cinnati Medical College, among others. In 1977, University President Warren Bennis and Governor Jim Rhodes signed papers ending UC's municipal status while securing its future as part of the state university system of Ohio.

UC maintains its strong relationship with Cincinnati, pioneering countless community and regionally oriented programs, from its expanding co-op education system, the first in the nation, to the Niehoff Urban Studio. Stradling describes the social and political activism of UC students and faculty—front and center in the civil rights and women's rights movements, as well as the public health and environmental movements. Often they struggled to change the culture within their own institution, which at times appeared conservative or reactionary.

Drawing on archival research, Stradling recounts in lively prose and through dozens of illustrations, two-hundred years of UC history, setting the story in the context of changes within higher education in the United States.

With the cost of higher education on the minds of legislators and the public, questions first posed by Daniel Drake in 1819 upon the founding of Cincinnati College remain relevant. Who should the college serve? What and how should students learn? How can we pay for it? *In Service to the City* encourages readers to consider how the University of Cincinnati—with a history so entwined with its city—can balance its urban-serving tradition with its aspiration to be a leading global research university.

"The Ohio General Assembly incorporated Cincinnati College and approved Cincinnati's municipal charter within days of each other early in the winter of 1819. The paths of city and university have been intertwined ever since as David Stradling so ably relates. *In Service to the City* is a fascinating read both as a history of UC's two hundred years and as a primer for understanding recent UC-Cincinnati events."
—**David Mann**, Cincinnati City Councilmember, former mayor of Cincinnati and U.S. Congressman

"Focused on the complex and ever changing relationship between the university and its host city, Stradling's superb history demonstrates clearly that the university's urban location and its status as a municipal institution continuously shaped its two hundred year history."
—**Steven Diner**, Rutgers University-Newark. Author of *Universities and Their Cities: Urban Higher Education in America*

"Stradling brilliantly outlines the central structural tension found in the university from its inception; a tension that exists in all of higher education, between the pursuit of wealth and the pursuit of knowledge and the pursuit of a mission based on the production of knowledge and service to all people, including blacks, marginalized white workers, and others denied entrance to university at one time or another."
—**Henry Taylor**, University of Buffalo. Author of *Inside El Barrio: A Bottom-Up View of Neighborhood Life in Castro's Cuba*

"Great cities and great universities grow and prosper together, but the relationship between 'town' and 'gown' can sometimes be fraught and difficult, especially during periods of urban decline and renewal. David Stradling's bicentenary history reveals both sides of this symbiotic relationship between university and municipality in this is a fascinating story of one of the nation's most prominent municipal universities."
—**Peter Cunich**, University of Hong Kong

"In a nation dominated by private and state universities, urban historian David Stradling elegantly narrates the life of a municipal college, a city institution historically devoted to the people of Cincinnati. He depicts a school committed to research and discovery, to teaching and learning, and to community reform—all in service to the Queen City."
—**Kristi A. Nelson**, Provost, University of Cincinnati

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IN SERVICE TO THE CITY
A HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
UC CINCINNATI

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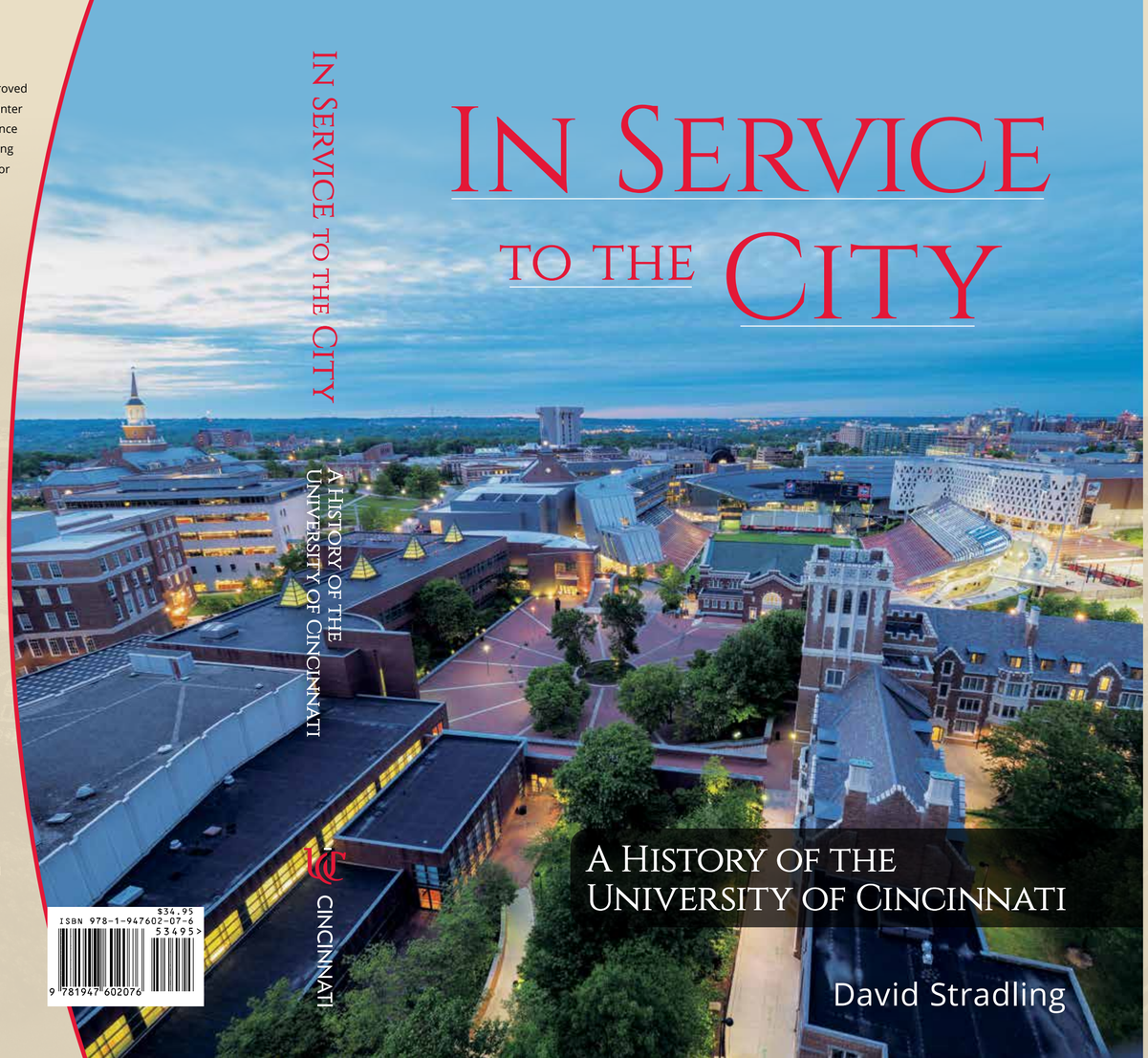

# IN SERVICE TO THE CITY

## A HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

David Stradling

$34.95

With roots reaching back to 1819, the University of Cincinnati has long been at the frontier of higher education in the Ohio Valley. While it has aspired to fulfill its mission to serve the public good, some residents, particularly those living near campus, have wondered how university decisions benefited the city at large. Long a municipal university, UC struggled to serve a broad, diverse population, even as Cincinnati itself struggled in the late twentieth century. Through it all, the university has maintained its importance to the city and its alumni.

*In Service to the City: A History of the University of Cincinnati*, the first history of the university written in over fifty years, explores the evolving, complex relationship between UC and the city of Cincinnati. *In Service to the City* casts an unvarnished lens on the details of student demographics, faculty research, curricular changes, and athletic controversy to challenges associated with campus architecture and planning, neighborhood relations, regional and national consequences of urban decline, and the roles of municipal, state and federal governments within American higher education.

Urban, environmental historian David Stradling traces UC's story through starts and stops, growth and contraction. In the 1870's the institution began its transformation into a comprehensive, municipal university located in America's thriving heartland. Expansion continued through mergers with Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and Cin-

# In Service to the City

## A History of the University of Cincinnati

David Stradling

University of Cincinnati | Press

*Cincinnati 2018*

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*Dedicated to the memory of*
*Zane L. Miller*
*Cincinnati's Historian*

# 1

# A Frontier Institution

## The College Edifice in the Commercial City

In the fall of 1814, Daniel Drake stood before a small group of men who, somewhat hopefully, called themselves the "School of Literature and the Arts." Engaged in the "introductory labors" of bringing high culture to frontier Cincinnati, theirs was one of many short-lived efforts to connect this western outpost to the traditions of western civilization. Just four years earlier Drake had described Cincinnati as a village with no paved streets, and in many ways it was still what Drake called a "Back-woods" community. But on this night Drake praised the work of the school's members, who over their first year had presented essays on topics as various as the geology of Cincinnati and the internal commerce of the nation. Drake acknowledged that the West was at a disadvantage so far as intellect and learning were concerned; comparisons with Europe's great centers of education—Edinburgh, Paris, or London—would be absurd. "Our lot, gentlemen, is cast in a region abundant in but few things, except the products of a rich and unexhausted soil. Learning, philosophy, and taste, are yet in early infancy, and the standard of excellence in literature and science is proportionally low."[1]

