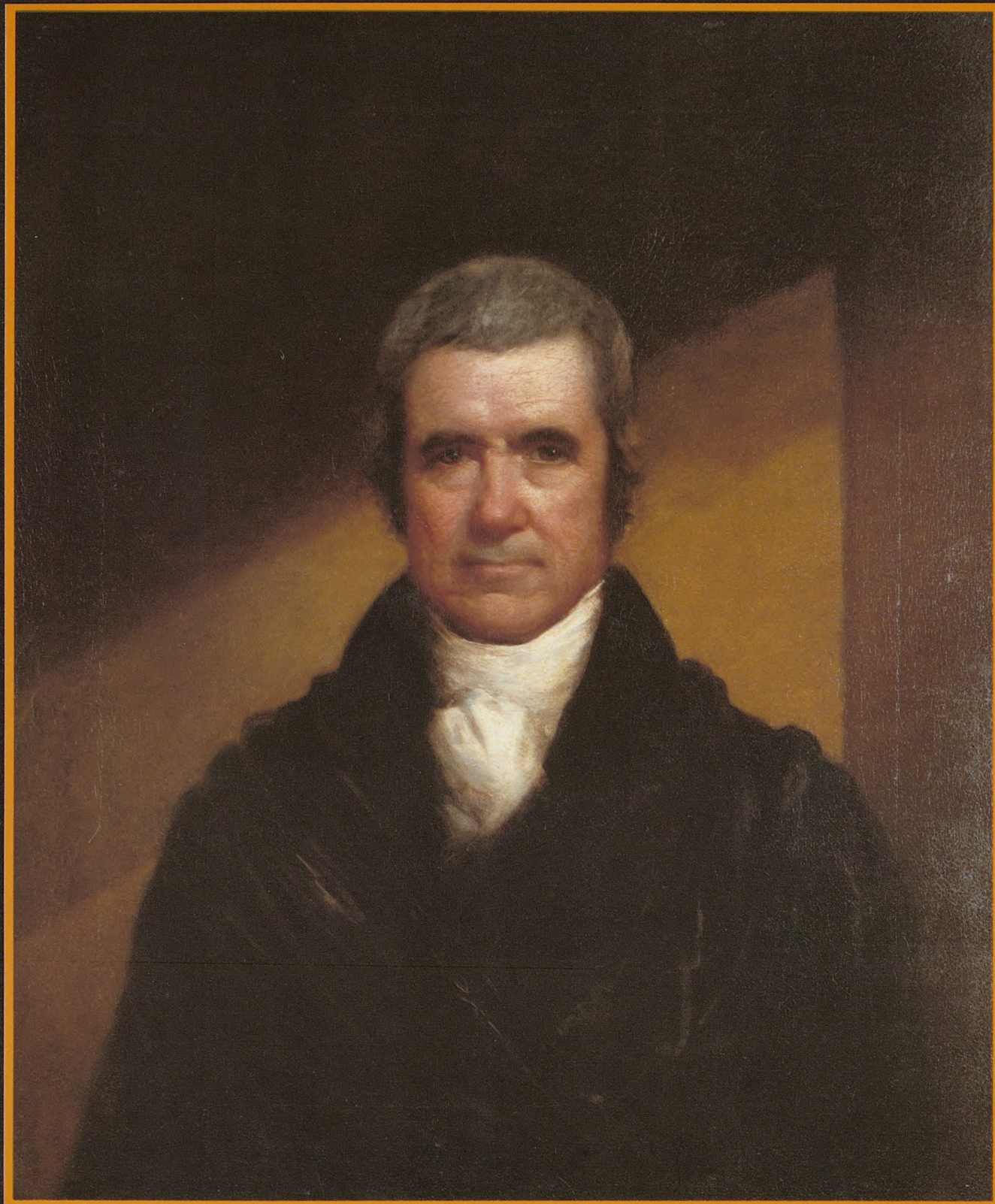
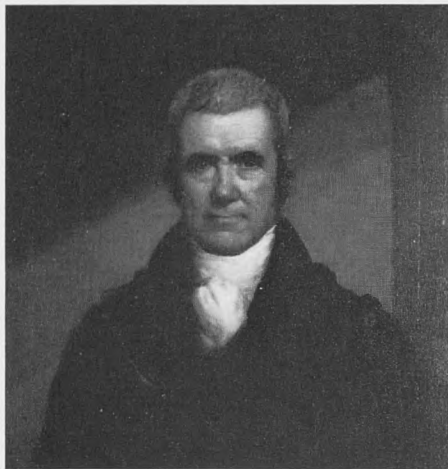


*Alumni Gazette*

# William and Mary



*Winter 1983*



### **On the Cover**

The cover illustration is the portrait of John Marshall painted ca. 1825 by John Wesley Jarvis (American, 1780 - 1840). Oil on canvas, 30" x 25".

John Marshall (1755 - 1835) is one of William and Mary's most illustrious alumni. He attended the College in 1780, studying under George Wythe, one of the period's most brilliant teachers of law, and then went on to a distinguished career in jurisprudence. He was appointed Chief Justice of the United States in 1801 and his constitutional decisions over the next 30 years gave shape and definition to the federal government.

Painted when the Chief Justice was about 70 years old, this portrait is one of several similar likenesses. While scholarly opinion is divided as to which is the earliest portrait and which are replicas by Jarvis or copies painted by other artists, Harold E. Dickson, author of the definitive study of Jarvis' works, identifies this version as the original portrait and notes that it "stands high in his [Jarvis'] output of strong likenesses."

This portrait, painted for and originally owned by Marshall's youngest son, Edward Carrington Marshall, was passed down from father to son, remaining in the family collection until recently. The portrait is now on display in the Rare Book Room of the library in the Marshall-Wythe School of Law.

Photo by Thomas L. Williams

The Alumni Gazette  
**William and Mary**

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**College of William and Mary in Virginia**

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# F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

## The Remaking Of A Reputation

Fitzgerald Has Finally Come To Be Ranked With The Major Prose Writers Of The Century, But It Was Not Easy

By Scott Donaldson

*Literary reputation is a notoriously chancy business. Melville died forgotten, Dickinson unknown. In the case of F. Scott Fitzgerald, however, the issue has been complicated by the unusual notoriety he commanded when alive, and by the cultist followers — far more interested in the singer than the song — who have assembled since his death.*

*Sections of this article, which traces the uneven and curious growth of his reputation, will appear in Donaldson's F. Scott Fitzgerald, Fool for Love, scheduled for publication in the early fall of 1983.*

Derogatory stereotypes have clung to F. Scott Fitzgerald's reputation like barnacles to a ship. During his lifetime and immediately afterwards he was popularly regarded either as the Chronicler of the Jazz Age or as the Artist in Spite of Himself. Like most such stereotypes, these have not altogether faded. Instead, they've been joined by yet another unfortunate image — the Writer as Burnt-Out Case.

Following his death on December 21, 1940, obituary writers were virtually unanimous in depicting him as an author whose star had fallen with the end of the roaring 1920s. An obituary in *Time* magazine was so bent on tying Fitzgerald to the Jazz Age that it mentioned only his first two novels, ignoring both *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and *Tender Is the Night* (1934). It was rather as if Herman Melville had been memorialized as the author of *Typee* and *Omoo*, never mind *Moby-Dick*. Furthermore, the *Time* obit was com-

posed, according to John O'Hara, by a man who had never read anything of Fitzgerald's before getting the assignment.

The newspapers and magazines were not entirely wrong in portraying Fitzgerald as a Jazz Age Author and hence as representative of that frantic period. At first he did not himself repudiate the association. In fact, he insisted on calling his second book of short stories *Tales of the Jazz Age* despite the reservations of Scribner's. And in a 1931 letter to his editor Maxwell Perkins he maintained that he'd given the period its name. "The Jazz Age is over . . . I claim credit for naming it . . . it extended from the suppression of the riots on May Day 1919 to the crash of the Stock Market in 1929 — almost exactly one decade."

Besides, there are certain writers whose lives are intimately entwined with their times, and Fitzgerald was surely one of these. He served both as a representative figure of the 1920s and as their historian. "For a little while," he himself commented, "I was seeing the contemporary line-up a little more clearly than anyone else." Then he'd had to change, either to "go in for new material or to regard my old material with a new slant." He'd chosen the second alternative and so split his public between "those who liked only my first books that said what, and those who liked only my later that said why." The evidence is strong that during Fitzgerald's lifetime a great many more people liked his first books than liked his later and better ones. The sales figures prove the point, and so do

the obituaries. Only Malcolm Cowley, in those first months after Fitzgerald's death, perceived that this writer who memorized the quarterbacks and songs of each year had managed to transcend his Jazz Age material "precisely and paradoxically because he immersed himself in it."

Few were inclined to take Fitzgerald as seriously as that when he died. *Esquire's* Arnold Gingrich summed up the prevailing view in his March 1941 "Salute and Farewell." Nobody of his generation "could write as well" as Fitzgerald, Gingrich remarked, but he "never had anything to say half worthy of his incomparable ability to express it." This concept of Fitzgerald as "a natural genius warbling his jazz notes wild" probably derived, rather ironically, from Edmund Wilson — ironically, because Wilson's efforts in bringing out *The Last Tycoon* (1941) and *The Crack-Up* (1945) had so much to do with restoring Fitzgerald's

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*Scott Donaldson abandoned a career as newspaper reporter and editor to come to William and Mary in 1966. He has since written many articles and a number of books, including *The Suburban Myth* (1969), *American Literature: Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century* (1978), and two biographies in addition to the forthcoming one on Fitzgerald, *Poet in America: Winfield Townley Scott* (1972) and the well-known *By Force of Will: The Life and Art of Ernest Hemingway* (1977). Among other things he teaches American literature and a seminar in non-fiction writing at the college.*



*F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1935, a "crackup" year.*

posthumous reputation. A class ahead of Fitzgerald at Princeton and many years his senior in breadth of reading, Wilson tended to look down on the younger man with an air of intellectual superiority. He recognized Fitzgerald's talent, but thought it a thin one. With John Peale Bishop, Wilson dashed off a free-verse outline of Fitzgerald's undergraduate career.

*I was always clever enough  
To make the clever upperclassmen  
notice me;  
I could make one poem by Browning,  
One play by Shaw,  
And part of a novel by Meredith  
Go further than most people  
Could do with the reading of years;  
And I could always be cynically amus-  
ing at the expense  
Of those who were cleverer than I  
And from whom I borrowed freely,  
But whose cleverness  
Was not the kind that is effective  
In the February of sophomore year. . .  
No doubt by senior year  
I would have been on every committee  
in college,  
But I made one slip:  
I flunked out in the middle of junior  
year.*

Fitzgerald for his part looked up to Wilson as a knowledgeable if sometimes brutally frank mentor. Wilson's reaction to *This Side of Paradise* demonstrated both qualities. He liked the "pretty writing and clever dialogue" in Fitzgerald's 1920 book, admitted that "some of the poems and descriptions are really exceedingly good," and confessed that he'd enjoyed it, since Fitzgerald had "the knack of writing readably." But he also issued a series of cautions. To begin with, Fitzgerald's novel read "like an exquisite burlesque of Compton Mackenzie with a pastiche of [H.G.] Wells thrown in at the end." Amory Blaine, his hero, was an intellectual "fake of the first water, and I read his views on art, politics, religion and society with more riotous mirth than I should care to have you know." The novel contained some very dubious scenes, and certainly Fitzgerald should pay more attention to form. "I feel called upon to give this advice," the 25-year-old Wilson instructed the 24-year-old Fitzgerald, "because I believe you might become a very popular trashy novelist without much difficulty."

Publicly, Wilson proclaimed in the March 1922 *Bookman* that *This Side of Paradise* contained "almost every fault and deficiency" a novel could possibly



*The Fitzgeralds — Zelda, Scottie, and Scott — enroute to France in the Spring of 1928.*

have yet did not commit the unpardonable sin: it did "not fail to live." *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922), he thought, represented an advance over the earlier novel, but Fitzgerald remained a "dazzling extemporizer" who had not yet acquired the discipline to "produce something durable." The man himself, middle-western and Irish in background, was not, Wilson wrote, "much given to abstract or impersonal thought." In a memorable passage he observed that Fitzgerald had "been left with a jewel which he doesn't quite know what to do with": the gift of imagination without intellectual control, the desire for beauty without an aesthetic ideal, the gift for expression "without very many ideas to express."

In this one essay Wilson pinned his specimen butterfly to the wall, labeled Artistic Naif, or the Artist in Spite of Himself. Fitzgerald accepted Wilson's criticisms and even adopted them him-

self. "Wilson's article about me . . ." he wrote Perkins, "is superb. It's no blurb — not by a darn sight — but it's the first time I've been done *at length* by an intelligent and sophisticated man and I appreciate it — jeers and all." Sixteen years later, writing Perkins once again, he looked back on *This Side of Paradise* in Wilsonian terms. "I think it is now one of the funniest books since 'Dorian Gray' in its utter spuriousness — and then, here and there, I find a page that is real and living."

Undoubtedly a tinge of envy entered into Wilson's feelings, especially after the acclaim that greeted *The Great Gatsby*. He was also annoyed by the refusal of Scribner's to grant him small loans. "You wouldn't do anything for me . . ." he wrote Perkins, "at a time when you were handing out money to Scott Fitzgerald like a drunken sailor." Wilson would have given his "eyeteeth," Perkins commented, to



Scott and Zelda when they were very young.

## Scott And Zelda, The Romantic Egoists

F. Scott Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in September 1896 and died slightly more than 44 years later, in December 1940. He became famous with the publication of his first book, *This Side of Paradise*, a highly autobiographical account of a young man's adventures in prep school and Princeton. This came out in the spring of 1920, and a week later Fitzgerald married Zelda Sayre, the talented devil-may-care daughter of a Montgomery, Alabama judge. Together he and Zelda went out of their way to shock the sensibilities of the respectable, riding on the top of taxicabs and splashing about in the fountain of the Plaza hotel. As the 1920s wore on, their antics grew progressively less amusing and more self-destructive. In fact, their progress has often been calibrated against the boom and bust of the decade: the Fitzgeralds rose into prominence at the beginning in the glare of publicity, peaked at mid-decade with the critical and popular success of *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and then tailed precipitously to bottom out in Scott's alcoholism and Zelda's schizophrenia at the time of the crash.

Despite treatment at sanitariums in Europe and the United States, by 1934

it was clear that Zelda would never fully recover from her illness. In that year her husband published *Tender Is the Night*, the novel that — with *Gatsby* — has become a staple in college and university classrooms. *Tender* is in many ways a bitterly pessimistic book, yet a very moving one as well. Fitzgerald himself was going through a dark time when he wrote it — in the 1934-36 period described in his "Crack Up" articles. He spent the last three and a half years of his life in California, writing for the films to recoup his fortunes and, toward the end, working on another novel, *The Last Tycoon*, which he hoped would help restore his reputation.

Fitzgerald died largely forgotten, or, if remembered, regarded as merely a frivolous chronicler of the Jazz Age. Today he ranks with Faulkner and Hemingway among the giants of twentieth century American prose fiction. The accompanying article explores the process by which his star rose from obscurity to brilliance, a process that has been beclouded by the tendency to romanticize the sad story of Scott and Zelda and so to focus less on the work Fitzgerald left behind than on his erratic behavior.

S.D.

have half of Fitzgerald's reputation as a novelist.

The two Princetonians quarreled only once when a drunken Fitzgerald insisted on denigrating himself as a "vulgarian" and pigeonholing Wilson (who had other ambitions, after all) as a "scholar." This occurred during a luncheon in the fall of 1933, and the ever-contrite Fitzgerald went out of his way to patch things up afterwards. There may have been a trace of irony in his bowing and scraping, but, by and large, he really did rely on Wilson as a source of knowledge on literary and political questions.

In his notes for *The Last Tycoon*, he set down a proposed dedication: "This novel is for two people — S.F. [daughter Scottie] at seventeen and E.W. [Edmund Wilson] at forty-five. It must please them both." Whatever else his role in Fitzgerald's life and career, Wilson was one of those he always wanted to please, if only because he never quite succeeded in doing so.

At the beginning of his career, Fitzgerald helped construct a somewhat disreputable image through his subject matter, appearance, and behavior. Calling his second collection of stories *Tales of the Jazz Age* may have been a tactical error. Calling his first collection *Flappers and Philosophers* almost certainly was, for he became fixed in the public mind as an expert on flappers and their foolish ways. "One of the worst things that ever happened to Fitzgerald," John O'Hara remarked, "was the simultaneous popularity of John Held's drawings."

Held exaggerated the frivolousness of his flappers for satirical purposes, but many people accepted his drawings at face value and assumed that these were the very girls who inhabited the young fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald. By easy transference the author himself was identified with the flappers and sheiks who were his characters. Soon critics were suggesting that he might concentrate his gaze on that "large section of the feminine younger generation which has never tasted a cocktail and can scarcely be called 'flappers.'" But the *Saturday Evening Post* wanted flapper stories, and Fitzgerald duly supplied them, at eventual cost to his reputation. One commentator in the mid-1920s belittled Fitzgerald as "a splasher of lavender in the pink tea of life." Joseph Wood Krutch and others accused him of lacking a properly critical attitude toward his material: "he sees flappers, male and female, much as they see

themselves." Moralists feared, some of them rightly, that young people would imitate the immature and irresponsible antics of, say, the heroines of "The Offshore Pirate" and "Head and Shoulders," both 1920 *Post* stories.

Reading the former story inspired Zelda to write her husband in 1931 that "You were younger than anybody in the world once — what fun you must have had in that curious place that's younger than life." Indeed, Fitzgerald struck almost everyone as amazingly young. "A baby with rouged lips," Neysa McMein called him in 1922. "A choir boy singing . . . secure in the knowledge that he has just placed a tack in the minister's chair," Woodward Boyd described him the same year. All his life his restlessness and effervescence and Golden Boy appearance caused others to think him more youthful and naive than he was. Vernon L. Parrington's note on Fitzgerald in *Main Currents in American Thought* (1930) summed up the derogatory reaction inspired by this youthful image: "a bad boy who loves to smash things to show how naughty he is; a bright boy who loves to say smart things to show how clever he is."

In fact his actions often complemented his immature appearance. During their 1921 trip to Europe, as Gore Vidal has observed, "the Fitzgeralds never got around to seeing the sights because, as Jazz Age celebrities, they were the sights." Jumping into fountains and tangling with the law brought them a certain notoriety they did not, at first, dislike. Behind it all lay the drinking. One of Fitzgerald's most revealing fan letters about *Gatsby* came from actor John Barrymore, who admitted to finding the book astonishingly good. "I had not expected you could write so well," Fitzgerald's sometime drinking companion said. And what was to be made of a grown man who paid his butler to impersonate a ghost and donned a huge false nose himself to shock visitors?

