



Photo by Carrie Coe, printed courtesy of Mrs. Herbert Coe.

In 1895, the cleared grounds of the new Denny Hall at the University of Washington was a favorite place for picnics.

On a bright Fourth of July in 1894, a crowd of 1,000 gathered at the University of Washington's new campus for the ritual cornerstone laying of the site's first permanent structure — Denny Hall. The cornerstone used in that July ceremony was a transplant from the university's original site downtown, dating from 1861. A Bible and a copy of the Constitution were inside.

Combining provincial pride with the day's excitement, they came by wagon, electric trolley and special excursion train to listen to 13 speeches and Fanny Ferguson of neighboring Latona sing the "Star Spangled Banner."

Within a year, Denny Hall grew to four floors of Enumclaw sandstone, pressed brick and terra cotta details, rising like a French Chateau above the bushes in today's historical photograph. By September 1895, the hall's 35 rooms were opened to a student body that numbered a little more than 200.

At first called the Administration Building, the hall housed all of the university's colleges. It had six laboratories, 10 classrooms, a library with 60 chairs, a museum, faculty

Denny Hall

90 years at the center of student life.

WRITTEN BY PAUL DORPAT



Today, the area around Denny Hall is landscaped with trees and shrubs.

rooms, a music room, student lounge (although most hung out on the front steps) and a 700-seat auditorium named Denny.

The name honors Arthur Armstrong Denny, often called the "father of the university" and "the father of Seattle." During the July ceremony Denny was third in the speech line, after the governor and the mayor.

After an afternoon full of oratory, many in the crowd pulled out picnic lunches. And a picnic might have been the reason Carrie Coe, with her family and camera, wandered to the site near the new hall shown in today's historical picture, probably taken in 1895. The Coes were friends of both education — Coe School on Queen Anne Hill is named after Carrie's husband, Dr. Frantz Coe — and the Denny family.

In 1910, the building was officially renamed Denny Hall. Now, 90 years after Denny's dedication, only once has its existence been threatened. In 1954, one regent complained that its belfry "stuck up like a sore thumb above the modern campus," and suggested raising the entire hall. Happily, that sole regent's judgment did not prevail.

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