

INDIANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

Volume XXXVIII December, 1942

No. 4

Logan Esarey, Hoosier

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One September afternoon in 1906, the study hall of Vincennes High School, usually presided over by a dignified elderly lady of formidable mien, was being patrolled aimlessly by a quiet-looking, medium-sized man. The first impression upon one thirteen-year-old student was that of a quizzical being with a sunken nose and bright shining dark eyes. As the teacher drifted idly up the aisle and approached the school's popular fat boy from the rear, those "in the know" began to sense excitement. This lad, who found it difficult to exist from one meal to the next without supplementary rations, was, as usual, feeding from his coat pocket. Suddenly he looked up into the face of the law—caught red-handed. All was quiet. The score or more of students nearby held their breath and anticipated the worst. We knew what the woman teacher would do under the circumstances; we could only imagine what a man teacher would do. Then we heard a low question: "Are you eating something?" Finally came the reply, "Candy." "Don't they pass things around at your house?" It took a minute for the idea to penetrate. When a handful of jelly beans was produced, the teacher, with a twinkle in his eye, said, "Thank you," and walked on about his business eating them.¹ Within a few minutes after that study period was over the news of the event had penetrated to the ends of the building. An hour or so later this same man reappeared in charge of our ancient history class. A short way down the roll he paused at the same Barney and said, "I used to have a horse named Barney. He wasn't worth a durn." A revolution and a revelation had taken place before

¹ Mr. Louis W. Bonsib, prominent Fort Wayne businessman and artist, speaks of the candy as "made sweeter, perhaps, by a sense of guilt." Otherwise the evidence is in substantial agreement.

our eyes. It was not to end for three years, in our minds not ever.

Shortly the ancient history classes were finding Greek and Roman mythology as interesting as G. A. Henty or Horatio Alger, nor was it longer necessary to hide a good book behind the big geography, which in its day covered a multitude of sins. One could read Herodotus, shocking stories and all, boldly, right in the study hall, and claim that one was studying his history lesson. Occasionally this new teacher would take over a Latin class. Then our well worn ablatives and gerunds received but passing notice, and we reveled in Dr. Harold W. Johnson's *Private Life of the Romans* or constructed a critique of Caesar's *Gallic Wars*. It had never occurred to us before, of course, that even Julius Caesar might have made a mistake. Cicero we leap-frogged, the class translating a few lines, the teacher reading several pages. After all, we were in a hurry to get at Sallust's *Cataline*. Certainly one by-product of that year's work was an expanded circulation for *Collier's*, which was offering *The World's Greatest Orations* as a bounty. That, in turn, involved forays from Pericles to Chief Logan and William Jennings Bryan. How dead was Latin when we reached Vergil, only to find, under another teacher, that it was a business of counting meters and weighing syllables.

We found in the interim that this teacher would now and then teach a German class and that an entirely different mythology and lore would be discussed there. Also, that he could squat on his heels and peg a ball faster and flatter to second base than anybody else in school. Though he made little pretense of being an expert in football, the boys could always count on his being present at practice. When track season began he helped measure and time and in class brought up the Olympic games and Greek sports. He even took up a collection and took the school's outstanding runner to the state meet—an unheard-of event. Frequently he recommended poor but able students to Mr. Jake Gimble and other men of means who bet on promising boys' keeping their promises after college. In assemblies we heard fascinating talks on the early history of Vincennes. We learned that the *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois* performed feats as impossible as did the knights of old and that the strip-field system of the medieval manor had been practiced right in our town—

we even made trips on Saturdays and Sundays to see if we could find the old balk-lines. Right in the midst of one of these discourses, the speaker would point to a Badollette, a Brouillette, or a Polk and say, "That might have been your great-great-grandfather." Sometimes when James Speed Rogers (later Professor of Biology at the University of Florida), who walked five miles to school when the old mare was needed elsewhere, would slip apologetically into his seat, the speaker would stop and say, "James, you have missed a mighty good talk."

