# WILLIAM & MARY

THE ALUMNI GAZETTE MAGAZINE • SUMMER 1987

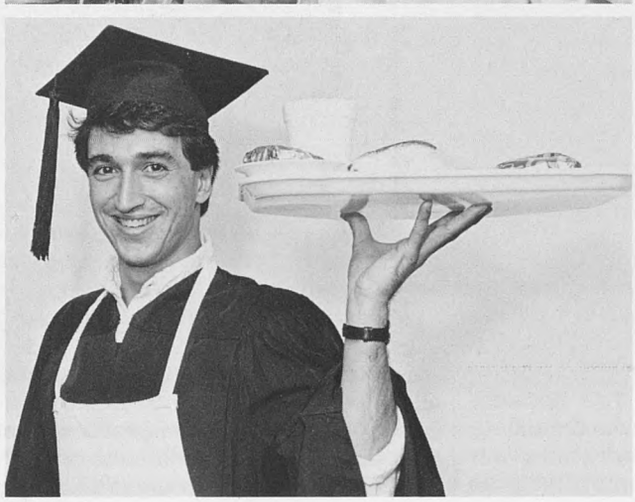
**ON THE COVER**

*The cover illustration is a painting (oil on plywood panel, 16 x 20 in.) titled* White Flower, *1932, by American artist Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986).*

*Now one of the treasures in the collection of the Muscarelle Museum of Art, the painting was given to William and Mary by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., shortly after Miss O'Keeffe received an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from the College in 1938. For many years the painting hung in the fine arts department library in Taliaferro Hall. The painting will be featured in* Georgia O'Keeffe: One Hundred Flowers *scheduled to be published this fall by Callaway Editions of New York in a volume which will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the artist's birth.*

# WILLIAM & MARY

JULY/AUGUST THE ALUMNI GAZETTE MAGAZINE SUMMER 1987 *Volume 55, No. 1*





**The College of William and Mary ■ The Alumni Gazette Magazine**

Editor ..... H. WESTCOTT CUNNINGHAM '43
Associate Editor ..... S. DEAN OLSON
Editorial Assistant ..... MARY ANN WILLIAMSON
Editorial Assistant ..... JAMES B. HATCHER
Composition ..... SYLVIA B. COLSTON
Design ..... JUNE SKALAK

# OF COURAGE AND CONVICTION

## The Sarah Brady Story

BY CHARLES M. HOLLOWAY

It was a normally chilly, blustery March 17, 1987 — St. Patrick's Day in Chicago. Huge crowds lined Dearborn Street, watching the bands and marchers move briskly along the freshly-painted green center line. Nearby, the Chicago River, temporarily brightened by the addition of an emerald dye, traced its sluggish course between the skyscrapers, transporting an aura of premature spring.

As flags snapped in the breeze and drum rolls reverberated through the stone canyons, two guests of honor waved and smiled from inside the slowly moving black limousine. One was the Grand Marshall, Jim Brady, the White House Press Secretary, and the other was his wife, Sarah Kemp Brady, '64.

They had come to Chicago for two days of celebrations focusing on the holiday, and Tuesday evening at a dinner following the parade, Jim was to be honored as "Irishman of the Year."

It was, like most of their trips together now, full of emotion, enthusiasm and energy. "It was really a nostalgic visit for us," Sarah recalls. "Lots of Jim's friends and mine live in Chicago. He worked there for years, and in the early 1970s we literally commuted back and forth between Chicago and Washington before we were married. I felt like we owned a pretty good share of American and United airlines.

"We flew in on Monday for a big reception and press luncheon, complete with Irish dancers and singers. Having grown up in Virginia, I still get culture shock out there. I'm amazed at the ethnic impact of the place — there's so much vigor and diversity. Tuesday, we attended early mass, then a huge brunch, the parade, and of course, Jim's award dinner that night. For us, it was a kind of average, hectic visit. We mingled a lot, and relived old times with people. We both tend to thrive on that, being where the action is."

*The long confusing hours of March 30 remain sharply etched in Sarah Brady's memory. "I was in the basement with Scott. . . . I think I actually heard the news on the radio — I didn't connect Jim to all of this right away. Pretty soon, of course, I began to get phone calls, and it all started to sink in."*

For much of the past two decades, Sarah Brady has been close to the action, deeply involved in the heady, turbulent, and sometimes tragic currents of national political life. With Jim, she has shared in the triumphs and disasters of the Nixon administration; participated in the brief, therapeutic tenure of Gerald Ford; carried on as the loyal opposition during the Carter years; and worked as a key part of the Reagan team during the 1980 electoral campaign and the transition period.

Now, more than six years after his fearful injuries on March 30, 1981, during John Hinckley's attempt to assassinate President Ronald Reagan, Jim Brady continues along the tedious road to recovery. "His memory, his mind, his wit are fine — he gets better all the time," Sarah says.

A White House van takes Jim on regular trips to George Washington University Hospital for physical therapy. He gets out for horseback rides. And he spends a good part of each week going somewhere to receive an award, a tribute or an honor, as he did in Chicago on St. Patrick's Day. In early April, it was recognition by the American Association of Hospital Administrators; in May, the Rotary International honored him in Williamsburg. So it goes.

Sarah Brady has, within the past two years, become an extremely visible symbol of the courage and conviction that began to shape their lives following the shootings. As vice-chairman of Handgun Control, Inc., she has crystallized the sentiments, beliefs and strong persuasions of all those who gravitate to this citizen's lobby, which now reports a million members. As Cardinal Newman said of Napoleon, she has come to understand "the

grammar of gunpowder," and how to operate in the corridors of power.

In addition to her tireless lobbying with members of Congress and state legislatures, her speech making, and her Op Ed articles in leading newspapers, Sarah regularly appears at conferences and town meetings around the country, and has taken to the electronic forums with a vengeance. She has appeared on the whole gamut of talk shows from early morning *(Today, CBS Morning News, Good Morning America, Donahue)* to late evening *(Nightline, Nightwatch)*.

*Sarah and Jim Brady attend the opening of a special art exhibit benefiting George Washington University where Jim was hospitalized for several months after being wounded in the attempted assassination of President Reagan.*

Emerging from the violence of the shootings that were witnessed by millions on television, she herself has become an embodiment of Marshall McLuhan's philosophy of modern communications — she has come to realize that the medium is, indeed, the message, and that the magic of technology has created a global village united by instantaneous involvement. Sarah has come to appreciate and utilize both the power and presence of television, and she needs all the help she can get as she confronts her own Darth Vader, the National Rifle Association, an implacable foe whose powerful and pervasive opposition to gun control is well-known throughout the land.

Yet, on an early spring day in 1987, she is cheerful and confident as she takes time from her busy schedule to reflect on the recent past, to reminisce about earlier days as a student at William and Mary, and to talk with pride and persuasion about her work for the control of hand guns in the United States.

For the past 15 years, the Bradys have lived on a quiet, tree-shaded street in a comfortable red brick home that nestles into a South Arlington hillside, almost within sight of National Airport and a 10-minute drive from downtown Washington.

Despite her carefully organized three-part life as mother, wife and crusader, Sarah Brady makes an informal and hospitable hostess. She is about 5 feet, 6 inches tall, with a long, oval face and deep-set gray-green eyes. Her short hair is frosted a fashionable silverish blonde, and she speaks in tones that blend her Missouri roots with the natural softness of Virginia speech. On this day, she is wearing gray cotton slacks, a green sweater over a white blouse, and little makeup. Her movements and speech are animated. Often, she punctuates her remarks with a sudden, throaty laugh that comes almost as a point of exclamation. Her attitude and bearing convey a sense of resolution and determination, a deep tensile strength that sustains her.

"It's ironic, I suppose," she says, "that my father was an FBI agent and in those days we regarded the NRA (National Rifle Association) as a most patriotic group, in the category with motherhood and apple pie. My brother learned to use a rifle at an NRA range, and I learned to shoot, too. I even remember going to a range with Dad on occasion. But he had a great respect for guns and their proper use. We all did. My father always kept his service revolver carefully under lock and key.

"His work with the Bureau brought him to the east coast from Missouri. Mother

came from Alexandria, still lives there, only about a mile or so from here. I went all through public school in Alexandria, graduated from Francis Hammond High School. Because of my birthday, I started school early, maybe too early. I was only 4 when I first went, and so I was always young. That probably had an effect on me when I went to college, because it took me some time to adjust and mature. But I loved William and Mary from the beginning. I never had any other college in mind."

As Sarah Brady talks, she occasionally glances over to check on the glass enclosed sunporch at the far end of the living room, where Jim is relaxing in a leather lounge chair, watching TV. Now and then, he calls in an interjection or comment in response to a query from Sarah, and he seems in good spirits.

Jim Brady is a big man, about 6 feet tall, with a well-padded frame, and it's easy to see why he was affectionately nicknamed "Bear" by his media colleagues. He is wearing a tan sweater and slacks, and high-topped leather shoes; a metal leg brace is just visible below his left trouser cuff. His roundish face, high forehead and general quizzical attitude give him a puckish appearance, and he still retains the sharp wit and sense of humor that carried him through years of political infighting and lightened the pain and tedium during his weeks of recovery.

"I do take a nap occasionally," he says, "but lots of other famous men do that, too. Without naming any. The Pope remembers," he adds, alluding to President Reagan's alleged catnap in the course of a papal visit. "So did Eisenhower," Jim adds quickly.

Sarah continues her reflections. "Quite a few in my graduating class went to William and Mary. There was simply no doubt in my mind that it was the best coed school in the state, and that I would go there. UVA didn't take girls then, and I really didn't think about any other choice.

"Fortunately, I was admitted, and in the fall my parents drove me down for my freshman year. Of course, I had been there before as a tourist. My first residence hall was Ludwell, and we used to ride in to Jefferson Circle on the bus, the Green Machine — it's probably still running, isn't it? Later on I moved to Landrum.

"As I said, I probably started college too young. I didn't do well, maybe I was enjoying the whole experience too much. In any case, I took a year off, more or less involuntarily, and I worked on Capitol Hill. I got my first taste of politics and I matured quickly. This was 1960, the period of the Nixon-Kennedy campaign. I still remember Nixon counting the electoral votes because he was vice president, and then declaring Kennedy president! I learned a lot, but I knew all along that I wanted to get back to college, and I did the next fall. I resumed my education major, and I did practice teaching at Matthew Whaley School. I loved it, and I knew that I would love teaching.

"Two of my own teachers I remember with special fondness. One was Professor Frank MacDonald, who taught me beginning philosophy and logic. He was such a good teacher, so positive and helpful. He believed all of us could get A's if we tried, and he worked to help us learn, to understand our capabilities.

"The other was in the arts, Leslie Cheek, who also gave me a wonderful background and understanding of that whole area.

"But it wasn't all hard work. I found time to relax, and I made a good many friends, lifetime friends, like Mary Anne Venner, who married Herm Schmidt. She taught school with me in the early days. And of course there was "Teddy" Hall — now Sharon McBay, who operates one of the District area's largest ski stores — she and her husband own it. And I remember playing bridge, a lot of bridge."

Two of her classmates, Jackie Crebbs '64 and Tish Paschall '64, both of whom now work for the college advancement office, recall the nightly games. "Some of us were bridge fanatics," Crebbs says. "I know Sarah was; she was there every night right after dinner. She was full of fun and always ready for a game. In those days, people lived and stayed on campus; we didn't go home much, even on weekends, and not many people had cars. So our life centered around classes and the social activities at the Chi O house and other nearby places."

Sarah Brady recalls that she was at Matthew Whaley the day John Kennedy was assassinated, and heard the news on the loudspeaker system. It was the first of several stunning manifestations of violence that would burst into her private world, and, like millions of others, she listened to the news of that shooting in disbelief. Later on, she and some friends went over to the Colonial Restaurant and talked about it. "Mostly, we just sat there in a state of shock."

Just two days later, she was in the Student Center, watching TV when the bizarre folk drama of Lee Harvey Oswald's killing by Jack Ruby unfolded on the big screen. "These things all make a terrific impression on you," Sarah says. "A lasting impression. You wonder, 'Where did Ruby get his gun? How could this happen?' " "But," she adds, "Texas was wide open then, still is. That's where Hinckley got his Saturday Night Special, you know, in Dallas. He lied and gave a false address."

She pauses as her own personal memories of March 30 flood back. Then, she goes on. "And there was Bobby Kennedy, and Martin Luther King. And don't forget the attempts on Gerry Ford's life, too." It's not hard to feel the depth and intensity of her convictions about violence in America, and the inescapable role played by the ubiquitous handgun.

"My first teaching job was in Virginia

Jean Gwaltney '56

*A 1964 graduate of William and Mary, Sarah Brady went to Washington in the early 1970s and met her husband Jim Brady there as a result of their mutual political interests. He came to work for the Nixon Administration in the Housing and Urban Development Office and later moved to the Office of Management and Budget. "Jim always sought tougher challenges," Sarah noted, and after the 1980 election he was named as President Reagan's press secretary.*

Beach," Sarah recalls. "It was much different then — much smaller. As I had expected, I really enjoyed it. I taught the fourth grade at the Pembroke School for two years, and then moved up to Alexandria, where I taught the sixth grade. Each year seemed better to me, more challenging. But towards the end of my last year, I began to feel I was becoming too involved. I was putting everything into my work and preparation. I was too intense. Nowadays, I guess they would say I was on the fringes of burnout." She laughs nervously.

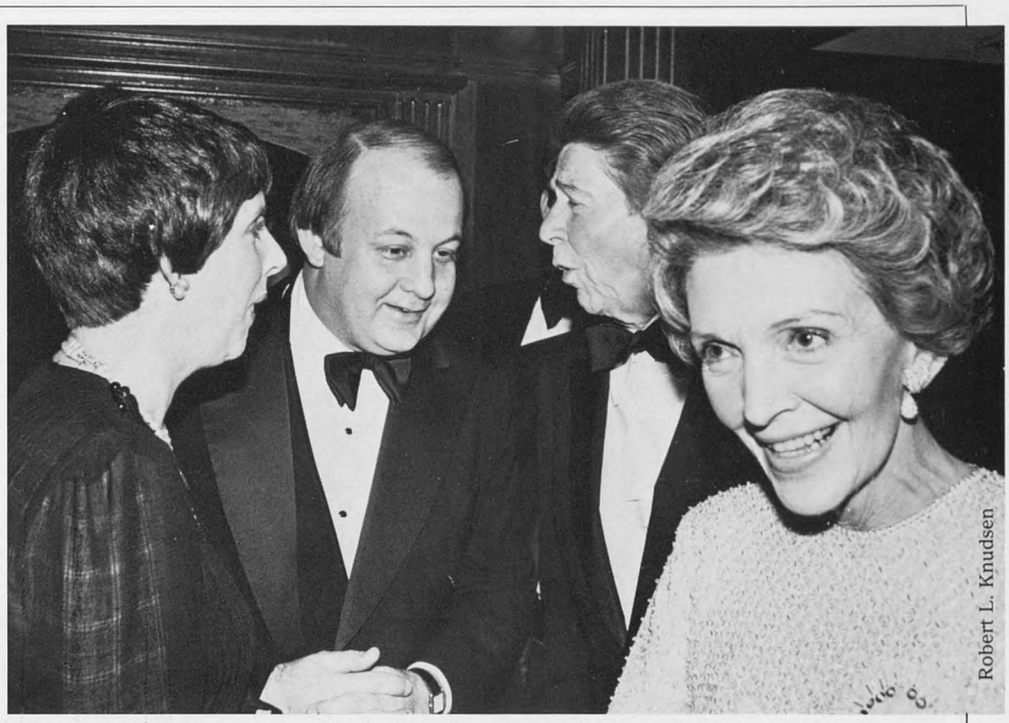
"I knew I had to move on to something else, something entirely different, and I got a job on the Hill again. One whole phase of my life had ended, one stage was over. I doubt that I could ever go back to classroom teaching again, though I realize there are important educational aspects to my gun control work."

As far back as 1972, she had begun to learn about the sensitive and controversial issues involved in gun control. She worked for a while with a Denver congressman who was active in efforts to enact legislation to outlaw handguns, and she learned the fundamentals. But equally important, a close friend of hers on the congressional staff was accidentally killed by her own gun in a scuffle with her boyfriend. "Jim and I had double-dated with them," Sarah remembers. "We couldn't believe it. He had given her the gun for self-protection; they got into an argument, and he shot her. It was as simple and horrible as that."

Her work on the Hill led to employment by the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee, and it was in the course of her duties there that she first met Jim Brady. "Much of our work at the Committee involved helping Republican candidates for Congress, monetarily and with staff services. Jim was working at the time for an ad agency that supported political campaigns, and he was managing several of them. He came to Washington for a meeting of the full national committee, and we met at a cocktail party. That's when we began to support the airlines."

James Scott Brady grew up in the small coal mining town of Centralia, Illinois, where his father was a railroad man. He did his undergraduate work at the University of Illinois, and received a B.S. degree in 1962. He moved on to graduate studies at Southern Illinois University, and in two years had won his Ph.D. in public affairs and communications. With typical, self-deprecating humor, Jim Brady characterizes himself as "the most important graduate of Southern Illinois. No, maybe the second most important, after Clyde." He's referring to Walt Frazier, the legendary New York Knicks basketball star.

By the early 1970s, he had moved up to Chicago and into the advertising business.




*Jim and Sarah Brady share a moment with President and Mrs. Reagan before the tragic events of March 1981 intervened in their lives.*

Along the line, he did some lobbying work for the Illinois Medical Society. He also worked for a while with the West Coast public relations firm of Whitaker & Baxter, and got his basic training in political campaigns.

"After we were married," Sarah says, "Jim came to Washington in 1972 and began working for the Nixon administration. I was working on the Hill. He first joined the staff of HUD (Housing and Urban Development) and then went over to the Office of Management and Budget to work for Don Rumsfeld. Eventually, Senator Bill Roth of Delaware hired him, and he worked actively on the early tax reform legislation that was known as Kemp-Roth — though Jim tends to call it Roth-Kemp," Sarah says with a smile.

"The basic concepts in that bill became the centerpiece of the whole administration tax reform legislation that was finally passed in 1986."

Sarah Brady continues. "Jim always sought tougher challenges, more responsible jobs. During the 1980 election, he joined the Connally campaign briefly, but left when it went belly-up with only a single delegate." Before long, Jim was asked to work with the Reagan team as they prepared for the nomination and the election. He quickly accepted and plunged into the fray.

"A strange thing happened in 1980, during the Iran embassy crisis," Sarah recalls. "Jim kept watching Hodding Carter on TV as the State Department spokesman, and he would say 'I want to be the next Hodding Carter,' or something like that. The idea fascinated him."

