

Harvey Clelland DeMotte (1838-1904) was a devoted and beloved teacher who worked to bring out the best in every student. A long-time member of the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University (sometimes referred to by the nickname of “The Wesleyan” during DeMotte’s lifetime) he was a prominent factor in the university’s growth and prosperity during his tenure. He was an individual who was constantly curious, optimistic, and energetic which is evident by how he was involved in almost every aspect of university life. He was not your average professor of mathematics and university vice president; he was an adventurer. On two separate occasions (first in 1872 and again in 1874) he joined famed explorer and naturalist John Wesley Powell (who was also once a fellow member of Wesleyan’s faculty) on his journeys west to explore uncharted territory in Utah, the Grand Canyon in Colorado, and the Green and Colorado rivers.

Harvey C. DeMotte was born on July 17, 1838¹ in Green County, Illinois. He was the sixth child born to John and Phebe (Cary) DeMotte.² Not much is known about his early life prior to his attendance at Wesleyan. He spent his boyhood on the family farm and his early education was sparse at best. He became very fond of books and reading despite irregular school attendance. Despite those educational disadvantages, he was determined to secure a good education for himself. In 1856 he entered school in Metamora, Illinois and a short time later made his way to Bloomington where he began attending Wesleyan.

DeMotte began his studies at Wesleyan in 1857, shortly after the university had been reorganized yet again after suffering from additional financial difficulties. All classes and functions had previously been suspended at the school as of July 31, 1856 until adequate funds could be raised to pay off all the indebtedness of the Board of Trustees.³ That fall at a special meeting of the Board of Trustees, the school’s charter was reorganized and a new financial advisor was appointed with the hope of whittling down, if not eliminating, the school’s debt, and raising money to “provide for an endowment to keep the university alive once it had been revived.” Those efforts proved successful and *The Daily Pantagraph* reported the following summer that “the Trustees have made arrangements for the opening of the University this coming fall and are able to assure the public that the Institution, so far as the maintenance of the school for three years to come is concerned, is upon a reliable basis.”⁴ On September 10, 1857 the school reopened with three professors and seventeen students, DeMotte being one of those students.⁵

During his time at Wesleyan, DeMotte was a very active student and involved in a variety of activities. Chief among those activities was the Belles Lettres Literary Society. He was a charter member of, and chiefly responsible for, the organization of the society. The society was organized on October 18, 1859 by DeMotte and ten other students at the university. Current students and alumni were welcome to join and DeMotte remained a life-long supporter and member. The motto of the society was “*Veritas et Justitia Semper Vincent*,” or “Truth and

¹ “Dr. H.C. DeMotte Died Last Night,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, December 16, 1904

² DeMotte, Mildred Lone and Louis Bernard DeMotte. *DeMotte and Allied Families 1665-1977*. (Self-published, 1977) 240

³ Watson, Elmo Scott. *The Illinois Wesleyan Story, 1850-1950*. (Bloomington, IL: Illinois Wesleyan University Press) 55

⁴ *Ibid*, 57-58

⁵ “The Illinois Wesleyan University,” *The Alumni Journal of the Illinois Wesleyan University, August, 1876, Vol. VI, No. 8*. 22

Justice Always Conquers.” The purpose of the society was “for the cultivation of literary taste, for intellectual and social refinement, and for the purpose of acquiring a knowledge of the usages of parliamentary and deliberative bodies.”⁶

Throughout his course of studies, DeMotte was a careful and industrious student. He also showed a “special aptitude as a tutor and remarkable ability as a student in mathematics.” So much so that on the day before he graduated on June 27, 1861, he was elected a professor of mathematics.⁷ DeMotte and one other student, Peter Warner, each received a Bachelor of Science and were the first graduating class since the reorganization of the university.⁸ DeMotte gave an oration with “graphic power” entitled “Progress” at the commencement ceremony, and spoke about “the progress of improvement in science and art.”⁹

DeMotte continued his studies doing graduate work even while he was “occupying the chair of mathematics” and serving as university librarian starting in September of 1861. His salary for his work as the chair of the mathematics department was \$300 per year¹⁰ which would be about \$8,108¹¹ in 2014.

As DeMotte began to establish himself and his career, his professorship was interrupted by the U.S. Civil War. On the night of May 24, 1862, the students and faculty “awoke to the ringing of the college bell.” Illinois Governor Richard Yates had sent a telegram asking “for 200 volunteers to report to Springfield by 9 o’clock the next morning” to serve for a period of three months as state militia. He and a group of students hurried to the home of university President Oliver Munsell to show him the telegram and declare their intention to go “to the scene of war.”¹² Demotte and other Wesleyan students heeded that call and made their way to Springfield. Shortly after their arrival, a petition was circulated to ask that instead of being part of the state militia, that they be commissioned as Illinois Volunteers and be sent into the field.¹³ In accordance with said petition, those men were mustered into service on June 20, 1862 as the 68th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment under commanding officers Colonel Elias Stewart, Lieutenant Col. Houston Taylor, and Major George Lackey.¹⁴ DeMotte was elected to serve as a First Lieutenant in Company G.¹⁵

After a brief guard duty at Camp Butler near Springfield, the regiment traveled by rail to Wheeling, Virginia arriving on July 7. DeMotte wrote a letter from the regiment’s headquarters at Camp Carlisle on July 8 to Professor Wilkin at Wesleyan. In his letter he wrote about his regiment’s journey east and how they were awaiting further orders. DeMotte had the unfortunate

⁶ “Constitution of the Belles Lettres Society, of the Illinois Wesleyan University,” (Bloomington: Daily Leader Premium Job Printing House, 1869).

⁷ Wilder, William H. ed. *An Historical Sketch of the Illinois Wesleyan University, Together with a Record of the Alumni, 1857-1895.* (Bloomington, IL: The University Press, 1895) 85

⁸ *The Alumni Journal of the Wesleyan University*, August, 1876, 170

⁹ “The Commencement Exercise,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, June 28, 1861

¹⁰ Watson, *The Illinois Wesleyan Story*, 66

¹¹ Consumer Price Index,

<http://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/polisci/faculty-research/sahr/inflation-conversion/pdf/cv2015.pdf>, Date Accessed September 4, 2015.