His office as principal, hitherto visited only upon invitation, became a loafing place during the lunch hour and before school. Many a tall tale originated there. Discipline, too, could be dispensed. Minor derelictions received penalties in proportion; for the few serious ones, the penalty was never questioned. The offender knew that the overwhelming power of opinion against him would permit no appeal. For the teachers he served as wailing wall and father confessor, and stood as a bulwark between them and the political powers that were. The dedication of the 1909 *White and Gold*—"To our beloved principal, Mr. Logan Esarey—our sincere appreciation of his untiring efforts to make our school life pleasant, and to elevate the standard of our Alma Mater"—carried more import than the usual yearbook formula. When, at commencement in McJimsey's Opera House, the principal gave away the graduating class with the parting words, "We are glad that they can go; we are sorry that they must go," there were those of us who had a premonition that the words might also apply to the speaker.

We were right, for that summer he left us. The next year was in many respects an anti-climax. We did not know that a number of us would again have the good fortune to work with this teacher.

* * * * *

Despite the fact that his mother said she "found him under a cliff," Logan Esarey was born in a small frame house about three-quarters of a mile up the hill from Branchville, Perry County, Indiana, January 3, 1873. Since he was the sixth child (of nine), the mother often had to park the infant on the kitchen floor and go about her work. On such occasions the youngster would sit, with lugubrious countenance backed by ample lung power, and cry; so his care was

often delegated to the older children. Care of a two-year-old was not permitted too seriously to interfere with the usual activities. At the swimming hole one would push him in at the narrow end and another pull him out some six feet away at the other side. (A few years later the same boys were swimming the Ohio, commonly called a mile wide, and with a very fair current.)

At four young Logan started to school at Branchville, which, besides the school, consisted of a general store and a cluster of a dozen or so houses. Keeping two lessons and two classes ahead of his primary group still left a certain amount of time for pinching and hair pulling. Before long the youngster had the reputation of being "the meanest kid in school." Since intelligence tests, standardized achievement tests, and other means of painless avoidance of learning had not yet been invented, the scholars learned to add, multiply, and do cube root via Ray's arithmetic,—to spell, to analyze the sentence, to know some facts of physiology, geography, and history, and to write a good hand. They were confronted with facts, not "proper attitudes"; the burden of proof was upon them. They could not fill in the blank spaces with answers already provided. The quantity of knowledge dispensed was not great, but its quality was good. In addition there were the books at home or those borrowed from neighbors. Just as important was the education derived from woods and fields and the tales told around the fireside and in the store or blacksmith's or cooper's shop: tales of the Indian wars, the Revolution, the Mexican and Civil wars; of hunters and keel boatmen, hound dogs and New Orleans.

The Esareys had come to America, probably from Wales, some time before the middle of the 18th century. Great-great-grandfather John Esarey ("John the Hunter," 1744-1828) had served with George Rogers Clark and received a sizeable land grant on a branch of Salt River in the Kentucky country. Difficulties with speculators over land titles crowded the pioneer and his family of grown sons and daughters, some married, out of the Elizabethtown neighborhood. They crossed the Ohio about 1806 and settled in a little valley at the head of Oil Creek, in the present Perry County, Indiana. In this neighborhood in turn lived Jonathan Davis Esarey (1783-1858), Jesse Clark Esarey (1817-1869), and John Clark Esarey (1841-1924), father of Logan Esarey. Game

was plentiful along Deer, Poison, Anderson, and Oil creeks; and the great overhanging cliffs interested not only the original settlers, but also later generations of exploring children. Instead of *Startling Comics* and radio thrillers, there was a rich heritage of hunters' and fighters' tales, often somewhat confused as to principals, but satisfying, nevertheless. There was still plenty of woods left in the 1870's and the children did not have to draw too heavily on their imaginations when they re-enacted these tales.

Some of the stories might seem fairly pointless to the case-hardened young sophisticates of today; still, if they were told by an expert, one can not be too sure. There was, for instance, the story of the bewitching of Blackstock, the rifle of old John the Hunter. The piece, fired at forty paces, simply refused to kill a standing deer, though the powder exploded and the bullet left the barrel. In disgust the hunter took his cherished piece home and set it in the corner of the cabin, just like any old rifle gun, and said n'ary a word to his wife. Those pioneer wives understood guns and maybe men, too; so after her husband was asleep, she melted down a precious silver coin into a bullet, loaded Blackstock and put it back on the rack. The next day old Blackstock felled the deer the very first time, as she had "oughter done" in the first place.

