

Editor's Pages

A STUDENT AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY*

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I entered Indiana University in September, 1901,¹ with ninety term-hours to my credit for college work previously done.² I was given junior standing, but I could have attained the same status eleven years earlier had circumstances permitted me to begin a college course in the fall immediately after graduation from high school. It was still true in the early years of the new century that a large number of teachers obtained degrees several years late, and I did not worry much. Indeed I was too happy over the chance that had at last come to me to waste any time regretting my lot. I do not think that the eleven years were lost. They were years of slow advancement, it is true, but, wherever I worked, I gave about as good service as was possible with the resources at my command. I am only sorry that I had to work so long without a better equipment.

The long first stage of the University ended about 1885. There had been several great men on the faculty between 1820-1885, who will always be remembered, but the modern period did not begin till the coming of David Starr Jordan. Prior to his presidency, the University was a struggling college, with a student body that had never exceeded 200. The number of graduates in 1884 was only twenty-one. During the year 1901-1902, the total number of different students enrolled was 1,469, and the number of bachelor's degrees granted in June, 1902, was one hundred six, including fifteen who received law degrees.³

During that first portion of the period of transition, from 1885 to 1902, the campus saw what were then considered rapid changes. In September, 1901, the newest building for

* This autobiography was started in the March issue of 1936, and further installments have appeared in each quarterly issue since. It is probable that the story will be continued through 1938.

¹ I actually came to the University for the summer session of 1900, but, contracting a deep chest-cold, I was obliged to withdraw at about the middle of the six-weeks. While I was in school I was privileged to become well acquainted with Dr. John A. Bergstrom. I did not enroll in any history classes.

² It was customary at that time to allow a graduate of the Normal School a credit of two years, provided he had completed a four-year course, which meant a three-year course for a high school graduate. It was practically impossible to meet the major requirements and obtain the necessary credits in prescribed fields and obtain the A.B. degree by earning ninety term-hours. I found it necessary to earn one hundred three hours of credit after making several substitutions, so was graduated with thirteen extra hours.

³ In addition, the A.M. degree was granted to eighteen students.

class use was Kirkwood Hall. Wylie Hall, following a fire, was repaired and an extra story added in 1900, and the Observatory was finished in that year. Assembly Hall, now called the "Woodshed", was erected in 1896. It is referred to in the official publications of my student years as the "Men's Gymnasium", with no apologies.

One of the humorous sallies of the *Student*, which appeared in one of the early issues of the twentieth century, was: "When coming to or leaving Bloomington, always travel by the Monon." I came that way even before getting the benefit of this helpful suggestion. Being a married man, I sought for a place where it would be possible to do light-housekeeping. When my wife appeared a few days later, she found me wrestling with the small batch of household furniture that we had shipped from Elkhart. I was having a hard time to place our effects in the two rooms that I had engaged in a house located in the two-hundred block on East Seventh Street. We were settled snugly enough before the opening of the University year. In a short time, we discovered twenty or more married couples, some with children, who had also found living quarters in homes about the city. Two or three of these families occupied entire houses.⁴

By the census of 1900, Bloomington boasted a population of 6,460. The improved streets were well rounded-up and covered with finely crushed limestone. The non-improved streets, of which Indiana Avenue was one, were surfaced with red clay. In wet weather, one picked his way across this thoroughfare by stepping carefully on flat stones that were placed a foot or so apart at intersections. When I left the University with my diploma in June, 1903, the City Council was engaged in a debate, as it had been for some weeks, on a proposal to begin the construction of a sewer system. The Illinois Central line through Bloomington to Indianapolis was built after 1903, and there was no bus line. Local passenger traffic was in the hands of various and sundry cab drivers, who charged ten cents per passenger.⁵ Already a few automobiles were in use in cities, but I do not recall seeing a motor car of any description in Bloomington while a student at the

⁴The "Married Students' Club", though scarcely noticed by the general body of students, was really a going concern. There is even a picture of the Club in the *Arbutus* of 1903 (p. 117).

⁵Several of the cab or carriage drivers boasted two horses. All of the cabs appeared at the Monon Station every time a train came in. In fact, the arrival of either of the two most important day-time trains, one from the South and the other from the North, was a real event in the life of the City and the University.

University. The city was a quiet place, beautiful then, as now, with almost a surplus of fine shade trees and shrubbery.⁶ There are times when one would be willing to go back to the atmosphere of that day for a week or a month—perhaps not for a longer time.