¹² Porter, Lyde. “A Teacher and Co-worker,” *The Wesleyan Argus*, December 23, 1904

¹³ “From the 68th Illinois Regiment,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, July 15, 1862

¹⁴ *Adjutant General’s Report*, “68th Illinois Infantry Regiment,” <http://civilwar.illinoisgenweb.org/history/068.html>,” Date Accessed August 16, 2015

¹⁵ Watson, *The Illinois Wesleyan Story*, 67

responsibility to report “a sad accident” which occurred during their journey. Chas Goff, a member of his company, had fallen between the railroad cars and was crushed. DeMotte stated that “had it not been for this sad accident, we would have had a very pleasant trip.” He also reported that there had been very little sickness in the camp and the “Wesleyan boys are all well.”¹⁶

One day after DeMotte had written this letter, his regiment was ordered to report to Washington, D.C. They remained at the “Soldiers Retreat” until July 14 when they marched to Alexandria, Virginia where his regiment was assigned as Provost Guards (military police for the Union Army).¹⁷ DeMotte was made an assistant provost marshal. While there, they also cared for the wounded from the Second Battle of Bull Run and even walked in review before President Lincoln, “having the distinction of being the only Illinois Regiment present on that occasion.”¹⁸ His regiment was then ordered back to Camp Butler in Springfield on September 17 where they were mustered out of service at the end of the month. While the men never fought in battle, they executed their assigned duties swiftly and effectively.¹⁹

After DeMotte and the other men from his unit returned to McLean County, some of the members of his regiment immediately joined other units and continued fighting in the Civil War. DeMotte instead chose to immediately resume his duties as professor of mathematics at Wesleyan.

In addition to resuming his teaching duties at Wesleyan and resuming his studies towards obtaining a master’s degree, DeMotte continued to increase his duties outside of teaching math. During the 1863-64 academic year, he became the music instructor in the new department of vocal music.²⁰ Because the university lacked a piano, he led the chorus with a violin. The year 1863 also saw the founding of Wesleyan’s Alumni Association which DeMotte has been credited with founding and organizing.²¹ Seven years later, DeMotte helped to create *The Alumni Journal*, which was a combined magazine and journal for alumni of Wesleyan. DeMotte was listed as the publisher in the first issue printed sometime in 1872. The publication contained speeches given at literary societies, a history of the university, letters and editorials written by alumni, and other news items.²² By the end of the school year, he obtained a A.M. Degree Pro Merito, (meaning on examination after one year’s study of a prescribed course) on June 29, 1864.²³ Later in life DeMotte received two more degrees, a Ph.D. *in absentia* from Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York in 1877 and an LL.D. degree from Baker University in Baldwin, Kansas in 1883.²⁴

It was also during this time that he met his future wife, Sarah J. Kern, of Atlanta, Illinois who had recently been placed in charge of the Model School (Preparatory Department) which was the teachers' training school at the university.²⁵ Kern was born on September 29, 1843 in Washington, Illinois. She was the daughter of David and Emily Kern. Her father was one of the

¹⁶ “From the 68th Illinois Regiment”

¹⁷ *Adjutant General’s Report*, “68th Illinois Infantry Regiment.”

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Watson, *The Illinois Wesleyan Story*, 69

²¹ Wilder, 162

²² Ochs, Robert. “Green Letters, Portrait No. 11,” *The Argus*, April 29, 1936

²³ Watson, 70-71

²⁴ Wilder, 85

²⁵ *Ibid.*

pioneer businessmen in Tazewell County and later Logan County. The family moved to Pekin, Illinois before finally settling in Atlanta where her father engaged in the banking business.²⁶

Kern took up the occupation of teaching at an early age and it was said that she was exceptionally fitted to be a teacher.²⁷ In fact, she was Wesleyan's first female teacher. Unlike the school at nearby Illinois State Normal University, Wesleyan's school was only for boys under the age of 15. According to the 1864 circular for Wesleyan, the purpose of the school was to prepare boys for admission into college. The school "affords rare facilities to parents who desire to have their sons started right in the outset of their education."²⁸ Miss Kern was assisted by three university professors, one of whom was DeMotte, and two tutors. Classes were held in a wooden school house located on the east side of campus.²⁹

Not long after Kern became the principal of the Model School, she and DeMotte were married on July 26, 1864 at her father's home in Atlanta.³⁰ Sarah did not immediately quit her position as principal of the Model School. She continued to serve as principal and teach at the school until 1867.³¹

Sarah and Harvey had three children, sons Lawrence and David, and daughter Clara Louise born in 1876. Their daughter Clara was the only child who survived to adulthood.³² The family lived at 902 North Main Street in Bloomington which was a house built by Sarah's father in 1866. Harvey and Sarah lived there their entire married lives.³³

The beginning of the new 1864-1865 school year saw DeMotte move from his duties as librarian when he was made vice-president of the university. He served in that capacity until 1884 when he resigned his positions at the university to pursue other professional opportunities.

It was also in 1865 that DeMotte met and became friends and colleagues with explorer and naturalist John Wesley Powell. DeMotte's relationship with Powell would lead him on several adventures with the explorer to the largely uncharted territories of the West.

Powell, originally from New York State, spent his formative years in Ohio, Wisconsin, and Illinois. While in Illinois, when he was not teaching during the school year, he spent his time exploring the rivers of the Midwest such as the Mississippi, Illinois, and Ohio. Like most men of his age, Powell served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Powell served in Company F, Second Illinois Light Artillery.³⁴ In the spring of 1862, Powell was injured at the battle at Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River. He was hit by a Confederate ball in his right arm and due to the severity of the wound, medical personnel were forced to amputate his arm

²⁶ "Life of a Noble Woman is Ended; Mrs. Sarah J. DeMotte Expires," *The Daily Pantagraph*, March 7, 1921.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "Circular. Illinois Wesleyan University," Calendar for 1864. *The DeMotte Collection*, McLean County Museum of History Library and Archives.

