

# William and Mary



*Summer 1983*



### **On the Cover**

*The cover illustration is a portrait (oil on canvas, 50" x 40") of John Page of Rosewell (1743-1808). It was painted ca. 1758 by John Wollaston. This is one of a group of ten Colonial portraits of the prominent Page family of Virginia given to the College in 1897 by Dr. R. C. M. Page.*

*Born at "Rosewell" in Gloucester County, Virginia, John Page was the eldest son of Mann Page II and Alice Grymes Page. He attended the College from 1756 to 1763 and in 1776 he was appointed to the College Board of Visitors and was twice elected as the representative of the College to the House of Burgesses. Page was active in politics and was elected Governor of Virginia for three successive terms, 1802-1805.*

*The portrait, which is displayed in the President's House, is part of the College Art Collection, administered by the staff of the new Joseph and Margaret Muscarelle Museum of Art.*

*Photo by Thomas L. Williams*

### **On the Back Cover**

*The photo on the back cover of the President's House was taken by Jane Evans '83. The President's House is celebrating its 250th anniversary of its occupancy this year.*

# William and Mary

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# LIFE IN LOS ANGELES

## A Noted Author With Virginia Roots Looks At Los Angeles After 42 Years And Finds He Still Loves The City Of The Angels

By John D. Weaver '32

After growing up in a Virginia valley surveyed by George Washington and graduating from a college attended by young Tom Jefferson, it seems odd at times to find myself happily installed in a Southern California valley where a self-proclaimed "pioneer" establishment boasts of having been in business since 1945. With its population of around 1,250,000, the San Fernando Valley would be the country's sixth largest city if it were an independent entity. Instead, with the exception of Burbank, Glendale and the mission city of San Fernando, the valley suburbs are an incorporated part of that sprawling twentieth century phenomenon known as Los Angeles.

My mail is addressed to Encino, California, and my branch library is located in a neighboring community named for an English peer brought up by apes. It is this sort of thing, of course, that reinforces the conviction of so many old friends back east that I have committed myself to a palm-shaded asylum for the emotionally unstable, and, to be candid, it *does* seem strange to be borrowing books in a place called Tarzana.

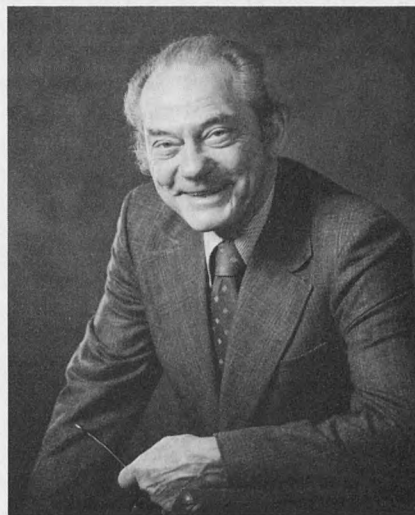
It is not quite what I had in mind when I left Kansas City in the fall of 1940, three years after I'd met and married a lovely, brown-eyed Phi Beta Kappa and beauty queen named Harriett Sherwood. Somehow, out of my *Kansas City Star* salary that never reached \$200 a month, Harriett managed to put together a grubstake of \$500, enough for us to take a six-month leave of absence from the paper. We planned to spend one month on the road and five months of uninterrupted writing in five different sunbelt cities, starting with Los Angeles.

We wasted so much time looking for a quiet, comfortable place to hole up that when we stumbled onto a tastefully furnished, \$46-a-month apartment in the Silver Lake section, we decided to stay put. Otherwise, we would spend our leave of absence apartment-hunting instead of writing. After a couple of months of living as free-lance writers, awakening each morning to a day that was ours to do with as we pleased, we knew we could never willingly go back to the 9-to-5 world of steady employment, so I resigned from the *Star*.

When our money ran out, Harriett took a job with a downtown advertising agency, making me the envy of every man on our block. After putting in five or six hours at the typewriter each morning, I tidied up the apartment, shopped for groceries and had dinner on the stove by the time Harriett got home. Twenty years later we discovered from young friends who thought their generation had invented this form of sexual emancipation that we had been practicing "role reversal."

For ten months I worked a seven-day week and never sold a line, but, in the fall of 1941, our luck changed, I had short stories in the December issue of three different magazines (*American Mercury*, *Atlantic*, *Esquire*), and Macmillan was preparing my Shenandoah Valley novel, *Wind Before Rain*, for spring publication. Harriett quit her job and started giving me a hand with the housework. She still does. And she has edited everything I've written in the last forty-six years, including personal letters (some of my more intemperate outbursts have ended up in her wastebasket). Her editorial antennae are so sensitive that she can plow through a 300-page manuscript and single out a page written months earlier when I had come to the typewriter with a hangover.

*The city's first freeway, a six-mile "miracle boulevard," opened in 1940. A generation later, David Brodsky wrote: "What a university is to the scholar, what the church is to the faithful, the freeway is to the Los Angeles motorist." From L.A. Freeway (University of California Press, 1981)*



*John D. Weaver, Class of 1932, credits the start of his career to the writing classes of Professor Glenwood Clark. Weaver's articles, short stories and novelettes have appeared in the country's leading magazines, and two of them have been made into motion pictures. His books include, among others, Another Such Victory, a novel based on the 1932 Bonus March; As I Live and Breathe, a humorous account of his life with Harriett; Warren: The Man, The Court, The Era, a seminal biography of the late Chief Justice; Los Angeles: The Enormous Village, a lively introduction to his adopted hometown, and The Brownsville Raid, which led to the exoneration of 167 black soldiers summarily dismissed by a stroke of President Theodore Roosevelt's pen in 1906. The book is currently under option for a four-hour CBS television miniseries. One of his Shenandoah Valley short stories, A Matter of Principle, has recently been filmed for the PBS network.*

When World War II ended, we were in New York, huddled in a one-room Greenwich Village apartment from which I had commuted to the Army Signal Corps Motion Picture Center at Paramount's 1920s studio in Queens. As soon as I was out of uniform, we started making plans to return to Los Angeles and pick up the work we had put aside three years earlier.

"It will be good to get back home," Harriett remarked one evening, and in that moment it came to us that home was no longer Kansas City, where she had a swarm of aunts, uncles and cousins, or the countryside around Front Royal, Virginia, where my father's family had settled in the eighteenth century. This time we were not a couple of transients heading for a sunny interlude. We were Californians.

We came home to a postwar metropolis grappling with the problems of its industrial expansion. In the words of Carey McWilliams, Los Angeles was floundering like an "idiot giant," fouling its air, polluting its beaches, clogging its streets with cars and letting its public transportation system, once the finest in the world, fall into a state of decay. The city's traditional voice of boosterism, the *Los Angeles Times*, observed: "The change from an easy, pleasant place to live has come on us sadly, amazingly."

For Harriett and me it remained "an easy, pleasant place to live," thanks to the motion picture sale of a story which enabled us to buy a house in the Hollywood Hills. We lived above the smog and, working at home, we didn't have to put up with morning and evening traffic jams. Harriett, whose earliest memories are of the flat, endless plains of western Nebraska, never tired of her panoramic view of a mountain-walled city sprawled between the desert and the sea. She was amused when friends from "back



A day on a Los Angeles beach photographed in 1939. (Special Collections, UCLA Research Library).

home," unable to imagine a land without sleet and snow, asked how we managed to get up and down the hill in winter.

Taking out-of-town visitors around the city gave me a tourist's view of Los Angeles, and in order to bring some historical background to my sightseeing spiel I began to read what little I could find on Southern California, notably the works of Carey McWilliams and W. W. Robinson. But I made no serious study of my surroundings until 1971, when Warren E. Preece, the *Encyclopedia Britannica's* general editor, asked me to write the Los Angeles entry for the revolutionary Fifteenth Edition (1974).

I was allotted 6,760 words for an article which should provide "critical insight into the distinctive nature" of the city and, at the same time, supply "orderly and consistently organized encyclopedia information." I took this to mean an article that could be read with pleasure and consulted with satisfactory results. It would, in short, include the key dates and the essential statistical data, while giving some idea of what life was like in twentieth century Los Angeles.

"More than half the city's residents," I wrote, "live in single-family homes, walled off from one another by their disparate life-styles. The surf-fisherman at Malibu, the Sunday sailors at Marina del Rey (described by county officials as 'the world's largest man-made, shallow-draft, pleasure boat harbour'), the equestrian set in Calabasas, and the cliff dwellers in the Hollywood Hills, all go their own way, surfing, yachting, riding, hiking, skiing, playing golf and tennis. Nowhere is the pursuit of happiness more unabashedly materialistic, and perhaps no city in modern times has been so universally envied, ridiculed, and, because of what it may portend, feared."

Los Angeles, in the early 1970s, had come to be regarded as the "Prototype of Supercity," a social laboratory where, in the words of two local song-writers, "the future is present tense." As early as 1927 Bruce Bliven referred to Los Angeles as "a melting-pot in which the civilization of the future may be seen, bubbling darkly up in a foreshadowing brew," and he noted that Angelinos were beginning to wonder whether bigness was, indeed, "the finest of ultimate ideals."

This spring, twelve years after I concluded my original *Britannica* article with a reference to an environmental report urging the city fathers to

"accept the fact that there is a limit to how many people this basin can support," I ran across a one-paragraph item in the *Los Angeles Times* reporting the addition of about 59,000 residents in 1982, bringing the city's population to 3,071,100. On another page a feature article splashed across four columns bore the headline:

#### SILICON VALLEY HAS FEARS OF BECOMING LIKE LOS ANGELES

The pear and apricot orchards of that northern California valley had been swept aside to make way for a 25-mile-long stretch of high-tech enterprises which have produced traffic tieups worse than those in San Francisco, and, according to a state highway official, they are probably "as bad as the bottlenecks in Los Angeles." Unless growth is controlled, the residents have come to realize, "the place is in danger of looking and feeling like Los Angeles."

Los Angeles as a fear-inspiring metaphor for contemporary urban ills is of relatively recent origin, but the ridicule can be traced back to the 1840s when a traveler described the pueblo as a "den of thieves," teeming with "the lowest drunkards and gamblers of the country." Modern opprobrium dates from an article in *Smart Set* (March, 1913), written by Willard Huntington Wright, a local art critic who later took to writing mystery stories under the pseudonym, S. S. Van Dine.

"Los Angeles enjoys the reputation of being the most puritannical and stupidly governed city of the first class in America," Wright declared.

He saw the city as "an overgrown village," with a population of nearly half a million, largely transplanted rustics with still-fresh memories of milk cans, new-mown hay and weekly baths. In its youth, it had worn vice leaves in its hair, but in recent years virtue had become "virulent." It was illegal for a man and woman (unless married) to be found in the same apartment. The city was overrun not only with "militant moralists," but also with neuropaths, chiropractics, hydropaths, spiritualists, mediums, astrologists, phrenologists, palmists and "all other breeds of esoteric wind-jammers."

Two generations of magazine writers have put their children through school and paid off the mortgage on their Connecticut saltboxes by rewriting the *Smart Set* article, rarely with as much grace or wit. The city was dis-



The city's cultural coming-of-age was dramatized in the mid-1960s by the opening of the Music Center, which is to be joined by the projected California Plaza, where Commerce will live on neighborly terms with the arts. (Courtesy the Performing Arts Council, the Music Center)

missed by *Life* as "cuckoo land" and by H. L. Mencken as "Moronia." A writer for *Fortune* found it difficult "to tell where the colonic-irrigation specialist leaves off and a new religion begins." Bertrand Russell announced that "Los Angeles represents the ultimate segregation of the unfit," and Frank Lloyd Wright agreed: "It is as if you tipped the United States up and all the commonplace people slid down there into Southern California."

But in Europe's dark ages of the 1940s, Goethe's Germany set up housekeeping in the city's west end, which came to be known as "The Fourth Weimar Republic." Arnold Schoenberg taught music at the University of California at Los Angeles. Bertolt Brecht made do on \$120 a month in a cramped, untidy Santa Monica bungalow, while Franz Werfel, embarrassed by all the money he'd made on *The Song of Bernadette*, lived next door to Bruno Walter in Beverly Hills. Thomas Mann worked on his *Joseph* tetralogy under "a serene Egyptian-like sky" in Pacific Palisades.

As Mann's wife recalled the examination into the workings of the United States government which preceded their admission to citizenship in 1944, her husband had managed to pass only because "he was clever and skillful enough to gloss over the points that weren't quite clear to him." A few years later, in the fall of 1948, when it looked as though Henry Wallace's third party candidacy would siphon enough Democratic votes from

Harry Truman to put Tom Dewey in the White House, Harriett and I had tea with the Manns, a pair of registered Democrats in an affluent Republican stronghold (Ronald and Nancy Reagan would move into the neighborhood later).

While Mrs. Mann poured tea and watched "Tommy" with a look of amusement and adoration that even the happiest of visiting husbands might envy, Mann brought up a point about American political procedures which was still not clear to him. In the primary, as a Democrat, he'd had no choice but to vote for the party's candidate. In the November election, he asked, would it be different? Could a registered Democrat vote for someone else? Henry Wallace, for example? We assured him he could, and I daresay he did.

By the time Los Angeles got around to making plans for the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of its September 4, 1781 founding, Harriett and I had been Angelinos for forty years. We had lived through one-fifth of the city's recorded history. During those years Los Angeles had dedicated its first freeway (December 30, 1940), survived its first air-raid scare (February 25, 1942), packed its Japanese-American residents off to internment camps (March 21, 1942), stood by while American servicemen beat up young *pachucos* in "zoot suits" (June 4, 1943), introduced the word "smog" into its municipal lexicon (September 18, 1944), installed its first parking

meters (late spring, 1949), crowded into Disneyland on opening day (July 18, 1955), cheered its first major league baseball team to victory over the San Francisco Giants (April 18, 1958), taken Premier Nikita Khrushchev and his wife to lunch at a film studio (September 18, 1959), retired its last street car from service (March 31, 1963), mourned Robert Kennedy's assassination at the Ambassador Hotel (June 4, 1968), watched its smoldering black ghetto explode in flames (August 11, 1965) and elected a black mayor (May 28, 1973).

Mayor Tom Bradley was a city councilman at the time I wrote my *Britannica* article in 1971. He had run for mayor a couple of years earlier, challenging the incumbent, Sam Yorty, who was rejected in the primary by three out of four of the city's voters. On the eve of that 1969 runoff election, pollsters put Bradley ahead with 53 percent of the vote, but after what the *Los Angeles Times* called "the most desperate, divisive campaign ever waged in this city," it was Sam Yorty, the white mayor, not his black opponent, who got 53 percent of the vote.

Four years later Bradley won handily. Last fall, when the *Britannica* editors asked me to bring my Los Angeles article up to date for a new edition, he had recently been elected to a third term and was running for Governor of California. He had a comfortable lead in the polls and key members of his staff were house-hunting in Sacramento. I put off sending in my revised text until after the election, hoping I could work in a sentence reporting the victory of the country's first black to be elected governor, but Californians were not ready to take that historic step. Bradley lost by less than 100,000 votes out of more than 8,000,000.

Fortunately, with two more years to serve as mayor, this gracious, 65-year-old son of black Texas sharecroppers will welcome the world's finest athletes when they converge on Los Angeles for next summer's Olympiad. He is the ideal host for *El Pueblo de la Reina de los Angeles* (The Town of the Queen of Angels). More than half of its forty-four settlers were of African descent. Like the eleven founding families who made the long, difficult journey north from Mexico with their twenty-two children, Lee and Crenner Bradley left the Texas cottonfields to provide a better life for their five children.

Angelinos whose forebears came to the pueblo during its first century as-

semble once a year to break bread and swap stories about a pioneer heritage in which they take understandable pride, but the true Angelinos, it seems to me, are not those who have stayed where their grandparents and great-grandparents settled, but those who have come a great distance, often at considerable risk, to make themselves part of this international crossroads, the most American of all American cities, mirroring the country's "untidy jumble of human diversity and perversity," as columnist George F. Will has put it.

"The United States is on the verge of being transformed ethnically and racially," says Leon Bouvier, a Population Reference Bureau demographer, who foresees a day when whites may become a minority of the population.

Los Angeles has already been transformed. On the eve of the 1980 census, which regards "Spanish origin" as an ethnic rather than a racial group, the city's computers put the Hispanic population at 27.5 percent, with blacks making up 21.5 percent and Asians and Pacific Islanders 6 percent. Black, brown, white and yellow Angelinos, with roots in Africa and Mississippi, Mexico and Korea, El Salvador and Vietnam, the Philippines and Guatemala, come together in a rich ethnic mix of neighborhood restaurants. Their children attend public schools in a polyglot system where nearly half (49 percent) of their 550,240 classmates have Spanish surnames. Whites and blacks each account for nearly 22 percent and Asians 7.6 percent.

"When I walk around Chinatown, I can hear children and adults speaking a lot of languages," Jean Lieu, a third-grade Vietnamese honor student at Chinatown's Castelar School, wrote last winter. While her mother attends classes at a downtown school along with 9,000 other adult students from more than eighty different countries 8-year-old Jean explores an enchanted neighborhood which contains a string of Mexican shops, an Italian restaurant, a French hospital, a Chinese Methodist church and a park where Asian youngsters play basketball while their Anglo contemporaries practice kung fu.

Los Angeles has more Jews (472,000) than Tel Aviv, more Catholics (2,069,682) than Boston, and more American Indians, Aleuts and Eskimos (16,595) than any other city in the country. City Hall officials cross First Street to feast on a "kosher burrito" and a downtown Thai restaurant

has a sign in its front window, *Se Habla Espanol* (Spanish is spoken). In Koreatown the streets are swept each day with the same kind of brooms the shopkeeper had used at home, and at Glendale College a championship soccer team is coached by Cherif Zein, an English teacher who was born in Egypt and reared in Morocco.

"A real test of the maturity of Los Angeles will be its ability to integrate its different groups," an English journalist, John Grimond, wrote in *The Economist* (April, 1982). In spite of the city's massive problems, he found it "impossible not to be optimistic about Los Angeles."

It is an optimism Harriett and I share. When we came here forty-three years ago, Los Angeles was an overgrown farm town, the seat of the country's richest agricultural county. The cliché, "No matter how hot it gets in the daytime, it is always cool at night," had been turned into the popular putdown: "No matter how hot it gets in the daytime, there is nowhere to go at night." Now there is a magnificent Music Center in the Central City, along with a lively sprinkling of little theaters scattered among fine neighborhood restaurants.

What used to be J. Paul Getty's little-known art repository on a bluff over-



*The ethnic and cultural diversity of Los Angeles is reflected in its public system which deals with children from households where older members of the family speak eighty different languages and dialects. (Special Collections, UCLA Research Library)*

looking the Pacific is now the world's richest museum. The UCLA Research Library ranks third among the academic libraries of the United States and Canada, and nowhere on earth is there a more hospitable center of learning than the Henry E. Huntington Library, Art Gallery and Botanical Garden, where England's scholars come to take the winter sun and examine priceless artifacts of their island culture. The Jet Propulsion Laboratory of the Huntington's distinguished neighbor, California Institute of Technology, shelters the modern Magellans who have explored interplanetary space in a new golden age of discovery.

On my workroom wall I have a document written and signed on May 3, 1852, by my great-grandfather, J. D. Weaver, postmaster at Bentonville, Virginia, certifying a note "for one hundred dollars payable at the bank house in Winchester." The son of the village postmaster for whom I was named moved less than a dozen miles from Bentonville to Front Royal, where he opened a store on Main Street and sired three sons, one of whom left home to study law, master the Pitman method of shorthand, and, after marrying a pert Irish stenographer, set up shop as a court reporter in Washington, D.C. where I was born.

A few years later he bought Gooney Lodge, our summer home six miles outside of Front Royal on the road to Bentonville. Washington was where I went to school, shoveled snow and removed ashes from a foul, coal-burning furnace. Gooney was where I swam, fished and hunted with the hill country neighbors I started writing about when Harriett and I defected from Kansas City to Los Angeles. We found our own Gooney Lodge here in the perpetual summer of the Santa Monica Mountains.

Whenever we can manage to get back east during the spring or fall, we enjoy the flowers and the falling leaves. With the first warning of summer humidity or winter chill, however, we scurry home. We have become incorrigible Angelinos. From my workroom in the foothills of Encino I look out on yucca and bougainvillea instead of dogwood and redbud, but wherever my work has taken me in this country, in England, Europe and North Africa, I have judged the earth's natural beauty by standards set in childhood by the countryside between Bentonville and Front Royal.