On another occasion the hunters kept running into a thing which just sat on stumps and looked at them. It looked like a gorilla, yet it was too big and didn't act like a gorilla. It had a terrible look in its eyes, and was kind of foggy around the edges. It wouldn't kill and it wouldn't scare. Finally, after the hunters quit wasting shot on it, it just gradually eased off into the woods and was never seen again. Perhaps in this case hunter instead of gun was somewhat "pixilated."

Then there was the story told by Newton Braxton Polard, cooper and *raconteur* extraordinary, of the bullfrogs of Reily hole. That these frogs could drag a fence-rail down to the creek and paddle across on one was common knowledge. But one night the hunting houn' dogs hit the trail of something mysterious. You could tell by their voices that it wasn't a coon trail, neither a wildcat, a fox, nor yet a bear. Certainly not a pole cat. They didn't seem to be trying to catch it, but every time they got to where it had hit the ground

last they just let out a kind of disgusted "Boo!" Finally it treed, and the dogs came back wagging their tails plumb crazylike. When the hunters approached the tree, they could see it by the light of the rising moon—hunched up about like a big Dominicker rooster. Suddenly it jumped clean over the heads of hounds and hunters, hit the ground twice or so, let out a great "Garrumph," and dived into Reily hole a quarter of a mile away.

Such a story, told in the upland south dialect in a deep, slow, musical voice, and dragged out for the better part of an hour in the telling—there were many of them for the youngsters to hear and pretend to believe.

John Clark Esarey, after marrying Barbara Ewing, had served about a year in the Union army. Besides their own numerous flock, usually several other children, orphans or otherwise, were housed and fed. All were supposed to do some work, but one surmises that the discipline was not too rigorous, for many a time the father returned from town to find the horses standing fresh behind the plow and the boys all gone fishing. In addition to the farm chores known to boys of today, they learned to use the ax and broadax, the frow and drawing knife, crosscut saw, bucksaw, maul and wedge and cradle. They knew dozens of trees, what the wood was good for, and when to cut them. They could trap and prepare pelts, dress or tan hides, help butcher, and make soft soap and maple syrup. The girls, in addition to the woman's work of milking, churning, and caring for the kitchen garden, helped dry and preserve fruits, knit, spin, and tend the chickens and such.

For a few years the family lived in an old two-story double-unit cabin of hewn logs and clapboards, about one mile below Branchville; but since it was drafty and cold and the mother was in delicate health, a new house was built farther up the hill. The boys still played in the old house, ostensibly a sort of cooper shop; but actually—since the Esareys were Methodists—they spent many hours there at seven-up, euchre, and pinochle. At least one of them developed card sense which furnished the foundation later of a very sound game of bridge. About the age of ten, young Logan also made his debut on the dancing floor. Despite the efforts of the local midwife to prevent the young boy from going to hell in that particular fashion by dragging him from the floor, he was

able, due to his mother's intervention, to continue. In time he cavorted agilely and cut many a sharp French Four or flung a high and fancy double and twisted Lord Massey, to the delight of those whose scruples did not forbid dancing.

They danced all night 'til broad day light
And went home with the gals in the morning.

At the age of sixteen, having finished common school, Logan got a school at German Ridge. Here for three years, 1889-92, he walked three miles, built the fires, swept the floors, and dispensed knowledge for \$40 a month. While he was teaching, his small library was enhanced by books sent home by an older brother who had gone to Danville Normal. Summers, the baseball team, which was almost a family affair, was an obsessing activity, and bitter local wars were fought.

