

**COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES OF THE OZARK HIGH SCHOOL,
OZARK, MISSOURI, HELD IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
March 24 And 25, 1892.**

Christian County Republican Job Print

[Transcribed from original 6" X 9" 6 page, double column pamphlet in the Christian County Library]

OZARK HIGH SCHOOL COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES,
HELD THURSDAY & FRIDAY NIGHTS, MARCH 24 & 25, 1892

From the Christian County Republican, Extra Edition, Friday, April 8th, 1892

On account of our pressure for room, we have not given the Commencement exercises at the Ozark High School that notice which its importance to this and surrounding communities demands, and we have yet not room to do the subject proper justice, for time and space will not permit the extended notices which each deserves. To say that all did well is to put the matter very mildly. The recitations were good, the music was good, and a large and appreciative audience were highly pleased with the performances.

The Salutatory by Miss Lonie Chapman and the orations by the graduating class are highly spoken of by all who had the pleasure of hearing them. The programs as published in our issue of the 23rd was fully carried out, except "The Burning of Chicago", by Miss Mabel Collier was, on account of Mabel having a severe headache, deferred until the second night.

We give below, in the order in which they were delivered, the Oration of Fitzhugh Aven and the Oration and Valedictory of W. N. Collier, followed by the address of Judge Collier in delivering the Diplomas.

ORATION

"Ambition" - Fitzhugh Aven

Ambition is an eager desire for some particular thing. Looking about us, we see it working everywhere. We see it manifested in the student who is constantly studying over some deep question, who is not content to sit still while the golden moments of time glide by on feet of lightning swiftness, but who is constantly improving with each passing day. We go into the school room and see one bright sturdy lad bending over a dry dull book and carefully scanning its pages, while his next neighbor on mischief is intent. We ask what is the difference between the two? Were they not both endowed with the power of reasoning by him who doeth all things well? Are not both surrounded by the same advantages? Then why this vast divergence of their characters? The only answer to this question is, that one is ambitious for the future, the other is not. The one desires to have his name inscribed high on the roll of honor, the other is content to fill the position he now occupies, without improving the talents bestowed upon him by nature. The one desires to mount to the highest round of the ladder of success, and will spare no pains to accomplish his purpose, while the other whispers to himself, soul take thy ease, and sits idly by with folded hands and trusts to dame fortune for all. The one wishes to raise the

standard of excellence, the other cares nothing for his fellow man but all for self. And were we empowered with the gift of prophecy that the future might pass before us as a scroll, we would see that the future of the lads is different; their paths lay in different directions; as far as the east is from the west so far is the way of the one from the other. When the former shall have passed off the stage of action, it will be said of him by his fellow, he hath done what he could for the advancement and the upbuilding of the race, while of the latter it will be said, another cumberer of the ground hath been cut off.

Another instance in which ambition appears in its best light is the case of the pioneer, who leaving the house of his youth and the land of his birth resolves to cast his fortune in a more congenial clime, and being ambitious he turns his face toward the Mecca of his mind's eye and resolutely presses forward and reaching his destination he finds one vast forest stretched out before him with no sign of human habitation, But he is ambitious to make of it a home with all that a home means, and laying his axe at the foot of each mighty oak he levels it to the ground, and within five years from the time he came we find the forest turned into a blossoming Eden by his hand, and all that gave him strength for this undertaking with all its perils and hardships, was his ambition for the future of himself and his posterity. Looking back through the annals of history we find there was once upon a time when American people were the most downtrodden people in existence. The inhabitants were but few in number, and on one hand were threatened by starvation, on another were menaced by the fear of the red man, and last but not least were burdened by the galling yoke of foreign oppression, and yet the fire of their ambition never abated, and by their struggles they drove the gaunt wolf from the door, vanquished the Indians and conquered the Englishman, thereby transmitting to their posterity a country which every loyal heart is so justly proud. And today our nation is the most prosperous the sun shines on and teems with myriads of the happiest people that breathe God's free air. Yet all these grand results were through the agency of a noble ambition, directed in the proper channel.

