards were sent, but not when they were first made available. They seem to have been issued from about 1903 or 1904, and continued until about 1920.

More ambitious than postcards—his printed name on them was inconspicuous—was a twenty-two page booklet he published in 1904, *Views of Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts, U.S.A.*, by Asa Stephen Kinney, M.S., printed by F. A. Bassette, Springfield. It has a frontispiece photo of Mary Woolley that gives the little book the college's quasi imprimatur. It must have been greeted with some enthusiasm because he issued it again the next year. The Library of Congress listed the deposit of the book for copyright on December 1, 1905. As with his postcards, it's not known what his costs were nor his sales. His introduction is a brief history of the institution in which he reports there were 709 undergraduates, eighty-two teachers and 262 courses not counting music. In both editions he reproduced more than a dozen of the college's principal buildings as well as a like number of landscapes of the campus and Goodnow Park. There were differences, however. The first edition has a cluttered student room and a batch of students around a chafing dish. Neither of these were repeated in 1905, nor were three views of students working in laboratories. Most of the same buildings were included, but Safford and

⁴⁰ Two mounted photographs labeled by Kinney, in a folio folder in the archives: 90/91-54.1, Asa Kinney, H-5.

⁴¹ Several postcards returned by alumnae are dated 1905, but these and others were presumably made earlier.

Williston halls were no longer seen closely. They are further back with trees and bushes covering much of the structures for decidedly picturesque effects. The net result was to put forth a more sober and monumental school.

The booklet probably sold well enough to encourage Kinney in 1909 to put out a revised edition. Its plates are a little less sharp, a little “plugged in” as printmakers say when softly graduated grey values give way to more dark and light contrasts. Some photos of the 1905 edition were omitted to make room for new ones. Left out were two pictures of campus life, a rendering of “Sophomore Play, ‘Fanchon the Cricket’”⁴² and “May Day, Winding the Maypole.” Lacking these, the 1909 volume presents the campus as a collection of timeless edifices. It’s a far cry from the way we think of college photos nowadays, in which people animate the grounds to emphasize sociability and access. Determined to keep up-to-date, Kinney showed in this edition that the college had just embarked on a new building campaign. He added photos of the president’s house erected in 1908, Judson Hall, newly remodeled and named the same year, and two new structures opened in 1909, Pratt Memorial Music Hall and Peterson’s Lodge (see below “Buildings and campus views”).

Altogether the published album supplies a quite complete pictorial account of the college, its buildings and its grounds. The booklet had the same title and printer as the first two editions, and a similar paper cover sewn with a cord. There is a different frontispiece photo of Miss Woolley, this one by “Van Normal Studios.” The title page of the earlier edition listed Kinney as Instructor in Botany, but now he is also “Director Botanical Garden.” The two-page “Historical Sketch” of the college in the earlier publication was brought up to date. The students had grown from 709 to 748, the faculty from 82 to 90, and the courses (excluding music) from 262 to 269. Kinney had the type reset and his photos were proportionately enlarged. In 1912 Kinney made a fourth edition, but this one was not printed professionally like the others. It has the appearance of a custom made booklet, holding only twelve tipped-in plates (compared to forty-two in 1909), each on the right with a paragraph on the facing page. The introduction has been enlarged to proclaim the forthcoming 75th anniversary and to make a plea for money to fund it.

Portraits and groups

Kinney made relatively few portraits of individuals, compared with hundreds of photographs of groups of students. He posed the president rather stiffly in *Miss Woolley with Flowers*. She smiles but has a rather formidable presence; she was probably glad that her more official portraits were taken by others. However, Kinney made several more relaxed photos of her with her collies, like *Miss Woolley with her Collies*.

⁴² The play was based on George Sand’s *La petite fadette*. In 1915 a film of the same name and source was produced starring Mary Pickford.



Miss Woolley, c. 1920-25



Miss Woolley with her Collies

Kinney occasionally made portraits on special occasions, among them “*Miss Eleanor Hartshorn '72*”, celebrated as the oldest alumna at the 1932 reunion, but such portraits were rare. Somewhat more frequent, but still not commonly found, were portraits of college and South Hadley people. At least once (and probably several times), a college person prevailed on him for a passport photo. The 5 x 7 portrait “*Miss Elting 1932: Passport Picture*” would have been cut to suit the format of the government document.



Eleanor Hartshorn, 1932



Miss Elting, 1932

Most of Kinney's portraits from his first years at the college onward are of groups of students, gathered in clubs, sports, theater and rituals like May Day (see below, "Rituals and Theater"). His technique did not vary much over the years, but he gradually took advantage of faster equipment to make images that are less formally posed. This change is very obvious in sports. Eight women are playing basketball or practicing in the gym in *Basketball, 1902*. He has frozen them in barely believable postures but by the 1920s, his photos of teams, like *Archery, 1922*, have more active poses although the athletes are lined up and suspend their gestures.



Basketball 1902



Archery, 1922



Senior Volleyball Team, 1921



Hiking 1930s: Press Club

Far more numerous are simple line-ups like “*Senior Volleyball Team, 1921.*” Indeed, Kinney took about 150 such photos of sophomore, junior and senior sports teams, solemnly facing his camera with only an occasional smile. We can assume that he made copies for the students to have for themselves and to post in the locker room. It’s possible that the college asked for these photos, but no sign of this has yet surfaced. Kinney did not take stop-action photos, so typical of his hesitant approach to motion is a photo of 1930, “*Hiking 1930s: Press Club,*” where three women walk up a slope, pausing in stride to look at the camera. Kinney often accompanied students on outings, and perhaps thought that this photo would be useful publicity for the press club.



Upperclass Play Day Band 1921

Many of Kinney's groups lack full identification although we know something of why they were gathered together. Fifteen musicians in marching order formed "*The Upperclass Play Day Band, 1921*," but what was the significance of their costumes and conical hats? The frontal row of "*The Junior Show of the 13th Amendment Class of 1913*" hold books which probably refer to the abolition of slavery in 1865, but what's the significance of their identical costumes? Why are they squatting down, and why are the others standing? The latter four are dressed mostly in black (three of them hold ice skates over their shoulders). Did Kinney pose these students because they gave him a pictorial black-and-white contrast, or did they recapitulate a portion of the Junior Show? He had choices of what to photograph from campus activities and perhaps was drawn to those that offered attractive contrasts.



Junior Show, 1913



YWCA Convention, 1922

In 1922 he took eleven women of post-student ages by an athletic field; one holds a bat, another a softball: "*YWCA Convention, 1922*." Most of them have puckered and buffoonish faces. Was this spoof their initiative, or did Kinney take delight in them and prompt their clowning? More soberly as a loyal son of New England, he photographed groups of students at commencement who came from Providence, the Berkshires, and nearby Worcester, his own home town.



Worcester Seniors I, 1922

Worcester Seniors I, 1922 line up solemnly, not so differently from those in earlier years. The same young women now in ordinary dress are more relaxed in a second photo: *Worcester Seniors, II, 1922*. Maybe they wanted to get away from the usual stiff poses in graduation garb, or maybe Kinney suggested an informal presentation.



Worcester Seniors II, 1922

Our reactions are very different when we look at dozens of curious bust portraits. Kinney stationed pairs of students against a cloth background or a plain wall. These were not intended as careful studies of individuals but as an economical way of recording members of a class. Cutting the dual photos in two would have allowed each woman to have her own picture, or they could be pasted separately in an album or college record.



