The General Prologue to the New England Tales

Khoo Soo Hay

The Bishop's a Good man of Letters,
For they are Long and Blunt,
While the MacIntosh's Grey,
And the Marshall's White,
But his Crew's out West,
Herd and Stock,
Bag 'n 'all,
Looking for the Hardy Savage
With the Brown Feather.

The Chapman grumbled as he (L)ambled,
Looking for a King to sell his Veale of Hogg.
While the Smith and the Taylor
Are fielding in the Green,
The Fleming Piper's on the Rhode,
And the Archer Robbs the Roe,
Forgetting the Bond of the Beadle's Cane.
The Miller misses the Baker's Cones
As he watches the Crane fly over the Street
To Ward Holland on his Wright,
And the Fowler's Sourry for such a List
For want of a Leach or a Pike.
And besides all those,
There's Isabel, daughter of McBryde
Who can tell her ancestry
By the Shape of their heads.

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This poem is made up of the names of the University of New England's academic and administration staff in the early 1960's written in the style of Geoffrey Chaucer. Words in capitals and italics refer to their surnames as appeared in the University Year Book.

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Editor's Note: Ward refers to Russell Ward, and, McBryde is the leading regional archaeologist. Feather, Letters and Bishop were Fellows of Wright, and significant academics, even at that early date. The other names are more obscure. JSR.