If friends expected Fitzgerald to behave outrageously, they were also prepared to forgive him most of his excesses. The critics were less inclined to do so. In their attitude there may have been some resentment at the ease of Fitzgerald's early success. Even a well-wisher like successful novelist James Branch Cabell warned the author of *This Side of Paradise* against the pitfalls of premature acclaim: "I hope — though possibly that is asking too much of human nature at your time of life — that you will not be very much spoiled by the book's, quite

merited, success." Less charitable observers were quite prepared to watch him stumble, the more so after he set about exploiting his accomplishments in a flurry of self-promotion.

Fitzgerald's penchant for advertising himself emerges clearly in "The Author's Apology," a blurb he wrote for the American Booksellers Association meeting on May 20, 1920, a few weeks after publication of *This Side of Paradise*:

*I don't want to talk about myself because I'll admit I did that somewhat in this book. In fact, to write it took three months; to conceive — three minutes; to collect the data in it — all my life. The idea of writing it came on the first of last July; it was a substitute form of dissipation.*

*My whole theory of writing I can sum up in one sentence: An author ought to write for the youth of his own generation, the critics of the next, and the schoolmasters of ever afterward.*

*So, gentlemen, consider all the cocktails mentioned in this book drunk by me as a toast to the American Booksellers Association.*

Scribner's could hardly have asked for more effective selling copy. In it Fitzgerald teased the booksellers with hints of autobiographical involvement in conduct considered unbecoming (all those cocktails) by the older generation. He also made himself out a regular fellow who had happened, in a burst of inspiration or "substitute . . . dissipation," to dash off a novel in the three months of the previous summer. In fact, *This Side of Paradise* had gone through three drafts and well over a year of composition before Scribner's finally accepted it in September 1919.

This promotion piece demonstrated that Fitzgerald had learned something while working for a New York advertising firm in the winter and spring of 1919. In accepting *This Side of Paradise* Perkins asked for some publicity material and a photograph, adding: "You have been in the advertising game long enough to know the sort of thing." Indeed he had, and when he came to compose something for the booksellers, Fitzgerald knew how to dramatize himself and help move copies of his novel out of the stores. Yet in the middle paragraph of his message, he revealed a far more sweeping ambition. There he sought not merely immediate acceptance but the approval of posterity, which would come when schoolmasters assigned his

writings (as now they do) to young people quite unlike the youth of his own generation. He wanted to sell, but he wanted to last too, and at the begin-

***"In fact his actions often complemented his immature appearance. During his 1921 trip to Europe, as Gore Vidal has observed, the Fitzgeralds never got around to seeing the sights because, as Jazz Age celebrities, they were the sights."***

ning of his career he did not see that the two goals might not always be compatible.

The general public was exposed to Fitzgerald's work not only in the *Saturday Evening Post* and other magazines, but on the back page of their daily newspapers, where roughcut condensations of his first two novels ran adjacent to comic strips and ads for corsets and corn plasters. Even his own friends considered him more a celebrity than a writer, and "not a celebrity to whom particular deference need be paid."

The diary of Alexander McKaig, who spent a great deal of time with the Fitzgeralds in New York in 1920, pinpointed Scott's drive for success on two fronts, financial and artistic: "success complex — artist's desire for flattery & influence — member of financially decadent family — Fitz bemoaning fact can never earn more than hundred thousand a year. . . ." He needed the reassurance of dollars, as well as the good opinion of critics and compilers of *Who's Who*. When both came to him in abundance with *This Side of Paradise*, a first novel which sold 40,000 copies in a few months and attracted almost universally favorable notices for its youthful vigor and honesty, the 23-year-old Fitzgerald was not prepared to accept his good fortune with dignity. Instead he kicked up his heels and made everyone watch.

By the time he was writing *The Great Gatsby* in France four years later Fitzgerald was eager to shed his playboy-artist reputation. He felt absolutely self-sufficient and happy working on the book, he wrote Thomas Boyd in May 1924. "Well," he signed



off, "I shall write a novel better than any novel ever written in America and become par excellence the best second-rater in the world." There was more than joshing in the comment, for like most writers Fitzgerald was plagued by occasional doubts about the value of his output. He told John Biggs, for example, that he felt he'd never make a first-rater, but only rank "at the top of the second class." Such moments of insecurity were naturally exacerbated by his somewhat disreputable public image. So when he mailed the manuscript of *Gatsby* to New York in October, he sent along a letter asking for favorable royalty terms, binding and stamping absolutely uniform with his earlier books, and no jacket blurbs. "I'm tired of being the author of *This Side of Paradise*," he told Perkins, "and I want to start over."

What he clearly wanted was to be taken seriously as a writer of accomplishment. That word crops up repeatedly in his correspondence. Dr. Adolf Meyer, one of Zelda's doctors, "never really believed that I worked hard, had a serious reputation, or made money," he complained. In February 1934 he wrote Perkins about advertising the long-delayed *Tender Is the Night*. Perkins shouldn't mention the "Riviera" or "gay resorts," Fitzgerald cautioned his publisher. "If it could be done, a suggestion that, after a romantic start, a serious story unfolds, would not be amiss. . . ." A month later, in a famous letter, the brilliant young author of *This Side of Paradise* insisted to Perkins that he should be considered a "plodder," that he was the tortoise and Ernest Hemingway the hare. He could do cheap things "as quickly as anybody," Fitzgerald acknowledged, "but when I decided to be a serious man, I tried to struggle over every point until I have made myself into a slow moving Behemoth. . . ." and so there I am for the rest of my life." In April he echoed the point in a letter to H. L. Mencken: ". . . ever since I decided that I would rather be an artist than a careerist, I would rather impress my image (even though an image the size of a nickel) upon the soul of a people than be known . . ." more widely. Fame wasn't the spur. Art was.

Fitzgerald's determination to become a serious artist made little impression on a reading audience which associated him largely with his first novels and his sometimes frivolous stories in the *Saturday Evening Post*. From the start of his career until

he went to Hollywood, from "Head and Shoulders" (February 21, 1920) to "Trouble" (March 6, 1937), he published more than 60 stories in the *Post*, most of them written to the familiar boy-gets-girl-after-apparently-losing-her formula.

In correspondence of the mid-1920s, he repeatedly denigrated such stories and stressed that he only wrote them to buy time for more important work. He poured his whole heart into his first "trash" for the *Post*, he told Mencken in May 1925, but lately the trash was getting worse and worse as there was less and less heart in it. "When I get ahead again on trash," he wrote Perkins the same week, "I'll begin the new novel."

It was only after he'd lost the knack of writing such stories, after all the heart had gone out of them, that Fitzgerald began to defend them. At 40 he simply could not turn out any more *Post* stories. "It grows harder to write," he confided to his notebooks, "because there is so much less weather than when I was a boy and practically no men and women at all." His recent fiction, he remarked in January 1937, seemed "to lack any special brilliance or glow. . . ." Too often he'd tried to "cover lack of story & feelings about the story with mere description or else set off damp fireworks to give an artificial life." The *Post's* editors, recognizing these difficulties, cut their long connection with Fitzgerald. To daughter Scottie, he complained that the magazine had lost its taste for "the intelligence and the good writing and even the radicalism" that he brought to it. But he also insisted that it required real professionalism to write publishable stories for the *Post*: "You do not produce a short story for the *Saturday Evening Post* on a bottle."

Nonetheless, Fitzgerald did not care to be judged for posterity by his least effective work. Nor did he want to be forgotten while still functioning. "Isn't my reputation being allowed to slip away? I mean what's left of it," he wrote Perkins in December 1938. In May 1940 he suggested that his finest book be reprinted in a cheap edition. "Would the 25-cents press keep *Gatsby* in the public eye — or is the book unpopular? Has it had its chance?" The week before he died, he had another inquiry for his publisher. "How much will you sell the plates of *This Side of Paradise* for? I think it has a chance for a new life."

He knew that he had been at best "a mediocre caretaker" of his abilities. He produced a considerable corpus during

his 44 years: four and one-half novels, 160 stories, several dozen articles. But much of that production came in spurts, and there were long fallow periods when he drank and sought the admiration of women and otherwise idled away his days. Eventually he regretted the time he'd wasted. In Hollywood, watching the sale of his books trickle down to a handful per year, he could hardly be confident of the judgment of the future. In 1925 he had predicted that *Gatsby* would sell 80,000 copies, though it sold only a third that number in his lifetime. By November 1940, when he wrote Gingrich about *The Last Tycoon*, Fitzgerald had been considerably chastened. "Am far past the middle of a novel and I want to finish it by February," he told the *Esquire* editor. "I expect it to sell at least a thousand copies."

That *The Last Tycoon* did rather better than that — indeed, that it emerged at all — was owing to the efforts of the same man who more than any other had fixed Fitzgerald with the stereotype of having nothing to say in combination with an exceptional ability to say it. After reading "Crazy Sunday" in 1932, Edmund Wilson began to encourage Fitzgerald to write "more about Hollywood, which anybody who knows anything about is either scared or bribed not to tell about or have convinced themselves is all right." Here was a subject suited to Fitzgerald's talent, Wilson clearly believed. Again in 1940, upon hearing that his fellow Princetonian was at work on a novel, Wilson wrote that he hoped it was about Hollywood. He'd read "practically all the novels" on the subject, he observed, and none of them really came to grips with it.

When Fitzgerald died, Wilson felt his death more than he had expected to: "men who start out writing together write for one another more than they realize till somebody dies." He also felt, as he wrote John Peale Bishop in January 1941, "that Scott at the present time needs more than [James] Joyce [who had also just died], because his contemporaries have done him less justice." In that spirit he undertook to edit the scraps Fitzgerald had left into a more or less coherent beginning and middle of a novel. In his introduction, Wilson as custodian of the reputation asserted that *Tycoon* was "far and away the best novel we have had about Hollywood" and added that in going over the "immense pile of drafts and notes" for this novel he'd become "confirmed and reinforced" in his

***“The general public was exposed to Fitzgerald’s work not only in the Saturday Evening Post and other magazines, but on the back page of their daily newspapers, where roughcut condensations of his first two novels ran adjacent to comic strips and ads for corsets and corn plasters.”***

impression that “Fitzgerald will be found to stand out as one of the first-rate figures in the American writing of his period.”

Generally, the critics took their cue from Wilson and praised both *The Last Tycoon* and Fitzgerald. Stephen Vincent Benet’s notice in the *Saturday Review of Literature* confronted the obituary writers directly. “They didn’t review his work,” Benet pointed out, “they merely reviewed the Jazz Age and said it was closed. Because he had made a spectacular youthful success at one kind of thing, they assumed that one kind of thing was all he could ever do. In other words, they assumed that because he died in his forties, he had shot his bolt. And they were just one hundred percent wrong, as *The Last Tycoon* shows.”

As editor of *The Crack-Up*, published in the summer of 1945, Wilson sought once more to enhance Fitzgerald’s standing. Later in that year the *Portable Fitzgerald* came out, edited by Dorothy Parker and with an introduction from O’Hara ranking Fitzgerald as “our best novelist, one of our best novella-ists, and one of our finest writers of short stories.” Bantam also brought out the first paperback edition of *Gatsby* in that year. And both *Gatsby* and *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz and Other Stories* were printed in huge Armed Forces editions for free distribution to the troops in 1945-46.

In 1951, Fitzgerald’s already ascending reputation skyrocketed after the publication of Budd Schulberg’s novel *The Disenchanted* (whose principal character was modeled on Fitzgerald of the final Hollywood years) and of

Arthur Mizener’s prize-winning biography, *The Far Side of Paradise*. Malcolm Cowley’s *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald* and his amended version of *Tender Is the Night* also appeared in 1951. So did Alfred Kazin’s collection of essays, *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work*. Readers could now buy Fitzgerald’s books too; all his novels had been republished either in cloth or paperback by 1951. Yet the sales figures made it clear that the reading public was far more interested in his life than his work. Schulberg’s novel and Mizener’s biography stayed on the bestseller lists for months, while the revised *Tender Is the Night* sold 8,176 copies and *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald* only 1,671 during the first year after publication. The legend of Fitzgerald was in the making.

In the last thirty years this legend has taken hold on the American imagination. Several biographies and dozens of articles have told and retold his story — and Zelda’s — and still the tale carries its fascination.

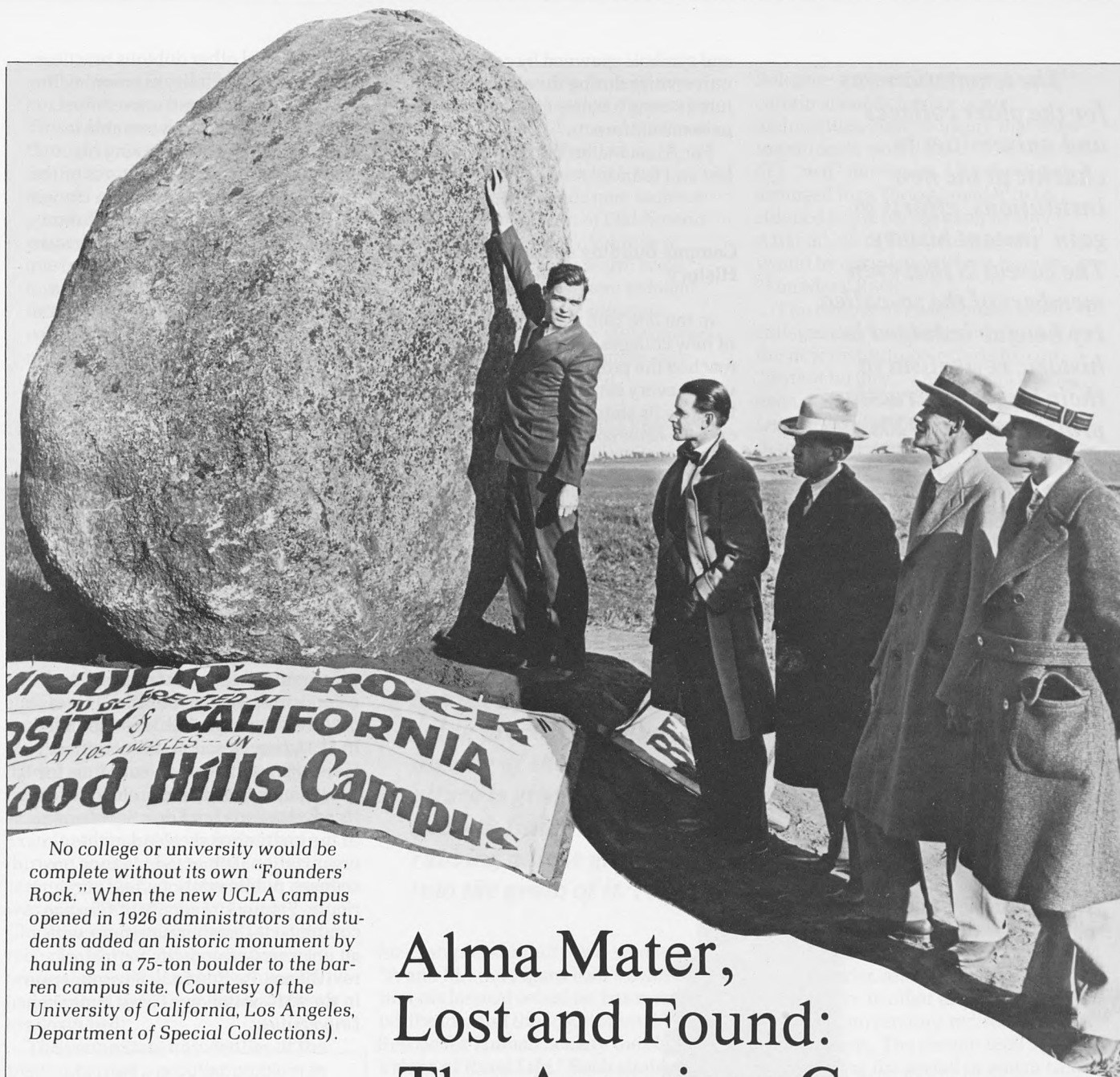
What is the source of Fitzgerald’s extraordinary appeal to tens of thousands of people, many of them without the least interest in literature? To some degree, he has remained attractive as a representative of the Jazz Age, a period glamorized in the public mind for its youth and high spirits. The Robert Redford motion picture of *The Great Gatsby* exploited this propensity and spawned a proliferation of Gatsby bars and parties and costumes. Then, too, Fitzgerald’s supposed lack of intellectual acumen and his sometimes immature behavior have led many to regard him as peculiarly accessible. Richard White’s study of seven Fitzgerald biographies concluded that his appeal derived partly from this seeming accessibility — a sense that he is somehow one of us, though a genius as well — and partly from the poignancy of his life and work. But finally it was that poignancy, that sense of high expectations crumbled to dust, that grasped the collective imagination. Here was a man who started so well and so sweetly, only to have everything turn sour.

He drank too much, he lived too high, he spent too foolishly, and it seemed only fair that he should plummet to earth. Like Edgar Allan Poe before him, Fitzgerald became an example of the Burnt-Out Case, and one facet of the public imagination fastened upon his story as a cautionary tale to be delivered to budding artists and other would-be disturbers of the peace. Many Americans tend to admire

democracy so much as to want it extended to ability as well as opportunity and to distrust or disapprove of those who are granted more than their share. Yet if some took satisfaction at witnessing the dire effects of recklessness, others felt a real empathy for Fitzgerald’s misfortune.

Oddly, he himself seemed to cultivate that misfortune. From the beginning he infused his fiction with “a touch of disaster. . . the lovely young creatures in my novels went to ruin, the diamond mountains of my short stories blew up, my millionaires were as beautiful and damned as Thomas Hardy’s peasants.” Almost all of his best stories ended in failure, even including some for the *Post* (“Babylon Revisited,” for example). Then in *The Crack-Up* essays he detailed his own collapse. In fact, as Leslie Fiedler has argued, the old maxim that “Nothing Succeeds like Success” should be altered for American tastes for “Nothing Succeeds like Failure.” Failure can move us as success never did. This has something to do, Fiedler believes, with the paradox of the Christian who achieves victory in defeat. And in a sense, this is what Scott Fitzgerald has done. He sank all the way to the bottom, not only in his personal life but in his reputation, and he has since risen.

A poster prepared to promote “Zelda and Scott: The Beautiful and Damned,” a 1980 exhibition of Fitzgeraldiana at the National Portrait Gallery, displayed the doomed couple in 16 photos or sketches: Zelda in tutu atop the steamer trunk, the two in black tie and evening dress, Scott in the David Silvette painting of the mid-1930s. At the opening of that show the band played those Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman numbers from the 1940s that have come to be associated, wrongly, with the Jazz Age. Some of the men wore white suits, though no one came in a Gatsbyesque pink suit. One gentleman, inexplicably, danced in a pith helmet. Champagne flowed. An enormous crowd attended, just as unusually large crowds came to see the exhibition of the weeks ahead. Zelda and Scott, Scott and Zelda — they are fixed so securely in the collective minds as lovable reckless youths for whom it all went wrong that, in a sense, Fitzgerald’s greatest victory has been, finally, to be taken very seriously indeed as one of the major literary artists of the twentieth century. It is so much easier to look at photographs and cultivate legends than to really read books.