Mary Reynolds '22 & Helen Gay '22



Effie Holabird '22 & Marjorie Smith '22

There are about a hundred of these double photos of students from the classes of 1921 to 1924. They're endlessly fascinating! "*Mary Reynolds '22 and Helen Gay '22*," taken in their senior year, have the bobbed hair that was a hallmark of the postwar years. The women in these double views are self-conscious. Some shyly smile but most have calm expressions, like "*Effie Holabird '22 and Marjorie Smith '22*." No two women look alike and yet there's a mechanical sameness when one looks at several double portraits consecutively. They have the same environment, an abstraction that removes them from daily life into a curious pictorial world. They're not like work by Diane Arbus or Auguste Sander, yet we think of those artists because each of Kinney's paired women has a definite individuality that looms out of the anonymity of their serial presence. These odd juxtapositions of the individual and the mechanical are not carried over to photographs of pairs of students in full length, posing on campus. Although "*Helen Hickman '21 and Helen Whitaker '21*" stand and stare stiffly with no communication between them, and hence have an effigy-like appearance, their full dress and the landscape setting gives them a presence lacking in the pairs of bust portraits. Nonetheless, they lack personhood, and Kinney keeps his distance.



Helen Hickman '21 & Helen Whitaker '21

Rituals and theater

Kinney photographed plays and outdoor campus rituals so often that they form the largest category of his pictures of the college. They had the attraction of quasi-public events, more lively subjects for a photographer than line-ups of athletes or club members. Of course he filmed Commencement ceremonies, including the “laurel parade,” and such common activity as the choir filing in or out of the chapel, and the annual Tree Day on the downhill slope of Prospect Hill: “*Tree Day 1920.*”



Tree Day 1920

There's nothing of note in these routine photographs, but May Day activities were rites that Kinney responded to creatively throughout his college years. Until Prospect Hill was largely wooded over, the day was often celebrated up at the crest near the Pepper Box (the last was held there in 1918). In 1902 Kinney photographed a large crowd watching the onset of the winding of the Maypole near the Pepper Box, *May Day 1902, Winding the Maypole*. Outdoor theater was a regular feature of May Days. In 1905, for example, a carriage of dancers mounted the hill for a Maypole dance followed by the sophomore play. On other May Days the celebrations took place on a downhill slope's natural amphitheater until growing bushes and trees closed down the spaces.



May Day 1902



May Day 1920



May Day 1920, Noah's Flood

Kinney paid unusual attention to May Day 1920 by turning his camera toward several of the day's events. On Stony Brook he photographed a crowd standing on the bridge that led to Cowles Lodge, looking down upon a homemade boat holding a bevy of costumed women, *May Day 1920*.⁴³ Below the crowd on the bridge is a woman high up on a ladder who appears to be speaking from a book; further off is a painted theater drop. Kinney also photographed a close view: "*May Day 1920, Noah's Flood*." May Days were always ambitious. *Noah's Flood* was one of three Elizabethan plays in 1920 that celebrated "an old English May Day." The other two were the *Oxfordshire St. George* play,⁴⁴ and Jonson's masque, *Lovers Made Men*. "After the little plays, the Freshmen will do the Maypole dances and the queen will be presented." The queen's "necessary virtues" were blonde hair, beauty and grace; she had to be a senior. Further on this busy day, "*Robin Hood* will be sung and acted on the pageant ground. Seventy-five milkmaids, and villagers and tinkers and archers are going to dance around Robin and Maid Marion."⁴⁵ As if this were not enough, there was also the "May Day Play," *Cyrano de Bergerac*, produced and directed by Miss Hallie Gelbart of Hartford.

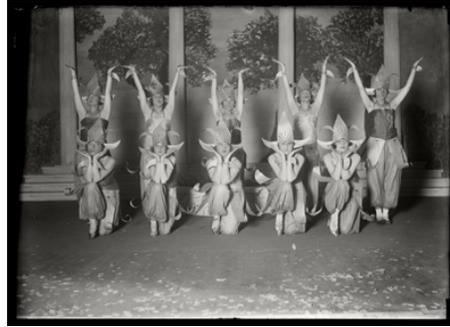
In the first three decades of the nineteenth century there were many more theatrical productions on campus than in recent years. Every year the sophomores, juniors and seniors each put on a major play; Shakespeare's were common choices.⁴⁶ One or more plays attended commencement and there was a play on Faculty Day. Throughout the year plays were often mounted by clubs and societies, mostly in the theater but sometimes out of doors. Some of Kinney's photos suggest exotic dances in extravagant costumes, and hint at musicals, like "*Junior Show 1922: Pagoda Girls*". "Pagoda" suggests southeast Asia, but here the sun's rays on the winged headgear might be an Egyptian motif.

⁴³ *Noah's Flood* had been performed during the 1902 May Day, but no descriptions of it have been found.

⁴⁴ A well-known mummer's play that had entered folklore generations ago.

⁴⁵ *The Mount Holyoke News*, May 6, 1920.

⁴⁶ See "Dramatics at Mount Holyoke" by Mary Sewall '06, *The Mount Holyoke*, vol. 16, June 1906, pp. 22-26.



Junior Show 1922: Pagoda Girls



Speech Play, 1930

We know that Kinney acted in plays so he was primed to document the familiar environment of the theater. He often took six or more photographs of a play: six each for *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1911), *The Merchant of Venice* (1908), *The Heir at Law* (1907), and thirteen for *The Adventures of Lady Ursula* (1913). More than 100 of his photos show a representation on stage; not all of them can now be tied to a specific play. Costumes may yet identify some, although a large number have garments of an indeterminate former age. In “*Speech Play*” of 1930, a clown and a hairy animal might help locate the play. The actors assume curious poses; two of them are shackled to chairs. Kinney frequently had trouble with reflections and glare from the lights, as was the case here.



Sophomore Play 1908



May Day 1921, Fairies

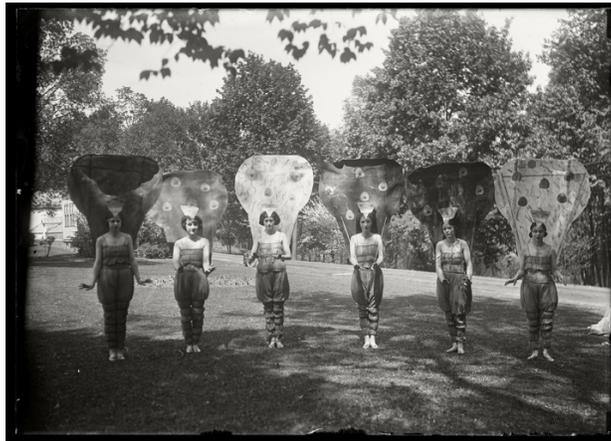


May Day Queen, 1929

Kinney often asked the actors to move outdoors for a picture of the cast. On a lawn in soft grey light he photographed the cast of the “*Sophomore Play 1908: Maid of Plymouth Town.*” There are no onlookers, so this was just for the camera. To make a lively picture, instead of a simple line-up, he asked the cast to take active poses. We’ll not know if these outdoor views were his idea or a response to students’ wishes. Kinney also made more ambitious and handsomer photos by assembling the cast (or a central portion of it) to create a satisfactory *tableau*. “*May Day 1921, Fairies and Fairy Queen Vivian Ratcliff ‘24*” is a constructed view of five winged women in tutus who accompany the queen, also with wings. Two have one leg raised to suggest dancing, and two crouch with arms crossed. These latter might be rendering homage, but all the figures face the camera and don’t seem to constitute an actual excerpt from a performance; they’re clearly posing for Kinney. Another outdoor commemoration of a play, “*May Day Queen 1929,*” has a white princess accompanied symmetrically by two “Indians” in dark-face, and two colonials (colonial, yes, but no specific source has yet been found). Wholly outdoors performances were given in a portable mini-theater imitating a puppet show. In 1930, beneath an overhead sign “Ye Pinners,” two actors on the stage and three on the ground in archaic costumes were taken in mid-performance in “*Speech Play.*” It’s an unusual campus event because four of the figures are men (two have genuine beards).