# ON THE ROAD AGAIN WITH JACK **K**EROUAC

*THE KING OF THE BEATS FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT,  
BUT IN THE END ALL HE HAD LEFT WAS THE BOTTLE.*

BY MIKE D'ORSO '75



Top photo, Kerouac in *Tangiers* in 1957. Photo by Allen Ginsberg from Columbia University Library's Special Collection. Middle, Kerouac's friend, poet Allen Ginsberg, with Philip Whalen in California in 1957. Photo by Gordon Ball from Columbia University Library's Special Collection. Bottom, Kerouac with his beloved cat. Photo by Jerry Bauer.

It is always disappointing to some, certainly encouraging to others, to see how the years have a way of bringing rebels into line. Bobby Seale, the former Black Panther, now sells barbecue cookbooks. George C. Scott, who snubbed the Academy Awards ceremonies when honored for his starring role in the film *Patton*, grabbed an aisle seat at the most recent Oscars. Even the surviving vanguard of the fabled Beat Generation are popping up in the mainstream lately. Witness a withered William Burroughs appearing on television's "Saturday Night Live," reading an excerpt from his vicious *Naked Lunch* to a studio audience unsure of just when to laugh. Or a well-groomed Allen Ginsberg, coat and tie and all, posing with fellow poet Gregory Corso and Peter Orlovsky for a chatty reunion shot in *People* magazine. Yes, howls do become whimpers.

Jack Kerouac himself, appointed the spokesman for them all whether he liked it or not, the man the media labeled "King of the Beats," went the same route at the end of his days, showing up on talk shows and panel discussions, in newspaper columns and radio interviews, trying to explain how the 1950's were linked to the 1960's. But for Kerouac there was a resistance, a

Mike D'Orso '75 is currently a staff writer for *Commonwealth* magazine. He received both a bachelor's degree in philosophy and a master's degree in English from the College of William and Mary. His writing has earned him several journalism awards, including a place among *The Sporting News* Best Sports Stories 1983. His essay on Jack Kerouac, entitled "Man Out of Time: Kerouac, Spengler, and the 'Faustian Soul,'" was published in the Spring, 1983, issue of *Studies in American Fiction*.

stubbornness, an unwillingness to join in that kept him punching back until the only weapon he had left was the bottle. When he died in 1969 from a hemorrhaging stomach worn thin by alcohol, Kerouac simply had no fight left in him.

In his time, however, as Hemingway might have put it, Kerouac fought the good fight. Both in his life and his writings, which were in essence virtually inseparable, Kerouac was driven by the urgency of sheer movement, by the need to escape the ticking clock, by the frantic exhilaration of those rare moments when past and future are forgotten and the only thing a man feels or knows is the sensation of *now*. The drugs, the drinking, the jazz, the coast-to-coast dashes with his mentor and model, Neal Cassady, and the breathless, keyed-up prose in which he tried to capture the intensity, the feeling, the *meaning* of it all — these were Kerouac's ways of trying to dodge, outrun, or at least push back against the relentless force of time. It was a struggle he took up as a boy and never again put aside, either in his fiction or in his own life.

Kerouac grew up in the dingy, textile-mill town of Lowell, Massachusetts. His memories of childhood, idealized in his first novel, *The Town and the City*, mythically re-created in his comic-book fantasy, *Doctor Sax*, and sadly romanticized in the melancholy *Maggie Cassidy*, ranged from the euphoria of Saturday afternoon movies, huge family Sunday dinners, sandlot football games and puppy love to the gloom of his brother's untimely death, his father's failures at his printing press business and his mother's brooding Catholicism. It was sports that eventually gave Kerouac a way out, when his high school track and football exploits attracted

## TO THE KEEPERS OF THE STATUS QUO. . . , "ON THE ROAD" AND

scholarship offers from Boston College and Columbia University.

Kerouac chose Columbia, which sent him for a year of prepping to New York City's Horace Mann School for Boys, where he grabbed headlines as a halfback. He was primed for college stardom when a broken leg ended his athletic career. He could have come back from the injury, but there were other things in his life that had become as important to him as football. He was intoxicated by the upbeat rush of New York City, he had discovered the untethered sounds of black jazz, and he had written several sports articles and two short stories for Horace Mann's publications. He had always been a voracious reader, but now he had discovered Thomas Wolfe, a writer who showed him "a torrent of American heaven and hell that opened my eyes to America as a subject in itself."

Kerouac dropped out of Columbia in 1941, eager for adventure, but before he got down to dealing with America, he spent a summer as a cook on a merchant ship and suffered through a short stint in the Navy that ended with a stay in the mental section of Bethesda Naval Hospital and a subsequent honorable discharge. When he returned to New York City in 1943, falling in with a crowd of young intellectuals that included Ginsberg and Burroughs, he was eager to fill Wolfe's shoes. He was hungry for ideas, listening in awe to the late-night discussions among his new circle of friends, conversations probing philosophers like Korzybski and poets like Yeats. When a book was mentioned, he would read it, and when Burroughs recommended Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, Kerouac found a near-blueprint for his own vision of a deteriorating American society, of a bland people out of touch with the beat of life and of restless men locked into a struggle with the pulse of time.

The German philosopher/historian's gargantuan study, completed near the end of the First World War, had been much in vogue among young intellectuals when it appeared in America in the late 1920's. F. Scott Fitzgerald was taken by several of its ideas, particularly Spengler's theses on money. Kerouac's interest was less focused than Fitzgerald's; he was

more attracted to Spengler's sweeping explanations of the historical development of Western civilization and his dire predictions about its future.

"Civilization is the inevitable destiny of the Culture," wrote Spengler. "Civilizations are the most external and artificial states of which a species of developed humanity is capable. They are a conclusion, the thing-become succeeding the thing-becoming, death following life, rigidity following expansion, intellectual age and the stone-built, petrifying world-city following mother-earth and the spiritual childhood."

Spengler's words were in tune with Kerouac's disdain for the urbanized American society that was sprouting from World War II, and they also addressed the stormy confusion Kerouac felt upon leaving his romanticized boyhood life in Lowell for the complexities and demands of adulthood in a fast-paced metropolis. In his first novel, *The Town and the City*, Kerouac established an opposition between the pastoral life of primitive man allied with nature and the "redbrick, neon" sterility of cities and their inhabitants, a dichotomy that continued to fascinate him throughout his writing. While cities often provided Kerouac's protagonists with a ceaseless flow of jazz, drinks and drugs, they remained, in the end, soul-stripping symbols of society's decay. Stranded in the city, Kerouac's characters could be found reaching out in numerous directions to resist the breakdown all around them, a fragmentation of society due, according to Spengler, to man's loss of union with the flow of time.

Throughout Kerouac's novels, time is a precious, fleeting commodity, something to be frantically devoured before it disappears; and in *On The Road*, his most celebrated work, based on his travels and adventures with Cassady in the late 1940's, Kerouac most deeply explored the paradox of grasping the ungraspable moment.

Cassady had grown up in the poolhalls and flophouses of Denver's skid row area. He was in and out of reform school as a boy, street-wise, intelligent, and bursting with a nervous energy that infected the people around him. Kerouac caught the fever when he first met Cassady through a New York friend. Cassady's nonstop chatter, his hunger for food, sex,

sounds, sights and action, his hard, lean cowboy appearance swept Kerouac off his feet. Their riotous excursions over the next several years became literature in the form of Sal Paradise (Kerouac) and Dean Moriarty (Cassady), the two main characters in *On The Road*.

Many readers and critics have attacked the apparent aimlessness of Sal and Dean, but the book is more than a simple portrait of two kick-happy hoodlums. Sal and Dean's furious trips are layered with the frustrations of what Spengler called the "Faustian soul," restless contemporary man frustrated by his exhausting race with time. Throughout *On The Road*, Sal is deeply introspective, constantly struggling to establish his purpose and identity while Dean is maniacally obsessed with deadlines and dates, pouring out passionate soliloquies on the concept of "It," a union with the here and now.

All through *On The Road*, and indeed throughout Kerouac's lifelong association with Cassady, there hangs over the frenzied energy a dark sense of doom, of the burden of time, of the inevitability of death, which Kerouac liked to call the Shrouded Traveler. Each trip in *On The Road*, whether it aimed at San Francisco, New York or Mexico, always ended with Sal returning home to his aunt, trading feverish expectancy and enthusiasm for despair and dissatisfaction. The same pattern of highs and lows, journeys across the country and returns to his mother's house, marked Kerouac's life.

Toward the conclusion of *On The Road*, Sal recognized "the raggedy madness and riot of our actual lives, our actual night, the hell of it, the senseless nightmare road." When Kerouac himself tired of the rocket-like trips with Cassady, he turned to other ways of escaping the humdrum homogeneity of mainstream 1950's American society. Each alternative he sampled became the core of another novel. He was always fascinated by bums, hoboes, the derelicts of society — what Spengler termed the "fellaheen," the remnants of primitive man that he predicted would inherit the ruins of civilization — and *The Subterraneans* was a chronicle of Kerouac's own disappointing love affair with a hip black woman. He became mesmerized by the paradoxes

## ITS AUTHOR BECAME A PROMINENT, VISIBLE WHIPPING HORSE.

of Zen Buddhism, fancying himself a *bikkhu* of sorts, entertaining some friends and embarrassing others with wine-fueled aphorisms. This Zen inspiration, which eventually led to a summer spent in isolation in a fire-tower atop a northern Washington mountain, was the basis of *The Dharma Bums*. He had an incredibly accurate memory, often amazing his friends with verbatim recollections of night-long conversations, and it was his attraction to the idea that memory, an introspective re-creation of the past, could forestall the wave of time that was the impetus for *Visions of Cody*.

In all these novels, as well as in his other writings, Kerouac was recording, in the free-flow style that he later labeled "spontaneous prose," his two decades of efforts, in the 1940's and 1950's, to find some reprieve from time's rush. When *On The Road* was finally published in 1957, six years after Kerouac finally banged it all out on a single roll of teletype paper in what he claimed was a three-week marathon session at the typewriter (he actually took three years writing and revising it), it thrust its author into a spotlight to which he never adjusted. The fame he had sought since he was a boy dreaming of football stardom was now his, but the notoriety centered more on the man than on what he wrote, and Kerouac became squeezed by a public pressure even more intense than the inner yearnings and questions that had driven him for two decades.

To the defenders of tradition, the keepers of the status quo who disdained the irresponsible, vulgar lifestyles of the new wave of societal dropouts, who resented the audacity of these "beatniks" who tried to label themselves artists, *On The Road* and its author became a prominent, visible whipping horse. *Saturday Review* dismissed the book as nothing more than "verbal goofballs." The *Hudson Review* said it was "like a slob running a temperature." *Encounter* labeled it a "series of Neanderthal grunts." But while the book was less than a hit with many critics, the public clamored for it. It was a best-seller for five weeks, Warner Brothers offered \$100,000 for the movie rights. Marlon Brando was reportedly interested in the part of Dean Moriarty, and magazine offers poured in for Kerouac to give them more of the same.

After operating on the fringes for his entire writing career, always on the outside looking in, Kerouac now found himself thrust center-stage. At the typewriter he was in control of the questions as well as the answers, but in public, with reporters and fans pushing him to fill the role of King of the Beats, to explain to them what it all meant, to be Dean Moriarty, Kerouac became nervous, skittish, confused. His liquor became "my liquid suit of armor, my shield." But even that wasn't enough. When the convertibles filled with partying teenagers, the motorcycle gangs, the wandering hitchhikers would come to his mother's house seeking the wild, flaming Buddha Of The Road, at best they found a tired, middle-aged man offering them a drink. At worst they met anger and a slammed door.

Kerouac was always an observer, sitting on the edge at parties, cradling a bottle of cheap wine and watching, taking it all in with his notebook-mind and later opening the floodgates at his typewriter. He was always along for the ride, but he was rarely the driver. Early in *On The Road* he wrote, "we were leaving confusion and nonsense behind and performing our one and noble function of the time, *move*." Now the confusion and nonsense was all around him and there was no place to run. His roads had been traveled years before, although the clamoring public did not realize it. His friends were now scattered across the country, and Neil Cassady was off on his own, headed toward an eventual meeting with Ken Kesey, for whom he would drive the famous Merry Prankster bus filled with LSD-soaked travelers made legendary in Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*.

Kerouac was left to explain the Beats, how they fit into the scheme of things, and given no other choice, with nowhere to hide, he gave it a try. Mike Wallace interviewed him for CBS television, and Kerouac's mystical, circular responses to Wallace's skeptical questions made the writer look silly. *Life* magazine commissioned him to re-create that on-the-road feeling with a journey up the East Coast, sending a photographer along to capture it on film, but the mix didn't work and the piece was scrapped. William Buckley invited him on the "Firing Line" program to discuss "the hippie phenomenon" along with

two other panel members, and what resulted was an embarrassing episode in which Kerouac dozed off, bored with the intellectual patter, sipped at a coffee mug filled with Scotch, and only occasionally was called on by Buckley to join in the discussion. Kerouac's wild-eyed, rambling style of discourse was ill-suited to the point-by-point game of hard questions and specific answers. He was drinking more all the time, shocking his friends with wild mood swings on the rare occasions when they were reunited in public. He even began denying the very substance of the work he had lived for. "We didn't have a whole lot of heavy abstract thoughts," he snapped at one critic toward the end. "We were just a bunch of guys who were out trying to get laid."

Kerouac spent his last years trying desperately to regain the spirit, the energy, the impulse of physical and verbal momentum that had carried his best writing to peaks where it spoke for the urgent restlessness of an entire generation. But his later novels were only disappointing shells filled with much of the same weariness, anger and confusion with which he lashed back at critics and inquisitors in the final years of his life.

In what is probably *On The Road*'s most quoted passage, Kerouac wrote, "the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars." Kerouac did burn out, but not in the same way as his friend, Neal Cassady, who died a year before Kerouac, drunk from tequila, lying naked next to some railroad tracks in the middle of a Mexican desert. Cassady kept his breathless pace right up to the end; Kerouac just wound down, slowly, steadily, until it was easy for time to catch up to him.

In *Maggie Cassidy*, Kerouac wrote, "The second-hand kisses the minute-hand sixty times an hour 24 hours a day and still we swallow in the hope of life."

At the end, Kerouac simply had no more hope.

# MAKING AMERICA COMPETITIVE AGAIN



*Four veteran blast furnaces are systematically detonated in rapid sequence at U.S. Steel's former Ohio Works in Youngstown to make way for further progress on a modern U.S. Steel Industrial Park. (Courtesy U.S. Steel Corporation)*

## A ONCE GREAT NATION IS IN TROUBLE UNLESS IT CAN REASSERT ITS COMPETITIVE EDGE

By David A. Heenan '61

Whither America? In normal times, this question might seem presumptuous. But these are not normal times. One need only examine America's waning competitiveness in world markets to sense that a once-great nation is in trouble.

Symptoms of the problem face us daily. Reports of record unemployment, chronic federal budget deficits,

an overvalued dollar, and sagging economic growth have dominated the news — not just the business page but the front page as well. Clearly, the American public shares these concerns. In a recent survey that asked which industrialized nation had the best-performing economy, only 15 percent of Americans chose the United States. A solid plurality picked Japan.

Furthermore, almost nine of every ten Americans surveyed were of the opinion that drastic steps are needed to prevent a future erosion of the economy.

That drastic steps are not only appropriate but critical in solving America's present dilemma is by itself a shocking admission. A mere decade

ago nothing could have seemed further from the truth.

### America's Ascendancy

Entering the 1970s, America had just concluded a twenty-five-year period of unprecedented economic prosperity. On the heels of its World War II victories, the United States seemed singly qualified to assume the mantle of leadership in international affairs. The vocabulary of the time separated affluent America from the rest of the pack. We spoke in terms of "gaps" — for dollars or defense, trade or technology — to meter the distance between this country and its competitors around the world. Other nations desperately needed America's resources: its capital, technology, and managerial knowledge. The United States, in turn, responded by mobilizing these resources.

America's subsequent successes did not go unnoticed. Financial editors feasted on the global reach of U.S. business. In his popular book *The American Challenge*, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber prophesied that U.S. enterprise was well on its way to becoming the world's third ranking industrial power after the United States and the Soviet Union. Success abroad quickly spelled success at home. "The affluent society," John Kenneth Galbraith quite precisely called us. Our standards of living and sense of self were never higher. A cornucopia of goods and services competed for the attention of American consumers; prices were affordable; and most of our countrymen were gainfully employed and still vested with the Yankee work ethic. As we entered the seventies, our economic future seemed well assured.

### The Party's Over

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the seeds of America's decline in world markets were already visible. For example:

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*This article draws heavily from Mr. Heenan's recent book, "The Re-United States of America," published by Addison-Wesley of "Theory Z" fame.*

- The well-publicized sale by Chrysler Corporation of its European operations to Peugeot-Citroen, followed by smaller liquidations in Australia, Colombia, and Venezuela.
- In the tire industry, massive cutbacks in Europe by Firestone and Goodyear, with Uniroyal and Goodrich virtually closing up shop.
- Bell & Howell Co. and General Foods Corp. both exiting Japan and selling their assets to local companies.
- The pullout of Reynolds Metals from British Aluminum; Kaiser's from Alcan Booth Industries; and W. R. Grace's liquidation of its European consumer products division.



*Connaught Center, headquarters of Jardine, Matheson & Co., Ltd., parent company of the author's firm, dominates the Hong Kong harbor.*

The cautious withdrawals of American business from overseas ventures should not be interpreted as a full-scale retreat. But for the great majority of U.S. companies, the party's over — or, as Professor Raymond Vernon of the Harvard Business School puts it: "Gone are the cash cows of yesteryear."

The days of full-speed ahead overseas are over for the lion's share of U.S. enterprises. From Bell & Howell to Boise Cascade, American companies are shifting their preferences from foreign to familiar markets. These pro-

digal sons of American industry might take heart from this "better-the-market-you-know" strategy were it not for the changing configuration of the U.S. marketplace.

### The Buying of America

With a vengeance, outsiders are taking their wrath out of their American competitors where it hurts the most — in the United States. For the past decade, foreign investors have been flocking here in record numbers. Last year, the Department of Commerce estimated that close to \$10 billion made its way into the country in the form of direct foreign investment. The recorded book value of all direct overseas holdings is somewhere between \$60 and \$65 billion, representing more than a fourfold increase over 1974.

Few sectors of the U.S. economy have escaped this mammoth influx of foreign capital. To illustrate:

- Royal Dutch Shell's \$3.6 billion takeover of Beldridge Oil, the biggest in American history; the Kuwait government's \$2.5 billion purchase of Santa Fe International; the \$353 million acquisition of Fairchild Camera by the French Schlumberger family; and the \$350 million purchase by the Dutch insurance company National-Nederlander of the Life Insurance Company of Georgia.
- In automobiles, Renault assumed a controlling 46 percent interest in American Motors Corporation, with the option of increasing its holding to 59 percent at any time it wishes. (Ironically, France's other automaker, Peugeot-Citroen, acquired Chrysler's failing European business.)
- The Statue of Liberty's welcome also applies to foreign bankers, where the latest overseas takeover took place with the U. K. 's Midland Bank's \$820 million purchase of 57 percent of Crocker National, this country's thirteenth largest bank holding company. This followed the move by Standard Chartered, another British bank, to acquire Union Bancorp, the sixth largest bank in California, and Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank's 51 percent stake in Marine Midland Bank of New York.

- Carpetbagging applies to agriculture, too. The Department of Agriculture estimates that almost 8 million acres of choice U.S. topsoil, or six-tenths of a percent of the nation's 1.4 billion acres of farmland, are now in foreign hands.

Not since British loans helped finance the building of the nation's canals and railroads in the nineteenth century has the United States displayed a more magnetic attraction to overseas investors.

Just as the American challenge captured frontpage headlines in the 1960s, so too has the recent European and Japanese revenge. Americans are reminded that if they are consuming Mounds candy bars or Baskin-Robbins ice cream, dining out at Lum's or the International House of Pancakes, shopping at Ohrbachs or Saks Fifth Avenue, or staying at a Travel Lodge or a Howard Johnson's Inn, they are fattening foreign wallets. Whether it is Perrier's splash in mineral water or Panasonic's being slightly ahead of our times, overseas companies are demonstrating that the U.S. market, once thought to be impenetrable, is very much up for grabs.