I had taken about a year each of American and European history while a student in the Normal School. On the basis of this and such work as I had done in grades and high school, I served one year as a teacher of history in the Elkhart High School, just prior to my two years at Indiana University.⁷ It was during that one year, while teaching history exclusively, that I mastered enough history to serve as a groundwork for some specialization in that field. The courses that I carried with Professors James A. Woodburn, Samuel B. Harding, Amos S. Hershey, and Ulysses G. Weatherly, in history, political science, and economics were deeply appreciated. An opportunity, beyond anything that had ever come to me earlier, to read in these fields, was enjoyed to the limit.

Since I was endeavoring to complete the requirements for an A.B. degree, it was necessary to take certain prescribed work besides social studies courses. Dropping out to teach during the spring quarter of 1902, I spent the summer at Winona Lake, where I met the requirement in science. It was necessary to take some courses in mathematics, which afforded me the privilege of working with Professors Ulysses S. Hanna and Robert J. Aley. While under the instruction of Dr. Aley, I thoroughly enjoyed the struggle provided by the problems in Charles Smith's *College Algebra*. I carried one year of German and one of French during my two years at the University, which I did not mind at all, though I regretted that I had not been permitted to do much more with each of these languages earlier in life.

For nearly forty years, I have kept a cash account.⁸ My entries for the interval between September, 1901, and Commencement Day of June, 1903, are of interest, for the reason that they reveal much in regard to the cost of living

⁶ For a city so small, there was an unusually sharp contrast between the culture and comfort of the more favored portions and the district where the families of the poor were congregated.

⁷ I was accorded the title of "Head of the Department of History", but I was the only one on the staff at the time.

⁸ In the *Indiana Magazine of History* (Dec. 1929), XXV, 312-325. I published the cash account of a history major who was a senior during 1902-1903, disguising the fact that the account was my own. I now relieve my conscience by the admission that I purposely misled readers of the *Magazine*. I did not deceive very many, I know full well, as a great number of subscribers, believing that they are too busy, fail to notice what appears in this quarterly.

in that age. A study of this side of student life shows that the thirty-four years that have passed do not really indicate the distance between the conditions then and now. Books cost far less and food prices and rents were low. Every quarter, each student paid a library fee of one dollar, and, except in laboratory courses, there was no additional fee. In the fall quarter of 1902, the total expense for fees, books, and other school supplies for Mrs. Lynch and myself was \$18.45. This included a Waterman pen, at \$2.50, a subscription to the *Student* for a quarter, at seventy-five cents, and a share in the "Co-op", costing \$2.00. We bought seven text books at a total cost of \$8.90. In the same fall quarter, I went alone to the first football game—admission twenty-five cents. The most important game played at Bloomington in the season of 1902, Mrs. Lynch and I both attended, the admission being fifty cents each.⁹ I do not recall that there were any seats at a higher price.

We went home during the Christmas holidays each year but at no other time. This was a fairly expensive vacation as the round-trip carefare to Delphi was \$10.54 for two, at the holiday rate of one and one-third fare. I must mention that when people traveled in those days, whether they went very far or not, they usually took a trunk along. Trunks were carried free by the railroads, but one always had to look after drayage and checking the baggage. The popular suitcase of the time was the "telescope". There were more expensive traveling bags in use, but the "telescope" was the universal companion of common folk for several years when making trips. The inventor of this contraption should have been shot before he carried out his idea. Should he still be living, I would at least vote for a short prison term, were he on trial and I a jurymen. The "telescope" had two unforgetably bad features. In the first place, it was broader from side to side than vertically when suspended from the hand. This made it necessary for one carrying a packed "telescope" in his right hand to lean far over to the left as he walked along. In the second place, whatever the size (and there were all sizes, ranging from tiny ones to those as big as trunks) of the "telescope", when empty and closed, it could be filled to twice that size and

⁹The game of Oct. 7, 1902, which I attended alone, was between Indiana University and Wabash—score 34 to 0. Purdue and Indiana played at Lafayette that year. The most important game at Bloomington was with Notre Dame on Oct. 25—score 11 to 5. This is the game that Mrs. Lynch and I attended. There were two other games at Bloomington in 1902, one with DePauw and one with Vincennes University.

generally was. We owned a "telescope", a little above average size, while at Indiana University, and I have never forgotten it.

It was during my senior year that the History Club was formed. My recollection is that Frank C. Gray, a major in history from Indianapolis was the originator of the idea and the chief promoter of the Club. His principal abettor at first was Walter Grey ("Pat") Murphy from Washington, Indiana. Murphy was also a major in history and a good student. He was a large young man with much native humor, who scorned conventions and anything like polish. He lived his life in his own way.¹⁰ The members of the history faculty approved the plan to form a Club and most of the history majors were soon enlisted in its support. It was launched in the middle of the fall quarter of 1902, and still lives. The first annual banquet was held in March of 1903 in one of the churches. It was quite an affair with toasts by professors and students. The price per plate was seventy-five cents, which meant a rather expensive dinner in that era.¹¹

Science Hall was completed in 1902 and was ready for use at some time during my senior year. A move towards the erection of a student building was started in the summer of 1902. Subscriptions were taken then and during the following year. A daring idea was conjured up by some one to the effect that every senior on the campus ought to give ten dollars. I had subscribed five dollars during the summer when Charles M. Lawrence visited Delphi, and now pledged another five to come up to the standard set. That seems a very small total as I look back to it, but, in that day, it meant giving till it hurt for most of the students who contributed. The building was planned to cost \$80,000, half of which was a gift from John D. Rockefeller. Construction costs were comparatively low then, it is very evident.

