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# THE LAFAYETTE ALUMNUS

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## The American College

1925 - 1935 - 1945

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President of Lafayette College, 1915-26

LOOKING back ten years, forward ten years, and about us in 1935, do I feel that 1925's faith in higher education for American youth was justified; or if I feel it was justified then, do I still retain that faith under the changed conditions of today? My answer in general is yes, but it will require some additional words to tell what my faith was in 1925, what it is now, and how far conditions seem to me to be substantially different in 1935 from those in 1925.

In 1925 the alternatives for the youth of 18 were college, professional and technical school, apprenticeship or job. The alternatives remain substantially the same today, except that so many free junior colleges have been set up and the standards of professional education, particularly of law, dentistry, and pharmacy have been so raised, that professional education generally speaking does not confront the boy of 18 as an alternative over against college. Apprenticeship at that age has largely disappeared, though efforts are being made to revive it as a part of federal policy. Jobs are scarce and therefore not a universal alternative, while idleness at public expense has been added to the list of real possibilities.

In 1925 college as an alternative to immediate employment implied eventual employment at a higher wage, and employment of a sort which carried with it certain social values. It is still true that the chance of employment for the man who can afford to wait until he is through college is double that of the youth seeking employment at 18. I am told that over 80 per cent of the class of 1934 at Lafayette found employment, and a recent

study made at Purdue shows that well over 80 per cent of their graduates of the last five years are at present employed and at surprisingly large salaries. Conditions in this respect are, therefore, not as greatly changed as many would have us believe. College certainly does not lead into a blind alley. While it does not guarantee a job it doubles one's chances for employment and is now the only road to the professions. On the other hand wages in the skilled trades have risen more than average earnings in the skilled professions and the youth who chooses to become a carpenter, a steamfitter, or a bricklayer, if he is one of those fortunate ones to secure employment, can expect to work shorter hours and yet drive his own Buick or Chrysler years ahead of the man who chooses the longer road to the professions.

If the nation decides to furnish higher education to all who can profit by it at public expense, thus greatly increasing the competition in the professional fields, it will become a question for careful consideration on the part of the man with little taste for intellectual pursuits, but with five thousand dollars capital, whether it will be better for him to invest his five thousand in four years at college, or to go at once into business taking his capital with him.

The blue shirt is symptomatic of the change in social attitudes. Both the "brain trust" in Washington and the Prince of Wales affect it and prefer to be reckoned with manual labor rather than with the white collar class. I heard the president of an American College, which until recently would have been numbered with the aristocrats,

say the other day, that most of the important work in the world is done by the men who get their hands dirty, and another college president declare that there were too many men riding today on the backs of other men. If democracy feels compelled to iron out economic inequalities among its members, why may it not also try its hand at intellectual inequalities? Perhaps we too will banish Aristides.

Against these signs of diminishing social values attached to college education it is well to note the astute Huey Long's choice of a State University and its football team as an instrument toward popular favor and power; to note that in the ten years 1922-1932 the number of students in high school increased  $2\frac{3}{4}$  times and that the seven per cent of the youth of 22 who graduate from college will ten years from now hold 57 per cent of the supervising staff and professional positions paying \$4000 or more a year. If you draw a line through American youth today and call those who graduate from High School the top and those who do not the bottom—it may still be popular for the politician to sing "I am the bottom even if you're the top," because the majority is on his side of the line. But if you are planning for 1945 I would not count on it. The majority may shift and shift very fast, just as the number of college men in politics is going to change very quickly as a result of the new requirements for the study of law.

Personally I think the talk about changing social conditions has been overdone. Human nature under Roosevelt is not substantially different from human nature in 1925

under Coolidge. Greed and covetousness and envy may be fostered by capitalism, they are certainly not destroyed by communism. Fascism offers great possibilities for the man who knows more, can see farther, who is stronger and more patient than the rest of us, to work to the last ounce of his energy for the welfare of mankind, but it does not guarantee the use of ability to that end.

I was not one of those who believed in 1925 that higher education was the panacea for all the nation's ills or the road to happiness for all its citizens, much less did I believe that a particular kind of education, college education—was the kind of education all needed. But I believed then, as I believe now that to go to college was the best possible use of four years that a young man or a young woman of certain abilities and interests could make. Like all pearls of great price it can be bought too dear, and by the wrong people, who when they find it not suited to their needs either debase it to vulgar use, or substitute the imitation for the real.

