

Editor's Pages

THREE BUSY YEARS, 1911-1914*

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When I entered Harvard University to increase the length of my tether by doing some additional graduate work, I was a year beyond forty. I do not believe that one must live two score years before life can begin, nor do I believe that all great ideas generate in the minds of young men. Whatever the truth about this last contention, it is a poor philosophy to accept in a world where men are neither shot at forty nor electrocuted at sixty. Since many of us live and work beyond sixty, it is better that we continue to use our faculties throughout life than to surrender all expectations of productive work and thinking at forty, or sixty either, because of an unproved theory.

The academic year began on Wednesday, September 28, in 1911. When the day came, my wife, our small daughter and myself, having been installed in a modest apartment at No. 47 Langdon Street for a few days, I was ready for my year of study. I had already conferred with Dean Charles H. Haskins and Dr. Frederick J. Turner, after an earlier meeting with Secretary George W. Robinson. The last named gentlemen, who wore a full beard (not a Van Dyke) and whose trousers showed no creases (then, as now, universal), was about the mildest, kindest man that it has ever been my lot to meet. I had occasion to go to his office several times while at Harvard, and he was always the same. I never saw him hurried or impatient, and can well believe that throughout his career as Secretary of the Graduate School, he met and handled students just as he did me and that he spoke every word slowly and with a gentle inflection.

For twenty years, I had felt an urge to spend some time at Harvard, but, having become interested in the Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin, it is not likely that I should have carried out my plan had not Dr. Frederick J. Turner accepted a call to Harvard. He was entering on his second year in the new position when I was a member of

* The first installment of this autobiography appeared in the issue of March, 1936, and a further chapter has been published in each succeeding quarterly issue. One additional chapter bringing the sketch up to the year 1920, will appear in the next number.

his *seminar* group during 1911-1912.¹ This group worked on western subjects that were more or less closely related to the eighteen-forties. I spent the year gathering material on the Whig Party of the Old Northwest. At that time, the Harvard Library was very poorly housed in Gore Hall, and it was very inadequately stocked with western sources. Having had the privilege of working in the Library of the Wisconsin State Historical Society not long before, I was much disappointed in the resources of the Harvard Library relative to the West. I am sure that Dr. Turner felt this handicap keenly. If he regretted leaving Wisconsin, this may have been the main reason. He was very patient, however, and encouraged his students to make the best possible use of the available material.

I was sure, as were others, that there was something about the atmosphere at Harvard that depressed the spirit of Turner. Year by year, he no doubt felt more at home in Cambridge, but it is a serious question whether the combination of circumstances that led to his transfer from his Wisconsin environment to that of Massachusetts did not do a dis-service both to the man and to the cause of history. There was no outward expression of the fact, and yet I believe that this interpreter and teacher of American history from the West was much encouraged by the fact that some men from the hinterland came to Cambridge to sit at his feet. In his *seminar* group of 1911-1912, there were two from Ohio, one from Indiana, one from Minnesota, one from Utah and one from Washington.² There were but two from the East, and one of these had been a teacher at Olivet College, Michigan.³

While at Harvard, I did a year's work with Dr. William Bennett Munro in the field of Municipal Government, with Dr. Edwin Francis Gay in Economic History, and with Dr. Charles Howard McIlwain in English Constitutional History. One difference that I discovered between Harvard and Wisconsin was that the work requirements were much more

¹During the first semester, I audited the first half of Turner's course in the "History of the West." I had taken the second half of the course with him at the University of Wisconsin.

²The two members from Ohio were William T. Morgan of Maynard, and George C. Davies of Wauseon; George M. Stephenson was from Minneapolis, Minn.; Franklin D. Daines, from Hyde Park, Utah; Elbert A. Kincaid, from Palouse, Wash.; William O. Lynch, the writer, was from Terre Haute, Indiana.

³George W. Bell of Stoneham, Mass., was one of the eastern students in the group. The other man in the group was from somewhere in New England, but I cannot recall his name.

rigid and extensive in the older University. Such a contrast to many university professors seemed then, and would now seem, to be much in favor of Harvard. To the extent that more required work leads to better results, I am in harmony with the idea, but there is a grave doubt in my mind whether a graduate student is worth his salt who does not work because of an inner urge and in a field where he can be happy while working. I believe that every graduate student should be carefully guided and frankly advised, but I feel that each one should be rated by the quality rather than by the quantity of his work.