By the time of the election and Reagan's victory, Jim Brady was well established as a likable and meticulously professional press secretary. During the transition period in the winter of 1980-81, he played an essential role in establishing the tone of the new administration, and easily coped with all the major and minor flurries that came up. For instance, Nancy Reagan had made an offhand remark at some point that she hoped the new press secretary would personally reflect the bright and attractive image of the new White House. Inevitably, Brady had to fend off repeated questions like "Was he suitably handsome for the job?" and "Did he live up to screen test standards?" He did so with grace and style, and a New York *Times* profile spoke with admiration of his "unquenchable sense of humor and his droll irreverence." A "roast" by his peers at the fashionable George Town Club around the turn of the year further underlined the respect and affection that journalists and bureaucrats alike feel for the man.

In the early spring of 1987 the Bradys passed the sixth anniversary of John Hinckley's attempt to kill President Reagan, an assault that seriously injured Jim and two others who were leaving the Washington Hilton hotel. Hinckley himself has remained much in the news despite his confinement at St. Elizabeth's in Washington (a mental hospital). This fall, Molly Dickinson's full-scale biography of Jim will be published (working title: *Thumbs Up!*).

The long and confusing hours of March 30 remain sharply etched in Sarah's memory. "I was in the basement with Scott (James Scott Brady, Jr., who is now 8).

He was just a baby, not much over two. I think I actually heard the news on the radio — that the president had been shot. But, strangely, I didn't connect Jim to all this right away. Pretty soon, of course, I began to get phone calls, and it all started to sink in."

She talks calmly, but just beneath the surface there's a suggestion of the sadness and helplessness that she felt. "At one point, the TV news broke in with the report that Jim had died, and they actually ran an obituary on him, recapping his life, before a correction came out. Scott watched all this and was pointing to the screen, saying, 'That's daddy.' Well, I went over to GW hospital as soon as I could. People kept coming in and calling, and I finally got an idea of what really happened. Most of it didn't actually affect Scott too much until he was a little older. He had a bit of trouble in school because of it, but now things seem to go on pretty much normally for him."

As Jim moved through the seemingly endless months of recovery and rehabilitation, Sarah began to rebuild her own life, and found new strength in the responsibilities that she had to assume. Though there was constant and reassuring support from the White House and the doctors, the tension and apprehension about Jim's condition was always present. And there was Scott and his schooling. And maintaining their home. Somehow, she found time to renew her interest in gun control, and, as time went by, she gained the respect of growing audiences as she won a central position in the expanding campaign.

Today, there is a determined, almost compulsive pace to her crowded schedules. During one recent week, she spent Monday in interviews, drove Scott to school and back, and took him for a doctor's appointment. Later in the day, she went with Jim when he picked up a special award from the hospital administrators. Tuesday, she flew to Florida to testify on a pending bill in the legislature. She returned late Wednesday night, and the next morning went to Capitol Hill for strategy meetings and lunch with some congressmen. She and Jim attended a radio-TV correspondents dinner that night, and Friday "I reserved to work on my federal income taxes!"

"The whole issue is such an emotional one," Sarah says. "I guess 1985 was a turning point for me when I realized that the Senate was about to adopt a measure backed by the NRA that was designed to *weaken* the 1968 federal gun control act. That enraged me." The Senate had actually passed the amendment by a convincing vote (79 to 15), but Sarah Brady and many allies (police chiefs, the FBI, and others) joined to mount an intensive lobbying effort in the House that resulted in much-watered-down legislation that did little to alter the 1968 law.

Sarah contemplates the basic controversies involved. "I've tried not to let this become a purely personal issue, because I think that's what the gun lobby has done. I believe that law-abiding people have every right to own or purchase guns for sporting or other legitimate purposes. That's the message I carry when I lecture and appear on TV." She's continuing a steady series of speeches and media appearances. Recently, Sarah Brady has been a featured speaker before university audiences at Georgetown, Fordham and George Mason, and she regularly flies to state capitals to testify on pending gun control bills.

*In addition to her tireless lobbying with members of Congress and state legislators, her speech making, and her OpEd articles, Sarah regularly appears at conferences and town meetings around the country, and has taken to the electronic forums with a vengeance. She has appeared on the whole gamut of talk shows from early morning to late evening.*

"You have to realize," she continues, "that there must be certain common sense measures that you can take to make it more difficult for the criminal, the mentally incompetent, and children to be able to purchase guns." That's the thrust and direction of the Metzenbaum-Feighan legislation which would hold up delivery of a handgun to a purchaser for seven days, giving authorities a week to look over the purchaser's application, question or validate it.

"The pending legislation is a very rational bill. This kind of proposal has been around for some time. It's not extreme. In fact, in 1978, the NRA was even supporting a waiting period. This would have stopped Hinckley from getting his gun in Dallas. He got it by lying on his federal form — he used an expired driver's license — he was a drifter at the time, and a background check would have caught him up." Her cool rationality prevails, though the Hinckley connection inevitably stirs deep feelings.

"I don't think my efforts are capitalizing on Jim's misfortune," she continues. I don't view it as revenge or retribution. It's more of an obligation to us — to anyone who might be affected. And anyone could. Just read the daily papers." She pauses and then goes on.

"A seven-day waiting period could inhibit and prevent many cases. Ultimately, we may need a 14- or 21-day waiting period — a cooling-off period. Many experts on suicide feel, for example, that this could have a powerful effect on potential suicides."

"I think we will win a victory before too long. Maybe not this year or next, but there will surely be federal legislation in three or four years."

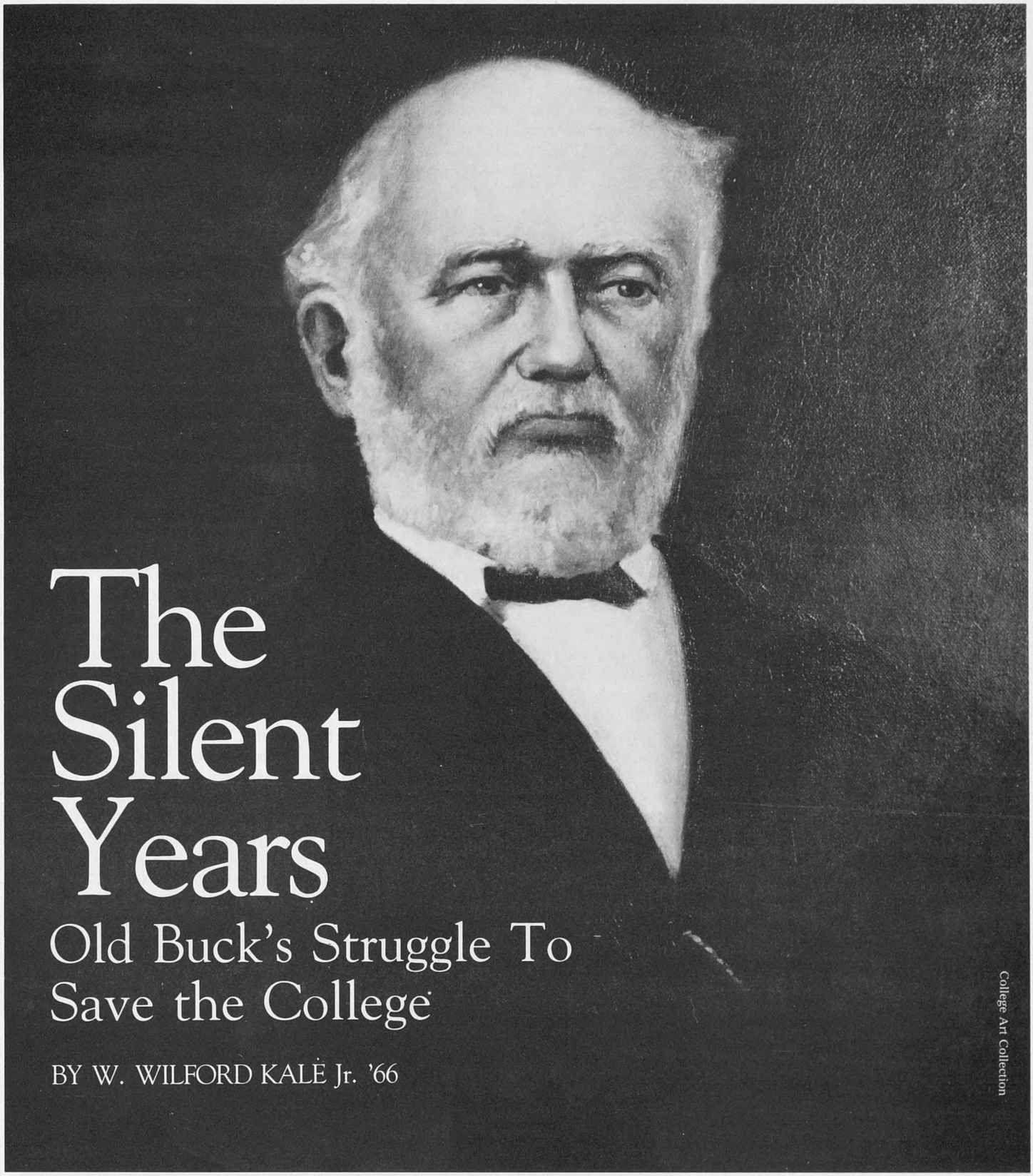
What would she do at that point? "Probably continue in efforts to assure handgun control. Help expand educational programs. There's a lot to be done, and as long as I can be effective and useful, I will remain actively involved."

What will happen when 1988 rolls around and Jim's official term as press secretary ends? Sarah replies: "By then we may be ready for another campaign, who knows? We would have had one in any case. That's the way we have led our lives, immersed in politics and public affairs. We met in campaigning and have gone from election to election. Another time of change will come in two years, another set of challenges." (Echoes of *Kiss Me Kate.* "Another opening, another show . . . .") "We will move on to something positive, I'm sure."

"I think all our experiences have given me a new perspective," Sarah says as she reflects on events of the past few years. "I've begun to question a lot of things — even deep-seated loyalties. I am now beginning to examine issues and basic philosophies much more carefully. I know that what happened to Jim has changed my very way of thinking about a lot of things. I just never realized what kinds of things can affect people's lives. I've become deeply interested, for instance, in good, comprehensive health insurance. Things like that, that affect large segments of the population, seem more important than working for a fund raiser or even an election campaign.

"Where do we go from here?" she wonders aloud. "I don't think I will ever return to teaching, to the classroom. I have thought about studying law . . . not practicing . . . just delving into the study of law. I have already gotten a taste of it at both state and federal levels.

"Sometimes we think of moving to a warmer climate and a quieter life, taking things easy. But that's probably not realistic right now. All our friends are here, and we're used to a fast pace. I go a hundred miles an hour and never sit back. That's just the way I am."



College Art Collection

# The Silent Years

## Old Buck's Struggle To Save the College

BY W. WILFORD KALE Jr. '66

The crusty old white-bearded educator rode up Franklin Street in a black, weather-beaten carriage. He was enroute to the Exchange Hotel, just a few blocks from Capitol Square in Richmond. The year was 1887.

Benjamin Stoddert Ewell, president of the College of William and Mary, had ridden the train to Richmond from Williamsburg and was on his way to a special meeting of the College's Board of Visitors.

This gathering was very important to him because he had decided to press the Visitors into more direct action — action he felt was essential to save the College. His mind rarely dwelt on anything other than William and Mary. For Ewell these were the worst of times.

William and Mary had ceased to have any students after the session ended on July 4, 1882. Ewell had tutored some boys in the President's House on occasions, and the Visitors had continued to meet, electing faculty members and handling the affairs of the school. But as a college, in the business of educating young men, William and Mary was in jeopardy of closing its doors forever.

The task fell to Ewell to develop ideas

to revitalize William and Mary and return students to the old hallways and classrooms of the nation's second oldest college.

Scheduled to meet with Ewell that fateful day were Judge W. W. Crump, the relatively new rector; former Confederate officers, Col. William Lamb and Gen. William B. Taliaferro; Dr. Charles F.E. Minnegerode of Christmas tree fame; Dr. John W. Lawson; the Rev. Dr. O. S. Barten, and P. Montague Thompson.

The Visitors were faced with a crisis of mounting proportions. With no students on campus and dwindling resources, the finances of the school were precarious at best. The College had very difficult problems in collecting debts owed to the school and in securing promised bequests. Its cash flow was almost nonexistent.

From 1883 until this meeting on March 17, 1887, the Visitors had spent much time trying to maintain the college buildings and seeking ways to get students back to campus.

Ewell had written scores of influential politicians in Washington, D.C., attempting to encourage the Congress to consider reparation payments to William and Mary for the destruction of the main building during the Yankee occupation in 1862.

The problems facing Ewell and the Board of Visitors were the latest in a series of trials and tribulations which the College had encountered during the 19th century. It survived fire, military occupation, internal strife and legislative efforts by prominent Virginians to move the school.

Alumnus Thomas Jefferson, in response to a proposal to relocate the College in Richmond, had proposed in the mid-1820s that the buildings and land be sold and the proceeds divided for the establishment of six "community" colleges around the Commonwealth.

The fact that William and Mary survived six academic years without the formal enrollment of a single student is the most amazing feat of its 19th-century life. That survival can be attributed directly to the efforts of one man — President Ewell.

It is important to set the scene for Ewell's meeting with the Board 100 years ago, in March 1887.

On Feb. 8, 1859, Charter Day, the 166th anniversary of the founding of the College, a fire destroyed the old main building, now called Sir Christopher Wren Building. In the aftermath, a new structure with great twin Italianate towers was built around the shell of the old structure, which had survived the fire of 1705.

Then came the Civil War and, in May 1861, classes were suspended and the president, students and professors left, many joining the Confederate Army. President Ewell, a unionist, believed secession was unconstitutional. Nevertheless, at age 51, he organized the 32nd Virginia Infantry and was appointed its colonel.

Ewell helped Gen. John B. Magruder fortify the Peninsula, just east of Williamsburg, with a series of earthwork lines and small forts stretching from the York to the James. Soon, he was made assistant adjutant-general to Gen. Joseph. E. Johnston and served with ability as his chief of staff and closest friend — personally and officially — until March 16, 1865, just a few weeks before Johnston's army collapsed.

Meanwhile, back in Williamsburg, by May 1862 Federal troops under the command of Gen. George B. McClellan had moved up from Fort Monroe and had taken over the city of Williamsburg, following the battle on May 5, 1862. There were skirmishes between Union and Confederate troops in and around Williamsburg during the next few months.

On Sept. 9, 1862, the main building was burned again and the culprits apparently were members of the 5th Pennsylvania Cavalry, "who surrounded the building with drawn swords to prevent any attempt [by townspeople] to extinguish the fire," one account reported. Many people believed the Union soldiers burned the building to keep Southern sharpshooters from using it.

With the end of the war, Ewell returned to campus, after declining more lucrative professorships at Hampden-Sydney College and Washington (soon to be Washington & Lee) College. He found the campus wrecked: the main building a burned-out hollow shell; the Brafferton stripped of interior woodwork, it having been used as firewood by occupying troops; and the President's House rundown and divested of many of its furnishings.

Ewell reported to the Board of Visitors on July 5, 1865, that the remaining walls of the College's main buildings were "apparently in as good condition as they were after the fire of 1859, [in] fact [they] are less warped and cracked." Much of the library and scientific equipment had been saved. He estimated that $70,000 damage had been done to the main building, $3,000 to The Brafferton and $1,600 to the President's House.

Ewell reopened William and Mary in October 1865, with 18 college students and 32 grammar school boys attending. Classes were conducted in The Brafferton and a wing had been added to the President's House as professors' quarters. Students were housed wherever they could get rooms in the town.

Seeing that the College's facilities were severely lacking and that there were no apparent opportunities for improvement, the faculty voted on July 10, 1868, to suspend classes until the main building could be rebuilt and the other college facilities repaired.

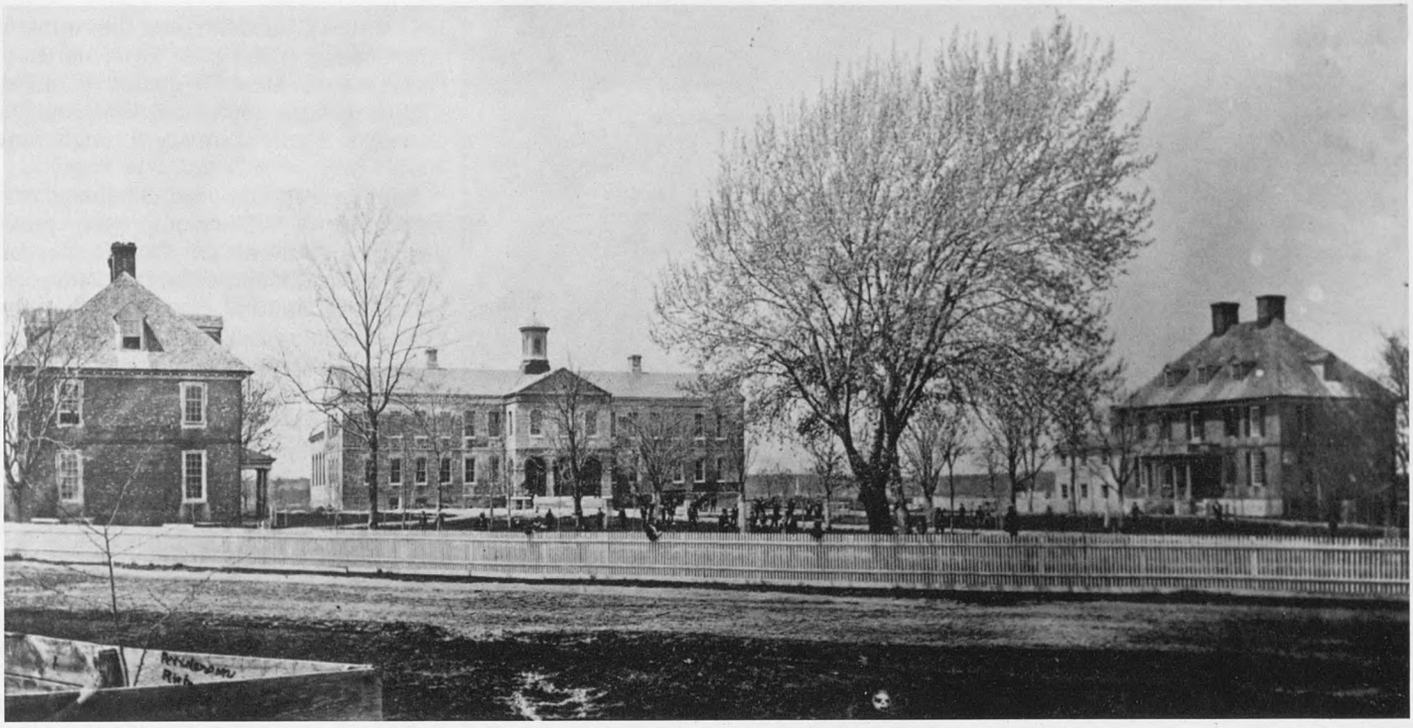
Plans were drawn immediately to rebuild the main building, again within its old walls. The new structure was ready for use in October 1869. For the rebuilding, Ewell worked diligently to secure contributions from many Virginians, the Archbishop of Canterbury and others in England, the land of the College's founders. Ewell also gained support from many individuals throughout the United States.