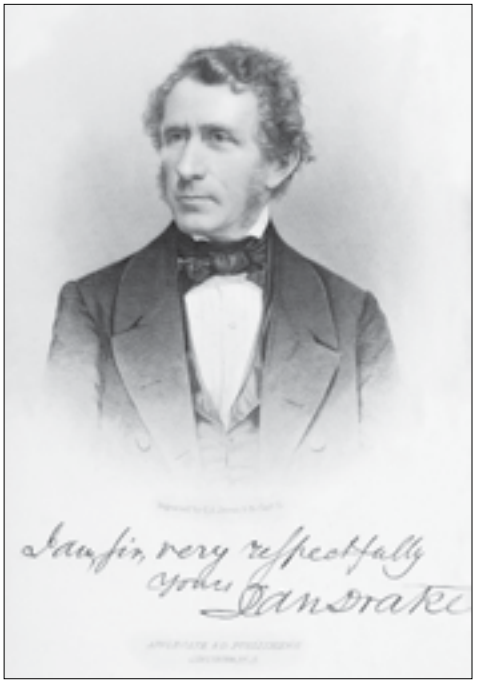
But Drake assured the assembled that the Miami Country, so called because of the two Miami rivers that drained the good farmland north of the city, held more than natural advantages. The young American empire's hold on the West was tenuous, but so too was the influence of "the empire of prejudice." Drake thought these men were in a position to innovate, to improve upon the societies of the East and of Europe. Perhaps most important, "In no country of the same age and numbers, do the immigrants exhibit more diversity."[2] People had come to Cincinnati from every state in the young nation, from England, Ireland, and "the empires of Europe." Drake thought this diverse population gave residents the opportunity to

traverse the world and learn the customs of many places without ever leaving the city. According to Drake, "the operations of intellect in an old country are like the waters of a deep canal, which, flowing between artificial banks, pursue an equable and uniform course." But in this "new country" the waters of intellectual life "resemble the stream which cuts its own channel in the wilderness; rolls successively in every direction; has a current, alternately swift and slow; is frequently shallow; but always free, diversified, and natural. The former is eminently useful for a *single* purpose—the latter can be made subservient to *many*." Drake, a brilliant, controversial young man, Cincinnati's most prominent intellectual figure, had found the perfect metaphor to capture the raw potential of the Ohio Valley. The wild waters of the West—metaphorical and real—would reshape the nation. And Cincinnati, Drake hoped, would be at the center of it all.

Born in New Jersey in 1785, Drake had moved with his family at an early age to May's Lick, Kentucky. He came to Cincinnati at fifteen to study medicine as an apprentice to William Goforth, a well-regarded physician. Like Goforth, Drake had varied intellectual interests, and in addition to studying medicine he became a student of the young city and the Ohio Valley region. Among the important early publications of his long and remarkable career were *Notices Concerning Cincinnati*, a pamphlet published in 1810, and the more substantial *A Natural and Statistical View, or Picture of Cincinnati*, published in 1815. Together these pieces not only established Drake as an expert on Cincinnati, but also as one of its most vocal boosters, eager to convey the unique prospect of his adopted city. The Ohio Valley, Drake emphasized, was ruled by its own climate and possessed distinctive flora and fauna; its rocks contained a distinctive fossil record, which was of special interest in the early 1800s because of the Big Bones found across the river in Kentucky. Like all good boosters, Drake was compelled by his desire to know this place, boast of its character, and predict its grand future.

And now, just a month before the Treaty of Ghent brought the War of 1812 to its official close, Drake could affirm an American future in the West. With the removal of British interests and the defeat of confederated Native Americans, migration to the Ohio Valley was sure to surge, and boosters like Drake would direct the flow. Many fledgling cities—including Lexington in the heart of the rich soil of the Kentucky bluegrass region, and Louisville, located downriver at the only substantial falls on the Ohio—competed to attract migrants seeking economic opportunities. Boosters knew that many of the nascent towns would not thrive, that just a

few would become substantial places, and only one would become the region's metropolis. Most boosters were primarily concerned about improving commercial traffic and increasing property values—making money—but for some, like Drake, the concern was more than economic. He wanted Cincinnati to become the intellectual and cultural center of the region—the Athens of the West.[3]




Daniel Drake, 1855. This engraving appeared in Edward Mansfield's *Memoirs of the Life and Services of Daniel Drake, M.D.* (Cincinnati: Applegate & Co., 1855). *Courtesy of the Henry R. Winkler Center for the History of the Health Professions, University of Cincinnati Libraries.*

Drake was hardly the only booster in Cincinnati. In a historical sketch of the city that accompanied his 1819 directory, Oliver Farnsworth reflected on the changes witnessed by a fictive settler who had arrived in Cincinnati just two decades earlier. "In the course of a few years, he has seen a little village of cabins transformed, as if by magic, into a populous, active, and commercial city. He has seen the canoe give way to the barge, and the barge to the steam boat. In short, he has seen hills torn down, marshes filled up, streets laid out, graduated and paved, public buildings erected, manufactories established, and every part of the country around him improved and beautified by the active spirit of enterprise and civilization."[4] In the thirty years since its founding, Cincinnati had grown into an important commercial center, with a bustling public landing that served as a linchpin in the burgeoning river trade. Still, with fewer than 10,000 residents and a credit crunch caused by a banking panic that year, Cincinnati's continued rise was far from guaranteed.

Observer after observer—from resident boosters to touring foreigners—commented on the distinctive feel of the frontier. Even in cities, they felt a certain freedom from custom, a distance from cultural norms and ancient institutions—a liberty to remake oneself and perhaps society. Expressing their faith in democracy, some observers anticipated great experimentation and innovation, not just in

economic terms, but in social arrangements as well. Importantly, however, the impulse of settlers everywhere was to fill the structural void with new institutions, usually modeled directly on those they had left behind. Growth created wealth, especially among property owners, and the established elite invested a portion of their gains in ways designed to enrich their lives but also to perpetuate the development of their city.[5] Titian Peale took note of these investments when he stopped in Cincinnati while traveling on the steamboat *Western Engineer* in May 1819. Peale, son of the famed artist Charles Willson Peale, noted that Cincinnati had "risen like a mushroom from the wilderness." The city's growth and diversity had been created by immigrants "every day arriving from all parts of the world." Although much of the growth was quite recent, Peale remarked, "The inhabitants have already founded a college and subscribed eight or ten thousand dollars for a museum."[6] They had done so because only through such investments could Cincinnati hope to become the metropolis of the West.

## A Very Eligible Situation for a Seat of Learning

Cincinnati's effort to create an institution of higher education began in earnest in 1814, with a group of Methodists trying to establish a Lancastrian School under their control. Some residents, however, not wanting the school under the auspices of any single religious body, decided to create their own—the Cincinnati Lancaster Seminary, chartered by the state in 1815. The new school admitted students at a wide range of ages and operated under the educational principles of Joseph Lancaster, an English Quaker who advocated a system in which the older children taught the younger under the supervision of one master. To accommodate the new school, the First Presbyterian Church leased land at the corner of Walnut and Fourth Streets, upon which a two-story building was erected. The Methodists, at first snubbed, joined in the effort, and in the spring of 1815, 420 students enrolled in the school, their families paying a tuition of $8 per term. A few needy youngsters attended on scholarship, a condition set by the Presbyterian Church in exchange for the land.[7]

The Lancaster School competed with several other private schools, but the city itself did not yet provide public education. In 1818, a number of prominent Cincinnatians, including General William Lytle, Judge Jacob Burnet, and John H. Piatt, raised funds to add a college to the Lancastrian School. The $50,000 pledged would have provided a tidy endowment, except for the onset

Cincinnati College, circa 1819. Constructed at the corner of Walnut and Fourth Streets, the Cincinnati College edifice, with its bell tower and gardens, provided a structure worthy of a growing city. Unfortunately, it also created a debt that could not be overcome by the generosity of its patrons.
*Photograph files, Archives & Rare Books Library, University of Cincinnati.*

of the Panic of 1819, a financial crisis that triggered two years of economic stagnation. Lytle, son of one of the founders of the city, a famed military man, experienced surveyor, and heir to a considerable fortune, mostly in land, suffered acutely during the crisis. Still, prospects seemed bright on January 22, 1819, when the state of Ohio incorporated the Cincinnati College with a short piece of legislation. (Interestingly, Cincinnati became a city two weeks later, when the General Assembly approved a municipal charter.)

Daniel Drake, who had personally traveled to Columbus to help ensure the passage of the college charter, was ecstatic with the outcome. "There is now a fair prospect of making this city the emporium of the sciences from the Western Country," he wrote in his typically confident tone. The faculty would be led by Elijah Slack, who had moved to Cincinnati to lead the Lancastrian Seminary after a rocky stint at Princeton University. Slack ran the college and taught mathematics, physical sciences, and chemistry. He did so using a laboratory outfitted with his personal apparatus, which he had brought with him from Princeton. The importance of the appearance of this sophisticated equipment on the frontier should not be underestimated. "A very handsome Laboratory has been fitted up," Drake bragged to Dr.