### Changing Global Realities

"For the first time in American history," says Henry Kissinger, "we can neither *dominate* the world nor *escape* from it." The United States, for better or worse, is inextricably linked to the political and economic dynamics of the new world order.

Small comfort, though. Witness America's recent inability to keep pace with its industrial competitors:

- The U.S. share of world exports has plummeted since 1970. In terms of its impact on dollars and jobs, this country has lost an estimated \$125 billion and over two million jobs to foreigners.
- As other nations rebuilt their industrial machines, America's productive base went to seed. The average age of U.S. plant and equipment is sixteen to seventeen years compared with twelve years for West Germany and ten years for Japan.
- By almost any measure, the growth of U.S. productivity ranks last among the major industrial powers — averaging 2.3 percent

*Only by letting their talents work together in tandem will the principals in our economic society weed out old myths and allow new dreams to be realized. Or as Henry Ford once put it: "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."*

over the past decade. By comparison, productivity growth in Japan and West Germany averaged 5.2 percent for the same period.

- American enterprise also lost ground. In 1963, U.S. corporations accounted for two-thirds of the world's largest 100 companies and for three-fifths of the 500 largest. By 1979, their membership had dropped to less than one-half of each group.

Whatever the yardstick, the *pax Americana* that shaped modern economic history has been disintegrating. And many wonder, "What ever happened to the American challenge?"

### What Went Wrong?

Realistically speaking, the relative dip in the U.S. influence around the world was inevitable. "The 1970s began to obliterate features that distinguished the United States from other industrialized countries," explains Harvard's Vernon. "For one thing, European and Japanese income levels were rising rapidly and no longer trailed far behind those of America. Gone, too, were the differences in cost structures that had distinguished the United States — from other countries. Labor was almost as expensive in Europe as in the United States." The rest of the world's revival notwithstanding, America's slippage from global leadership cannot be dismissed lightly. "It seems to me," warns former Treasury Secretary John B. Connally, "that we have reached a stage where there is cause for deep concern. History offers too many examples in which maturity evolved into stagnation, decline and decadence." Obviously, corrective action must now be taken.

Just what these actions might be depends on one's assessment of the problem. The fault behind declining U.S. economic power lies with many people and many events. But my reconstruction of America's postwar

troubles places the blame on the inability and unwillingness of our key economic stakeholders to put America's house in order. Rather than agree on an industrial game plan at the federal level, an economic counterpart of our foreign and domestic policies, our leaders in business, government, and labor clung religiously to the orthodoxy of the past. They agreed to disagree, to maintain the arm's-length, if not adversarial, posture of bygone days — even though the changing global realities had rendered such old ideological dogma obsolete. From this failure of national vision on all fronts has sprung a series of economic crises, each seemingly more difficult than the last. In an increasingly interdependent world, the United States suffers all the stresses that accompany a fall from the global pecking order: chronic trade deficits, rising unemployment, budgetary cutbacks, popular resistance to expansive government, loss of confidence in our leaders, and a heightening level of tension and infighting among self-interest groups for shares of a pie not growing as fast as their needs or expectations.

### What To Do?

"The state of mind of the public is worried sick and in a panic," says Daniel Yankelovich, chairman of the opinion research firm of Yankelovich, Skelly & White, Inc. "In that condition, people know that there is something wrong. That pushes them into working out accommodations that make economic sense." And the question introducing this article must be asked again: Whither America?

The answer is not to be found in any sharp turn from our present course. "When the engine breaks down, you don't call the principle of internal combustion into question," warns Francois de Combert, former economic adviser to the president of France. "You fix or replace the engine." The repair, as it were, depends on one's analysis of the reasons for U.S. reversals at home and abroad. These have covered a wide

spectrum — from loss of the Yankee work ethic to a preoccupation with the short term. But critics of the American dilemma consistently cite the failure of U.S. business, government, and labor to build a national consensus. This failure, in turn, has left America without a coherent vision of its future.

"Dress me slowly, I'm in a hurry!"

Napoleon once remarked. This describes the double bind of America's economic transition: the challenge of recapturing the benefits of democratic capitalism while holding down the costs of our adversarial system to acceptable limits. Former Secretary of Labor and Ambassador to Japan James D. Hodgson tells how: "At the operational level, the adversarial tests of wills (for example, in traditional collective bargaining) is okay. But at the policy level, we must agree; international competition makes this a mandate." In the years ahead, we shall seek to define more precisely this *split-level approach*.

For starters, this means acknowledging once and for all that the United States is a "free" enterprise society with its economic lifeline inextricably tied to the modern-day corporation. Therefore, the foundation or *lower* level of the split-level approach will remain our regulated or mixed economy, although in a somewhat modified form. We may anticipate more serious attempts to redefine the regulated aspects of the present system — the objective being an unbridling of the competitive market forces that made the United States an economic superpower. Look for new and continued efforts to (1) rationalize regulation; (2) replace restrictive legislation with that accommodating U.S. business interests; and (3) redirect government's interventions in the economy along more productive, yet unobtrusive lines. In so doing, U.S. enterprise will be better positioned to compete more effectively in national and world markets.

While preserving the essence of America's competitive underpinnings, we must also work to reduce the antagonism of arm's-length attitudes of our major stakeholders in business, government, and labor. The *upper* level of our new economic home will include selected segments of an "America, Inc." Confrontation will give way slowly to greater cooperation, particularly in national and international policymaking. The by-product, one hopes: a Re-United States of America.



*The plummeting of the U.S. share of world exports since 1970 can be traced in part to the efficiency of the Japanese auto worker and the substantial wage differential between the American and foreign worker.*

### Concluding Note

For the balance of this century, America's charge is to shape the type of social, economic, and political system in which its children and their children will prosper. For this to happen, U.S. business, government, and labor must replace the ethic of head-to-head competition with the ethic of collaboration. Only by letting their talents work in tandem will the principals in our economic society weed out old myths and allow new dreams to be realized. Or, as Henry Ford once

put it: "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

The principle of indivisibility — of coming together, keeping together, and working together — is deeply ingrained in the American character. We should follow our origins to pursue the modern-day meaning of "one nation indivisible." That meaning will reside in a Re-United States of America, where an accommodation, if not an alliance, gradually begins to emerge among industry, government, and labor.

*Once Faced  
With A Shortage  
of Doctors  
America Reacted  
and Now Must  
Deal With The  
Implications Of A  
DOCTOR  
SURPLUS*

*By Leonard G. Schifrin*

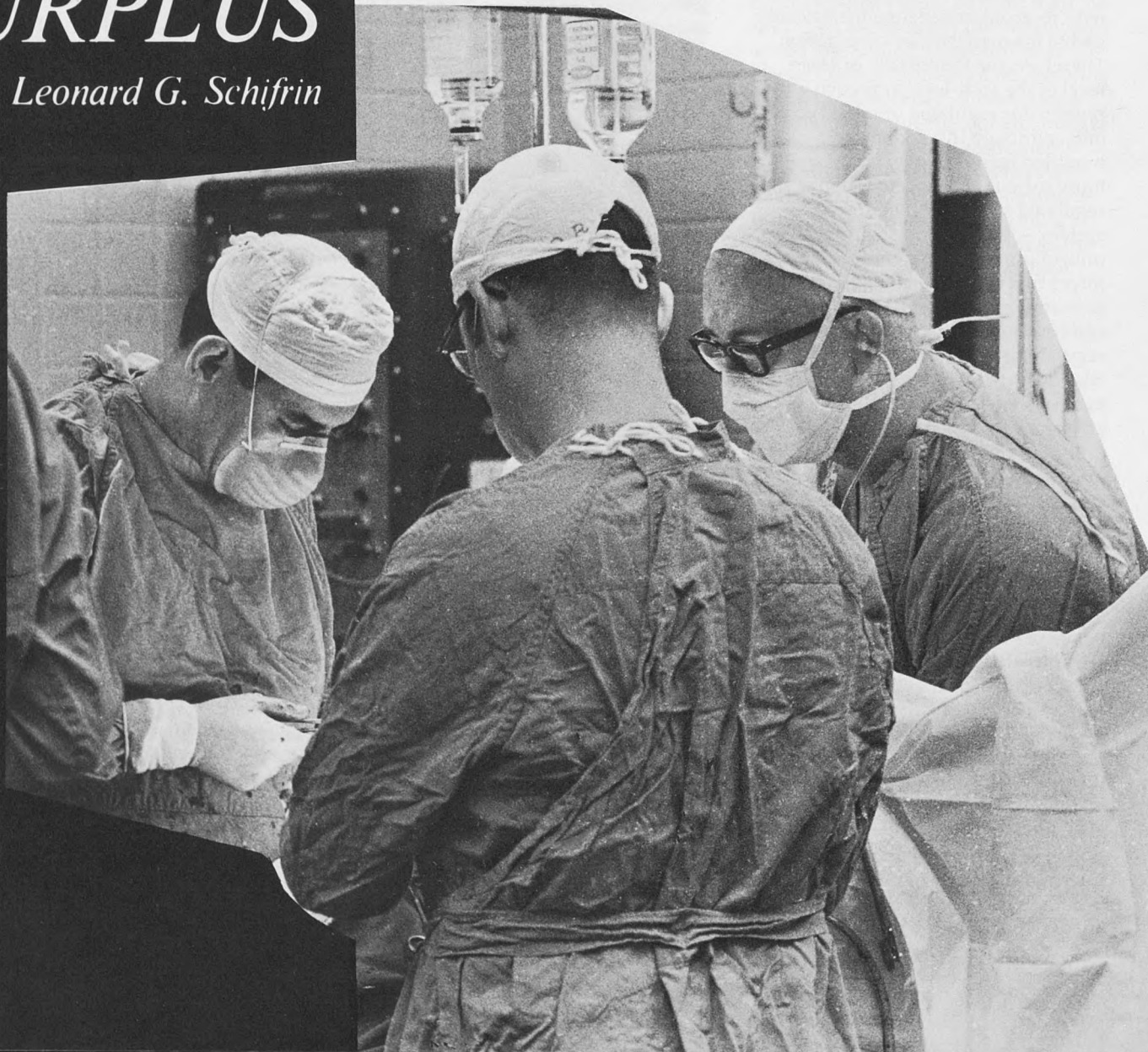
**L**ately we have heard and read a good deal in the popular media about an emerging oversupply of physicians and surgeons, and probably few of us were surprised to hear it. After all, at a time when ten million workers, are unemployed, why should news that a surplus of doctors exists be particularly surprising to us?

On closer examination, however, the concepts of a "surplus" and "unemployment" carry quite different connotations. Unemployment has a variety of causes, but most of the present unemployment is a result of economic recession. Indeed, it is a measure of the extent of such a recession, but recovery will bring a growing demand for goods and services which will, in turn, generate a growing demand for labor, and much of the unemployment may be eliminated.

Perhaps this recovery already is underway. But a surplus of doctors, or lawyers, or others who largely work for themselves does not appear as unemployment in the usual sense of

the term, and exists independent of the forces of the business cycle. Consequently it will not be alleviated in any substantial degree by economic recovery. The explanation of these surpluses lies not in Fiscalist or Monetarist theories of the business cycle, but in the structural and institutional characteristics of our society that have created mismatches between the pattern of skills available and the pattern of skill requirements. Accordingly, these mismatches — in the form of surpluses and shortages — often are longer in their development, more durable in their existence, and less amenable to correction than cyclically-caused unemployment and its often dramatic short-term shifts in level.

In some ways, the oversupply of doctors is similar in both causes and effects to that of other professionals, and the lessons learned can be generalized. But there are important differences between the medical profession and others, differences of both







***“. . . the number of medical schools rose from 77 in the mid-1940s to 114 by the early 1970s. In that period, average medical school class size about doubled, from 80 to 150; and total medical school enrollment, reflecting both factors, increased from 23,000 to 56,000. Most significant, the number of new M.D.'s graduating each year rose from 5,800 to 13,600, an increase of 134 percent.”***

degree and kind, that make the consequences of a doctor surplus particularly important and thereby place a high priority on the identification and implementation of effective and equitable solutions.

#### ***Did We See the Surplus Coming?***

Yes, we did. In fact, for almost a decade, medical educators and health-care economists have warned of an emerging surplus of doctors. Two particularly prestigious commissions, the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education and the Graduate Medical Education National Advisory Committee (“GMENAC”), provided detailed and convincing support that

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such a surplus is about to materialize and will continue to worsen unless very dramatic — and unlikely — changes occur in our public policies toward medical education.

The common thesis follows this three-part sequence.

First, after World War II and into the 1950s, we experienced a sharp increase in the desire for and ability to purchase medical care. While the rate of growth of this demand has slowed somewhat (except for another surge in the late 1960s due to the passage of Medicare and Medicaid), projections made through the years have continued to predict a steady growth in society's medical care needs.

Second, in response to present need and future projections, a major effort was undertaken by the private and public sectors to increase all facets of the medical care delivery system, including hospitals, technology, and the medical manpower to operate them and to expand private physician practices.

Third, this expansion of the system has been so responsive that it has caught up with the demand and passed it. Indeed, a sizeable physician surplus now exists; yet the expanded medical education system remains in place, producing thousands of new doctors each year, more than enough to keep pace with the average annual growth in demand for their services, even allowing for the effects of an aging and longer-lived populace. Thus, it is our successful response to the physician-shortage of the 40s and 50s that now has created the opposite problem of physician surplus, and promises to widen the excess of supply over demand in the years ahead.

#### ***The Direct Causes***

The post World War II surge in demand for medical care caught us by surprise. Before that time, our medical care sector was of modest proportions, but so too was the demand for medical services. But a number of factors converged to alter that situation permanently. Scientific and technological advances increased the efficacy of medical treatment and, thereby, the public's expectations from the system; sharp increases in real income provided both the private and public sectors with much higher levels of purchasing power; and a heightened concern for those among us with low health levels due to economic or epidemiological factors spurred us to

expand the system and to bring them more into it.

Two major Federal actions were at the forefront of the system-wide response. The Hill-Burton Act, passed in 1946, provided generously for Federal funding for hospital construction, mainly in the less populated areas; and several Federal Medical Manpower Acts provided even more generous funding for the construction of new medical schools, the expansion of older ones, and for the operation of all of them through large enrollment-related yearly subsidies called capitation payments, on the order of \$4000-\$5000 per student per year.

The results were as expected: the number of medical schools rose from 77 in the mid 1940s to 114 by the early 1970s. In that period, average medical school class size about doubled, from 80 to 150; and total medical school enrollment, reflecting both factors, increased from 23,000 to 56,000. Most significantly, the number of new M. D.'s graduating each year rose from 5,800 to 13,600, an increase of 134 percent. Thus, our objective of expanding the supply of physicians by increasing the medical education system's capacity seems, by these data, to have been successful.

Another policy measure dealt with foreign-trained doctors, the so-called “FMGs” (“foreign medical graduates”). Our immigration laws are expressions of our perceptions and attitudes toward foreigners; among those afforded more favorable treatment are those of exceptional talent in the arts and sciences and those in occupations in which the U. S. is experiencing shortages. By both criteria, foreign physicians were a favored group. A wide range of economic, sociological, scientific, and political factors provided both strong “push” factors inducing them to leave their home countries or countries where they had received their medical education and strong “pull” factors attracting them to the United States, where they were welcomed and afforded easy access to permanent residency. By the 1960s and 1970s the annual immigration of FMGs averaged well over 5,000 per year. As a result, by the early 1970s more than 60,000 FMGs were among our estimated 350,000 physicians, and by 1980 we had approximately 100,000 FMGs among 450,000 physicians. As concerns about the emerging oversupply grew, the rules were tightened, but even now we receive a net inflow of about 2,000 physicians per year.

The issue of foreign trained physicians coming into the United States has many complex facets, and there are many positive and negative impacts, on both the U. S. and the countries of origin, of such manpower flows. A large inflow creates one set of effects, a smaller inflow another; but aside from all other effects, the inflow was deliberately reduced, just as it had been deliberately increased two decades earlier, to remedy a mismatch between supply and requirements.

Looking back, then, on the Hill-Burton programs on the one hand and the Medical Manpower Acts and our immigration policies on the other, the sought-for expansions of the medical care sector were attained, and more. As hospital capacity grew to remedy shortages and even create redundancy, the Hill-Burton program was ended, and together with new controls in place of former inducements, the impetus toward further hospital overcapacity largely has been checked. But the end of governmental support for new medical school construction only ended the *expansion* of the educational machine; it left in place an enlarged pipeline, each year producing new physicians in excess of increased needs, adding further to the now-recognized surplus. Thus, we have seen the number of physicians grow from about 155 per 100,000 population as recently as 1970 to 200 in 1980. By 1990 it is expected to reach 250 per 100,000.

### **The Underlying Reasons**

If public programs remedied the physician shortage so effectively that a surplus now has evolved, what explanations can we offer for the overzealousness or lack of caution in these programs? More pointedly, while appreciating the success of our public policy efforts to expand the supply of physicians, what lessons can we learn that might help us stay more on the mark in future comparable situations, in the field of medical care or elsewhere? There seem to be three main reasons for our lack of moderation.

The first reason is a "more is better" approach to many problems of society, including medical care. In this approach, there is assumed to be a positive, continuous relationship between the quantity of human, capital, and natural resources that we devote to the provision of medical care and the health status of our people. According to this view, if we are try-

ing to elevate societal health status, we must do more of the sorts of endeavors we already are pursuing and, in turn, we must have more institutions, technology, and manpower to do so. By this logic, we never will have enough, since our health status is never perfect. Thus, an ever-larger commitment to medical care, from this viewpoint, appears to be economically rational (and politically popular!). Yet we have come to realize the flaws in this view: many factors other than costly remedial care contribute importantly to societal health status; other treatment modes than total reliance on costly hospitals and doctors have proven their usefulness; and traditional fee-for-service, office-based physician care and hospitalization are, like just about every production mechanism in our economy, subject to the law of diminishing marginal productivity.

Second, we greatly misperceived the seriousness of the physician shortage in other ways. Much of the most dramatic "evidence" presented in support of the view that a physician shortage existed dealt not with the aggregate number of physicians in relation to total population or health needs, but with shortages in certain geographic areas, such as ruralities or the inner city. Further, even in well served areas, certain types of specialists were in short supply. In more formal terms, we spoke of sectors of geographic or specialty shortage, perhaps even in the midst of overall abundance. This evidence persuaded many that a serious shortage existed, but it really represented a confusion of the problem of uneven geographic and specialty distributions with the problem of overall shortage. Consequently, we chose to fill the sectoral and specialty shortages not through inducements for more rational patterns and locations of practice, but by widening the production pipeline. This produced perhaps twenty doctors who would enter already fully served geographic areas or well-provided medical specialists in order to get the one or two who would help alleviate a sectoral shortage, thereby contributing heavily to surpluses while making only modest gains against shortages.

The third reason is somewhat arguable, but it is a persistent theme in the politics of medicine and has at least historical foundation. Here we consider the public's perception of the American Medical Association as a craft union, using its control over medical education to exercise the time proven tactic of "restriction of num-

bers" to constrain physician supply and thereby to elicit higher fees and incomes. The issue is not whether the American Medical Association had restricted supply, but whether it was the public's perception that it had, and this perception certainly was present. Accordingly, the public felt all the more justified in expanding the number of physicians to eliminate as quickly as possible the doctor shortage created over past years by the power of organized medicine for its own gain. Like the previous two elements in the logical foundation for Hill-Burton and the Medical Manpower Acts, the "contrived shortage" argument is flawed. If restriction of numbers has been achieved, there was little evidence to show any economic consequences. Physicians, faced with a limited arsenal against illness, were not really in heavy demand or short supply before World War II; and the depression of the 1930s constrained the demand for their services to the point that their incomes, while relatively high for the time, provided no indication of conditions of serious excess demand.