No college or university would be complete without its own "Founders' Rock." When the new UCLA campus opened in 1926 administrators and students added an historic monument by hauling in a 75-ton boulder to the barren campus site. (Courtesy of the University of California, Los Angeles, Department of Special Collections).

By John R. Thelin

**T**he essential difference between a university and a college is the way they look. The university looks forward and the college looks backward."

So noted an influential editor in 1909 in an epithet which provided the American public a neat guide for sorting out the incredible changes which had taken place in higher education since the 1880s. On close inspection, however, one finds the conventional wisdom was off the mark, as both colleges and universities looked backward to stake out identities. During a half-century of expansion and popularity, from roughly 1880 to 1930, the American campus blossomed as a monumental entity with an unmistakable *historic* personality.

## Alma Mater, Lost and Found: The American Campus Restored, 1880 To 1930

American Universities Discovered That Moving Forward Sometimes Required A Little "Instant History"

Each institution — whether large or small, public or private, old or new — learned that an academic enterprise was enhanced when fused with a colorful tradition.

Tracking down the ways in which colleges and universities invoked a "useful past" allows us to witness the restoration of the American campus. The transformation stands out when one considers that in 1870, for example, even the most established institutions were seldom more than a modest,

uneven patchwork of nondescript buildings which blurred into the host town or city. Whether one examined Brown's University Hall, The College of William and Mary's Wren Building, or Princeton's Old Nassau, the findings were lamentably similar: the few surviving 17th and 18th century structures were either in disrepair or obscured by piecemeal additions — off-handed testimony to the low ebb of the colonial legacy in the life of the late 19th century institution.

***“The temptation was for the older colleges and universities to chuckle at the new institutions’ efforts to gain ‘instant history.’ The caveat is that even members of the so-called Ivy League indulged in historic revivalism in their large construction projects of the 1920s and 1930s.”***

All this would change over the next half century: the enlarged and revitalized campus became a landmark, a source of community and alumni pride. Above all, the architecture, monuments, mementos, legends,

and symbols spawned by colleges and universities during these decades conjured strong historic images in the national culture.

For Alma Mater, the past had been lost and found.

#### **Campus Building and Instant History**

In the late 19th century the founding of new colleges and universities reached the proportions of a fad in which every settlement seemed intent to prove its stature by establishing its own “booster college.” Unfortunately, college founding was closely rivalled by college closings, as most of these ventures were pursued without fear — and without forethought or resources. In many cases, ambitious towns opted to open a college before such services as water, electricity, or elementary schools were in place. Decades of overbuilding, faculty raids, real estate

schemes, and other dubious practices led to a high mortality rate among the incipient colleges and universities.

By 1910 journalists were able to identify among the surviving institutions the homogenized features of the so-called “Standard American University.” However, students and alumni rejected such generalizations because they violated the belief that one’s Alma Mater was a special place. As Henry Seidel Canby wrote in his 1936 memoir about the turn of the century mood, “The most ardent believer in standardization would not dare to assert that college life among the lakes of Wisconsin was identical with experience in a Princeton dormitory or upon a Southern campus.” And, Canby elaborated, “Furthermore, the younger colleges, whether they were ‘state’ or ‘privately endowed’ institutions, modeled their life and aspirations upon the older colleges. . . .”

So, the curious twist is that at the very time that journalists hailed the emergence of progressive “modern universities,” the new buildings and campuses started to look *old*. The case of the University of Chicago, founded in 1892, provides a good illustration. Here was an institution notorious for having upset academic protocol with its adventurous (and drastic) changes in the instructional calendar, the organizational chart, admissions procedures, public relations, and curricula. Yet the University of Chicago combined its brash innovations with an unsurpassed appetite for historic revivalism. As Edwin E. Slosson wrote in the 1910 anthology, *Great American Universities*:

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*This article draws heavily from Mr. Thelin’s recent book, Higher Education and Its Useful Past and from his 1976 work, The Cultivation of Ivy — both published by Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc. of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Photographs and materials are reproduced here with kind permission from Alfred Schenkman.*



The mix of Medieval and Modern Forms in the University of Pittsburgh’s remarkable “Cathedral of Learning” (circa 1928). (Courtesy of the University of Pittsburgh Library, Department of Special Collections).

The University of Chicago does not look its age. It looks much older. This is because it has been put through an artificial aging process, reminding one of the way furniture is given an 'antique oak finish' while you wait by simply rubbing a little grime into the grain of it. . . . The antique buildings had to have furnishings to match; such, for example, as the chandeliers in the law library with porcelain candles, and the massive lanterns, not giving light but lit up very prettily on the outside by electric bulbs. With the buildings and the furnishings came the caps and gowns in colors and designs unrecognizable by Mr. M. A. Oxon, but nevertheless fine examples of the pseudoantique. . . .

In many ways the University of Chicago pioneered a "bureaucratic revolution" in American higher education; President William Rainey Harper, for example, delineated more than two-hundred gradations of faculty and staff rank. Yet this obsession with modern organizations was matched by the President's insistence on mandatory participation in historically inspired rituals: all were expected to wear academic regalia at doctoral examinations and at no fewer than thirteen annual University ceremonies. In fact, a fourteenth event was added in 1905; the University of Chicago community donned academic robes for Harper's elaborate funeral procession — which Harper himself had planned with fond detail while on his death bed!

The young state universities of the 1890s inherited a peculiar problem in the "burden of history": how best incorporate such new fields as agriculture, forestry, engineering, and applied science into the traditions of the learned professions and the liberal arts? Historian Allan Nevins captures well the quest of the embryonic state universities to acquire historic legitimacy for the "A and M" strand within higher education:

*One of the more difficult obligations of these new institutions has been the creation of an atmosphere, a tradition, a sense of the past which might play as important a part in the education of sensitive students as to any other influence. This requires time, sustained attention to cultural values, and the special beauties of landscape or architecture. It is the immemorial grace of towers and lawns, the recollections of great*

*ideas and causes, the fame of eminent leaders, that makes the name of Oxford fall like a chime of music on the ears of men in Delhi and Melbourne. It is this which for generations has made men wake at night with memories of Old Nassau at Princeton or the Colonnade at Charlottesville, their warm brick and ivy, their atmosphere redolent with scholarship and principle. . . . This spiritual grace the state universities cannot quickly acquire, but they have been gaining it.*

The solution, then, for the new university was to create not only the beautiful campus — but more specifically, the historic monument. At the University of California, Berkeley,

***"The University of Chicago does not look its age. It looks much older. This is because it has been put through an aging process, reminding one of the way furniture is given an 'antique oak finish' while rubbing a little grime into the grain of it. . . ."***

for example, antiquity was wed to the "A and M," in Hilgard Hall's combination of classical columns, bas relief beefheads, and the inscription, "To Rescue for Human Society the Native Values of Rural Life." Such strategies continued into the 1920s. In 1928, for example, the University of Pittsburgh projected itself as a 20th century urban "Cathedral of Learning" which mixed the best of modern and medieval forms: a reinforced concrete skyscraper with the most advanced I-beam construction was wrapped with 14th century style stonework, gargoyles, and spires. American pragmatism had fostered higher education's "Girder Gothic."

On the West Coast, the new University of California at Los Angeles worked out its historical identity crisis in an imaginative manner. Whereas most campuses invoked Colonial, Classical, or Gothic motifs, UCLA sought an historic institution compatible with Southern California's Mediterranean climate; thus, the main building (constructed in 1926) was inspired by 13th century University of

Bologna — even though no one was certain about Bologna's actual architecture. And, to insure that entering students would have the traditions of a "real" university, UCLA officials arranged for a 75-ton boulder to be shipped to the barren campus site. After all, no college or university would be complete without its own "Founders' Rock."

The temptation was for the older colleges and universities to chuckle at the new institutions' efforts to gain "instant history." The caveat is that even members of the so-called Ivy League indulged in historic revivalism in their large construction projects of the 1920s and 1930s. The ornate residential quadrangles of Harvard's House Plan or Yale's Colleges drastically altered the campus appearance and the patterns of student life. These were prolonged building campaigns in which the indigenous "General Grant" architecture of the 1870s was replaced by heroic depiction of a Colonial past — namely, laboratories, libraries, and research centers' modern functions were clothed by Georgian brick. Or, as was the case at Yale, a Gothic Revival gymnasium came to be known among undergraduates as the "Temple of Sweat."

### Symbols and Ceremonies

One staple of commencement oratory is that the campus is "not made of bricks and mortar alone." Heeding this reminder, let us shift from architecture to other areas where colleges and universities rediscovered historic roots. The decade 1880 to 1920 stand out as the period in which campus was romanticized. One impetus toward nostalgia came from alumni groups -- virtually unknown a few years before, but highly active and organized toward the end of the century — who became willing allies with undergraduates in celebration of the College's traditions and extracurricular activities. These were the years in which elaborate class year books, student newspapers, and college songs flourished. Possibly the most conspicuous addition to the campus life was the rise of varsity sports. And here, a college's colors and mascots became a visible source of loyalty and heritage.

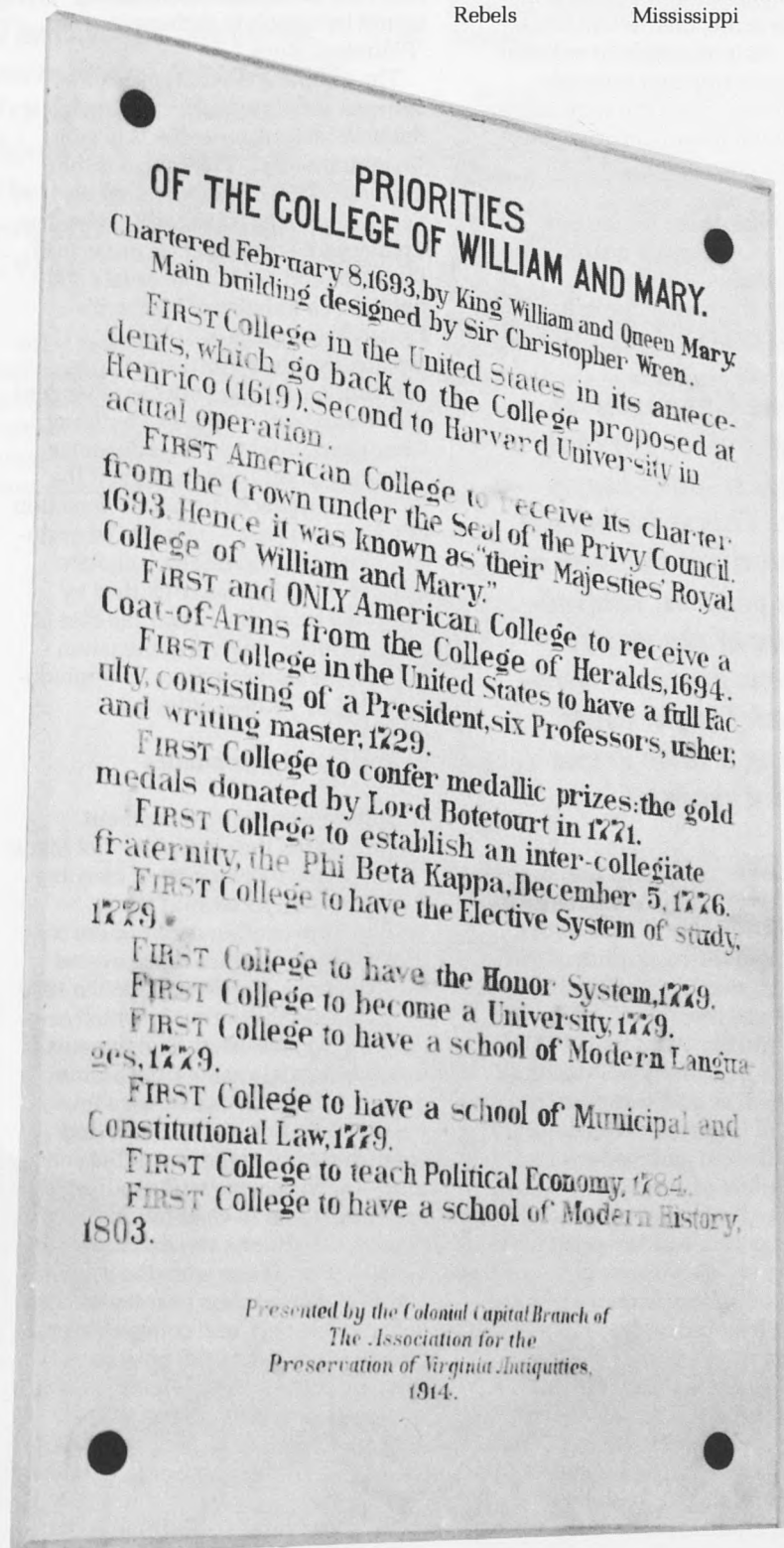
American higher education is dotted with predictable beasts serving as institutional mascots — namely, lions, tigers, and bears. Beyond this obvious menagerie one finds a number of colleges which linked their respective

symbols to state or local heritage. Recalling the task of the young state universities to acquire an historic identity, the following mascot choices are noteworthy:

Mascot	Institution
Hoosiers	Indiana
Sooners	Oklahoma
Cowboys	Oklahoma State
Boilermakers	Purdue
Cavaliers	Virginia
Cornhuskers	Nebraska
Tarheels	North Carolina
Rebels	Mississippi

Some colleges and universities have opted for mascots which honor either the founder or namesake. The result is a recurrent public reminder of an institution's origins:

Vanderbilt	Commodores
Aquinas College	Tommies
Amherst College	Lord Jeffs
Washington and Lee	Generals
Franklin and Marshall	Diplomats
Brandeis University	Judges



Selecting an appropriate mascot is a serious matter which requires careful attention to institutional heritage and good taste. In 1972, after Stanford University dropped its "Indian" mascot, there were numerous campaigns for such nominees as "Robber Barons," "Redwoods," and (the eventual choice) "The Cardinal." In 1978 over two-hundred varsity athletes petitioned the Stanford administration to become "The Griffins." Unfortunately for Stanford, that mascot already was claimed by Reed College. The Griffin is an especially significant choice because it shows that an institution can select a mascot for its cerebral qualities. Here was a mythical beast, part lion and eagle, who signifies supra-solar light, "the highest degree of intellectual insight and awareness" — a staunch opponent of Chaos (Darkness).

Along with mascots and school colors, one finds in the 1890s a renewed interest in academic ceremonies. The public events and examinations which had made Commencement integral to 17th and 18th century collegiate life had withered by the mid-19th century. The same impulse which led undergraduates to sponsor athletic teams and glee clubs led to a resurrection of rituals and pomp. There were, of course, important modifications: commencement oratory was for celebration rather than for examination; caps and gowns bore little resemblance to the authentic styles of the medieval university. At Oberlin, for example, faculty were worried that undergraduates' penchant for sailor's caps, sombreros, and top hats had pushed academic costume beyond acceptable limits. Today, of course, the regalia of mortarboards, gowns, and hoods are regulated by strict guidelines of color and symbolism — but even these solemn measures are historically inspired rather than historically accurate.

As one school with no need to manufacture "instant history," William and Mary lists its legitimate claims to historical firsts on a tablet on the back portico of the Wren Building. (Photo by Thomas L. Williams)

## Heritage and Attachment: The Institutional Saga

The preceding academic procession of costumes, mascots, motifs, and monuments hints that since the turn of the century American higher education has been enamoured with revivalism. This can lead to abuses, as a Harvard brochure warned prospective applicants twenty years ago, "Obviously age does not guarantee excellence. It may produce simply smug somnolence and hardened arteries."

Equally dangerous, however, is the institutional sin of omission, that is, being oblivious to history. The category "invisible colleges" refers to those campuses which invoke no dis-

tinctive tradition and stand for no clear educational mission. Without such moorings it is difficult to gain the loyalty and affiliation of students, faculty, alumni, and external publics. One architect, after reviewing the magnificent revivalistic campus plans from the early 1900s, looked out over a university characterized by low-bid structures of the 1960s and sadly concluded that higher education was susceptible to trading its "classical dreams for concrete realities."

This is not to say that all colleges and universities must be imitations which invoke the same precedent. The subtle and imaginative challenge is for each campus to merge its contemporary mission with an appropriate legacy. A good recent example is

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*For many years, the statue of Lord Botetourt formed the centerpiece for the ancient Wren front courtyard but environmental damage forced its removal to the Botetourt Gallery in Swem Library. (Photo by Thomas L. Williams)*

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Georgia State University, a large urban commuter school in Atlanta. Rather than cite the grossly ill-fitting imagery of pastoral Oxford or Colonial Harvard, Georgia State University emphasized its continuity with the great continental universities and their tradition of *not* building dormitories and a landscaped campus. The urban university was heir to a rich, although underappreciated, history.

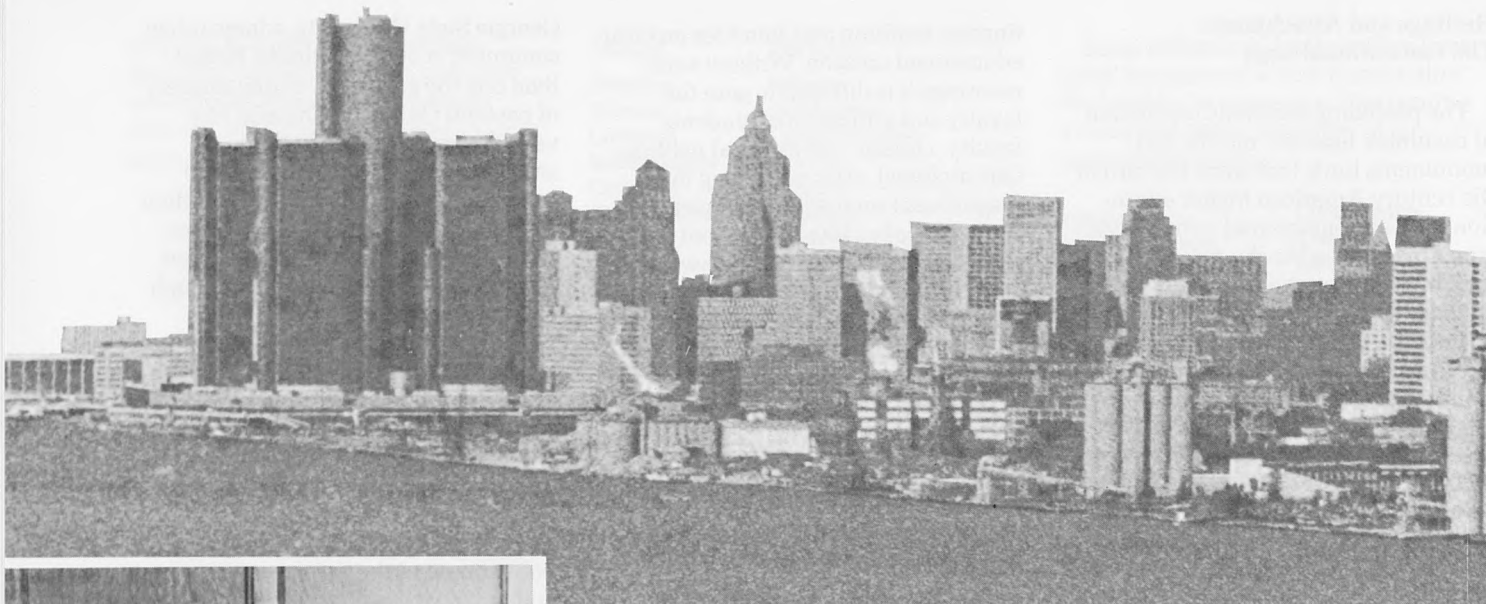
The inauthenticities and anachronisms of academia's historic revivalism often are minor crimes. Ought we be outraged to learn that mortar boards and gowns are inaccurate in their design and color? More important is the social fact that the resurrected ceremonies can serve a didactic function: to remind the public and the participants that wearing the gown, marching in the procession, and receiving the diploma dramatically and symbolically makes one a part of a noble educational tradition — which carries the double-edged blade of privileges and obligations.