The William and Mary president tried three times, appearing before congressional committees, to secure payments from the federal government for damages suffered by the College during the Civil War. But those efforts were fruitless.

With the College struggling to regain its stability after the war and the South itself in the throes of reconstruction domi-

College Archives

*President-Emeritus Benjamin Stoddert Ewell and Professor Hugh Stockdell Bird, the youngest professor at William and Mary, were photographed in 1888 in the College library located, at the time, in the rear of the chapel in the southeast corner of the old main (Wren) building.*



Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

*Taken between 1869 and 1875, this photo shows the College Yard when Benjamin Ewell was president. The main (Wren) building is in the center with The Brafferton on the left and the President's House on the right.*

nance and military occupation, the nation was struck by a severe depression. Available money was scarce and few parents had funds to send their sons to college.

The rebuilding of the main building combined with increased operating expenses, diminished what was left of the College's endowment. A later subscription effort also failed.

College finances were in trouble. For example, records for 1878-1879 indicate that the College had expenses of $2,608.63 of which $1,600 was for faculty salaries. Revenue was only $2,344, resulting in a deficit of $264.63. The bursar believed that the debt could be cleared during the next school term by various overdue collections. But existing records do not show that such collections were made.

By June 1881, William and Mary had only 12 students, and the next year there were just three "true" college students and two professors. From the 1882-1883 school term until the 1887-1888 school term, there were no students at the College, but there is strong evidence that William and Mary did not close, as earlier accounts of the College seemed to suggest.

A careful reading of the minutes of the Board of Visitors' meetings from 1882 through 1888 reveals that the Board tended to operate the College as though students were on campus. The Visitors received formal reports, almost annually, from the College's president and financial reports from the bursar.

It is possible that the Board had a keen awareness of history. Throughout the 19th century there were strong references to the Royal Charter, as was the case in at least one account during those silent years. Therefore, the Board members considered the charter in effect and were intent on keeping the College active to retain that charter.

In fact, at the June 15, 1882, meeting of the Visitors, a resolution was adopted: "That the College of William and Mary shall be continued for the reception and education of students for the year commencing the 2nd Monday in October 1882, and ending July 4, 1883, and that the present faculty continue to discharge during that period, the duties attached to their professorships."

The Board also appointed a committee to "propose and address to the people of Virginia and the Congress of the United States in behalf of the College" pleas for funds to keep the College running. During that school year, there were no students, except some tutorial work by Ewell, and the college exercises in July 1883 were suspended.

At a meeting of the Board on Dec. 13, 1883, Judge Crump was appointed rector and reports from the faculty and bursar "were read, examined and filed."

For a number of years, dating from at least 1875, the Wise Light Infantry had used the College's main building as its headquarters. The Board was notified at this meeting that one of the lecture rooms in the building was also being used as an armory. Because of insurance difficulties, the Board asked the local volunteer military group to remove themselves from the main building. Instead, they were offered the use of a room in The Brafferton for the armory.

In a related resolution at the December 1883 meeting, the Board declared: "It is the opinion of the Visitors that it is desirable to use the buildings and grounds of William and Mary College only for collegiate and literacy purposes." Does this mean that a proposal had been received by the Board to use the College for another purpose? The minutes do not say.

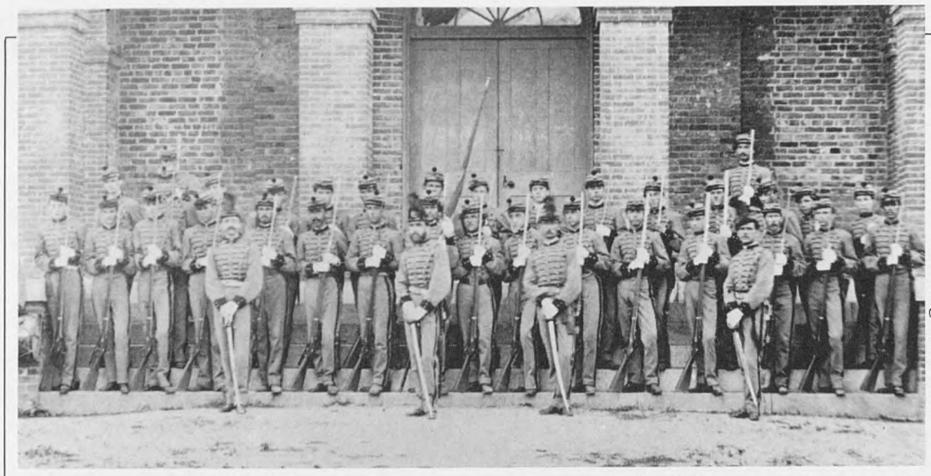
The next Board meeting was on Aug. 4, 1884, when the Visitors resolved that the president of the faculty (Ewell) be requested to sell the College Hotel and lot, the Saunders House (now Robert Carter House on Palace Green, home of a former College president), 160 acres of land in Prince George County and the lots adjoining the Matty School House. Ewell was to apply the proceeds to the liquidation of all debts due by the College.

The President's Report of 1884 included the condition of the buildings. It noted that "the library is in as good condition as it has been since 1860 and is occasionally increased by government documents and by gifts from authors and publishers."

The *Boston Christian Register* newspaper reported on Sept. 23, 1886, that Edwin D. Head, in his recent "Old South" lecture, spoke about William and Mary:

"The old, gray-haired President [Ewell] as each October comes round, goes to the College and has the college bell rung, as a formality to still retain the [royal] charter . . . [the] president, with whom I talked there in these last May days, believes that the bell will yet be heard.

"It is a pity when one considers the educational needs of the South, that something should not be done to perpetuate



College Archives

*When the Civil War came, classes were suspended at William and Mary and the president, students and professors left, many of them joining the Wise Light Infantry, which was organized by Professor Richard Alsop.*

this old College, second only to Harvard in age and historical interest, both in memory of its great past and in active service of the present. Such great traditions as those of William and Mary are themselves of the highest utility in education and ought not be wasted."

Did President Ewell, as legend says and Head reports, ring the bell to begin each school year and keep the charter alive? In January 1887, Ewell wrote:

"There has been an ancient tradition connecting with the College to the effect that a full session of students followed the ringing of its bell on the 1st of October at sunrise. The session began early in October. The transformation of this tradition into a daily ringing by me exceeds the story of 'The Black Crows.' But, to compensate, it has given me a wide reputation as a 'bell ringer.' So, I laugh at the story without murmuring or contradicting."

Regardless of whether Ewell rang the bell daily or just to begin the silent school sessions, it is essential to understand the character and influence of Ewell, because without a doubt, it was his work during the silent years that continued the College.

Ewell, as the bell story demonstrated, had a keen sense of humor. In his later years, he was referred to as "Old Buck," beloved by young and old because he was a true William and Mary hero, even though he did not want to be. A man of bulldog determination, he also had a knack for holding things together, like the faculty during a turmoil or dissension and the College when its halls became silent without student voices.

Although a fighter for his cause, he was a gentle, kind, understanding man, conciliatory in philosophy and meticulous in action, probably stemming from his many years of teaching mathematics.

Coming from a military family, he was a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, but did everything he could to avoid war. Yet, he fought for his Southland and his Virginia when duty called.

Ewell taught mathematics at West Point following graduation and later moved to Hampden-Sydney College and then to Washington College in Lexington, Va., where he held the prestigious Cincinnati professorship in mathematics and military science.

Mathematics professor Robert Saunders became William and Mary's president in the fall of 1847, after serving for a year as acting president. By the spring of 1848 the College was seeking a new mathematics professor. But a major confrontation between the faculty, the Board of Visitors and townspeople occurred. Ultimately, the Board fired the faculty, including President Saunders. Only the law professor, Judge Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, was spared.

Realizing the College could not continue without a president, Rector Robert McCandlish of Williamsburg wrote Ewell, who was soon to be enroute to Williamsburg as mathematics professor, and offered him the presidency.

Ewell, in a letter found among his papers in the Library of Congress, replied:

"As I cannot flatter myself that the Board of Visitors of William and Mary College could have elected me to the presidency had my meager qualifications been fully known, I feel compelled to decline. In case it should be deemed expedient I would not object to filling the presidency till such time as the Visitors shall see fit to make another choice."

It is there that the College's records apparently do not acknowledge Ewell's decision. The records show Ewell as being president, 1848-1849, and again from 1854 to 1888. However, the first term was only an acting presidency; he was merely president pro-tem.

Ewell's obituary stated that he was acting president in 1848-1849 as does the West Point alumni directory, published one year after his death. Therefore, the College should not list Ewell's first term as a full presidential term, but rather, consider it an acting presidency like the 1846-1847 term of Saunders and the terms of other acting presidents: Dr. Kremer J. Hoke, twice in 1934; Dr. James W. Miller, August through September 1951; and Dr. George R. Healy, January through June 1985.

With Ewell's first term eliminated, the numbering of William and Mary presidents changes, and Dr. Paul R. Verkuil '61 is not the 25th but rather the 24th president of the College.

Ewell's significant mark on William and Mary came during his 1854-1888 presidency, and many persons well acquainted with William and Mary's history consider him one of the three or four great presidents.

He worked continuously on behalf of his adopted college. He tried at every turn to make the College stronger and better. He constantly sought out talented professors, frequently losing them because he could not compete with other institutions' salary offers.

Ewell even offered to step down from the presidency in the mid-1870s in deference to his good friend and mentor General Johnston, who had been named to the William and Mary Board of Visitors. In Ewell's judgment, wrote a Board member, "the College needed a man of influence at the helm." But the Visitors retained their trust in Ewell and he never let them down.

As the College entered the 1880s, Ewell first suggested to the Board that they ask the Virginia General Assembly for state funds to train much needed male public school teachers.

At the Nov. 27, 1885, Board meeting, Ewell, in his report, offered "two lines of action" regarding the future of the College: "the one is to turn it over to the state and the other is to continue in its present condition, paying off its debts and taking all possible care of the college property."

The Visitors adopted a resolution, establishing another committee to "digest and submit to the General Assembly of Virginia a proposal by which an annual appropriation may be secured to the College from the body on such conditions as the said committee shall deem expedient and proper." Apparently, the action was seeking again to renew Ewell's earlier suggestion for state funding.

Continuing the operation of the College, the Visitors also "placed on the record that the colors of Cambridge be adopted as designating the degrees conferred by this College."

This is the first record of any mention by college officials of colors for William and Mary and apparently supersedes the earlier first-known colors of black and orange. The current school colors of green, gold and silver come from the College's coat of arms.

But what were the colors of Cambridge

University? The Cambridge University Library in Cambridge, England, explained that in 1885 the scheme of college colors was not the same in the United States and England.

Colleges and universities in America developed their own colors in the mid-19th century. The colors were associated with the various degree hoods while the size of hoods and the color of trim distinguished the degrees. In England, and specifically at Cambridge, the athletic color of light blue had been in use since 1832, but light blue was not associated with any degree hood.

So, what did the Board of Visitors mean by "the colors of Cambridge?" Most probably, they were the specific colors of the Cambridge hoods for various degrees. For example, the bachelor of arts degree was distinguished by white fur, specifically miniver, lining a black hood. The master of arts degree had white silk lining a black hood. And the bachelor of divinity degree carried a scarlet silk lining in a black hood with a border of white fur. Doctors of philosophy, as we know them, were not awarded in English universities until about 1919.

The William and Mary Visitors met again on Jan. 28, 1886, and more specifically asked the Virginia General Assembly to establish a "system of normal instruction and training within the College for the purpose of preparing white male teachers for the free schools of the Commonwealth."

It was at this time that the Board devised a new organization to cope with hoped-for state participation. Under the proposal, which was eventually included in the state legislation, the 10 members of the Board, having continued from the Royal Charter group since 1693 by self-perpetuation, would continue, and future vacancies would be filled by the group. An additional 10 associate members, however, would be appointed by the governor of Virginia, who also would fill future vacancies in the associate ranks.

This new arrangement for the Board, which took effect in 1888, in time tore the group asunder. A president was elected in 1888 over both groups, but the College's rector, the leader of the Charter group, still held power and influence. Eventually, in the late 1890s, the president and rector were the same person, but the quarrels between Board factions continued until 1905 when the state assumed complete control over William and Mary and an entirely new Board of Visitors was appointed. The College rector then returned to the leadership position of previous years.

In March 1887, 100 years ago, a report was published by Professor Herbert B. Adams, associate professor of history at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Released as an official document of the federal government through the Department of Education, Adams' report related the long history of William and Mary from its founding through the troubles and the silent years, noting that in January 1887, "the old college in Williamsburg has not now a single student. Its classic halls are closed and deserted."

Adams' report called upon the nation to support William and Mary and not allow the school to die. It cited its long history as worthy of being maintained.

On Dec. 20, 1887, the Visitors again authorized Ewell to secure the necessary loans on College property to pay debts to two specific estates.

After several years of effort and the constant and patient behind-the-scenes determination of Ewell, the General Assembly took up the William and Mary case in January 1888. On March 5, 1888, after hours of deliberation and much committee work, the Assembly adopted a bill to make William and Mary a state normal school. The Board of Visitors concurred on April 10 and accepted all the bill's conditions.

A month later, on May 10, 1888, as College officials continued to bask in the glow of their new found finances, amounting to about $10,000 annually, President Ewell submitted his letter of resignation. Realizing that he had won the long battle and, that he was too old, at 78, to administer a new faculty and student body, he wanted to step down.

Board members understood completely, for Ewell had been a good and faithful servant to whom they could honestly say, "Well done!"

The next day, the Visitors elected Dr. John L. Buchanan, vice rector of the College and state superintendent of public instruction, as the new William and Mary president. Buchanan was not at the meeting and asked for time to consider the offer.

On July 5, 1888, Dr. Buchanan notified the Board that he could not become the new president because of his responsibilities to the state that he felt he must continue to carry. On Aug. 25, at its next meeting, the Visitors named Lyon G. Tyler, son of U.S. President John Tyler and a Richmond attorney, as the new president.

His father had served on the William and Mary Board of Visitors from the 1820s until his death in 1862 and also was rector and College Chancellor when he died.

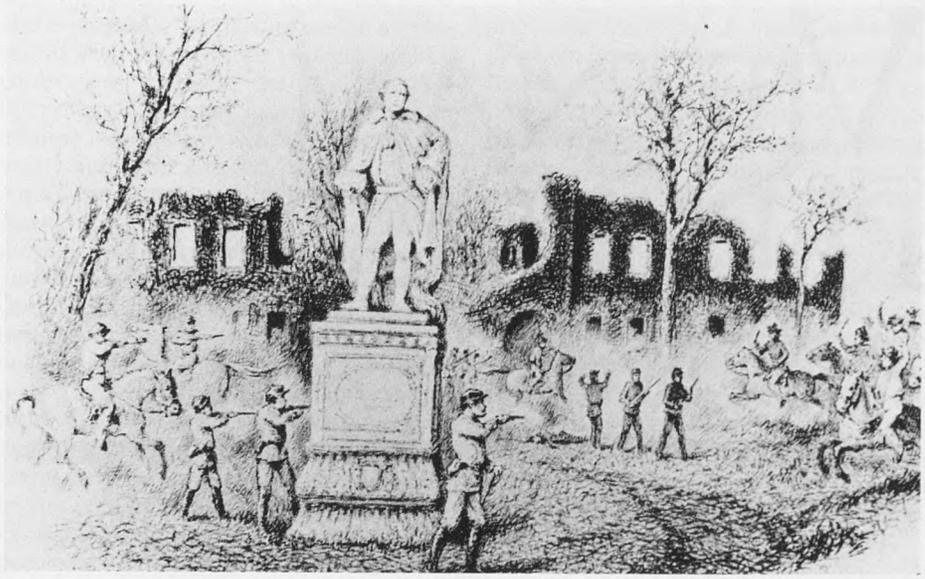
An epoch of William and Mary history ended with Ewell's departure. Ewell's work, however, was not yet finished. He continued to aid the College and through his efforts, the United States Congress finally voted in 1893, William and Mary's bicentennial year, to pay $64,000 in reparations.

"Old Buck" Ewell lived to see his efforts succeed. He died a year later at age 84.

By 1894 and with Ewell's death, the "silent years" of the College were already history. President Tyler had built a faculty that would be known through William and Mary annals as "the seven wise men." Student voices were once again heard in the halls of old main and the bell was rung, not for tradition's sake, but to bring the students daily to classes.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*W. Wilford Kale Jr. '66 is chief of the Richmond Times-Dispatch bureau in Williamsburg and author of "Hark Upon A Gale: An Illustrated History of the College of William and Mary."*



New York Historical Society

*Union soldiers burned the main College building on Sept. 9, 1862. This drawing, by Major Edward Cronin of the Union Army, apparently depicts Confederate cavalry attacking Union soldiers. More than 30 years later, largely through Ewell's efforts. Congress paid $64,000 in reparations to the College.*

*Even the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C., a stark black marble slab containing the names of those killed in the war, was plagued by controversy.*

# VIETNAM PERSPECTIVE: A Scholar's Bookshelf

## A Spate of Books and Films Analyzes America's Most Controversial War

BY EDWARD P. CRAPOL

In the more than 10 years since the last American forces left Southeast Asia there has been a steady outpouring of television documentaries, feature films, magazine articles, and books about the Vietnam War. Not only was Vietnam the first American war to reach the nation's living rooms each evening through television's all too graphic and unrelenting nightly news broadcasts, it also appears destined to become one of America's most studied and analyzed external conflicts. Why this ongoing fascination with Vietnam among the general public as well as throughout the scholarly community? On one level, persistent media coverage and the agony of America's first defeat on the battlefield undoubtedly have seared the national consciousness and perpetuated American society's preoccupation with the Vietnam War. On yet another level, the sheer bulk and magnitude of official documentation as well as print and electronic media sources present scholars and students with a surplus of riches for an ongoing analysis of America's longest war.

The existing, already voluminous literature on the Vietnam War is of every description and genre. It runs the gamut from novels, ordinary personal reminiscences and war stories, and retrospective musings that include accounts of recent anniversary visits to the scene of battle, to scholarly monographs, proceedings of conferences, oral histories, journalistic ramblings, and efforts at synthesis that would enable us finally to understand the true meaning of the war. Most of the earlier works were critical of American involvement, tended to denounce the war as an immoral debacle, and called for a major reappraisal and drastic overhaul of the nation's interventionist foreign policy. Guilt, shame and cries of "never again" were the vogue, much to the dismay of hawks and hardliners, as what pundits labeled "the Vietnam syndrome" dominated discourse about the necessity of rethinking America's role as global policeman.

