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UA37/44 Diary to Kelly

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December 14, 1967

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When I remembered today about the rather primitive dormitory conveniences of sixty years ago, I wondered how our present students would regard our setup of that time. For example, old Cherry Hall had no indoor conveniences; the outdoor toilet was away down in the yard, in behind Frisby Hall. Once every few days Uncle Ed, the one janitor, would take a hose and flush the excrement down into an open cesspool. Our water for drinking and for bathing had to be brought up from a hydrant in the back yard. We had old-fashioned washbowls and pitchers. The waste water was poured into galvanized buckettes, which we took down to the outdoor toilet. We brought our coal up in buckets from the basement of Frisby Hall, just as did the boys who stayed in Bailey Hall, on the town side of Frisby Hall. I am afraid that few delicately-reared boys of this age could have enjoyed much slumber on the beds we had then. The springs sagged dreadfully in the middle, so that it was almost like sleeping in a hammock to lie on one of the beds. I recall that my roommate got a rope somewhere and tied it across the bed under the springs; that did a little good. So far as I know, however, we did not have any bedbugs. There were no screens on our doors, in spite of the cesspool not too far away and pretty primitive conditions all around us. Some of us survived, however. Frankly, most of us had not been used to any better and rarely quite so good as these primitive conditions I have mentioned. My own Fidelity School had no outbuildings; I doubt whether half the homes of the community had an outdoor toilet of sorts. I never thought of it at the time, but I suppose that Frisby Hall, for the girls, had bathrooms. I never heard any complaints about the plumbing in that building, and, since some of the girls were from my home county, I am sure I would have heard if things were too bad.