In surveying the landmarks and mementos which were fostered on the American campus between 1880 and 1930 I have attempted to introduce what Burton Clark has called the institutional *saga* — the blend of "real" and embellished historical strands which invigorate an organization. Our colleges and universities are peculiar institutions in that they recognize well the importance of historic belief and emotional attachment for the health of the present and future campus. So long as we bear in mind that traditions need not be stagnant, American higher education's "useful past" can be a vital and proper orientation.

### Suggested Readings

I am indebted to the following works and authors whose research and insights shaped my brief essay:

- James Axtell, "The Death of the Liberal Arts College," *History of Education Quarterly* (Winter 1971) vol. xi, no. 4, pp. 339-352.
- Henry Seidel Canby, *Alma Mater: The Gothic Age of the American College* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1936).
- Burton R. Clark, *The Distinctive College* (Chicago: Aldine, 1970).
- Edwin E. Slosson, *Great American Universities* (New York: MacMillan, 1910).
- Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1965).



Ed Roberts

***“... Detroit is a great newspaper town. The News competes fiercely with the rival Free Press, and the place itself is notable for its big business, big labor, big money, and fiery politics.”***

# DETROIT: THE MYTHS AND MADNESSES

A Pulitzer Prize Winning Newsman Tells How Living And Working In Detroit Changed His Perceptions Of The Motor City

By Edwin A. Roberts, Jr. '56

On a sparkling Sunday morning in July of 1977, my wife and I stood at the window of our 15th-floor room in Detroit's Pontchartrain Hotel and considered the view. Directly below was the world's busiest waterway, the Detroit River, and beyond the river was the peaceful little city of Windsor on the Ontario shore. How odd, said Barbara, that from this spot in the United States one looked south toward Canada.

But our bemusement at Canada's southerliness was far from being our oddest perception that day. A few blocks to the east stood the shining Renaissance Center, a towering hotel of some 70 stories flanked by six large office buildings - all seven structures rounded in the familiar John Portman style, eschewing the ancient architec-

tural convention of perpendicular walls meeting in the perfection of right angles.

It was our plan to stroll to the RenCen for brunch, but we hesitated. Would it be safe? Would it be safe to walk four blocks on the streets of Detroit, the city reputed to be the "murder capital of the world?" Finally we decided to chance it and, after walking swiftly and with eyes peeled for suspicious characters, we arrived at

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*Edwin A. Roberts, Jr. '56 is the editorial page editor of The Detroit News. A former editorial writer for The Wall Street Journal and columnist for The National Observer, he won the 1974 Pulitzer Prize for commentary for his Observer column, "Mainstreams."*



a RenCen restaurant with the sense of having cheated death.

How innocent - how inane - that fear seems now. But in those days we had no personal knowledge of the character of the Motor City and, probably like most Americans, were inclined to regard unskeptically Detroit's demonic reputation.

Permit me to back up a moment.

Just a month before, The National Observer had folded. So, after 20 years with Dow Jones & Co., first as an editorial writer for the Wall Street Journal and later as a columnist for The Observer (a general-interest weekly that was widely admired by everybody except the advertising community), I was without a job.

The timing of the Observer's demise was extravagantly inconvenient. I had just bought a house in Santa Barbara, the idea being to write my column from the West Coast to somewhat compensate for the natural "Eastern tilt" of a newspaper headquartered in Silver Spring, Md. But we had not yet sold our Maryland house. So the situation was this: We owned a house in the Washington suburbs, another in California, both were substantially mortgaged, our oldest child was about to go off to college, and I was suddenly unemployed.

It was going to be an interesting summer. My first thought was to proceed with our California plans and arrange for the syndication of the column. But then I got a call from my old friend, Bill Giles, whom I had known since the 1950s when we both were young writers on The Wall Street Journal. Bill, who was the founding Editor of The Observer, had recently become Editor of The Detroit News, the largest newspaper in Michigan and one of the six largest in the United States. He was looking for an editorial page editor.

While I very much liked the idea of working for Giles again (he is probably the most versatile, quick-minded, fearless, and dead-honest newspaperman I've ever known), I was wary. My whole career had been spent at the typewriter. An editorial page editor is principally that - in an *editor*, and, of course, a manager of people. I was by no means sure I wanted to give up the luxury of spending every day brooding over my own material. I was by no means sure I wanted to become a "copy doctor" while at the same time entertaining all the politicians and others who would be dropping in to try to influence the editorial policies of a major metropolitan newspaper. And I was by no means sure I wanted to give

up my California dream to live in the murder capital of the world.

On the other hand, Giles' offer represented something new. After having worked as a writer on a small country weekly, a suburban daily, America's famous business newspaper, and a national weekly, the idea of running the editorial page of a big-city paper was enormously appealing. And I would have a free hand.

Beyond that, Detroit is a great newspaper town. The News competes fiercely with the rival Free Press (both papers have circulations well above 600,000 daily), and the place itself is notable for its big business, big labor, big money, and fiery politics. If you're an enthusiastic journalist, there may be no better area in which to write

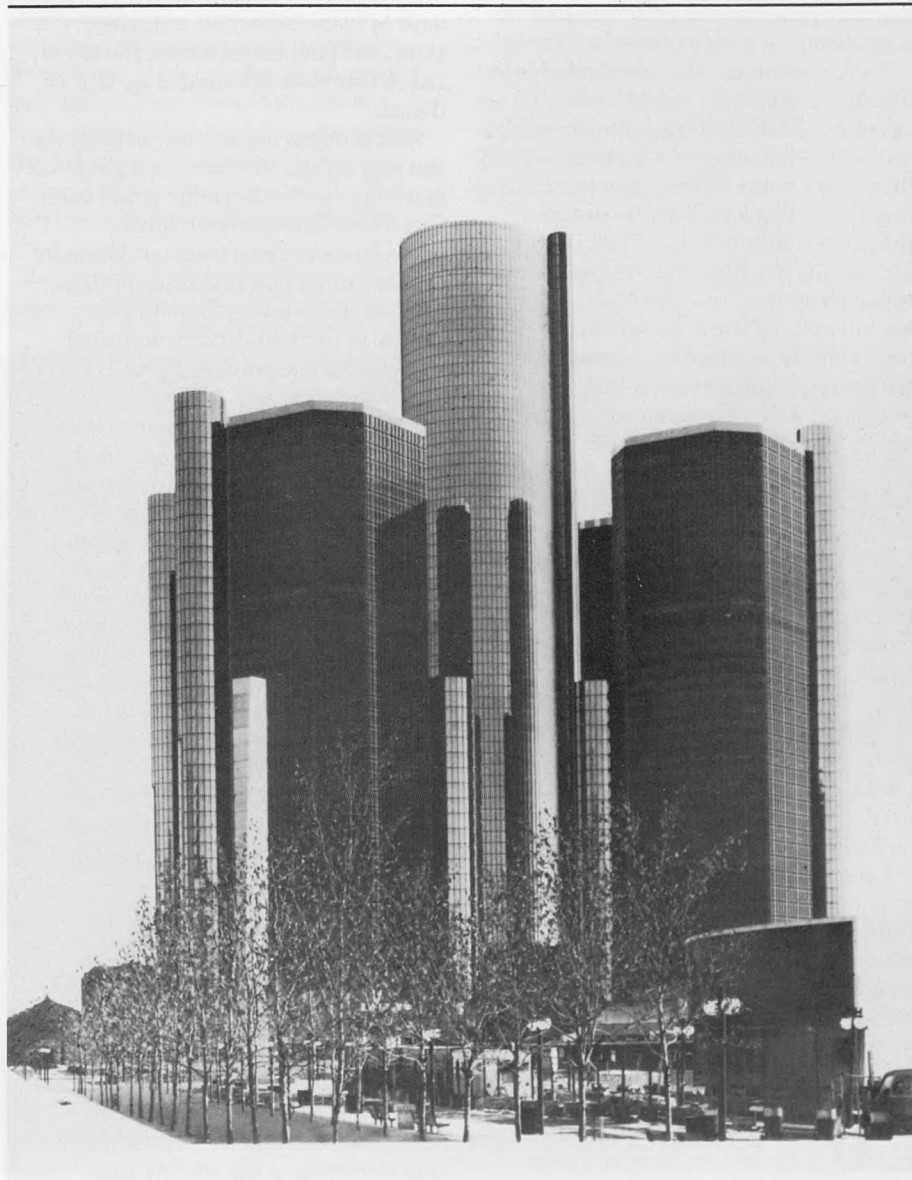
about public events. (Washington is much admired as a workplace by many of my colleagues, but there is a wolf-pack tradition there that is alien to those belonging to an older school of newspapering. Beyond that, news-by-handout and news-by-leak represent a kind of journalism that can numb the mind.)

Well, said Barbara, you really ought to go out and talk to Bill about the job in Detroit. Which is why we found ourselves having brunch at the Renaissance Center on a summer Sunday in 1977.

I've learned since then that our former fear of, and small regard for, the Motor City, while unjustified, is still widely shared by people who don't know very much about the subject.

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*The shining Renaissance Center, a towering hotel of some 70 stories flanked by six large office buildings, decorates the Detroit skyline. (Courtesy of the Detroit News)*



Here are some things I've learned after five years in Detroit.

For a time in the 1960s and 1970s, the city's murder statistics were indeed grim. But the crimes were mostly domestic in character, the result of family spats and such, and in no way represented the atmosphere on the streets. Detroit's downtown area is as safe or safer than any downtown area in the country. Are there neighborhoods I wouldn't venture into at night? Yes. Just as there are parts of Newport News I wouldn't venture into at night.

Unlike any other major urban area I know about, Detroit has virtually no tenements. It is a city of one-and two-family houses with little patches of green lawn between house and sidewalk. It is an airy city of backyards and parks.

Blacks account for 65 percent of the population, and many of them are poor - especially now during Michigan's deep and protracted recession. But since I've been here, I've never once heard anyone use the term "ghettos" to describe black neighborhoods.

Racial tensions, which exploded into the memorable riots of 1967, have eased markedly, although they have by no means been erased. As a result of those riots, some of the city's most distinguished black and white leaders formed a coalition called New Detroit, Inc., which has done much to enhance social harmony. As at the United Nations, New Detroit meetings are occasionally misused by demagogues, but an awful lot of serious-minded people of both races have worked successfully to eradicate the seeds of misunderstanding that in the past were permitted to germinate into poison weeds.

The most serious problem the city faces is also the most serious problem facing the whole state of Michigan: a lack of economic diversity. Autos are it. One of every three domestic cars is built in Michigan, one of four in the Detroit area. Over the years there have been many attempts, during downturns in the auto industry, to diversify the state's economy. But enthusiasm for the goal has always ebbed when car sales picked up. Now, at last, with the whole structure of the industry undergoing change and contraction, there's a renewed awareness that General Motors and Ford and their hundreds of suppliers can no longer be counted on to keep the Michigan economy perking.

I want to tell you something about Detroit's positive qualities and assets, but first it's only fair that you know

what is truly dreadful about living and working in the Motor City.

Winter.

While it's true that last winter was abnormally cold and snowy even for Detroit (many days the wind-chill factor was 50 below, against which wool suits and heavy overcoats were scant protection), all Detroit winters are terrible. They are terrible not only because driving is hazardous and home-heating bills preposterous, but because there's so little sunshine. Day after day, the dark gray skies make one wonder if the sun has departed forever.

Spring is not miserable like that. It is miserable in a different way, combining the same gray skies with rain and wind. Too, April is a great month for ice storms and surprise blizzards. If you like street-gutter slop and general sogginess, you would love spring in Detroit.

Now the good news. Summer in Michigan is glorious, with very few oppressively hot spells but with many days of warm sunshine, cloudless skies, and cool breezes from the Great Lakes (the state is bounded by four of them).

And autumn is paradise, with all the sun and crystal freshness and gorgeous hardwood leaves anybody could want. One of our favorite September pleasures is to drive from our home in Grosse Pointe to a vast apple orchard some 30 miles away, there to pick apples, eat steaming corn on the cob, and buy several gallons of fresh cider for winter storage.

And, usually around Thanksgiving, we visit a tree farm 100 miles north near the shores of Lake Huron and, after what seems like an endless debate in the gloomy cold of November, the children finally decide on a Christmas tree - which we cut down ourselves, strap to the top of the station wagon, and haul back home. Although we pay less this way than if we bought one all cut and bound from a local entrepreneur, I estimate that the cost of gasoline, lunch out for the family, and a late-in-the-day hot-chocolate stop, makes it, foot for foot, the most expensive Christmas tree in the Old Northwest. But it is an agreeable expedition.

Every city, I suppose, has its eccentric aspects, and Detroit has one that is not only baffling but ironic. Can you believe that in the auto capital of the world (as it used to be known), the car dealers are closed on Saturdays and Sundays?

It is understandable, I think, that auto salesmen in the Detroit area

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***"Every city. . . has its eccentric aspects, and Detroit has one that is not only baffling but ironic. Can you believe that in the auto capital of the world. . . , the car dealers are closed on Saturdays and Sundays?"***

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should want Saturdays off. But it is less understandable that they insist upon it.

There is nothing odd about placing a high value on full weekends at home with the family. It's nice to be off when most other people are off, and when the children are home from school, thereby making two-day trips possible. But are those sales people (mostly unionized in the most union-smitten city in the country) serving their own best interests?

With dealerships forced to shut down on Saturdays, buying a car in the Detroit area is inconvenient. The purchase is so important an event that few people are comfortable with a quick lunch-hour bargaining session. Nor is a weekday evening always a good time to engage in a major transaction. Nine-to-fivers are justly weary at day's end, and, beyond that, for much of the year an evening shopper must examine cars under artificial light.

As one who over the decades has often worked Saturdays, Sundays, and Christmas mornings, I find the car salesmen's attitude perplexing. Most men and women believe it's wiser to work any hours necessary, if by so doing one's fortunes are advanced. But there's a different ethic in Detroit unionism. It is rooted in the idea of more pay for less work, rather than more pay for more and better work. Detroit's adamant auto salesmen are disinclined to buy that attitude - just as many other Detroiters are disinclined to shop for a car at the salesmen's convenience. That dozens of Detroit-area auto dealers have gone out of business in recent years is both unfortunate and unsurprising.

My hobbies are gardening and fishing, and so I looked forward (after years as a saltwater man) to learning something about hooking salmon, trout, and perch in Michigan waters. A drawback to the sport in the Great Lakes, however, is that the fish are

slightly contaminated with industrial chemicals. State authorities urge Michigianians to eat fish from the lakes no more than once a week, and they urge pregnant women to eat none at all. However small the risk to health from eating Great Lakes fish, the state's cautionary word has a negative psychological effect. Who wants to catch and eat fish whose fat contains potentially dangerous ingredients?

Thus my ardor for freshwater angling has cooled. But there's another kind of fishing that's a ritual in Michigan and, whether you eat the catch or not, offers many satisfying rewards. I especially recall a night spent on a nearby Canadian beach that juts into Lake Erie, because a man I met there symbolized very well the economic shortsightedness that has afflicted both Michigan and the nation's most famous factory town.

The wind was blowing smartly from the east, raising a fair surf on that side of Point Pelee and sending sheets of water surging across the extremity of the peninsula, giving the beach the appearance of a ship's bow intermittently awash in heavy seas.

To the north and curving westward was the arc of lanterns and flashlights that didn't so much end as finally disperse among the stars. Thousands of people speaking a variety of languages - English, French, Italian, Spanish, Polish - were there because of the smelt run, and the tiny fish, which spawn on sandy beaches, were being netted in extraordinary numbers. Canada's Point Pelee National Park is 30 miles southeast of Detroit, and for generations it has been a popular place to collect smelt during the spring run. After paying the \$2-per-car entry fee, you drive to a parking lot, board a rubber-tired train for the half-mile ride to a refreshment stand, and then walk another half mile to the tip of Point Pelee, the southernmost reach of mainland Canada.

One of the fishermen that night was a man from Pontiac (a city 25 miles northwest of Detroit) who was attempting to fill a large metal box with smelt he was taking with a scoop net, by no means the best tool for the job. A hundred times better is a two-man seine, with floats along the top and sinkers along the bottom, that in two or three sweeps can catch enough fish for a Biblical picnic.

"I don't know why I'm bothering with this damn thing," said the man from Pontiac, whose name was Hal. "My brothers wanted to go in with me on a seine, but we never did anything

about it. It'll take me all night to fill the box with the scoop net."

Hal is an unemployed auto worker and he doubts he will ever be rehired by his plant.

"Things look so bad. When I quit high school, everybody wanted to get a job in an auto plant. Everybody talked about the pay and the benefits. Everybody said Americans would always buy cars, and there's plenty of security. Some security!"

Hal waded into the lake with boots that reached to the middle of his thighs. He went one step too far and a wave of icy water sloshed over his boot tops. He hurried back to the beach.

"God, that water's cold. I should've bought an outfit like that (he pointed to a man wearing rubber overalls). We've had it with Detroit. We're thinking of moving to California. There's a better chance of making a go of it out there."

Then, after at last filling his box with smelt, Hal attempted to lift it. He got it up on his shoulder but quickly set it down. It was too heavy to carry a half mile to the rubber-tired train. With a whispered expletive, he opened the container and dumped several pounds of fish onto the sand. Angrily, he again put the box on his shoulder

and began the long trek home.

He slowly faded into the gloom, struggling under a burden heavier than he knew.