In the early autumn of 1892, Logan entered Danville, where he finished the teachers' and business course in a year. Another year of teaching, then back for the law and scientific course, 1894-1895. At home for a short time in the summer, he borrowed some money on life insurance, and returned for the classic course, which he finished in the summer of 1896. Like most schools of its kind in the period, Danville was a poor man's school; it accepted students after completion of common school and tried to offer any course which anyone might want, from common branches up to trigonometry, Greek, and philosophy. From the standpoint of advanced training, degrees, and independent investigation, the faculty would hardly compare with that of the modern college; yet it was strong where the latter is often weak. There was a high proportion of sound and inspiring teachers. Among those always remembered by the young student were Jonathan Rigdon (later president of Winona Normal School and of Danville) in grammar, A. J. Kinnaman in mathematics, G. L. Spillman in Latin and Greek, and particularly J. A. Joseph in history—a teacher who was no slave to a text book, but who, "widely read," ranged over the field.

Much time, but not all, was spent in serious study. At the time of his first arrival Esarey had met on the train one Lewis Turman, and the boys shared a room heated with a wood stove, about a block from the college.² Soon they were

² Ironically, Turman later as professor of education at Stanford University had much to do with forging "those terrible weapons, the so-called intelligence tests," which the historian viewed with such distrust.

DANVILLE DAYS



Commencement, 1895



Easter Sunday, 1895, J. R. Brown, James Emmons, Purley Emmons, Luten Cook, Logan Esarey (standing), Harvey Thomas, Edward Harold, Milt. Hobbs.

known as two of the most inveterate pranksters in school. Far more mature in scholarship than most college boys of today, they would be regarded in some respects as strangely naive. On one occasion it developed in discussion that Turman had never seen a drunk man. So his roommate purchased two bottles of beer, picked up some sandwiches and one other boy, and the three took to the woods. There after a few sips Esarey's head began to loll and his eyes to roll. It was a good act and apparently convincing.

At the college bookstore clerked quiet and attractive Laura (Pearson) Mills, whose family lived in Danville.³ Though from a solid Quaker family which tolerated no nonsense, Miss Pearson, after having taught two schools, declared her independence of spirit by cutting bangs and going to college. That the Esarey-Mills friendship progressed apace is evidenced by the fact that during Christmas vacation, 1895, the one opportunity of the year for visiting home, the young man spent eleven consecutive evenings at the Pearsons' playing dominoes.

Nine boys and four girls finished the classic course in the summer of 1896. Esarey got a job at Cannelton; but in September he went down with thirteen weeks of typhoid fever, so did not get to help save the country from free silver and repudiation. He began his school in January, 1897, and was married in May. In June the county commissioners appointed him county superintendent. The salary was now \$100 per month, and by living at home, he was able to pay off the debt, about half college and half typhoid, in little over a year. Thereupon his father took him to Tobinsport to buy seventeen acres of land—something to save for. The parents lived with their son at Tobinsport until 1899, when Logan's family moved to Cannelton.

After six years of the county superintendency, it was time to move on. Harvard and law seemed indicated, especially since the older brother had for two years been studying at Cambridge. But when it appeared that the wife and four children⁴ would have to remain at home for two or more

³ Nee Laura Pearson, whose husband J. D. Mills was killed in an explosion shortly after their marriage in 1891.

⁴ They are Mary (1898-), now practicing law in West Palm Beach, Florida; Myra (Mrs. Herbert Evans, 1899-), Lake Worth, Florida; Ralph (1901-), assistant professor of Geology at Indiana

years, a compromise was reached and the family moved to Bloomington in the autumn of 1903.

The next two years were spent in completing the work on the A.B. degree in history at Indiana University. Outstanding in the department at that time were James Albert Woodburn, of pioneer Bloomington family; Amos Shartle Hershey in ancient and modern European history, European government, and international law; and Samuel Bannister Harding in European and English history. Probably no other western history department had at that time three peers of these men as combined scholars and teachers. Woodburn, Ph.D., from Johns Hopkins' famous Adams seminar—genial, anecdotal, and precise—hewed closely to politics and the principles of the fathers. Hershey, of Harvard and Heidelberg training—unmethodical, at times absent-minded, always brilliant in the field of international relations—opened the eyes of even undergraduates to the scholarship and literature of other lands. Dr. Harding, from Indianapolis to Indiana University by way of Harvard, was a sort of Theodore Roosevelt without the bluster and scatter-mindedness—forceful, exacting, a dynamo of energy and an encyclopedia of knowledge. No serious student ever left one of his classes without resolving to storm the bulwarks of historical knowledge and master it all before he came back again.