²⁹ Watson, *The Illinois Wesleyan Story*, 69

³⁰ "Marriages: DeMotte-Kern," *The Daily Pantagraph*, July 28, 1864; "Life of a Noble Woman is Ended: Mrs. Sarah J. DeMotte Expires."

³¹ Wilder, 86

³² DeMotte and DeMotte, 240

³³ Kessler, Clara Louise. *Home Town on the Corn Belt: A Source History of Bloomington, Illinois 1900-1950 in five volumes, Vol. V* (Bloomington: Self Published, 1950) 173

³⁴ Kemp, Bill. "John Wesley Powell and the Middle West," December 1996, 17. McLean County Museum of History Library and Archives.

slightly below the elbow.³⁵ Powell continued to serve in the Union Army even after his arm was amputated and mustered out of service on January 4, 1865.³⁶

While Powell was in the Union Army, he received an honorary degree from Wesleyan in 1863. When he returned to Bloomington, President Oliver Munsell offered Powell the position of professor of natural sciences and geology even though he had no formal training. He taught a wide variety of classes during three of his four years (1865-1868)³⁷ at Wesleyan. Those classes included cellular histology, comparative anatomy, mineralogy, and “insects injurious to vegetation.”³⁸ Powell combined his “out-of-doors instruction with classroom and laboratory work.”³⁹ He “devoted all his energies toward building up the science department of the school and imparted the true scientific spirit to a large body of men.”⁴⁰

In addition to his teaching duties at Wesleyan, Powell became the curator of the growing natural history museum at Illinois State Normal University on March 26, 1866.⁴¹ The Museum was located on the third floor of ISNU’s main building. The museum featured a very respectable collection, considered one of the finest outside of the eastern seaboard. The collection included birds, minerals, fossils, and more. By the time Powell took over as curator, there were over 60,000 artifacts in the collection.⁴²

Almost immediately Powell began making plans for expeditions west to explore regions that had hardly been explored and were virtually untouched by settlers. While Powell was busy planning his first expedition, set to depart in the spring of 1867, for DeMotte it was business as usual. At the beginning of the fall term of 1866, DeMotte had been made the “Stamper Professor of Mathematics.” He was also named to a committee that would be in charge of developing plans for adding a commercial department to the university. In the fall of 1867, DeMotte was relieved of part of his faculty duties to serve as a special agent on the Committee on Buildings and Grounds. This meant he was in charge of raising funds to erect a new building south of the main hall.⁴³

At the university’s commencement exercise in June 1872, four years after Powell had tendered his resignation from Wesleyan, Powell came back to Bloomington to call upon his old friend and colleague DeMotte. Powell approached DeMotte and asked him to accompany him on a trip to the “far west” that summer “among the Rocky Mountains.” DeMotte eagerly accepted Powell’s invitation to spend his summer vacation with him on the expedition. DeMotte’s role on this expedition would be to assist in “determining the latitude and longitude of the ‘Base Line’ survey” in northern Arizona and southern Utah, and to assist in some of the triangulation as well.⁴⁴

³⁵ Ibid, 18-19

³⁶ Ibid, 20

³⁷ Powell was listed in the Wesleyan catalog in 1868 but he did not teach any classes; Ibid, 21

³⁸ Ibid, 21

³⁹ Watson, *The Illinois Wesleyan Story*, 85

⁴⁰ Wilder, 86

⁴¹ Watson, *The Illinois Wesleyan Story*, 80

⁴² Kemp, “John Wesley Powell and the Middle West,” 22-23

⁴³ Watson, *The Illinois Wesleyan Story*, 76-77, 80

⁴⁴ Watson, Elmo Scott. *The Professor Goes West: Illinois Wesleyan University—Reports of Major John Wesley Powell’s Explorations: 1867-1874*. (Bloomington: Illinois Wesleyan University Press, 1954) 63; Kemp, “John Wesley Powell and the Middle West,” 41

Detailed accounts of both expeditions in which DeMotte accompanied Powell were published in the pages of the Wesleyan *Alumni Journal*; the first expedition having been recounted in the November 1873 edition and in several editions published in October through December 1874. During both expeditions, DeMotte documented the landscape, animals, climate, the people he met, and stories he heard.

For a little over a month, (July 15 until roughly August 19, 1872) DeMotte and other members of the expedition traveled throughout the mountains, rivers, canyons, and ravines of northern Arizona and southern Utah. Powell engaged DeMotte's services to take mathematical observations during the expedition.⁴⁵ Arriving in Salt Lake City on July 15, after four days and three nights traveling by train, DeMotte and his traveling companion Captain F. M. Bishop spent a week sightseeing, gathering supplies, and breaking in four mules to prepare for the next leg of their journey which took the group deeper into Utah. On July 22, DeMotte and Bishop began their journey to Kanab, Utah some 300 miles away. Powell set out one day later as he needed to stay behind to arrange "for telegraphic work to be done." He then began his own trip by stagecoach to Kanab.⁴⁶

It took DeMotte and Bishop 12 days to reach their destination. DeMotte wrote about the wondrous sights, visits with Mormons, and "hostile Indians" they found along the way. The first night of the journey, DeMotte wrote that he was anxious about sleeping under the stars "in the open air." He would have preferred to have slept near or under the wagon but Bishop told him that it would be much better to spread their blankets in the sand. DeMotte recalled that as he lay there gazing up at the stars, which twinkled "merrily above," he thought of all the possible danger in the days ahead and "then of home and the loving hearts so far away," but he soon drifted asleep and awoke rested and refreshed for the next day's journey.⁴⁷