All three of the logical supports for a single-minded "more is better" attack on our post World War II health care problems are subject to serious challenge. More medical care may well affect dramatic improvements in health status when the primary reason for poor health is lack of access to adequate levels of care. But, as we have

***“. . .the expansion of the system has been so reponsive that it has caught up with the demand and passed it. Indeed, a sizeable physician surplus now exists; yet the expanded medical system remains in place, producing thousands of new doctors each year, more than enough to keep pace with the average annual growth in demand for their services, even allowing for the effects of an aging and longer-living populace.”***

indicated, even medical care must respect the principle of diminishing returns. As it becomes more abundant, the incremental benefits of additional care decrease and ultimately approach zero; subsequent improvements in mortality, morbidity, and well-being in general then may transcend the capabilities of traditional medical care and depend increasingly on many other influences, particularly the concept of "life style" and its broad inclusiveness. There is ample evidence that the bulk of our population has reached or is close upon this "margin" of medical care.

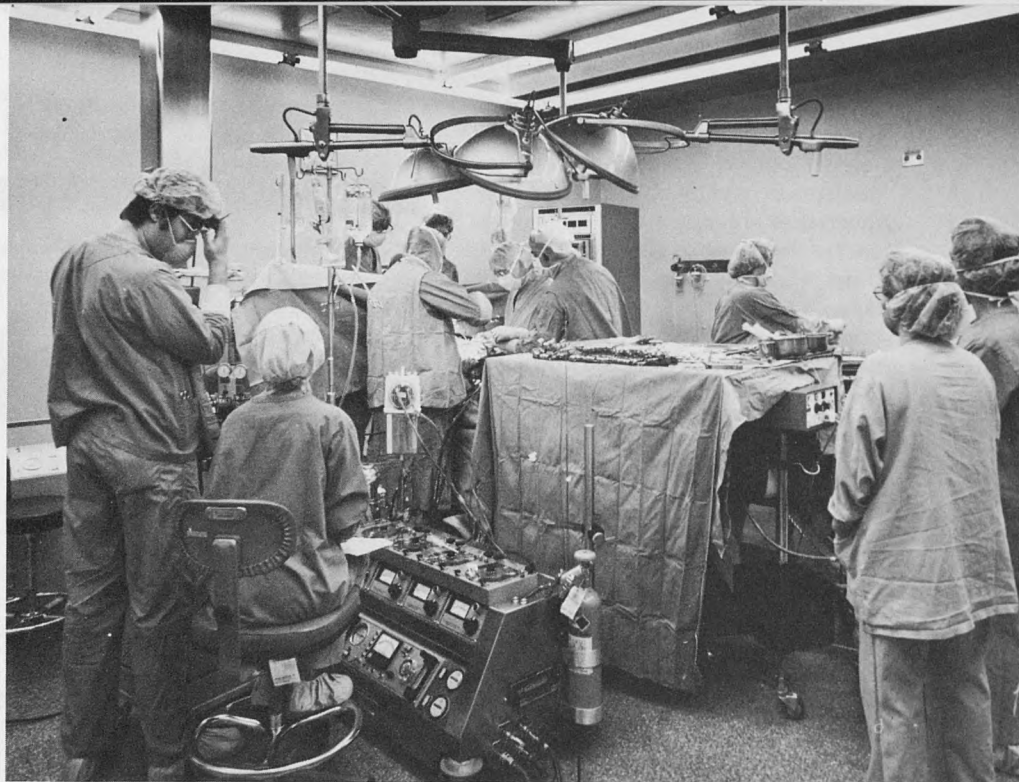
Additionally, opening the medical education pipeline wider or leaving a widened one in place in order to fill the not-yet-full corners of the physician supply pattern has been shown to be a wasteful approach to resolving such availability problems, increasingly so as there remain fewer sectoral shortages. And expanding physician supply to compensate for past restraints, when there appear to be few observed effects of any such restraints, is a dubious policy measure at best.

### *The Effects of a Doctor Surplus*

Aside from the direct costs to society of producing physicians and surgeons who are in excess supply, does a doctor surplus pose any other problems? After all, wouldn't a surplus make it even easier to obtain care, and perhaps produce a tacit competition that gives us more attention at more affordable prices?

In some ways, we see these phenomena already at work — shorter waiting times and longer visits, the former definitely a benefit since time is valuable for all of us, and the latter possibly a benefit, if the longer patient-physician contact period provides therapeutic gains in excess of any additional cost levied for the longer visit.

Indeed, recognition that longer visits may lead to higher charges tells us that the market for doctors' services may work to some extent in a manner quite contrary to traditional economic expectations. We know from our personal experience and observation that patients are generally very inexpert about the nature of their health problems and their related medical care requirements. Consequently, they are particularly dependent on physicians and surgeons, to choose the level and quality of medical services. Since



*The author suggests that greater availability of surgeons may lead to higher rates of elective — and perhaps non-elective — surgery, adding to the skyrocketing costs of medical care in the United States. (Photos courtesy of Emory University Photographic Services, Atlanta)*

physicians and surgeons, then, largely determine how much of what they do for a living needs to be purchased by or for the patient, the medical care marketplace is said to be characterized by "provider-determined-demand." One school of thought is that excess capacity among providers leads to higher levels of utilization of the particular services, be it hospitalization, surgery, or physician contact, than otherwise would be the case. In other words, provider-determined demand, combined with a doctor surplus, may invite provider-expanded demand.

In fact there is rather persuasive evidence that larger hospital bed-to-population ratios lead to more frequent and longer hospitalizations; greater surgeon availability leads to higher rates of elective — and perhaps some non-elective — surgery; and greater physician availability leads to more doctor visits per episode of illness.

Such induced activities may partly obscure the surpluses causing them, which at the very least should tell us that we ought not expect to see obvious and outward signs of excess capacity. Yet the effects of induced-demand, both in therapeutic and economic terms, may be very great. If over-doctoring means more exposure to the power of medical technology

and treatment, it necessarily means more exposure to their risks. If some of this care is not therapeutically justified, the risks, relative to potential benefits, loom even larger. Thus, the overproduction of hospitals and physicians imposes one direct set of costs on society, and any subsequent redundancy and over-utilization imposes another. Given the current costs of medical care, unnecessary provider-induced-demand may well compare with or exceed the large, burdensome costs of creating the over-capacity in the first place.

What is the effect of excess supply on prices in medical care markets? Shouldn't the various hospitals price compete among themselves for the available but limited patient demand? Shouldn't we expect to see under-utilized physicians competing for scarce patients with lower fees?

Maybe, but only after a certain point is reached. Because of the special role of "third-party players," namely government and private insurance mechanisms who currently pay two thirds of all medical care costs to providers, the market historically has absorbed unilateral, provider-determined price increases. As occupancy rates decrease in hospitals and as physician patient-loads decrease, their response has been to try to sustain their incomes by raising their prices.

Increases in physician fees associated with excess capacity are labelled "target income" effects, reflecting a perception held by physicians of how much they should earn. As the one part of the equation — patient load — thins out, the other part — fee per contact — is raised, in order to sustain the target income. With recent strong institutional changes in the form of the growth of prepaid health plans and a greater necessity for traditional inservices to become price competitive against them, the price increasing effects of both hospital and physician

***“. . . recognition that longer visits may lead to higher charges tells us that the market for doctors' services may work to some extent in a manner quite contrary to traditional economic expectations. ”***

surplus capacity will not automatically be absorbed by insurers. In the meantime, though, the evidence suggests that there presently exists a third factor associated with a provider surplus raising the expenditure made by society for its medical care: higher prices per unit of service received.

Accordingly, the economic impacts of a doctor surplus, if not already burdensome, promise to become very much so in the 1980s. These impacts include a past and continuing overcommitment of scarce economic resources to the education of physicians and surgeons; a continuing overproduction and overutilization of expensive medical treatment and care; an exposure to unnecessary risk along with this overutilization; and an upward influence on prices as excess capacity emerges.

While not easily calculable, if they represent even a small percentage of the \$300 billion current annual total health care expenditure, these costs represent perhaps many billions of dollars per year. And if there occurs any significant "freeing up" of still more doctors due to increasing third-party cost consciousness and the decided trend toward greater use of paramedical, nurse practitioners, and other medical personnel who are substitutable, at least at lower levels of care, for physicians — then the oversupply of physicians — and all the result-

ing problems and costs — may well expand to even greater proportions.

#### ***Where Do We Go From Here***

Our fundamental policy error was in using sectoral shortages as evidence that a general physician scarcity existed. As a result, we greatly expanded the total physician supply in order to fill some not-yet-full specialties and geographic areas. But the aggregative surplus has grown large and has exacted very great costs and will continue to do so as the price we pay for meeting our sectoral shortages in the manner we chose. And using the same simplistic approaches in reverse to remedy the problems of surplus will again create some important sectoral shortages; the public policy pendulum is moving back to where it was in the 1950s. For example, the influx of foreign doctors, one answer to the shortage problem, has been curtailed since 1978 to remedy the present surplus; however, this has caused serious financial problems for inner city general hospitals not affiliated with medical schools and for public psychiatric hospitals, which now have to attract replacement staff physicians, usually at higher salaries. To the extent that these institutions cannot afford costly replacements, then some of the more serious occupational and geographic shortages will recur.

A second response to the surplus problem was the termination of operating subsidies to medical schools in 1980. This will help by ending the widening of the educational pipeline, but the loss of federal operating funds of \$4,000-\$5,000 per student per year largely has been shifted to the student in the form of higher tuition. Many medical schools now charge upwards of \$15,000-\$20,000 per year, and more than a few charge between \$20,000 and \$30,000. As medical school becomes more expensive, the applicant pool may well shift toward the wealthier segments of society; and many new M. D.'s will enter the more lucrative specialties or practice in higher income areas to repay their debts or justify their large investments in their professional education. By simply reversing the original policies that caused the general surplus while alleviating sector shortages, we will move back in the direction we have travelled.

The problem, then, is not one of just reducing the annual production of new doctors, but doing so in ways that

do not aggravate distributional problems and may even alleviate them hand in hand. Thus, the plausible set of policies must address both problems.

The aggregative balance in the physician supply-demand relationship can be maintained by the continuous policy hand on the immigration door and by moderate but steady adjustments in the financial incentives for medical education expansions and contractions as needed. The more troublesome allocation problems perhaps can be addressed by a variety of efforts that include identification of the factors that determine geographic locational decisions and choice of specialties by doctors. For example, one key factor in locational decisions is the presence of a medical community, for peer interaction, support, and continuing education. The availability of travelling specialists, serving as both consultants and continuing educators, may well overcome some doctors' reluctance to set up practice in rural areas, despite what otherwise might be an attractive way and place of life. For another example, some of the factors in such choices may be sociodemographic, reflecting the personal characteristics of medical students. It may be possible to choose among equally qualified applicants those with background characteristics suggesting ultimate career choices that are more likely to resolve existing sectoral shortages.

In typical American fashion we have addressed our physician shortage and subsequent surplus problems in direct and forceful ways. We have made some costly mistakes but we probably have learned some valuable lessons in the process, lessons that allow us to seek out and implement policies more finely tuned to the different and sometimes conflicting facets of the general problem. Things may get a little worse before they get better, but the seriousness of the problem and our growing recognition of it have put us two-thirds of the way toward a resolution. A little imaginativeness and some of that forcefulness will move us the remaining one-third. We will continue to have available to us the best of modern medical science and care; but our ability to partake of the system in meeting our needs, while pursuing many other worthwhile goals, depends largely on economic considerations, which we must first recognize and then use as guidelines for effective policy actions.

*"Passion, and passion at its profoundest, is not a thing demanding a palatial stage on which to play its part. Down among the groundlings, among the rakers of the garbage, profound passion is enacted."*

--Melville  
Billy Budd

On January 15, 1981, NBC premiered a new police series called *Hill Street Blues*. I remember turning on the television, watching the opening credits, thinking "Oh great, another cop show," and opting to clean my oven instead. Three and a half years later, *Hill Street* has garnered a total of fourteen Emmys, has an average weekly viewing audience of forty million, and is, in my opinion, one of the best shows in the history of American television. Better yet, *Hill Street* is now the place where I earn my livelihood. The truth behind all these factors is that *Hill Street* is not (nor has it ever been) "another cop show." The reasons for this are as varied and as complex as the show itself, but I think that there is an underlying foundation that is easy to understand. This foundation is passion; it is a passion born of an excruciatingly realistic look at life where the truest passion exists: "down among the groundlings."

*Hill Street* is fully and colorfully populated by these groundlings. Never before has a television show been such a celebration of the mundane. The characters are people who go to work every day and try to make enough money to pay their bills, with maybe a little left over for a few beers at the end of the day. They have car trouble; they have personality conflicts; they have character flaws that are more than just the "social issue of the week." They even go to the bathroom. (When did you ever see Kojak looking for something to read in the john?) The characters are working class people with working class problems. Every episode begins with the morning roll call and follows the characters through the course of one day. The audience witnesses everything that happens to them (the pedestrian as well as the fantastic) and witnesses it totally through the eyes of the regular characters. The audience

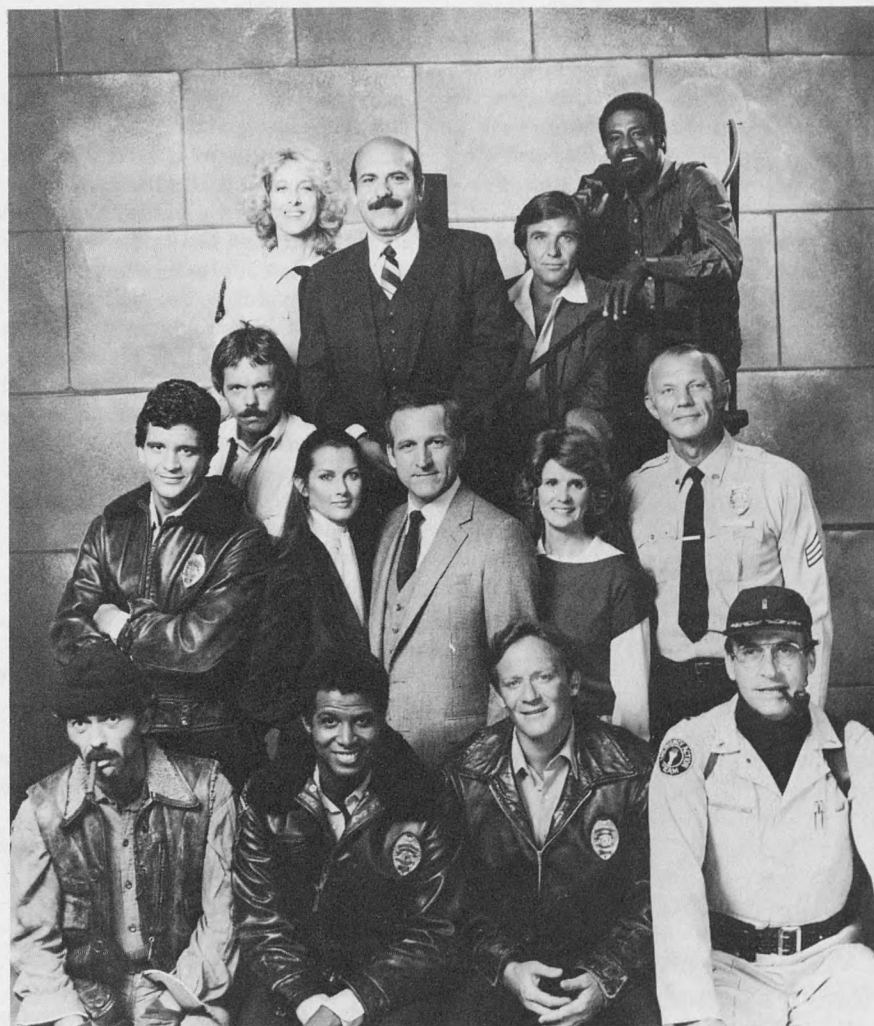
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*Karen Hall '78 is a former story editor for Eight Is Enough and M\*A\*S\*H. She is now executive story editor for Hill Street Blues.*

# DOWN AMONG THE GROUNDLINGS

(An Insider Examines the  
Success of *Hill Street Blues*)

By Karen Hall '78



*"The characters of Hill Street Blues are people who go to work every day and try to make enough money to pay their bills, with maybe a little left over for a few beers at the end of the day. They have car trouble; they have character flaws. . . . They even go to the bathroom." (Photos courtesy of MTM)*

sees life only as they see it; and, as a result, the audience feels what they feel.

Before the days of *Hill Street*, I used to complain that no one on television ever went to work. "Work" was usually just another permanent set, so

that the writers and producers could do funny stories about Daddy at the office. Or "work" was what enabled the hero to embark on hair-raising adventures. But "work" as it exists in the real world never really found a place on television until *Hill Street*

came along. When I was a staff writer on *Eight is Enough*, we did a story about a strike putting the family's main breadwinner out of work. We did a few scenes about the kids not being able to continue their expensive dancing lessons and the washing machine blowing up, but somehow the family had food for fourteen on the table every night and the teenage daughters never had to give up their designer jeans. On *Hill Street* this past season, we did a three-part episode in which the city is forced to issue promissory vouchers to the police force instead of pay checks. From that point on, we showed the cops unable to pay their bills, unable to spend any money, having to borrow from loansharks. . . We showed people who live from one pay check to the next trying to get by with no pay check. Certainly at this point in the history of our country, the audience can relate to the fear and embarrassment that the situation provokes. A great deal of the power of *Hill Street* comes from the pain or joy of being able to feel a story from first-hand recognition.

If this celebration of the mundane is the key to the success of *Hill Street*, one might wonder why more television shows aren't able to pull off the same



**"Officer Bobby Hill (Renko's partner played by Michael Warren, above) is infuriated when the owner of a towing company won't take a check for payment, forcing Hill to leave his car impounded, with the cost rising by the minute. Hill rants: 'I'm gonna remember his face, and if I ever pull him over, I'm gonna put him through cop hell!'"**

ploy. My response would be that many shows probably try to do this, but they get watered down during the creative process. It takes something very special to carry this level of passion from the original conception of the story line all the way through until the finished product reaches the television screen.

The creative process of *Hill Street* is very different from that of any other show that I have encountered, either as a participant or as an industry observer. In most cases, a television show is just a conglomeration of egos. Everyone is working towards personal glorification, and whatever manages to survive and reach the viewing audience is left to fate. The creative process of *Hill Street*, on the other hand, is the absorption of the individual into a collective sensibility. The over-riding concern here is that the show be as good as we can possibly make it, and that is the goal to which everyone's talents and energies are directed. As a result, there is not a great amount of pressure to create an imaginative reality, but rather to participate in an existing one.

From whence did this "existing reality" come? The simplest and most honest answer is that it came from the two men who created the show, Michael Kozoll (who has since left to pursue a career in feature film writing) and Steven Bochco, the show's current executive producer. When NBC executives approached Kozoll and Bochco with a request for a new police show, they agreed under two conditions: (1) that the show would be totally different from any other cop show in the history of television and (2) that they would be given free reign to create the show as they saw fit. Both provisions were agreed upon, after much haggling, and what resulted was the series, more or less, as it is today. Kozoll and Bochco created the fictional world on "the hill," and from that point on, that world took predominant importance. It is to that world that everyone involved with the show pays allegiance and swears dedication.

Kozoll and Bochco created a world full of as many inconsistencies and absurdities as life itself. They chose to set the show in the precinct station house of a large, urban, inner-city ghetto. They wanted to do a cop show that dealt less with adventure and more with a futility of trying to combat a no-win situation. In keeping with this goal, they were careful to make sure that the show "looked"

right. The station house is bleak, dark and dirty, with paint flaking off the walls. The place is over-crowded and filled with a constant flow of winos, prostitutes, junkies and other characters typical of those who would inhabit such an environment. The characters themselves are not glamorous; the casting is geared towards actors who are magnetic without being flashy. They look tired; they look like they are working. The lighting is dim and shadowy. The costumes are old, sometimes dirty, often not quite in style. Everything about the look of the show is faithful to the world that has been created.

The characters are the largest factor in the creation of this world. The cops on the hill are not religious about regulations. They are not overwhelmingly concerned with the rights of the people they arrest. . . not nearly as concerned as they are about, say for instance, lunch hour. They have quick tempers, narrow-minds, bad grammar, and mediocre senses of humor. In short, they are human.