It was not possible for me to learn much about the undergraduate students nor about the nature of their activities in or out of the classroom. I heard often about the "Gold Coast" and about the private tutoring agency, or school, that was said to do quite a business on Harvard Square. The professors that I knew at Harvard ranked high in scholarship and in productive work, and they were surprisingly open-minded in regard to current problems. The general atmosphere lacked the pervading spirit of liberalism which then prevailed at Wisconsin. The student body at Cambridge was preponderantly conservative, it seemed, but such students as did not camp on the right were apt to be pretty far to the left. This did not leave many to occupy the middle zone.

It was at Harvard that I became acquainted with Albert L. Kohlmeier and William T. Morgan, two men with whom I have, for eighteen years, been closely associated at Indiana University. There were several Indiana men at Harvard during the year 1911-1912, some of whom it was my privilege to know well.⁵ In class or on the Harvard Yard, among others, I learned to know Chauncey S. Boucher, Kenneth W. Colgrove, Nils A. Olsen, H. Herbert Bass, and Franklin D. Daines.⁶ I became especially interested in Elbert A.

⁴ Albert L. Kohlmeier was at Harvard during the year 1911-12 and also the preceding year. He became an instructor in history at Indiana University in September, 1912. Later he received the Ph.D. degree from Harvard. Since 1924, he has been head of the department of History. Dr. William T. Morgan completed the work for his doctor's degree at Yale. He came to Indiana in September, 1919.

⁵ Three Indiana men whom I knew quite well (in addition to Boucher and Kohlmeier) were: Lloyd M. Crograve, James G. McDonald, and Oscar H. Williams.

⁶ Chauncey S. Boucher, now Chancellor of the University of Nebraska, spent the year 1911-1912 at Harvard and we were together in Dr. Gay's course in economic history. Kenneth W. Colgrove, now a professor of government at Northwestern University where he has been for several years, was with me in Dr. McIlwain's course in English constitutional history. Nils A. Olsen is now Chief of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in the Department of Agriculture at Washington. I had met him at the University of Wisconsin, but we became much better acquainted through our occasional contacts at Harvard. H. Herbert Bass, of the Warrensburg, Missouri, Teachers College, had been a graduate student at Wisconsin, but I first met him and became well acquainted with him while we were in Cambridge during

Kincaid and George M. Stephenson, both of whom were among the members of Turner's *seminar*.⁷ We often counseled together as we searched for light on western problems during the year. As the campaign of 1912 approached, we found a new community of interest in that each of us became deeply interested in the fortunes and activities of Col. Theodore Roosevelt. The party developments of the spring of 1912, do not loom so large as one views them in retrospect, but they really absorbed the attention of persons of progressive tendencies at the moment.

While living in Cambridge, I found it possible to make occasional excursions to places of historic interest with Mrs. Lynch and Mary. We visited Lexington, Concord, Salem, Plymouth, and many places in Boston and Cambridge. As I went back and forth between Langdon Street and the Yard, I usually passed by the Washington Elm. It was somewhat disturbing to learn that Professor Channing could not feel sure whether the committee, headed by Henry W. Longfellow, which had some years before made an investigation and selected the tree, had decided correctly or not. We were likewise more or less disquieted¹ when, some months after we had placed our feet on Plymouth Rock, we read a newspaper story written by a minister residing in Plymouth who raised a question about that substantial stone. It seems from his account that there were several boulders at the water's edge, on any one of which the Pilgrims could have landed as they left the Mayflower. When a pier was constructed, what was then believed to be the sacred rock was carted to a place in the small business section of the port. Later the rock was placed where it is now, some feet higher but approximately over its old resting place.

the same year. Franklin D. Daines was from Utah, a graduate of Brigham Young College, and a Mormon. Mrs. Lynch and I came to know him and his wife quite well. When I first knew Daines, he seemed to be a confirmed conservative, but, before the end of the year, he was an enthusiastic supporter of Colonel Roosevelt. Since 1922, Daines has been professor of political science at the Agricultural College of Utah.