Samuel Brown, "which will receive a hundred pupils and Mr. Slack has furnished it amply and in the best style with apparatus."[8]

The state charter named the first board of trustees and established the rules by which it would operate. The board consisted of twenty prominent men of the city, including Burnet, Lytle, Drake, and Martin Baum, who undertook the building of a grand Palladian home on Pike Street at the same time he helped to build the college.[9] The state authorized the college board to "grant and confer on any candidate, in such form as they may direct, all or any of the degrees that are usually conferred in any college or university in the United States." The college also gained control of the Lancastrian Seminary and its two-story brick building. The school had a central entranceway and staircase, topped with an impressive dome that contained a set of bells.[10] Still, the building was not yet substantial enough to house a college, and the board set out to expand it with a new wing.

In October, Cincinnati newspapers announced that the college would open on November 9 with "the classical course of studies." This would be the winter session, with a summer session to begin in May and end in a September commencement. Admission cost $5, and courses cost $20 per term. To gain admission, students needed some command of Latin and Greek, which they would demonstrate via examination. As was standard, the curriculum was entirely set by the faculty, with no electives. Freshmen took courses in Virgil, Horace, Xenophon, Latin prosody, and the Greek New Testament, among other classical topics. In subsequent years students took geometry, algebra, natural philosophy, chemistry, and astronomy, even while continuing to study Greek and Latin classics. In addition to the demanding coursework, the college established a rigid code of conduct. All students were to attend morning and evening prayers in the college hall and attend "public worship on the Sabbath." Among the many other rules: students could not "go to a tavern or tippling house, for the purpose of entertainment or amusement, without permission from some member of the Faculty"; and, challenging someone to a duel, or merely serving as a second in a duel, would be grounds for expulsion.[11]

The opening of the college brought a great deal of optimism, despite the economic downturn. As Oliver Farnsworth wrote, "It must be obvious to everyone acquainted with the Western Country, that Cincinnati is a very eligible situation for a seat of learning." And now it would have an educational institution befitting its rank as the largest city in the Ohio Valley. The political, cultural, and economic elite of the West could send their sons—and only their sons—to a college in

their region's urban center, in the hopes that they would be prepared to lead the next generation. Farnsworth was certain that the institution would succeed, for the commercial connections created by the Ohio River had placed Cincinnati at the center of the region's economic network. Further, Farnsworth noted, "It is a healthy, populous city, and can afford the wealth and talents necessary to endow and foster an institution of the kind."[12] Boosters hoped Cincinnati College would quickly surpass Lexington's Transylvania University, which became the first college west of the Appalachians when founded in 1799. The nationally known Lexington institution provided the best evidence that Cincinnati could not yet claim to be the Athens of the West.[13]

Drake thought Cincinnati College could outcompete Transylvania by taking advantage of its location. In the previous decade, Cincinnati had dramatically


Cincinnati, 1819. This map appeared in Oliver Farnsworth's city directory. It lists the recently created Cincinnati College among the city's prominent sites, at the location of the former Lancaster Seminary. *Photograph files, Archives & Rare Books Library, University of Cincinnati.*

outpaced Lexington in growth, and with the ever-expanding fleet of steamboats on the river, there was no reason to think Cincinnati's economic superiority over its landlocked southern neighbor would diminish. The trick would be translating individual profits into community resources. Residents had begun a subscription library nearly twenty years earlier, and Drake hoped its collection would move to the college to facilitate student use. Drake also thought the Western Museum Society, just organized, would "place its collections in the same building and thus contribute to the promotion of this young and promising institution."[14] Of course, the commercial bustle of the city brought its disadvantages for scholars, too. After two years of study in Cincinnati, John Hough James reflected in his diary after walking into town during a hot and dusty late summer day, "I have often wished for the country where I might pursue my studies undisturbed."[15] For better and worse, Cincinnati College would be an *urban* institution.

The college faculty, numbering just three at the start—Slack, Thomas Osborn, who taught languages, and David Taylor, who tutored students—assessed the abilities of the first set of applicants and placed them in the curriculum based on their proficiencies in Latin and Greek. Three young men entered as juniors and so were prepared for graduation after the summer session in 1821. On September 26, a Wednesday evening, in a ceremony held in the north wing of the college building, President Slack opened the graduation with a prayer. One of Cincinnati's weekly newspapers, the *Western Spy*, reported on the events of the day. "The audience was numerous and respectable, and left the Institution, we trust, equally impressed with its importance and the novelty of the scene which they had just witnessed." This was, according to the paper, "no ordinary moment," one that would be of interest to every class in the city, one "of so much consequence to the republic of science, letters, and refinement." The lengthy report looked forward to the day when the college would "be justly esteemed the first and greatest of the Western Country."[16]

Among the three graduates was William Henry Harrison Jr., son of a general who had gained fame fighting Native Americans and the British before and during the War of 1812. The older Harrison had recently served in the US House of Representatives—and eventually he would be elected president of the United States. Unfortunately, his son, who lived in North Bend with his parents, died before his father's inauguration in 1841. At graduation, the younger Harrison spoke on "Eloquence," a speech the *Western Spy* called "an impassioned, glowing harangue, one delivered with his characteristic impetuosity." The second graduate was Freder-

ick A. Kemper of Walnut Hills, who gave the salutatory address in Latin, precluding comment from the *Spy*'s reporter, who didn't know the language. The third was John Hough James, who graduated at the top of his small class. James delivered "a chaste, appropriate, and highly affecting Valedictory," according to the *Spy*. James himself admitted that he was "flattered with having drawn tears from some of the ladies and some of my fellow students." After the day's events he reflected in his diary, "I have the honour of being the first graduate of Cincinnati College and tho I leave it with the highest honours it can bestow, I leave it with regret."[17]

In 1822, a young, wealthy Scot named William N. Blane passed through Cincinnati as part of a tour of the continent, arriving on the steamboat *United States* from the thriving city of Louisville. He was most impressed with Cincinnati, which he called "the western capital of the Federal Republic." Blane toured the college while in town, even sitting in on a class. "The college is tolerably built," he noted in a published account of his journey, "but is not likely to be well attended until better regulations are established." In an indication that Cincinnati retained its outpost flavor, Blane reported, "I was present at a lecture, and was much shocked at the want of decorum exhibited by the students, who sat down in their plaids and cloaks, and were constantly spitting tobacco juice about the room."[18] Apparently demanding church attendance and prohibiting duels was not enough. The journey from "Back-woods" community to Athens of the West would take some time.

## Neatly and Scientifically Arranged

On June 10, 1820, Daniel Drake stood behind the rostrum of the Cincinnati College chapel. Just thirty-five years old, Drake was an established figure in the city, well known to its learned elite. So it wasn't surprising that he should rise before the crowd in celebration of the opening of the Western Museum. Drake had been involved with the museum from the outset, encouraged by William Steele, who had recruited Drake to serve as the Museum Society secretary in 1818. Meetings began the next year. Members contributed $50, a very high sum. The museum opened a year later, occupying prominent space in the college edifice, in close proximity of the students and faculty who might make frequent use of the collections.

The Western Museum contained such a great variety of items that it might have been called a museum of everything. Cabinets displayed "neatly and scientifically arranged" objects, including minerals, fossils, and cultural artifacts, many of them collected from the region. In this way more than just the museum's

location was "western."[19] Its finest objects were, too. The most important of these were samples of Big Bones from the famed lick across the river. These included Drake's own collection of fossil bones. Some cabinets held Native American artifacts, which Drake referred to as "curiosities"—"utensils, weapons, and trinkets of our Indian tribes," some of which were taken from the many mounds in the region.[20] Indeed, Drake hoped the museum would "be made an efficient means of inquiry into the aboriginal history of this country" and ultimately explain what happened to the mound-building societies that had disappeared long before white settlers arrived.[21] The room also held preserved animals—taxidermy—"quadrupeds," reptiles, and birds, which captured the rich natural history of the Ohio Valley. The museum even included paintings, mostly produced in the region. Drake noted that in older cities, museums of different specialties would hold these collections separately—art here, native artifacts there, and fossils in still another place.[22] In the new country, these objects would be displayed, appreciated, and understood in relationship to one another.