In my opinion, the thing that makes these characters sympathetic is their frustration. It is the frustration of everyday life: having your car towed; having to work with someone you don't like; being forced to function on a day when it's a hundred and ten in the shade and the air conditioner won't work. It is also the frustration of trying to hold on to ideals in a career that does nothing to nurture them and everything to tear them down. In a show from last season that I wrote, *Hill Street* Officer Andy Renko (a self-styled cowboy with a mile-wide lazy streak) is upset when a woman's lawyer convinces her not to press charges against a man who tried to attack her. The lawyer says that trying to put the guy away would only be a waste of his client's valuable time. Renko excuses himself from the discussion, walks over to the coffee machine and fumes to his partner: "If you took all the gray-suited lawyers in the world and put them on a slow boat to Indo-China, we wouldn't have no problems with the criminal justice system in this country." His partner's attempts to calm him down only serve to make Renko angrier, so he goes back to confront the woman and her lawyer: "Miss Hyler, if you are truly the least bit interested in my opinion on this matter, I'll be glad to tell you about it. If you think you're inconvenienced now, where the hell would you be if my partner and I hadn't showed up this morning? We went in after that



**“When we write for Belker (played by Bruce Weitz, above), we make sure that he gropes for words and expresses himself without the benefit of an overwhelming command of the language. For instance, he once expressed his deepest gratitude by telling public defender Joyce Davenport: ‘You’re about as far from a dirtbag as they come.’”**

guy at considerable personal risk. For all we knew, we coulda been stabbed, or shot, or just plain beat to death. Now, I don’t mind doin’ my job, but it just kicks the wind right out of me when I go through all of that and it turns out I’m risking my life for that turkey to be behind another bush next week, waiting to jump out at somebody else. Kinda makes me wonder why I bother to get out of bed in the morning.” The lawyer informs Renko that, although very inspiring, none of this is particularly pertinent to his client’s situation. As the lawyer and the woman leave the station house, Renko turns and kicks a trash can the length of the squad room. Renko kicking that trash can was my favorite moment in the show. He isn’t just frustrated, he is frustrated with every fiber of his being. . . . he is frustrated with the passion of a groundling.

In another episode, Officer Bobby Hill (Renko’s partner) is infuriated when the owner of a towing company won’t take a check for payment, forcing Hill to leave his car impounded, with the cost rising by the minute. Hill rants: “I’m gonna remember that guy! I’m gonna remember his face, and if I ever pull him over, I’m gonna put him through cop hell!”

Detective Mick Belker is probably the most interesting and endearing

character of the series. He is a small, mousy guy, but what he might lack in stature he more than makes up for in heart. He generally foregoes his service revolver or tear gas and opts to employ incisors and bicuspid as his favorite method of detaining the criminal element. He is deeply committed to keeping “hairbags” in line, and any time the phone on his desk rings, he is sure to respond with “Hi, Ma.” He is a simple man, and the scripts reflect his simplicity in attitude and in dialogue. When writing Belker, we make sure that he gropes for words and expresses himself without the benefit of an overwhelming command of the language. For instance, he once expressed his deepest gratitude by telling public defender Joyce Davenport: “You’re as far from a dirtbag as they come.”

Last season I had to write a very difficult scene in which Belker has just returned from his father’s funeral and is trying to share his feelings with Captain Furillo. We discussed this scene at great length in story conferences, trying to decide what Belker would say — what he would be feeling. After all, this wasn’t just any character who had lost a father. We wanted to make sure that Belker dealt with it in his own unique way. After much deliberation, what evolved was the following speech:

BELKER

You shoulda known my dad, Captain

He wasn’t really himself the last few months, but he used to be something else.

(beat; half-chuckle)

You think I can bite? Once, when I was about five, I saw him get in a fight with this guy who’s about the size of a mack truck. And my dad, he was a little guy like me, he took a bite on that hairball’s arm and held on for life. . . .

Guy kept shaking his arm up and down

and my dad was going up and down right with him. . . .

(beat)

That little guy was tough.

(beat; a bit choked)

I’m gonna miss him a lot.

What we concluded was that all the sappy speeches in the world would never have the power of the image of Belker as a kid, watching his father take a plug out of some “hairball’s” arm.

This is just one example, but it is this approach that is used every time we write any of the characters (fourteen regulars and an infinite number of outsiders). This keeps all of them well-defined and clearly drawn, and always acting and speaking as only that character would.

Another thing that makes *Hill Street* so real is the constant juxtaposition of the mundane and the dramatic. Just as in real life, there is never a drum roll before something happens. No ominous music, no strange camera angles. The best example of this technique was the pilot episode: Officers Hill and Renko are investigating a domestic disturbance and their car is stolen. They wander down the street looking for a pay phone, walk into a building in hopes of finding one, happen upon a group of junkies making a drug deal and get blown away. It all happens in the blink of an eye, just as it would in real life. (The only thing unrealistic about it was that they managed to survive; but even the most realistic of television shows must have regular characters.)

The opening segment of every show, which is referred to as “Roll Call,” is in itself a microcosm of the entire show, as far as the juxtaposition goes. It is messy, noisy and chaotic, with Esterhaus trying to impose some sort of order. The roll call items include the insipidly mundane as well as matters of life and death. And no matter how trivial the day’s items might be, Esterhaus always dismisses the officers with “Let’s be careful out there,” an ever-present reminder of the potential for violence in any situation.

I mention chaos in passing, but its importance in the undercurrent of the show cannot be stressed enough. It is a chaos that cannot be controlled, but merely negotiated on a day to day level. As Bochco puts it, “Captain Furillo understands that he’s not going to solve crime on the hill. He negotiates survival.” There are no easy answers to the problems on the hill, and since there are no easy answers, none are provided. Seldom is a story paid off by any kind of answer or solution, unless it is very obviously a temporary one. At best, perhaps the characters gain some new insight. All of which is as it should be. If the groundlings suddenly unlocked the secrets of the universe, then they’d no longer be the groundlings, and *Hill Street Blues* would be just another cop show.



THE HEAVY BURDEN OF DEFENSE SPENDING  
ON THE ECONOMIES OF THE USSR  
AND THE U. S. MAKES ARMS CONTROL  
A REALISTIC OBJECTIVE

# SEEING RED ON ARMS CONTROL The View From Moscow

By Morris McCain

**W**e'll never build communism as long as there's an army." That, according to my friend in Leningrad, was what he had heard from his mother, the wife of a Soviet army doctor. Her sentiments related, I feel sure, to communism with a small "c," the communism of Marx and Engels, characterized by a sharing of power in society, by what they called the "social ownership" of the things society uses to produce. That vision of ultimate democracy affords an extraordinary contrast with the relationships in an army, where the sergeant has nearly boundless power over his recruits and the officer nearly absolute control over the sergeant. Later that year (1975) my Leningrad friend would be

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inducted into the Soviet army, where he, like most young males in his country, would serve a compulsory two-year stint.

The Communism of the USSR is a far cry from that of Marx and Engels, and I doubt whether the Soviet leadership would share the view of my friend's mother. For them Communism is a hierarchical relationship with the vanguard party at the top of a pyramid of power, various technical elites on the middle rungs, and the average citizen at the bottom, the target of control techniques widely understood in this country. The army, or rather a military consisting of several services, is an essential instrument of control by the Communist Party within its own country. It is one of the most powerful interest groups in Soviet politics, maintaining its own representatives on the party's Central Committee, and influencing the decisions taken by the party leadership itself. Why, then, I am often asked, would that leadership have an interest in arms control?

That they do have such an interest is easily demonstrated by a series of agreements reached by the United States and the Soviet Union over the past twenty years and so far observed by both sides. The number of Soviet strategic missiles is no greater now than it was in 1972, when SALT I was ratified; and the number of warheads on those missiles is still consistent with the further limits agreed to seven years later in SALT II. What do the Soviets gain from those agreements? What, from the standpoint of Moscow, is the point of arms control?

The history of strategic arms limitations begins in the late 1950s, when the radioactive effects of nuclear weapons testing became known worldwide. After a number of false starts, Great Britain, the U.S., the USSR, and several other countries decided in 1963 to prohibit all but underground nuclear explosions. That treaty said nothing about nuclear delivery vehicles — the missiles and bombers used to deliver nuclear



warheads to their targets — in which an unrestrained competition between the two superpowers continued throughout the 1960s. By the end of the decade, however, Soviet missile totals were approaching those of the United States, ending a long and embarrassing period of strategic inferiority on the part of a superpower which claimed equality of status in international affairs. It was at that point that the leadership in Moscow showed its first willingness to limit the arms race.

In 1967, at the East-West summit meeting in Glassboro, New Jersey, the Johnson administration approached Soviet premier Alexei Kosygin about the chances for negotiations on "means of limiting the arms race in offensive and defensive nuclear missiles." In particular, our government wanted to know whether the Soviet Union would agree to forego anti-ballistic missile systems (now called ballistic missile defense), which could reduce the threat to a country's cities and thereby undermine the opponent's capacity to retaliate if struck first. Initially the destabilizing effects of ballistic missile defense were lost on Kosygin, who is said to have responded: "How can you expect me to tell the Russian people they can't defend themselves against your rockets?" The Soviet premier countered that it made more sense to limit "offensive" nuclear weapons, a term which had then, as it has today, no easily discernible meaning.

By the end of 1969, when the first strategic arms limitation talks between our two countries got off the ground, the position of the Soviet delegation was already more flexible, and by 1970 they were enthusiastically behind an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) treaty. We may never know with certainty how the leadership in the Kremlin came to the view that it need not protect its cities against American rockets. The strategic logic is simple: either both sides would have ballistic missile defense or neither would. The U. S. could not be persuaded to leave its territory vulnerable to attack unless the Soviets did also. Furthermore, although the USSR had a head start in testing ABM systems, the greater technical capabilities of American science made it likely that ours would eventually be superior. Whatever their thinking, the Soviets decided in favor of arms control and against a "defensive" arms race. By the mid-1970's, the

superpowers had agreed to limit ABM interceptors to one hundred on each side.

Hesitation and reversal were evident, too, in Moscow's position on "offensive" limits — possible restrictions on the numbers of land-based and submarine-launched missiles (ICBMs and SLBMs) and intercontinental bombers, with which each superpower could deliver nuclear weapons against the territory of the other. By 1970, the asymmetry in force postures which still plagues East-West negotiations was already emerging.

***"Limits to the arms race thus came to seem desirable to some, though not all, within the Soviet leadership as a way of constraining the growth of their own military establishment. Detente had the additional benefit of improved relations with the United States and western Europe, meaning expanded trade in the high-technology goods required by Moscow for continued growth in the Soviet economy. . ."***

The USSR had pulled ahead of the U.S. in ICBM totals, while lagging in its strategic submarine and bomber forces. The Moscow leadership, only recently brought under Leonid Brezhnev's control may have been divided as to the merits of continuing a race in which they might soon hope to pull ahead *versus* quitting and declaring a tie.

Ultimately Brezhnev decided the issue, making detente with the West, and therefore arms control, the cornerstone of his foreign policy from 1971 onward. As John Newhouse puts it in *Cold Dawn*, a detailed account of the SALT I negotiations: "Within his constituency, Brezhnev's prestige was perhaps no less involved than Nixon's." Elements of the Soviet military were opposed to arms control, which would slow the expansion of their bureaucratic empires within the government of the USSR. Allied with Brezhnev was Foreign Minister (then as now) Gromyko, who had delivered

a speech to the Supreme Soviet in 1969, aimed, to quote Newhouse again, "as much at those opposing SALT on his own side as at Washington. He described the arms race as folly. Governments, he said in effect, unless they can control these complex high-speed instruments of destruction, risk becoming victimized by them and by events."

Limits to the arms race thus came to seem desirable to some, though not all, within the Soviet leadership as a way of constraining the growth of their own military establishment. Detente had the additional benefit of improved relations with the United States and western Europe, meaning expanded trade in the high-technology goods required by Moscow for continued growth in the Soviet economy. They could export their own energy resources in exchange for the computers, agricultural machinery, and energy-extraction equipment produced with so much greater success in the West.

These were the considerations on the Soviet side which led to the SALT I agreement in 1972. In the negotiations that finally limited the numbers of strategic delivery vehicles on both sides the USSR showed considerable flexibility. After more than two years of talks, they agreed to leave out of the treaty two systems in which the U. S. advantage was greatest: the intercontinental bombers on which we have the largest share of our megatonnage and our forward-based bombers in Europe, which can strike Soviet targets despite their shorter flight ranges. In exchange for ignoring American bombers, the Soviets got "unequal ceilings" on land-based and submarine-launched nuclear missiles. Each side was allowed to keep the missiles it had developed or was in the process of deploying by 1972, implying a substantial Soviet superiority in ICBMs and SLBMs. With that bargain the first nail in the coffin of the arms race seemed to have been driven.

Much work remained to be done, however, if the East-West competition in nuclear armaments was to be halted. While SALT I stopped the proliferation of strategic missiles on both sides, it said nothing about the number of warheads each could place on its missiles, and it did nothing to prevent the qualitative improvement of existing delivery vehicles. Earlier single-warhead missiles could be replaced by more accurate missiles with multiple warheads (MIRVs), capable

of doing several times as much damage. The military on both sides lost no time in exploiting these loopholes in the treaty. Moscow moved quickly to MIRV its land-based missiles, while Washington built more accurate, multiple-warhead missiles for its submarine fleet. Before the 1970's were over, each side had several thousand nuclear warheads aimed at the territory of the other.

What, then, had become of the SALT process? The assumption is sometimes made, with little justification that I can see, that the Soviet leadership had lost interest in arms control. The 1972 agreements were predicated on continued negotiations to constrain the arms race in additional ways, leading to reductions, not growth, in the nuclear arsenals of the two superpowers. In fact, while the ABM limits were of indefinite duration, the rest of the treaty was set to run out in 1977, when further, stricter limitations were expected to be in effect. That it took seven years to get to SALT II, a treaty still unratified by the United States, was more a result of events in the West than of hesitation in Moscow.

The unequal ceilings of SALT I generated opposition to arms control in the United States, where personnel changes in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency brought into the process advisers more skeptical of Soviet motives. While Brezhnev's prolonged tenure at the head of the Communist Party gave continuity to Soviet positions, one administration succeeded another in Washington. Nixon left office in 1974 and Ford departed in early 1977. From the standpoint of Moscow, we were proving to be "an unreliable negotiating partner," as opponents of arms control in the Soviet military pointedly remarked. Moscow's preference for a smooth succession of agreements, each building on the ones before it by incremental additions to arms limitations, was thwarted by proposals from new American Presidents to start from scratch every few years. So it was that Carter's suggestion early in 1977 for radical reductions in the nuclear arsenals on both sides met with outright rejection.

In the end the provisions of SALT II had to be constructed on the basis of the Vladivostok Accords, reached informally between Brezhnev and Ford five years earlier. Still Moscow's insistence on continuity did not rule out flexibility altogether. This time bombers and cruise missiles were brought into the treaty, while Ameri-



*Meeting in Williamsburg earlier this year, the leaders of the western world reaffirmed their intention of placing American cruise missiles in Europe, a topic of intense negotiation between the United States and the Soviet Union. (Colonial Williamsburg photo)*

can demands were accommodated by equal totals of delivery vehicles. The agreements made provisions for one new form of ICBM — in our case, the MX — and would have required a small but potentially significant reduction in the number of Soviet strategic missiles. Most important, the U. S. and the USSR for the first time placed ceilings, albeit very high ones, on the warhead totals which had grown so rapidly in the 1970s.

Leonid Brezhnev was to face a series of setbacks to arms control and detente in his last three years in office. Within a few months of the signing ceremonies, SALT II lay moribund in the Senate, while President Carter unveiled plans for increased military spending. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the end of 1979 gave ammunition to the opponents of the treaty and helped to secure the election of Ronald Reagan ten months later. We still have no firm idea what response policy makers in the USSR expected their actions in Afghanistan to evoke in the West. The Soviets have argued from the start that arms control has its own merit and should not fall victim to either side's disapproval of the international behavior of the other. President Nixon was received in Moscow to sign SALT I at the height of U. S. military action in Vietnam, just as we were bombing Hanoi and mining Haiphong harbor. In the West, on the other hand, nuclear arms control is repeatedly "linked" to Soviet aggression in Eastern Europe, south Asia, and Africa. At least three years and probably more have been lost

since 1967, as Washington put negotiations on ice to punish the Soviets for other aspects of their foreign policy.

The more consistent support for arms control on the part of the Soviet leadership may be explained in part by economic considerations. Over the course of Brezhnev's long tenure, the General Secretary spoke more and more plainly about the burden placed by the arms race on living standards in the USSR. Near the start of SALT negotiations he commented in a speech to the Communist Party Congress that "the favorable outcome of these talks would make it possible to avoid another round in the missile arms race and to free substantial resources for constructive purposes." Throughout Brezhnev's term in office, Soviet military spending increased steadily at a rate of about 4.5% a year — a growth rate that became more difficult to sustain as overall growth in the economy declined. By late 1981, the party had to announce publicly that it was cutting still further an already reduced rate of investment in civilian construction. And while some in the Soviet military are advocating swift "countermeasures" to compensate for the present military buildup in the U. S., the party leadership counsels patience and negotiation, hoping that "moderate" elements in Washington will prevail.

As in the United States, so also in the Soviet Union the development of increasingly sophisticated delivery systems for nuclear weapons — like the mobile SS-20 or the radar-evading

Stealth bomber — drains skills and supplies from the high technology sectors of the civilian economy. Year by year both nations are being outdistanced by technical advances in countries like Germany and Japan, which devote fewer of their resources to military competition. If the rest of this decade is to witness another round in the arms race, it will cost the Soviets, as well as the United States, very dearly.

With the death of Leonid Brezhnev last November, a new and more vigorous leadership has taken charge in Moscow. Although his control over

Soviet politics is still open to challenge within the leadership of the Communist party, Yuri Andropov has already been able to advance his side's negotiating position somewhat closer to the American stance. By offering to count warheads as well as missiles in NATO and Warsaw Pact nuclear forces in Europe, he has replaced the initial, disingenuous proposal of the USSR with one more likely to attract American attention. Similarly, with regard to strategic nuclear weapons, he speaks favorably of deeper reductions than the 25% cut suggested by Brezhnev.

But the basic Soviet view of arms control remains unchanged. It may be characterized roughly as follows:

\* Negotiated agreements to limit the growth of nuclear arsenals are preferable to an unrestrained arms race.

\* Future agreements, like those of the 1970s, must preserve what the Soviets see as overall "parity" between the nuclear forces of the two sides. If the USSR is to reduce systems in which it has the advantage, such as ICBMs, a corresponding cut in superior U. S. systems, perhaps bombers and cruise missiles, will have to be made. No treaty will be contemplated if it limits only areas of existing Soviet strength.

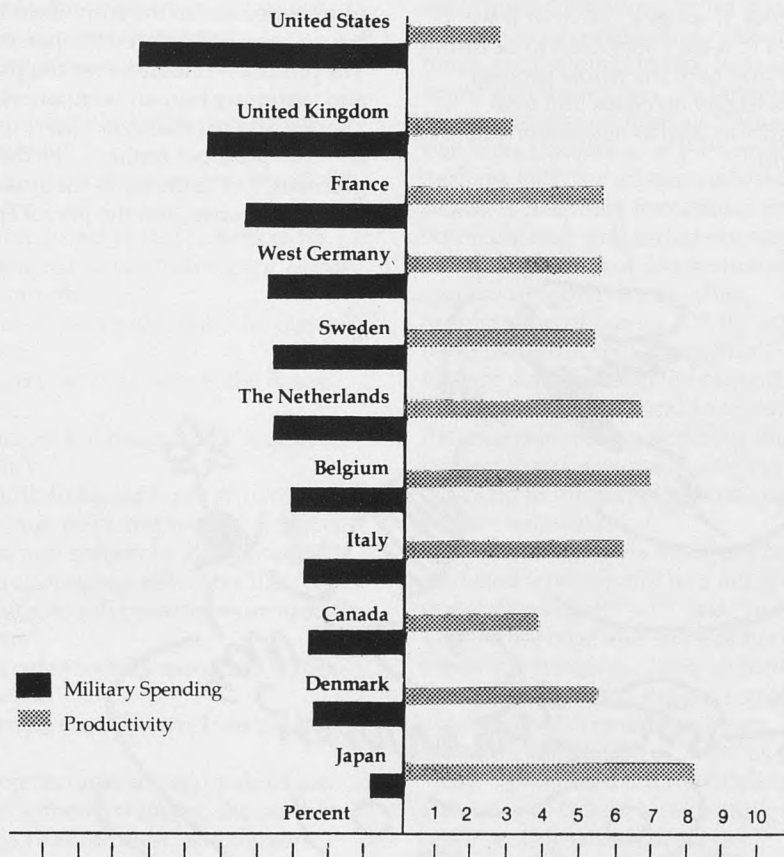
\* With respect to intermediate-range weapons, Soviet commentators use the term "equal security" to describe their goal. This reflects the fact that, while the United States has only one nuclear opponent, the USSR has several. Great Britain, France, and China all have nuclear weapons with which they can strike Soviet territory, many of them scheduled for modernization over the next few years. Any agreement with Washington on intermediate-range nuclear forces will — overtly or implicitly — have to take into account the capabilities of these countries, leaving Moscow with some equivalent.