As they continued on they passed a number of Mormon towns and even stopped at the house of a Mormon family (with whom Bishop had a slight acquaintance) for a grand, old-fashioned dinner. DeMotte wrote that the "Mormon people are noted for their hospitality. Nothing which a Mormon has is too good for a friend, and you are received with such a hearty welcome that you feel at home even with strangers."⁴⁸

At the end of the third day of their journey, as they were traveling down the banks of Chicken Creek, they heard there had been some "hostile Indians" in the area. This made DeMotte's nerves unsteady. That night as he "pillowed his head upon a wisp of straw" he had his trusty "Smith and Wesson" pistol near him. In his own words "as one accustomed to the security, comforts, and refinements of a pleasant home in the midst of civilizations, the thought of an Indian raid upon two unprotected innocents in the dead hour of night is not calculated to induce perfect quiet and undisposed repose."⁴⁹

By the tenth day, they had reached "Kanab Creek" and were upon what DeMotte called the "Colorado Slant." Just before they made camp for the night, as they were proceeding down the valley, DeMotte and Bishop "had a narrow escape from a regular 'turnover and smashup.'" Kanab Creek was a deep gully at this point and across the chasm a temporary bridge of willow boughs had been laid cross-wise on some timbers. This was barely wide enough for one of their

⁴⁵ "Second Lecture in our Home Course," *Washington Herald*, December 11, 1873

⁴⁶ Watson, *The Professor Goes West*, 97

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 73

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 75

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 77

mules to pass. DeMotte and Bishop knew it would be dangerous to attempt this pass. But they had no other choice because this was the only way to their destination and meeting up with Powell and the rest of the expedition. So, DeMotte and Bishop began the attempt across the rustic bridge and sure enough, one of the mules began to falter when one of the willow boughs on the bridge began to move. DeMotte acted quickly and “put life into all four” of the mules to move them along at a quicker pace. However, this rapid movement made one of the rear wheels of their wagon slide so as to cause its axle to come down upon the cross beam of the bridge. This caused the beam to give way, which left the wagon at a 45 degree angle. Fortunately, DeMotte, Bishop, the wagon, and the team of mules were all able to make it safely to the other side of the creek.⁵⁰

For the last two days of the journey (which covered about 22 miles) there was no water for their mules. However, it appears that the while the conditions were harsh and dry, the road for the most part was good. On the twelfth day (August 2) they reached the Mormon settlement of Kanab, comprised of a small group of about 40 families with “plain but comfortable homes.” As DeMotte and Bishop rested and waited for the arrival of Powell, they met up with another member of the expedition, Professor Almon H. Thompson. Later that afternoon, Powell himself arrived to begin the next leg of the journey.⁵¹

After resting for a few days, DeMotte, Powell, Thompson and his wife Nellie (who was Powell’s sister), a man named George, and “two Indian guides” began their journey again.⁵² The group left on August 6 on a pack trip through the Buckskin Mountains with their final destination being the Paria River.⁵³ When the group reached the Grand Canyon on the second day, DeMotte wrote that “no language can describe the scene which greeted our eyes.” Their route was “down one of those beautiful valleys so common here, along with on either side at intervals, were little dells, skirted with balsam, spruce and pine, and beautifully decked with richly variegated flowers.” Upon climbing a gentle slope, they stood upon the brink of the Grand Canyon. DeMotte stated that “immediately beneath us, apparently within a stone’s throw of our feet the opening of the chasm lay. Our point of observation was upon the first precipice or upper bank of the Grand Canyon. We gazed upon the panoramic view spread out before us with intense interest and awe.”⁵⁴

On August 11 the group reached Willow Spring Camp. After scaling a ridge of sloping sides and topped with a dense growth of forest pine and fir, Powell, DeMotte, and Thompson came upon a “beautiful vale” about 12 miles in length and one mile wide. Intermingled with heavy timber, lush grass, and flowers were “strange, funnel shaped excavations” some of which were filled with water. DeMotte recalled that the group set up camp near one of the pools of water when Powell suddenly decided to christen the area “DeMotte’s Park” for some unknown reason. DeMotte, no doubt flattered by this distinction, felt a better name could have been chosen. He wrote that “after ages, should the name thus thoughtlessly bestowed, adhere, the passer-by will quiz to know how such a beauty of a place could be assigned a name so void of poetry.” Unfortunately the name did not “stick.” Later maps of the area list that location (which

⁵⁰ Ibid, 84-85

⁵¹ Ibid, 87

⁵² Ibid, 88

⁵³ Ibid, 97

⁵⁴ Ibid, 90-91

was 18 miles north of the rim, now Kaibab Lodge) as V.T. Ranch.⁵⁵ On the final days of their journey (August 12 and 13), they began their descent of the mountain. They descended some 4,000 feet below the Kaibab range to reach the Paria River.⁵⁶

From the Paria River they continued on another six-day journey to ascend the Kaibab plateau. According to DeMotte, the route was treacherous. Their path wound "around a projecting cliff and down a tortuous ravine." Their path ended abruptly when the group came upon the bank of the river whose waters were "turbid and uninviting." Most of the route was impassable. But DeMotte and the others persevered and found a path which allowed them to pass unharmed.⁵⁷ On August 14, Powell, knowing how DeMotte did not like to sit idle, told DeMotte to check out some plainly exposed strata that he wished to verify. Armed with an aneroid barometer (a device used for measuring atmospheric pressure), DeMotte began his assignment to take the altitude. According to DeMotte he "climbed and rested, rested and climbed again; sipping the water" from his canteen. He finally reached his destination of 1,500 feet after "much weariness of the flesh," took his readings, and began the "much easier" descent.⁵⁸ After a few more days of traversing the countryside, DeMotte began his journey back to Kanab and eventually back to Salt Lake City. From Salt Lake City he would return home to Bloomington on or about August 28, just in time for the new semester to begin at Wesleyan.