⁷ George M. Stephenson, since 1917 at the University of Minnesota, is a professor of history at that institution. He began his study of the public lands as a member of Turner's *seminar* in the fall of 1911. His book, *The Political History of the Public Lands from 1840 to 1862* (Boston, 1917), was the outcome of the research which he then began. I regard it as a misfortune that circumstances have not permitted me to keep up the close friendship with Stephenson which began at Harvard. Elbert A. Kincaid has been a professor of economics at the University of Virginia since 1922. He and I became intimate friends while in Cambridge, and we have been able to keep in touch with each other to the present. Kincaid visited us in our apartment in Cambridge, dined with us and learned to know Mrs. Lynch and Mary well. When he accepted a position at the University of Virginia, he was offered a place in the department of economics at Indiana University, for which I had recommended him, at the same time. After leaving Harvard, Kincaid shifted to economics, and took his degree in this field at the University of California.

In Harvard Hall, one of the old buildings on the Yard, constructed in 1766, and used by soldiers of Washington's army, I attended lectures in each of the two second story rooms. On several occasions, I wrote on examinations in Massachusetts Hall, which was erected in 1726. The preservation and use of these old college buildings appealed to me very strongly, adding much to the enjoyment that I experienced while at Harvard. The bell at the top of Harvard Hall was rung to announce the beginning and end of each lecture period, the bell-ringer using a suspended rope in the process in the old fashioned way. The strangest thing was that the tones of the bell rang out each morning at seven o'clock. Possibly, there had been classes at that hour at some time in the past, but certainly few people, if any, knew the why or the wherefore of the ringing of the bell at seven in 1911. The tradition was that long years before, there was a rule that every student living in the dormitories on the Yard must be up each morning at seven or earlier. A Boston reporter, investigating the matter arrived at the conclusion that there was no reason for the morning bell in the new age, unless it was to indicate that no Harvard student should retire later than seven A.M.

It was no easy matter to locate a furnished apartment in Cambridge suited to the requirements of a student with a small family.⁸ This was more especially true since the said small family desired to hold out for nine months. We were fortunate enough to discover quarters that served us well. Our total cash resources were \$1112 from which we paid all expenses from the moment we left Logansport, Indiana, on the afternoon of September 19, 1911, until we stepped off the train in Terre Haute in the early morning of June 17, 1912, with a balance of \$61 in hand. Subtracting my tuition fee of \$150, our traveling expenses to and from Boston, \$145, and the cash balance of \$61, we had left \$756, or an average of \$84 per month for all other expenses. It is almost impossible to believe these humble statistics, but I am certain of their accuracy. I kept a careful cash account and have the small red book on my desk as I write with all the items of expense recorded therein. It is doubtful whether we have ever obtained so much for an equal outlay in any nine months since.

⁸Our three rooms at No. 47 Langdon Street constituted an upper floor of a larger apartment. We leased them from Mrs. Lee Morrison. Mr. Morrison was a regularly employed chemist at the Harvard Botanic Garden. We were within easy walking distance of Massachusetts Avenue and the Harvard Yard.

For exercise, we took many walks in Cambridge. We found Brattle Street especially attractive, and often went that way. We took trips on the street-cars and then walked about in interesting areas of Boston and the surrounding region. Our first motorcar (a Model T Ford) was not purchased until 1916, so we were accustomed to walking.⁹ The subway from Harvard Square to the Park Street Station in Boston was completed in the early spring of 1912, which made it possible to go into the city very quickly where it was easy to transfer to other car lines. I had little time for pleasure jaunts, but, whenever I could spare an hour or more, we made good use of the opportunity. At the end of the year, we returned to Indiana by way of Washington. This being our first trip to the nation's capital, it was one that we have not forgotten.

Before leaving Cambridge, I had made up my mind to complete the work for a doctor's degree at the University of Wisconsin at the earliest moment.¹⁰ To further my purpose, I asked for a leave of absence a year later, intending to continue my studies during the summer of 1913. I was prevented from pursuing my plan by a promotion which I could not well refuse to accept. Thwarted in two later attempts to meet the remaining formal requirements for the degree, I gave up the quest and joined the ranks of that small company of university professors who somehow survive though the magic letters, "Ph.D.", do not follow their names in the catalogues.