The museum was curated by Robert Best, who also performed taxidermy and positioned the animals, earning great praise in the local press. Another museum employee also gained notoriety. Four months before the museum opened, young Robert Todd Lytle, who later became one of the early graduates of Cincinnati College, wrote from Louisville, inquiring of his father William, then a trustee of the college, if he could find a place for a man with extraordinary talent. This man, born in Saint-Domingue and raised in France, could serve as professor of French, or perhaps of drawing, for John James Audubon had made a reputation for himself with his art, especially his paintings of birds. "You have no doubt seen some of his paintings in this place," Robert wrote, "and of course will be able to judge that subject for yourself." Audubon had been collecting birds for years as he moved about Kentucky, Missouri, and Louisiana, making just enough money to raise a family on the edge of poverty. All the while he painted birds in realistic settings in the hopes of publishing a complete ornithology of the United States—a work that Lytle thought was nearly finished just as the Western Museum was opening. "The opportunity of employing Mr. Audubon ought not to be neglected," Lytle implored, "as he would be a great acquisition to your institution and to your society."[23]

Audubon's work for the museum gained immediate acclaim in the press. The weekly newspaper, *Liberty Hall*, praised Audubon's "collection of splendid, and we may safely say unrivalled, paintings of birds, animals, &c. from real life." His work

constituted just a fraction of the fine art in the new museum. Drake noted that some observers might say that the city is "too poor to encourage the fine arts," that this enterprise is premature for a small city on the western edge of the nation. "I will admit that but few of our citizens have sufficient wealth to become their individual patrons," Drake said, "but this very circumstance constitutes a strong argument for confiding to a collective body, the means and the duty of promoting their introduction to this country." This is what the museum was for, to encourage the introduction and production of fine arts in Cincinnati as well as to promote an understanding of the natural history of the region. Science and art were intimately connected in Drake's mind, just as they were united in Audubon's paintings.[24]

Drake thought of the museum as a perfect supplement to the college, and so their physical connection was important. Drake arranged an agreement with the college trustees that assured the collection a rent-free home in the college building, while students and professors would have unfettered access, including the use of artifacts to illustrate lectures. In this way, the museum provided objects for study to complement the literature provided by the college, although Drake thought that the museum, too, needed an expansive library. "One of the most painful deprivations experienced by the student of nature in these new and remote settlements," Drake wrote, "is the want of books to direct his researches." The library would have to expand, because, "Thousands of years have elapsed since the students of Nature began to unfold her mysteries. Books are the great repository of their discoveries, and he who neglects them, begins, like the first observer, unaided and alone." In an effort to raise money to purchase books, Drake and Slack organized lectures at the museum—Drake on "Mineralogy and Geology" and Slack on "Elements of Natural Philosophy." The lectures, free to members of the museum, were 25 cents for the general public.[25]

The college and the museum were physically united, but each had a specific purpose. "The College is principally a school of literature, the Museum of science, and the arts," said Drake. "The knowledge imparted by one is elementary, by the other practical. Without the former, our sons would be illiterate; without the latter, they would be scholars merely—by the help of both, they may become scholars and philosophers." In other words, complete students must combine scholarly understanding of the world in which all of humanity has existed, with a practical knowledge of the world in which they actually live. Drake also regarded learning at first hand, through travel and field study, to be essential to developing understand-

ing. He argued that Cincinnati's young men and women should know their home before heading off to explore Europe or the eastern cities. "Until we are acquainted with the state of our own country," he wrote, "we must be wretchedly prepared to appreciate that of others."[26] In this way, the mission of the college to connect western residents to classical traditions was balanced by the mission of the museum to familiarize them with the particularities of their own Ohio Valley.

The Western Museum became a necessary stop for travelers passing through the city. W. N. Blane, who had been unimpressed with the college, had a more positive reaction to the museum. "The Museum at Cincinnati, though small, is very interesting to a lover of natural history," he reported. "All the specimens are very neatly arranged." He was especially struck by one of the "remains of the mammoth"—a great tusk eight and a half feet long.[27] Unfortunately, shortly after Blane's visit the poor finances of the museum, unsurprising given the depressed economy, precipitated a crisis that nearly led to the sale of the objects. With no ready buyers, the entire collection was gifted to Joseph Dorfeuille, who had become director in 1823, with the simple stipulation that members continue to have free access. Dorfeuille moved the museum out of the college edifice to the corner of Main and Second Streets, closer to the public landing, where it could more easily attract travelers passing through Cincinnati on the river. Under Dorfeuille's leadership the mission of the museum quickly slid from education to entertainment, and the collection's scientific value waned.[28]

## The Philadelphia of the West

Drake had played a significant role in founding of the college and the museum, but his primary professional goal was to create a medical college in Cincinnati. Indeed, Drake secured the incorporation for the Medical College of Ohio just days before that of Cincinnati College in January 1819. His own medical training had begun with an apprenticeship, but he had also received formal training in Philadelphia, where he studied under Benjamin Rush at the University of Pennsylvania's excellent medical school, from which he received a degree in 1816. He then accepted a faculty position at Transylvania University, which started its medical school in 1817. But Drake spent less than a year in Lexington, because he much preferred living in his beloved Cincinnati. Upon returning in early 1818, Drake began to build support for a medical school that would replicate the success of Pennsylvania and eclipse the success of Transylvania. Writing to Dr. Samuel Brown, Drake con-

cluded, in typical booster fashion, "Upon the whole I am convinced that Cincinnati is to be the *Philadelphia* of the West as to medical instruction."[29]

To found a successful school, Drake needed to attract renowned faculty. To this end, he carried on an extensive correspondence with Brown, one of the nation's most highly regarded physicians, who was then at work in Philadelphia. In a lengthy letter, Drake assured Brown that, "we shall not hesitate to encourage the emigration hither of such eminent men as may be necessary to fill the professorships" of this new college. Brown too had trained with Benjamin Rush, and he had attended the University of Edinburgh and the University of Aberdeen, giving him one of the finest pedigrees in the country. Seeing Brown as the linchpin of his school's success, Drake offered him the professorship of anatomy even before the college had been established.[30]

"Of the state of the medical profession in Cincinnati I cannot say much," Drake reported to Brown, displaying the condescension his fellow physicians found so annoying, "but the population of the town (already much greater than that of Lexington) is rapidly increasing." Drake knew that his college would enter into direct competition with the one he had recently left, and so he assured Brown that Cincinnati was "better situated physically, morally and politically, for a medical college, than Lexington." To increase public enthusiasm for a medical school in Cincinnati, Drake gathered together talented physicians—Coleman Rogers and Elijah Slack—and arranged a lecture series. This allowed Drake to report to Brown on "the pulse of the public."[31] The lectures also helped draw the attention of prospective students, including "four respectable young men from the interior of Kentucky and three from other towns in this state," he wrote to Brown, eager to emphasize the ability of Cincinnati to draw talented students away from Lexington.[32]

Drake expected to double the attendance at lectures the next winter, and based on this support he "concluded to make a personal application to the legislature for a law of incorporation." He solicited Brown's thoughts on the language that should be contained in the charter, which Drake himself drafted, and he asked permission to include Brown's name as professor of anatomy. "To this I hope you will consent; and if you have not given us your decision upon the receipt of this letter please to write me immediately at Columbus." Drake expected the school to grow quickly, and he assured Brown, "We do not therefore solicit your cooperation in a transient or insignificant undertaking."[33]

Coleman Rogers also recruited Brown to join the as-yet-unfounded college. He too understood that the real competition was with Transylvania, where Brown

had taught for several years after returning from Scotland. Transylvania had been damaged by Drake's departure, which precipitated other departures and a temporary closure of the medical program, and Rogers assured Brown, "[I]t will be impossible to fill the professorships in the school at Lexington for many years; no person will accept who is qualified."[34] Two months after Rogers made his case, Drake returned from Columbus, having secured a charter for the college and the medical school. Brown, however, did not join in Drake's celebration.[35]

Despite the wooing, Brown decided to head to Lexington instead of Cincinnati. Upon hearing the news, Rogers wrote, "I admit you have all the talent that could be asked for to form a school, but you must have more, you must have population so that you may have patients to give your practice; you must have *subjects* for anatomy; to conclude you want *stuff* to work on." Further, Rogers warned, "This you have not—nor can any human effort procure it."[36] Brown's decision to bolster Transylvania's faculty was a heavy blow to Cincinnati, because leaders of both institutions thought the region could support only one excellent medical college. Drake, frustrated by Rogers's ultimate support of Brown's decision, had him dismissed from the college. When classes began in the fall of 1820, four professors—Drake, Slack, and two other local physicians, Jesse Smith and Benjamin Bohrer—constituted the faculty.[37]

In addition to completing the faculty, Drake was intent on assembling a library of medical works. He had asked Brown to gather books in Philadelphia—all the most recent publications in the field. Drake was especially keen on acquiring books from France. "If we conclude to import any books from Europe we should make out an order soon," Drake noted in February, just six months from what he hoped would be the opening of the school. By the time the school did commence in 1820, a year later than he had hoped, the library consisted of over five hundred volumes, a number sufficiently large so as to appear in a marketing circular announcing the commencement of classes.[38] An up-to-date library was a strong selling point with prospective students.

Although he had not assembled the faculty he wanted, Drake continued to work toward the success of the Medical College, including securing the use of a house with room enough to instruct 100 students, although the first class had only 30. He also made arrangements to assure a stream of patients for the students. He made an agreement with the secretary of war to attend to the soldiers at the garrison in Newport, and with the city to attend to the poor. Most important, he

went back up to Columbus to secure the creation of the Commercial Hospital and Lunatic Asylum in 1821, for which he also secured state funds and tax support.[39] Students and faculty at the college would have attending rights at the new hospital, constructed on Twelfth Street, a mile north of the riverfront on inexpensive land.

Unfortunately for the Medical College and for Drake, jealousies and animosities developed into a fractured medical community, and after just two years Drake was forced out of the college he had created. Slack, who participated in Drake's ouster, continued on at the college, which managed to erect its own building on Sixth Street in 1826. Drake, meanwhile, returned to Transylvania to teach. When he left town, nearly all of the institutions he had established rested on weak foundations.