Esarey wrote a senior thesis on "The Abolitionists and the Freedom of the Mails," won the William Jennings Bryan Prize in discussion, and graduated in 1905. At the time of graduation, in addition to a major in history, he had on the record what would now constitute majors in government, English, and possibly language (Latin and German) as well. In his personal library were not only most of the standard histories of the United States, such as McMaster, Rhodes, and the new first volumes of Channing, but also well-underlined and annotated copies of Stubbs' *Constitutional History of England*, Langlois and Seignobos' *Introduction to the Study of History*, and many works in literature and philosophy. The owner's marginal comments in these books are interesting evidence of his maturing scholarship.⁵

University and State Geologist; Rosalie (1903-), wife of Dr. Ray Borland, Bloomington. The fifth child, Robin (chemist with Hercules Powder Company, Hattiesburg, Mississippi), was born in 1906.

⁵ These were contemporary notes and were in the books when first seen by the writer about 1907.

After a year as principal of the high school at Tell City (salary \$60, raised later to \$80), the Esareys moved to Vincennes in the autumn of 1906, where they "camped out" in a rambling old house until furniture and pay day arrived. Three years were spent at Vincennes, one as teacher of history and two as principal and teacher. Graduate work at the university, begun in the spring term of 1905, was continued during the summer terms. Under the direction of Woodburn and Harding, the student's research centered in Indiana history, and the master's thesis, *State Banking in Indiana, 1814-1873*,⁶ remains the most exhaustive treatment of the subject to date. The master's degree in history was granted in June, 1909.

When opportunity presented to teach at Winona Normal under his old Danville teacher, President Rigdon, Esarey accepted. The following year he became dean of the college. The routine of teaching and study was varied with many hours at croquet, horseshoes, fishing, listening to chautauqua speeches, and holding forth with old cronies.

In September, 1911, having received an appointment as research fellow in history at Indiana University, Esarey again moved to Bloomington. At the house on Third and Dunn Streets (later at Smith and Henderson), things were usually in a state of salutary confusion. Half a dozen boy roomers, five children, visiting children and dogs, later a family orchestra of fiddle, saxophone, cornet, drums, and piano, plus a guest artist or two, a barrel of apples at the foot of the stairs surrounded by a thousand-volume library—and in the midst of it all the student, now working on his doctor's dissertation and his *History* as well, would sit down and write a part of a chapter.⁷ Now and then the gang sat down to one of Mrs. Esarey's famous oyster stews.

On completion of the study on *Internal Improvements in Early Indiana*⁸ and formal oral examination on the chosen

⁶ *Indiana University Studies*, I, No. 15, published in 1912.

⁷ Among the fun-loving roomers of this period were Victor Beamer, president of the class of 1914 and later manager of the Equitable Life Assurance Company in Florida, and one Richard Allen Howes, London cockney via Australia, who claimed that he was born in a ship's rigging and frequently acted the part. The writer for years marveled at the landlord's tolerance of relatively harmless but often noisy pranks—until tales of similar activities of Esarey's days at Danville came to light.

⁸ *Indiana Historical Society Publications*, V, No. 2 (1912).

fields of history and government, the degree of Doctor of Philosophy was received in June, 1913, and Dr. Esarey was made instructor in history and secretary of the newly-created Indiana Historical Survey. Courses were established in Indiana history and in the development of the American Middle West, the latter being among the first courses of its type in any university. The historian now began the three-fold work of teaching, collecting, and writing and editing which was to continue for almost thirty years.