DeMotte gave a free lecture at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Bloomington on November 28 about his experiences on the expedition with Powell. He called it "12 Days with the Broncos; or Experiences Among the Mormons." It was reported that his "thrilling incidents" would interest everyone in attendance and that the "character of Professor DeMott [sic], as well as the character of the University with which he is connected, is a sufficient guarantee that the Lecture will be of great interest."⁵⁹ Less than a month after the November lecture, he presented his lecture again for the "Home Course" at the Lutheran Church in Washington. His lecture was the second in the series of lectures used to raise funds for the local schools.⁶⁰

DeMotte joined Powell for a second expedition in 1874, this time DeMotte served as topographer. Expedition members explored and performed additional surveys in Utah from Green River Station to the Uintah River.⁶¹ DeMotte's wife, Sarah also accompanied him for part of the journey. The explorers were set to pass down the Green River on the eastern side of the White River, "traversing a belt of territory from ten to twenty miles wide, and then return on the west side to Green River Station." Upon the DeMottes' arrival at Green River Station, they learned that Powell had been delayed in Washington, D.C. so the couple decided to spend a few days exploring Salt Lake City as they awaited Powell's arrival.⁶² The DeMottes spent time exploring the city and Sarah later recounted her observations in the pages of Wesleyan's *Alumni Journal* published in November 1875. Sarah DeMotte was enthralled by all that she saw. She and her husband were introduced to the "renowned polygamist, Brigham Young." She found

⁵⁵ Ibid, 94-95

⁵⁶ Ibid, 97-98

⁵⁷ Ibid, 98-99

⁵⁸ Ibid, 100

⁵⁹ "Free Lecture," pamphlet 12 Days with the Broncos, November 28, 1873, DeMotte Collection, McLean County Museum of History Library and Archives.

⁶⁰ "Second Lecture in Our Home Course."

⁶¹ "From the West," *The Daily Pantagraph*, September 22, 1874

⁶² Watson, *The Professor Goes West*, 116-117

him to be "hale, hearty old man, courteous, polite, talkative, obliging, and a gentleman."⁶³ The DeMottes also visited various sites around the city including the Tabernacle (the Mormon Church), which in Sarah DeMotte's opinion was "a monstrous egg shaped building."⁶⁴

After spending a few days showing his wife the sights and sounds of Salt Lake City, DeMotte reported for duty at Green River Station on July 27. Besides DeMotte as topographer, a cook, Powell's private secretary and reporter, a photographer, a man in charge of the pack train, and a man in charge of the barometer, accompanied Powell on the expedition. Their pack train included ten pack mules and eight saddle horses with enough rations for two months, blankets for seven people, and "such instruments as were necessary for the scientific work of the party."⁶⁵

DeMotte recalled that his work "required a great deal of riding and climbing, for, from prominent peaks." And he was expected to take bearings and guess at distances from which to plat a map of the surrounding country. DeMotte stated that his work could only be "a work of approximation" as he had no measured baseline upon which to construct a map. He did however have a map of the Green River from which he could occasionally get bearings upon "some bend which would aid in correcting any errors." But, DeMotte lamented the fact that for days at a time he was beyond range of the river and left to his own lucky guesses as to the correctness of his work.⁶⁶

As the expedition was making its way along the Green River into the region of the Colorado River, DeMotte noted that that topography was very peculiar. He stated that he never realized how imperfect western maps were until his visits to the region. DeMotte noted that a prime example of how inaccurate the maps of the region were could be found in the location of one of the camp sites during the 1872 Powell expedition. DeMotte noted that his party camped near a spring one night and upon consulting the map, found that the map stated they were near the Colorado River when in fact they were still more than 100 miles away from it.⁶⁷

Towards the end of his journey, DeMotte had one final task to perform near Split Mountain canyon. DeMotte ascended a precipitous cliff of Uintah sandstone which was 8,000 feet high. He then stood atop a chimney rock which was no more than six feet in width. He raised a block of sandstone and hit it upon a ledge to break it apart and use some of the pieces to adjust his instrument. In doing so one of the shards broke into his hand, splitting his finger to the bone. DeMotte lamented that at that altitude "the blood flowed profusely." He hastily wrapped his finger with a handkerchief so that he could complete his observations. Being as his right hand was injured, he attempted to write down his measurements with his left, but what appeared in his record looked more like "hieroglyphics or Chinese characters" than the English language according to DeMotte. Despite his injury, DeMotte was able to complete the task, even naming the region on the map "Split-Finger Cliff."⁶⁸

With the new school year fast approaching, DeMotte bid Green River Station and the region of the Colorado River adieu. While he looked forward to returning to his academic work and his students, he was sad to leave the labor "which had afforded him so many hours of pleasure" and rich experiences. When his recollections about the expedition were printed in the

⁶³ Ibid, 132

⁶⁴ Ibid, 131

⁶⁵ Ibid, 117

⁶⁶ Ibid, 118

⁶⁷ Ibid, 121

⁶⁸ Ibid, 125-126

pages of the *Alumni Journal*, DeMotte admitted that the work of a topographer was one of the most severe and trying occupations in which a man could engage, "trying not only to his physical, but to his mental and moral powers as well." DeMotte continued by stating that "for daily, and almost hourly, he is tried and driven to his wit's end, his ingenuity taxed to its utmost to surmount difficulties and devise means to overcome the obstacles in his way." Based on his experiences, he challenged any man "to spend a season in topographical work and sustain unwrinkled the strict straightness of his moral rectitude." The work of a topographer "drives him from the sweetest of slumbers, at the earliest break of day; and with a hastily eaten breakfast of bread, jerked beef, and coffee—straight and strong enough to float a pistol cartridge—he is off for the mountain."⁶⁹

The Daily Pantagraph heralded DeMotte's return to Bloomington on September 22, 1874. The newspaper reported that DeMotte was in the best of health and had a splendid time among the mountains. The article also stated that DeMotte brought home "some elegant maps which are to form a part of the Major's [Powell's] elaborate report of operations. He [DeMotte] brings with him a quantity of valuable and rare specimens for the museum and the university."⁷⁰