There has been much said and written about the search for jobs in recent years. I can testify that the problem was present in that earlier period. In the summer of 1902, I was offered a place as a high school teacher at ninety dollars a month. I turned it down, because, poor as I was, I was in for

¹⁰ Mr. Gray died at Indianapolis in 1905, and Mr. Murphy took up farming in Daviess County, near Washington, Indiana.

¹¹ The writer was the first President of the History Club. Larkin L. Beeman, '03, now a professor of history in the Santa Ana Junior College (Santa Ana, California), was the President during the Spring Quarter of 1902-1903, and Emmett E. Giltner, '04, now professor in the New York Training College for Teachers (New York City) was chosen to serve during the fall quarter of 1903.

the "duration". After the new year had opened, I was again asked to leave the University, this time to take charge of the schools of Converse, Indiana, but I rejected this offer too. Though I was only to receive an A.B. degree at the end of the year, I was encouraged to try for a position in a Normal School. I narrowly escaped being chosen to each of two positions in the state of Washington. However, I was most exercised over the consideration that I received from President George A. McFarland of the Normal School at Valley City, North Dakota. He wrote me several letters and investigated me carefully. In the end he informed me, after the appointment had been made, that I was one of three out of forty selected for final consideration. The place went to a candidate who had just completed the work for a doctor's degree, as was entirely proper. I know that many college professors of my age have passed through similar experiences, and often met with what seemed overwhelming disappointments. It is interesting, in retrospect, to think how happy one can be that he did not succeed in certain efforts, since success would have made it impossible for later and more desirable opportunities to present themselves.

Dr. Aley recommended me for the superintendency of the Spencer Public Schools, and I went to see the School Board. When I held out for a certain modest salary (\$900 per year), the Board decided to retain the man who had just resigned to go elsewhere for a trifle more than that. I was called to Chicago, just after Commencement, to confer with Professor Henry Thurston and President Arnold Tompkins of the Chicago Normal School about a position. This looked like a sure thing with a good salary, but, when I discussed the matter with Dr. Thurston, I discovered that he wanted a man who would be willing to give a course in anthropology, in addition to history courses. I could only state frankly that I had no special or even general preparation in the line of anthropology, though I believe that I could have defined the term. The weeks went by and I had no place. Friends and relatives began to worry, but, like Mr. Micawber, I had a feeling that something would turn up.

It was about August 1, that I received a telegram from Elkhart asking me to again become the head of the history

department.¹² I accepted this offer at an advance of ten dollars per month over the salary received during the year 1900-1901. Two weeks later, I received a wire asking me to become the superintendent of the Attica Public Schools for a year. This offer I rejected, though the salary was more than three hundred dollars above what I was to receive at Elkhart.¹³ After I had taught ten days, a note came from Superintendent Calvin N. Kendall of the Indianapolis Schools in which he asked me, if interested in a position as instructor in history at \$1200 per year, to come to Indianapolis at once.¹⁴ I made the trip as soon as possible. When I met Superintendent Kendall, he received me kindly, but explained that, information relative to the vacancy having gotten into the papers, it had been found necessary to consider another candidate. No further explanation was ever made in regard to the matter. I journeyed back to my job, which, except for the salary, was about as fine as any high school instructorship in history in the state, and, with that job, I staid for some time.

I cannot say that student life at Indiana University was better at the opening of the century than in later years. Being several years older than those who spent four years at the University immediately after leaving high school, I did not, of course, have a normal or regular student experience. I believe that the moral tone of fraternities, and perhaps of sororities, was not as high then as in later years. I am certain that, in spite of the more expensive chapter houses of the present day, there was less of the democratic spirit a generation ago. I am not at all convinced that the general run of students worked harder in that period than now. There was no doubt a larger element of both brilliant and mediocre students who worked incessantly, paying little attention to anything save school work. This was partly due to greater poverty and partly because there were fewer activities to distract. It was also true that education, being harder to get and open to fewer people, was more deeply appreciated. To be a University student was still by no means an ordinary condition, which

¹² Arndt M. Stiekles, now professor of history in the Western Kentucky State Teachers College (Bowling Green), taught history in the Elkhart High School while I was at the University. He resigned to go to Evansville, Indiana.