Clearly this heralded overall rethinking of American foreign policy never took place either in official government circles or among the public at large. Instead, by the late 1970s and early 1980s the dove interpretation of the Vietnam War was being strongly challenged by conservative and neo-conservative "revisionists" intent on exorcising "the Vietnam syndrome" from the national consciousness. That effort has not entirely succeeded either, as attested by the recent appearance of several scholarly analyses that are based on extensive research in newly opened documents and unerringly detail the futility of the American war effort. Also, several examinations of "what went wrong" that undermine the easy solutions of the revisionists have been offered by prominent military officers who served and suffered in Vietnam.

At the time of Hollywood's Academy Awards ceremony last March, Oliver Stone, writer and director of this year's best motion picture, "Platoon," commented that his highly autobiographical depiction of the war barely scratched the surface of what happened in Vietnam. Despite the enormous box-office success and critical acclaim accorded his film, the wisdom of Stone's observation seems clear, for neither at home nor abroad are all filmgoers happy with his personalized view of the American experience in Vietnam. While most Vietnam veterans apparently disagree with their former commanding officer General William C. Westmoreland's dismissal of "Platoon" as being too negative and a distorted portrayal of the war, some black veterans do resent the movie's tendency to perpetuate racial stereotypes by casting the black troops as lazy, cowardly and without leadership abilities. Inadvertently confirming the accuracy of Stone's candid admission about the limitations of the film, one black veteran said: "Regardless of what you say went on in Vietnam, it's not going to be the total truth, because white America has always got to be the hero." "Platoon" also has come under attack from the National Committee for Responsible Patriotism as slick anti-war propaganda and demeaning to the memory of American servicemen who gave their lives in Vietnam. In Europe "Platoon" also has been seen as propaganda, but there the political left charges the film depicts American imperialism's invasion of Vietnam too benignly. Acrimony and disagreement about the basic issues of the war remain endemic to the American experience in Vietnam.

*The existing, already voluminous literature on the Vietnam War is of every description and genre. It runs the gamut from novels, ordinary personal reminiscences and war stories, and retrospective musings to scholarly monographs, proceedings of conferences, oral histories, journalistic ramblings, and efforts that would enable us to finally understand the true meaning of the war.*

Much the same may be said of direct attempts to heal the wounds of war and allay the agony of defeat. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the effort to erect a memorial to Vietnam veterans was plagued by controversy. Feeling scorned because their own government had not established a fitting national monument, veterans privately financed a tribute to their fallen comrades. The design of the memorial, a stark black marble slab containing the names of all those who died in the war and set directly into the earth, initially was denounced as the "black gash of shame," but since its formal dedication in 1982 has become one of the most visited monuments in Washington, D.C. The addition in 1984 of three figures representing three fighting men facing the memorial wall, but at enough distance to preserve the integrity of the original design, has placated veterans' groups that demanded a more heroic image of Americans in Vietnam. Unlike other war memorials that celebrate victory and rely on heroic depictions, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, or "the wall" as it is commonly known, exerts a mystical pull in its simplicity and starkness. To visit the monument and to confront the thousands of names on the mirror-like black marble, to come upon mementos left by earlier visitors — the photos, wreaths, single flowers and messages — and to see the weeping parents, friends and children touch and trace the name of a lost loved one, is to understand the memorial's sustained emotional and psychological attraction for a generation haunted by the trauma of Vietnam.

For anyone wishing to embark on a literary investigation of the meaning of Vietnam to the recent American experience, let me suggest the following brief listing. All are presently or soon will be available in paperback.

George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950 -1975* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2nd edition). This is the best brief overview by far. Clearly written and solidly researched, it provides the reader with the essential facts and chronology, while at the same time offering a succinctly argued interpretation of American involvement. In the preface to the 1986 second edition, Herring, a historian at the University of Kentucky, reasserts his primary thesis, unaltered by revisionism, that "U.S. intervention in Vietnam was based on a policy fundamentally flawed in its assumptions and major premises."

Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam, A History* (Viking Press). This volume by a journalist who reported for *Time* and *Life* beginning in 1959 and later for the *Washington Post* accompanies the PBS series, "Vietnam: A Television History." A lively narrative flavored with fascinating anecdotal tales, it is strong on the early aspects of American involvement, but lacks any overall thesis on the causes and merits of the war.

Truong Nhu Tang with David Chanoff and Doan Van Toai, *A Vietcong Memoir* (Vintage Books). The author, who fled his homeland in disillusionment in 1978 and now lives in Paris, was born of the French-educated Vietnamese elite. Originally attracted to the cause of Vietnamese nationalism by Ho Chi Minh, he provides a riveting glimpse of the enemy, having served with the National Liberation Front and for a time as minister of justice for the Provisional Revolutionary Government. His autobiography will become "grist," both for the critics and for defenders of American intervention, as it details not only the destructiveness of the U.S. presence on the southern insurgency, thereby virtually guaranteeing Hanoi's dominance, but also the repressiveness of northern rule in the post-1975 period.

Arnold R. Isaacs, *Without Honor: Defeat in Vietnam and Cambodia* (Vintage Books). A recent (1983) journalistic account that documents the tragedy of America's last years in Southeast Asia.

Highly judgmental, this participant history denounces with equanimity the actions of Saigon and Hanoi, and concludes that American policy in Indochina in the late Nixon-Kissinger era was a disaster. Perhaps the last of the genre of liberal journalistic histories of American involvement in Southeast Asia that defy neo-conservative revisionism with the unmistakable cry of "never again."

Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy, A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Dell). A postmortem by a colonel of infantry that directly faults American military leadership for the strategic failure of Vietnam and indirectly questions politicians for failing adequately to mobilize the will of the American people. Relying heavily on Clausewitz's classic principles of war, Summers concludes that the outcome in Vietnam might have been different had the military command possessed a clear understanding of the strategic offensive. His analysis apparently has become quite influential among military theorists.

George McT. Kahin, *Intervention, How America Became Involved in Vietnam* (Alfred A. Knopf). An excellent account by a specialist in Southeast Asian studies who painstakingly has evaluated previously classified documents made available through his persistent use of the Freedom of Information Act. Particularly insightful on the early decisions that led to the commitment of 500,000 troops by 1968, this volume does not cover the Nixon years. Kahin deftly explores the impact of the increasing American political and military presence and how it altered the nature of politics in South Vietnam. Another feature of Kahin's analysis is a sympathetic portrait of LBJ as a savvy politician warily reluctant to commit American might to a Vietnam quagmire, but succumbing in the end to the expertise of his foreign policy advisors.

Loren Baritz, *Backfire, A History of How American Culture Led Us into Vietnam and Made Us Fight the Way We Did* (William Morrow & Co.). A provocative analysis of U.S. involvement in Vietnam premised on the belief that "war is an expression of culture" and "of the way a culture thinks of itself and the world." Baritz seeks not only to explain the American way of war but to answer the question why Vietnam became such a national disaster. This is a passionate book in which the author concludes that the "lessons" of Vietnam have less to do with military strategy and tactics than they do with deepening and enhancing our understanding of ourselves and our culture.

Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War: Vietnam, the United States, and the Modern Historical Experience* (Pantheon). A trenchant analysis based on extensive research in American, French and Vietnamese sources. Kolko analyzes the war in the context of the triangular relationship between the U.S.A., the Republic of Vietnam, and "the Revolution," by which he means North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front. For him it was above all a struggle of ideologies in which "the Revolution" proved superior in capturing the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese masses. An important if somewhat didactic book that sees the Vietnam War as having exposed the limits and constraints on U.S. power in the post World War II era.

Wallace Terry, *Bloods, An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans* (Random House). Bernard Edelman (ed.), *Dear America, Letters Home from Vietnam* (Pocket Books). Two books that movingly tell the everyday story of the American troops in Vietnam. Terry, a journalist who for two years reported the war for *Time*, presents the experiences of 20 black veterans and eloquently conveys not only the horrors of war but the racial ambiguities confronting blacks in Vietnam. The Edelman collection vividly portrays the ordeal of the "grunts" who actually fought the war by authentically revealing their fears and sorrows, and their differing attitudes about what they and their country were doing in this foreign land thousands of miles from home.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Dr. Edward P. Crapol is acting chairman of the Department of History at the College of William and Mary where, among his other courses, he teaches one titled "America in Vietnam." A graduate of the University of Wisconsin and SUNY, Buffalo, he edited a collection of essays titled* Women in American Foreign Policy: Lobbyists, Critics, and Insiders, *which was published by Greenwood Press early this spring.*

*The renewed interest in Vietnam is evidenced in the enormous box office success of Oliver Stone's autobiographical motion picture "Platoon."*

# TERRORISM:
## A Diplomat's Personal View

BY
ROBERT E. FRITTS

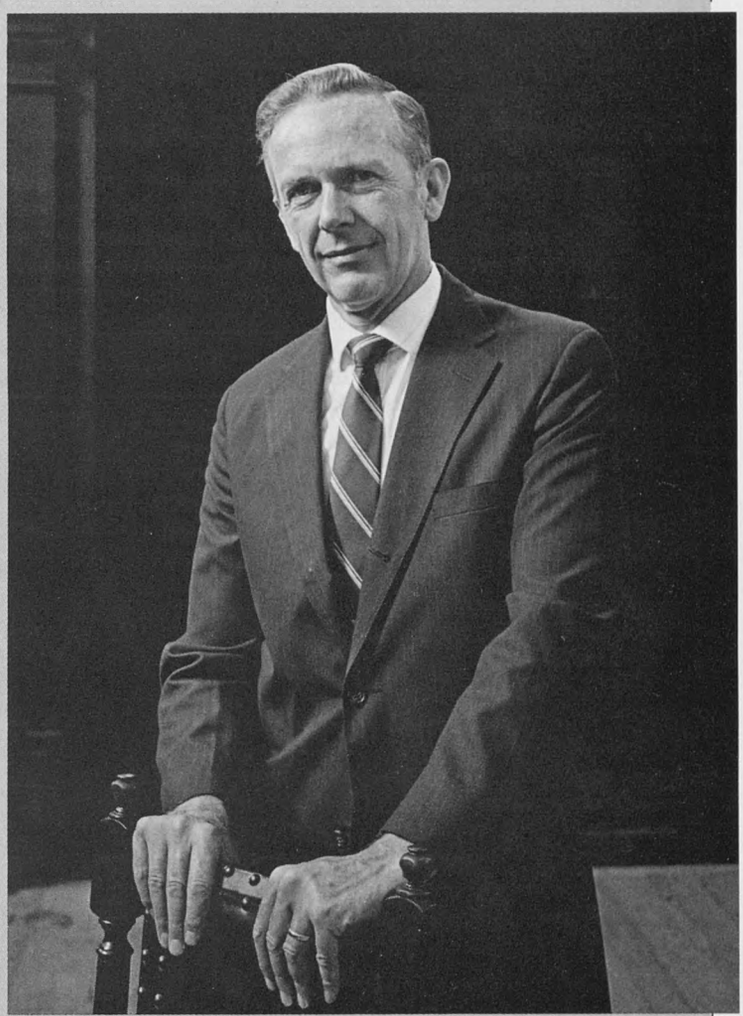
My first direct experience with terrorism was in 1973. I was being transferred from the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia, to become the deputy to the U.S. ambassador in Khartoum, the Sudan. While I was enroute to Khartoum with a layover of several days in Washington, D.C., the American ambassador, Cleo A. Noel, Jr., and his deputy, Curtis G. Moore, were captured by Black September terrorists while attending a diplomatic reception at the Saudi Arabian Embassy.

In accordance with standard U.S. policy, the responsibility for any negotiations with the captors rested with the Sudanese government. A stand-off quickly developed. The State Department decided to provide support at the scene, and I joined a small group on a special U.S. Air Force flight for Khartoum via Cairo. For reasons that were relevant at the time, the senior official and most of the group remained in Cairo, while I caught an onward commercial flight.

The plane arrived over Khartoum in the midst of dense *haboob*, or sandstorm, which was to last an unprecedented three days. As there was no alternate field for a thousand miles, the pilot had no option but to land at the shrouded airport. He radically aborted the first attempt when he mistook the lights of the terminal passenger lounge for the runway. We made it on the second try.

I was driven to the embassy, which was surrounded for protection by several tanks and squads of Sudanese soldiers. Power had failed throughout large areas of the city and the darkness of the late night was accentuated by the howling of the driving sand and grit. We hurried up the narrow staircase to the top floor of the dark and dilapidated commercial building that housed the embassy offices. As I climbed the last flight, I saw the silhouette of an officer backlighted by the emergency lamps. In a breaking voice, he announced, "We've heard gunfire in the Saudi Embassy, the ambassador and de-

**Robert E. Fritts, William and Mary's Diplomat-in-Residence**



*Robert E. Fritts served during the past academic year as William and Mary's Diplomat-in-Residence, a program sponsored by the State Department aimed at increasing support and dialogue between practitioners and scholars in foreign affairs. A former Naval officer and graduate of the University of Michigan, Fritts brought the experience of nearly 30 years of foreign service duty to the classroom at William and Mary, including several years in sensitive ambassadorial posts in Africa.*

*Fritts entered the foreign service in 1959, was selected into the Senior Foreign Service in 1981, and has the career rank of Minister-Counselor. He has served in foreign posts in Tokyo, Luxembourg, Jakarta, Indonesia, the Sudan, and in the African nations of Rwanda and Ghana, where he was the U.S. Ambassador from 1974 to 1976 (Rwanda) and 1983 to 1986 (Ghana). Other policy positions have included Director of U.S. Relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs (1980-83), a position in which he was responsible for foreign policy issues related to immigration as well as the protection and welfare of American citizens abroad.*

*The* William and Mary Magazine *asked Ambassador Fritts to share his views on dealing with terrorism, an issue with which he gained first-hand experience when he was transferred from Jakarta to Khartoum, the Sudan, where the American ambassador and his deputy had been captured and murdered by the Black September terrorists while Fritts was enroute to his new post. As he climbed the last flight of a narrow staircase of the building where the embassy offices were housed, Fritts was told that he was in charge.*

puty are believed dead, and you're in charge." They were and I was.

The next hours, days and weeks were what my trade euphemistically terms a professional challenge. Among many vignettes, I recall the parallel lines of black Sudanese troops with bagpipes playing "Auld Lang Syne" to a mournful dirge as the caskets of the fallen envoy and his deputy, my predecessor, were borne ceremonially to the U.S. presidential aircraft that would carry them and the widows back to the United States. My wife, Audrey, who had remained temporarily in Washington, would represent an embassy she had never seen at the nationally televised memorial service with attendance by the secretary of state and other notables. Since that time, we as a nation and the Foreign Service as a profession have necessarily become more hardened to the inescapable facts of terrorism. One or even several slain are no longer sufficiently unusual to warrant national mourning and full-scale media focus.

Ambassador Noel was neither the first nor the last American ambassador to be assassinated. Indeed, more American ambassadors have been lost at post (killed in action, if you will) than were American generals in the Vietnam war. In addition to the Sudan, they include our ambassadors to Guatemala (1968), Cyprus (1974), Lebanon (1976) and Afghanistan (1979). I knew all of them by reputation and several personally.

"Spike" Dubs in Afghanistan was an outstanding expert on the Soviet Union. The last time we met was in the men's room of the State Department where we each had paused in the middle of some late-night crisis, he with the Soviet Union and I with Thailand. We exchanged sympathetic comments. He made a typically wry witticism on his yet-to-be announced ambassadorship. We laughed and parted. A year later he was shot to death during a rescue attempt by Afghan security forces.

Ambassadors are not alone, of course. Americans abroad as tourists, in business, or as students are also at risk along with the Marines and other members of the armed forces. But the cost has been heavy in the Foreign Service as evidenced by the two memorial plaques in the diplomatic lobby of the State Department.

The first bronze plate contains the names of 78 State Department officers who lost their lives in "tragic circumstances" beginning in 1780. The causes were primarily the rigors of the time such as "lost at sea," natural disasters (earthquake and fire), and ever present disease, usually various "fevers," listed as yellow, tropical, African, coast and epidemic. It took until 1966 or 186 years to "fill" the available space.

The pace is much faster now. The second plate, begun in 1967, is almost full with 72 names of Americans who have similarly died violently while serving at our posts abroad. The cause of sacrifice has also changed from the natural to the human. The most prominent citation these days is "bombing," which has claimed 18 colleagues in Beirut alone since 1976. Before that, a total of 36 civilian officials were killed in Vietnam from 1965 to 1975. So far in the 1980s, 30 colleagues have been killed deliberately while serving the United States abroad.

*Ambassador Noel was neither the first nor the last American ambassador to be assassinated. Indeed, more American ambassadors have been lost at post than were American generals in the Vietnam war. In addition to the Sudan, they include ambassadors to Guatemala, Cyprus, Lebanon and Afghanistan. I knew all of them by reputation and several personally.*

William and Mary students are very interested in careers abroad, particularly with the Foreign Service and other government agencies. Their interest in government courses has leaped over the past few years. They are understandably interested in the threats of terrorism, and usually approach the topic indirectly with typical American false jocularity. But they quickly become intent and questioning.

— *What are the trends?* Well, in 1986 there was a welcome 6 percent decrease in the number of terrorist incidents worldwide as defined and compiled by the State Department. As might be expected, the Middle East remains the focal arena for nearly half (352) of the 737 incidents. In Africa the number fell from 43 to 18 and in Western Europe from 218 to 146. However, Latin America jumped from 119 to 157. Within Western Europe, the number of incidents of "Middle East origin" fell from 74 to 39.

Although cause and effect are notoriously difficult to trace, there is a consensus belief that the U.S. raid on Tripoli in April 1986 and the subsequent expulsion of several hundred Libyans from Western European countries had a substantial impact. Our intelligence agencies, in enhanced cooperation with those of other governments, have also forestalled and preempted a number of planned attacks. Nevertheless, worldwide, 544 persons were killed and 1,543 wounded in 1986 compared to 825 killed and 1,217 wounded in 1985. In most cases, whether one is killed or wounded is sheer luck.

Of the overall totals, American "casualties" were 12 killed and 101 wounded, down from 38 killed and 157 wounded in 1985. Other nationalities that suffered in a major way were the French (285), the Israelis (176) and the Spanish (54). Americans and our facilities abroad were, however, the leading targets of terrorist attacks (198), barely nudging out Israel (193) and followed by France (85), "Palestinians" (41), Spain (38) and the UK (31).

— *Do Americans still want to join the Foreign Service?* You bet! Last December about 16,000 persons applied for the Foreign Service entry exam (which also covers the U.S. Information Agency and the Foreign Commercial Service). About 3,000 passed and are now meeting with oral examiners around the country. The State Department will probably hire only about 200 this year (our recruitment is down 50 percent because of budget cuts). About a hundred W&M students took the exam. They have a high success rate testifying to the qualities of their education and of the factors which led them to William and Mary in the first place.

— *Where is it safe?* The easy answer used to be Europe. Terrorism was a phenomenon of the Middle East in particular and the developing world in general. No longer. The threat is now endemic. Three American embassies are considered so dangerous that a 50 percent salary bonus is provided — in Kabul, Afghanistan; Managua, Nicaragua, and Beirut, Lebanon. There are mutterings in Congress about ending those bonuses to "bureaucrats" who can thus earn more than a congressional salary. However, so do captains of nuclear submarines in recognition of special skills and hazardous conditions.