After his adventures in the West with Powell, DeMotte resumed his duties teaching and as vice president at Wesleyan. However, perhaps those adventures in the West instilled a bit of wanderlust in DeMotte because he appears to have been begun looking for other opportunities elsewhere in the Midwest. Several letters of reference can be found in the Tate Archives and Special Collections at Ames Library at Illinois Wesleyan University having been written on behalf of DeMotte by several prominent members of the community. One such letter, dated September 5, 1878, was written by Richard Edwards, President of Illinois State Normal University at the time. In that letter, President Edwards stated that he had the pleasure "to say a word...concerning the fitness of Professor H.C. DeMotte of Bloomington, Ill. for the Chair of Astronomy and Engineering in your University." This letter was written to the attention of the Board of Regents at Kansas State University.⁷¹ A similar letter was written by several faculty members at Lincoln University on September 17, 1878. A letter dated May 12, 1879 written by R.R. Brown, Professor of Natural History and Physics at Wesleyan to an unknown university (most likely Kansas State University) stated that he recently learned that several of DeMotte's friends had sent his name "as a candidate for presidency of your Institution." Professor Brown stated that it would be "very difficult indeed to fill his [DeMotte's] place; he is certainly one of the best educators in the west."⁷² From all the information available, it appears that DeMotte never received the position at Kansas State University.

In the fall of 1881, DeMotte and former student Manford J. Ricks (a graduate of Wesleyan in 1879) purchased the *Kansas Farmer*, a weekly agricultural newspaper established in 1863 and based out of Topeka, Kansas.⁷³ When DeMotte took over co-ownership of the newspaper, he resigned his duties as chair of the mathematics department. It is not known exactly why DeMotte decided to purchase part ownership of this publication or enter the

⁶⁹ Ibid, 126 and 111

⁷⁰ "From the West."

⁷¹ Letter from President Richard Edwards to Board of Regents, Kansas State University about Professor H.C. DeMotte, September 5, 1878. Tate Archives and Special Collections, Ames Library, Illinois Wesleyan University.

⁷² Letter from R.R. Brown to E.B. Purcell, May 12, 1879. Tate Archives and Special Collections, Ames Library Illinois Wesleyan University.

⁷³ "Prof. H.C. DeMotte and Mr. M.J. Ricks," *The Daily Pantagraph*, September 2, 1881

newspaper industry. The previous owner and manager, J.K. Hudson, wrote a letter to his readers in the September 21, 1881 edition of the *Kansas Farmer*. In that letter he introduced DeMotte and Ricks as the new proprietors who would “continue its publication as heretofore, under the name and style of Kansas Farmer Co.” Hudson gave DeMotte and Ricks his blessing and assured his readers that “neither labor nor money will be spared to advance the interest of the paper, and make it yet more desirable as a practical farm and family journal.” He closed by asking his readers to continue supporting the paper and the new owners as they had done for him.⁷⁴

Back in Bloomington, *The Pantagraph* reported the purchase of the newspaper and made it sound like DeMotte intended to leave Bloomington to settle in Topeka where his new business venture was.⁷⁵ Ricks went to Topeka to begin managing operations for the newspaper, but it appears DeMotte never joined him. Unfortunately, Ricks became sick with typhoid fever in February 1882 and within two weeks, died from his illness.⁷⁶ After Ricks’ death, in July 1882 DeMotte sold two-thirds of his ownership in the newspaper to several other individuals, creating The Kansas Farmer Company with DeMotte as the president of the company.⁷⁷ The *Kansas Farmer* reported the transaction and stated that DeMotte would not be actively connected with the paper and was to resume his duties at the Wesleyan University as vice president and professor of mathematics in September of that year.⁷⁸ While it appears that DeMotte never lived in Topeka, he did travel to Topeka from time to time as noted by the *Kansas Farmer*.⁷⁹ DeMotte remained president of The Kansas Farmer Company until November, 1886 which is the last edition of the newspaper where he was listed as president of the company.⁸⁰

Despite the addition of his minimal duties with The Kansas Farmer Company, DeMotte continued his search for other opportunities and it appears that he found some at Chaddock College in Quincy, Illinois. Chaddock College⁸¹ was founded in 1853 as a German and English College by the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was named Chaddock after a major benefactor, Charles Chaddock.⁸² Chaddock College had a variety of departments including science, literature, medicine, law, music, and art. The college boasted “a full corps of efficient instructors in each department” and “superior facilities for a broad and thorough culture.”⁸³

DeMotte tendered his full resignation from Wesleyan in 1884 to assume the presidency of Chaddock. The *Kansas Farmer* reported that competition for this position was stiff and there

⁷⁴ “To the Readers of the Farmer,” *Kansas Farmer*, September 21, 1881.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ “An Untimely Death,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, March 10, 1882.

⁷⁷ “The New Kansas Farmer Company,” *Kansas Farmer*, July 5, 1882

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ “Professor DeMotte spent a few days in Topeka,” *Kansas Farmer*, July 1, 1885

⁸⁰ Business information for *Kansas Farmer*, November 24, 1886

⁸¹ In 1899 the school was renamed Chaddock Boys School was became an orphanage. In the 1960s, the school became a home for dependent neglected boys and currently the school is “a progressive, co-educational child-serving organization that addresses a full range of the most challenging and life threatening issues affecting children, including those with severe emotional, behavioral, and trauma based problems”; “Chaddock College, 1875-1899,” *Illinois Digital Archives*, <http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/ref/collection/qpl/id/1525>, Date Accessed August 22, 2015; “Heritage of Chaddock,” *Chaddock, Every Child Deserves a Chance*, <http://www.chaddock.org/#!heritage/c9ke>, Date Accessed August 22, 2015.

⁸² “Heritage of Chaddock.”