I taught for a full quarter during the summer of 1911 and again during the following summer. There was no change in my salary during the year immediately succeeding my leave of absence. Late in the spring quarter of 1913, I was asked to serve as acting-head of the department of American history for the ensuing year, at the end of which time I was elected to the headship of the department.¹¹ This

⁹Automobiles were already thick on the streets of Cambridge and Boston by 1911. Massachusetts Avenue, a wide and much used thoroughfare, seemed always full of speeding cars, much as are city streets today.

¹⁰In my last conference with Dr. Turner in the Harvard Library, he asked me what I intended to do in regard to the doctor's degree. I told him of my purpose to go back to Wisconsin where I had taken my A.M. degree. He then said to me: "If they (history department of Wisconsin) write me about you, I shall recommend that you be given your examination without further residence work."

¹¹Before I went to Terre Haute, two departments had been created in the Normal School, one in American history and one in European history. After I became head of the department of American history in 1914, Professor Bogardus and I agreed that his department should be known as the "department of European history and economics" and mine as the "department of American history and government." When I left the institution in 1918, the two departments were combined.

meant a twenty-five per cent increase in salary for 1913-1914, and another increase of about thirty dollars per month twelve months later. Like Paul of old, I was able to prove that I knew how to "abound", but I trust that no taxpayer will become unduly excited as my salary was just \$230 per month or \$2760 for four quarters of service after both adjustments. While at Harvard, I was asked to consider a position in the State Teachers College at Moorhead, Minnesota. I offered to go for a salary of \$2000 for the regular year of nine months, but the president wrote me that the school could not pay so much, and I returned to my job in Terre Haute at a salary of \$1932 for forty-eight weeks.

During my year as acting-head of the department of American history, I was in a more conspicuous position than I had ever been before. My contacts with President Parsons and heads of other departments were more frequent, my responsibilities were greater, and new duties outside of my department were assigned to me. My method was "to saw wood" quietly and let matters take their course. The head of the department was on leave and there was a general belief that he was being eased out in the most kindly manner. One does not like to be placed in such a position, but I was certain that I had been loyal to my superior, and, since it was out of the question to aid him in any way, I gave very little thought to what was said or to the possible outcome. Not once did President Parsons mention his plans for the future of the department to me until after the whole matter was settled.

For many years teachers' institutes were held in the counties of Indiana, and likewise in many other states, each lasting for one week. Two or more lecturers were employed by each county superintendent, each lecturer giving two addresses per day, as a rule. A number of counties paid well and Indiana became a sort of Mecca for "instructors" from every part of the country. Scores of informational or inspirational lectures were annually delivered to the teachers of the public schools, but a considerable number of the educators and others who picked up some money on the side during August or September by serving county institutes were little more than entertainers. Spellbinders who more or less cleverly purveyed second-hand pedagogy were among those employed each year to uplift the Hoosier teaching fra-

ternity. I did not make a practice of serving county institutes, but lectured in enough to know what the system was like and to become acquainted with its good and bad features.

Early in September of 1913, I lectured for a week before the teachers of Pike County, Indiana, in institute assembled.¹² This was one of the spots in Hoosierdom where men remained in the teaching profession, and I was very agreeably surprised at their genuine interest in history and politics. This was partly due to the fact that the condition of unrest which produced the Progressive party in 1912 had by no means subsided. So great was the interest in political questions and the party situation that I was obliged to meet with an enthusiastic group after the hour of adjournment in the afternoon for an off the record discussion of politics in which everyone took part. One of the teachers in this group, who was then principal of the Petersburg High School, was Walter E. Treanor, later a professor of law at Indiana University and member of the Supreme Court of the State, and now a federal judge in Chicago. From that week, Judge Treanor and I have been close friends.

Brief mention has been made of my interest in the progressive movement in politics while I was at Harvard. As the time of the Republican National Convention approached, the question whether Theodore Roosevelt would bolt the party should the delegates fail to nominate him became one of deep moment. I have very seldom bothered public persons with communications, but I wrote to the Colonel commending him because he had refused to declare that he would support the nominee of the Convention regardless of the platform. I also called his attention to the fact that the Republican Party owed its rise and early success to men

¹² This was, I believe, my first institute after I became connected with the Normal School as a member of the faculty. I returned to Pike County for a similar engagement in 1916, and again in 1924. Before the abolition of county institutes, I served in each of the following counties: Clay, Fountain, Floyd, Harrison, Morgan, Vermillion, White, Carroll, Fulton, and Martin. I have known instructors who served in two or three counties annually for many years, but I feel that I did enough work in that field. There is great danger that one who does much work of the sort will dissipate his energies and fail to accomplish things of greater moment.