Interestingly and to the surprise of W&M students, there is little difficulty in finding Foreign Service officers to fill the key jobs in those posts and other difficult places. They volunteer in part, of course, for the money (which, among other uses, helps pay for college tuitions), but primarily because of the professional challenge (it's "where the action is"), and, frankly, plain old patriotism.

— *How do you know what to do?* Every Foreign Service employee and family member is trained on how to recognize the signs of potential terrorism, how to complicate or avoid an actual attack and, finally, if captured, how to improve chances of survival. The techniques range from the simple to the complex. Some of the simplest are also the most effective.

One is to be constantly alert. Our first few weeks in Williamsburg, Audrey and I luxuriated in driving anonymously without having to remain constantly aware of which cars were following and how close.

In Khartoum, my then 12-year-old daughter called one morning to say that the school bus had been followed by a suspicious car. She was able to identify the writing in Arabic on the license plate. I arranged alternate plans for the school that afternoon, but we were relieved later in the day when the Sudanese security headquarters, which had launched an emergency investigation, sheepishly discovered that the car was one of their own tailing the schoolbus as a precautionary measure.

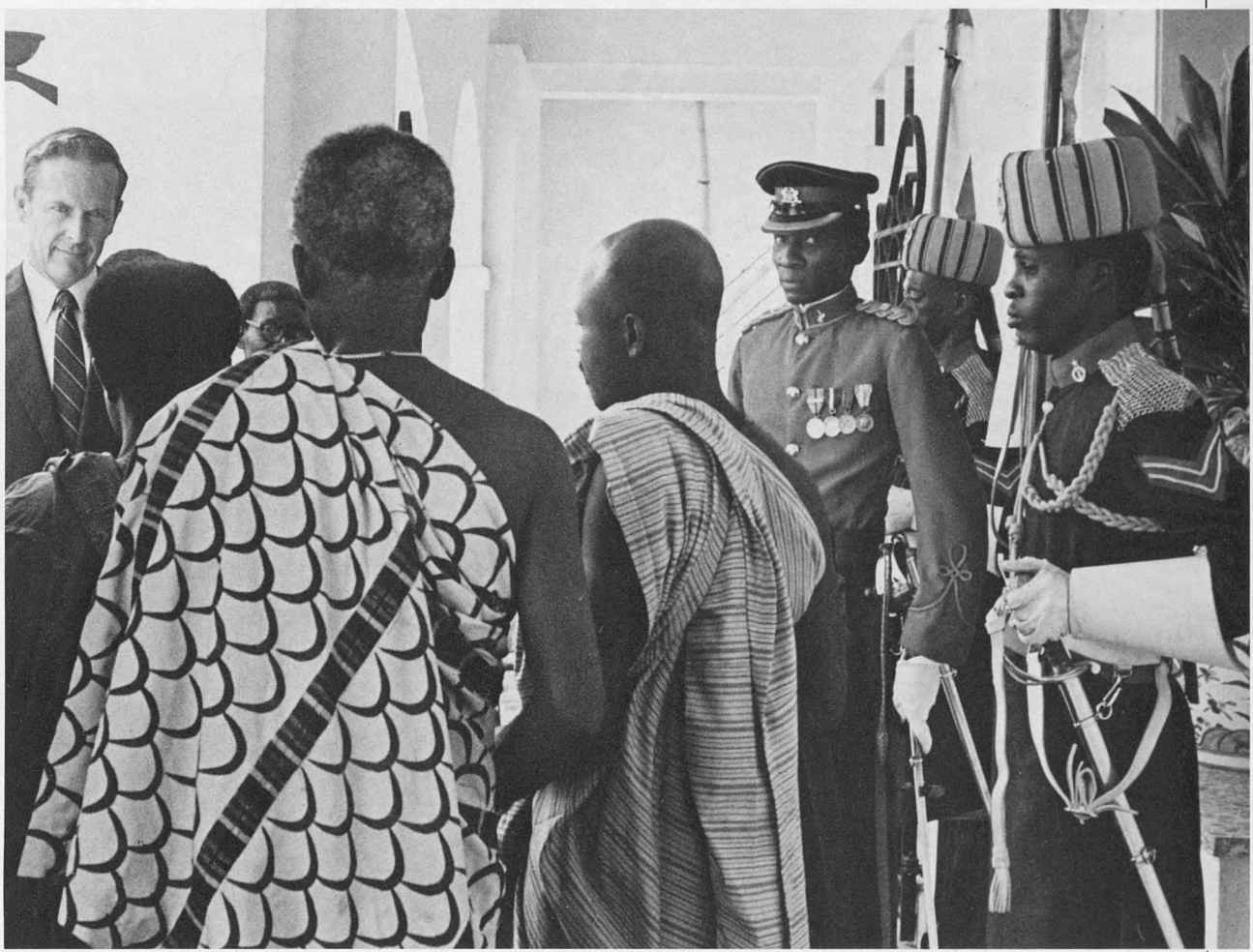
Another simple technique is to vary the times of going and returning from the office. The latter is not difficult; there are always enough flaps and other events to provide a variety of return times. For most Americans, however, wedded as we are to morning routine, varying departure to work is psychologically and practically more difficult. Variability — or nonpredictability — should also apply to any recurring activity.

But we all make compromises we shouldn't. Even when under purported assassination threats or when the local situation was dicey, such as following the U.S. bombing of Tripoli, I adhered to a weekly semi-public afternoon tennis game. To a potential terrorist target, a tennis court is nothing more than a wire mesh cage with no place to hide. My only concession to security, however, was not to change sides of the court, but always play from where I could watch the street. My Ghanaian and other partners never asked me why, but they probably guessed. It didn't seem to affect their play; I still frequently lost.

An important initiative against terrorism in recent years has been the support of the Congress and the American public in providing the State Department with the funds to improve markedly the physical security of our facilities. I was a beneficiary in Ghana where, in April 1986, a just-reconstructed wall prevented the almost certain penetration of the embassy by a violent mob which, tragically, vented its frustrated ire against the Ghanaian police and killed an unarmed policeman. After scattering the demonstrators, the police collected a number of guns including AK-47 automatic weapons. The wall had saved the situation for us and, not incidentally, averted major damage to the embassy which would, in the best of circumstances, have cost several times more to repair than the wall cost to reconstruct.

Unfortunately, such programs are now endangered as a result of previous budget cuts and the massive slash pending for this year. In addition to the closing of 15 embassies or consulates, about 25 security improvement projects are or will be stopped. Other cuts will have a disastrous impact on our ability to understand and influence international affairs and events. The entire foreign affairs budget covering all U.S. staffing and activities, including foreign aid and military assistance, amounts to about 2 cents per budget dollar. Canceling such security insurance to save the premium will only ensure future crises of much greater human and taxpayer expense.

In preparing to leave the College of William and Mary, Audrey and I are frequently asked how we found our "foreign" assignment to Williamsburg? As usual, we sought to become totally immersed in the environment — the region, the town and the university. Professionally, the support we received from "Brafferton," "Blair" and, especially, the faculty and students was outstanding and far beyond what we optimistically expected. Personally, we confess to an unexpected degree of the "culture shock" usually reserved for living in more exotic cultures as overseas we become inured, although never reconciled, to daily charges of imperialism and neo-colonialism related to virtually every news event, large or small, global or local. In Williamsburg, in contrast, the image of a past foreign colonialism is not only nurtured with customs preserved, but its physical presence has even been restored. Perhaps this may also happen one day in Africa, but that may well require the century and more that it did here.



*The author presents his credentials in a formal ceremony during his most recent foreign assignment as the U.S. Ambassador to Ghana.*

# 'No Mean City'

## An Irreverent Account of Williamsburg from Dr. Pott to the Rockefellers

LUDWELL H. JOHNSON III

Jamestown, said Lord De La Warre, was "a verie noysome and unholsome place." Well might he have thought so, having just met the haggard survivors of the "starving time" of 1609-1610. To Governor Thomas Gates, the village seemed "rather as the ruins of some auntient [for]tification, than that any people living might now inhabit it." Another settler reported, "Our men were destroyed with cruell diseases," reduced to "feeble wretches" whose "pitifull murmurings" filled the air night and day. The island where Jamestown lay was only a few feet above high tide. Marshes, with clouds of mosquitoes, covered much of it. The water was brackish, the summers sweltering, the winters bitterly damp and chilling. To disease and famine was added the threat of Indian attacks. It was, to say the least, an insalubrious place.

Yet in spite of such dismal circumstances Jamestown remained Vir-

ginia's chief settlement and seat of government for more than 90 years. Then at the end of the 17th century it was moved to the site that, as a result, became Williamsburg. There were several reasons for this decision. The settlers had very early become familiar with the area because it lay directly on the overland route between Jamestown and the principal settlements of Chief Powhatan on the York River. In 1608 Captain John Smith and some companions who made this trip were treated to a memorable entertainment. Smith and the others were sitting around a fire when

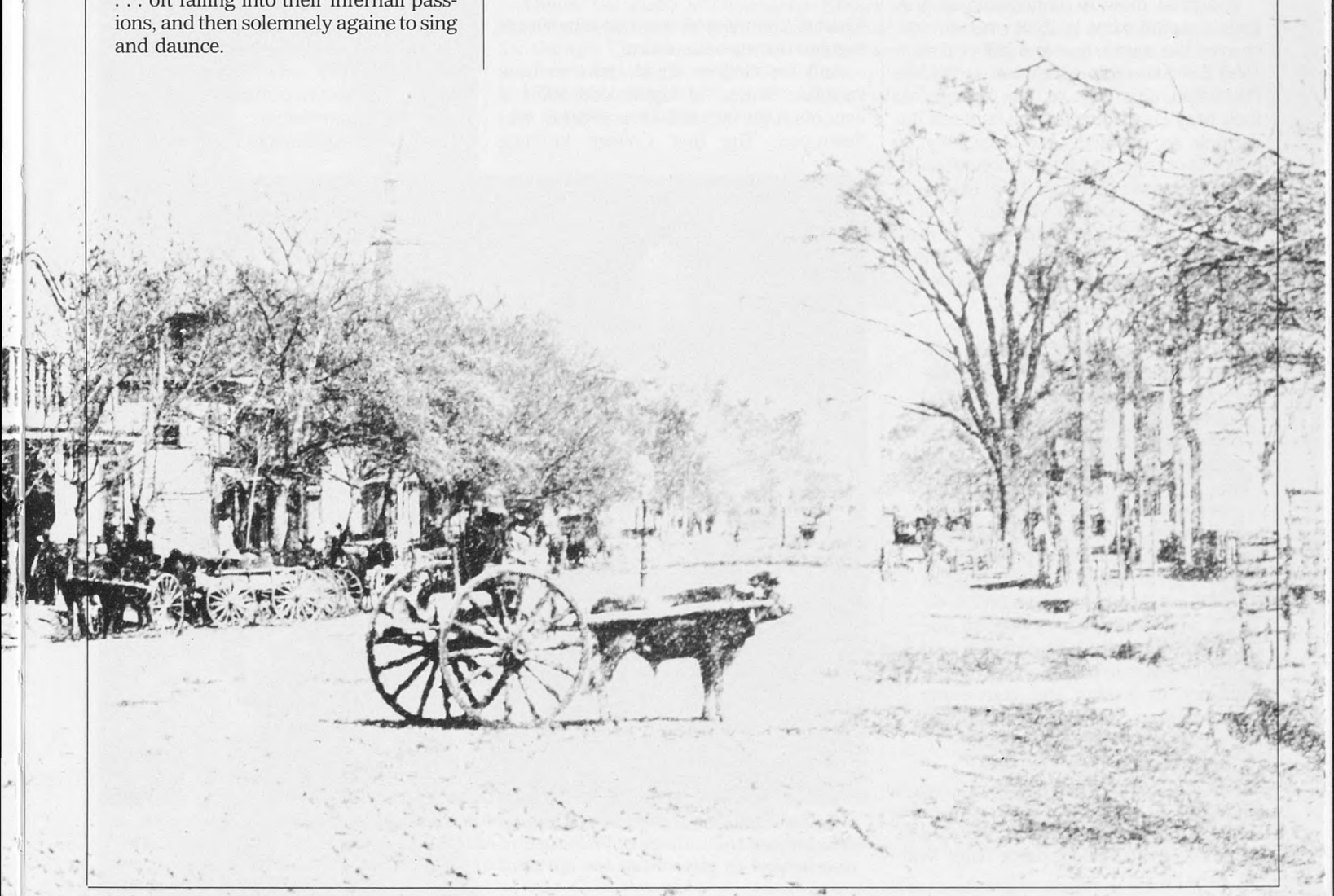
> suddainly amongst the woods was heard such a hideous noise and shriking, that they betooke them to their armes, supposing Powhatan with all his power came to surprise them; but [they soon were satisfied] there was no such matter, being presently presented with this anticke. 30 young women came naked out of the woods (only covered behind and before with a few greene leaves), their bodies al painted, some white, some red, some black, some partie colour, but every one different. . . . [They rushed] from amongst the trees, cast themselves in a ring about the fire, singing and dauncing . . . . oft falling into their infernall passions, and then solemnely againe to sing and daunce.

Someone has advanced the theory that the "antickes" of these wildwood Lolitas before men who had been deprived of feminine company for almost two years led to a great many trips unrecorded by history between Jamestown and Powhatan's village, producing an intimate familiarity, not only with the Indians, but also with the advantages of the future site of Williamsburg. Coming from the steamy flatlands of Jamestown, travelers must have admired the relatively high ground at the crest of the watershed between the James and York rivers, the absence of swamps and marshes and hence (relatively) of mosquitoes, the fresher air and good springs.

Perhaps the clinical significance of these climatic conditions led the colony's physician-general, Dr. John Pott, to establish his plantation of Harrop here in 1630. Besides being made physician-general in 1621, the doctor was for a time a member of the council, although he lost this position temporarily when accused of poisoning the Indians, and in 1629 even served a short term as provisional governor of the colony. The next year Pott's already somewhat shaky reputation suffered when a woman accused him of having caused her to miscarry by denying her a piece of pork (perhaps America's first medical malpractice suit). Even more ignominious were his trial and conviction for stealing hogs. In spite of his apparent passion for pork and his reputed fondness for low company and strong drink, Pott received a pardon because he was still the best physician in the colony. By this time the good doctor probably decided he would be more comfortable away from Jamestown, hence his establishment of Harrop. So Dr. Pott may claim to be one of the first settlers, if not the founder, of what was to be Williamsburg.

A pressing reason for moving the capital from Jamestown was strategic. The dreadful massacre of 1622 showed the need for a strong defensive position. The site of Williamsburg lay at the narrowest neck of the York-James peninsula. So it

*Photo Below: The Duke of Gloucester Street looking toward the Capitol early in the 20th century.*



was proposed to build a palisade from what is now College Creek, falling into the James, to Queen's Creek, a tributary of the York, and to encourage colonists to locate at the center of this defensive line by offering tax relief and land grants. By 1634 the palisade was in place, and there grew up the settlement of Middle Plantation, the predecessor of Williamsburg, including a church that was the forerunner of Bruton Parish.

Subsequent events were to elevate the importance of the straggling little hamlet. In 1676 the rebel Nathaniel Bacon made his headquarters there and held a convention which adopted "resolutions . . . breathing the love of liberty which characterized the work of the patriots in Williamsburg a hundred years later." Bacon burnt Jamestown during the course of his rebellion, and in 1677 the Assembly met in the house lately used by Bacon. A treaty of amity with the Indians was signed that same year at Middle Plantation, which had now become the principal garrison town of the colony. Sixteen years later, in 1693, there occurred an event that further enhanced the importance and helped to guarantee the survival of the town: the issuance of a royal charter founding the College of William and Mary.

The final blow to Jamestown as Virginia's capital came in 1698 when fire destroyed the state house and jail, and so in 1699 the Assembly again met at Middle Plantation, this time at the College. At their May Day exercises, the students undertook to persuade the Assembly to move the capital to Middle Plantation. Already, they said "here are great helps and advances towards the beginning of a town, a church, an ordinary, several stores, two mills, a smiths shop, a grammar school, and above all the College." And they further argued:

> Another great benefite to the students at this place, would be the conveniency and good company and conversation: For in such a retired corner of the world, far from business, and action, if we make scholars, they are in danger of proving meer scholars, which make a very rediculous figure: made up of pedantry, disputaciousness, positiveness, and a great many other ill qualities which render them not so fitt for action and conversation; except the muses naturally shamefaced and bashful learn to put on a decent confidence by seeing and conversing among men and being acquainted with action and business.

The Assembly and Governor Francis Nicholson did in fact decide to move the capital to Middle Plantation, which was renamed Williamsburg after King William III. Nicholson, in some ways a strange fellow, wanted to lay out the town in the shape of a W and an M, but this notion was not executed. (Two streets were — and are — named for the governor, however: Francis Street and Nicholson Street.) The first buildings erected were the state house and the gaol, situated in suggestive proximity to one another. Because no fewer than three state houses at Jamestown had accidentally burned, in the new capitol the use of fires, candles and tobacco was prohibited — but it burned anyway in 1747. In fact, it can be said that in a very real sense Williamsburg has had a brilliant and illuminating history. Someone should do a study of pyromania on the middle peninsula, judging by the following catalogue of conflagrations:

1. First state house at Jamestown burnt, 1670.
2. Second a few years later.
3. Third by Bacon in 1676.
4. Fourth in 1698.
5. Fifth (first in Williamsburg) 1747.
6. Sixth (the remains at least) in 1832.
7. In 1781 the Governor's Palace burned.
8. In 1859 the Raleigh Tavern.
9. In 1885 Eastern State Hospital.

Visitors commented that the inhabitants seemed nervous about fire.

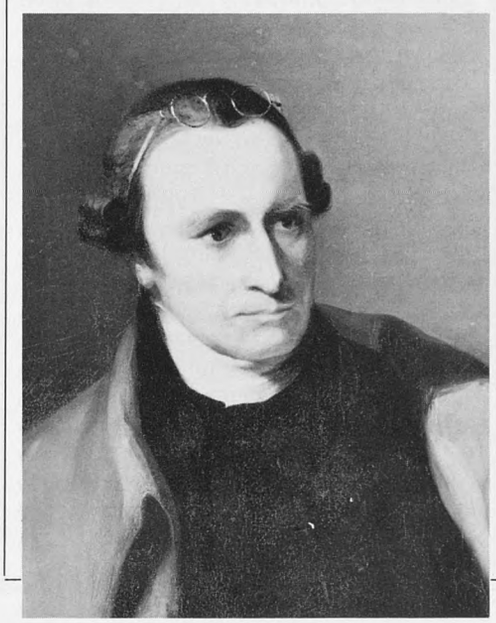
And the College could claim to be a veritable beacon of higher education. It was often on fire and several times was destroyed. The first College building burned in 1705 before it had been fully completed. It was badly damaged by fire in 1781, burnt down in 1859, and then was deliberately set on fire in 1862 by a crowd of drunken Union soldiers in a fit of Yankee vandalism.