Although Middle West historians a century earlier had realized the vital importance of the history of the region and of the study of history from the base of the pyramid up, rather than from the apex down, and though Frederick Jackson Turner had won national renown by developing the latter idea in the 1890's, relatively little had been done during the century. True, the historical societies—notably those of Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin—had been collecting and publishing volumes of reminiscences, articles by antiquarians, and documents; editors such as Reuben G. Thwaites were adding scores of volumes of documents and travels; and monographs were beginning to come from the seminars of Turner at Wisconsin (later Harvard) and Alvord at Illinois. Yet the fact remains that in 1913 there were hardly a half dozen important scholarly works, other than monographs, on the history of the region. Not a state in the Middle West possessed a general, balanced history of itself. There were no scholarly biographies of George Rogers Clark, William Henry Harrison, Abraham Lincoln, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, Benjamin Harrison, William Tecumseh Sherman, Ulysses S. Grant, Cyrus Hall McCormick, and a dozen others. Of the two histories which bore the name of the region, one (Theodore Roosevelt's *Winning of the West*) failed to touch the social, economic, cultural, or institutional history of the region, while the other (Burke A. Hindsdale's, *The Old Northwest*) ended with the organization of the territory in 1787. There were no real histories of agriculture, of transportation, of journalism, of religion, of education, of science, or of folklore. The history of the Middle West was, if not a virgin field, at least an inviting one.

And of all the states, possibly excepting Ohio, Indiana had done the least. The Wisconsin Historical Society had been doubly fortunate, or foresighted, for it had had a long line

of working officers—Lyman Copeland Draper, Reuben Gold Thwaites, Milo M. Quaife, and Miss Louise P. Kellogg—distinguished writers and editors all, and the finest library of materials on the West in the country. The society by 1913 had published twenty volumes of *Historical Collections* (not to mention Thwaites's seventy-three volumes of *Jesuit Relations* and twenty-eight volumes of *Early Western Travels*, published separately) and many volumes of *Proceedings*, full of articles by scholars. Though Michigan was doing little, it had, after all, forty volumes of *Pioneer and Historical Society Publications* (reminiscences, articles, and documents). Ohio had twenty-two volumes of *Archaeological and Historical Society Publications* and nine volumes of the *Historical and Philosophic Society Publications*. The Illinois Historical Society also had been relatively moribund, though it had published nineteen volumes, including *Transactions* and five volumes of the *Journal*. But with the advent of Clarence W. Alvord at the University of Illinois, Illinois history began to develop lustily. The Illinois Historical Survey was established, a state appropriation was allotted, and soon Alvord, his associates, and graduate students (Solon J. Buck, Theodore Calvin Pease, Arthur C. Cole, Clarence E. Carter, and others) were presenting volumes of collections, special works, and monographs. By 1913 there were nine volumes of the *Illinois Historical Collections*. As for Indiana there were four volumes of *Publications*, mostly papers and short articles, no documentary collections, and eight volumes of the *Indiana Magazine of History*, then practically expiring.

The Indiana Historical Survey was modelled after that of Illinois. The idea was to undertake the collecting and publishing of documents, the assembling of materials, and the writing and dissemination of the history of the state. To that end, graduate theses in United States history were to be assigned largely in the field of state history.

Dr. Esarey's problem was not an easy one. Without adequate collections of manuscripts, documents, newspaper files, and all the other material, it was impossible to publish collections, almost impossible to write. Without publication it was hard to arouse interest and get materials. Without interest it was impossible to get money. It was necessary to break out of the circle, to attack on all fronts at once. Since the regular appropriations for the survey usually amounted to

about \$500—enough for a part-time typist and incidentals—obviously, valuable materials could not be purchased. It would have to be beg and borrow, not buy. The prospectus or Appeal for Funds stated the case and plans. It announced a series of studies, collections of territorial papers, messages, and letters of the governors, and other publications, “if the necessary funds are forthcoming.” They never were.