## Drake's Battle for the Marines and a Place in the City

Charles Fenno Hoffman arrived in Cincinnati via steamboat in the spring of 1834. The young, soon-to-be-famous author was struck by the city's beauty, its "well-washed streets and tasteful private residences." Despite the depression of the early 1820s, Cincinnati's population had more than doubled in a decade. At well over 25,000 residents, Cincinnati was larger than Lexington, Louisville, and St. Louis combined. Construction of the Miami Canal, begun in 1825, had helped fuel the growth by connecting Cincinnati to Dayton and the rich farmland of western Ohio. The city became home to hundreds of new residents every year, and since nearly everyone in Cincinnati came from somewhere else, it was, Hoffman wrote, "in the highest degree absurd to speak of the Cincinnatians as a provincial people in their manners, when the most agreeable persons that figure here hail originally from New-York or Philadelphia, Boston and Baltimore, and are very tenacious of the style of living in which they have been educated." In other words, it wasn't just the fine hotels and the "elegantly furnished drawing-rooms" that revealed Cincinnati's progress. It was the manners of the people, tied as they were to older, eastern places. The frontier had pushed west, the forests had been pushed back, and the city had flourished. Hoffman raved of the "twenty gilded spires gleaming among gardens and shrubbery," and several "principal buildings" drew his attention, among them the Cincinnati College edifice. Unfortunately, in 1834 the college no longer offered classes, and, in fact, the building had been underutilized for nearly a decade. Still a prominent building, the college edifice had begun to show signs of dilapidation.[40]

In the years immediately following its founding, the college gathered considerable moral support but too little financial support. At the time of the first grad-

uation, the *Western Spy* asserted that universities are "mines of wealth to the cities in which they are located." In reality, the flow of wealth would have to move the other direction if the school were to build a firm foundation. Since finances did not improve, the first graduation was one of just four held before the college ceased operations.[41] In 1826, the college suspended operations and began leasing its rooms to help pay down the debt. Students still used the building, to visit private tutors, and several organizations rented rooms for meetings and lectures. The edifice even served as an emergency hospital during the cholera epidemic of 1832. But the college itself existed as a merely legal entity.

Cincinnati College had been part of a wave of new institutions in the West—including Ohio University, founded in 1804, and Miami University, founded five years later.[42] Although both of those rural schools persisted, the failure rate of booster colleges like Cincinnati's was high. Benjamin Drake and E. D. Mansfield wrote hopefully about the college's revival shortly after its closure, but they added, "Until that period shall arrive it is gratifying that our citizens, who have sons to educate, can avail themselves of the advantages of the Miami University, which is located in the vicinity of our city, and is now rising into respectability." Cincinnati's elite would have to send their sons away for college, but not too far away.[43]

In the spring of 1835, the trustees began discussing the possibility of reviving the college through the creation of new medical and law departments. Two years earlier Timothy Walker, a Harvard Law School graduate and recent migrant to Cincinnati, had joined with Edward King and John C. Wright to create the Cincinnati Law School, the first of its kind in the West. At the start lectures were given in Walker and King's law offices on Third Street, but in 1835 the school became a department of the Cincinnati College so that it could confer degrees. The untimely death of King in 1836 left the fledgling school shorthanded, with just two professors. Soon there would be only one—Walker, who, very ably, gave all the lectures.[44]

The college edifice could easily accommodate the small law school, but the building needed considerable work and an enlarged north wing to make it more useful to a new medical department. As the board's building committee summarized, "The object of this wing is to afford, first a laboratory and apparatus room for the professor of chemistry; second, an apartment for the preparations of the professors of special and morbid anatomy, and of surgery and obstetrics; third, a room for practical anatomy." The committee thought that when completed, the revived college would have room for 300 students in the north wing and an

equal number in the south. To pay for the work, the board sought donations from wealthy residents, but the faculty also contributed a significant sum. In 1836, with the edifice "reclaimed from decay," as Drake put it, the board agreed to enclose the college grounds with a stone wall and iron fence so that faculty could create a botanical garden to the south of the building, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut. The board also approved planting and protecting a row of shade trees around the whole property and improving the pavement in front of the building. In this way, the revival inside the building would be matched by renewal outside.[45]

While the college refurbished the building, Drake established a faculty. He served as professor of the theory and practice of medicine and as dean. Joining him were Samuel Gross, who taught anatomy and physiology, Joseph McDowell, professor of surgical anatomy, and professor of obstetrics Landon Rives, who had arrived in Cincinnati in 1830 after having studied medicine in Philadelphia. In all, nine physicians took faculty positions, and they instantly made the school a strong rival to the Medical College of Ohio, Drake's earlier creation. Indeed, on the strength of the faculty, the new medical department attracted sixty-six students to its first cohort in 1836. Students came from thirteen states to study with Drake and his colleagues. In just its second year, the Cincinnati College medical department admitted more students than its older rival.[46]

The faculty could attract students, to be sure, but they needed access to patients for clinical training if the college were to succeed. The rival Medical College of Ohio had exclusive access to the only hospital in the city, the Commercial Hospital, and so Drake decided to create another facility, which he called Cincinnati Hospital, directly across the street from Cincinnati College. The new hospital would receive patients from Drake's Eye Infirmary, which he had opened in 1827, but students—and the hospital—would require a larger, more diverse stream of paying customers. For that, Drake turned to merchant marines.[47]

In the mid-1830s, the public landing was the heart of the city. Hundreds of merchants, cartmen, and day laborers mingled with passengers, captains, and boatmen. The landing, which sloped gradually into the rising and falling river, could be cluttered with piles of products that were coming and going. Men rolled barrels on and off the steamboats and flatboats that came and went. About 250 steamboats plied the waters of the west in the mid-1830s, most of them traveling up and down the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. With an average crew of twenty-two men, inland steamboats employed more than 5,500 men altogether. In addition, every year as

many as 6,000 flatboats—each with a crew of four or five men—stopped at Cincinnati as they floated down river.[48]

In January 1836, Drake attended the Medical Convention of Ohio in Columbus, hoping to gather support for the creation of a system of marine hospitals. Such a system already existed along the coast, for which merchant marines contributed 20 cents a month to a federal fund, a tax that Drake thought could be replicated for men working inland waters. In arguing for a new system, Drake specifically linked the Ohio Valley environment with a propensity for disease, noting that great numbers of boatmen traveled through "unhealthy climates" where they were subject to the "insalubrious exhalations" of marshy banks. Many passengers got sick while traveling up the Mississippi, but, according to Drake, even more people died on "the long and sickly descending voyages of the flat bottomed boats, which often depart from the upper waters in summer and early autumn, when they are low, and their shores unhealthy." The arrival of sick boatmen put ports like Cincinnati at risk of contagious diseases and burdened them with the duty and expense of caring for the infirm. What's more, Drake argued, sick boatmen put the entire commercial enterprise at risk. "Nothing is more common than for two out of the five hands, who generally managed one of these boats, to die; and it has even happened, that the whole have perished, and the boat with its cargo been left deserted, to be lost."[49]

Drake was concerned about these men and about the health of his city, but he was more interested in the opportunity the marines represented for his fledgling medical school. Sick and injured marines could provide a variety of clinical experiences, and, equally important, could pay for the services rendered. In the spring of 1836, Drake petitioned Congress to create these inland marine hospitals and then corresponded with Secretary of the Treasury Levi Woodbury to have the boatmen sent to his Cincinnati Hospital. Using the language of the federal law, Drake informed Woodbury that his hospital would furnish "boarding, nursing, lodging, washing, medical treatments, medicine and funeral expenses" to all entitled seamen. Perhaps impressed with Drake's persistence and reputation, Woodbury notified Cincinnati's port surveyor, Robert Punshon, that the taxes he collected from boat captains should go to Drake's hospital.[50]

With this assured stream of paying patients, Drake formally proposed that Cincinnati College create an infirmary as a "school of practical medicine, surgery, and Obstetrics," which the faculty promptly approved. Immediately thereafter, Drake presented a five-year lease for a townhouse owned by William Disney just

across the street from the college, the signing of which the faculty also promptly approved. Drake and his colleagues quickly prepared the building to accommodate sick and injured marines, furnishing it as a hospital with their own funds.[51]

This arrangement lasted a year, the length of the original contract, after which Punshon decided to send the marines up to the Commercial Hospital at Twelfth Street and Central Avenue, more than a mile from the public landing, where it had been located in the hope of removing the sick from the unhealthy air and unsettling atmosphere at the heart of the bustling city. The Commercial Hospital had attended to the needs of the marines before Drake's arrangement with Woodbury, and Punshon decided that he would revert to this previous practice. This decision was devastating to Cincinnati Hospital and Cincinnati College. "The loss of this class of patients is quite a calamity to the medical department," Rives noted in a plea to the Board of Trustees, in which he encouraged them to exert their influence over the port supervisor or with officials in Washington.[52]

For Drake, Punshon's decision was a personal affront. He assumed, and with good reason, that Punshon had made the change at the pleading of the Medical College of Ohio faculty, not because they needed the patients, but because they wanted to deprive Drake's new school of the clinical experience. So here was the faculty of the old medical school, which Drake had created, taking steps to destroy his new medical school. Although Drake saw this action as yet another personal attack by jealous physicians, he also understood the ramifications for his new hospital. Drake flatly concluded "without the marines the establishment will not support itself."[53]