⁸³ “Chaddock College,” *Kansas Farmer*, August 25, 1886

were many ideal candidates. But, DeMotte outshined them all and was voted unanimously to be elected president of the college.⁸⁴ The news of DeMotte's departure from Wesleyan sadden many of the students at the school. As reported by *The Wesleyan Bee*, the Alumni Association (which DeMotte founded) passed a resolution stating that "the University loses an able educator, a friend tried and true and a most affable Christian gentleman."⁸⁵ The tribute concluded in stating that "perhaps no man at any institution has been more universally and sincerely beloved by all the students under him than Prof. DeMotte has been for nearly a quarter of a century by the Wesleyans."⁸⁶

After settling all of his business in Bloomington, he and his family moved to Quincy to begin a new chapter in his life at Chaddock College that fall. His wife Sarah also served as professor of English language and literature at the school.⁸⁷ However, he only remained president of the college for 3 years before resigning that position and returning to Bloomington in 1887. It appears that he had not found the opportunity he was looking for at Chaddock. Evidence of this can be found in additional letters of reference written for DeMotte in 1886. One letter, written by his friend John Wesley Powell to the State Agricultural College in Ames, Iowa, stated that DeMotte was an intimate acquaintance. He recommended DeMotte for the position of president of the agricultural college because DeMotte's scholarship is of the highest grade and his ability as an instructor was rarely equaled.⁸⁸

In 1887, DeMotte was appointed the superintendent of the Soldiers' Orphans' Home in Normal, Illinois (later known as the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's School). Sarah DeMotte served as the matron of the home. It was reported that because the couple were both trained educators and "were known to be successful in the management of children," that they would do well managing the home and caring for the children.⁸⁹ The Home was established in 1867 for "children of deceased soldiers" and indigent children of Illinois Civil War veterans.⁹⁰ It was located on a large tract of land in northeast Normal (today at the corner of Lincoln and Beech Streets).

DeMotte succeeded the home's long time superintendent Virginia Ohr (who served from 1869 to 1887). In addition to continuing the successful work begun by Ohr, DeMotte made several improvements to the school during his six years as superintendent. In 1889, the state Legislature appropriated \$66,618 to cover the construction costs for a chapel, dining hall, play rooms, and bathrooms in the main building, a new boiler house, laundry, kitchen, and bakery, as well as a new heating plant. Buildings for the addition of a primary school and kindergarten were also added.⁹¹ DeMotte also secured an additional 30 acres of land for the home (partially

⁸⁴ "A Deserved Promotion," *Kansas Farmer*, January 30, 1884

⁸⁵ "Alumni Association," *The Wesleyan Bee*, June 1, 1884

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Burnham, John H, George P. Davis, and Ezra M. Prince. *Transactions of the McLean County Historical Society, Volume II: School Record of McLean County with other papers*. (Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationary Co., 1903) 195

⁸⁸ Letter from John Wesley Powell to Trustees of the State Agricultural College, Ames, Iowa, April 5, 1886. Tate Archives and Special Collections at Ames Library, Illinois Wesleyan University

⁸⁹ Burnham, Davis, and Prince, Vol. II, 195

⁹⁰ Ibid, 187

⁹¹ Cobb, Ruth. *A Place We Called Home: A History of Illinois Soldier' Orphans' Home 1864-1931 and Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Childrens' School 1931-1979*. (Normal: ISSCS Historical Preservation Society, 2007) 1

by purchase and partially by exchange) so that these new facilities could be added. In 1891, an electric light plant was added too.⁹²

DeMotte modified the plans in the domestic life of the home and reorganized and unified the various departments to make the institution as much like a home as he possibly could. He felt that “institutional life is not the ideal life for a child. It cannot be made even under the most favorable conditions, the equal of a well-ordered home.” But he and his wife did all that they could to make the institution into a home for the children who lived there. They made sure that life at the home was not monotonous or a dull routine.⁹³ Some examples of activities they planned for the children include inviting vocalist U.S Dunbar to visit the home. He joined DeMotte and his wife, and Miss Emily Beath in an improvised song service for the children of the home.⁹⁴ During Christmas 1887, DeMotte worked with the Illinois Grand Army of the Republic (a national fraternal organization for veterans of the Union Army who were honorably discharged after the Civil War) to collect gifts for the children at the home. DeMotte, being a veteran of the Union Army himself, was a member of the local William T. Sherman G.A.R. Post #146.⁹⁵ It was reported that while the children of the home were well supplied with clothing, food, and literature, “gifts of money, toys, dolls, or games at Christmastime will be highly appreciated and gladden the hearts of more than 360 orphans of soldiers.”⁹⁶

In addition to serving as the principal of the schools at the home, DeMotte reorganized the curriculum at the schools so that it mirrored the work that was being done in common schools as prescribed by the state. DeMotte also saw to it that the older boys at the home “gained practical knowledge of various kinds of farm and garden work” while the girls, under the supervision of Sarah DeMotte and her assistants, “received special instruction in the use of the needle in plain sewing and fancy work.”⁹⁷

In 1893, as so often happens when the opposing political party comes to power after an election, DeMotte was replaced as superintendent of the home. It was reported that DeMotte’s six years as superintendent of the home were most “economical, wise, and popular.” He was more of a father than a master to the hundreds of children under his charge.⁹⁸

Following his departure from the Soldiers’ Orphans’ Home, DeMotte dabbled in several different business opportunities. The same year he departed the Soldiers’ Orphans’ Home he was elected to the board of directors of the Columbian Loan Association, filling the unexpired term of one W.H. Schureman.⁹⁹ In 1897 DeMotte tried his hand at the newspaper business yet again when he became the editor and co-owner of the evening newspaper the *Daily Leader*. This was short lived, however, because in May of 1899 the newspaper was absorbed by the rival newspaper, *The Daily Bulletin*.¹⁰⁰ This probably came as no great loss to DeMotte as it was reported that he did not find “the newspaper work congenial to his temperament.”¹⁰¹

⁹² Cobb, 3

⁹³ Burnham, Davis, and Prince, Vol. II, 200

⁹⁴ “Sunday at the Home,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, November 7, 1887

⁹⁵ “Dr. H.C. DeMotte Died Last Night.”