Many years later in commemoration of these incidents alumni presented the College with a large brass plaque depicting the phoenix, which also rises repeatedly from its own ashes. The phoenix is no doubt appropriate, but some have suggested that a more fitting mascot for the College would be Lazarus — in fact both Lazaruses: the one in the 11th chapter of John to represent the College's resurrection, and the leprous mendicant in the 16th chapter of Luke to recall the College's long career as a beggar for funds, and the fact that the state government and Williamsburg townspeople have from time to time looked upon it as something of a moral and intellectual leprosarium. This proposal has met with little enthusiasm, however, possibly because it would require renaming the football team.

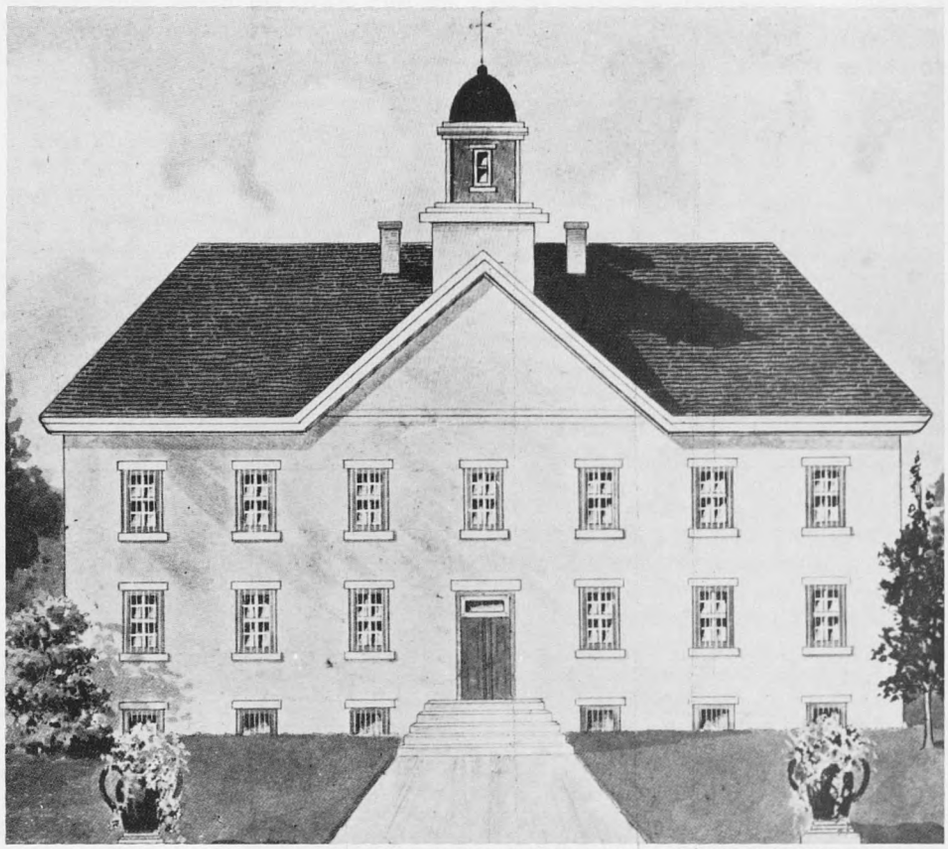
We can tell that the establishment of the College and the capital accelerated the development of Williamsburg as a genuine town because as early as its session of 1710-11 the Assembly passed an act "to prevent hogs from rooting within the city of Williamsburg." In trying to determine what Williamsburg was like in the 18th century, other than being hog heaven, one meets a confusion of voices.

General impressions varied widely. Some visitors commented favorably: the

*In 1693, King William III and Queen Mary II issued the Royal Charter which established the College of William and Mary — an event that further enhanced and helped to guarantee the survival of Williamsburg.*



*Above, the Duke of Gloucester Street as viewed from the Wren Yard early in the restoration; at left, College student and later resident of Williamsburg St. George Tucker, who disputed the view that Williamsburg was a den of gamblers; below, the original public hospital and mental institution completed in 1773, and below left the great orator Patrick Henry, who, according to Jefferson, "spoke as Homer wrote."*



*All photos are from the archives of Colonial Williamsburg.*

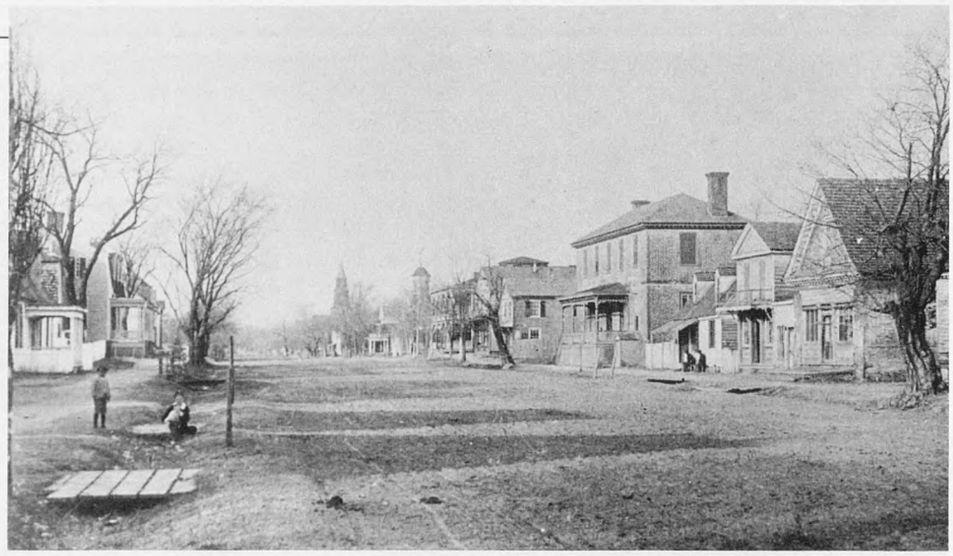
town makes "a handsome appearance" (1759-60); it occupies a "charming situation;" it is "the finest town I have seen in Virginia" (1777); a "very pretty town" (1781). Others saw it very differently: It was "a most wretched contriv'd Affair for the Capital of a country . . . ." (1742). Josiah Quincy of Massachusetts, on a trip south for his health, said: "I have just been taking a view of the whole town. It is inferior to my expectations. Nothing of the population of the north or of the splendour and magnificence of the south."

There were similar disagreements concerning the public buildings: In his *Present State of Virginia,* Hugh Jones wrote in 1722: "these buildings . . . are justly reputed the best in all the English America, and are exceeded by few of their kind in England." Others applied to the College, capitol, and palace such adjectives as "large and elegant," "magnificent," "beautiful," "fine." Yet during the same years the same buildings were being called "extremely indifferent," "far from magnificent," "badly contrived," "shabby." And in his *Notes on Virginia,* the illustrious Jefferson delivered an opinion that was to give Williamsburgers the dry gripes down through the years when he said that "the college and the hospital are rude, mis-shapen piles, which, but that they have roofs, would be taken for brick kilns." Inhabitants maintained loyally that they could easily tell them from brick kilns.

Under the careful scrutiny of the eyewitness, even Duke of Gloucester Street took on a remarkable elasticity. It was said to be less than one-quarter of a mile in length, or three-quarters, or one mile, or one and one-half miles (the real length is seven-eighths of a mile). Whereas Hugh Jones found the street to be a "pleasant, long dry walk, broad, and almost level," others said it was deep with "burning sand and dust" and "very disagreeable to walk in."

A number of visitors claimed that gambling was epidemic in Williamsburg. For example, Ebenezer Hazard observed in 1777: "There is a severe act of Assembly against gaming, but I observe the members of that house are as much addicted to it as other men, and as frequently transgress the law . . . . Gaming is amazingly prevalent in Williamsburg." Even Governor Fauquier was said to have "a rage for play." Some went so far as to say that gambling was the *only* amusement.

Against these clouds of witness, however, we can place the testimony of none other than St. George Tucker, the eminent legal scholar, who recalled that during his college years in Williamsburg (1771-75) when he was widely acquainted in the town and during "a time of life when prudence rarely guides our footsteps," he could not "recollect that he was ever present where the company amused themselves with *gaming,* unless playing for a few pence, or at most shillings, deserves that epithet." He never saw, he said, during those four years "a pack of cards" or any other "implement of gaming introduced a dozen times." Furthermore, since taking up residence again in Williamsburg in 1789 he had concluded that no other "civilized part of the globe is more perfectly exempt from the vice of gaming."



*This pre-1921 photo shows Williamsburg with dirt streets and rundown buildings. In the 1800s, a traveler recalled, there were so many animals in the street that "I thought I had been transported to Noah's ark."*

Perhaps some potential gamblers were deterred by a report in the *Virginia Gazette,* March 17, 1766:

> Gloucester, March 17, 1766 — We have an account of a very extraordinary instance of the Divine vengeance that happened about a week ago at Chalford in this country. One Richard Parsons a young man of that place, was playing at cards, and he most profanely wished his flesh might rot, and his eyes never shut, if he did not win the next game. When he was going to bed he observed a black spot upon his leg from which a mortification began immediately to spread all over his body, so that he died in a day or two, his flesh being quite rotten; nor could his eyes be shut, notwithstanding all the efforts of his friends to close them. The truth of this fact is attested by many of the neighbours who were with him.

Whatever the conflicting views about Williamsburg, there can be no doubt that in the 1760s and 1770s it saw a concourse of great men and momentous events unparalleled in American history. The reader scarcely needs to be reminded of such things as Patrick Henry's resolutions against the Stamp Act, when this peerless orator, who (said Jefferson) spoke as Homer wrote, reminded George III that Caesar had his Brutus and Charles I his Cromwell; or of the effect of those resolutions on the spirit of resistance in the other colonies. Nor will he forget the Burgesses' continued opposition to repeated violations of their rights, to illegal trials and taxation, which came to a climax in 1774 when Governor Dunmore dissolved the Burgesses for declaring June 1, the day the port of Boston was to be closed by act of Parliament, a day of fasting and prayer. And that thereupon leading Burgesses reassembled at the Raleigh Tavern and called for a Congress of delegates from all the colonies — the First Continental Congress. The reader will remember the Virginia convention, whose delegates included Peyton Randolph, soon to be first president of the Continental Congress, Richard Henry Lee, George Washington and Patrick Henry. And that in the following year Williamsburg overthrew royal authority altogether, causing Governor Dunmore to flee the city. He will reflect with pride that in 1776 the convention at Williamsburg directed the Virginia delegates to the Continental Congress to move resolutions declaring the colonies free and independent states, resolutions that were unanimously passed by the convention on May 15 and sent on to Philadelphia, where George Mason introduced the resolution of independence which Thomas Jefferson would soon justify in his famous Declaration.

But Williamsburg's star began to decline even as it reached its zenith. In the autumn of 1779 a meteor of extraordinary brilliance flashed and went out in the sky over the town — an omen of the city's fate. The following year the state capital was moved to Richmond for two of the reasons the capital had been moved from Jamestown to Williamsburg: centrality of location, and defensibility. It was moved not a moment too soon. The very next year Cornwallis's army occupied Wil-

liamsburg, which suffered from the pillage, destruction and diseases of war, plus a remarkable plague of flies left behind by the British army when it marched away to its decisive defeat at Yorktown. In any event, one stroke of the legislative pen reduced this birthplace of American liberties to an insignificant country village. The merchants and professional men departed with the politicians.

Williamsburg had never been a trade center, so now its remaining means of support consisted of the College and the lunatic asylum. The asylum, first of its kind in America, opened its doors in 1773 and admitted the "first person of unusual mind," as one writer quaintly phrased it. Both it and the College were struck a severe blow by the war. In 1782 the Reverend Francis Asbury, known as the "Father of Methodism in America," observed: "The Bedlam house is desolate, but whether none are insane, or all are equally mad, it might, perhaps, be difficult to tell." Reverend Asbury's view may have been colored by the fact that he had tried to preach in a town that was almost unanimously Episcopalian.

After the war both the College and the asylum revived, although the general population had dwindled to a few hundred families. In later years it was said that the 500 lazy lived off the 500 crazy. Whether the college population was included in the latter or the former number is not clear. Indeed, there were those who saw more similarities between College and asylum than their brick-kiln appearance, remarking that about the only difference was that to get out of the asylum one had to show signs of improvement. By the late 19th century, impoverished by two wars, overshadowed by the University of Virginia and other rising institutions, the old College — which had counted among its students Jefferson, Monroe and Marshall, where Phi Beta Kappa was born — had become the butt of jokes and a place of little importance.

As for the town, to Virginians the word "Williamsburg" came to have a very specific meaning — the place where crazy people were sent. When one was told that so-and-so had gone to Williamsburg, you knew immediately what *that* meant. And even the asylum had little claim to fame. For more than two generations the attending physicians apparently went on the theory that "you are what you eat," and their usual treatment consisted either of emetics or cathartics. Even more dreadful was the hygiene. Many of the patients suffered from alcoholic dementia, yet it was common practice to bathe them, not in soap and water, but in whiskey. Imagine the feelings of the lifelong toper, sent to the asylum, his liquor cut off, and then being washed in it. One can scarcely imagine a more refined and exquisite type of mental torture. At bath-time there must have been many a spirited tussle between patient and attendant for possession of the sponge. However, the so-called system of "moral treatment" eventually was introduced by that dedicated and gentle soul, John Minson Galt II, who was superintendent until ejected by Union army officers in 1862.

Travelers' accounts of Williamsburg in the 19th century have a pensive sadness. One sure sign of decay was the return of the pigs to root in the streets from which they had been legally banned a century before. They were joined by so many other animals that a visitor wrote in 1827 that "I thought I was transported to Noah's ark." Public buildings destroyed, others tumbled down, the "poor town," as one traveler said, "has very little to recommend it . . . except the memory of its ancient importance." The long, sleepy afternoon of this little village stretched into the 20th century. On election day in 1912 there was no election; everyone had forgotten to hold one. And the next year the city council voted to stop paying $50 a year to wind up the only public clock in town. Time could stop. It was a pleasant, Booth Tarkington kind of life, simple, friendly, slow, rich in humanity, and colored still by memories of "ancient importance."

Those memories were to rush Williamsburg into the 20th century by recreating the Williamsburg of the 18th. Causality is the despair of the historian. Who could have watched a silent, intent little boy in western New York in the 1840s, learning the rudiments of business by purchasing candy by the pound and selling it to his brothers and sisters by the piece — who could have predicted that he would amass a fortune which would transform a community that in all likelihood he had never heard of? But so it was, for his son, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., under the tutelage of Reverend W.A.R. Goodwin, embraced the idea of restoring the 18th century town.

Restored Williamsburg is not, of course, Old Williamsburg. That way of life was swept away, the natives inundated by a flood of newcomers. Perhaps this would have happened eventually anyway. Even Williamsburg could not have withstood the onslaught of the automobile age indefinitely. Fortunately, when change did come, it came in the form of a memorial to those great times when wisdom, courage and statesmanship gave birth to a society of free men based upon the rule of law. Americans need to be reminded of these things, to keep alive the memories of Williamsburg's ancient importance.

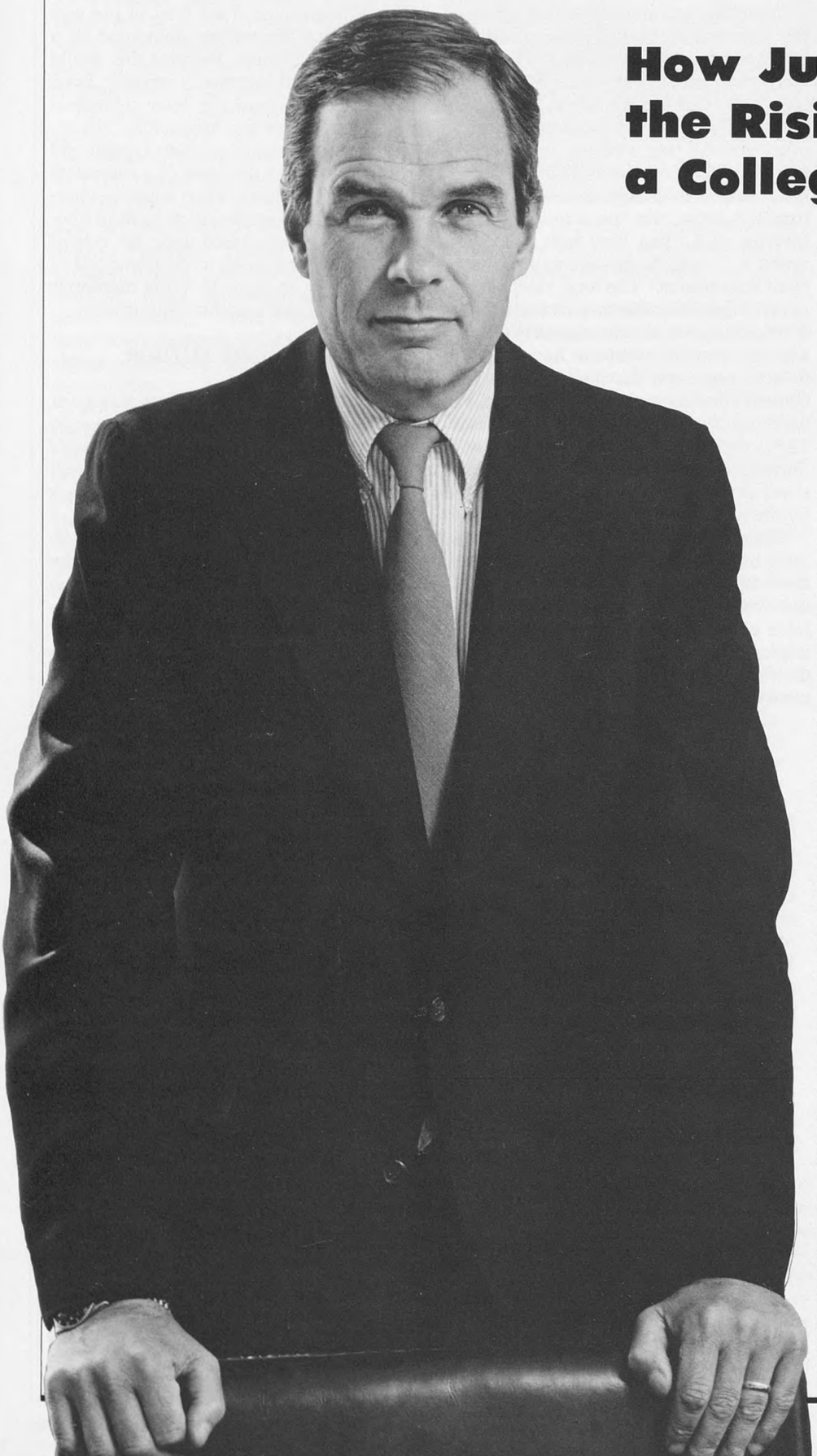
### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Dr. Johnson is a professor of history at William and Mary. Among the sources used for this little sketch, the writer would like to mention the late Dr. Jane Carson's* We Were There, *and also Parke Rouse's* Cows on the Campus *for its evocation of the atmosphere of pre-Restoration Williamsburg. Readers interested in John Smith are referred to the definitive edition of his* Complete Works *edited by Philip L. Barbour and published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture in 1986 by the University of North Carolina Press.*

*Under the tutelage of the Reverend W.A.R. Goodwin, John D. Rockefeller Jr. (right) embraced the idea of restoring Williamsburg to its 18th century heritage.*

Photo by Joseph Karsh

# HOLD ON THERE, MR. BENNETT



## How Justified Are the Rising Costs of a College Education?

BY PAUL R. VERKUIL '61

The higher education community has drawn attention nationally from Secretary of Education William Bennett for the allegedly reckless way it is pricing its services. Closer to home, the State Council of Higher Education has questioned the increases in the fee portion of college costs at Virginia's institutions of higher learning. This scrutiny is a good thing, and it should be applauded. However, sound explanations should mute much of the criticism.