Drake complained bitterly to James Whitcomb, commissioner of the General Land Office and his personal liaison to Woodbury. Drake argued that since the Commercial Hospital had city support, it did not need the marines. Drake also claimed that no one had done as much as he had to ensure that Congress created inland marine hospitals, which might have been true.[54] Drake's correspondence with Whitcomb and directly to Secretary Woodbury had the desired effect. Woodbury asked Punshon to explain his actions. In late 1837, Punshon reported a series of complaints against the Cincinnati Hospital, including the "contracted size of the apartments." Most of the complaints concerned the relative settings of the two hospitals, however, one being in the center of the city, and the other on the periphery. Punshon claimed that seamen complain about "the heat and dust in the hot weather together with the noise which exists in the most populous and crowded

Commercial Hospital, 1886. Pictured here several decades after Drake's efforts to secure marine patients for his own hospital, Commercial Hospital won out on arguments concerning its better location at the edge of the city, along the Miami and Erie Canal north of downtown. *Photograph files, Archives & Rare Books Library, University of Cincinnati.*

part of the city." In contrast, the Commercial Hospital was "commodious" and "out of the throng of the city."[55]

When made aware of these complaints, Drake produced an affidavit from Dr. Edward Kimball, resident physician of the Marine Hospital. Kimball claimed he had never heard a complaint from a boatman. He also defended the location of his facility, which became the focus of the battle, claiming "the hospital is situated not on one of the business streets of the city" and that it was near "a garden and grass plot"—the college yard—where "the invalids take exercise."[56] Punshon also created an affidavit signed by several owners and officers of steamboats and Joseph Pierce, the port warden, who swore that the Commercial Hospital had provided their men "good clean and comfortable rooms" in "an airy and healthy situation near the confine of the city of Cincinnati." These men had been surprised that the marines "had been removed to a new institution called the Cincinnati Hospital located in the *heart* of the city." They complained that the new hospital was "subject to the noise and constant tumult of a business street and in the summer season to that of dust." They appealed to Punshon to return the sick and injured sailors to Commercial Hospital.[57]

Drake responded to Punshon's affidavit with yet more affidavits. One, dated April 24, 1838, was signed by several boatmen—pilots, stewards, engineers, captains—stating that Drake's hospital is "well finished, well warmed and properly ventilated." They agreed that the hospital was appropriate for a marine hospital. For good measure, Drake had a long list of doctors add their names to the testimonial, along with the medical students at Cincinnati College, some from Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi.[58]

Drake also made clear that Punshon's decision had been motivated by the interests of the older Medical College. Drake even conveyed that "the Surveyor of the Port is a clerk in the Office of one of the Trustees of the Medical College of Ohio, and dependent on him for his daily bread, and all the Trustees of that establishment are enemies of the Cincinnati College." Further, Drake noted that those who signed a petition supporting the change to Commercial Hospital were connected in some way to the rival medical school, including one who admitted to thinking the Medical Department of Cincinnati College ought to be abolished. Drake also defended his hospital's location. "The Hospital stands on the west side of the street, and consequently the dirt in summer is blown from it, and it is on one of the most elegant blocks of the city with low offices and shops on each side of it, and the Cincinnati College with its grounds, for 200 feet on the opposite side of the street," where, now fully revived, 200 students were "taught by lectures and recitations." In addition to the college, there was a female academy and a school for the instruction on the piano, Drake noted, making the case that if this part of the city were quiet enough for educational purposes, it must be quiet enough for a hospital. Drake even attacked Commercial Hospital, which served as the city's poorhouse, claiming "two thirds of its inmates are paupers," clearly an inappropriate arrangement for pilots and engineers who were "respectable men." Drake noted that the college hospital was for sick people only and "at this very moment has four patients in it, who are paying for their accommodations, three of whom have come to it from places in Ohio, Kentucky, and Virginia, more than 300 miles distant."[59]

Cincinnati College trustees put together a committee to investigate and found that Punshon himself had never visited Drake's hospital. And the committee determined that complaints about noise were unfounded because of the presence of the college and because the watermen are "a class of patients whose daily business is prosecuted in the midst of noise and bustle." The committee visited the hospital, found it well furnished and comfortable. The doctors reported that patients had

never complained of its location. The committee also believed that since the hospital was a mile closer to the river than the Commercial Hospital, it was of greater advantage to the watermen, especially for "the victims of those severe accidents to which watermen are particularly liable."[60]

By the fall of 1838, Woodbury had washed his hands of the issue and left the decision to Punshon. Drake's only recourse would be to claim Punshon was incompetent or corrupt, a strategy he apparently left untested.[61] Just months later, however, the Medical Department of Cincinnati College was struck with crisis, as Dr. Willard Parker, chair of surgery, left the faculty in mid-summer. With little time to find a replacement before the next session, Drake sent letters to other physicians seeking advice, including to Joshua Martin in Xenia. Martin was certain that no current faculty member could succeed in that most important job. Clearly the success of the college was still predicated on finding talented faculty with strong reputations, and preferably from outside the city.[62]

Drake decided to support Samuel Gross for the chair of surgery, but the board refused to elevate him. The snub caused Gross to retire, leaving the Medical Department in disarray. On August 24, 1839, the Board of Trustees "vacated" the professorships at the Medical Department, although by then several of the remaining faculty had "withdrawn." Rogers and McDowell had already left the city. Although the board was open to a reorganization of the school, Drake could not put the pieces back together.[63] Drake, Gross, and Rives agreed to inventory the property of the department and the Cincinnati Hospital, including furniture, chemical apparatus, and books, and find buyers for everything. Proceeds would pay debts, with any residuals going to the faculty, who had purchased much of the equipment in the first place.[64] With that, the Medical Department of Cincinnati College ceased to be.

## Well Lighted, Comfortably Warm

The Medical Department wasn't Cincinnati College's only failed endeavor in the 1830s. In 1836, the trustees gathered to consider creating an Academic Department to offer a classical education. Trustee Robert T. Lytle asked the board to create "a flourishing City University," which would require more than just medical and law departments.[65] Daniel Drake, even while teaching and administering the Medical Department, was fully engaged in the effort to re-create the Academic Department. Drake contacted William Holmes McGuffey, then a professor at Mi-

ami University and the author of a recently published children's reader that would make him a household name for more than a century. In addition to wooing McGuffey, just as he had wooed Samuel Brown nearly twenty years earlier, Drake was engaged in fundraising, attempting to secure $1,500 to pay McGuffey's salary, raising much of it by selling $50 subscriptions that entitled holders the right to send a student for a year. Ultimately Drake secured thirty subscriptions, although not all of the donors intended to send students. Nicholas Longworth, one of Cincinnati's wealthiest men, gave $400, and Drake himself gave $200.[66] With the money raised, the trustees elected McGuffey president and professor of intellectual and moral philosophy and the evidences of Christianity. "For the last two days I have been conversing with respectable citizens on the subject of your election," Drake wrote to McGuffey to encourage his acceptance, "and find but one position and feeling. Your acceptance would be followed by a sort of general rejoicing." McGuffey accepted the job the next week.[67]

The Academic Department opened late that fall, enrolling ninety students, most of whom were "sons of citizens of Cincinnati." The board took the strong enrollments as a sign of public support for revival of the college. Still, the institution was on the financial edge, carrying debt taken on in 1835 and 1836 to expand and repair the building, and now it was "indispensable for the Board to acquire the means of putting a new roof on the edifice" and "of repairing and furnishing several of the rooms appropriated to the Academical Department." The board also wanted to furnish the great hall "so as to fit it for the purposes of the College, and for public meetings of the city." And so fundraising continued. In May 1837, with "the aid of the ladies of the city," the college put on an exhibition of fine arts—"chiefly of the paintings and statuary of the numerous ingenious young artists of our city." The Ladies' Fair, as it was called, raised $828 through art sales. Altogether, the board hoped to raise $5,000 to put the college on good footing, relieving it of debt and establishing an endowment. Despite the fundraising efforts, tuition from the 103 students who had enrolled by the end of the spring constituted the largest part of the 1837 budget.[68]

The Academic Department attracted several strong faculty, including Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel, a West Point graduate who taught math and astronomy, and Asa Drury, professor of Latin, Greek, and ancient history. Just three years after its revival, however, the college suffered a blow, when McGuffey accepted the presidency at Ohio University. McGuffey even took a significant pay cut in exchange

for the stability afforded by the landed endowment of the rural college. McGuffey, who had quickly tired of living on the edge of insolvency, hoped Ohio University's endowment would ensure a more prosperous and predictable future.