\* The Soviet preference for incrementalism in arms control, building new limitations on the basis of those in previous treaties, is likely to continue. If we are serious about arms control, our negotiators will have to remember that Soviet positions are the result of internal bargaining among political and military leaders in the USSR. It is easier for a Soviet leader to "sell" a treaty to his own bureaucratic constituents if it can be depicted as an adjustment to one they have accepted earlier, with new Soviet restraints matched by important reductions in the perceived threat from the West.

With a new leadership in the Kremlin, a broader variety of outcomes in arms control may be possible. Andropov seems for the moment to have support within the military and intelligence services which he could swing behind nuclear arms reductions, if the terms were favorable enough to Soviet interests. Over the next year or so, much will depend on the strength of the coalition he has formed in Moscow and on the willingness of the Reagan administration to propose more realistic alternatives at the Geneva talks.

### Military Spending as a Share of Gross Domestic Product vs. Growth in Output Per Hour in Manufacturing (Productivity)

(Average Percent, 1960-1979)



Source: *The Council on Economic Priorities, "The Costs and Consequences of Reagan's Military Buildup," 1982.*

IT IS NOW POSSIBLE TO STUDY HUMOR WITHOUT BECOMING  
TOTALLY DEPRESSED

# THE LIGHTER SIDE OF HUMOR

By Peter Derks

"I'd like a laugh track around my life.  
I'd like a funny theme introducing my  
life." "Landscape of the Body,"  
by John Guare.

**G**reat minds from Plato to Norman Lear have written seriously about humor. In spite of the popular belief that humor is a

lot of fun, the general conclusions on humor have been depressing. When we laugh, so the theories go, we are merely displacing aggression into a socially acceptable form of expression.

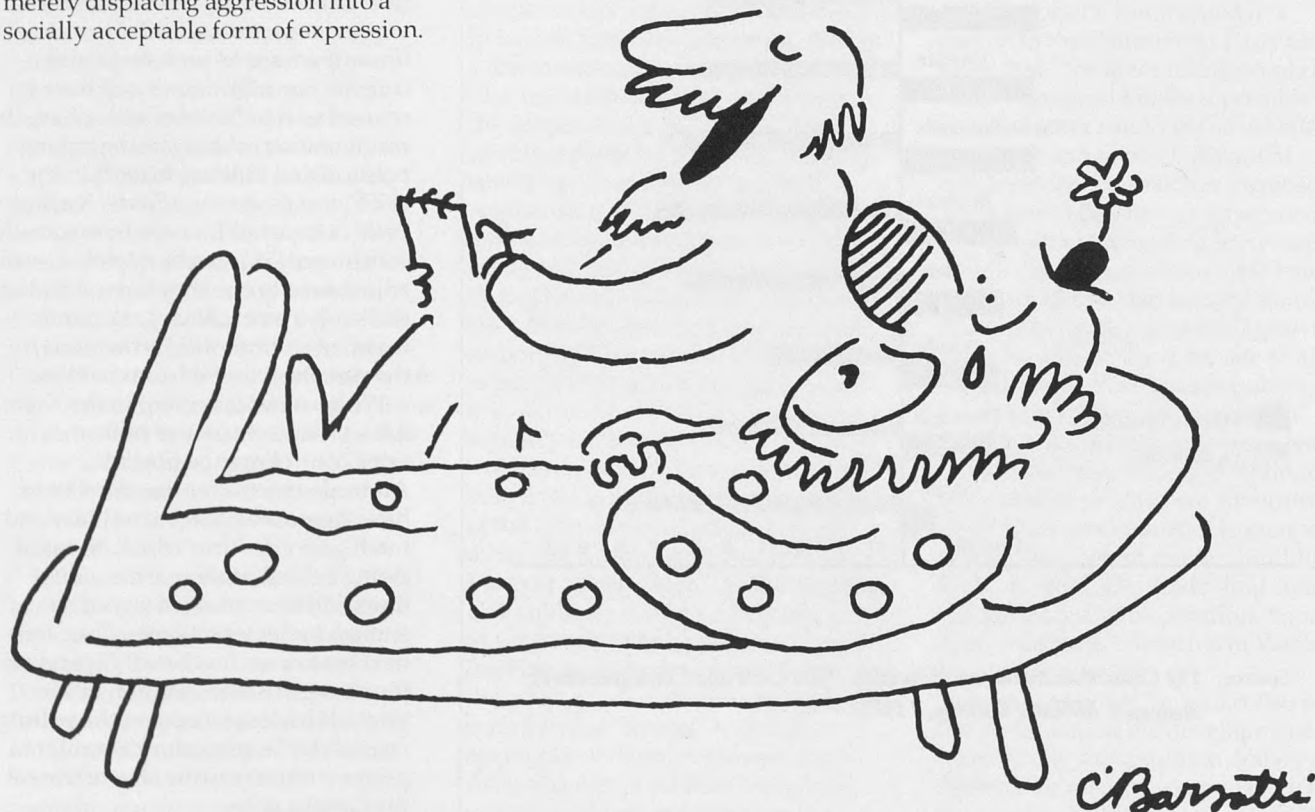
The most succinct statement of this view comes from Thomas Hobbes. Laughter, he says in *Leviathan*, is an expression of "sudden glory" and we should be ashamed of ourselves for requiring deformity in others to obtain amusement for ourselves.

Humor doesn't seem very funny when you think about it that way. When we laugh it is supposed to be because we see ourselves to be quickly and unexpectedly superior. Henri Bergson points out that such amusing situations are "mechanical" and at least makes our laughter an expression of freedom as well as superiority. Nevertheless, in laughter there is criticism. Our own language tells us we are "laughing at" and "making fun" of someone else.

No wonder taking humor seriously can be depressing. If the analysis is pushed far enough there will be someone or something that is the "butt." Furthermore, the theories say, incongruity and surprise are at the foundation of humor. A sudden, unexpected change is necessary for laughter. If we ease into it or if we expect it, it isn't supposed to be funny. If we stop here the whole process seems to rely on chaos and irrationality as well as aggression and hostility.

Recently, however, theorists and researchers have begun to find some good in humor. It is now possible to study humor without being totally depressed. First of all, humor is not mindless, but requires a fair amount of abstraction and creativity both for its production and its appreciation. In fact, Arthur Koestler in *The Act of Creation* makes a strong case for putting the Jester right along side the Artist and the Scientist in a triptych of creativity. All three try to produce novelty. The invention, by definition, is something new. The joke, by necessity, hasn't been heard before. Nevertheless, the invention has to work. The work of art has to be within somebody's bounds of comprehension. The joke, research shows, has to be somewhat predictable. Various experiments have demonstrated a mild correlation between the predictability of a punch line and its funniness.

For example: once upon a time there was a plumber and a parrot. The plumber comes to the front door to the house occupied only by the parrot. The plumber, unable to see the parrot and assuming human occupancy, knocks. The parrot says, "Awk, who is it?" The plumber replies, "It's the plumber. I've come to fix the sink." There is a pause, and the parrot speaks



again, "Awk, who is it?" The plumber, hoping to overcome stupidity with volume, shouts, "It's the plumber. I've come to fix the sink." A pause and with no change in intensity or inflection, the parrot, parrot-like, says, "Awk, who is it?" The plumber, exasperated, screams at the top of his voice, "It's the plumber. I've come to fix the sink." This time, however, seized by the intensity of his emotion, he loses, as well as his grip, his breath and his consciousness. At this moment the woman of the house returns and, seeing a stranger passed out on her front door step, cries, "Awk, who is it?" and the parrot responds, "It's the plumber. He's come to fix the sink."

Even if you haven't heard this simple joke already, you could predict where it is going quite easily. If it didn't go there, however, it wouldn't be funny at all.

A more direct example of this is found in a study by Ronald Hoppe on strings of words generated by random processes. In one experiment he started with a collection of real sentences. Some of them were:

"Gadgets simplify work around the house."

"Accidents kill motorists on the highways."

"Trains carry passengers across the country."

From the set of real sentences he constructed random strings of words. For example:

"Passengers gadgets on the highway around."

"Carry work accidents the house trains."

"Across kill the country motorists simplify."

Maintaining sentence structure and randomly inserting specific subjects, verbs, and objects he also generated some anomalous sentences like:

"Gadgets kill passengers around the country."

"Accidents carry motorists across the house."

"Trains simplify work on the highway."

Subjects rated the anomalous sentences somewhat funny, the random strings next funniest, and the sen-

tences least funny. Of course, as can be seen here, the anomalous sentences were far from hilarious and the real sentences were seen as occasionally slightly funny. Nevertheless, it appears that conformity and chaos should both be avoided in the production of humor.

Following these guidelines a computer can be instructed to produce humor. There is a rumor that an MIT program, following this principle, writes over half the situation comedies on T. V. Of course the computer doesn't "get the jokes" yet, but we're working on it.

More important, the human comedian does tread a fairly narrow path between the bizarre and the banal in his quest to entertain. The task does require more than sheer idiocy. At least part of this creativity must go to conceal the aggressive tendency of the joke and make it socially acceptable. This concealment is so effective that even the joker is probably unaware of it. Therefore, the whole process of joking attracted Sigmund Freud, the midwife of the unconscious, almost as much as dreaming. In fact, he is supposed to have written *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* at the same time; perhaps with the manuscripts side by side. It is charming to consider Freud bouncing back and forth between the heavy discussion of dream analysis and the supportive, but jollier, examination of humor. On the one hand there was the "traumwerk" (dream work) and on the other the "witzwerk" (joke work) to transform the unacceptable unconscious into the presentable conscious. Surely even he chuckled to himself every time he wrote "witzwerk."

Unfortunately, his little joke has confused what should be a fairly clear understanding of "wit" and "humor." Thanks to Freud and some of his less creative translators, "wit," which should be related to intellect, got all entangled with emotions. James Strachy's translation of "wit" as "joke" has helped but the intellectual and creative side of humor still gets less attention than it deserves.

Consequently, Freud's theory of humor is certainly the most depressing of all, fraught with sex, aggression and the escape from repression. He admits to "innocent" humor, word play and the like, but still finds it less funny than material not so socially acceptable.

Consider the following joke. It is an expurgated version of a "dirty" joke and is included, once again, for illustration and not for entertainment. (Gershon Legman in the preface to his two volume work on dirty jokes informs the reader that the jokes are in italics and the commentary in standard print. He goes on to urge that at least some readers read about the jokes and the commentary. He realizes that some will simply read the jokes, but fervently hopes that no one will simply read the commentary.)

This is the one about the traveling salesman and the farmer's *three* daughters. The traveling salesman loses his way, needs a place to spend the night, sees a farmhouse, etc., etc. In this particular farmhouse, as well as three daughters, the farmer is a woman. The woman tells the traveling salesman he can spend the night, but, as they will all sleep in the same room, he should not get any ideas about the girls as she, the farmer, keeps her shotgun right by the bed. Night falls, all go to bed and more or less to sleep. The first girl begins to talk in her sleep. "ZZZ (gentle and seductive, more a sigh than a snore) come on over and love me." The traveling salesman considers complying but is deterred by the thought of the shotgun. Just then the farmer mutters in her sleep. "ZZZ (less gentle and certainly not seductive) my gun's unloaded." So the traveling salesman obliges the first daughter. Just as he is crawling back to bed, the second daughter murmurs, "ZZZ, come on over and love me." The farmer-mother again assures, "ZZZ, my gun's unloaded." Once again the traveling salesman fulfills his destiny. On his return to bed the third daughter enters her sleepy plea, "ZZZ, COME on over and love me." The farmer adds her line, "ZZZ, my gun's unloaded." Although approaching exhaustion, the salesman sees this as an opportunity not to be missed, stumbles to the bed of the third daughter, performs, and stumbles back. Silence falls, only to be broken in a moment by the mother, "ZZZ, come on over and love me." To which the salesman responded "ZZZ, my gun's unloaded."

The form of this joke is very similar to the one about the plumber and the parrot. There is the three step build-up: one to catch attention, two to build expectation, three to get ready, and four to go. Then there is the transportation of a line; simple, predictable,

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but fraught with meaning. The subject matter and the meaning, however, are very different. The traveling salesman story is full of sex and implied incest, impotence and implied death, hostility toward mother-in-laws, and many other tension arousing perversions. The aggression in the parrot story is quite bland by comparison. Clearly the plumber is revived, fixes the sink and all live happily ever after.

Now, Freud notwithstanding, some people find the relatively innocent story funnier than its sexy counterpart. In fact, one of the most obvious things about humor, and one of the most troubling to theorists, is that different jokes can appeal to different people. This fact has not gone unnoticed by constructors of personality tests. Humor, taken seriously by no one, should be an unguarded vantage for observing a person's inner nature.

Largely unhampered by theory, the dimensions uncovered by such tests might give a purer representation of the nature of humor. Perhaps a happier description of humor is available from the jolly empiricists than is the case for the dour theoreticians. Unfortunately, the data do not bear out this wish.

Certainly the most extensive effort along this line is the work of Raymond Cattell and his group at the University of Illinois. His Institute for Personality and Ability Testing has generated numerous instruments carefully refined on thousands of subjects to assess the many facets of human nature. One such test, developed with D. L. Tollefson, is the IPAT Humor test, an instrument to get at personality through sense of humor. The 338 jokes that make up the two forms of the test sort people into twenty six overlapping categories. As the theories considered thus far would suggest

these categories represent rather negative modes of human intercourse. There are such things as "Debonair Sexuality" balanced against "Anxious Considerateness." Flirtatious Playfulness" is set opposite "Gruesomeness." "Anxious Concern" is weighted against "Evasion of Responsibility." Hidden away amidst all these distressing behavior patterns is one relatively pleasant trait, "Good-natured play." Even this hopeful humor type is on the other end of a continuum with "Dry wit."

So the negative examples of humor do seem to outnumber the positive from this perspective as well. This piece of information is unfortunately reminiscent of Max Eastman's criticism of humor theorists who rely on superiority to account for humor. "If they are going to identify humorous laughter with egotistical cruelty, they must prove that there is *more* egotism and *more* cruelty in humorous laughter than in the general behavior of man, and that I confidently challenge them to prove." (This is from p. 32 of *Enjoyment of Laughter* written in 1936 and still an excellent, thought-provoking piece of work. Someone, probably H. L. Mencken, reviewed it as Eastman getting humor down and breaking its arm.) The disappointing side of Eastman's contention, then, is the absence of altruistic behavior in the general behavior of man.

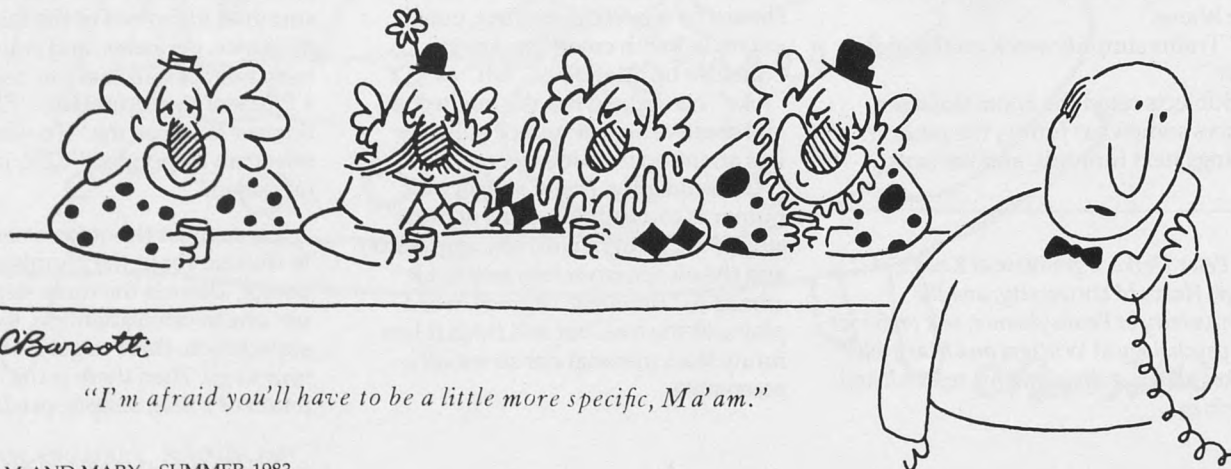
Ofra and Baruch Nevo, working out of that hot bed of humor Haifa U. in Israel, have supplied some interesting evidence on this in an article titled "What do you do when asked to answer humorously." They report what happens when male high school

students are shown pictures of frustrating situations, i.e. getting splashed with mud by a passing car, and asked to respond "as if you were present in the situation" and also to give another response "as humorously and as funnily as you can."

The students' responses in the humorous condition were highly aggressive, the typical response was one of "medium extrapunitive aggression" which consisted of shouting an insulting name at the driver of the car. The "non-humorous" instructions most frequently resulted in "low extrapunitive aggression." This kind of response contained no dirty words and a request like, "Next time, don't do it." The difference is clearest in the "extreme aggression" response category which was the "threat of physical harm, murder, or vengeance." Of the 250 participants, 120 used such comments more often when trying to be funny. Only twelve individuals used such comments more often when they were instructed to be ordinary.

There is, however, another side to these data. If all the aggressive categories are combined, regardless of intensity, we find that 83% of all responses were aggressive in the humorous condition. For the "normal" condition the proportion of aggressive responses was 73%, not such a dramatic difference. Apparently the usual response to frustration is aggression, (a finding well known in Psychology) and to be funny we intensify that response to incongruous proportions. The accuracy of Eastman's hypothesis depends on whether the "more" refers to intensity or frequency of aggression.

(Cartoons are from "Kings Don't Carry Money" published by Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, \$8.95. They are reprinted by permission of the author, cartoonist Charles Barsotti, whose drawings of kings, clowns, struggling artists, and small dogs have been cheering readers of The New Yorker for years.)



CBarsotti

"I'm afraid you'll have to be a little more specific, Ma'am."

Some additional support to this parallel between the nature of humor and real life comes from Kay Phillips' M.A. thesis done at William and Mary in 1980. She sent out a questionnaire to families of students to find out how they communicated among themselves. Since humor is an important part of interpersonal relations, she also asked them about their family jokes and laughter. She found that the families reported differences in the amount they laughed together but this general difference had little to do with the nature of their interfamily communication. The families that laughed frequently, however, did not necessarily laugh at the same things and that difference did correlate with communication style. For example, families that reported frequent practical joking as a source of humor also indicated they had strong individual opinions and seldom tried to see the point of view of others. On the other hand, families that reported "laughing together a lot" also reported feeling close and trusting each other.

Given this affiliative aspect of humor, contemporary research seems to be documenting an encouraging trend. A very clear phenomenon in humor has been a difference in the way men and women respond. Freud practically denied women any sense of humor and, indeed, subsequent research tended to bear him out. Females found relatively innocent nonsense (the plumber and the parrot) mildly amusing but found nothing funny in aggressive, sexual humor (the traveling salesman and the farmer's daughters). Males were the other way around except that sex and aggression were, generally speaking, *very* amusing. Of course most of these "socially unacceptable" jokes were made up by men for men frequently against women.

Two Welch psychologists, Anthony Chapman and Nicholas Gadfield, managed to find some relatively pro-female sexual cartoons. Women rated these as more funny while men, no surprise, found them relatively less so. Even more encouraging, there is a tendency over the past ten years, indicated by Paul McGhee in his excellent summary of humor research, *The Origins of Humor*, and occurring at such diverse institutions as Western Illinois University and the College of William and Mary, for simple sex differences in humor appreciation to disappear. Maybe

"feeling close" and "trusting" can be taken beyond the happy family.

