The Alumni Center

A dream of many years will be realized at the Valhalla campus later this year when the Alumni Center opens. The building occupies a historic site and may incorporate in its foundation the remnants of a pre-revolutionary dwelling. According to a plaque placed by the D.A.R., it was there that a Continental Army officer was branded by Hessian soldiers for refusing to tell where money to pay General Washington's troops was hidden.

Through the generosity of the many NYMC graduates who contributed to the Alumni Goals Fund, the house is now being completely renovated. The stucco exterior is being covered with a brick facing, a step that will greatly improve the building's insulation without destroying the fine wood paneling inside.

A Georgian-Colonial style facade will be achieved by the addition of columned porticos at the front and rear entrances to the building. The larger of these extends 45 feet along the south side of the Center and will provide an attractive covered area for large outdoor gatherings and ceremonies.

Between the two porticos is a wide foyer opening into the first-floor rooms on either side. To the left as one enters from the street is a large, comfortable lounge with recessed wood-paneled walls and a huge fireplace. Beyond it is another room of equal size that will be furnished to serve as a board and meeting room. Because these two rooms are connected by archways with sliding doors, they can be used together as a setting for cocktail receptions or buffet dinners. Sliding glass doors to the rear portico expand the space still further for use on such occasions as Orientation Day and homecoming events at Commencement time.

The Alumni Association's main office and reception area will be located to the right of the front entrance, on the west side of the foyer. A spacious dining room with fireplace and a fully equipped kitchen complete the ground-floor facilities.

An attractive student lounge and recreation area will be housed on the second floor, as will additional offices and space for Alumni Association memorabilia. A guest room and bath for visiting colleagues will also be located on the second floor.

Air conditioning is being installed throughout the building. Other renovations include an entirely new heating system, new electrical work, and a new asphalt shingle roof. Thus, on the completion of the Center, the Alumni Association will begin its second century with a hospitable headquarters of which every graduate can be proud.

The Alumni Association 1883-1983

The opening of the Alumni Center in the summer of 1983 appropriately celebrates the centennial of the Alumni Association. It was on March 15, 1883, twenty-three years after our medical school was established, that a group of graduates formulated the statement of purpose that still guides the Association. "We," they wrote, "being desirous of serving our Alma Mater and wishing to participate and share in the development of the Institution from which we were graduated, unite in the foundation of this Association of Alumni."

The initial membership comprised 295 doctors. No dues were assessed until 1886, when the alumni voted to have annual dues of $1, with the provision that they be omitted during the first year of membership. In 1913 the dues were raised to the munificent sum of $2 a year!

In 1884 the trustees of the medical college recognized the Association as a force in institutional life by appointing to membership on the board Dr. W. M. Pratt, first president of the Association.

Among the Association's early activities were sponsorship of a series of lectures "of a high scientific order," and the preparation of alumni news for Chironian, which had been established by the students of the College in 1884 as a semimonthly publication. In 1896 an alumni editor was added to the Chironian staff, and in 1915 the magazine became the official organ of the Alumni Association.

In recent years the organization's programs have ranged from providing summer scholarships for students and hosting the graduating class at the Annual Alumni Banquet to sponsoring the new Alumni Directory and offering symposia.

The history of the College as recorded by the late Leonard B. Wershub '27
Handsome columned porticos characterize the new Alumni Center. The main entrance is on the north side of the building, shown in the architect's drawing above. The south portico, shown on the opposite page, provides an ideal setting for large outdoor events. The building, originally known as the Commissioner's House, is pictured at right as it appeared before renovation.

makes clear that the Alumni Association has played a role far beyond its apparent significance. Throughout the changes the College has undergone, the Alumni Association has been a link from one graduating class to another and from one generation to the next. During and just after World War I, when the very life of the College was threatened, it was the Alumni Association which provided the steadfastness that was vitally needed, as it has done ever since.

In an address to the Annual Alumni Meeting of June 1951, Dr. Wershub said, "We must share in the effort to make possible the continuation of our school's growing usefulness and influence. We must be conscious of the need to make the standards of our school second to none." Today, upon completion of a century of service, the Alumni Association enlists the help of all its members in advancing these objectives.