Once again Cincinnati College suffered from bad timing. The financial panic of 1837, sparked by President Andrew Jackson's banking policies, had precipitated an unprecedented depression and undoubtedly had impeded college fundraising. In early 1840, law professor Edward Mansfield updated McGuffey, by then living in Athens, Ohio, on the conditions in Cincinnati. He lamented the "almost universal stagnation of business" that had "crept over the country." He noted that the problems at Cincinnati College were "only a specimen of the general state of things here." The college still had about 125 paying pupils, but the professors were forced to accept a salary cut to allow it to stay open.[69] Two months later Mansfield could report no improvement. "As to literature, there is none in Cincinnati, at this time," he complained to McGuffey. "Everybody is absorbed in the pecuniary distress of the times and whatever light emerges from it,—is the light of fashion."[70] Mansfield later reported that after "lingering a few years," the Academic Department disbanded, "the professors separated; and the college name attached to its walls alone attest that such an institution once existed."[71]

Mansfield exaggerated the demise of the college, for the Law Department persisted, but even that was jeopardized by a catastrophic fire on a Sunday morning, January 18, 1845. The building was fully destroyed, along with the possessions of several occupants, among them the Young Men's Mercantile Library, which had moved into the building in 1840. As it turned out, the presence of the Mercantile Library may have saved the college. With the building destroyed and no significant endowment in hand, the college faced the very real possibility of disappearing. The Mercantile Library, founded in 1835 to cultivate learning among the city's merchants, signed a perpetual lease for space in a new college building, however, providing the capital to start afresh. The Mercantile's annual report noted that, "it was a prudent and safe investment, and that while we aided in the erection of an Edifice, which should give character and credit to the public buildings of the city, the occupancy in it of its finest and most spacious apartments would reflect back, and reciprocate the like benefits to our Association."[72]

When the new college edifice opened in 1846, the trustees decided not to reestablish the Academic Department. The trustees recognized that it could not afford to assemble a complete faculty, but since the college was "central to the city, and

its hall well fitted for courses of public lectures," they determined that "lectures on various branches of human knowledge, might be instituted and maintained, with equal credit to the college and advantage not only to the families of those who are stockholders in the institution but to the community at large." In this way, the educational mission of the college would be maintained—which was legally necessary if the building were to remain tax exempt.[73]

The seemingly arcane tax issue became quite real in part because of the new edifice. As was typical of academic buildings, the new college building was Greek in style, with a Dayton marble façade and a cupola modeled on the Tower of the Winds in Athens, but the building had a multipurpose design. The first floor contained eight storefronts facing Walnut, spaces that could earn rent to help pay down the debt and, eventually, create a permanent endowment. It made perfect sense, after all, for a building at the heart of the city to use its location to advantage, and that advantage was retail. The city rented the rear of the ground floor for public offices. The Mercantile Library occupied the front rooms of the second floor, while the grand College Hall, with thirty-one-foot ceilings and three chandeliers, occupied the back half of the building. The hall could accommodate up to 3,000 people. Above, the third floor was reserved for Cincinnati College offices, lecture rooms and private rooms for students, while the Law School occupied the fourth floor.[74]

Joining the Mercantile Library on the second floor was the Chamber of Commerce, which not surprisingly shared a significant membership with the library association. The north room became the Merchants' Exchange. Here members kept careful records of "the imports and exports to and from the city, by the river, canals and railroad; of arrival and departure of steam-boats; of the markets, for demand and supply; of arrivals at the principal hotels, etc.; all of which has been constantly accessible to the examination of subscribers, and furnished in abstract from the Exchange books to each of the daily papers." In addition, the Mercantile subscribed to local, regional, and national periodicals. By 1847, members could come to the reading room to peruse forty-five newspapers, including twenty-seven dailies and twelve weeklies.[75] In this way, together the Mercantile and the Chamber educated their members about business both immediate and far-flung.

The second floor of the college building became a place where a variety of men could mingle and discuss the news of the day. Chamber members met with strangers with business to conduct; masters and first clerks of steamboats and

agents of any railroad or company were given free admission to the rooms. Bulletin boards contained notices of "the latest news of general interest, recent reports of important mercantile transactions in this and other markets, copies of steamboats' manifests, with transcripts of their logs, and other commercial intelligence." Members also posted on the bulletin boards, advertising and describing their businesses.[76] Altogether the college had become largely a place of business, without having entirely abandoned its educational mission. Still, the casual observer would have found little in common between the college hall of 1849 and the one that had opened thirty years earlier. Gone were the objects of natural history and the cultural artifacts of lost civilizations. In their stead were the schedules and tables of commerce and all variety of news about current conditions.

The college itself may have been nearly moribund, focused purely on the work of the law school, but the Mercantile Library made certain that the college building remained home to lively intellectual debate and learning. As it still does, the library sponsored a series of lectures each year, and in the late 1840s some of the most learned men of the city took the rostrum. Judge Timothy Walker, the former dean of the law school—and for many years its only professor—discussed "The Morals of Commerce." Others associated with Cincinnati College also spoke, including E. D. Mansfield, on the "Life, Genius and Discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton," and Alexander McGuffey, William's brother, who addressed "The Personal and Poetical Character of Shakespeare." The Mercantile also brought in leading intellectuals from outside Cincinnati, such as Robert Dale Owen, the well-known social reformer and outspoken US representative from New Harmony, Indiana, who discussed "The History of Labor." Perhaps most impressive, Louis Agassiz, the famed Harvard geologist, came to Cincinnati for the American Scientific Association meeting in 1851 and gave a series of lectures at the Mercantile. His topics included "The Relation of Man to the Animal Creation."[77]

Cincinnati College had not become what Drake and the other early boosters had hoped it would be. Its Greek façade alone could not convince the nation that Cincinnati had become the Athens of the West. Undoubtedly a confluence of factors led to its failure to thrive. There was the bad timing, given the coincidence of the founding (and refounding) of the college and severe economic downturns. And the presence of the controversial Drake at the center of these efforts undoubtedly limited interest in some circles. And perhaps the secular nature of the college, unusual in this era, was enough to raise concerns about the moral training

it could provide to the city's future leaders. Or perhaps the elite, even in Cincinnati, thought an education in the West could not compare to what the East had to offer.[78]

When Drake died in 1852, having lived a most energetic and engaged life, he could take some comfort in the fact that the city itself had thrived, having grown to over 115,000 residents. Its economy had diversified, with commerce sparking growth in meatpacking and steamboat manufacturing. The clothing, furniture, and carriage industries flourished, too. Cincinnati had also become the West's publishing center, producing books and periodicals consumed around the nation. And it had taken on a nickname, Queen City of the West, befitting its regional stature. The college edifice offered hope that higher learning might someday find a home in the city, and in the meantime, at least the Mercantile Library provided a reading room, "well lighted, comfortably warm, and plainly though neatly furnished," where men of business and boosters of all types could come and talk about the prospect of a bridge spanning the Ohio or perhaps the necessity of building a railroad to the south. Unfortunately, they apparently did too little talking about the need to support higher education, and the creation of a stable university in Cincinnati would await the death of another benefactor, Charles McMicken, who passed away six years after Drake.[79]

# Notes

## **Chapter 1** A Frontier Institution

1. Daniel Drake, *Anniversary Address Delivered to the School of Literature and the Arts* (Cincinnati: Locker and Wallace, 1814), 4–5, 7. For more on Daniel Drake see, Henry D. Shapiro and Zane L. Miller, eds., *Physician to the West: Selected Writings of Daniel Drake on Science and Society* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970), a collection of some of Drake's most important writings, which also includes two fi biographical pieces, one each by the two editors.
2. Drake was apparently uninterested in the diversity represented by the small African American population in Cincinnati.

3. In 1801, Athens, Georgia, became the literal Athens of the South, and home to the University of Georgia. In 1804, Athens, Ohio, became the home to Ohio University, theoretically precluding Cincinnati from claiming the title of "Athens of the West," although that term had already been widely applied to Lexington, Kentucky.
4. Oliver Farnsworth, *The Cincinnati Directory* (Cincinnati: Morgan, Lodge and Co., 1819), 30.
5. On the creation of urban institutions in the West, see Richard C. Wade's classic, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790–1830* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959); on the creation of a distinctive western culture see Wendy Jean Katz, *Regionalism and Reform: Art and Class Formation in Antebellum Cincinnati* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002), 1–26.
6. Peale quoted in Howard Ensign Evans, *The Natural History of the Long Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, 1819–1820* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 31.
7. Daniel Drake, *A Natural and Statistical View, or Picture of Cincinnati and the Miami Country* (Cincinnati: Looker and Wallace, 1815), 155–57. On very early educational efforts in Cincinnati see Daniel Aaron, *Cincinnati: Queen City of the West, 1819–1838* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992), 202–27.
8. Daniel Drake to Samuel Brown, February 14, 1819, Samuel Brown Papers, 1817–1825, folder 3, FHS.
9. Baum eventually lost the house due to the fi crisis, but it was lived in by a number of prominent citizens, including Nicholas Longworth, Anna Sinton Taft, and Charles Phelps Taft, before becoming the Taft Museum in 1932. http://www.taftmuseum.org/museumhistory.
10. "Act to Incorporate the Cincinnati College, January 2, 1819," Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 57, ARB.
11. *Laws and Regulations of the Cincinnati College* (Cincinnati: Cooke, Powers, and Penney, 1819), 15.
12. Farnsworth, *Cincinnati Directory*, 39.
13. Transylvania has roots back to 1780, but it became a university at this later date. Indeed, even then it only slowly evolved into an actual university. See Wade, *The Urban Frontier*, 233–43. On the creation of "Booster Colleges" designed to lay claim to real urbanity, see Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience* (New York: Random House, 1965), 152–61.
14. Daniel Drake to Samuel Brown, February 14, 1819, Samuel Brown Papers, 1817–1825, folder 3, FHS.
15. John Hough James Diary, vol. 1, John Hough James Collection, Diaries and Family Correspondence, box 1, MUSC.
16. "Cincinnati College," *Western Spy*, September 28, 1821, and "Cincinnati College," *Cincinnati Gazette*, as found in John Hough James Diary, vol. 1, John Hough James Collection, Diaries and Family Correspondence, box 1, MUSC.
17. John Hough James Diary, vol. 1, John Hough James Collection, Diaries and Family Correspondence, box 1, MUSC.
18. W. N. Blane, *An Excursion Through the United States and Canada during the Years 1822–23* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1824), 124, 127.
19. Ben Drake and E. D. Mansfield, *Cincinnati in 1826* (Cincinnati: Morgan, Lodge, and Fisher, 1827), 46.
20. Daniel Drake, *An Anniversary Discourse on the State and Prospects of the Western Museum Society* (Cincinnati: Looker, Palmer and Reynolds, 1820), 18–19.
21. Ibid., 21.
22. Ibid., 7.
23. "Western Museum," *Liberty Hall*, June 17, 1820; Robert Todd to William Lytle, February 12, 1820, Lytle Papers, box 12, folder 10, CHLA.