Speech Play, 1930



May Day Dancers, 1922



May Day Nymphs, 1921

A good many capture theatrical groups that participated in May Day celebrations. Among the most amusing of Kinney's photos is "*May Day Dancers, 1922.*" Six women in elaborate costumes hold spectacular pear-shaped panels above their heads with the aid of slender rods. What was their dance? One can't resist speculating on how these women moved about. Their large panels would have caught the slightest breeze but even without a breeze, they would have been difficult to control. One of Kinney's rarely exuberant pictures is "*May Day Nymphs, 1921,*" a close-up of three dancers in loosely flowing garments with linked hands. Two of them grin as they raise a leg.

Buildings

Kinney never wrote about his photography, so we must deduce his aesthetic from his photos. Put briefly, he perpetuated the picturesque naturalism that characterized the visual arts from the Romantic era onward. *Safford Hall, c. 1905* is so garmented in trees that only small portions of its architecture are exposed. Because Kinney had charge of caring for trees and bushes, featuring them was a congenial way of encompassing his work, giving the structures what for him was a personal affect. He converted his photo of Safford Hall into a postcard, cropping it on all four sides to suit the missive's proportions: *Safford Hall, Postcard*. A number of his postcards had similar origins. He could offer himself a choice because he typically made six or more photos of each building.



Safford Hall, c. 1905



Safford Hall Postcard, c. 1905



Porter Hall, c. 1908-10

Kinney photographed most of the campus buildings at an angle, so they penetrate space more than when taken flat on to their façades and they have more three-dimensional substance. *Porter Hall, c. 1908-10* exhibits more of the building's mass than Safford but Kinney took it from a moderate distance so that campus trees rise up prominently; their foliage screens the sky to contribute a picturesque effect. Late afternoon sunlight comes from the right to illuminate the side of the structure, leaving the façade in shadow. Was this in order to exalt the white birch by

giving it a dark background? (Three more photos of Porter Hall feature the same birch.) He pictured *Mead Hall* in 1930 at only a slight angle, but it was enough to turn our eyes toward the walkway and lawn that open out between the bushes and trees. He photographed Mead eight times, each with its ornamental setting. In contrast, his photos of the music building and Peterson's Lodge loom up starkly on plain lawns not long after they were built; they weren't yet graced by trees or bushes.



Mead Hall, 1930

To compose broader picturesque views Kinney frequently took advantage of the school's open spaces that are like lungs which let the campus breathe. He photographed Clapp Laboratory from the library on a winter day not long after it was erected in 1924.



Clapp Laboratory, c. 1925



South Campus with Skinner Green, 1908-09

Skinner Green is one of the most capacious of the campus's lungs. In *South Campus, 1908-09* we look across its western slope (Skinner Hall would be constructed there in 1916). Standing near Rockefeller Hall, Kinney aimed his camera toward Brigham Hall and Mary Lyon to emulate the views of Romantic picturesque parks that the Olmsted firm had in mind when they designed the campus at the turn of the century. By contrast, contemporaneous photos of Vassar and Wellesley have little of Kinney's picturesqueness. Many of their buildings were far larger so they lacked the intimacy of Mount Holyoke's "cottages" and "houses." Photographers were intent upon celebrating the monumentality of those college's buildings, so trees were seldom allowed to screen the architecture, and no people are visible. Similarly, there are no people in Kinney's photos of college structures. In some ways, he also treated his home campus as a collection of monuments and silent landscapes. It's a far cry from the way we think of college photos nowadays, in which people animate the grounds to emphasize sociability and access.



President's House, 1920s



President's Porch, 1920s

The president's house attracted Kinney more than any other building on campus. He took nearly three dozen views of it, most of the exterior. He had included the newly built house in his *Views of Mount Holyoke College* published in 1909, and followed this with several photos of the front of the house in which the successively increased growth of the bushes and trees take us in stages to the 1920s, when he took most of the pictures.



The President's Wisteria, 1920



Interior of the President's House, 1920s

Because he was responsible for the plantings around the house he had a stake in their appearance. They show to advantage in *The President's House* and in several other views of the grounds. He took casual photos from the building's porch at the rear of the house, but others have an ambitious formality. *The President's Porch* is one of several from that vantage point, very carefully framed. Four times he went behind the house to look back at its wisteria shrouded porch, once before the plant was in bloom and three times when it was in its glory. *The President's Wisteria* is one of these, with Miss Woolley's two collies in attendance as they are in a close-up portrait of her (see above, "Portraits and Groups"). These pictures of the wisteria porch were shot on a diagonal that adheres to his familiar picturesque compositions. Kinney also inventoried the rooms of the building's ground floor, each photo with a sharp sculptural clarity like *Interior of the President's House*. One wonders if he was drawn to Miss Woolley's house simply because it was the residence of the most important person in the college. The formal interior views, with no persons represented, and some of those of the entrance façade, might have followed requests by Miss Woolley or a staff member to serve college publications but the many views taken in different years and seasons add up to an extended portrayal that was Kinney's own.

The president's house was not entirely private since visitors and college people attended various functions there, and Kinney was aware of the house's quasi public functions. He also kept in mind the way visitors approached the college. Several of his photos show Mary Lyon Hall and Field Memorial Gateway from College Street. In *Mary Lyon Hall from College St.*, the street still retains its trolley tracks while up above tall oaks fill the sky. Entrance to the college is accorded a flattering picturesque view. Upon entering the campus, the visitor had an oblique sight of Mary Lyon beneath another display of luxurious foliage: *Mary Lyon Hall*. Kinney draws our eye down a penetrating axis he was fond of, a kind of parkland avenue; he treated most of the college's pathways and roads in like fashion.



Mary Lyon Hall from College St., c. 1910



Mary Lyon Hall



Mary Woolley Hall, 1916



Mary Woolley Hall, 1920s

Kinney merged monumentality and picturesqueness in many photos of the college's most public buildings. *Mary Woolley Hall, 1916*, is the first of nearly a dozen he took in following years. As has been mentioned, he was intrigued by the effects of time and conceived of his photos as parts of a historical record and himself as campus historian. In his lectures and classes, he projected slides of the same sites taken several years apart, and of buildings under construction and when completed (notably the main library, Mary Lyon Hall, and Clapp). By the mid-1920s he could show Mary Woolley Hall in a proper picturesque view after the bushes and trees he planted took on their desired roles: *Mary Woolley Hall, 1920s*.