During the struggles of the revolutionary war, the American ill clad and tortured with sufferings as no pen can portray, were kept alive by their ambition for liberty, and through its influence spurring them on to nobler existence they reached the goal. And today we are a free people, and it matters not where a man may come from or how lowly his station in life from the moment his foot touches American soil, his soul expands to its native element, and he proudly proclaims himself a free man, subject to such laws as are necessary for the protection of society, and all of this was accomplished by ambition. Ah, who can tell how much ambition has accomplished for the human race? To it we owe almost all the blessings we now enjoy, for had it not been for the ambition of inventors we would not have the improved machinery with which we can accomplish such prodigious results. Had it not been for the ambition of religious men, we would not have the any churches today, but through their efforts inspired by a noble ambition, we see church steeples rearing their lofty spires heavenward on every hand. Had it not been for the ambition of our people, we would not have any schools at present, but through its agency we may go to almost any city or town in the U. S. and hear the merry school-bells ringing an unpleasant greeting to the lazy schoolboy.

Friends, not only can we look back upon the past and see the power of the one word, ambition, as it inspired and filled the hearts of our forefathers, but we can daily see its working among us. We see it in the young man who is ambitious to become a doctor, a

preacher, a teacher, etc, varying according to the taste of the man, but all are or should be ambitious to achieve success in some line, and fellow schoolmates as we leave this school-room this evening, with which are connected so many memories, both pleasant and unpleasant, it is quite likely that some of us will never return to it again, and as we step out into the stage of action, let us start out on the rugged sea of life with resolutions for the future, yet let us not be disappointed, but let us recollect:

“Success is not reached by a single bound,
But we build the ladder by which we rise,
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies.
And mount to its summit round by round.”

And, thus remembering, let us make a noble ambition our guiding star, and then we will be enabled to fulfill our destiny marked out for us by our Creator, and someday we will be privileged to close the last door of the dark prophetic past and step out into the bright light of the glorious realization.

Oration and Valedictory **“Why” W. N. Collier**

Who can say what this question has done for the world, or what would have been done without it? It is beyond the limits of human endeavor to even outline this vast subject, but a few thoughts may be presented, tending to show the suggestiveness of this one word, Why. It conveys the idea of a power that moves us to greater exertions, deeper researches, and more scrutinizing observations. It carries with it an idea of curiosity and mystery, from which it is inseparable. All nature resolves itself into an interrogation and the Why will go ringing down the avenues of time until all things earthly shall end, and the last man will stand and cry aloud, “Why all this?” It may briefly be said that all the great truths and principles of our sciences have been discovered through the agency of Why. It would be difficult indeed to picture the condition of the human race as it would be now, if Why had never occurred to the mind of man. Had he been content to take things as they were and ask no questions, we should have known comparatively nothing. We would just simply exist. We would make no progress in either the arts and sciences or education. But the mind of man was so constituted that he wanted to investigate, reason and find out the “Why” and wherefore of things he did not understand. Every man has this curiosity in the direct ratio of his cerebral power, and it will be found that the man who has this faculty rightly developed will leave no stone unturned to get to the bottom of things. Without doubt, the first man who ever saw the heavenly bodies set in the blue infinity of space and shining down serene and grand upon him, asked “What and why all this?” Nor was he content with asking and wondering but set to work to find out, if possible the truth of the matter, and only to satisfy his curiosity. He could have no other reason. The old astronomers, a thousand years before the Christian Era, asked themselves the question, sought the answers, and found exceedingly ingenious theories about the movements of the celestial spheres, even without telescopes. And so the question has come down through the ages of the past.

“For I doubt not through the ages an increasing purpose runs
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the sun.”

until now we wonder at the result of the researches in the single but most noble department of science.

The modern astronomers now trace the movements of the planets as certainly as we trace the curves in a problem of geometry. The desire to ascertain "Why" stimulates then to find the peculiarities of our Solar System and though millions of miles from us, they are familiar with their course, conditions, size and climate. They tell us that the moon will pass between the earth and the sun on a certain day, years to come, and precisely at the predicted time, true to the hour and minute, the great orb of day is eclipsed by the earth's satellite. This has been done so often and so accurately that there is no longer any room to doubt. And this is the result of asking, "Why".

