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Affectionately your Mother
Alice K. Grierson

Since writing the above, Helen has sent me a letter from Aunt Mary to read. It contained pictures of Madge and Ralph, for each of us.

Ft. Concho Feb 24th 1879

My dear Charlie

Yours of the 16th enclosing programs of the Dialectic Society, came last evening. Your class are counting the days now to June. Do you expect to visit in Philadelphia and Youngstown after you graduate? And about what time do you expect to reach J or is it so long beforehand, that you have not made your plans? I expect to visit Chicago while I am North. It is going to be rather hard to leave Papa alone, he has spoken several times about my leaving Harry with

In the letter to the left and transcribed below, Alice catches Charlie up on the goings on at the fort. She seems to have great expectations for the younger boys education. Meanwhile, Charlie was nearing graduation.

A letter to Charlie from his mother Alice

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Charles Grierson



The Dialectic Society that Alice mentions in her letter is an organization at West Point that originally began as a literary club in 1824 and evolved into a dramatic club. When formed it was and may still be the only society allowed at West Point.

The Dialectic Society was active enough and involved enough members of the corps to warrant a meeting room of its own. Early on the Society primarily was an outlet for literary efforts, allowing oratorical and dramatic reading but soon moved on to more dramatic efforts.

These efforts cumulated into the 100th Night Show celebrating that the graduating class was only 100 days from graduation and freedom from West Point. Each year a unique stage show is produced by the students to tell the story of the graduating class from Plebes to Firsties complete with inside jokes. "The 100th Night Show exists on a continuum somewhere between Elizabethan Shakespeare and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Marking a hundred days before graduation, this traditions began as a Mess Hall celebration during which plebes and upperclassmen temporarily exchanged dining duties one February shortly after the Civil War ended. Skits soon evolved, and it wasn't long before the show took to the stage with compositions, choreography, and costumes (namely cadets in drag) creatively interpreting the highlights of the graduating class's years at the Academy. Legend has it that Mark Twain patronized early productions, and the plot of the 1950s *The West Point Story* is mainly about staging this annual production of the Dialectic Society." (WestPointAOG.org)

The first "100th Night Show" was a collection of skits and was presented by the First Class in 1871. It resembled an English recitation more than anything else. By the late 1800's the show moved to Grant Hall and was being covered by New York Times and attracting visitors from beyond West Point. 1903 saw the first full-length musical comedy, "The Caprices of Cupid" ever since the "100th Night Show" has been a musical comedy.

Today the organization is part of the Theatre Arts Guild & Dialectic Society where cadets perform, work backstage as technical support for both cadet and professional performances at the Eisenhower Hall Theatre and participate in theater festivals and cultural arts events in the region.

In 1976, the Dialectic Society even brought Bruce Springsteen to West Point.



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