Old Rockefeller Hall, 1905-08



Rockefeller Fire, 1922



Judson Hall, 1908-10



Kellogg House, c. 1925

Kinney also served the history of the college in his photos of buildings that have disappeared. In 1917 he documented the traumatic fire that destroyed Williston Hall and its scientific exhibits (see above). Not long afterward another fire transfixed the campus. He had photographed *Old Rockefeller Hall* before the First World War and then took a number of photos of its destruction by fire in 1922. In calmer moments he photographed other buildings that were less dramatically lost. They merely made way to the expansion of the campus. Three-tiered *Judson Hall* was a hotel remodeled for student housing in 1908, on the site of the present U.S. Post Office; it was torn down in 1935. Gothicized *Kellogg House*, a curiously small structure for student housing, was built on Park Street in 1925 and torn down only seven years later in 1932. To add to Kinney's roster of no longer extant buildings, he photographed *Cowles Lodge* that had been built on the north slope of Prospect Hill in 1910. It was approached by a pedestrian bridge that crossed high over Stony Brook from the road by the Greenhouse. Kinney photographed it from the Little Falls bridge just after a wet snowfall coated the trees: "*Cowles Lodge Bridge, 1929.*" The lodge was used for student housing (and in summers in the 1930s for Youth Hostel stop-overs) until it gave way in 1965 for Ham Hall's parking lot.



Cowles Lodge, c. 1925



Cowles Lodge Bridge, 1929

Campus views

Burned and torn down college buildings were not the only losses that Kinney documented. Dear to his heart were memorable individual trees that toppled over. In 1917 he photographed *Fallen Black Walnut*, a gigantic specimen of historic interest that had been leveled in a storm; its roots were rotten. More than century old, it was 102 feet high with its circumference at the base of fifteen feet.⁴⁷ He asked a bunch of students to stand and sit on it for a memorial picture. As the campus “tree man”—yes, he was called that—he would have keenly felt its demise. It’s one of the many occasions when we dearly wish we had a diary or other expression of his feelings. Three years later he would have been equally moved when he had to order the felling of a huge chestnut, victim of the blight which ravaged the Northeast, *Chestnut Tree Felled*, 1920. At other times he must have welcomed the opportunity to have a large tree rolled to a more suitable location. *Moving a Hawthorn*, 1931 enlivens a work-a-day winter scene, and it would have been Kinney’s pleasure to see it leafed out in its new spot near the library, *Hawthorn Tree Replanted*, 1931.



Fallen Black Walnut, 1917

⁴⁷ *The Mount Holyoke News*, vol. 1, Oct. 13, 1917.



Felled Chestnut Tree, 1920



Moving a Hawthorn, 1931



Hawthorn Tree Replanted, 1931

Most of Kinney's photos represent the central campus and its buildings photographed from ground level, but he also took views from Prospect Hill and from the roof of Clapp Laboratory. *View from Clapp Laboratory, 1925-30* looks out over Dwight and Shattuck from a point that features tree foliage as much as the buildings. Shattuck is on the lower right and Dwight is to the

left. In *Campus from Prospect Hill, 1910-15*, Goodnow Park provides the picturesque foliage. In mid-distance is the prominent Wilder Hall and the original Blanchard Hall.



View from Clapp Laboratory, 1925-30



Campus from Prospect Hill, 1910-15

He also took dozens of views of the periphery of the campus. One of these is *Steps to the Mandelles, 1925-30*. A large portion of it is still there, but one can imagine it a century or two earlier as the entrance to a picturesque grotto or cavern.



Steps to the Mandelles, 1925-30



Iron Bridge from Lower Lake Road

Nostalgia is more ours than Kinney's when we look upon his photos of Stony Brook, Lower Lake (he did not favor Upper Lake), and Prospect Hill. He took *Iron Bridge from Lower Lake Road* long after it was built in 1886. Roughly contemporary are scenes of Prospect Hill before the First World War. We look up at its slopes in a snowy view from Lower Lake, *Prospect Hill in Winter, 1910-15*.



Prospect Hill in Winter, 1910-15

Lower Lake and Stony Brook, which occupied the much-frequented eastern edge of the college grounds, figure in enough of Kinney's photos to add up to a good portrait of this stretch of landscape. Several times he showed the extent of Lower Lake by aiming his camera from Iron Bridge across the lake to the former gristmill. In *Lower Lake from Iron Bridge*, the 1879 Boat House is in the right foreground.



Lower Lake from Iron Bridge

Turning in the opposite direction from Iron Bridge, in *Stony Brook and Little Falls* he photographed the “Little Falls” and its bridge by the Pump House, which is here nearly hidden by the plentiful foliage that shrouds both banks of the brook. Before Kinney arrived at the college the brook’s banks were less covered in foliage, and views from the same vantage point as his showed the brook’s course very clearly. Moreover, before 1900 local photographers had used their cameras to pose groups of students on the exposed bridge (no men among them but it was called “the kissing bridge”); the falls and the pump house were then fully open to view.

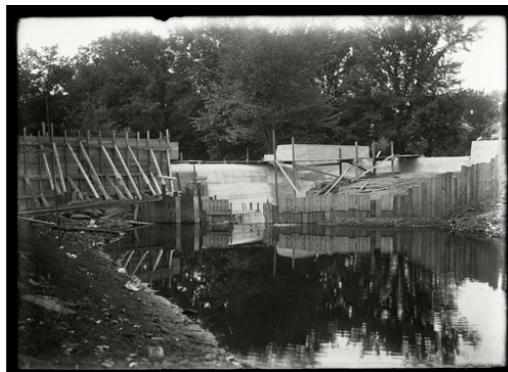


Stony Brook and Little Falls

Another of the most popular sites at Mount Holyoke was the venerable stone bridge over Park Street. It appeared in numerous amateur and professional photos before and after the turn of the century. Kinney favored it several times, carefully framing it in foliage that enhanced its antique look: *The Stone Arch, 1910*. The Upper Lake, acquired in 1884, had not been much visited until 1910 when a new boathouse replaced the former one on Lower Lake. The lake’s use was extended after the dam was raised in 1912 and its perimeter road became a popular walkway for the college and townspeople, as it still is. Kinney was intrigued with the dam’s construction and made more than one picture of it: *Dam under Construction, Upper Lake, 1912*. Its splendid aspect after completion has since made it one of the most sought-after sites on campus: *The Falls, Upper Lake, after 1990*.



The Stone Arch, 1910



Dam under Construction, Upper Lake, 1912



The Falls, after 1912

Gardens

Kinney's work with the college gardens has been summarized in the initial portion of this essay. No other documents have been found to add to this Spartan account, but an album of his photographs, with occasional remarks, can take us further. *Dwight Garden with Lily Pond, 1904* shows a prominent focal point of the garden's path, with the lily pond in mid-distance.



Dwight Garden and Lily Pond, 1904



Dwight Garden Pathway, c. 1908

The same path taken from further back, is featured in *Dwight Garden Pathway, c. 1908*. On the left are the geometric plots which characterized the garden until the “Class of 1904 Garden” supplanted it with a more “natural” plan in the mid-1930s. Through the years the Lily Pond was a central feature, together with luxurious beds of ferns that responded in part to Alma Stokey's specialty.



Dwight Lily Pond and Ferns, 1922



Vegetable Garden, 1910-15

Until the War Garden of 1917, there was a vegetable garden near the botanical plantings: *Vegetable Garden, 1910-15*. It served the campus dining rooms, but we don't know how much food it provided. Of course Kinney used it for his courses in plant culture. He photographed half a dozen students in another vegetable garden in early spring: *Floriculture Class Weeding Garden, 1905*.



Floriculture Class Weeding Garden, 1905

In *Floriculture Class in the Potting Shed, 1904*, about a dozen students are at work in a roofed-over part of the shed. They wear protective loose smocks, but if they walked about campus they would dress in long skirts, as do the four women preparing grafts for a small tree in “*Plant Culture Class, 1906*”. A sign of the early twentieth century is their hair tied in a bun and piled high on the head.