On the last day of my week's engagement in Pike County in 1913, I received a telegram that my father was very ill. Hurrying back to Terre Haute, I was at his bedside in Bringhurst, Indiana, as soon as possible. He lived on for about three weeks, passing away on September 24, 1913. Had he lived until the end of December, he would have passed the seventy-third anniversary of his birth (Dec. 28, 1913) and the fiftieth anniversary of his marriage (Dec. 3, 1913) to my mother, who outlived him by fourteen years. My father belonged to that first generation of men born in north central Indiana, a generation that never knew childhood and youth in an older area as did their parents. The men and women of this generation, born on the raw frontier, were more truly the products of pioneer conditions than were those who came in from more civilized states. I have never known a man who was more anxious than my father that his children should make the most of opportunities that had not been available to him.

who had the courage to leave the Whig and Democratic parties, and reminded him of the part played by Whig leaders like Lincoln and Seward. I do not suppose that my letter exerted a particle of influence, but when the Colonel bolted and announced that he was ready to participate in the formation of a new party, I was in complete accord with him.

At the same time, I was deeply concerned about the candidacy of Woodrow Wilson. Knowing well that a Clark victory in the Baltimore Convention would make for the success of the nascent Progressive Party, I could only rejoice over Bryan's great fight and the victory of Wilson. The nomination of Governor Wilson caused me to write again to Colonel Roosevelt. The substance of my letter was that, since the Democratic Party had not committed suicide but had instead nominated a progressive, the wisest policy would be to organize the Progressive Party, make a platform and then seek a coalition with the Wilson Democrats. I urged that an arrangement should be made under which, should Wilson be elected, there would follow a Cabinet made up of Democrats and Progressives with a like combination in the case of all important committees in Senate and House. For once, I believed that there was a chance for a real and effective coalition, something to that time, and still, unknown to the American party system.

In reply to this earnest plea, I received a letter which explains why Colonel Roosevelt was unwilling to take up my plan. I thought then and think now that, standing at the parting of the ways, he took the wrong road. He made history by his decision, but he passed up the chance to make more and greater history. Here is the paragraph that constituted the body of the letter:

I cannot personally support the ticket and Platform of the Baltimore convention and I do not think that the Progressives should do so. I see no advantage in changing Penrose, Barnes and Gugenheim for Murphy, Taggart and Sullivan. The Democratic House has acted atrociously during the past year, and the platform put forth at Baltimore is as vicious as any platform well could be.¹³

In taking this attitude, Colonel Roosevelt was in harmony with American party traditions, which only means that American parties have not been wise enough to understand party coalitions and their value under certain conditions.

¹³ T. Roosevelt to W. O. Lynch, New York City, July 12, 1912.

During the campaign, I defended the Progressive Party and cast my vote for the Roosevelt electors. I went as a delegate to the Progressive State Convention and helped to nominate Albert J. Beveridge as a candidate for governor. In 1914, I again served as a delegate to the party's State Convention, when Mr. Beveridge was named as a candidate for the United States Senate.¹⁴

¹⁴Ex-Senator Beveridge gladly accepted the nomination of 1912 and made the race for governor with enthusiasm. Samuel M. Ralston was elected, running 109,221 ahead of Beveridge. The latter, however, received 23,251 more votes than the Republican candidate, Winfield T. Durbin. In 1914, Beveridge was drafted as the senatorial candidate by the Progressives, and accepted very reluctantly. He knew only too well that the strength of the new party was declining and that he was being asked to lead in a losing cause. He sat on the stage, near the front and to the left of the chairman of the Convention. For several minutes, while the delegates vigorously demanded that he accept the unanimously tendered nomination, Beveridge leaned forward, his face buried in his hands, shaking his head and repeatedly saying "No." In the end, he rose to his feet, faced the silenced body of delegates that filled Tomlinson Hall, and, speaking with deep feeling, said—"I will." He made the sacrifice and conducted a strong campaign, but wind and tide were against the Progressives. The Democrats won, electing Benjamin F. Shively, with Hugh Th. Miller, the Republican candidate, running second in the race for Senator.