While Ernest V. Shockley was working on his Atlas of Indiana History and compiling the political platforms, Esarey began his Newspaper History and Directory of Indiana.⁹ When the *Indiana Magazine of History*, begun by George Cottman and others in 1905, was about to expire on the financial rocks, Indiana University took it over in 1913 and Esarey was made editor. A small but enthusiastic seminar in Indiana history was now at work, and by adding their studies to the usual contributed articles the *Magazine* was soon noted as the best in the Old Northwest.¹⁰ Said a contributor to the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* in June, 1914: “The best of these, from the standpoint of scientific history, is *The Indiana Magazine of History* . . . edited by Dr. Logan Esarey.”¹¹ And again a year later: “*The Indiana Magazine*

⁹ This unpublished manuscript—now some 2,000 typed pages of history and sketches of over 3,000 newspapers of the state from 1804 to 1940—is to the writer’s knowledge the only work of its kind for any state.

¹⁰ Among the graduate student monographs published in whole or in part were: Nina K. Reid, “Sketches of Early Indiana Senators,” in *Indiana Magazine of History*, IX (1913), 1-13, 92-95, 167-86, 247-68; William F. Vogel, “Home Life in Early Indiana,” *ibid.*, X (1914), 133-61, 284-320; Dale Beeler, “The Election of 1852 in Indiana,” *ibid.*, XI (1915), 301-23, XII (1916), 34-52; Harold Littel, “Development of the City School System of Indiana—1851-1880,” *ibid.*, XII (1916), 193-213, 299-325; Charles Zimmerman, “The Origin and Rise of the Republican Party in Indiana from 1854 to 1860,” *ibid.*, XIII (1917), 211-69, 349-412; Ernest D. Stewart, “Populist Party in Indiana,” *ibid.*, XIV (1918), 332-67, XV (1919), 53-74; R. C. Buley, “Indiana in the Mexican War,” *ibid.*, XV (1919), 260-326, XVI (1920), 46-68; Charles E. Camp, “Temperance Movements and Legislation in Indiana,” *ibid.*, XVI (1920), 3-37, 112-51; Carl Painter, “Progressive Party in Indiana,” *ibid.*, XVI (1920), 173-283; Charles H. Money, “Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 in Indiana,” *ibid.*, XVII (1921), 159-98, 257-97; Carl F. Brand, “History of the Know Nothing Party in Indiana,” *ibid.*, XVIII (1922), 47-81, 177-206, 266-306; Adam A. Leonard, “Personal Politics in Indiana, 1816-1840,” *ibid.*, XIX (1923), 1-56, 132-68, 241-81; Glen A. Blackburn, “Interurban Railroads of Indiana,” *ibid.*, XX (1924), 221-79, 400-64; and Howard R. Burnett, “The Last Pioneer Governor of Indiana—Blue Jeans’ Williams,” *ibid.*, XXII (1926), 101-30.

¹¹ Solon J. Buck, “Historical Activities in the Old Northwest . . . 1913-1914,” in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, I (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1914-), 80.

of *History* continues to hold the premier place among the historical periodicals of the Old Northwest in editorial workmanship and qualities of paper."¹²

Not the least among the reasons for this high rank were the articles and critical reviews by the editor. Some of his best writing is to be found in such articles as "The Pioneer Aristocracy," "The Approach to History," "The Literary Spirit among Early Ohio Valley Settlers," and "The Myth of the Poor White Trash."¹³

The *Magazine* ("our baby," as he used to call it) was quite a chore, but a labor of love. The editor "rustled" circulation and exchanges, kept its accounts, read dozens of contributions quarterly, helped rewrite those accepted, compiled the mailing list, read the proofs, at times even addressed wrappers and tied up the bundles for the mail. Help was used when available—the Esarey family, graduate students, a part-time typist, sometimes an assistant from the department. Proof was read anywhere—on the front porch, under a beech tree in the woods, in army barracks in 1918.¹⁴ By arrangement with the Indiana Historical Society, the members received the *Magazine* for half the regular subscription price. Although hundreds of dollars' worth of historical magazines and publications of other states, as well as scores of Indiana newspapers, came to the university annually in exchanges, no regular budgetary provision was made for maintaining the publication. It was always a matter of wrestling with the deficits and overdue bills by requests for special appropriations. Besides its historical and exchange value to the university, the *Magazine* had another value of importance. Possibility of publication of studies was a fine stimulus to graduate students working in the field; it served as a practical laboratory in editing, preparing for publica-

¹² Solon J. Buck, "Historical Activities in the Old Northwest, 1914-1915," *ibid.*, II (1915-1916), 92.