Floriculture Class in the Potting Shed, 1904



Plant Culture Class, 1906

Kinney took a number of photos of the interior of the greenhouse, but hardly any are dated. One of the rare dated views is "*First Time Winning Cup, 1925*" for which he provided a cloth backdrop. He made a specialty of chrysanthemums, and won several prizes in local and regional flower shows. He featured mums among his photos of plants in the greenhouse, like *Chrysanthemums*. Presumably he intended to separate these mums for display around the college, but he could have taken advantage of their growth for the experiments that produced his prize winners.



First Time Winning Cup, 1925



Chrysanthemums

As manager of the war garden, briefly discussed above, Kinney became involved in many of its activities. His numerous photos show how much this work engaged him. The college garden was in the “Button Field,” located between present-day Buttonfield, Jewett, and Ashfield lanes on gently rising land which shows in *Button Field Garden*. In prior years the college used this property as a hockey field and for other outdoor activities. Mount Holyoke had purchased the land in 1912 from Andrew McElwain, a farmer who brought shredded rag waste from Holyoke paper mills to use as compost. This waste held many buttons which were sought after by village children from about 1880 onward.⁴⁸



Button Field Garden, 1917-18

⁴⁸ Warner 1937, pp. 197-201. In 1937, Kinney introduced Warner to McElwain’s daughter who confirmed the story.



Tilling in Button Field, 1917-18

In the war garden, a sturdy farmerette has stopped maneuvering a heavy machine to pose for Kinney: *Tilling in Button Field*. Like other women of about that time she wears knickers adapted from men's golfing attire. We look across the future Ashfield Lane towards the large building on the corner of Bridgeman and Ashfield lanes; it housed faculty then, and still does. This tilling machine was quite modern (we can't help finding it amusing now), and so were some of the college's motorized trucks, but horse-drawn wagons were still in use.



Farmerettes at Work, 1917-18

In *Farmerettes at Work* five women are supplying the faculty house seen in the previous picture. They wear bloomers, and so do some among the farmerettes hoeing in the garden south of Jewett Lane: *Farmerettes Hoeing Vegetables*. If they had observed the college rules they would have worn skirts over their bloomers when going to and from the garden, but it's likely that given relaxed fashions of the war years they paid no attention to the directive.



Farmerettes Hoeing Vegetables, 1917-18

In this and a few other war garden pictures, one or more of the women look up at Kinney. His presence is therefore felt, so he becomes part of the scene as we register it. More common are pictures for which he asked the students to look busy but not at him in order to make a more anonymous picture. *Stripping Wartime Corn, 1917-18* is one of these. Indoors on campus, the women wear skirts, relegating bloomers and knickers to the outdoor gardens. Apparently they're boiling the corn, probably for the "inadequate" capping machine of which Kinney was "the vigorous manipulator" according to Stokey's memoir. This is not a casual photo, a "caught moment," for Kinney artfully arranged the scene. On the left the women look rightward, and on the right, leftward. This encloses the composition, which is strongly lit from the window. Its reflections and shadows along the floor activate and unify this interior.



Stripping Wartime Corn, 1917-18

The only contemporaneous mention of Kinney in the war garden was published in the student weekly in early autumn 1917.⁴⁹ There was an early frost. "Mr. Kinney and Mr. Folsom do an amazing amount of work, but they cannot do it all, dig two or three acres of potatoes, pull

⁴⁹ *The Mount Holyoke News*, vol. 1, Oct. 3, 1917 (n.p.).

an acre or two of turnips, pick cabbage, pull beets and carrots, all before freezing time [. . .]. When Mr. Kinney puts on the bulletin an urgent appeal for thirty or forty workers, see to it (and this really happened) that more than two turn out.” From the same issue, it’s reported that “Miss Stokey and Miss Starr worked on the college farm from August 16 to the opening of college.” The war garden was given up in the winter of 1919, replaced by the “peace garden” of four to five acres destined to produce “such vegetables as can be canned in the fall for the college winter supply. Last year the college installed a canning apparatus and purchased thousands of cans which can be re-used. . .”⁵⁰ After the war, the college used the open space of Button Field for outdoor activities. Kinney’s daughter Elizabeth, a member of the class of 1924, wrote in her diary on October 25, 1921, that she went for a “good time and good eats” to a picnic (a “bat”) in the Button Field for commuting students.⁵¹

Interiors and Williston Hall

Kinney photographed the interiors of college building less often than the outdoors but we’ve already looked at photos of theatrical presentations and a few of the greenhouses, his own campus domain. During the first ten or twelve years of the century he took a few views of classrooms and the library. Like his pictures of campus buildings, these are unpeopled and conform to the idea of a timeless institutional fabric. *Library Reading Room* shows off the large Tudor room with a long central axis that flatteringly reveals its structure. (The prominent cracks in this print show the fragility of Kinney’s glass plates.) *Reading Room Tables* exalts the building’s heavy wood furniture in pristine purity uncluttered by students, the kind of view to be forwarded to trustees and institutional publications.



Library Reading Room, c. 1910-12

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, vol, 2, April 1, 1919.

⁵¹ Elizabeth Tucker Kinney (1904-2004), diary of 1921, in the college archives.



Reading Room Tables, c. 1910-12

Two photos of 1911 have even-lighted sharp images of science classrooms: “*Psychology Lab*” and “*Philosophy and Psychology: Psychology Lab*”. These are both Kinney’s titles, although the latter with its turning forks and biological charts would more appropriately today be called a physiology room. It’s a smaller room that houses various instruments, including on the right the colored Maxwell disks that are spun to create uniform hues.



Psychology Lab, 1911



Philosophy and Psychology Lab, 1911

From the same year are several photos of the gymnasium without students but a few are devoted to sports, like the basketball we've seen and here the striking *Gym Class, 1911*. It probably took Kinney some time to set up his camera because the sunlight streaming in from above would have been a challenge for the slow speeds he had to work with at the beginning of the century. Because we recognize the architecture of Blanchard Campus Center of bygone days and think of its present-day activity, the regimentation of the young women in this picture—it was the era of eugenics—has a disturbing effect. They wear identical gym clothes and are lined up in regular diminishing heights, the shorter ones nearest us. They're bearing their weight for a few suspended moments on that rather forbidding rack of metal bars, calling up to us unbidden images of torture.



Gym Class, 1911



Clapp Hall, Miriam Lab, 1929



Library Corner. 1928-30

By the mid 1920s, thanks to faster lenses and plates, Kinney's interiors become activated by students. "*Clapp Hall, Miriam Laboratory*" is one of seven shots of science labs with students at work that he took in 1929. Only one of the seven has a student looking up at Kinney, an inadvertence because he obviously asked them to appear unaware of the camera. The same is true of a few photos of students relaxing in more informal gatherings that date from the late 1920s or early 1930s. *Library Corner* with its satisfying view of quiet student life is a contrast with the earlier unpeopled photo of the main library room. "*Mount Holyoke News Group*," its students sprawled and seated while working, has an unusual immediacy. It's no snapshot, so when Kinney set up his view camera, he asked the women to assume working poses. He may have suggested placing the typewriter on the floor to the right, a symbolic object that reinforces the scene of editing. This photo is unique in Kinney's work. Except for plays on a stage, his glass plates have no other sign that he ever went into a student room to record so informally a campus activity.