¹³ The position of Acting-Superintendent of the Attica Schools was offered to me through Registrar John W. Cravens.

¹⁴ The vacancy was in the history department of Manual Training High School.

enhanced the importance of college men and women in their own estimation and in the eyes of others.

It is impossible to comment separately on the many worthwhile students whom it was my privilege to know and count as friends while at the University. I was closely associated with a number who obtained degrees in 1902 and in the years immediately after 1903, as well as in that year. The number of students who received the A.B. degree in 1903 was 112¹⁵ I believe that the class of 1903 compares favorably with any body of graduates of any year, as to the relative number of able members.¹⁶

The impression of Indiana University which I carried away in 1903, and it has grown on me since, was that it was an institution manned by an earnest, able, hardworking faculty. I was sure that money was only one of the things needed to make a strong University, but it was obvious that the state, though awakening to its obligations, was not permitting the building up of a great library nor creating other facilities for extensive research. There has been a strong tendency for legislators, professional men and leaders in business to boast of their support of education in our state, while remaining largely blind to the absolute necessity of promoting advanced study. To provide for undergraduate work which serves the many, and economize on the more expensive phase of education, which seems to serve the few, has been too much the prevailing idea in Indiana—an idea that men have held with pride. It is nevertheless an unsound idea, as no stream can rise higher than its source. To change the figure, no faculty can remain above the water-line unless many a member has the passion and the chance to work on the fringe of his field in an effort to add something in the way of new knowledge.

I was not closely associated with members of the faculty other than those in the field of history and closely related subjects. Dr. Woodburn, I found to be an enthusiastic, expert class-room teacher, a kindly, persistent friend, a gentleman of culture, and a man with wide contacts and an open mind. Dr. Harding was an exacting teacher and a man of force and vitality. He was thoroughly absorbed in his subject, and very

¹⁵ Twelve graduates of the Law School received the degree of Bachelor of Law, and the degree of Master of Arts was granted to nineteen graduate students.

¹⁶ Eighteen of those who received A.B. degrees in 1903 became college professors; one a college president; five physicians or surgeons; ten attorneys at law; one a famous singer; one a journalist; one a clergyman; one a Y.M.C.A. Secretary, traveler and writer; one a noted social worker. Many others rose to important positions in public school work and in the business world.

appreciative of students who were willing and able to work hard and show substantial results. Dr. Hershey was a more easy-going teacher in the class-room. He left a great deal of leeway to his students. When assigned a course in which he was not interested, he seemed to care little about it. In whatever he was genuinely interested he lost himself completely, worked at it patiently, thought about it long and deeply, and his understanding of it grew steadily. To get what Dr. Hershey had to give, the student must also be interested, work for himself, and grow by catching the simple, unaffected approach of his teacher. Dr. Weatherly was a seeker after truth. He read, weighed the evidence, considered the views of others without prejudice, and presented his own views with candor and modesty. He was calm and dignified but stimulating. I sat at the feet of these four teachers when all were approaching their best. Their spirit, their knowledge, their guidance, I needed.

While at the University, I came in contact with Registrar John W. Cravens and Dean Horace A. Hoffman frequently, both on and off the campus. From the first each seemed like an old friend. Neither of them ever failed me when I needed advice or aid. During my first year in Bloomington, Dr. Joseph Swain was President. I saw him occasionally, but never learned to know him. I was a senior during Dr. William L. Bryan's first year as President. It was never my privilege to know him as a class-room teacher, but I did become acquainted with him before the end of the year. I think he became interested in me through the good offices of Mr. Cravens and Dr. Woodburn. As I look back to the year 1902-1903, I recall that an unusually fine spirit pervaded the campus. I talked with no student who did not believe that the right man had been chosen to the presidency. The prevailing notion among students was that Indiana University was certain to hold a high place among the institutions of the country. Strange to say, there was little or nothing said about buildings or the size of the student body. So far as I know, we generally felt that there were enough buildings and a sufficient number of students. The greatness of the University was to lie in its intrinsic worth. This was before the age of "bally-hoo" when anything to be better must be bigger. There may have been some "go-getters" and "super-salesmen" then, but, if so, most of the students at

Indiana University were ignorant of their existence in that remote time—about thirty-five years ago.

One of the things for which President William L. Bryan should always be highly honored is the fact that he could not become a President of the "go-getter" type. The University, under his wise guidance, developed steadily and sanely. In so far as adequate support was not forthcoming, it was because the elements that controlled the state were unable to appreciate his idealism and did not permit Indiana to rise to her real opportunities in the realm of higher education.