A more direct example of affiliative laughter comes from a study by Herb Lefcourt, Carl Sardoni, and Carol Simon. Lefcourt has devoted much of his research career to the study of people who believe they control their own destiny compared with people who believe they are victims of circumstances. In other words, how does it affect your behavior if you think your "locus of control" is internal as opposed to external?

One difference is in how much you laugh. When asked to free associate to a list of words the "victims" apparently saw this as just one more indignity to be suffered and participated with a relatively straight face. The "masters of their fate," however, were quite jolly and laughed frequently at the beginning of the study. Furthermore, the laughter had a "quality of warmth," the eyes were "wide open," the "teeth visible," and there was a "body lean toward (the) experimenter." The laughter of these self confident individuals was social and affiliative.

As the list of words continued the experimenters added double entendres; words with progressively more obvious sexual interpretations. The aim was to try to make the experimental situation into a kind of joke. The last list of items for association reads like an index to the *Joys of Sex*. At this point, the "external locus of control" people did laugh a little. It was mostly "tension relief," however, with a "strained smile," a "quizzical facial expression," "fidgetiness," and so forth.

On the dirty part of the list those with a self image of personal control laughed even more. Some of their laughter was social and more was tension relief. The majority of their laughter, however, was with "challenging looks — intense with narrowed eyes" and a "pleased or prideful look." In short, they were expressing superiority in their laughter.

There are frequent occasions, then, for a kind of benign aggression to appear in humor. There are also times, though, when laughter is intended to be friendly. A very pure example of a friendly laugh can be found in a study conducted in the Netherlands by Bert Raven and Jan Rietsma.

Their main interest was in things that influence the relation between an individual member and a group. In

this case it was clarity of the group goal. In other words, if people know what is going on will they be happier to be part of the activity?

To check the answer to this question, the experimenters brought individual participants into a room with a speaker, a pair of scissors, and a stack of cardboard. On each piece of cardboard, geometric figures were printed; triangles, parallelograms, and so forth. The participants were told that they were to cut out these forms for use by three other students. The voices of the other group members could be heard over the speaker but the cutter of forms had no microphone. The clarity of the goal was manipulated by telling half the cutters that the pieces would be used to fulfill a group goal of "building houses" as opposed to the other half learning only that they were building "certain things." What the students didn't know until the end of the experiment was that the voices from the speakers were on tape and were essentially the same for everyone.

As the session went on the cutters were put in conflict as to what figures to cut. Those who knew that the goal was to build houses were more cooperative than those that didn't. Furthermore, they liked the task and their fellow "group members" better. The most interesting observation as far as humor is concerned, however, came about almost by accident. In recording the tape, one of the actors emitted a "boer." "Boer" means loud belch in Dutch and is "often heard at jovial male student parties," at least in Holland. The "builders" on the tape all laughed enthusiastically. The cutters in the condition where they didn't know what was going on anyway were most likely to make no response to all this levity. In the situation where the cutter was in on building the house, three out of four chuckled along with their recorded friends.

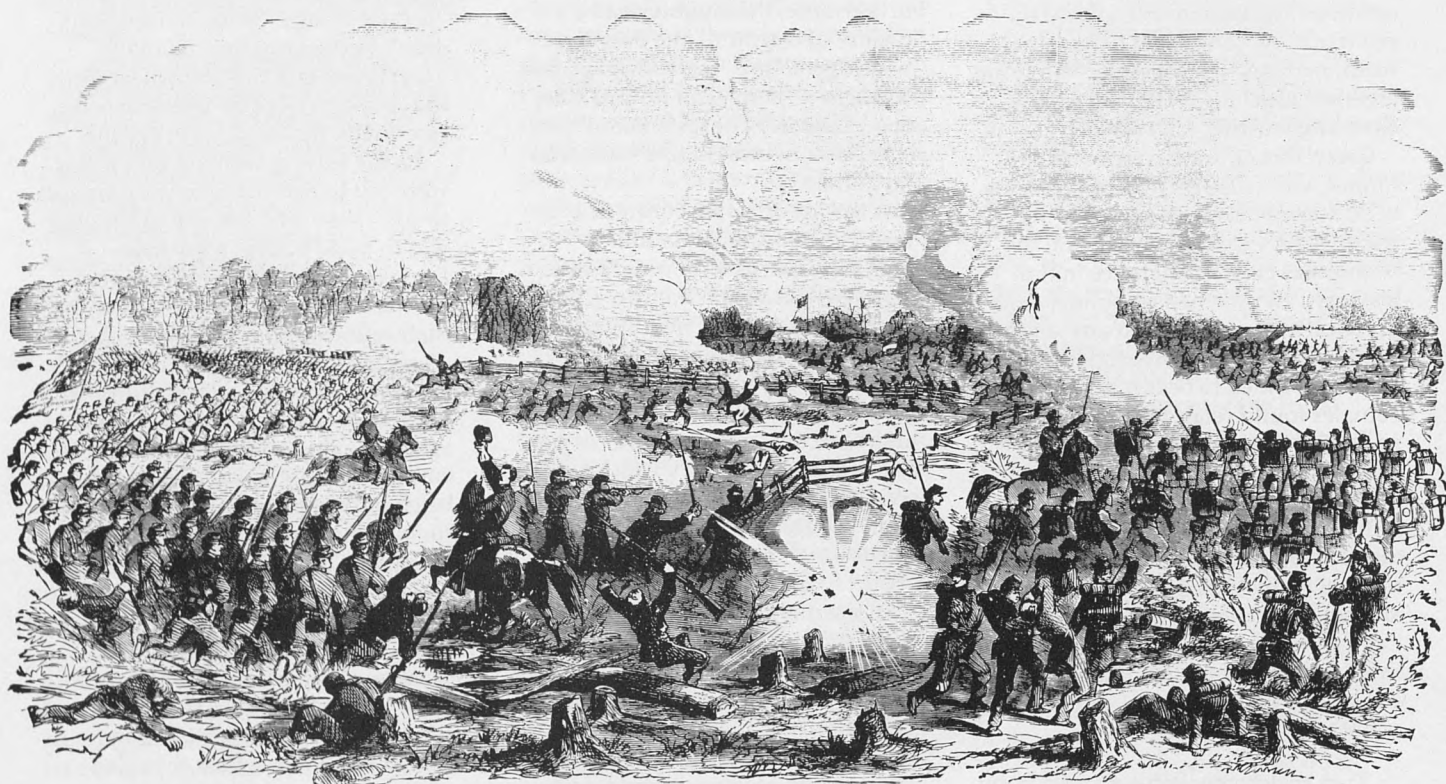
Here again there is a positive, affiliative side to humor. Humor is not just a device for glorification and putting down. It is also an important part of sharing. Even if "laughing with" has not been an important part of theories it does exist. It is certainly no more difficult to analyze a joke for its affiliative than for its aggressive tendencies. Furthermore, a humor model will be more general and more useful if it incorporates these qualities. Fortunately the human race won't have to wait for a complete theory to enjoy humor's bright side.

# THE BATTLE OF WILLIAMSBURG

## “A Most Sanquinary Engagement”

THIS LITTLE REMEMBERED ENCOUNTER  
EARLY IN THE CIVIL WAR PROVIDED SOLDIERS  
WITH LESSONS FOR BIGGER BATTLES TO COME

By Will Molineux '56



*A heroic sketch of the Battle of Williamsburg purportedly drawn by “a soldier on the field” shows Federal troops in the foreground attacking Fort Magruder, on the horizon in the center. An artillery shell from the fort explodes in the midst of men under the command of Gen. Joseph Hooker.*

**T**he bitter, day-long Civil War engagement fought just two miles east of Williamsburg on May 5, 1862, was, as one Union general noted, “a battle fought without a plan.”

It wasn't a staged battle with armies in place.

It was a fight that happened as both armies were on the move — toward

Richmond. The two commanding generals were only briefly in the field; their main attention was on moving men westward — the smaller Confederate force by land, the bulk of the Union army by boat up the York River.

Yet the battle at Williamsburg was a severe one, as of that day perhaps the biggest single battle fought on American soil. Fourteen percent of the men

who took part in the actual fighting were killed or wounded or missing.

It was a battle fought by subordinates, sometimes with commanders acting alone, often hesitantly not knowing the disposition or strength of their opponents and waiting for reinforcements.

It was a day, early in the Civil War, for leaders to learn of exercising command and control. It was a day for



many new soldiers to experience the confusion and exhaustion of combat.

In April 1862 Gen. George B. McClellan brought his Army of the Potomac down the Chesapeake Bay in 100 ships and landed at Fortress Monroe. His 100,000 soldiers dressed in dark blue tunics and light blue trousers were equipped and motivated for action as they started to move up the Peninsula. His was the most formidable military force yet seen in America and he bragged he'd be in Richmond in a matter of days.

A Confederate defense line between Deep Creek and the Poquoson River was quickly abandoned and McClellan's men advanced toward a second line which ran along the Warwick River and across the Peninsula to Yorktown where 16,000 Confederates had dug in and improved Cornwallis' old earthworks.

To meet the Union threat, Gen. Joseph E. Johnston brought 56,500 men of his Army of Northern Virginia to occupy the Yorktown earthworks. He took command on April 17, succeeding the recently promoted Maj. Gen. John B. Magruder who had been in charge of defending the Peninsula. Magruder slipped to fourth in command and led Johnston's first division. Colonel Benjamin Ewell who a year earlier closed William and Mary joined the staff of Johnston, a West Point classmate, as an assistant adjutant.

At Yorktown McClellan drew up 100 Parrot guns and mortars and howitzers to lay siege. The night before he was to open fire, the rainy night of Saturday, May 3, Johnston withdrew his troops under cover of an "uproar of artillery." In his haste, Johnston abandoned some artillery pieces.

The Confederates hurried toward Williamsburg, planting "torpedoes" in the road, the first time anti-personnel mines were used in combat.

Johnston had no intention of stopping to man the Williamsburg defense line and challenge a superior army; he was marching to assist Robert E. Lee form a tighter shield for Richmond. It was a plan he had helped to draft — to draw the enemy inland, to concentrate all available forces at Richmond and to give battle there.

After entering Yorktown on Sunday morning, McClellan ordered two of his corps to follow the Confederates along the Yorktown and Hampton roads and put his second in command, the aging Gen. Edwin Vose Sumner, in charge. A cavalry division under the

command of Gen. George Stoneman was sent ahead to harass the Confederate rear. McClellan remained at Yorktown.

The roads on the Peninsula passed through forests and by occasional farms; most of the old tobacco fields were worn out and had been abandoned to grow over. The few roads were poorly marked; maps were unreliable. The rain and the mud slowed the march of both Confederate and Federal troops. Soldiers slogged through the mud and teamsters strained to free wagons and artillery pieces from deep ruts.



John B. Magruder

Three divisions of Confederate infantry proceeded westward and through Williamsburg. The vanguard passed by Fort Magruder at noon. Their movement was protected by Virginia cavalymen under the command of Gen. James Ewell Brown (Jeb) Stuart.

Late that afternoon, as it was still raining, Stoneman's riders encountered Stuart's men in a blocking position along the Yorktown Road just east of King's Creek and chased them back to the unoccupied Williamsburg defense line.

Johnston, in Williamsburg, heard the noise of the skirmish and, fearing a possible major Union assault before his army could safely cross the Chickahominy River, ordered two brigades from Magruder's division to wheel about and return eastward to man Fort Magruder.

One Confederate soldier later recalled how Williamsburg residents watched awestruck as artillery horses "came thundering down the street at a full gallop" and then "dashed down the hill in a straight line for the redoubt over obstruction of briars, bushes, stones and gullies."

As infantrymen hurriedly followed, women cheered them and handed them food. Some soldiers tossed their knapsacks and bedrolls on front stoops and porches, saying they would claim them later.

Stoneman's men also dashed for the empty fort, but he arrived too late. A division of units from Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Maine and New York under the command of Gen. William Farrar (Baldy) Smith followed and set out in a line in front of the fort. A gun battery was brought up in the wheat field, but the weapons became stuck in the mud; Confederate sharpshooters picked off the artillerymen. Union skirmishers in the woods were unable to advance. Sumner's reconnaissance patrol became lost.

The situation stabilized at dusk. Union soldiers still advancing from Yorktown spent a miserable night. Those who slept, slept in the rain. High ranking officers took shelter in the farmhouse of the Whitaker family near where the roads from Yorktown and Hampton converged.

Many Confederate officers and men were given shelter in Williamsburg. Johnston set up headquarters in the residence of William Vest, a prominent merchant who had fled to Richmond. The Virginians of Gen. George Pickett's "Gamecock" brigade bivouacked behind the college.

Other Confederate units kept on marching westward. Brig. Gen. John Bell Hood's brigade of Texans, the last out of Yorktown, rested only a few hours and were in Barhamsville the next day, the day of the battle. Johnston urged his army on toward New Kent, for he didn't want to be flanked by McClellan's troops sailing up the York and then the Pamunkey River.

During Sunday evening Magruder's troops in Fort Magruder were replaced by two brigades from the division commanded by Johnston's field commander, Gen. James Longstreet. These brigades were from South Carolina, Alabama and Louisiana and one of them was commanded by a former congressman from Virginia, Roger A. Pryor, who had witnessed the bombardment of Fort Sumter.

The Confederates also manned the adjoining redoubts, the ones numbered 5, 4 and 3 to the south and 7, 8 and 9 to the north. The furthest earthworks on both sides were not occupied.

It continued to rain at dawn Monday, May 5, yet Gen. Joseph Hooker, who brought his division up the



Years after the battle Benson J. Lossing sketched Union artillery and supply wagons mired in the Yorktown Road enroute to Williamsburg.

Hampton Road and on line to the left of Smith, found the landscape "picturesque and not a little heightened by the large trees and venerable spires of Williamsburg, two miles distant."

Hooker's brigades, men mostly from New York, Massachusetts and New Jersey, had formed up in a mile-wide front to the southern side of Fort Magruder. At about 7:30 a.m. Hooker, perhaps acting on his own, opened the attack. A "tremendous report (of musket fire) rang through the forest."

Longstreet reinforced his right and occupied redoubts No. 2 and No. 1. He called on brigades commanded by Generals A. P. Hill, Cadmus M. Wilcox and Pickett to come out of Williamsburg and he placed them on line. At 11 a.m. these Confederate units, made up mostly of Virginians, counterattacked Hooker and pushed the Union line back about a mile.

The fighting was fierce. One Confederate soldier said "pandemonium broke loose."

"It seemed to me," he recalled, "as if the brass pieces fairly howled while the roll of the small arms was something indescribable. Ordinarily heavy musketry rises and falls like the sound of the sea, but here it was one deep, incessant, prolonged, deafening roar."

Afterward, someone counted 27 bullet holes in one Virginia regimental flag.

The dead "lay in every direction, like a rail fence thrown down."

Hooker requested reinforcements; the Confederates called for more ammunition. Sumner didn't respond to Hooker's plea; Confederate supply wagons were often mired.

Then, in the early afternoon, at about the time Southern forces were prevailing, Johnston visited Longstreet in the field. Later he

returned to Williamsburg to oversee the continued withdrawal of troops and baggage toward Richmond. He was so pleased, the Charleston Mercury later reported, that he was humming "I bet my money on the bob-tail horse" as he rode off.

Townsppeople, too, ventured out to the battlefield to watch the fighting, holding umbrellas to protect their heads from the rain. Other citizens climbed the Gothic tower of the lunatic asylum to watch the action through a telescope. A few stray artillery shells landed on the courthouse green and one damaged the weather-board of a house on Woodpecker (York) Street.

The battleline fluctuated back and forth for hours. A Boston newspaper correspondent, Charles Carleton Coffin, later wrote:

"The contest was in the edge of the forest, over fallen trees, where men

fell headlong in their endeavors to take new positions. The rain was falling, the ground was miry. The men were worn and weary; but they fought on, minding not hunger or thirst or exhaustion, calling for ammunition."

Early in the afternoon — whether coordinated by design or coincidence, it isn't known — the Federals probed the two mill pond crossings at their extreme flanks. A cavalry unit galloped up Quarterpath Road, but was stopped by the contingent of Confederates in redoubt No. 1. And there the horsemen waited for reinforcements which never came, spooked by the smaller force in the earthwork overlooking the road.

At the far other end of the line, at Cub Dam Creek, runaway slaves reported to Smith that the causeway was unprotected. Smith dispatched a Federal brigade under the command of Brig. Gen. Winfield S. Hancock to investigate. He seized redoubt No. 14.

A young cavalry lieutenant, George A. Custer, then led a rapid advance to

redoubt No. 11 and Hancock moved his artillery into position to fire on the Confederate-held redoubt No. 9 and Fort Magruder, about a mile away.

Hancock hesitated to advance down Queen's Creek Road which ran inside the Confederate defense line toward Fort Magruder and called on Sumner for reinforcement. Hancock, like Hooker, waited hours in vain for relief.

By mid-afternoon, just at Hooker's battle-worn men were about to collapse, "the impetuous" Gen. Phillip Kearney, whose division of New York and Michigan soldiers was the last to leave Yorktown, came down Yorktown Road in a rush and, apparently without orders from Sumner, replaced Hooker's division on line.

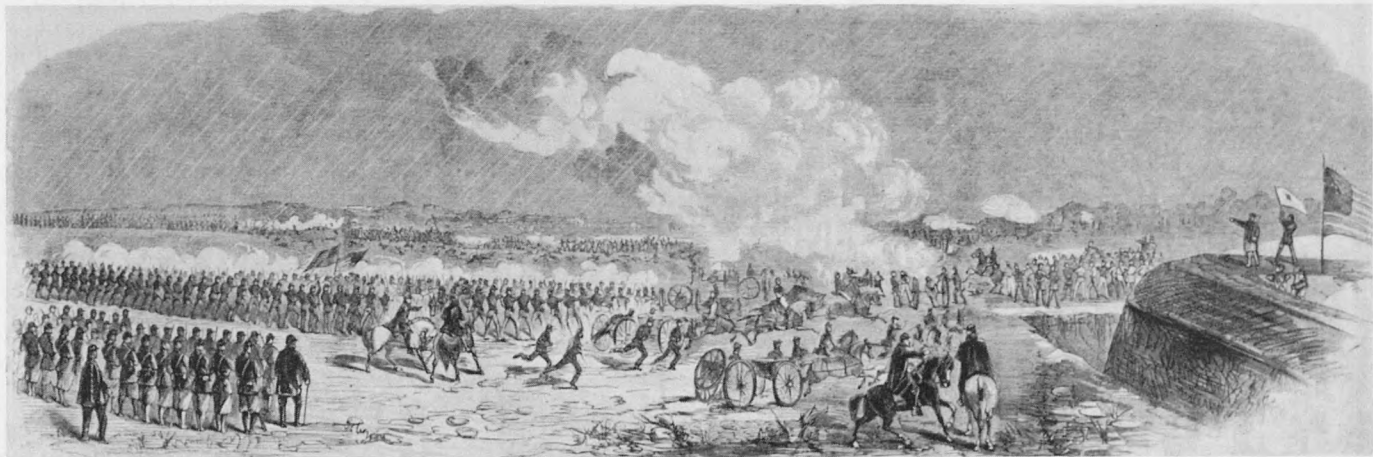
"The wave which was ready to sweep Hooker from the face of the earth, instead of setting onward, begins to recede," correspondent Coffin dramatically wrote. "It is beaten down before the fiery breath

pouring like a furnace blast from 3,000 muskets."