Mount Holyoke News Group, 1928-30



Dough Mixer, 1928-30



Bread Baker, 1928-30

Kinney was familiar with farm machinery so it's not surprising that he took his tripod and camera into the college bakery for a few photos. *Dough Mixer* has the attraction of a still life of "machine art" of the 1920s. We are far here from Kinney's interiors of the president's house, but there is a shared coldness of uncluttered geometric forms. It's true that he photographed a baker standing by his bread, *Bread Baker*. However, this is his only image of a working staff member taken indoors. He must have often encountered janitorial, kitchen and office staff but didn't choose to give any of them the cool, carefully arranged look of the young baker.

All these interior views lend themselves to pleasant nostalgia, but there's one that raises particularly painful regrets, "*Williston Hall: Miss Cowles Museum*." Lyman Williston Hall for Science and Art was built in 1876 was burned down in 1917. For unknown reasons, Kinney did not take his view camera into the science and art building although he had years of opportunity. Only one of his photos shows the interior, and this is a copy he made of a photograph of the 1880s. It shows plaster casts purchased from Henry A. Ward of Rochester NY (his firm still exists) and installed for the building's opening in 1876.⁵² Daniel Brinkman of Yale's Peabody

⁵² "Historical Facts concerning our recitation halls: Lyman Williston Hall, *The Mount Holyoke*, VI, Feb. 1897, 202-06, article by "C.M.C." See also "The Beginnings of Williston Hall, by Anna C. Edwards, 1859," *Alumnae Quarterly*, II, April 1918, 1-6, and Turner Jan. 1918.

Museum of Natural History has kindly identified most of the exhibits shown in the photo. The huge skeleton cast on the right is a Megatherium, the fossil of a giant ground sloth,⁵³ stretched on the wall above is a large fossil plesiosaur.⁵⁴ In the cabinet in the rearmost room is Lucius Hyde's collection of stuffed birds, mentioned earlier. In the basement were nearly a hundred Jurassic dinosaur tracks, many collected in South Hadley and other nearby quarries by professors Louise Cowles and Anna C. Edwards. They were touted as "the third best collection of fossil bird tracks in America."⁵⁵ Despite the sandstone's hardness, they were all destroyed.



Williston Hall: Miss Cowles' Museum

The most notable exhibit in Williston Hall had been the fossil theropod dinosaur *Podokesaurus holyokensis* discovered in 1910 just east of the campus by professor of geology and geography Mignon Talbot. It was the only fossil of this animal, the "type specimen," so it was a grievous loss. Talbot had asked Kinney to accompany her to the fossil site where he took several photos. In view of its destruction, his photos are precious visual artefacts. Talbot reproduced three of them in her article (crediting Kinney) that announced the discovery; she was the first woman to name a non-avian dinosaur.⁵⁶ Luckily casts of it were right away sent to Yale, Harvard and other museums.

⁵³ In Ward's published commercial lists of casts of prehistoric animals and fossils (1866), Megatherium Cuvieri is offered for \$250.

⁵⁴ Brinkman's communication of July 8, 2016, continues: "going from right to left along the tops of the cases: cephalopod, mosasaur jaws, cephalopod, [an unknown], large bony fish." In the glass cases: "Second on the right on top shelf of the case immediately to the right of the doorway is a cast of the so-called *Homo diluvii testis*, now known to be a giant salamander called *Andrias scheuchzeri*. The first object on the right on the top shelf may be an eurypterid and on the shelf directly below it may be a fossilized horseshoe crab next to what is definitely a fossilized bony fish. Second to the left on top shelf of the case immediately to the left of the doorway is a giant Cambrian-aged trilobite." On the lower left beyond unknown objects "is a proboscidean skull" and just beyond "is the carapace and 'armored' tail of a glyptodont."

⁵⁵ Turner Jan. 1918..

⁵⁶ Mignon Talbot, "Podokesaurus holyokensis, a New Dinosaur from the Triassic of the Connecticut Valley," *American Journal of Science*, 4th series, vol. 31, June 1911.



Podokesaurus holyokensis

It is this photo by Kinney that has been reproduced countless times (recently in the Wikipedia entry for the fossil), but his name is never attached so he has consequently disappeared from the record. Here, as is true of his other photos, his work has sunk into anonymity. He took three other views of the skeleton. One is a close-up of half of the animal's body from a slightly different angle which could still be of interest to paleontologists, *Partial View of Podokesaurus holyokensis*. Talbot reproduced another two Kinney photographs of the fossil but the glass plates for these have not been found.



Partial View of Podokesaurus holyokensis

From Williston to Dwight

When Williston Hall was opened in 1876, the third floor of its sober Gothic Revival building was devoted to art. Under a skylight and lateral windows was a large open gallery, with original paintings and copies on the walls. Chief among the pictures were two gifts to celebrate the building's opening, *Hetch Hetchie Canyon* by Albert Bierstadt, and George Inness's *Saco Ford: Conway Meadows*, both painted the year before. "Museum" was not the word for the collection which, although available to the public, was chiefly dedicated to teaching and mostly consisted of copies. Studio art, at first drawing and watercolor, had been part of the curriculum from the beginning and lectures in art history were provided by Amherst professors starting in 1859. History of Art entered the curriculum in 1874, and a Department of Art was established in 1892 under the leadership of the redoubtable Louise Fitz-Randolph (1851-1932). She was joined in 1901 by her co-chair Louise R. Jewett (1859-1914), a well-reputed painter who taught art history as well as art. Students in history of art and studio art used the art collection as well as plaster casts, photographs, and engraved and lithographed copies and prints. Objects in the natural sciences were also available: archeological and paleontological objects, native American artifacts, stuffed birds and animals, etc.



Williston Hall, 1905-10



Bierstadt: Hetch Hetchie Canyon



Inness: Saco Ford, Conway Meadows

In 1902, the crowded rooms of Williston gave way to the new Dwight Art Memorial which finally separated art and the natural sciences. From 1897 Fitz-Randolph had led a vigorous campaign for a new art building. Kinney had not photographed the art in the old building but in 1904 he turned his camera to Dwight. Unfortunately, only a few of his photos are dated. In his booklet *Views of Mount Holyoke* published in 1904, Kinney included a view of the sculpture gallery nearly identical to a later one of his that is dated circumstantially *Sculpture Gallery, c. 1927*. There were few changes between these dates. Apparently at the same time he photographed this room from its other end.



Sculpture Gallery, c. 1927



Sculpture Galley, c. 1927

From 1926 to 1931, Kinney often photographed students at work in sculpture classes. Florence W. Foss (1882-1968) taught courses in the history of sculpture and conducted classes in modeling in clay and plaster. She is seated on the left in “*Miss Foss’s Models and Class, 1926.*”



Miss Foss's Models and Class, 1926

One student is talking about her small sculpture while the others sit around two tables bearing six or eight other pieces. On and near the walls are a large number of reliefs and busts, mostly student work. The students are seen actively working in “*Miss Foss’s Modeling Class, 1926.*”



Miss Foss's Modeling Class, 1926

High on the left of the preceding picture are two tiny figures, much like the four small male figures that Kinney photographed in "*Miss Foss's Models 1926.*" These are convincing studies of gestural athletic movements that speak well for Miss Foss's instruction. Kinney was attracted to student sculptures and photographed dozens of them from 1926 to 1931, perhaps on his own initiative or else responding to Miss Foss's requests. A charming clay relief done in 1926, *Peggy Skinner, 1926*, apparently had a live model. Among the last of many student works that Kinney photographed is a *Saintly Figure, 1931*, loosely based on a medieval prototype.