⁹⁶ “An Order to the Grand Army,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, November 28, 1887

⁹⁷ Burnham, Davis, and Prince, Vol. II, 196

⁹⁸ “Dr. H.C. DeMotte Died Last Night.”

⁹⁹ “A Good Appointment,” *The Daily Pantagraph*, June 16, 1893

¹⁰⁰ Scott, Frank W. *Collections of the Illinois Historical Library Volume VI, Biographical Series Volume I: Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois 1814-1879*. (Springfield: Trustees of the Illinois State Historical Library, 1910) 29-30

¹⁰¹ “Dr. H. C. DeMotte Died Last Night.”

DeMotte was a devout Christian and member of the Methodist Church his entire life. He was a charter member of Grace Wesley Methodist Church in Bloomington.¹⁰² He was a member of the church's board of trustees, an active parishioner, and taught Sunday School for the adult members of the church for many years. And like he was with his students at Wesleyan, Chaddock College, and the Soldiers' Orphans' Home, he was an enthusiastic and inspiring teacher.¹⁰³ He was a member of the Methodist Church's General Conference¹⁰⁴ in 1882 and often represented the Methodist Church in lay electoral conferences.¹⁰⁵ He was also a frequent contributor to the *Central Christian Advocate*, a weekly Methodist publication based out of St. Louis.¹⁰⁶ In his letters to the newspaper, he would give reports on the happenings at Wesleyan, activities and organizations around Bloomington that may have been of interest or concern to other Methodists, and about life in general in Bloomington and Normal.¹⁰⁷

After about a 13-year absence, DeMotte returned to Wesleyan in the fall of 1897. He was appointed as professor of political economy and was also the secretary of the board of trustees.¹⁰⁸ He spent the last seven years of his life back at the school which was never far from his mind no matter where he was living and working. In 1899, DeMotte took over as principal of the preparatory department (like his wife before him).¹⁰⁹ Additionally in 1903, he was again elected vice president of the university¹¹⁰ and resumed his duties as professor of math and astronomy.¹¹¹

On December 15, 1904, Harvey C. DeMotte died unexpectedly at his home on North Main Street. It was reported by *The Daily Pantagraph* that he had been suffering for some time with an organic heart ailment which forced him to take a temporary leave of absence from his duties at the university. However, in the days leading up to his death, he had partially recovered and resumed teaching his classes. On the day before his death, he was "at his usual place in the classroom and seemed much better than the week before."¹¹²

Upon his death an outpouring of support and warm feelings came from his students and colleagues, both past and present. One former student, I.N. Phillips, reminisced that as a teacher, DeMotte was always "kind, helpful, considerate, inspiring, full of tact, . . . thorough, and competent."¹¹³ Colleague Dr. Edgar Smith recalled that DeMotte's essential characteristic was his "entire devotion to the best interests of his pupils. In the class room, the personality of the

¹⁰² Kessler, Vol. V, 175

¹⁰³ Ferguson, Prof. Wilbert, "Work for Church," *The Wesleyan Argus*, December 23, 1904

¹⁰⁴ The General Conference is an international body of delegates that meet every four years made up of clergy and non-clergy members of the Methodist Church. Delegates of the General Conference discuss and vote on petitions and resolutions proposed by individuals, agencies, annual conferences, and other groups within the denomination; "General Conference," The United Methodist Church, <http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/general-conference>, Date Accessed August 23, 2015.

¹⁰⁵ "Dr. H.C. DeMotte Died Last Night"

¹⁰⁶ "The Central Christian Advocate," St. Louis Media History Foundation, <http://www.stlmediahistory.com/index.php/Print/PrintPublicationHistory/central-christian-advocate>, Date Accessed August 23, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ "Bloomington Correspondence," *Central Christian Advocate*, February 3, 1869

¹⁰⁸ Watson, *The Illinois Wesleyan Story*, 129

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 132

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 136

¹¹¹ "Dr. H.C. DeMotte Died Last Night"

¹¹² *Ibid*.

¹¹³ Phillips, I.N. "Citizen and Patriot," *The Wesleyan Argus*, December 23, 1904, 1

student was always respected. There was no badgering or humiliating of the kind that produces loss of self-confidence and courage. The student's failings must be faithfully pointed out, but always in a way that would arouse to higher endeavor."¹¹⁴

The week following his death, the entire issue of *The Wesleyan Argus* (the university's newspaper) was devoted to the beloved teacher. Students and faculty members shared memories and stories about DeMotte that were a testament to the profound impact he had upon the university and all those affiliated with it. Dr. James B. Taylor wrote that "if those who had received great intellectual help and stimulation from H.C. DeMotte could be gathered, it would be a tremendous testimonial."¹¹⁵ Former student I.N. Phillips wrote that the university would "feel the lack of the exercise of his prodigious moral energy" and that the university would miss "his noble example and his helpful interest."¹¹⁶

Funeral services for DeMotte were held at Grace Wesley Methodist Church¹¹⁷ on December 19. A large procession of friends and family accompanied DeMotte to his final resting place. DeMotte's comrades from the William T. Sherman Post #156 of the G.A.R. attended his body and the Board of Trustees at Wesleyan served as honorary pall bearers. Harvey C. DeMotte was laid to rest at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery in Bloomington.

By: Candace Summers, 2015

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 1

¹¹⁵ Taylor, Dr. James B. "An Appreciation," *The Wesleyan Argus*, December 23, 1904, 1

¹¹⁶ "Phillips, "Citizen and Patriot," 2

¹¹⁷ According to DeMotte's daughter, Clara DeMotte Munce, Grace Wesley Methodist Church eventually merged with the First Methodist Church. This occurred sometime before her reminiscences were published in the book *Home Town in the Corn Belt: A Source History of Bloomington, Illinois 1900-1950 in five volumes, Vol. V*, compiled by Clara Louise Kessler in 1950.