Let's start at the federal level with the Department of Education and Secretary Bennett. In a nutshell he argues that higher education has for too long been preserved from cost and price control scrutiny and, as a result, has continued to raise its charges without regard to the economy, the inflation rate, or parents' and students' ability to pay. In a recent letter to the nation's governors, Mr. Bennett cited a 1986 Opinion Research Corporation study that 82 percent of the public believes "college costs are rising at a rate that will put college out of reach of most people." He also cites statistics that show average college costs have increased 56.8 percent between 1980-81 and 1985-86, a period during which the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose only 25.6 percent.

These statistics standing alone certainly deserve close study. I agree fully with the Secretary in welcoming the spotlight upon higher education, since I think that we, like other public functions, should justify and respond to public concerns. Colleges and universities which teach the value of open inquiry and critical analysis would be odd

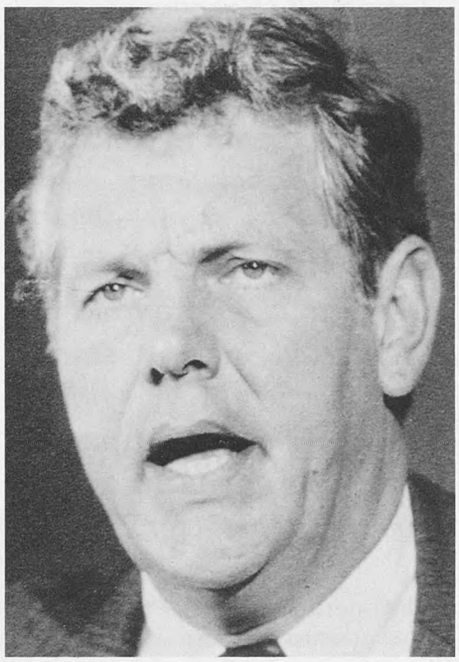
places to assert exceptions from those forces when applied from the outside.

Present perceptions of college costs can only be changed by equally compelling facts and statistics. Let's take a look at the cost figure the Secretary offers. While one cannot quarrel with his math, the time frame chosen for analysis has a marked effect on the outcome. If one goes back before 1980-81, the picture over 15 years is more balanced and should be much more reassuring.

An American Council of Education study recently published analyzes the period from 1970 to 1987, and shows that "the price of college has increased about one percentage point per year faster than the CPI and more slowly than disposable income per capita." While the increase has been greater in recent years as Secretary Bennett's statistics show, that is largely because tuitions lagged behind the CPI throughout the 1970s. Moreover, the ACE study emphasizes that many of the 3,000 plus colleges and universities, institutions that in fact enroll four-fifths of all students, charge far less than their top 80 or so competitors. In other words, there is a differentiated market in higher education, with some institutions offering a higher priced variation on the basic educational package. That is a point important to keep in mind when we turn to the situation in Virginia.

The ACE study cannot tell us whether the recent trend of higher than usual tuition increases of the 1980s is an aberration or the start of a new pattern, but there are several ways to approach that question. First, much of the recent tuition increases sought to reduce the loss in real income suffered by higher education faculties during the 1970s. In the 1970s faculty salaries grew by 73 percent, versus 112 percent for the CPI. In the 1980s salaries have increased 40 percent to a 33 percent CPI increase. Universities are people-intensive operations and any increase in personnel costs has a great impact upon the budget. Once the erosion is overcome, the cost pressures on salaries could well abate.

Now you could say, "Why not let faculties remain in the fix the inflation prone years put them in? They are largely tenured in and, as a result, immovable." This is a dangerous and self-defeating proposition. Putting aside equity arguments on behalf of the professoriate, what we cannot lose sight of is that universities are dynamic enterprises that not only must produce outstanding teaching and research by existing staff, but must attract the "best and brightest" to teach the next generation of students. A growing gap between opportunities in private enterprise and higher education can only have a deleterious, and in the long run, dangerous impact upon the quality of training our young people receive in an increasingly complex and competitive world. Recent studies show that it is increasingly difficult to attract the very top graduates to higher education.



**Secretary of Education William Bennett**

Another cost-inducing factor results from the broadened roles our campuses have been called upon to perform in recent years. Fees for services, non-academic costs such as food and housing, have moved upward for a variety of reasons, driven by the expectations of students and their parents when they choose an institution. A full range of environmental, health, social and safety services is expected. People want the campus to assume much more responsibility for the lives of the student, at least in the residential setting, than was true 20 or 30 years ago. To that I can attest as a student of that era, right here in Williamsburg. We didn't have such things as health and psychological services, extensive placement and academic advising programs. The point is these services do not come free; they have cost implications.

Perhaps the most significant cost factor nationally is student financial aid. Secretary Bennett utilizes the presence of federal aid to explain increasing tuitions by arguing that colleges and universities are passing on higher education costs with greater abandon because of the presence of federal dollars to absorb them. The connection between financial aid and tuition increases is not that simple. Student aid consists of about one-third of college costs. In the 1980s, when tuitions were rising faster than the inflation rate, the ACE study shows that financial aid, including federal aid, increased more slowly than the CPI (20 percent versus 33 percent). Thus during this period institutions had to bear a greater share of financial aid, which helps to explain the cost increases that have resulted.

Like the argument about professors' salaries, one could argue that finances are solely the responsibility of the student and family. Higher tuitions like lower salaries are problems that must be absorbed solely by those affected. But if we accept this argument we break faith with an underlying assumption of the open merit-based society, namely, upward mobility.

The Secretary's use of the financial aid argument is an odd one, given this background and in light of the cuts in federal aid the Department of Education has proposed in this year's federal budget. The President's budget cuts Federal funding for higher education by over 40 percent in one year (from $4.6 billion to $2.7 billion). Pell grants, which serve over 3 million low income students, would be reduced by 30 percent. College work study and National Direct Student Loan funding would be eliminated. These are catastrophic changes by any estimate. To give you some idea of the impact in Virginia, federal financial aid would fall from its current level of $80 million to $45 million, almost a 50 percent decrease.

It is hard to comprehend how Secretary Bennett can simultaneously attack the tuition levels of universities while proposing draconian cuts in support. A large component of the institutional budget is now devoted to self-funded financial aid.

Some aspects of the Secretary's program are very creative. For example, the income contingent loan program that allows students to pay back educational loans over a period of years based on a percentage of earned income. The idea of this plan is to hold students responsible for the degree to which their education has added value to their lifetime income. Thus those who major in business or finance and have high incomes would pay back their loans more quickly than those

who go into teaching or other public service professions.

But if loans and work make sense and encourage student responsibility, as I believe they do, then why does the Department of Education's current budget propose the elimination of campus work study funds which help achieve that goal already? This program already has a cost-sharing aspect, with 80 percent of the cost of wages charged to federal sources and 20 percent to institutions. Students who qualify can in effect pay their way with campus jobs while in school and thereby reduce educational debt thereafter. This is the kind of program you would think cost-conscious administrations would endorse, not destroy.

We all have responsibility for helping to reduce the budget deficit, but placing a disproportional multi-billion dollar burden on the student population is an inequitable way to do so. There is a disquieting assumption in these cuts that all of the benefits of higher education accrue directly to the recipient student. This narrow analysis overlooks the social dimension of higher education. Access to opportunity, as an enduring value of our democratic society, hangs in the balance. We are all enriched by an educated populace, especially by one that has been recognized for its merit, not just for its ability to pay.

Let me now turn to the situation in the Commonwealth. Virginia is blessed with a rich variety of outstanding public institutions and some notable private ones as well. A recent Department of Education study shows that this state is a net importer of college students, which is an indication of the popularity of our institutions nationally. The diversity of higher education in Virginia is its strength.

Individual autonomy leaves institutions with some discretion in the setting of fees and to a lesser extent tuitions. (Tuitions are largely dictated by the appropriations process. Each college is in effect told how much of its academic budget must be recovered from tuition. This ranges from 30 to 40 percent.) Autonomy implies that some schools will provide more in the way of services than others, and also that some smaller institutions will have to charge more for comparable services than larger ones.

Recently the State Council examined the fee structure at Virginia public institutions and made some critical statements about them. These were in turn picked up and endorsed editorially in several Virginia newspapers. The concern was that fees for non-academic undertakings were rising at a rate that exceeded tuition and, unlike tuition, they were set without specific state approval.

*Virginia's state institutions of higher learning contribute importantly to the quality of life in our state. First of all, they educate our children who will be the leaders of the next generation. They do research, which is critical to social and economic development. They bring to the Commonwealth students from all over the United States to study and later work. They bring jobs and a high quality workforce. Higher education is a good investment for Virginia.*

The question of proper fee levels for non-academic services is a complex one. Fees are a function of demands for services requested by students and parents. They are also not subsidized by allocations from the state appropriations process. Institutions respond in different ways based on their size and level of services demanded.

But size is relevant to fees. To some extent, economies of scale are at work in the university setting. For example, bus fees set for transporting students from residences to classes must be spread over a smaller student body, even though those bus routes, once fixed, could carry probably twice the student load without a significant increase in costs. Similarly health and safety personnel must be set at a certain functional size and be equipped in a manner that is more costly on a per capita student basis. Moreover, consider intercollegiate athletic programs. The cost of grants in aid and coaches' salaries for football, basketball or soccer programs remains the same whether there are 6,000 or 20,000 students to spread them over.

It has been suggested that one way out of the fee increase situation is to resort to user fees and only charge people directly for what they use. But this course would be impossible to administer, since budgets must be established and people hired on a solid forecast of revenues. We could no more do this with athletics for example than we could with academic disciplines, where English majors would argue that they should not have to subsidize the costly labs of science majors.

Thus fees are not only size sensitive, they are also type-of-institution sensitive. John Thelin of William and Mary's School of Education, writing in the Wall Street Journal, recently put the matter well: "Today the college that fails to provide new and expanded services falls behind other colleges in competition for students."

This does not mean of course that all colleges must provide the same range of services or charge the same fees. Diversity is again the key. There are institutions in the state whose tuition and fees are lower than others, and students can price shop. But this does not mean that we are high priced. Six of our state institutions and five of our private ones are listed in the nationally recognized book "Best Buys in College Education," published by the New York Times. Notably, only California's state system had more public institutions listed in the book than does Virginia. The state schools listed were George Mason, James Madison, Mary Washington, University of Virginia, Virginia Tech and William and Mary. This recognition confirms that we are clearly doing something right, and that we are clearly not overpricing our product.

Higher education welcomes and needs sustained scrutiny. My guess is that all of our state institutions will examine their fee increases carefully this year. I know we have.

Virginia's state institutions of higher education contribute importantly to the quality of life in our state. First of all, they educate our children who will be the leaders of the next generation. They do research, much of which is critical to social and economic development. New companies want to locate in states with high quality universities. They bring to the Commonwealth students from all over the United States to study and later work. They bring jobs and a high quality work force. Higher education is a good investment for Virginia.

*Dr. Verkuil is president of the College of William and Mary. This article is adapted from an address he gave at a statewide Rotary meeting in April, 1987.*

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

## Dining Halls and the Collegiate Ideal

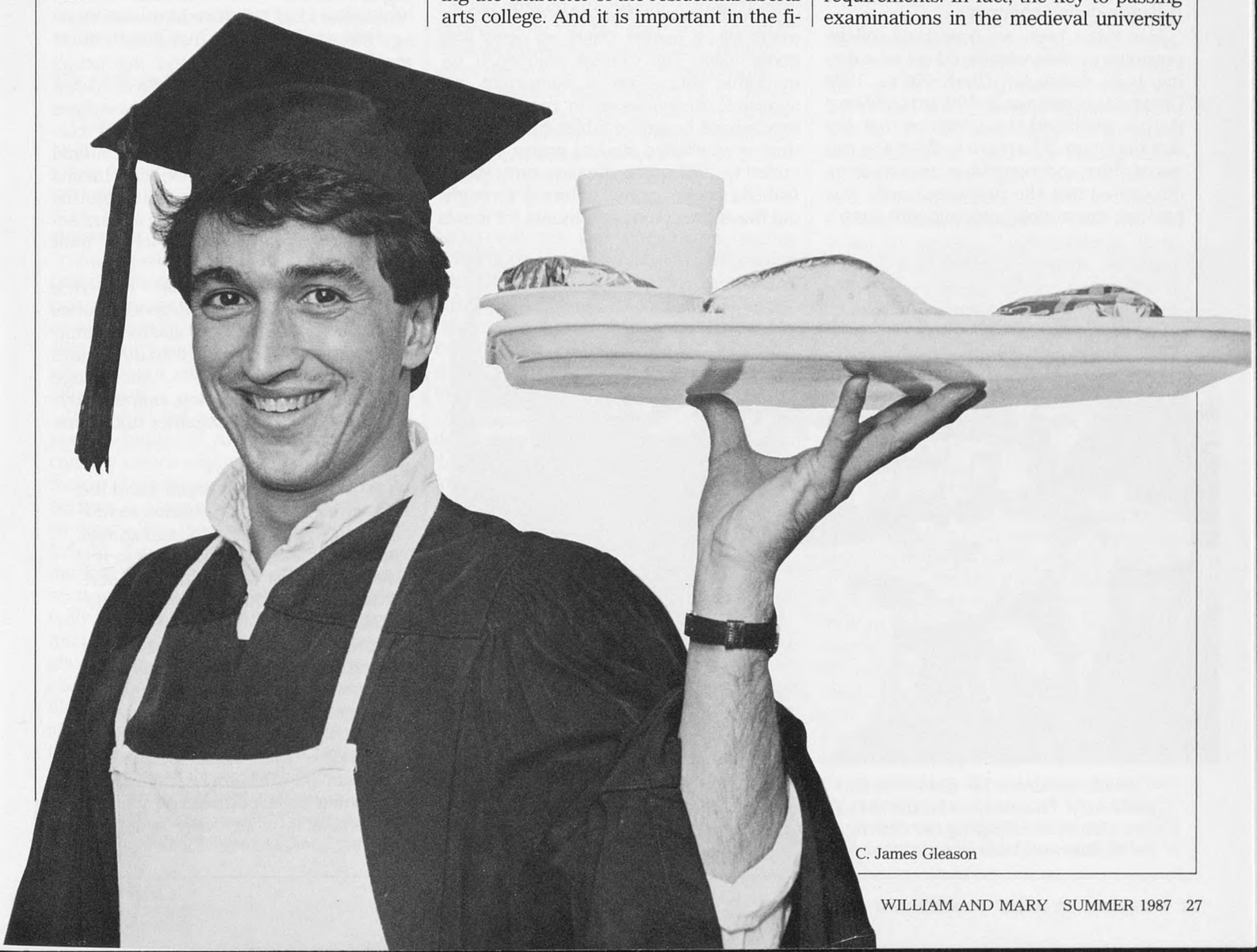
By JOHN R. THELIN and DAVID H. CHARLTON '73

A college, like Napoleon's army, travels on its stomach." With this remark at the fall 1986 meeting of the College's Board of Visitors, Rector Anne Dobie Peebles '44 heralded the opening of the new Marriott dining facilities in the Campus Center. The rector's apt observation triggers the question:

"Where would the liberal arts college be without its dining hall heritage?"

At first glance the temptation is to take for granted the dining hall facilities as a peripheral function with little connection to the serious mission of the campus. However, our review of historical records suggests a very different finding: the dining hall is integral and distinctive in shaping the character of the residential liberal arts college. And it is important in the financial and architectural condition of the institution. Above all, it is the real and symbolic facility which has provided "food for thought."

The early statutes of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, for example, show that codes and regulations about access to the kitchen and university brewery received more attention than did academic requirements. In fact, the key to passing examinations in the medieval university



C. James Gleason

was adhering to the custom of having students host a banquet for faculty examiners! Perhaps the triumph for young Oxford University in gaining legal stature in civil relations came about when the Crown warned local bakers, grocers and brewers that they would face royal prosecution if found guilty of swindling students and masters with unfair prices or inferior goods.

**Commoner or Servitor**

Within the university walls of the 16th and 17th centuries, dining became more than a necessary function — it became the primary source of categorizing Oxbridge students. Either you were a Commoner (literally, one who dined in College Commons) or a Servitor (one who earned financial aid by serving Masters and Commoners). Academic robes reflected this distinction, as Servitors were conspicuous by their obligatory short gowns. And the ultimate honor was to dine among masters and fellows at "High Table." To this day, some highly prestigious fellowships at England's ancient universities carry no academic or scholarly requirements, but do require the recipient to "take" a prescribed number of meals per term in the college's dining commons.

Has there been an American college president or dean who dared not take dining halls seriously? Clark Kerr's 1986 Charter Day address at William and Mary sternly reminded the audience that the first president of Harvard College was run out of office and town when irate students discovered that the president's wife was packing the student pudding with lamb's dung and mackerel guts. We have little evidence about Harvard students revolting about the course of formal study. In contrast, in 1750 and then again in 1766, student riots over the poor quality of college food led the institution to suspend classes for a month. Yale kept pace with Harvard's gastronomic preoccupation in 1828 when undergraduates took part in a widespread uprising against college officials, called the "bread and butter rebellion." That even had greater impact on institutional life than did the nationally famous faculty curriculum analysis known as the Yale Report of 1828.

The College of William and Mary was not without its dining hall legends and problems. In 1724 Hugh Jones was adamant about the primacy of residential dining, as he recommended that the Trustees

> . . . appoint a person, to whom they grant special Privileges and Allowances to board and lodge the masters and scholars at an extraordinary cheap rate. When the college should be full and compleat as here directed and wished, the collegians may be boarded . . . it is thought as yet more advisable to board in the college.