24. "Western Museum," *Liberty Hall*, June 17, 1820; Drake, *Anniversary Discourse*, 24.
25. William Henry Venable, *Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley: Historical and Biographical Sketches* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1891), 310–11; Drake, *Anniversary Discourse*, 25, 26; "Lectures before the Western Museum Society," *Liberty Hall*, December 14, 1819.
26. Drake, *Anniversary Discourse*, 26, 27.
27. Blane, *Excursion*, 126.
28. Drake and Mansfield, *Cincinnati in 1826*, 45, 46. On the longer story of the Western Museum see Louis Leonard Tucker, "'Ohio Show-Shop': The Western Museum of Cincinnati, 1820–1867," in *A Cabinet of Curiosities* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1967).
29. Daniel Drake to Samuel Brown, November 3, 1818, Samuel Brown Papers, 1817–1825, folder 3, FHS. Drake summarized the early history of the college in *Proceedings and Correspondence of the Third District Medical Society of the State of Ohio in Reference to the Medical College of Ohio* (December 1832), 4–9.
30. Drake to Brown, November 3, 1818, Samuel Brown Papers, 1817–1825, folder 3, FHS.
31. Ibid.
32. Drake to Brown, November 17, 1818, Samuel Brown Papers, 1817–1825, folder 3, FHS.
33. Ibid.
34. Coleman Rogers to Samuel Brown, November 3, 1818, Samuel Brown Papers, 1817–1825, folder 3, FHS.
35. Drake to Brown, February 14, 1819, Samuel Brown Papers, 1817–1825, folder 4, FHS.
36. Coleman Rogers to Samuel Brown, December 2, 1819, Samuel Brown Papers, 1817–1825, folder 5, FHS.
37. Daniel Drake, "Circular: Medical College of Ohio," August 20, 1820, Daniel Drake Collection, box 3, WCA.
38. Drake to Brown, February 14, 1819; Drake, "Circular: Medical College of Ohio."
39. Drake to Brown, November 3, 1818, Samuel Brown Papers, 1817–1825, folder 3, FHS; Drake, *Proceedings and Correspondence of the Third District Medical Society*, 6.
40. Charles Fenno Hoff *A Winter in the Far West* (London: Richard Bentley, 1835), 126, 128; Report on the College, March 28, 1873, Cincinnati College Records, box 5, folder 294, ARB.
41. "Cincinnati College," *Western Spy*, September 28, 1821, as found in John Hough James Diary, vol. 1.
42. Miami didn't begin instructing students until 1824, after years of gathering momentum to actually build the school and fending off an attempt by Cincinnati to move it from Oxford to the larger city on the river.
43. Drake and Mansfi ld, *Cincinnati in 1826*, 41–42. On the "mortality rate" of booster colleges see Boorstin, *The Americans*, 158. On the proliferation of antebellum colleges and the diffi y of even determining how many there were (what counts?), see James Axtell, *Wisdom's Workshop: The Rise of the Modern University* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 160–62.
44. "Law Department of the Cincinnati College," *Western Law Journal* (October 1843): 1; Irvin C. Rutter and Samuel S. Wilson, "The College of Law: An Overview, 1833–1983," *University of Cincinnati Law Review* 52, no. 311 (1983); Reginald McGrane, *The University of Cincinnati: A Success Story in Urban Higher Education* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 26–27.
45. Daniel Drake to Board of Trustees, August 27, 1839, Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 45, ARB; Report of the Building Committee to the Board of Trustees, March 22, 1836, Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 43, ARB.

46. North Wing Stock Account, Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 15, ARB; "General Meeting of the Corporators and other Contributors, of the Cincinnati College," March 8, 1836, Daniel Drake Collection, box 5, folder 1, WCA.
47. "Duty of Resident Physician and Surgeon," Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 18, ARB.
48. Daniel Drake, "Marine Hospitals in the West," 24th Congress, 1st session, House of Representatives (Doc. no. 264), May 31, 1836.
49. Ibid.
50. Drake to Levi Woodbury, September 6, 1836, Cincinnati College Records, box 2, folder 93, ARB.
51. Faculty Meeting Notes, September 19, 1836, Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 26, ARB.
52. L. C. Rives to the President of the Board of Trustees of the Cincinnati College, April 4, 1838, Cincinnati College Records, box 2, folder 86, ARB.
53. Drake to James Whitcomb, January 15, 1838, Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 55, ARB.
54. Drake to Whitcomb, April 23, 1838, Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 62, ARB.
55. Robert Punshon, Surveyor, to Levi Woodbury, Secretary of the Treasury, November 24, 1837, Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 63, ARB.
56. Affidavit (copy) Edward Kimball, Resident Physician of the Marine Hospital, January 13, 1838, Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 103, ARB.
57. Joseph Pierce et al. to Punshon, October 1837, Cincinnati College Records, box 2, folder 99, ARB.
58. Testimonial, April 24, 1838, Cincinnati College Records, box 2, folder 102, ARB.
59. Drake to Whitcomb, April 23, 1838.
60. Report of Committee, April 7, 1838, Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 70, ARB.
61. Whitcomb to Drake, October 23, 1838, Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 61, ARB.
62. Joshua Martin to Drake, July 25, 1839, Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 14, ARB. By "abroad" Martin meant not local, not necessarily from outside the United States.
63. "Cincinnati College August 26, 1839," Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 31, ARB.
64. Articles of Agreement for Dissolution of the Property of the Med Faculty of Cincinnati College, August 28, 1839, Cincinnati College Records, box 1, folder 10, ARB.
65. "General Meeting of the Corporators and other Contributors, of the Cincinnati College," March 8, 1836, Daniel Drake Collection, box 5, folder 1, WCA.
66. "New Stock Book of the Cincinnati College," Cincinnati College Records, box 3, folder 138, ARB.
67. Daniel Drake to William McGuffey, August 19, 1836, William Holmes McGuffey Papers, Miami University, Digital Collection.
68. Board of Trustees Address the Public, March 2, 1837, Cincinnati College Records, box 3, folder 176, ARB; List of Students Enrolled during 1837, Cincinnati College Records, box 3, folder 181, ARB.
69. E. D. Mansfield to McGuffey, January 29, 1840, William Holmes McGuffey Papers, Miami University, Digital Collection.
70. Mansfield to McGuffey, March 2, 1840, William Holmes McGuffey Papers, Miami University, Digital Collection.
71. E. D. Mansfield, *Memoirs of the Life and Services of Daniel Drake, M.D., Physician, Professor, and Author* (Cincinnati: Applegate & Co., 1855), 290.
72. Mercantile Library, "1847 Twelfth Annual Report," 23, Annual Reports, 1847–1860, ML.
73. "Report on the Cincinnati College Academical Department" (first Draft, 1846), 40–41, Cincinnati College Records, box 3, folder 158, ARB.

74. Mercantile Library, "1847 Twelfth Annual Report"; "Opinion on the question of whether the Cincinnati College Building and Grounds in Cincinnati are Subject to Taxation," November 28, 1849, box 1, folder 78, Cincinnati College Records, ARB.
75. Mercantile Library, "1847 Twelfth Annual Report," 10, 11, 14.
76. This language comes from the rules of the Chamber, which appeared in each annual report through the mid-century. "Annual Report of the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce and Merchant's Exchange for the Commercial Year Ending August 31, 1868," Chamber of Commerce Materials, CHLA.
77. See the various annual reports in Box Annual Reports, 1847–1860, ML.
78. On the secularization on American higher education in the 1800s see Julie A. Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and* the *Marginalization of Morality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). Although from a later era, perhaps the best example of an elite family sending its children east for an education comes from Alphonso Taft, who sent all of his well-known sons Charles Phelps, Peter, William Howard, Henry, and Horace to Yale University.
79. Mercantile Library, "1850, Fifteenth Annual Report," Annual Reports, 1847–1860, ML.

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