It has always been democracy's failing that it sets more store by labels than by substance. As the Supreme Court implied the other day if democracy calls ten cents a dollar, then it is a dollar for democracy, "vox populi vox dei." It is an encouraging sign therefore, when a whisky dealer advertises "the palate can tell you more than a thousand words." Let's get down to facts and beware of labels. If you talk about colleges in general the same label will do for Lafayette and for Lehigh, and Einstein, with Princeton as his frame of reference, might even see them as one. Nevertheless Lafayette is still Lafayette and perhaps the characteristics which differentiate it from Lehigh are quite as significant as the characteristics which they have in common. The value of a college education is debated over and over and the chief reason we do not arrive at a conclusion as to whether the game is worth the candle is because we do not start by saying what game and whose candle. Nowadays not only are no two colleges alike but even in the same institution college does not mean

the same to any two students. To one it is a professional preparatory school, to another the professional school itself. To one it is a place of social contacts to another a haven for abstract thought or pure research. To one it is the stage for the display of physical prowess, to another the cell of the ascetic. To one it is an interlude, an escape from life, to another the very door which reveals reality.

Space will not permit a discussion of the different types. I can only say what I mean when I use the term American College. The institution must have all these salient characteristics. (1) It is a fellowship and implies a way of life together in which intellectual interests predominate but are not exclusive.

(2) It is a walled garden, a controlled environment. The same sun shines on it which shines on the world outside but all sorts of devices can be used to control and to filter the sunlight and even to replace it with artificial rays. It shares soil with the world at large but its educational chemists can modify the soil indefinitely.

(3) Its activities are measured in terms of human growth. In fact if you want a single word to describe it "growth" is the best there is. There are laws of human maturation which must be recognized and taken into account. The contribution made by the natural process we call "growing up" cannot be greatly altered by "taking thought" any more in the intellectual and spiritual world than in the physical world.

(4) Time is a factor in the process which cannot be ignored. Neither tradition nor the materials of instruction alone determine the length of the curriculum. Four years is not an accident but a period arrived at by the experimentation and observation of those most concerned with all the factors involved.

(5) It is a device of mediation, co-ordination, and transition, a true "middle thing" to use the German phrase in more senses than one. It mediates between parental control and complete individual freedom. It offers an artificial environment in which experiment is possible without the full price of the consequences being charged to the in-

dividual. It mediates between the past and the future. It mediates between truth on authority and truth on personal investigation and judgment. It mediates between personal and even national horizons and world horizons "sub specie aeternitatis."

(6) It keeps plastic vocational interests and defers the inevitable choice of life work pending the display of all the samples society has to offer.

(7) It examines and relates the individual and the universe of people and things and institutions of which he finds himself a part.

(8) It is a microcosm, a miniature world, which reproduces as in a mirror the manifold activities and relationships of the macrocosm beyond.

If it lacks any of these characteristics it is not what I mean by a college. It is a delicate organism and easily spoiled by people acting with the best of intentions. It can be spoiled by scholars who in their zeal for scholarship forget that however it may be in the University, in the college, life is more than learning. It can be spoiled by those who think only in terms of the stock farm or breeding stable, and who regard human growth as exclusively a problem in biology. It can be spoiled by the sentimentalists who remind us we are young but once and youth is the time of play and who would create an artificial world in which there shall be no compulsion and no exacting duty. It can be spoiled by the martinets and petty tyrants dressed in a brief authority and rejoicing in the display of power. It can be spoiled by specialists and connoisseurs who breed for a particular type or delight in a special hobby and have no catholicity of interest. It can be spoiled by the intramuralists who would wall it off as a world of its own and cut all relationships with the world outside; and by the extramuralists who would have the student live in the movie and newspaper and radio world of today, with no time or place for dead languages or history or the writers or planners of other days. It can be spoiled by too much luxury and material equipment and by too little of the proper tools and con-

veniences. It can be spoiled most easily and most thoroughly of all, if those in control forget what it is all for, and allow institutional profit, personal fame, professional ease or dignity, to become the dominant pervading spirit at the treasurer's wicket, the registrar's counter, or the teacher's desk.