Perhaps by now, Hal has learned his lesson. I'm beginning to believe that Michigan has. The depression in the auto industry has been acutely painful but chastening - to management, labor, and to the politicians that flit about them. Lean times force lean ways, and these times are so historically lean that it's unlikely the companies and the unions will return soon to the fat, cynical ways of the past.

That's Detroit's hope. More pleasant than beautiful, more muscular than graceful, and infinitely more friendly, safe, and interesting than has ever been suggested by its notices, Detroit is worth a visit.

With its Belle Isle Park (larger than New York's Central Park by 160 acres) that graces the Detroit River and offers (along with sweeping lawns and vistas) a variety of educational and recreational attractions, with its admirable art museum and assorted colleges and universities, with its roaring factories, whining machine shops, and ingenious people, the city is, I think, a perfect paradigm of the variegated American culture.

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*Ford's new Escort rolls off the assembly line in a town where one out of every four American autos is built. (Photo courtesy of the Ford Motor Company)*

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*The Wren Building burned twice during Ewell's presidency and twice Ewell found the funds to rebuild it. This is how it looked after it was rebuilt in 1859. Only three years later, the building was burned again, this time by Federal troops. (Sketch from Scribner's Magazine provided by College Archives)*

## 'OLD BUCK' A Hero In Spite Of Himself

Benjamin Ewell's Quiet, Bulldog Determination Kept The College Alive During One Of Its Most Difficult Periods

By Parke Rouse, Jr.

**S**ome heroes are born and others are made," the adage goes.

Benjamin Ewell, the 15th and 17th president of William and Mary, didn't want to be a hero, but the Civil War and Reconstruction forced him into it. Several times he tried to pass the presidency to others and to return to teaching mathematics, but the college wouldn't let him. He ended up serving a total of 35 years - the longest tenure in the presidency after James Blair's 50 years and equal to Bishop James Madison's 35.

The key to Ewell was his quiet, bulldog determination to keep the college alive. When the Wren Building burned in 1859 and again in 1862, Ben Ewell was the man the college looked to rebuild. He did. And when he had to close the school in 1881 for lack of money, he kept its body together until he and the Board of Visitors in 1888 could persuade the General Assembly to give it \$10,000 a year to train school teachers.

That modest gift was the beginning of William and Mary's revival. Since 1888 its road has been upward.

College legend enshrines Benjamin Ewell as a kindly old codger who drove to Williamsburg from his James City farm during the college's closing and kept its spirit alive by tolling its bell. He's "Old Buck," a wizened Mister Chips, beloved by young and old.

That stereotype is true - as far as it goes. But, like most historic matters, the truth is more complex than the legend. Ewell was a gentle, conciliatory, meticulous man with a passion for the tidiness of mathematics and engineering, but his communica-

tion skill and leadership forced him into the presidency and - during the Civil War - into service as a colonel of the Confederacy and as chief-of-staff to his West Point friend, General Joseph E. Johnston.

Similarly, Ewell at home was a loving, domestic figure who enjoyed the company of his wife and daughter. Alas, however, a rift between him and his young, Pennsylvania-born wife, Julia McIlvaine Ewell, led her to leave him soon after their daughter Lizzie was born and to go home to her parents in York, Pennsylvania. Not until after Benjamin Ewell died at the age of 84 in 1894 did Julia Ewell return to Williamsburg.

Although Ewell received his prep school education in Georgetown and did his college work at the United States Military Academy. (Lee, Beauregard, and other Civil war leaders were also there), he also had ties with William and Mary. One of his connections was Richard Heath, of Northumberland, who in 1776 was one of the five founders of Phi Beta Kappa. The Ewells of Prince William County and the Heaths of Westmoreland both sent sons to the college.

A tradition of militarism ran in the Ewell family. His maternal grandfather, Benjamin Stoddert, had been first United States Secretary of the Navy under John Adams. Both Benjamin Stoddert Ewell and his brother, Richard Stoddert Ewell, were educated at West Point, Ben graduating in 1832 (third in his class), and Richard in 1840. Richard was to serve under Stonewall Jackson and to succeed him as head of the Confederacy's Second Corps, with the rank of lieutenant general. General Ewell also led Lee's advance at Gettysburg and defended Richmond in 1865. He was one of the Confederacy's best generals.

A strong influence on the brothers was their mother, indomitable Elizabeth Stoddert Ewell. She had been widowed and spent much time in Williamsburg during her son's presidency. In the absence of Ewell's wife, his mother was his housekeeper and

*Parke Rouse, Jr., a well-known Williamsburg historian and journalist, is the author of 16 books. His latest book, "A House For A President" about William and Mary, will be published in the spring of 1983.*



*President Ewell is shown in his office in the old library (now Tucker Hall) about 1888 with one of the Seven Wise Men, Professor Hugh S. Bird. (College Archives)*

hostess until she died in 1859. Her letters from Williamsburg, researched by Mrs. Anne Chapman of Fredericksburg for her forthcoming biography of Benjamin Ewell, give vivid glimpses of the college in her son's presidency.

But Ben Ewell preferred teaching to military life. He stayed on at West Point for a while as a mathematics instructor. A fellow-cadet described him as "lenient and forgiving, almost to weakness," and this human-ness served him well as a teacher and administrator. After West Point he taught at Hampden-Sydney and at Washington College, Lexington (later Washington and Lee), where he held the prestigious Cincinnati professorship of math and military science.

When William and Mary in 1848 suspended classes for a year because of a faculty dispute, the Board of Visitors invited 38-year-old Professor Ewell of Washington College to become its president and spend a year rebuilding the rundown campus before reopening its classes in 1849. Ewell's kinsman James Heath, an alumnus, sounded him out in a letter offering him a "...\$1000 salary, an excellent house in the college yard, which they have ordered to be repaired at an expense of \$500 - and a spacious garden. ..."

The renovation appealed to Ewell and his engineering interest. He moved into the President's House in October 1848 and spent the year building a new faculty and rebuilding the campus. He believed in a "proper attention to neatness and to the comfort of those residing on the College Grounds," and soon had things in shape. Meanwhile the

Visitors engaged as president in 1849 the popular Reverend John Johns, assistant Episcopal bishop of Virginia. Ewell stayed on as math professor.

After five years, Johns was obliged to resign because of his Episcopal duties. He recommended another cleric, but the Visitors liked Ewell and persuaded him to take the office again, this time as full president. In 1854 he moved back into the President's House and remained there nearly 34 years, until Lyon Gardiner Tyler succeeded him in 1888.

Ewell's young daughter, Lizzie, divided her time between her separated parents. Besides her and his mother, Ewell had as roomers in the President's House a succession of professors and students. In 1858 its eleven occupants included a new professor and his wife on the second floor and six grammar students on the third. After the Civil War, in 1869, the college added a two-story wing to the house to accommodate other teachers. The college was poor, and professors needed rooms.

Graduation in Ewell's years usually fell on July 4, and he entertained graduates, parents, and faculty at the President's House. Music was played by Ewell's mother or sister on the Clementi piano which secretary Benjamin Stoddert had given his daughter. Writing her son, Captain Richard Ewell, when he was on U.S. military duty in 1858, Elizabeth Ewell alluded amusingly to the impromptu baptizing of Professor Lucien Minor and General Hartwell Cocke following the 1858 graduation.

"The day before yesterday," she wrote, Minor "was taken out of bed, carried into the front porch, and immersed in a bathing tub borrowed from the asylum [Eastern State Hospital]. General Cocke. . . was immersed at the same time. He is near 80, looks like a pine knot, has been married 3 times, is ready for a 4th, and was baptized once before. Altogether it is a strange proceeding, or rather a droll one. . ."

Because Ewell shared Visitors' sentiment that clergymen should be college presidents he voluntarily stepped aside in 1857 while the board chose as president the Rev. Robert Barnwell, of South Carolina, a Harvard graduate then teaching at South Carolina College. To build a house to use when he left the presidency, Ewell in 1857 bought 400 acres on the Stage Road in James City county and built a large two-story frame house in 1858-59, called Ewell Hall.

When Robert Barnwell declined the presidency, Ewell agreed to stay on as president. From 1859 on he spent his summers and holidays at Ewell Hall, raising truck crops and livestock. The house is today the office of Williamsburg Memorial Park, visible from Richmond Road west of Williamsburg.

Ewell and Bishop Johns in the years 1848-54 had restored amity to the college after its 1848 shutdown, but new disasters began to assail the college in 1859. The rest of Ewell's presidency was to be a succession of fires, financial crises, and eventually a shutdown for six years of the institution. Stoic philosopher that he was, Ewell bore up, however. He believed with Robert E. Lee that "Misfortune nobly borne is good fortune."

Ewell's misfortunes began February 8, 1859, when the Wren Building burned. Only the outer walls remained standing. However, Ewell's faculty and Visitors soon raised \$35,000 to supplement the \$20,000 insurance and to rebuild Wren in the Tuscan villa style.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, the college closed and Ewell became a lieutenant colonel in the Virginia Infantry, in charge of defenses against Federal invasion of the Virginia Peninsula. When Union General George B. McClellan marched on Williamsburg in 1862 with his army of 130,000, the Confederacy sent General Joseph E. Johnston to defend Yorktown and Williamsburg. Johnston promptly chose Ewell as his assistant adjutant general and made him his chief of staff before the war's end.

Few colleges suffered greater loss

than William and Mary in the war. When drunken Federal troops burned the Wren Building in 1862 - its second destruction in four years - the college's very life was threatened. Although Ewell was able to reopen it in temporary quarters in October 1865, while the Wren was being rebuilt, poverty and a lack of students forced the college to close in 1881.

Buck Ewell was 71 that year, but the bearded veteran rose to new heights. He was determined that William and Mary would not die. With the aid of Massachusetts Congressman (later Senator) George F. Hoar, he besought Congress to repay the college the \$64,000 necessary to rebuild the Wren as it was before Federal troops burned it. After 28 years of tragic delays, reimbursement was voted in the college's tricentennial of 1983 - a year before Ewell died, aged 84.

Benjamin Ewell anticipated 20th century communications and fund-raising techniques in his college work. He wrote and distributed publications about the college, made fund-raising tours, and wrote letters to industrialists asking them to support education. His first William and Mary historical catalogue in 1859 was said to have been the first of its kind in America. He even wrote Queen Victoria to ask her to replace the college's lost 1693 charter.

William and Mary's archives contain a number of letters from Ewell to leading Americans, North and South. They reveal a man of wide knowledge and fluency - a sophisticated scholar and a man of the world. They also suggest a driven, work-oriented man who quite possibly had neglected the social needs of his pretty, fun-loving young wife. In any case, their differences went with them to their graves.

Ewell used his West Point connections, both North and South, to appeal for help. He corresponded with Ulysses Grant, Robert E. Lee, Ambrose Burnside, Joseph E. Johnston, and countless others. He obtained gifts from wealthy industrialists like August Belmont, W. W. Corcoran, and A. T. Stewart, much as William and Mary's later fund-raiser, the Rev. W.A.R. Godwin, was to do under President J.A.C. Chandler in the 1920s and 30s. Contributions came from such givers as the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Earl of Derby, the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, Charles Scribner's Sons and other publishers, and William Barton Rogers, the alumnus of William and Mary who founded Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1866.

To press its claims, President Ewell offered to step down in the 1870s in deference to General Johnston. "In his [Ewell's] judgment, the College needed a man of influence at the helm," one Visitor wrote. However, the board wisely pinned its faith on Ewell.

Ewell is finally credited with first proposing in 1881 that the college ask the General Assembly for State funds to train public school teachers, who were needed in Virginia's Reconstruction-era schools. The Assembly approved such a grant in 1888, enabling the college to reopen in October of that year. Wisely, Ewell at 78 then turned over the presidency to Lyon Gardiner Tyler.

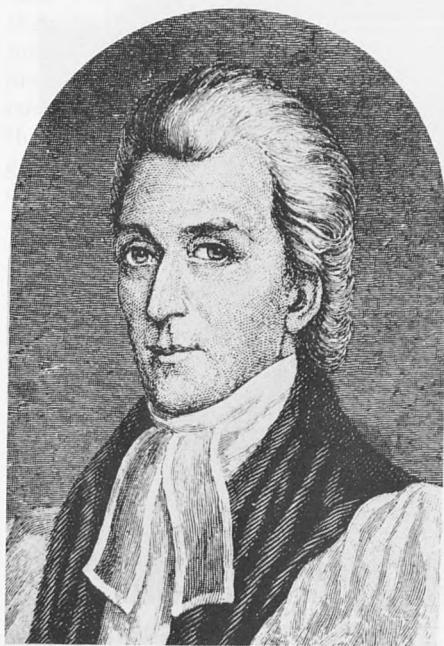
After 1888, the college's luck improved. State support clearly revived its life. Congressional reimbursement for Civil War damages in 1893 helped further. Finally, the admission of women in 1918 broadened William and Mary's constituency. Benjamin Ewell's faith in the college's future was vindicated.

After Ewell died in 1894 and was buried beside his mother in the college cemetery, near the Wren Building, his achievements were summed up by his successor, Lyon Gardiner Tyler, in the *William and Mary Quarterly Historical Magazine*:

DIED, Tuesday, June 19, 1894,  
BENJAMIN S. EWELL, LL. D.,  
Fellow of the Royal Society,  
President Emeritus of William  
and Mary College, and late Colonel  
of the Thirty-second Regiment,  
Virginia Volunteers,  
C.S.A. He was truly a remarkable  
man. Though eighty-four years  
of age, he retained almost to the  
last his brilliant powers of conversation  
and inexhaustible fund of cheerfulness  
and wit. The College was put in mourning  
for his loss, and his body was deposited  
in the College burying-ground. . . Chiefly  
through Col. Ewell's exertions, the  
*Historical Catalogue* of the college  
was prepared in 1859. I believe it is  
the first of the kind in the United States. . .

In the roll of William and Mary's 24 presidents, I am drawn especially to this modest man who never wanted to be president - who suggested a bishop or a general instead - but whom destiny chose as its instrument to keep the college alive in its darkest years. He wanted to teach math, but fate chose him to become a hero.

# The Rise And Fall Of The Established Church Of Colonial Virginia



Bishop Madison



Bishop Meade

By David L. Holmes

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## A Church Historian Traces The Rise — And Precipitate Decline — Of The Episcopal Church In Virginia

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Williamsburg is the town. The year is 1811. The place is the President's House of the College of William and Mary. The month is February, the day Sunday.

On February 24, 1811, a young Virginian named William Meade is examined for ordination into the ministry of the Episcopal Church. Meade's father had been an aide-de-camp to George Washington. Because his mother had thought William and Mary irreligious, Meade himself is a graduate of the College of New Jersey. His examiner is James Madison, first Bishop of Virginia, eighth president of William and Mary. Assisting Bishop Madison in the examination is John Bracken, rector of Bruton Parish and professor at the College.

Meade passes the brief examination. Breakfast follows in the President's dining room. When young Meade points out that one of the Bishop's neighbors is devoting that Sunday morning to restocking his ice house, Madison replies that such work on the Lord's Day is permissible. As the conversation continues, Meade hears that a literary society at this Episcopal college has recently debated two ques-

tions. First, does a God actually exist? Second, has Christianity been helpful or harmful to the world? He is shocked to learn that the students had affirmed one question only by a single vote.

After breakfast, the three men leave in the Bishop's carriage for Bruton Parish Church — a trip of 1675 feet. Dismay again creeps into Meade's mind. Duke of Gloucester Street abounds with groups of William and Mary students, guns on their shoulders and dogs at their sides; they are using that crisp Sunday morning to go hunting. Wending its way through students and dogs, the carriage arrives at Bruton Parish Church—once the place of worship for royal governors and for the leaders of the American Revolution. In Meade's description, the church is in a "wretched condition." The congregation inside numbers about 18, including two William and Mary professors — both, by Meade's account, religious rationalists or "Deists."

Although the Book of Common Prayer stipulates that a sermon should precede all ordinations, it turns out that neither Madison nor Bracken has prepared a sermon. Instead, at the appointed time Bracken simply pre-

sents Meade to Madison, who solemnly ordains him. A service of Holy Communion follows. During that service, one of Madison's slaves returns with the carriage earlier than ordered. The William and Mary students now walk out of the church and drive the carriage away. When the Communion is completed, the newly-ordained Meade, dressed only in homespun, is put up into the pulpit to preach his own ordination sermon. It was the winter of 1811; it was also the winter of the Anglican tradition in Virginia.

Whether one views the precise date as 1606-07, 1619, or 1624, Anglicanism — the faith of the Church of England — was established from the start in the Colony of Virginia. "Establishment" meant that Virginia's General Assembly legislated for the Church, supported it through taxes, and protected

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*A church historian who specializes in American religious history, David L. Holmes is Professor of Religion at the College. He is editing the papers of James Madison, 8th president of William and Mary and first Bishop of Virginia.*



Exemplifying Anglicanism during its rise and fall in Virginia was the historic Christ's Church in Irvington which is a Registered National Historic Landmark. (Photo by Cornwall Photography)

***“From 1607 on, the Established Church grew — first in Jamestown, then in ever-widening settlements along Virginia’s rivers. Whenever settlers moved too far from existing courthouses and churches, the Assembly established new counties and new parishes. The number of parishes in colonial Virginia grew steadily — from 48 in 1671, to 53 in 1726, to 107 in 1784.”***

it against “Dissent.” This State support bulwarked the Church of England in Virginia in its early years. But in time, as is usually the case in church history, State support almost crushed the spiritual life of a Christian Church.

From 1607 on, the Established Church grew — first in Jamestown, and then in ever-widening settlements along Virginia’s rivers. Whenever settlers moved too far from existing courthouses and churches, the Assem-

bly established new counties and new parishes. The number of parishes in colonial Virginia steadily grew — from 48 in 1671, to 53 in 1726, to 107 in 1784. Most were smaller in size than the colonial counties.

A typical parish contained three or four churches. Virtually all had a church farm (or “glebe”). The intention of the Virginia parish system (still in evidence along the banks of such rivers as the Rappahannock) was to place a church not more than six miles — easy riding distance — from every home in the colony. Many of these Anglican churches bore unintentionally humorous names: Pohick Church, Beaver Dam Church, Difficult Church, Cattail Church, Turkey Run Church, Rattlesnake Church, even Cheesecake Church.

Although the General Assembly passed the laws governing the Church, groups of twelve men — always white, and usually wealthy — called the vestries ran the individual parishes. Their powers were immense, ranging from levying taxes, to hiring and firing the clergy, to handling the welfare system. Very early these vestries became self-perpetuating, closed corporations. If a member died or resigned, the remaining members elected his replacement. Thus Virginia’s vestries effectively kept parish control in the hands of a select few.

For the established Church, the vestry system clearly offered great advantages. It assured the services and the loyalty, for example, of the leading landowners. That the vestries tended to hire clergy only on one-year contracts also reduced the number of unworthy clergy in Virginia’s pulpits. In day-to-day matters, the system seems to have worked efficiently and well.