Another example is found in the discovery of the planet Neptune. The outermost planet of the Solar System at that time was Uranus, and its orbital movement was found to be irregular, the only one that was so. Saturn came around from its thirty years journey about the sun, true to the second, but Uranus defied arithmetic and refused to conform to the time set for its return on the heavenly dial, and a young mathematician in England asked, "Why?". He stopped not at asking but began to find out. He took the hypothesis that there was another planet beyond Uranus whose attraction produced the variation noticed. This was his problem: "Given the disturbances of Uranus to find and locate another planet as the disturbing cause," For two long, weary years he worked at this problem, alternating between hope and despair; and at the end of that time he sent the results of his calculations with the unknown planet shown on a chart where it should be if his work was correct, to Lord Rosse, who immediately turned his monster telescope in the required direction, and there, within one-half degree of the designated spot he found the long lost wanderer of the skies. The planet has since been named Neptune whose attraction, though one billion one hundred and twenty million miles from Uranus, had kept it from its course. All this from asking, "Why?" It was one of the grandest achievements of intellect on record. Sir Isaac Newton sitting in his garden one day saw an apple fall to the ground, and this single incident generated a Why in the mind of the philosopher. Why did this apple fall to the ground when it was loosened from the tree? Why did it not go up or sidewise? He reasoned that it was because the earth attracted it, and pushing the question further still asked himself the question. Why does not the moon attract the earth. Probably it did. Why does not the sun attract the earth? Why does not every celestial body attract every other? were questions that followed in quick succession in that active brain. Every reader knows the result to be the discovery of the law of gravitation, that mysterious force so aptly described by the immortal bard as

"That very law that moulds a tear
and bids it trickle from its source
That law preserves the earth a sphere
And holds the planets in their course."

If the chemist and the philosopher had never asked Why, what we have known in the sciences? Very little. the chemist delving deep into his studies and experiments observes something which he does not understand and asks Why and seldom does he fail to find out. In this manner, all the great principles of chemistry have been discovered.

Edward Somerset saw the kettle lid lifted by the escaping steam and asked himself "Why not use the steam as a motive power." The ultimate result was to entirely revolutionize the motive power in the civilized world, and now we see vast engines used

for driving ponderous machinery, and those used for locomotion running hither and thither over this land, man's willing slave that never tires, doing the work needed in the progress of enlightenment that man's unaided hands could never have done.

Calvin saw that by rubbing a glass tube it would attract small particles of paper and he and others investigated the cause, and the final result is our present knowledge of electricity, that has proven such a boon to the human race. And all because someone asked Why. Not that we know what electricity is or that we fully comprehend its power. Those deeply versed in electrical science like Faraday or Edison, are continually adding to the store of knowledge. Only the unlearned believe that the limits of discovery and improvement have been reached.

“A little learning is a dangerous thing
Drink deep, or touch not the Pierian spring;
These shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
But drinking largely sobers us again.”

Education consists partly of ascertaining how much there is in the world that will never be known. We see a grain of corn put into the ground, see that it spreads and becomes a living plant, and we ask Why. No scientist can answer that question. There is a limit to human knowledge. We may go so far, we may live long and learn, but it is only a step in the direction of progress. The philosopher may go down toward the sea of knowledge and learn many things, but when he has gone so far he finds an ocean of undiscovered truth spread out before him which seems to say “Thus far shalt thou go and no further.” We ask Why. There is no answer. We see the earth swinging around the sun century after century after century, never losing a second. We see the whole celestial procession moving onward, onward through space, countless millions of miles yearly around some undiscovered spot, in the infinite depths of space. We may glance with prophetic vision, down the horoscope of cycles and note the time when our fertile mother earth shall become a cold and lifeless planet, when the stellar fires shall have been extinguished and the sun itself shall be a frozen orb, and out yearning souls, uplifted toward the Infinite, asks Why. On Why! Though we can not comprehend, we may rest assured that an undeviating purpose has existed, that nothing has been done in vain, and that He who doeth all things well, comprehends perfectly and never asks Why.