Miss Foss's Models, 1926



Peggy Skinner, 1926



Saintly Figure, 1931



Bronze Statue for Miss Galt, 1927

In the same years Kinney photographed many of the objects in the museum's permanent collection. One of the stars of the museum was a small Greek bronze in the "severe" style of the fifth century BC, "*Bronze Statue for Miss Galt, 1927.*" Kinney took the photograph from a printed source, one of a few such copies he made with his view camera. Still one of the college's most prestigious pieces of art, the bronze had been acquired in 1926 by Caroline M. Galt (1875-1937), professor of Latin and archaeology. Her office was in Dwight, where she took charge of

the display of ancient art of which she was the curator in all but name. It was either she or Kinney who thought the sculpture's importance warranted the copy. Kinney directly photographed two other objects that fell under her care: "*Miss Galt's Mosaic*" (an Imperial Roman floor mosaic) and "*Miss Galt's Egyptian Cup*." The latter is actually a Greek vase by the Theseus painter, "Skyphos with Harakles, Athena and Hermes." Kinney also took a photo of a handsome eighteenth century piece of furniture acquired in 1857, *Hadley Chest* (subsequently restored), but otherwise he paid no attention to the museum's decorative objects.



Miss Galt's Mosaic



Miss Galt's Egyptian [Greek] Cup



Hadley Chest

As we saw, Kinney photographed the collection's most famous paintings, Bierstadt's and Inness's (above) and many by artists no longer well known. These included *Old Peasant Woman Plaiting Straw* by Louise R. Jewett, since deaccessioned, and several other pictures of hers; she taught art from 1901 to 1912.



Jewett: Old Peasant Woman Plaiting Straw

The college museum also had a veritable collection of paintings by Edwin White (1817-1877), a South Hadley native who was nationally known and collected. For several years a room in Dwight was devoted to White's pictures given to the college in 1877, including *The Returning Pilgrims*, *Evening Hymn of the Huguenots*. This, and Jewett's painting, were on a wall in the large picture gallery we'll look at shortly, *Dwight Painting Gallery, c. 1925*. Another of Kinney's photos has two of White's paintings, *View on the Arno from Ponte Trinita* (1873) and *Landing of the Huguenots in Florida* (1859).



White, The Returning Pilgrims



Paintings by Edwin White

The White room also had a portrait of the artist painted by G. P. A. Healy (1813-1894), well known for his portraits of American presidents and other famous men. White's work is no longer on view, and Healy's has likewise been relegated to storage. Kinney's photograph of Healy's portrait is a historical artefact because it reveals numerous cracks in the pigment. The painting was subsequently conserved at an unknown date as later photographs prove, and the picture restored to its original appeal.



Edwin White by G.P.A. Healy

Another Kinney photograph also qualifies as a historical artefact, a painting of the late 1920s or early 1930s by André Masson, purchased in 1933. Described by one teacher as “too racy,” it was subsequently deaccessioned. It has a dark-skinned male or monster seizing a nude female.



André Masson



Sculpture Gallery, c. 1930



Sculpture Gallery, 1927

Other photos were taken about 1930, when there were a reduced number of casts on view that were now more widely spaced, as in *Sculpture Gallery, c. 1930*, which should be seen alongside the photo of the same gallery in 1927. It would seem that the museum decided to favor a display more suited to visitors than the former arrangement which had maximized the objects with students in mind. The same ventilation took place in the main gallery, as shown in two more Kinney photos. *Dwight Painting Gallery, c. 1925* presents the rather crowded installation of paintings on the top floor sometime in the 1920s. On the right, Bierstadt's *Hetch Hetchie Canyon* is second from the near corner, and Inness's *Saco Ford: Conway Meadows* is to its left. On the opposite wall near the viewer is Louise R. Jewett's *Old Peasant Woman Plaiting Straw, 1893*, which hangs above Edwin White's *The Returning Pilgrims*. The rear wall has a copy of Raphael's *La Belle Jardinière*. When we look into the gallery about 1930, we find the same streamlining of the pictures that took place in the sculpture room. To the right there are now ten pictures instead of sixteen; the far wall reveals a more drastic cut from fourteen to four. These changes suggest that more visitors to the museum were now anticipated.



Dwight Painting Gallery, c. 1925



Dwight Painting Gallery, c. 1930

From the early 1930s the college's more forward-looking museum gradually began to acquire more original paintings, sculptures, ceramics and prints. By the end of the second World War the collections rose in significance and the copies which had been a mainstay of instruction were relegated to storage. The opening of the new art building in 1971 was the occasion of a significant number of gifts. In recent years the collections of Asian, modern and contemporary art have grown considerably and the museum's several rooms that display art of many generations and cultures has become a distinctive destination for art lovers.

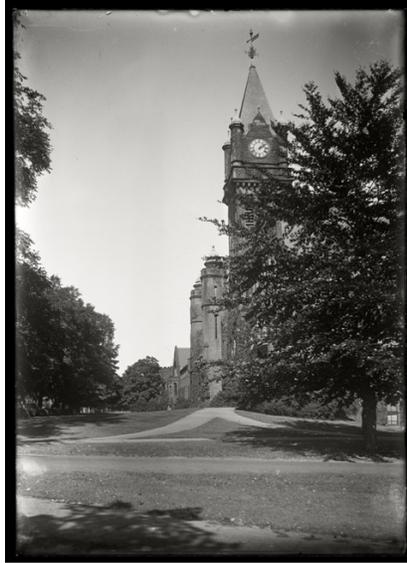
Kinney in retrospect

Despite the abundance of Kinney's photographs—truly an astonishing output—it's evident that his contemporaries treated his photographs as pictorial records not as art. The Rusks in their interview with him in 1954 didn't even ask him about his photography, although they surely were familiar with it. In his obituaries photography was not even mentioned, further evidence of the low esteem in which it was held. Teachers and students must often have seen him plant his tripod around campus. It was a cumbersome apparatus and they would have been amused to see him tuck his head under his black shroud. However, this was incidental to his teaching and plant work, not his first calling, so they felt there was no need to draw attention to it.

Nonetheless, didn't Kinney long to be regarded as a distinguished photographer? After all, he put his name forward when he published several editions of *Views of Mount Holyoke College*. However, he was aware that his work would be greeted as documents, not works of art. In fact, it was not until the second quarter of the century that photographs began to be placed among the fine arts. This does not deny that he had pride in his work. His glass plates achieve a consistent high level because he was an excellent technician and knew the ins and outs of controlling light and shadow. In one instance his pride suffered a setback that must have been a painful confirmation that he was only producing documents. *Better Homes and Gardens* rejected two photographs he submitted in 1930.⁵⁷ They were "much too dark to reproduce well in the magazine. As these two pictures are particularly beautiful, however, we felt that we should write you to explain that we would really like to get better prints. [. . .] if you could get a good photographer to take these photographs, from the same angle, we would be willing to pay you for the trouble, of course always providing that the picture turned out in such shape as to be usable." The identification of "pictures" with the buildings they represented is typical of the era. Photographs were only documents, not art, and it was pictures of the buildings that counted for the magazine.

Although Kinney did not consider himself a fine arts photographer, he did not merely take his camera anywhere and shoot what was in front of him. As we saw when looking at his buildings and campus views, he carefully chose his vantage points. We've remarked already that because he was in charge of campus plantings, he actually prepared scenery for some of the picturesque viewpoints he favored. In *Mary Lyon Hall* his foliage and the shadows of his trees so dominate the architecture that they seem to be the reason for taking the picture. In effect his work as the campus tree man was interwoven with his photography.

⁵⁷ Erma Dutton for the Editorial Dept. wrote Kinney on Oct. 24, 1930.