But in the long run, the vestry system made the Established Church of Virginia conspicuously the church of the aristocracy. In the minds of the common people (and they were about 95 per cent of Virginia’s population), it also allied the Church with the English government’s policy of taxation without representation. In addition, it caused clerical supervision of parish morality to suffer; parsons protected by one-year contracts rarely spoke out against the sins of leading parishioners. Finally, since the vestries asked parish residents only to pay an annual tax bill, the system left the Anglican laity with no knowledge of how to support a church voluntarily. By the eve of the Revolutionary War, the vestry system had begun to work, silently but surely, to assist the collapse of the Established Church.

In the first century of the Church’s existence in Virginia, clergy from Great Britain predominated. As graduates of William and Mary entered the ministry in the eighteenth century, the



number of native Virginians who served parishes steadily increased. Writers have often spoken of the colonial Virginia clergy with scorn. "For the most part . . . the refuse or more indifferent of the English, Irish, and Scottish Episcopal Churches, who could not find promotion at home" — thus William Meade, who became Virginia's great bishop, dismissed the colonial clergy in his *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia*. The

***"Not surprisingly, the church life over which the clergy and the vestries presided was aristocratic and formal. The churches were unheated; the pews were enclosed for reasons of warmth. Where one sat was important. . . the general rule in colonial Virginia was that the closer a pew to the holy table or to the pulpit, the higher a family's social rank."***

great mass of the Church's records, however, seem to portray the colonial clergy as better men than that. One scholar's estimate that only six per cent of the parsons misbehaved seems roughly to be accurate. As far as scholars can tell, the Anglican clergy of colonial Virginia seem to have been no better and no worse than their brethren in England at the time.

Not surprisingly, the church life over which the clergy and the vestries presided was aristocratic and formal. The churches were unheated; the pews were enclosed for reasons of warmth. Where one sat was important. Although today's churches have difficulty persuading worshippers to sit in the front pews, the general rule in colonial Virginia was that: the closer a pew to the holy table or to the pulpit, the higher a family's social rank. Today, too, guides point out galleries in Virginia's colonial churches, usually with the explanation that they once served as slave galleries. Some did — but many were private galleries, built at a family's expense. As later in the theatre, some gentry preferred not to sit on the same level as everyone else.

Inside the churches, the normal service each Sunday revolved around a pulpit having three levels or decks. The service was long — Morning Prayer, followed by the Litany, followed by the service of Holy Communion up to but not including the Communion itself, followed by the sermon, followed by the concluding prayers and benediction. Contemporary accounts indicate that it lasted one-and-one-half to two hours. But since colonial Virginia was not Puritan New England, the sermons (which seem largely to have been discourses of a philosophical or moral nature) generally appear to have lasted no more than 20 minutes. The clergy typically celebrated Holy Communion four times a year, with only ten per cent of their congregations coming forward to commune. It was not a sacramental age.

Thus the Established Church of Virginia held the loyalty of the vast majority of Virginians prior to the American Revolution. Why had such an apparently strong tradition almost collapsed by the time of William Meade's ordination in 1811? Scholars cite five reasons for its fall:

First, the Church fell because of the problems (already discussed) of the vestry system.

Second, the rise of anti-English feeling in Virginia during and after the American Revolution boomeranged on the Church of England in Virginia.

Third, the parish clergy of Virginia seem to have sunk steadily in the public estimation from the 1740s on. The parsons not only got involved in a famous lawsuit demanding higher salaries but lost it. More than that, in the minds of the common people of the Colony, the Anglican clergy apparently came to be indistinguishable from the planter aristocracy. Many of the planter aristocracy wore periwigs, played cards, drank heavily, raced horses, and attended cockfights—and so apparently did numerous parish clergy of the Established Church.

Bias and exaggeration may color the stories about clerical misconduct in Virginia's parishes in the decades just before the Revolution. But one story that scholars can substantiate from court records involves a Tidewater cleric named Patrick Lunan. In the 1760s, the vestry of Upper Parish, Nansemond County, brought court charges against the Rev. Mr. Lunan and accused him of the following: officiating at Divine Service when drunk; offi-

ciating at Divine Service in ridiculous apparel; running down the main street of Suffolk nude; soliciting women for sexual favors; preaching from the pulpit that he did not care about the flock, just so long as he got the fleece; announcing himself an atheist from the pulpit; and standing everyone drinks for several days in a Suffolk tavern, but then refusing to pay the bill and hiring a lawyer to defend him.

Patrick Lunan was undoubtedly an exception among the colonial clergy. His career also exhibits human tragedy and mental illness. But the historical point is clear: with anything like this kind of parson in the Anglican parishes, the ascetic Evangelicals of the Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist ministries must have looked attractive indeed to the average Virginian. All of which leads to the fourth reason for the fall of the Established Church.

Fourth, other Protestant denominations moved aggressively into Virginia in the decades just prior to the Revolution. Dissent was nothing new to the colony, but aggressive Dissent was. In the 1740s and 1750s, the Baptists, the Presbyterians, and later the Methodists came into Virginia and presented an appealingly fresh interpretation of Christianity. The Baptists and the Presbyterians also offered a democratic form of church government, with no self-perpetuating aristocratic vestries. In addition, the Methodists and the Baptists had an emotional, extemporaneous Gospel, preached by clergy who were generally men of the people. Although Virginia allowed religious toleration from 1699 on, the terms of toleration favored the Established Church. When the Establishment imprisoned some of these Dissenting preachers on technicalities, defections occurred throughout Virginia to the Baptists and Presbyterians. In some areas, Dissenters came to outnumber Anglicans—all of which had political consequences.

Finally, a fifth reason for the fall of Anglicanism: in the years immediately before and after the Revolution, Tom Paine's religion of reason, Deism, began to infiltrate the male aristocracy of Virginia. In today's terms, Deism was certainly not irreligious; but it did undercut formal religion. Although the Episcopal women of Virginia continued to go to church, many of the men did not. With its very pillars now indifferent, the Established Church began first to sag and then to collapse.

And thus the story moves through the Revolutionary War to the last act. During the Revolution, most Virginia

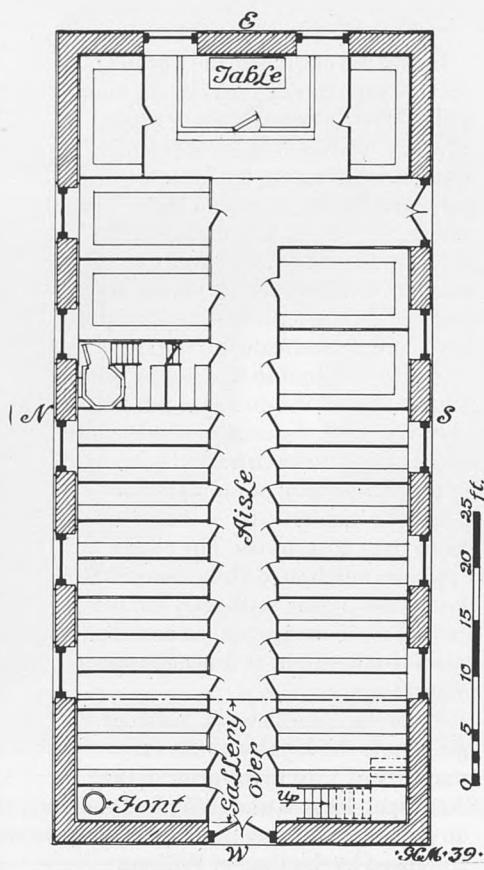
Anglicans (or, as they were called after the War, "Episcopalians") were patriots. The newest research indicates that 70 to 80 per cent of the clergy of the Established Church of Virginia supported the American side. Hence Tory sympathies played little role in the Church's post-Revolutionary collapse.

Nor did Disestablishment — removal of State support — cause the fall. In 1784 the General Assembly disestablished the Episcopal Church and placed it on the same level as all other denominations in the Commonwealth. But every Southern colony disestablished its Anglican Church, and none collapsed like the Church of Virginia.

What was special in Virginia was that the clamor for laws against the Episcopal Church continued for two decades following the Revolution. From 1784 to 1802, the Presbyterians and especially the Baptists of Virginia flooded the General Assembly with petitions and lobbyists urging that the Commonwealth confiscate the property the Episcopal parishes had purchased during the colonial period. The argument was that a general taxation on all Virginians had purchased, built, and maintained the Episcopal churches and glebe farms. Now that the majority of Virginians were no longer Episcopalians, the buildings and land should revert to the public domain, or else the Episcopal Church would hold an unfair advantage.

In the years after 1786, the General Assembly gradually yielded to the petitions and lobbyists. In 1802, it passed the Glebe Act. This Act directed that groups in each county, called the Overseers of the Poor, seize all glebes that Episcopal parishes had purchased prior to 1777 (in effect, all but a handful of the Episcopal Church's glebes) upon the death or resignation of the parish's present rector. It also directed the Overseers to sell the glebes and to use the proceeds for the public benefit. The Glebe Act further allowed Virginians to view all Episcopal churches erected prior to 1777 (again, the overwhelming majority of Virginia's Episcopal churches) as public property whenever any Episcopal parish proved unable to maintain regular services in them.

During the colonial period, virtually every parish in Virginia had a glebe house and a glebe farm of 200 or more acres. The rector of the parish lived there and either rented the land out, farmed it himself, or ran a school on part of the land. In this way the rectors could supplement their salaries. Hence



even when the General Assembly terminated their salaries at the start of the Revolution, Episcopal clergy still had their glebes, and the parishes still had a means of attracting and supporting clergy. But in 1802, with the passage of the Glebe Act, all of this ended.

The Episcopal Church tried to fight the Glebe Act. Some of the most prominent lawyers in Virginia supported the Church's right to keep its colonial property. The test case came in 1802 in Chesterfield County, where the vestry of Manchester Parish challenged the right of the county's Overseers of the Poor to seize their vacant glebe. In Chancery Court, George Wythe (under whom Bishop Madison had earlier studied law at William and Mary) ruled in favor of the State. The vestry now appealed their case to Virginia's highest court, the five-member Court of Appeals. Even when Justice William Fleming, an Episcopalian who lived in Chesterfield County, disqualified himself, the Church still expected the Court of Appeals to invalidate the Glebe Act. Three of the Court's remaining four members were Episcopalians of conservative legal views. Its president, for example, was the 81-year-old Edmund Pendleton, who during his years in the General Assembly had proved an uncompromising champion of the rights of the Episcopal Church to its colonial property.

The sketch at left shows the interior of a typical Episcopalian Church during colonial Virginia while the photo below shows the interior of Christ's Church which has won a national award for historic preservation. In colonial Virginia, social status had a lot to do with the location of a family's pew — the closer the pew to the holy table or pulpit, the higher a family's social rank.



The story now took a strange turn. On the afternoon of October 26, 1803 — the time at which he was to deliver the ruling of the Court in the suit brought by the vestry of Manchester Parish — Judge Pendleton died in his lodgings in Richmond's Swan Tavern. In his room at the tavern, ready for delivery, searchers found the 3 to 1 decree of the Court declaring the Glebe Act unconstitutional. But Pendleton's death rendered that decision null and void.

St. George Tucker, a notable resident of Williamsburg and former friend of Bishop Madison, was appointed to the Court of Appeals in Pendleton's place. After hearing the arguments, Tucker voted for the constitutionality of the Glebe Act. The Court of Appeals — with Justice Fleming still disqualifying himself — divided 2-2. Under Virginia law, the tie upheld the lower court. Disheartened, the Episcopal Church failed to con-

tinue the litigation. From the Chesapeake to the Alleghenies, the Episcopal glebes now became the property of the State.

Historians would have difficulty in exaggerating the consequences for the Episcopal Church of the seizure of the glebes. Because of anti-English animus, of Deism, of the departure from its ranks in 1784 of the Methodists, of the loss of other of the common people to the Baptists or the Presbyterians, and of a heavy post-war emigration of Episcopal families to Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio, the former Established Church of Virginia had been steadily declining since the start of the Revolution. Following the Glebe Act, it utterly collapsed.

The collapse took only a brief time. Shortly after the passage of the Glebe Act, the Overseers of the Poor in each county began to confiscate the glebes of those parishes that had either failed to survive the Revolutionary War or that currently lacked ministers. Approximately 67 parishes fell into this category. As other parishes one by one lost their rectors to death or resignation after 1802, the Overseers seized additional glebes. Consequently, having lost their only assured support for a rector, and lacking experience in supporting a church voluntarily, vestry after vestry gave up the struggle and dissolved. At that point their church buildings, now viewed as public property, were abandoned, left to the plunder of neighboring landowners, or turned over to any denomination that could supply a minister and congregation. In parish after parish throughout Virginia, the Episcopal Church died out.

The devastation was immense. Of the seven colonial churches in Isle of Wight and Southampton counties, six disappeared. Of the three colonial churches in Portsmouth Parish, two fell into ruins. In Hungars Church on the Eastern Shore, when Episcopalians were unable to continue services following the Glebe Act, fishermen seized the organ and melted it into sinkers. In Essex County, vandals completely destroyed the parish church, turning even its tombstones into grindstones. Near Smithfield, the bricks and pews of the church on Burwell's Bay were torn down and used to construct a kitchen and a stable; the person who seized the church bell bartered it for a brandy still. In Prince Edward County, the Baptists and Methodists argued for years over the rights to the parish church. In Christ Church, Middlesex County, the pews crumbled, the roof fell in, and a large

sycamore tree sprang up between the walls.

The effect of the Glebe Act is amply displayed by the fact that, out of approximately 250 churches belonging to the Anglican Church of Virginia at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, less than 35 (or about 13 per cent only) remain in use today as Episcopal churches. Throughout the state there were spoons and bullets made out of pewter communion sets, chalices taken from deserted parish churches

***"In the 1760s the vestry of Upper Parish, Nansemond County, brought court charges against the Rev. Mr. Lunan and accused him of the following: officiating at Divine Service when drunk; officiating at Divine Service in ridiculous apparel; running down the main street of Suffolk nude; soliciting women for sexual favors; preaching from the pulpit that he did not care about his flock, just so long as he got the fleece; announcing himself an atheist from the pulpit. . . ."***

and used on family tables, baptismal fonts employed as flower bowls and horse troughs, and crumbling colonial churches. "Our churches," Bishop Madison told one of his diocesan conventions, "are dedicated not to the unknown god but to the god of ruin."

Virginia lore contains many such stories from this period, and most seem not to be apocryphal but true. The former Established Church had fallen in a post-Revolutionary atmosphere of anti-Episcopalianism and anti-Establishmentarianism that seems almost impossible to comprehend in Virginia today.

As the Episcopal Church of Virginia declined, a parallel decline occurred in James Madison's activities as its bishop. Although the national Episcopal Church held General Conventions every three years, Madison

attended none after 1795. After 1801, he was unable to provide the General Convention with the required lists of active clergy in his Diocese. After 1802, his congregation at Jamestown stopped meeting. Though he published annual calls in the *Virginia Gazette*, he was able to assemble only two conventions of Virginia Episcopalians between 1800 and 1811. In the decade from 1801 to 1810, he ordained only one deacon. By 1811, a committee of the General Convention reported that the Episcopal tradition probably would die in Virginia. Although rumors spread throughout the Commonwealth that Madison had become a skeptic and a Deist, the evidence indicates that he had grown skeptical only of the future of the Church in which he had been baptized and ordained.

That for decades Bishop Madison had been doing the work of several men in his roles as president, teacher, counselor, scholar, pastor, parent, and bishop is now clear. It is also now clear that he was dying of dropsy from approximately 1807 on. This knowledge makes all the more poignant a letter the Bishop wrote on October 7, 1807. Declaring that he had previously labored for others but that he must now think of himself and of his family, James Madison — Bishop of Virginia, president and professor of the College of William and Mary, and rector of James City Parish — applied to his friend President Thomas Jefferson for the post of Port Collector of Norfolk.

And so the story returns to where it started — to the President's House of the College and to a dilapidated Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg on February 24, 1811. In the Bishop's own city, only 18 persons could be gathered to witness an ordination. The students of William and Mary, formerly the chief supply of vestry and clergy for the Established Church of Virginia, scornfully passed the old church by. The Bishop and the rector failed even to prepare an ordination sermon. This was the last ordination performed by Bishop Madison, and probably no one who witnessed that simple service realized its significance. With its land sold, with its churches abandoned or deserted, with its few remaining laity and clergy in despair, and with Virginia and the nation regarding it as extinct, the Episcopal Church of Virginia needed a revivalist in the truest sense of the word. In William Meade, it got one — and the old Church began to rise again.

But that's another story.

# SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE:

## Literary Societies At William and Mary

Literary Societies Provided An Educational Alternative To  
Outrageous Student Behavior

By James W. Oberly

Before the days of fraternities and football, William and Mary students found extra-curricular excitement in literary societies. Also known as debating societies, these student-run organizations met every Saturday evening to hear declamations, essays and speeches, and to debate topics of interest. The College literary societies obtained exclusive rooms in the Wren Building to hold their meetings and

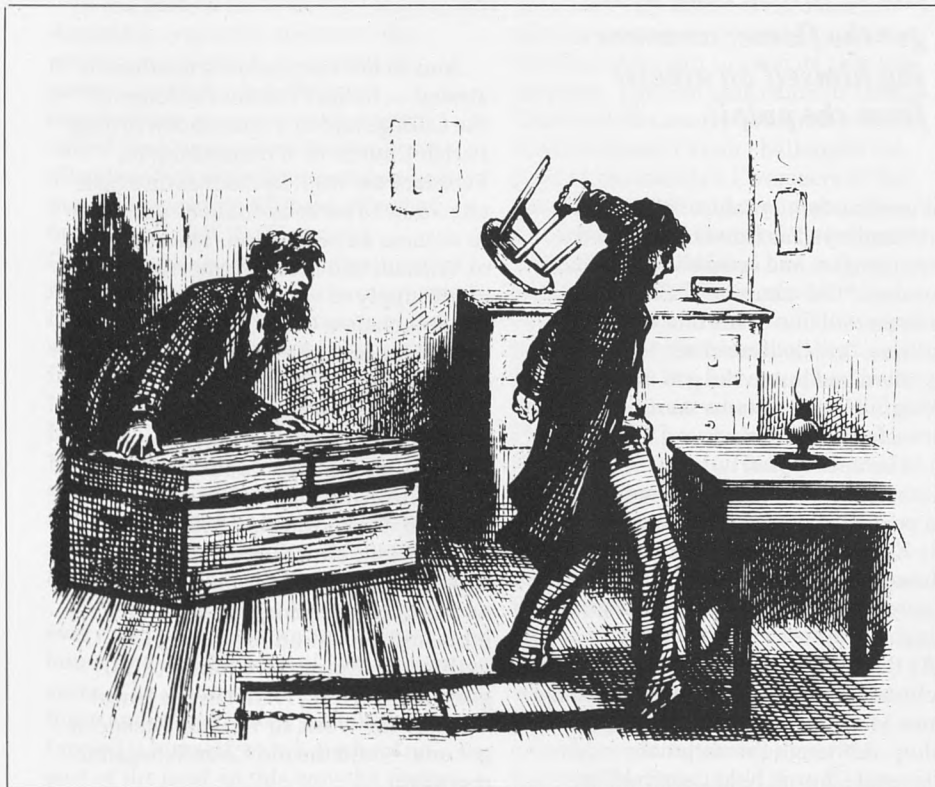
house their small libraries. Membership in a literary society in the three decades before the Civil War came to be a student's most important social activity at William and Mary. A student expelled from a society for disciplinary reasons usually left the College because his former fellows practiced an ostracism as severe as any imposed for honor violations. In addi-

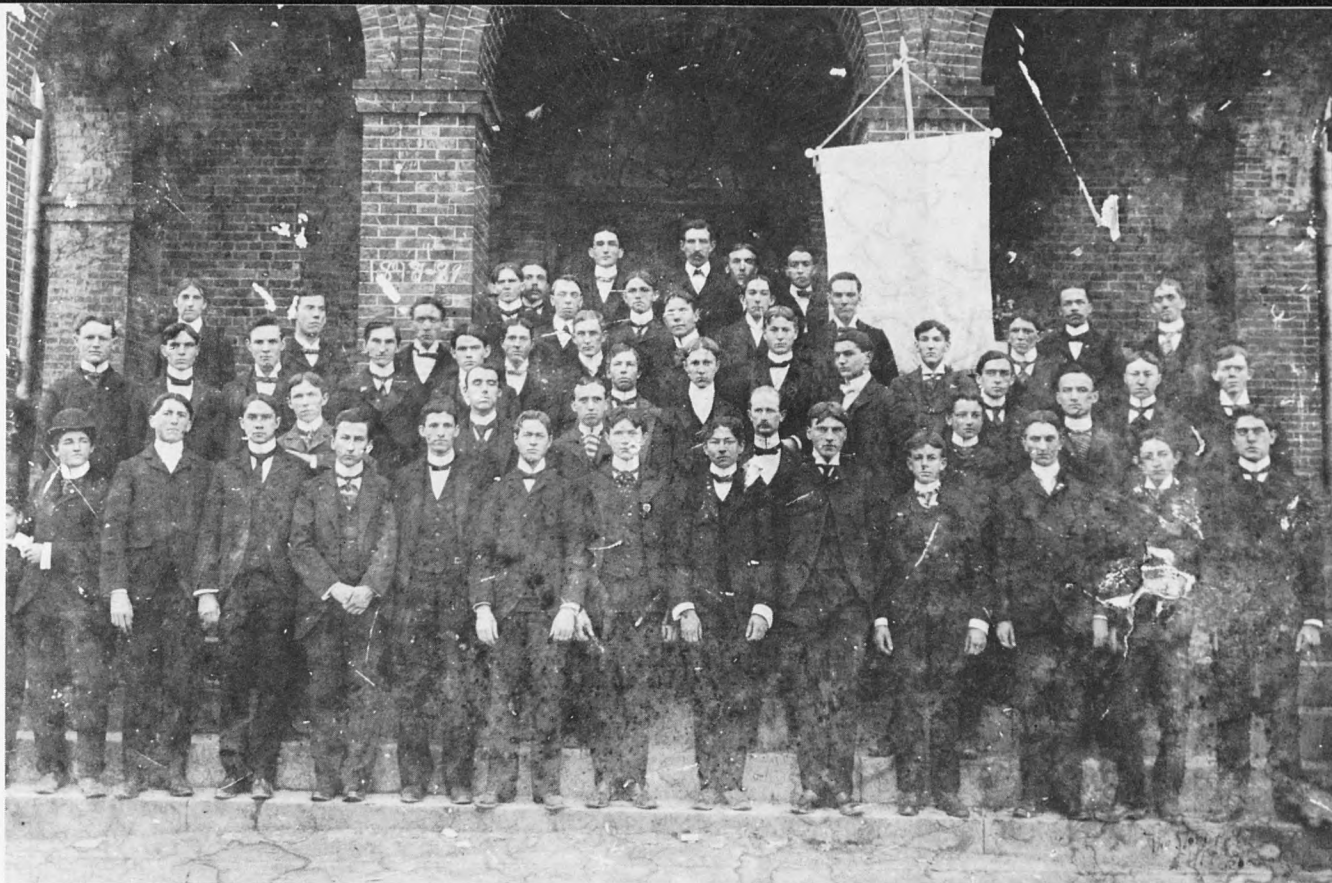
tion to group solidarity, the societies offered intellectual stimulation. At a time when "the old-college classroom was a dreary place," in the words of the great historian Richard Hofstadter, literary societies "made it possible for the self-education and the mutual education of undergraduates."

The records of many of the College's literary societies are preserved in the College Archives, and are available for examination by scholars, students and alumni. William and Mary cannot claim any priorities in the establishment of collegiate literary societies. Princeton's Whig Society and Cliosophic Society antedate the American Revolution. Hampden-Sydney, the University of North Carolina, and Washington College (now Washington & Lee University) all established literary societies at least 20 years before William and Mary. Nevertheless, the College stands apart from other schools in the number and diversity of its literary societies. While other colleges and universities supported one or two societies, William and Mary had six operating societies between 1829 and 1847.

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Members of the Philomathean Literary Society, 1899. (Courtesy of College Archives)

***“The joint public ceremony held by Phoenix and Philomathean before graduation attracted large crowds of townspeople. The best debators from the two societies, dressed in formal attire, argued over questions such as whether the railroads should be nationalized, or whether the United States should end its occupation of the Phillipines.”***

Literary societies appeared at William and Mary shortly after the College's near collapse in 1824-25. President Adam Empie slowly built up student enrollment and the College's finances to a point where the College once again had a secure base. The only drawback to larger enrollment was the significant increase in student vandalism and "pranks." Apart from classes, students had no organized activity and, as a result, the young scholars trooped

en masse to the Raleigh Tavern for bouts of drinking. Visits to the Raleigh all too often resulted in the destruction of property in town and on College grounds. The faculty spent considerable time acting as constables in order to keep track of the latest student outrage. In this setting, the faculty welcomed an 1829 proposal by a group of students to acquire a room in the Wren Building for an organization called the "Franklin Literary Society."

The Franklin Literary Society soon had competition from the Patrick Henry Literary Society and the Jackson Literary Society, and, by the beginning of the 1840's, from the Licivrynean Literary Society, Tau Chi Literary Society, and Washington Literary Society. How and why William and Mary supported so many societies is something of a mystery. The absence of artificial membership barriers explains in part the large number. For example, the University of North Carolina required students living east of Chapel Hill to join the Philanthropic Literary Society, while those from homes west of the University became members of the Dialectical Literary Society.

The force of national politics may have worked to encourage diversity among William and Mary literary

societies. The constitutions, by-laws, and minutes of the Patrick Henry Literary Society and Jackson Literary Society have not survived to the twentieth century, but the names "Patrick Henry" and "Jackson" suggest a political division among the two societies. Patrick Henry became a hero of the extreme states-rights southerners in the 1820's and 1830's. Any student group choosing "Patrick Henry" as its namesake also chose to identify itself with nullification; those students considering themselves nationalists would naturally choose Andrew Jackson as their champion.

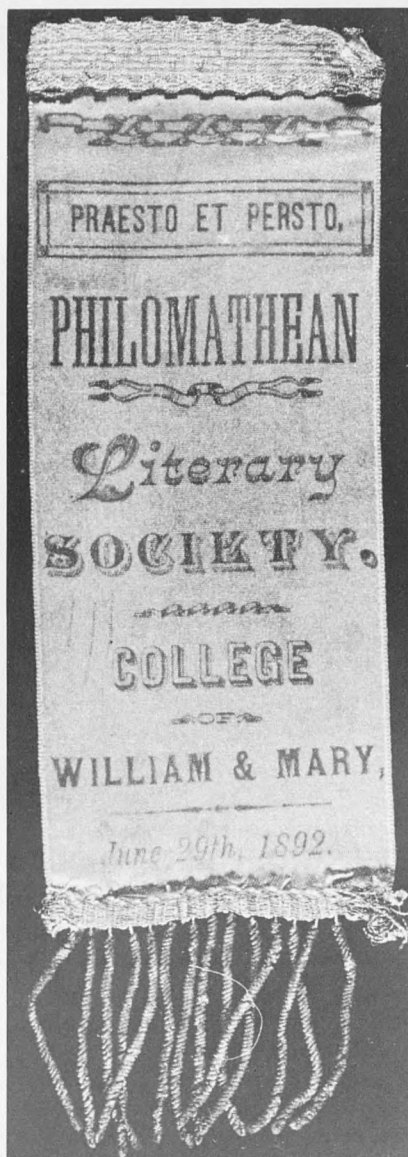
If national politics could influence the organization of College literary societies, campus politics certainly did create additional societies. The Licivrynean Literary Society, the antebellum society, for which we have the most extensive surviving records, began as a haven for the shy and tongue-tied. John Wooten, one of the founders of Licivrynean, left a memoir of his reasons for starting a new society:

*When I arrived here in the Autumn of 1839 and had formed some acquaintances with the Literary Societies then existing in College I thought all somewhat objectionable and the best*

insufficient to secure to each individual member that amount of knowledge and general improvement which might be made acceptable to everyone under a different and better constitution. In the Societies which then existed (and they were many, which most conclusively proved that they were defective) none but the best speakers were heard. A bad speaker is tiresome everywhere and at all times; but in these Societies much impatience and dissatisfaction was always manifested whenever such a one rose. And, in some instances, he was, by the rude and thoughtless, exposed to insult and great disrespect.

Wooten and some friends decided to start a society where every member would speak regularly without fear of heckling. The by-laws of the Licivyronean Society hint at the qualities Wooten disliked in the other William and Mary societies. Licivyronean members could be fined for walking out on another member's oration, for drinking or smoking at meetings, for cursing speakers, for failure to prepare arguments for assigned debate topics, and for inability to deliver at least a five minute oration if called upon. The Licivyroneans began with nine members and soon grew to fifteen. The Society arranged itself into "classes" with every five members making up a class. At each Saturday night meeting, one class would divide itself and debate the affirmative and negative sides of a topic determined the week before. Topics ranged from the classical, "Was Brutus justified in killing Caesar?" to the more immediate, "That General Harrison is less objectionable to the South on the subject of abolition than Mr. Van Buren." The members of the classes not engaged in debate had the responsibility of listening to the debaters and voting a winner on the merits of the debate, not the issue.

The Tau Chi Literary Society and the Washington Literary Society began debates about the same time as Licivyronean. All the societies flourished as the College enjoyed great prosperity under President Thomas Dew. Enrollment at the College soared to a point not reached again until just before World War I. Contemporaries knew Thomas Dew as the brilliant author of an incisive defense of slavery, and Dew never let his students forget that they were slaveholders and would someday become the leaders of a slave society. Literary societies fit nicely into Dew's view of the College



Literary society members wore identifying badges to public debates. (Courtesy of College Archives)

as preparation for plantation life. Students learned in their societies how to think on their feet, how to address an audience, and how to put wit and classical learning to practical advantage.

Both the College and its collection of literary societies suffered a serious blow when Dew abruptly died in 1846. Interim President Robert Saunders soon fell to quarreling with Professor of Moral Philosophy Archibald Peachy. Professor Peachy challenged President Saunders to a duel (using a student as a messenger), and the uproar divided the College and town into two factions. The Board of Visitors called for and received the resignation of Saunders and the entire faculty, and closed the College for a year until tempers eased. Not one of the literary societies started under

Empie or Dew survived the events of 1847-48.

Students in 1850 revived literary societies at William and Mary with the aptly named Phoenix Literary Society, joined in 1852 by the rival Philomathean Literary Society. Phoenix and Philomathean continued the old tradition of weekly Saturday night meetings in their respective "halls," but added a new twist by staging a debate between the two societies. William Lamb, a member of Phoenix in 1855, confided to his diary the details of inter-society debates, revealing both the jockeying for position within a society, and the group loyalty between the members:

The Philomatheans called the members of our Society over to their hall last night & challenged us to meet them in debate. We accepted, & elected [William] Pendleton, a law student, and [Alfred] Randolph as our champions. The debate is to come off on next Saturday night. The appointment of Pendleton I think judicious that of Randolph rather injudicious. There are many in our society superior to Randolph, in point of debate. He has a fine reputation because he always commits his debates, but there are men who can almost equal him, without preparation, these with the preparation they would have made could have distanced him. I have never met Randolph prepared, yet, I would not hesitate to meet him on any question under the sun, if I could prepare. How I wish I was a Philomathean just to get on debate against Pendleton & himself. I would strain every nerve, I would leave no stone unturned to gain a victory. Friends and foes told me last year that I was the cause of the Phoenix victory & if the Phoenixians have slighted me, they may yet rue it, but I hope we will win the day. I am not so selfish as to desire a defeat even to humble the conceit of our champions.

Phoenix and Philomathean reappeared a few years after the Civil War, and, according to William G. Stanard (Class of 1876), the two societies "drew almost all the students." The Societies revived most of the antebellum traditions including the Saturday night meeting, the inter-society debates, and a pre-graduation public ceremony with orations, debates, and an address by an invited public figure. The health of the literary societies depended, however, on the general state of the College. As

the College bled to financial death in the late 1870's, Phoenix and Philomathean ceased operations. When the College reopened as a normal school in 1888, President Lyon G. Tyler encouraged students to reform

Phoenix and Philomathean. The years between 1890 and 1910 might fairly be called the silver age of William and Mary literary societies. Membership in Phoenix and Philomathean regularly reached 40 students in each society.

The two literary societies collaborated to produce the first student-run publication in College history, *The William and Mary College Monthly Magazine*, a collection of student essays, fiction and verse. The best debaters from the two societies, dressed in formal attire, argued over questions such as whether the railroads should be nationalized, or whether the United States should end its occupation of the Philippines.

World War I cut deeply into the College's enrollment and weakened the literary societies. Unlike the College Administration, Phoenix and Philomathean flatly rejected women students as new members (see related story). The link between the size of the student body and the health of the College's literary societies was finally broken in the 1920's. Although student enrollment reached unprecedented levels under President J.A.C. Chandler, the literary societies became enfeebled. Philomathean died in the 1930's and Phoenix did not survive World War II. Attempts to revive Phoenix in 1960, and Philomathean in 1962, failed.

William and Mary literary societies disappeared in the middle third of the twentieth century for several reasons. Above all, students developed other, more satisfying extra-curricular pursuits. Athletics provided a more consistently entertaining public spectacle, while the Greek system offered men and women more intense group solidarity. The two decades after World War I saw the growth of a host of student clubs, from the Accounting Club to the Sociology Club. Almost inevitably, students formed a Debate Club and eventually put together an intercollegiate debate team, robbing the literary societies of yet another reason for their existence. Finally, the growing size of the College in the 1920's and 1930's made the old societies something of an anachronism. The old, "aristocratic" William and Mary finally disappeared under President Chandler. The new school was a far more heterogeneous school with a significant out-of-state contingent. Under Chandler, William and Mary turned decidedly away from a classical curriculum toward the training of teachers, librarians, home economists, accountants, and even airplane pilots. While the College never denied the value of effective public speaking, the new William and Mary student had little time or interest to devote to the gentlemanly traditions of the old literary societies.

## Women's Literary Societies

By Laura Frances Parrish

The first women students, all 24 of them, arrived in September 1918, eager to become involved in college life. The women joined all the organizations which opened their doors to them and formed their own clubs when the men refused them admission. The men's literary societies, Phoenix and Philomathean, were among those clubs refusing to admit women.

In 1918-1919 the women formed the Alpha Club, which sponsored musical, dramatic, literary, and social activities. In 1919 as more women arrived, organizations were formed which took over Alpha's functions. Alpha became an honorary, eventually becoming Mortarboard. Whitehall Literary Society was one of those organizations formed in 1919. In 1920 the still increasing enrollment of women necessitated the formation of another literary society, this one named in honor of an English professor, J. Lesslie Hall. Historically, most coeducational colleges had separate literary societies for men and women. Often, there were brother-sister societies which regularly scheduled joint meetings. At William and Mary, the J. L. Hall became a sister to Phoenix, and Whitehall with Philomathean. In 1925 the four societies met together for the first time and had a debate.

The optimism which led to the formation of two separate literary societies was premature, however. Declining membership in the societies led to rumors in 1923 that Whitehall and Philomathean would merge. Instead, Whitehall merged with J.L. Hall in 1927 (Philomathean later merged with Phoenix). J.L. Hall Society died in 1941. Phoenix Society, which died during World War II, revived briefly in 1959-60 and permitted women to join.

Enrollment and campus organizations increased throughout the 1920's, leaving less time to devote to the literary societies. First, meeting days were

changed to avoid conflicts with basketball games and dances, and then meetings became biweekly instead of weekly.

In the early years of the societies, they sponsored the traditional literary society activities, debates (sometimes debating their brother societies), readings, and declamations. They also sponsored lectures, musical programs, dances, and plays. In 1924 a Women's Debate Council was formed, and thereafter debates were progressively rarer on the societies' programs. In the 1930's, J.L. Hall departed almost completely from the traditional program of literary societies: occasional debates were held with Phoenix, but the regular program was a discussion of literature and authors.

For several years in the 1920's, J. L. Hall sponsored a contest for the best poem and best short story written by William and Mary students. Later, a similar contest was held by Chi Delta Phi, a national honor society which recognized excellence in writing.

Although neither Whitehall nor J.L. Hall ever had a library, as most nineteenth century literary societies did, J. L. Hall did have the tradition of presenting money to the college library. During Professor Hall's lifetime, the check was presented to him at his birthday party, and he purchased the books. After his death in 1928, the check was presented to the librarian at a society banquet.

Since most literary societies had died by 1900, it is remarkable that Whitehall and J. Lesslie Hall were ever formed. Surviving for 20 years was a great achievement. They died because there were too many other organizations with similar purposes.

*Ms. Parrish, who received her undergraduate degree from Emory University and a masters degree in library science from the University of North Carolina, is currently at work on her masters degree in history at William and Mary.*

# Confessions Of An Academic Politico

A Campaign For Congress Taught A William And Mary Professor Some Things He Hadn't Learned In Textbooks

By John J. McGlennon



On November 3, 1982, the outcome of the previous day's Congressional elections was a topic of discussion in most college Government courses across the nation. It certainly was in my two sections of Introduction to American Government at William and Mary. But I had a somewhat more unusual task than most of my fellow political scientists: I had to explain not only the national trends but why I had not won election as U.S. Representative from Virginia's First District.