And now to me belongs the pleasant duty of returning the earnest thanks of the students of the Ozark High School to the Board of Education. Gentlemen, your work for the interest of this school have been zealous and untiring. You have given us the opportunity of education, you have enabled us to drink at the fount of knowledge, you have permitted us to cull gems of learning more precious than the gold of Ophir. Gentlemen, from our hearts, we thank you. And to you, the teachers of this school, we desire to extend our gratitude and most sincere thanks for your kindness, forbearance and patience with which you have guided our footsteps up the hill of learning. You have cheered us when we faltered, and have encouraged us to press onward and upward. By your example and your precepts you have shown us how to learn and how to be useful workers in the busy world. We thank you. May our future lives attest the value of your teachings. We can never forget you. And you my schoolmates, joyous, happy, helpful friends, what jolly games we have had, what knotty problems we have solved together, how your wit has brightened and your criticisms pruned me. Never, never can I forget a single one of you. For me, the school life is ended. I must enter upon the world's school

of realities. Truly, this is my commencement. Short indeed seems the time that I have been in school, but it has been fourteen years, and of the scores of students that were my mates and friends then, none are hear. Their places are filled by others. My former mates are either out fighting their way in the world, or they have gone to join the silent majority. Of them and you I shall always entertain a loving recollection. I will close by saying, cherish our Alma Mater, the Ozark School

ADDRESS OF JUDGE COLLIER

Members of the Graduating Class: it becomes my pleasant and agreeable duty to present to you your certificates of graduation or Diplomas, and I feel that it is an honor to me to have this privilege, and an honor to you to receive these Diplomas. These are the first ever issued, as far as I know, from any school in Ozark. It may be that the school taught in Ozark prior to the war in the old building which stood on the east side of the old town of Ozark granted Diplomas, but if so I have not been able to learn of it. The school in our town at the time I came to Ozark 19 years ago was being taught in the Court House for want of any other suitable building, and was afterwards taught in this building.

Some 15 or 16 years ago, two rooms of the present building were erected, and some years later the other two were built.

The schools of Ozark since I came here have been such as are now found in any other good district of the County, until about six years ago the people of Ozark began to ask "Why." Why not have a better school? And they, like those of whom we have been hearing in the Valedictory address did not stop with asking why, but went to work with a will to secure a better and more efficient school in our midst. Enthusiastic meetings were held: correspondence was had with, and replies came from educators in Massachusetts, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, and I know not how many other places from persons who saw in the accounts of the proceedings that the people of Ozark were in earnest in their determination to have a good school. Suffice it to say that a graded school was established; a course of study was adopted; and you, gentlemen of the graduating class, are the first to complete the Course prescribed, and are entitled to receive from the Board and the Principal of your school these certificates of graduation.

As I said before, it is a pleasure and an honor to me to be permitted to deliver these first diplomas from the Ozark High School. And this occasion, this assembling of your friends and neighbors here tonight does an honor to you. It tells to you that they are interested in you and your future.

Speaking in the name of the Board of Directors, in the name of the people of Ozark and of the entire school district, I wish you unbounded success in your vocations in life. Be assured that our hearts are with you. We hope you may be able to delve to deeper depths, to rise to higher heights, and to occupy broader fields than any of the able and learned scholars who have occupied and who are now occupying the fields of science and learning. You cannot possibly do better than your friends wish for you.

The occasion may be somewhat sad to you. It is to us. We know that we will have you with us no more. The seats occupied by you for so many long years will now be filled with others. The teachers who pointed out your "Onward and Upward" will miss your well known faces. But there is a bright side to all this. We feel that as you have conquered thus far it is an omen that you will go on "conquering and to conquest" until every obstacle shall have been overcome, and our sorrow shall be turned to joy when we

shall see you, as we hope that we may see you, stand on the pinnacle of fame, and in the language of that greatest Roman general exclaim, “veni, vidi, vici” (I came, I saw, I conquered).

Let me then present you these diplomas with the wish of all your friends that you may go onward and upward, and at the end of a long and useful life you may go down the slope of time bearing the honors which we hope may be yours, and that at last you may remember with pride and gratitude your Alma Mater - The Ozark High School, May God bless you and crown you with the best of success in life.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, may I be permitted to express the hope that this occasion, these Commencement exercises may be an inspiration to use to greater efforts for the advancement of the school interest of Ozark. May I not hope that this is the harbinger which ushers in the dawn of a better day for the Ozark High School. Let us put forth every effort in our power to build up in our midst a school second to none in Southwest Missouri and continue the effort until a building shall crown our hill which will be the pride of generations to come, and be a school which shall be sought after by students from all the surrounding counties of our part of the state.

And before I take my seat, I want to return these teachers of the Ozark High School the thanks of the School Board and the patrons of the school for their very faithful and efficient management of the school, and I express the hope that they will return to their labors of the next term, after a season of rest and recuperation, with renewed vigor and energy, determined to make the Ozark High School the best in the land.