In wise hands the American College will continue to be in 1945 as in 1925 and 1935 the brightest, happiest, most fruitful garden since Eden—worth to society and to the individual himself ten times the electric light bill and gardener's wages combined. He who finds growth therein will see to it, that in Pope's words, it "grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength."

### Dr. and Mrs. Radcliffe Have Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary

On New Year's Day, Dr. and Mrs. McCluney Radcliffe of Philadelphia celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. They received the congratulations of their many friends at a tea held in the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, Philadelphia. Dr. Radcliffe is president of the famous class of '77 and very active in the Lafayette Alumni Association of Philadelphia. He was a trustee at Lafayette until he resigned in October, 1932.

### Dr. Ross Hoffman, '23, Wins \$250 American Historical Prize

A prize of \$250 is glory in itself but when it is granted to a historian by such a body as the American Historical Association the honor is doubled.

Dr. Ross Hoffman, '23, instructor in History at N. Y. U., has been awarded the George Louis Beer Prize of \$250 by the American Historical Society. The prize is given every other year for the outstanding volume on European international relations, and it was given to Dr. Hoffman for his book, *Great Britain and the German Trade Rivalry, 1875-1914*, published last year by the University of Pennsylvania Press. Dr. Hoffman received the prize at the annual meeting of

the Association held in December in Washington, D. C.

Another book written by Dr. Hoffman, and published in 1934, was titled *Restoration*, a volume of a religious and historical character. The publishers are Sheed and Ward, N. Y.

### Seventh Annual Alumni College to Be Held Beginning June 8

Recognizing that it is difficult for many alumni to leave their work for a full week to attend the Alumni College, President Lewis has made a change in the usual program.

This year, the seventh annual session, the Alumni College will be limited to four days, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, June 9, 10, 11, and 12. Dhan Mukerji, author and authority on Indian affairs and famed as the "Interpreter of India" will be one of the speakers.

George B. Markle, '13, chairman of the Alumni Council and producer, with John Tuerk, of several plays among which was "Within the Gates," by Sean O'Casey, will lead a symposium on "Contemporary Progress of the American Drama."

There will be two other conferences. One will be on "Engineering;" the subject of the other will be announced later.

Cornell University, with its first "Alumni University" scheduled for this June is the latest recruit to the rapidly growing list of colleges and universities that have followed Lafayette's lead in this field of adult education.

President Lewis spoke before the Cornell Alumni Corporation at their annual mid-winter meeting on the subject of the Alumni College and it was the action of that body that launched their new project.

### J. Blair Easter, '12, Elected to Royal Statistical Society

J. Blair Easter, '12, Pittsburgh financial and economic student, has been honored by being elected a fellow of the Royal Statistical Society. There are 23 other fellows of the society in the U. S.

The Royal Statistical Society was founded in 1834 in pursuance of a recommendation of the British

Association for the Advancement of Science, its object being the careful collection, arrangement, discussion, and publication of facts bearing on and illustrating the complex relations of modern society in its social, economical, and political aspects, especially facts which can be stated numerically and arranged in tables.

Mr. Easter, associated with the investment counsel firm of John A. Beattie & Co., is completing a book on statistical information and investment work. His research led him to contact the prominent and successful managers of investment funds in England and Scotland from whom he learned the ethics, principles, and practices so successfully used in that country. He then endeavored to correlate his findings with practices of the largest American Life and Fire Insurance Companies as well as principal American Public Endowments.

His work is not completed but his findings so far confirm his original thought, namely, that conservation of accumulated wealth through the medium of investing is a scientific task and that the practitioners in this science should be considered as a profession which is regulated by a code of ethics.

The Pittsburgh Press carries a weekly article written by Mr. Easter on the subject of investments.

### Judge Richard Kennedy, '78, Died on January 29

Judge Richard A. Kennedy, '78, presiding judge of the County Court in Pittsburgh since 1918, and a jurist in the court since its founding in 1911, died on January 29 following an operation.

In his almost 25 years in County Court, Judge Kennedy listened to the woes of thousands of marriage misfits as he presided over the bulk of the desertion and non-support cases. Since 1911 he directed the distribution of more than \$10,000,000 to wives, children, and aged parents.

His chief hobbies were botany, ornithology, meteorology, astronomy, and other natural sciences. He is survived by his wife and two daughters.