Mary Lyon Hall

In addition to indulging his aesthetic of the picturesque, Kinney made other photographs that can't be described simply as visual records. It's no surprise that when he photographed his family, he made some carefully composed images. For *Elizabeth and Asa, 1910-11*, he had his children face the open window whose light floods their upper bodies. It's a demonstration of how light articulates form and is one of the few of Kinney's photographs that could readily be exhibited as an example of fine art. A modern critic would subtitle the picture "Study in Light." Only the forward portions of their faces receive the light, which etches their clothes above their waists in strong folds and crinkles of light and dark. There is no view out the window, which is an out-of-focus veil of light that bathes the two figures while leaving the rest of the room in opaque darkness.



Elizabeth and Asa, c. 1910

Occasionally Kinney took rather formal single views of his children. For *Elizabeth, c. 1920* he had his daughter sit with her arms in her lap, next to a small bureau that holds a large vase with pine boughs. The light comes sharply from the right to sculpt her figure but Kinney drew the pine boughs back in shadow so as not to compete with the girl's form. She looks solemnly to the right in a three-quarters pose, hands tight to the body and folded in her lap. We're in the presence of a somewhat matronly young woman, dignified by her sculptural aplomb and the adjacent still life.



Elizabeth, c. 1920



Helen Stella, '22

There are many other photographs which rise above the humdrum. For example, alongside his rather stark bust portraits of pairs of students, there's one that shows him capable of eliciting personality, a two-thirds view of "*Helen Stella '22.*" What encouraged him to make this handsome rendering? Was it she or he who decided on the portrait? Was she perhaps a friend of his daughter Elizabeth, a sister undergraduate? Whatever the reason, it's clear that in this

photograph he found an uncustomary rapport with his subject. We sense a psychological exchange between them that is absent from his portraits of his daughter.

Among Kinney's artfully arranged pictures we looked at his championship chrysanthemum. It was centrally posed and beautifully lighted, in contrast to the more casual photographs he usually took in the greenhouse. There are a few other occasions when he took pains to isolate a single plant. He shot *Night Blooming Cereus* in daylight, which slants down from the windows above. He took the time to set those two sensuous blossoms against a contrasting zig-zag structure.



Night Blooming Cereus

If an exhibition of Kinney's work is ever undertaken, the organizers might be tempted to limit the choices to the kinds of photographs we've just been looking at, close-ups of beautiful objects or people. This would be wrong because it would not do justice to his broad spectrum of the college which requires a generous sampling of hundreds of his handsome images like those included in the present study. Furthermore, his photographs should not be seen in isolation from his attachment to history, which was a vital feature of his outlook. He involved himself in the history of South Hadley as well as of the college; it's evident in his notes on readings and in many pages of his handwritten chronologies in the Gaylord Library. In the section of this essay on buildings, we noted that he often made successive photographs of several edifices taken years apart: Mary Woolley, Pratt and Mary Lyon halls, and the President's house. In his lecture in 1930 he showed how deeply he was fascinated by historical change. He projected a sequence of slides that led from the old seminary building to the aftermath of its fire of 1896, then to the construction of Mary Lyon Hall, the demolition of the old library, and the erection of Williston Memorial Library. He went further back to the origins of the college by showing slides of Mary Lyon's home in Buckland, its church and the academy in Ashfield from which she was graduated. He had found these prints in the college archives, and copied them for his lecture. The fact that he also projected a slide of the program of the commencement of Lyon's Ashfield academy reveals that he used the archives to date salient college people, buildings and events: the historian at work.

History enters also in our appreciation of his photographs because we're conscious of the decades that have passed. Our nostalgia is the screen through which we look at the early twentieth century, charmed by the foregrounds Kinney gave to buildings that surround us now but look so different in his renderings. James Gehrt has often commented on this difference. In other words, historical distance makes his photographs seem deliberately artful and expressive. And they were indeed deliberate. For example, he took several photographs of Porter Hall, setting his tripod at slightly different angles and distances, always giving prominence to the trees which act as veritable performers in his compositions. Many lighter and more spontaneous cameras were increasingly available to him, but he stayed with the view camera and tripod. He didn't experiment with process and devices, so his photographs have a unique consistency. We now see them as having aesthetic content, especially the many pictures of campus buildings and walkways that perpetuated the previous century's picturesque aesthetic. Intimately familiar with the trees that surrounded the buildings he was photographing, he used them as compositional devices to establish spaces and distances while embodying natural forms that contrast with the geometry of nearby structures.

Lacking his own words and having only a few helpful memoirs of his colleagues, we've struggled to construct a biography by looking carefully into his photographs. We don't even know what he thought about his procedures or the subjects that attracted him. He was like the photographer Lewis Hine who famously said "If I could tell the story in words, I wouldn't need to lug around a camera." Instead of using pen and paper to write his observations, Kinney confronted his world by taking out his camera, dark cloth, tripod, glass plates and film holders.

With little to go on except his photographs, we can at least reflect on what is publicly known about his life. For one thing, he had an unusual place among male teachers in a woman's college. He was the first man on regular faculty appointment at Mount Holyoke, and from the beginning he used his camera to document the life of an institution devoted to women. His photographs make visible to us the school's fabric: undergraduate culture (theater, festivals, sports), changing women's fashions, classrooms and museum installations, collegiate architecture, campus plantings and garden design. The latter were attached to his teaching of plant culture but he was also close to student and faculty theater for which he was often a ham actor. It would not be easy to find another man in his era who so thoroughly gave himself to women's culture.

Although some of his photographs proved useful to the college (he was seldom credited), they were not treated as a body of work that deserved notice. He was surely proud to be asked by Mignon Talbot to photograph her famous fossil in 1910. And yet about this time he gave up hope that his work would be properly recognized. He went out among the students not as a distant "objective" photographer, but one who knew them well and who was drawn to their activities. Stokey wrote that only once in his career did he fail to accompany the students on their annual Mountain Day; his photographs are records of his attendance at their indoor sports and their outdoor performances. Yes, he was a conservative man, not a feminist *avant la lettre*, but he overcame the distant remove that most men then adopted when among women.

After looking through Kinney's work, we know that his photographs were not mere reportage. We're sensitive to the picturesque naturalism that makes his buildings reach out to their environment. It's true that we become so used to his effects that they often seem unarranged, plain, with no meretricious embellishment, but we know better. He could use light and shadow to create drama, as in *Porter Hall* (page 41), where the white shaft of the paper birch has a singular presence. On another day he put his tripod further back from Porter to form a subtler kind of drama: *Porter Hall, Early Spring*.



Porter Hall, Early Spring, c. 1908-10

That same birch makes Porter look even darker, and now it's accompanied by several other trees which form a rather stark pantomime. Placed on a filigree of attenuated shadows, their uprightness is all the more apparent. They're his real subject. No one would take this photograph for a rendering of Porter's architecture. When we take time to look at his other photographs with similar care, we conclude that behind Kinney's reticence there was a gifted wielder of a view camera. He had the experience and technical skills to achieve the effects that he desired.

Kinney should be remembered today for his many hundreds of glass plate negatives because they are a beautiful and formidable pictorial history of forty years of the college and its ties with South Hadley. They let us witness the successive changes in the campus buildings and landscapes that were settings for a distinctive New England center of women's education. We can't imagine the same brick and brownstone buildings and rolling lawns set down in the prairies of the Midwest or the mountainous landscapes further west. It's unlikely that a comparable set of photographs exists for any other small college town.