When the summer of 1982 began, I had no way of knowing that I would soon find myself running for Congress. As chairman of the Democratic Party in the First District, I was taken by surprise completely when our original candidate, who had been nominated some seven weeks earlier, announced in late June that he was withdrawing from the race. After a frustrating search for a candidate willing to leap into an admittedly difficult race, and a good deal of encouragement from others, I began a challenging, sometimes surprising, and, despite the outcome, satisfying fourteen-week campaign.

Both during and since the campaign, I have been asked a number of questions about my first foray into elective politics. Three questions recur with some frequency, and they provide a useful framework for this discussion. The first two questions gave me an interesting insight into the view which many people seem to have about college professors in general and political scientists in particular.

The first question: Was it an advantage or a disadvantage to be a college

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*An associate professor of government at the College of William and Mary, Dr. McGlennon is a graduate of Fordham University, where he received his B.A. degree, and The Johns Hopkins University where he received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. He has been on the faculty at the College since 1974.*



professor/political scientist seeking public office?

Most people who asked this question seemed to have already formulated their own rough answer to the question: that it must be a disadvantage. Oh, of course there were some ways in which my occupation must have prepared me for the campaign. Certainly, speaking before groups should have been almost second nature to me, it was assumed. On the other hand, I wondered how I could hold the attention of people who didn't have to worry about whether or not what I was about to say would be on the final examination.

But the question itself always fascinated me. Underlying it was the unstated assumption that somehow the academic life is so divorced from reality that the professor is unable to relate to the average voter. The prevalence of this notion became clear to me at several public forums, when individuals approached me with the comment, "I came here expecting to hear just another college professor, but you actually made sense."

In fact, I found that being a professor of political science was very helpful to me, as was my association with William and Mary. Throughout my campaign, I was reminded time and again of the very fine reputation which William and Mary has earned among the public at large and the respect and devotion with which the College is regarded by its graduates and their families.

Being a member of a distinguished faculty gave me another advantage: the benefit of my colleagues' study and research on both practical problems facing the country and the world and the equally important, if less tangible, philosophical questions which a leader must confront. As a political scientist, I was gratified to know that my discipline did a great deal to explain to me the real world of a major campaign.

This brings me to the second question: What did I learn about how politics really works from the campaign?

What I learned is that political scientists don't do a bad job in explaining the process by which voters make their choices in elections and why candidates behave as they do in campaigns. As a political scientist who has been actively involved in electoral politics on behalf of others for a decade, I can't say that being a candidate changed my perception of the way in which the American political system operates. It did, however, allow me to experience

the texture of elections in a way that only a candidate can.

As a candidate, I had a reason to go places and do things that would have either never occurred to me or would have been precluded to the average citizen. Certainly few people have the opportunity to ride in as many parades as I did in a single summer and fall (it did seem that I ran into the Rappahannock Shriners in their miniature automobiles at almost every one, and I got



***“Parades require a definite strategy on the part of a political candidate. The first thing that every campaign scheduler must know. . . is who owns a convertible. In a pinch, a small pickup truck can be substituted, but riding in a convertible offers a much greater opportunity. . . to hop out at regular intervals, shake some hands and hop back in before the marching band mows you down.”***

to know a large number of the volunteer firefighters of eastern Virginia on a first-name basis). A candidate can reach a lot more people at one time through radio and television, but personal campaigning lets the candidate know whom he will be representing, and what kind of government they want.

There were a few eye-opening events in the campaign. In one of the first weeks of travelling around a district which covered four cities and eighteen counties, I was scheduled to attend a county fair in one of the more rural parts of the district. Dave Kaut '82, my field coordinator for the area, had been given a good piece of advice from one of the local elected officials.

"It's okay for him to come to the

fair," our advisor suggested, "but he really ought to stop in at a tractor pull down at the local high school." Now, I had a vague idea of what a tractor pull was — a contest to see which of a series of souped-up, supercharged farm machines could drag a weighted sled a set distance in the shortest time. I suspect that the real reason some people go to this kind of event is to see one of these metal monsters throw an engine rod. But the advice came from a good source — our friend was currently serving his fourth decade in public office, so he must know something about his county's voters.

The county fair was very nice and it took little time to meet the twenty people there (including the local chairman of the opposition party). Since we had only a brief time to spare before the next scheduled event, we stopped by the tractor pull — where a crowd of two thousand was cheering its favorite John Deere or International Harvester to victory. I nearly lost my eardrums to the deafening roar of the tractors, but I met as many people that one night as at any other single campaign event. And people remembered! Right up to Election Day people would shake my hand and say, "I met you at the tractor pull." Tractor pulls are great places to campaign. Not only do you meet lots of people whom you won't meet at the local civic club candidate forum, but some of those people might not have made up their mind yet.

Parades require a definite strategy on the part of the political candidate. The first thing that every campaign scheduler must know, as my scheduler Lauri Brewer '82 discovered, is who owns a convertible. In a pinch, a small pickup truck can be substituted, but riding in a convertible offers a much greater opportunity for a candidate to hop out at regular intervals, shake some hands and hop back in before the marching band behind mows you down. Bob Bragg, a William and Mary graduate student in Government and the MBA program, pointed out that it helps if the borrowed convertible has working brakes. As my driver through much of the 18,000 miles we covered in the campaign, Bob kept me relatively safe, and more importantly, relatively sane.

Even waving from a convertible in a parade requires some planning. One of the Commonwealth's most well-known and respected officials offered me some useful advice as we rode together one Saturday morning. As we approached the first groups of people gathered along the sides of the parade



Two big guns of the Democratic Party, Lt. Governor Richard J. Davis '42 (left), who ran against Paul Trible for the United States Senate, and Governor Charles S. Robb joined McGlennon at a Poquoson Seafood Feast, one of hundreds of such events that McGlennon attended during the election campaign.

route, he leaned over to me and whispered, "Wave to the lawn chairs." "What?" I asked, failing to conceal my lack of parade expertise. "Always wave to the lawn chairs," he repeated. "People who think ahead enough to bring lawn chairs to parades, and set the chairs up along the parade route, are the kind of people who will vote." I decided then and there to listen carefully to whatever he had to say.

Nothing in my political science background had prepared me for the psychology of handshaking. I have decided that handshaking is an art which bears no relationship to the shyness or gregariousness of the candidate. Some of the most outgoing candidates I have met are rather diffident handshakers. From my perspective, handshaking is an essential political tool. Grabbing an individual's hand and pumping his arm is almost guaranteed to get that person's attention. While most people will look at you a little strangely at first, somehow, when you announce that you are running for Congress, that explains and forgives your rather forward behavior.

Having shaken tens of thousands of hands over the course of the campaign, I can tell you that a handshake makes an impression. One of the reasons I know this is that many people were able to tell me how many times I had shaken their hand in the past, and where. After one particularly long day of campaigning, as I offered my hand

to another voter, I suffered the handshaker's greatest embarrassment. "I've shaken your hand three times before," he said. "Oh, really?" I said brightly. Here was a voter I had met before, and he remembered me. Great. "When was that?" "Tonight," he said. I headed for home.

Running for office reinforced in my mind two other aspects of political campaigns which I had intellectually accepted: the powerful impact of the electronic media and the importance of the campaign itself as a source of information to the voter. As in so many other campaigns each year, television and radio advertising played a crucial role in this election. Starting my campaign as a virtually unknown quantity (after my first week of campaigning, with fairly extensive media coverage, only eight percent of the district's voters had an opinion of me) I worked very hard to increase my name recognition and to establish a favorable opinion of me among the electorate. By personal campaigning, I might reach several hundred voters on a good day. But in a district where more than 140,000 people would eventually cast ballots, that pace was just not quick enough. On the Thursday before the election, we took one last look at our campaign treasury and decided we had enough money to spend \$10,000 on television ads. That money bought 39 30-second spots on commercial stations which covered about two-thirds

of the district. Even with a modest advertising effort such as this, I was amazed at the impact which it had. Suddenly, people were recognizing me, and beginning to hear my campaign themes. Although it was too little too late, it was an impressive display of television's power to reach people.

Even without the large scale television budget, my modest radio advertising campaign had an effect. Put together in large part by my press secretary and assistant press secretary, former *Flat Hat* editors John Bloom '82 and Kathleen Henry '82, and my research director, Chris Cherry '81, my



**"Always wave to lawn chairs. People who think ahead enough to bring lawn chairs to parades, and set the chairs up along the parade route, are the kind of people who will vote."**

radio campaign stressed my positive and issue-oriented approach to seeking public office.

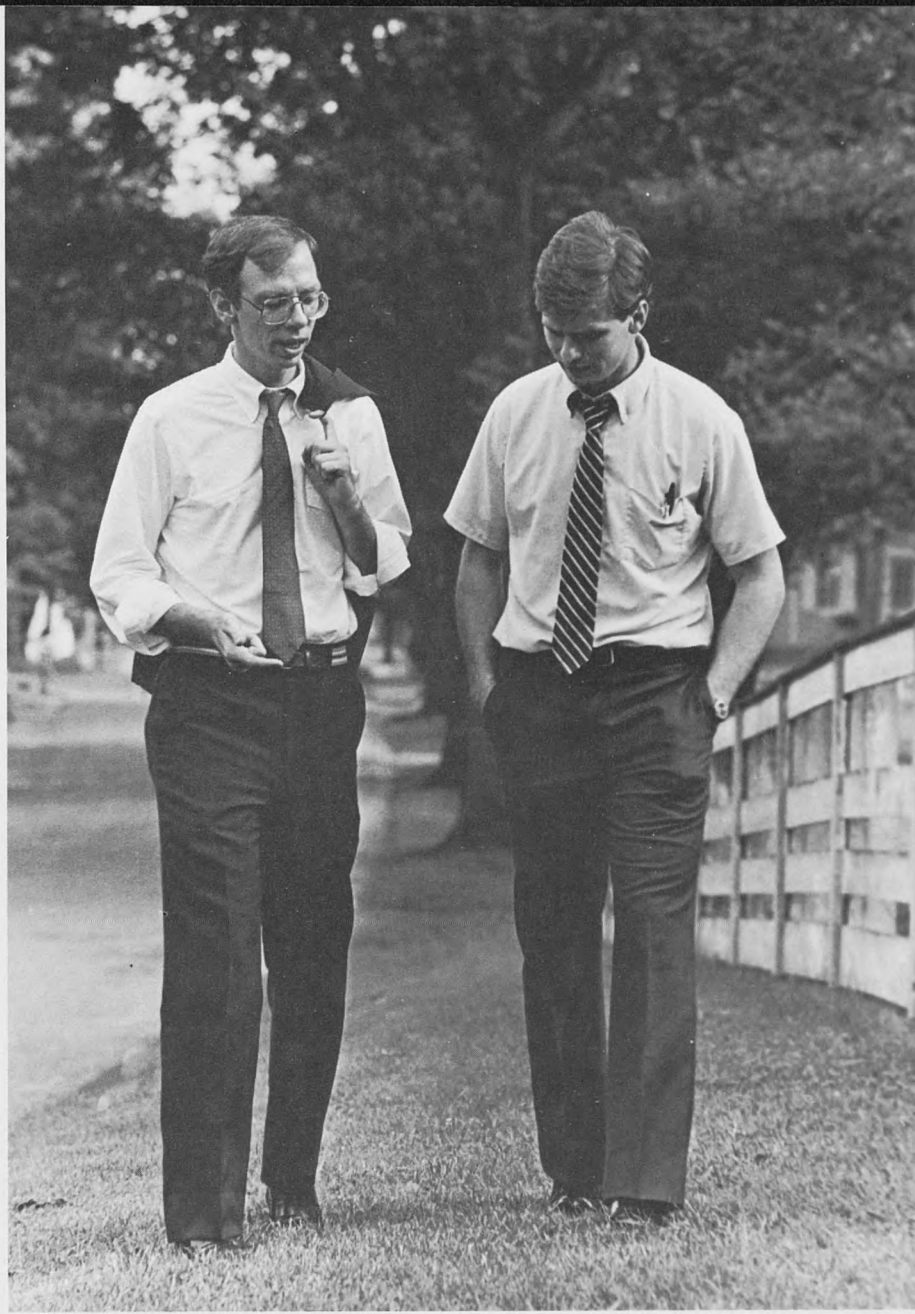
While around the Commonwealth and across the country many voters complained about "negative" advertising, the voters who happened to hear my radio campaign heard me offer a focus on issues and a willingness to "work with anyone interested in finding solutions to the problems we face." My campaign was issue-oriented and attractively presented. It sought to convey both a substantive platform of issues and an image of a candidate who cares about the issues that most affect the lives of Americans and residents of the First District in particular. My opponent, Herbert H. Bateman '49, a 15-year veteran of the Virginia Senate, centered his campaign on experience. But I am proud that neither of us engaged in negative, mud-slinging tactics, and I like to think that the tenor of my campaign had a lot to do with that.

What the campaign demonstrated was the impact which the candidates themselves have on the information voters receive. When one candidate has a large advantage over his opponent, his information is much more likely to be received by the voters. Under such circumstances there are powerful incentives for the financially disadvantaged candidate to gain free media, and free media (radio, television and newspaper reports) is much more likely when candidates hurl charges and accusations against each other. Perhaps most worrisome are those cases where candidates have both a financial advantage and a propensity toward mudslinging. It is too easy to say that the voters respond to negative advertising more strongly than to positive advertising — voters generally will respond to what the candidates give them. But the burden is on the candidates to decide what kind of campaign the voters will face.

The final question I have had to answer is: How do I explain the outcome of the election?

When the votes were tallied, my opponent had defeated me by a 55-45 percent margin. Starting the campaign as a virtually unknown college professor, I did manage to draw a respectable vote while being outspent 3-1 by the opposition, who also benefitted from the exceptionally strong showing in the district of incumbent Congressman Paul Tribble in his race for a seat in the U.S. Senate.

Graduates like Mark Colley, Jeanette Petrolia, Gary Abrams, Paul Jost,



*John McGlennon's driver, Bob Bragg, a graduate student at the College, helped the candidate cover 18,000 miles during the campaign. Bragg was one of several students and alumni who donated their services to McGlennon's campaign.*

Andy Waters and Rick Reinhard devoted long hours with no compensation to doing something they believed in. The list of current students who involved themselves in my campaign, like law students Al Matano and Greg Kallen and undergraduates Julie Zydron, Fred Rauscher, Nick Sojka, and too many others to mention here, was a great source of encouragement to me, as the ongoing involvement of William and Mary students and alumni in politics generally should be for our nation.

Knowing from the beginning that a fourteen week campaign had only a long-shot chance of success, I have no regrets and a new appreciation for the electoral process. Just as importantly, I ended the campaign with renewed

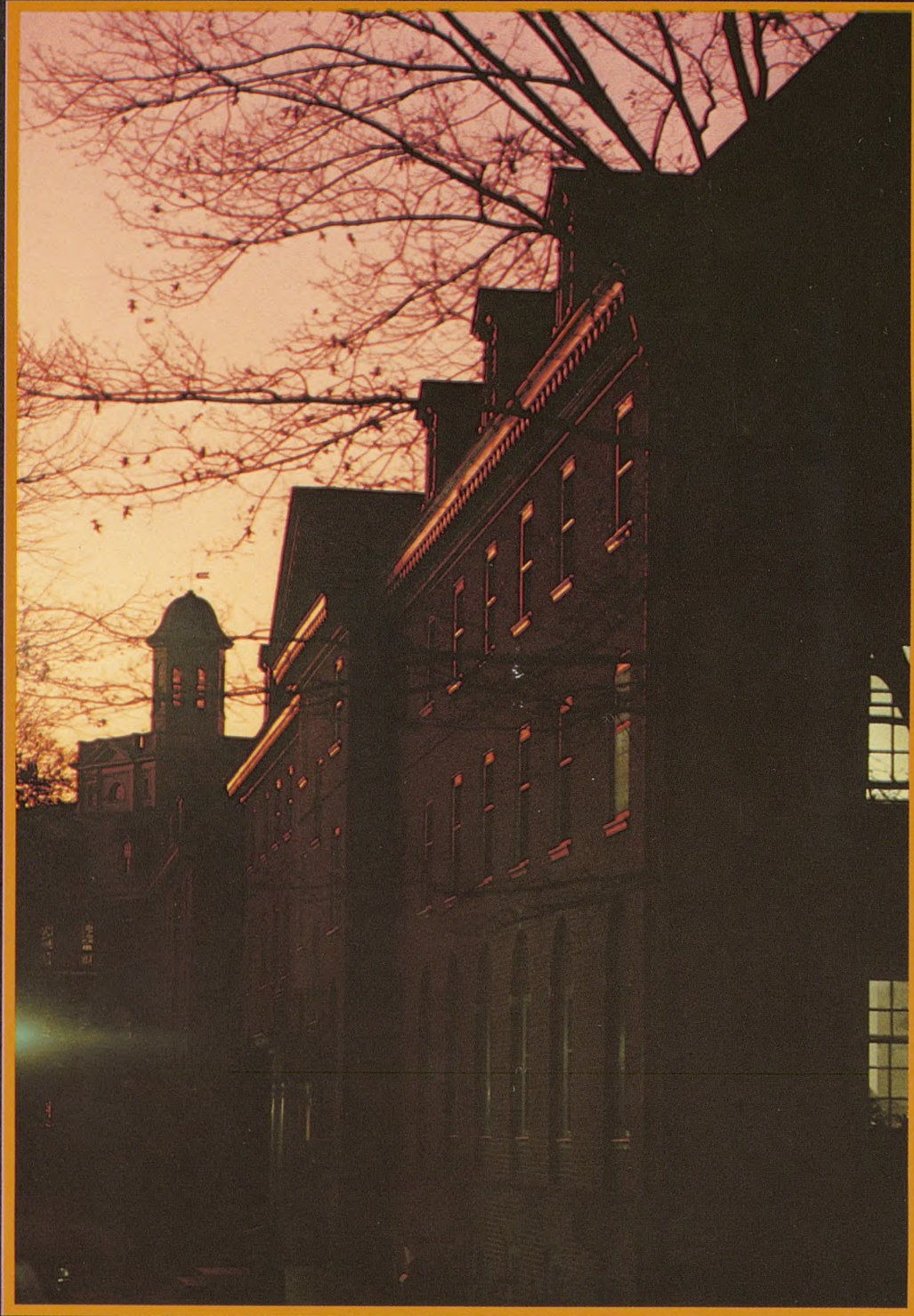
appreciation of the strength of William and Mary as an institution and of her students and alumni as citizens and political leaders.

With the campaign at an end, and the analysis presented, my Government 201 classes settled down to normal. The students noticed the change almost immediately. For now, I have been able to control the urge to shake all their hands before I begin the day's lecture.

*Taken during Homecoming Weekend just after the Sunset Ceremony by Lyle Rosbotham '71, a free-lance photographer from Washington, D.C., the photo on the back cover shows the familiar tower in the background of Barrett Hall, a student residence built in 1927.*

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