At William and Mary the dining commons was a matter where no news was good news. The College enjoyed a remarkable succession of competent, responsible stewardesses in the 18th century whose boarding tables from time to time even elicited student praise. All this ended in 1761 when the new stewardess, Isabella Cocke, gained notoriety throughout the entire colony of Virginia for meals which were poorly planned, badly cooked, and "served in a solvenly manner." In a rare display of consensus, the president, the faculty, the students — all sectors of the College — applauded the official decision in 1763 to have Housekeeper Cocke leave the College employ.

**Jefferson's Idea**

We do not know what young Thomas Jefferson thought about dining commons when he was an undergraduate at William and Mary. But food certainly was on his mind when he designed the academic villages at the proposed University of Virginia. Each pavilion was supposed to offer a distinctive (foreign) cuisine along with foreign language instruction and conversation. Apparently this cosmopolitan idea was ahead of its time (at least in Charlottesville) as students' palates were able to handle neither exotic languages nor cooking. The students opted for more customary fare — and for provincial rowdy behavior, which left Mister Jefferson aghast.

The sum of these disparate episodes gradually yet persistently hovers over a salient institutional fact in the history of higher education: arrangements for dining are central — not incidental — to the "collegiate ideal." As an educational strategy there is the belief that good talk at meals among students and instructors promotes learning and the skills of discussion and debate far beyond the confines of the classroom and the formal curriculum. As a matter of organizational control, the dining hall provides a means of supervision. In either case, it transforms the college experience beyond a mere accumulation of course credits into a "total institution."

Here is what historian Frederick Rudolph of Williams College concludes about the "collegiate way" and its commitment to fusing instruction with dining and residence halls in which ". . . the college was a large family, sleeping, eating, studying and worshipping together under one roof ":

> . . . one of the oldest traditions of the American college, a tradition so fundamental, so all-encompassing, that to call it merely a tradition is to undervalue it. For what is involved here is nothing less than a way of life, the collegiate way.
>
> The collegiate way is a notion that a curriculum, a library, a faculty, and students are not enough to make a college. It is an adherence to the residential scheme of things. It is respectful of quiet rural settings, dependent on dormitories, committed to dining halls, permeated by paternalism. It is what every American

College Archives, Swem Library

*Students dress for dinner in this 1918 photo of the dining hall at William and Mary. The authors contend that the dining hall is an integral and distinctive element in shaping the character of a residential liberal arts college such as William and Mary.*

college has had or consciously rejected or lost or sought to recapture.

How well has the collegiate ideal translated into reality? Certainly the episodes of food riots and student dissatisfaction suggest some snags. On the other hand, serious and systematic analysis of higher education indicates that the residential environment of dining and residence halls may be crucial to what — and how much — is learned. Alexander Astin's landmark 1978 study of college students, *Four Critical Years,* isolates the residential campus experience as a crucial factor in the ability of a college or university to make substantial changes in its students' learning, values and attitudes.

Conversely, Astin's policy analysis suggests that since World War II the decision to emphasize construction of commuter institutions with little provision for the cohesion of dining halls and residential quadrangles seriously limited the ability of new institutions to have a significant effect on students, especially among "first generation" college goers, in areas of retention, academic achievement, degree completion, and satisfaction with the college experience. As Woody Allen lamented, the closest he came to "going to college" was once having lunch in the cafeteria at City College of New York.

**The College Quad**

College and university officials have long struggled with the importance of using dining commons to promote cohesion even among a large, disparate student body. The most conspicuous architectural landmark is the form of the "college quadrangle" — an expensive, impressive monument to fusion of instruction, dining and dormitories. In fact, such an ideal was so expensive that by the early 19th century, most American colleges simply could not afford to offer commons to all students.

This void led to an interesting, unexpected chapter in American student life: campus meals, originally intended to promote cohesion within the student body, became a source of fragmentation and snobbery. The 19th-century collapse of officially sponsored dining commons marked the flourishing of independent, scattered student "eating clubs." Originally this was a rather unconscious, pragmatic arrangement in which a group of about 10 to 20 students banded together each academic term to fend for some regular meal plan. Ground rules usually ran as follows: one student would receive free board as payment in kind for the responsibility of lining up a steward or cook and making arrangements to rent a dining room away from campus. The archetypal American college town of the late 19th century was filled with these transient tributes to free enterprise: private dining rooms whose main characteristics were that food was cheap and the locale safe from intrusion by college faculty and administrators. The "dining clubs" were formed and disbanded each term.

Later the function and personality of such arrangements would change dramatically. Eating clubs changed into more enduring entities which perpetuated themselves year after year. Ultimately at some colleges and universities, eating clubs became social clubs as well — not altogether unlike fraternities or literary societies, subject to election and incorporation. In the case of Princeton, these became established and cherished within the student and alumni life — so much so that they were impervious to scrutiny or regulation by presidents, deans or faculty. Indeed, when Woodrow Wilson was president of Princeton he tried unsuccessfully to put the eating clubs under institutional control.

Thomas L. Williams

*An honorary service group at William and Mary, the Order of the White Jacket consists of alumni, students and faculty who earned their way through college by working as waiters. It numbers among its members governors, congressmen, businessmen and members of every learned profession, including past and current college presidents. M. Carl Andrews (above) '27 was a co-founder of the organization.*

**'You Are Where You Eat'**

One lesson students taught one another was that within the American undergraduate world, "You Are Where You Eat." College dining as a social matter characterized by cliques and exclusion gained strength beyond the control of college administrators. At some universities, presidents and deans, upset by charges of snobbery within eating clubs, shifted strategy from reforming private dining groups to a proposal to build the college's own dining facilities.

Starting in the early 1900s, one of the major changes in the American campus was the trend of constructing elaborate Student Unions. These first appeared at such large, urban, elite institutions as Harvard, Pennsylvania, Brown and Columbia. Their purpose was to provide for all students — commuters and residents — a place for socializing, eating and talking. These were supplements and surrogates for the colonial ideal of living and studying under one roof. The Student Union plan met with controversy and resistance not only at the northeastern urban universities of the early 1900s. Colgate Darden, when president of the University of Virginia in the 1940s, faced strong resistance for advocating a Student Union — a facility seen as an intrusion into the university's traditional student culture.

Let us return briefly to the root cause of the disappearance of mandatory dining commons by the early 19th century: to operate such facilities and provide services is an expensive, risky venture by the college. The continuous thread throughout the history of college and university administration is that dining halls stand out importantly not only as a matter of academic policy but also as an element of institutional budgets and financing. To grasp the scope of the modern campus food service, let us consider the case of Brown University, a residential liberal arts university comparable in size to William and Mary. In a typical academic year, Brown's dining halls have an annual budget of over $7 million and serve more than 1.6 million meals. Among undergraduates this breaks down to serving 3,000 students three times a day for nine months. At many colleges the food service unit often is among the campus's largest employers. Its professional staff includes directors, chefs, bakers, dieticians, health inspectors, a computer programmer, along with a large number of servers and kitchen assistants.

**Prefer Cafeteria**

The heritage of college dining commons ought not to obscure important changes in forms and practices. Alumni of William and Mary recall in the 1920s and 1930s the pride which presidents took in sponsoring a college farm to assure excellent food at low prices. Since the mid-1960s most colleges have abandoned "sit-down" dinners, complete with student waiters. Is it any wonder that in an era in which the curriculum is characterized by the "cafeteria line" elective system, students have also opted for cafeteria meal service? The hedonistic streak in students' love-hate affair with institutional food has catapulted to

C. James Gleason

*The Marriott Corporation invested more than a million dollars last summer into upgrading the dining facilities in the Campus Center at William and Mary. Noting the importance of the facilities to the College, former rector Anne Dobie Peebles '44 asked at the dedication: "Where would the liberal arts college be without its dining heritage?"*

heroic proportions since John Belushi's war cry of "Food fight!" in the 1978 movie about campus life, *Animal House.*

One interesting twist to the social history of dining halls is the resilience and diversity of the American character. The usual tendency was for dining halls from time to time to promote snobbery and exclusion within a student body. An unexpected sequel is that the "servitors" have been transformed into collegiate heroes and heroines. In the United States the tradition of "working one's way through college" can be a source of pride and dignity. Little wonder, then, that the experience of serving as a dining hall waiter has became a fertile source of legends and honor, hardly a stigma of low status. One litmus of the strength of this tradition is that even the most fiscally tight congressman will be reluctant to cut federal support for campus work-study programs. To do so would be un-American. How popular is the work-study role of student-waiter? At Brown in 1983 more than 900 undergraduates were employed by the university's food services!

The College of William and Mary provides superb local testimony to this tradition. Since 1972 alumni, students and faculty who once worked in college dining services have formed the Order of the White Jacket — an honorary service group which combines college memories with the important business of raising scholarship funds for academically able yet financially needy students. It is an organization which claims as its members governors, congressmen, state officials and delegates, members from every learned profession — even a university president! Here is a strand of the American legend which fuses the traditional collegiate ideal with our national admiration for the educated, self-made person.

## No Free Lunch

Today college food still stands as a convenient target of student wrath. A few years ago *Esquire* magazine devoted a feature article to a tour of the nation's campus dining halls. Heralded as "Triumph of the Swill," it concluded that there were signs of change and sophistication which might deter student food riots in the late 20th century.

Despite this praise, heritage and sensitivity to students as consumers, the future of college dining commons is uncertain at best. Even in the food service domain, there is no free lunch. Institutions must monitor closely their costs in the dining hall enterprise. This was true in 1785 and in 1985. Providing quality food at a reasonable price remains an expensive proposition which has led to a peculiar "up or out" syndrome among campus food services. Each year an increasing number of institutions opt out of providing dining commons — in favor of laissez-faire or limited offerings. Yet those institutions which remain committed to the dining commons experience do so in an increasingly sophisticated and thoughtful manner. For a relative handful of colleges and universities, commons remains central to the distinctive residential college experience.

It does not necessarily mean each evening offers a formal sit-down dinner. It does usually mean that the food services attempt to provide diverse menus along with special facilities available for guest speakers and college dinner guests. According to such a practice, dining halls become an increasingly important investment in learning as well as eating. Certainly the College of William and Mary stands in this relatively small group. Renovation of Trinkle Hall and recent arrangements with the Marriott Corporation suggest a renewed and updated variation on the historic commitment to the "collegiate way" which provides scholars with "Food for Thought."

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS


*DAVID H. CHARLTON*

*David H. Charlton received his A.B., M.A. and doctoral degree from the College of William and Mary. His 1985 doctoral dissertation in the Higher Education Program is an analysis of dining halls as part of the collegiate ideal. It was honored as an Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation in 1986 statewide competition. As an undergraduate he was a student-waiter at the King's Arms Tavern. Dr. Charlton formerly served as associate vice president for Business Affairs at the College. He is now director of Business Affairs at the Episcopal Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia.*

*JOHN R. THELIN*

*John R. Thelin is the Chancellor Professor of Education at the College of William and Mary. He also serves as director of the Higher Education Doctoral Program and as a member of the American Studies Program Faculty. As an undergraduate at Brown University he was a student-waiter for four years. His major brush with infamy came in 1968 when he spilled coffee on President Barnaby Keeney at Keeney's retirement banquet.*

*Both Charlton and Thelin are members of the Order of the White Jacket of the College.*



*Acknowledgments:* The authors especially wish to thank Kay Domine, Margaret Cook, J. Carter Harris of the College Archives, Laura Parrish, and graduate assistant Jane Bailey for assistance with research documents and illustrations.

# WORDS THAT BIND

## A Father's Parting Tribute

BY DAVID ZINMAN

**What does it matter in the course of a lifetime if a father doesn't tell a son how much he loves him? It means everything.**

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

*David Zinman, who first wrote this article for* The Newsday Magazine *in New York, is* Newsday's *medical writer. His son Daniel is a 1984 graduate of William and Mary. The article is reprinted with permission of Mr. Zinman.*

In the doorway of my home, I looked closely at the face of my 23-year-old son, Daniel, his backpack by his side. We were saying goodbye. In a few hours, he would be staying in France for at least a year to learn another language and experience life in a different country. I wanted to make this parting one that would become fixed in his memory.

It was a transitional time in his life, a passage, a step from college into the adult world. I wanted to leave him with some words that would have some meaning, some significance beyond the moment. Perhaps he, too, would one day stand before his own sons or daughters at a key moment in their lives, and he would remember how he had felt when his own father had taken him aside.

Nothing came from my lips. No sound broke the stillness of my home in the beachside community of Point Lookout. Outside, I could hear the shrill cries of sea gulls as they circled the ever-changing surf. Inside, I stood frozen and quiet, looking into the searching green eyes of my son.

What made the moment more difficult was the fact that I knew that this was not the first time I had let a moment pass. When Daniel was 5 years old, I took him to the school bus stop on his first day of kindergarten. That was his first passage, a transition from his life at home to the school world. I felt the tension in his hand holding mine as the bus turned the corner. I saw color flush his cheeks as the bus pulled up. His eyes looked up then — as they did now.

*What is it going to be like, Dad? Can I do it? Will I be okay?* And then he walked up the steps of the bus and disappeared inside. And the bus drove away. And I said nothing.

A decade later, a similar scene played itself out. With his mother, I drove him to the College of William and Mary in Virginia. I helped carry his things into his dorm room. That night, he went drinking with his new schoolmates, and when he met us the next morning, he was sick.

He was coming down with mononucleosis, but we could not know that then. We thought he had a hangover.

In his room, Dan lay stretched out on his bed, and, as I started to leave for the return trip to Long Island, I tried to think of something to say to give him some courage and confidence as he started this new phase of his life.

Again, words failed me. I mumbled something like, "Hope you feel better, Dan. And good luck." And I left.

Now, as I stood before my son, who had grown into a man, I thought of these lost opportunities. How many times have we all let such moments pass? A parent dies, and, instead of giving a eulogy ourselves, we let a clergyman, who is a stranger, speak. A child asks if Santa Claus is real, or where babies come from, and, reddening and embarrassed, we slough it off.

A boy is graduated from school, a daughter gets married. We go through the motions of the ceremony. But we do not seek out our children and find a quiet, private moment to tell them what they have meant to us. Or what they might expect to face in the years ahead.

Shakespeare wrote about just such a situation in *Hamlet* when Polonius bids goodbye to his son, Laertes, who is going off to a university. Polonius turns out to be a pompous, old windbag. Yet, he says some of the more profound lines in the play:

*This above all: to thine own self be true*
*And it must follow, as the night the day,*
*Thou canst not then be false to any man.*

These lines ran through my mind as I stood before Daniel. How fast the years had passed. He was born in New Orleans in 1962, slow to walk and talk and small of stature. He was the tiniest in his class, but he developed a warm, outgoing nature. And with a friendly face and ready smile, he was popular with his peers. He was coordinated and agile, and he became adept at sports.

Baseball gave him his earliest challenge. He was an outstanding pitcher in Little League, hoping to make it big in high school. It didn't work out that way. The varsity coach passed him over as a sophomore, then as a junior. Daniel thought about quitting, but didn't. Instead, he played on the junior varsity team and pitched a no-hitter. Finally, as a senior, he made the varsity, winning half the team's games with a record of five wins and two losses. At graduation, the coach named him the team's most valuable player.

**By the time he left for college, Daniel stood 6 feet and weighed 170 pounds. He was muscular and in superb condition, but he never pitched another inning. In his first month (at William and Mary), he found that he could not combine academics and athletics. He gave up baseball for English literature. I was sorry that he would not develop his athletic talent, but I was proud that he had made such a mature decision.**

His finest hour came at a school science fair. He entered an exhibit showing how the circulatory system works. He had sketched it on cardboard. It was primitive and crude, especially compared to the fancy, computerized, blinking-light models entered by other students. My wife, Sara, felt embarrassed for him.

It turned out that the other kids had not done their own work. Their parents had made their exhibits. As the judges went on their rounds, they found that these kids couldn't answer their questions. Daniel answered every one. When the judges awarded the Albert Einstein Plaque for the best exhibit, they gave it to Daniel.

In his last year in high school, Daniel had a growth spurt. By the time he left for college, he stood 6 feet tall and weighed 170 pounds. He was muscular and in superb condition, but he never pitched another inning. In his first month at college, he found that he could not combine academics and athletics. One or the other had to go. He gave up baseball for English literature. I was sorry that he would not develop his athletic talent, but I was proud that he had made such a mature decision.

His studies did not come easily. He needed an extra semester to get all his credits. Still, he was graduated with a "B" average.

One day, I told Daniel that the great failing in my life and the life of his mother had come when we did not take a year or two off after college to go to Europe. This is the best way, to my way of thinking, to broaden oneself and develop a larger perspective on life. Once I married and began working, I found that the dream of living in another culture had vanished.

Daniel thought about this. His Yuppie friends said that he would be insane to put his career on hold. But he decided it wasn't so crazy. After graduation, he worked as a waiter at college, a bike messenger in Boston and a house painter in Point Lookout. With the money he earned, he had enough to go to Paris.

The night before he was to leave, I tossed in bed. I was trying to figure out something to say. Nothing came to mind. Maybe, I thought, it wasn't necessary to say anything.

What does it matter in the course of a lifetime if a father never tells a son what he really thinks of him? But as I stood before Daniel, I knew that it does matter. My father and I loved each other. Yet, I always regretted never hearing him put his feelings into words and never having the memory of that moment. Now, I could feel my palms sweat and my throat tighten. Why is it so hard to tell a son something from the heart? My mouth turned dry, and I knew I would be able to get out only a few words clearly.

"Daniel," I said, "if I could have picked, I would have picked you."

That's all I could say. I wasn't sure he understood what I meant. Then he came toward me and threw his arms around me. For a moment, the world and all its people vanished, and there was just Daniel and me in our home by the sea.

He was saying something, but my eyes misted over, and I couldn't understand what he was saying. All I was aware of was the stubble on his chin as his face pressed against mine. And then, the moment ended. I went to work, and Daniel left a few hours later with his girl-friend.

That was seven weeks ago and I think about him when I walk along the beach on weekends. Thousands of miles away somewhere out past the ocean waves breaking on the deserted shore, he might be scurrying across Boulevard Saint Germain, strolling through a musty hallway of the Louvre, bending an elbow in a Left Bank cafe.

What I had said to Daniel was clumsy and trite. It was nothing. And yet, it was everything.


## The Chancellor's Badge and Chain of Office

When Warren E. Burger '73 LL.D., 15th Chief Justice of the United States, was installed as the 20th chancellor of the College of William and Mary at Charter Day on February 7, 1987, the Society of the Alumni marked the occasion by presenting to the College a chain and badge symbolic of the status of the office of chancellor. Handcrafted of silver, gold and enamel by the firm of Thomas Fattorini, gold and silversmiths of Birmingham and London, England, the badge and chain are modeled after the badge of the Lord Chancellor of England worn by Sir Thomas More. Its design incorporates various historical aspects of the chancellor's post at William and Mary, whose first occupant was Henry Compton, bishop of London from 1693 to 1700. (Photo by Dan Dry)

SOCIETY OF THE ALUMNI
P.O. Box 1693
Williamsburg, VA 23187

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 1390
Richmond, VA