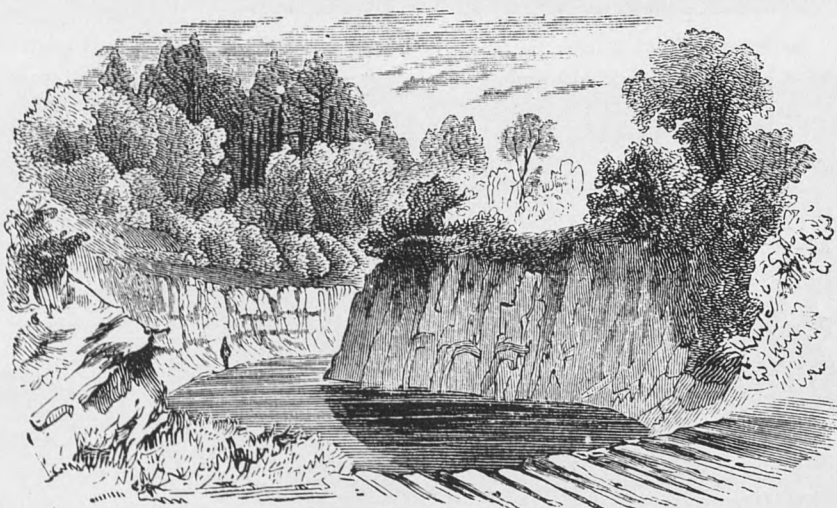
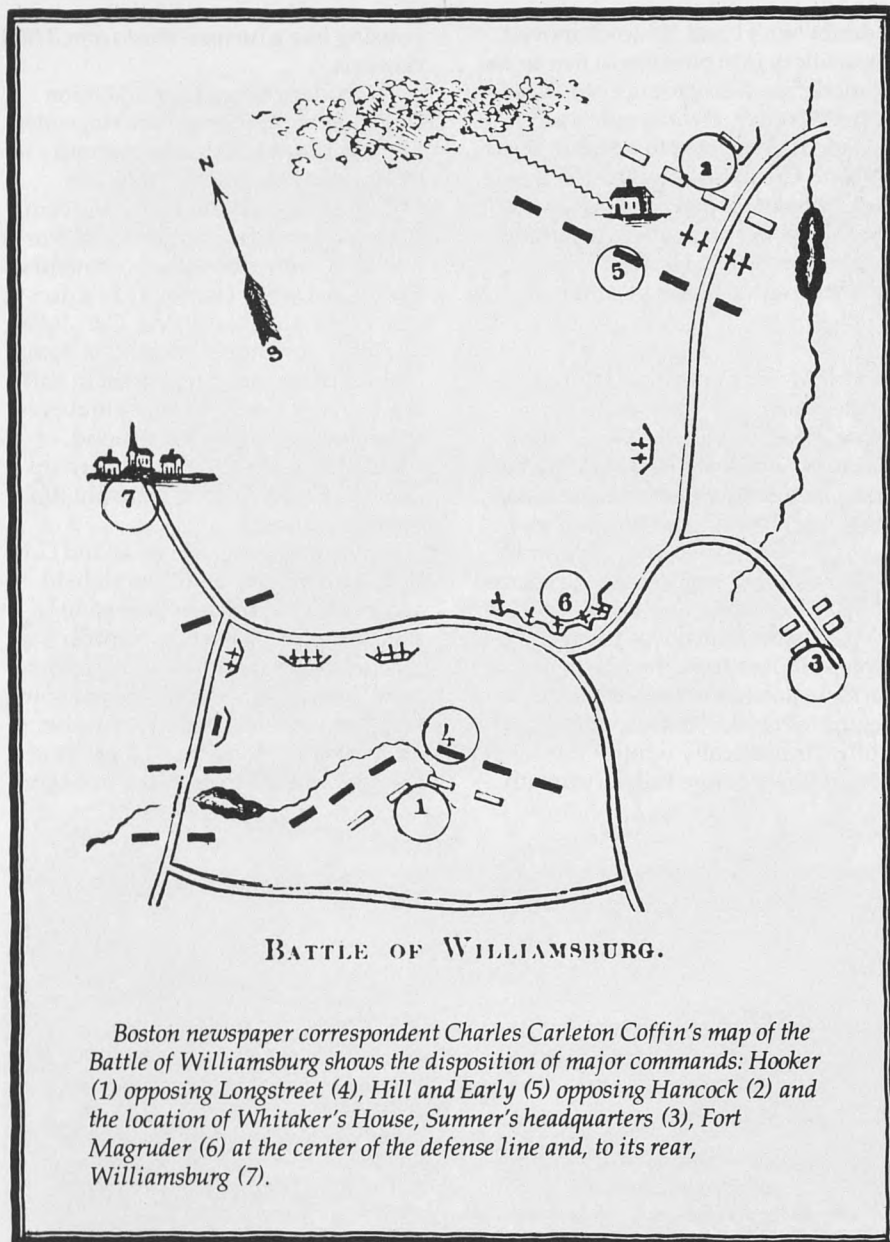
To challenge the renewed Union threat on both sides of Fort Magruder, Johnston gave Longstreet authority to call up more regiments from Williamsburg. These regiments, composed of men from Virginia and North Carolina, were under the command of Maj. Gen. Daniel Harvey Hill, a division commander, and Brig. Gen. Jubal A. Early, a brigade commander. Some regiments assisted Longstreet in halting Kearney's counterattack and even regained previously lost ground.

Hill and Early rode northward up Queen's Creek Road to confront the waiting Hancock.

In the meantime, Rhode Island Gov. William Sprague, on the battlefield accompanying regiments from his state, became alarmed by Sumner's inaction and raced back to Yorktown to tell McClellan "things are not going well in front." McClellan arrived at the Whitaker House headquarters at 5 p.m. and found "everything in a state



*These sketches by A. R. Waud appeared in Harper's Weekly three weeks after the battle and show, in the top drawing, Winfield S. Hancock's brigade taking Redoubt No. 11 and, at the bottom, Hooker's artillery opening firing at the start of the day's battle.*



*Redoubt No. 14 was situated on the high bank directly over the figure of a man walking along Cub Dam Creek. The dam across the creek had served as a roadway since Colonial times and today the Colonial Parkway crosses the creek at this spot which was sketched in 1866 by Benson J. Lossing.*

of chaos and depression, the troops weary and discouraged." With Kearney relieving Hooker to the left, he ordered Smith to support Hancock.

At about this time Longstreet gave Hill and Early a vague order to "assault and capture a battery (one of Hooker's) over there." Hill and Early wheeled to the left in an arc with Early taking the outer and longer swing. The two commanders soon lost contact with each other and Early's regiments became disoriented while going through dense and tangled undergrowth in a muddy ravine.

Early, on horseback, sprang out of the woods and shouted "Follow me!" and led an attack across a field to a fence line immediately in front of Hancock. Two charges at the Union fence were repelled at a terrible loss; Early was wounded. Later Hancock said "no troops could have made a more desperate or resolute charge."

Hancock waved his cap as a signal to charge, but the Confederates were already retiring from the field. Then Hancock, still without reinforcements, fell back to Cub Dam Creek.

The day's fighting and bloodshed ended. The hours-long exchange of fire along the southern side of the line and the minutes-long exchange at the northern side were done. The Battle of Williamsburg was over.

The Union counted 2,239 casualties — 456 men killed, 1,410 wounded and 373 captured or missing out of an attacking force of 15,000. One regiment, the 70th New York of Hooker's division, was the hardest hit, losing 330 men.

The Confederate losses were estimated at 1,560 — 288 men killed, 975 wounded and 297 captured or missing out of 12,000 engaged. One third of the 24th Virginia regiment, which Early led, fell.

An enlisted man in a New York regiment, himself wounded, recalled: "The dead were lying so thickly on the ground that, in some places, it was necessary either to pick your way or step on the body of some dead or wounded soldier half-buried in the mud."

It was, wrote Corporal James R. Burns, "a most sanguinary engagement."

At nightfall both armies regrouped. McClellan's men spent the night on the battlefield. Johnston's men fell back, marching westward through Williamsburg again, leaving the wounded behind.

The next day, Tuesday, May 6, dawned bright and clear. The

# The Confederate Defense Line

Military strategists in both the North and South early recognized the importance of the Virginia Peninsula, the land route between the Union garrison at Fortress Monroe and the Confederate capital of Richmond.

Williamsburg stood mid-way commanding the narrowest point between the James and the York rivers. The city of about 1,500 persons, nearly every one of them a Southern sympathizer, was a natural defensive position for the Confederacy.

Virginia seceded April 17, 1861, and that day someone altered the Prayer Book in Bruton Parish Church, striking the reference to the President of the United States.

"Early in May 1861," reported Benjamin S. Ewell, president of William and Mary, "the immediate prospect of active hostilities rendered it impossible to continue the College Exercises; they were accordingly suspended" on the 10th. College funds were invested in Confederate bonds; books and laboratory apparatus were moved for safekeeping to Eastern Lunatic Asylum.

Within days the college's Main Building was taken over by state and Confederate military authorities and used as a barracks. Ewell, who had graduated from the military academy at West Point, had accepted a colonelcy from the state and organized the Virginia 32nd regiment. He also drafted plans for the defense line outside Williamsburg.

Construction of the bulwark didn't begin until summer. Soldiers, slaves and young boys were recruited to man picks, shovels, wheelbarrows and ox-drawn wagons. Many soldiers came down with malaria and the college and churches in town were used as hospitals.

The Williamsburg defense line stretched four miles in a curve across the Peninsula's low flat ridge. At each end was a pond, created by dams across small streams which flowed in opposite directions. The dams also served as roads.

At the James River end of the fortifications — at the Confederate right — was Tutter's Neck Pond, impounded by a dam across a sluggish tributary of College Creek. The dam was a causeway for Quarterpath Road which, in colonial times, served

Kingsmill, known in the 19th century as Allen's wharf.

At the York River end — at the Union right — was Jones Mill Pond, established by a dam across Cub Dam Creek which flows into Queens Creek. This dam also was used by colonial road travelers.

Fourteen separate earthworks commanding roads, ridges and ravines were erected between these ponds. They were numbered, running from the James to the York in a north-easterly arc. The redoubt at Tutter's Neck Pond was No. 1 and the redoubt at Cub Dam Creek was No. 14.

(Two redoubts, Nos. 11 and 13, were lined up one behind the other to command a roadway to the north of No. 14. Some maps don't include them as they played no part in the battle. In 1962, William D. Geiger, '48, as chairman of Williamsburg's Civil War Centennial Committee, set out to locate the redoubts. He was able to place all but two.)

At the center of the line was redoubt No. 6, the dominate fortification which faced the main road which ran

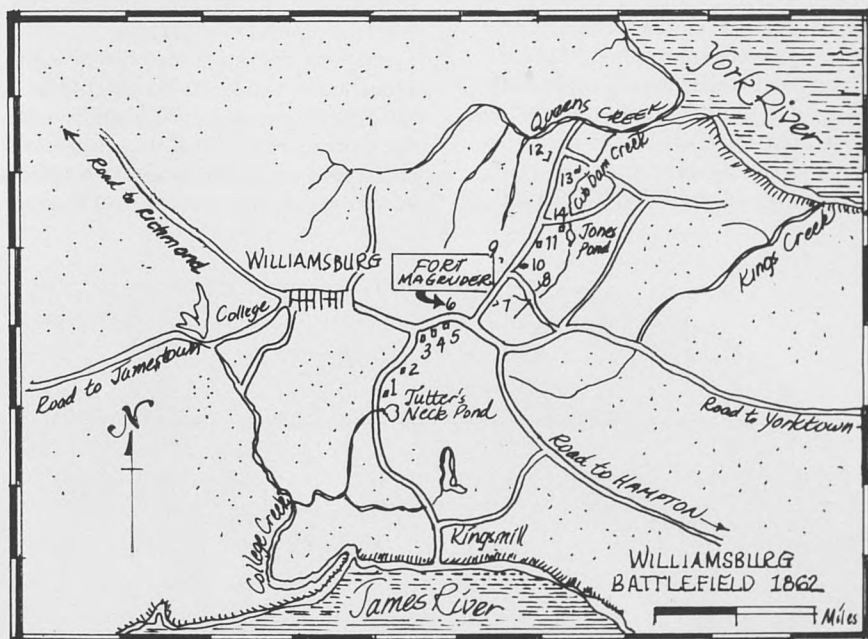


Vest House

up and down the Peninsula. Just to the east the road divided with one spur flanking the York River to Yorktown and the other running down the middle of the Peninsula to Hampton. The fort was named for Col. John B. Magruder who then was in charge of Virginia troops and military operations on the Peninsula.

Fort Magruder's walls were nine feet thick and, measured from the bottom of a moat, 15 feet high. The fort had a circumference of 600 yards with its broadest side — 70 yards wide — facing eastward across a wheat field and down the main highway. Rifle pits were dug in advance of the fort; trees in nearby woods were cut to form barriers.

The Battle of Williamsburg was fought on both sides of Fort Magruder. In the morning the action took place to the south of the fort; in the afternoon the fighting was to the north.



The numbered redoubts across the Peninsula and the natural barriers of College Creek and Queens Creek formed the Confederate defensive line east of Williamsburg. Although unoccupied at the start of the battle, nearly 3,800 men were killed, wounded or missing along this line May 5, 1862. The Williamsburg home of William Vest (above) served first as the headquarters for Joseph Johnston and then, after the battle, the George McClellan.

mockingbirds were singing in the thickets. The leaves had just filled the trees; the dogwood petals were falling and the laurel blossoms were appearing. Along the roadside were buttercups; azaleas and iris flowered in the gardens.

McClellan had sent scouts from a Pennsylvania unit to occupy Fort Magruder and ordered a New York regiment which hadn't taken part in the fighting to march first into Williamsburg. These soldiers entered the city from the east just as the last of Johnston's men left to the west.

The Union army followed into the city. Some regiments marched to bands which played "Yankee Doodle" and, it was reliably reported, "Dixie." Union soldiers pitched tents on the city greens and pulled up fences for firewood and chased down chickens for dinner. Dwellings left empty by residents who had fled were occupied. All homes were searched — some politely, others rudely.

The wounded from both sides were treated by Union physicians and by Dr. Robert Garrett of Williamsburg. Those left on the battlefield were taken to a barn near Fort Magruder and to churches in Williamsburg and to the courthouse. Dr. Garrett bandaged some men lying on the lawn of his home. Union wounded were evacuated by boat from Capitol Landing on Queen's Creek, Fortress Monroe and New York City. Confederates held prisoners were interned at Monroe.

The dead were buried where they fell, and in churchyards and — where more than 250 were laid to rest — in Cedar Grove Cemetery.

The litter of war filled Williamsburg

and the woodland and fields in front of the Williamsburg defense line. Artillery pieces and wagons remained mired and broken in the rutted roads. Dead horses, stripped of saddles and bridle, lay along the roads. Abandoned equipment — cartridge boxes, broken muskets, knapsacks and blankets — were strewn everywhere.

It was McClellan's assessment that Union "victory is complete."

Longstreet considered it "a very handsome affair."

The battle, of course, was neither.

It was, instead, a forecast of battles, much bigger and more conclusive, to come.

Williamsburg was a place where many men, frightened yet courageous, faced combat for the first time. Their spirits were fresh. "To hell or Richmond" was a banner on one Federal battle flag; "Preserve Southern institutions, or perish with them" proclaimed a Confederate banner found in Fort Magruder.

The battle taught the lessons — to be experienced over and over again — of deadly combat: of noise and gunpowder smoke and of mental and physical numbness, of blood and pain, of unexpected kindness and unexpected treachery. Burns, when wounded, was given water and molasses by two Confederate soldiers; a third stole his watch. A Confederate colonel was shot by an enemy soldier who pretended to surrender.

For the generals there were lessons, too: the need to know the lay of the land and the position of friendly and opposing forces, the ability to assume command and control and to maintain communications, the value of having

and following a bold and definite plan of action.

Many officers who were in Williamsburg fought on, lived on, to become well known.

Hooker later commanded the Army of the Potomac. Hancock, a corps commander at Gettysburg, was an unsuccessful Democratic candidate for president in 1880. Custer, as everyone knows, fell at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Sumner, the professional warrior who spent 43 years in the army, died less than a year later. His last words were: "God save my country, the United States of America."

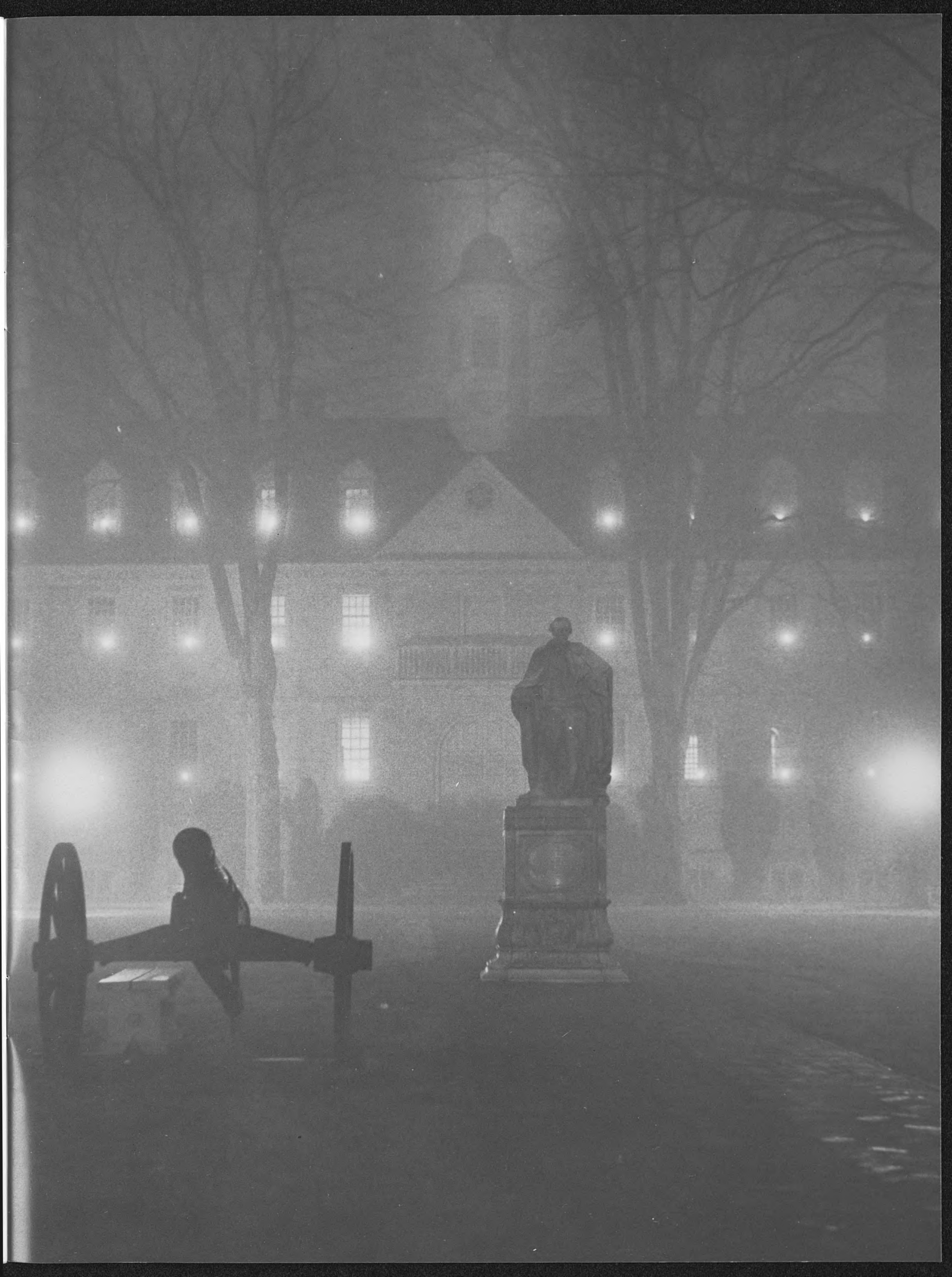
Hood, who scurried through Williamsburg, relieved Johnston in the summer of 1864, but was incapable of stopping Sherman's advance on Atlanta. Longstreet, who was with Lee at Gettysburg, later embraced the Republicans and served as minister to Turkey and U. S. commissioner of railroads. Pickett, as everyone knows, made a gallant charge at Gettysburg. Pryor, the ardent secessionist, became a justice of the New York State Supreme Court. Magruder fled the United States and lived in Mexico. And Ewell returned to Williamsburg, turning down promising offers to teach elsewhere, to oversee the reopening and rebuilding of William and Mary.

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*Will Molineux, '56, is manager of the Williamsburg office of the Newport News Daily Press and The Times-Herald and book review editor for the newspapers. He is a Civil War buff who has written several articles about the Battle of Williamsburg.*



*After the battle Federal troops from Pennsylvania occupied the College. The statue of Lord Botetourt, however, was moved to the Lunatic Asylum for safekeeping and was returned to the college yard after the war.*



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