¹³ Logan Esarey, "The Pioneer Aristocracy," in *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII (1917), 270-87; *idem*, "The Approach to History," *ibid.*, XVII (1921), 150-58; *idem*, "The Literary Spirit among Early Ohio Valley Settlers," in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, V (1918-1919), 143-57; and *idem*, "The Myth of the Poor White Trash," Ohio Valley Historical Association *Proceedings and Papers for the Year 1919* (Columbus, Ohio, 1925), 82-91.

¹⁴ Dr. S. W. Geiser, head of the Department of Biology, Southern Methodist University, recalled in 1942 one of the articles on which he as "buddy of the day," helped read galley proofs at Camp Sheridan, Illinois, in 1918.

tion, and writing of book reviews. For "making print," the student often got the privilege of reading proof of the whole number with the editor.

While the *Magazine* was getting under way, Dr. Esarey issued his small *Guide to the Study of Indiana History*,¹⁵ edited with Leander J. Monks and Dr. Ernest V. Shockley the three volumes on *Courts and Lawyers of Indiana*,¹⁶ wrote his articles for the Indianapolis *Sunday Star*, and finished the first volume of his *History of Indiana*.

The articles in the *Star* ran more or less regularly for several years and covered every phase of Indiana history. Some were on popular subjects, others almost chronicles; all were sound. Sunday mornings, having read the papers, comics included, the historian would grab a bundle of notes and a long cigar, light almost anywhere, and write his piece for the next week. These articles helped to keep alive interest in the state's history—and they "kept the kids in shoes."

Although Indiana, the second state of the Northwest Territory, was nearing its hundredth birthday, the state had no scholarly, balanced history of itself. What histories it had were either episodic and popular or else the work of the older literary avocational historians. Best known of the latter type were the works of John Dillon (*History of Indiana*, published in 1859) and Jacob Piatt Dunn (*Indiana, A Redemption from Slavery*, which appeared in 1888). The former practically ended with the War of 1812, and the latter with the admission of the state. Dunn's work was built around an indefensible thesis. Neither work covered the more important periods or topics in the history of Indiana.

Drawing heavily upon his general knowledge and such documents and newspaper files as were available, Dr. Esarey rushed to completion the first volume of his *History of Indiana (From its Exploration to 1850)*.¹⁷ The immediate urge was the impending celebration of the state's centennial anniversary. The second volume, *From 1850 to the Present*, was published in 1918.¹⁸ This 1200 page work is not very well or-

¹⁵ Indiana University Extension Division *Bulletin* (1915).

¹⁶ Federal Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 1916. This was an historical-biographical work of the better-class subscription type.

¹⁷ This was published by W. K. Steward Company, Indianapolis, 1915, in the library edition. A students' edition was reprinted by the Hoosier Press of Fort Wayne, 1916 and 1924.

¹⁸ This was published by the B. F. Bowen Company of Indianapolis and later reprinted by the Hoosier Press of Fort Wayne, and by Indiana University Bookstore.

ganized, at times is not very well written, and contains some errors; but it is a balanced and scholarly history, based upon the sources. All phases of the life of the state are treated—political, military, social, economic, and cultural. There are chapters on constitutions, religion, public lands, banking, and home life. The second volume, although fuller of source references, ran into the practically insolvable problem of presentation which arose from the lack of a central thread to tie to in the later period. The author was well aware of this. He also neglected the opportunity of including an evaluated bibliography of materials for the study of the history of the state; and he, better than any other, was qualified to do this. There were some statements and viewpoints presented which were reversed or considerably modified in the author's mind in later years. At the time of writing he had been through all the important published documents and had laboriously run, page by page, the files of the *Western Sun*, *Indiana Journal*, *Richmond Palladium*, and the *Madison*, *Corydon*, and other early papers; but later years took him not only into many other newspapers but into diaries, journals, letters, and other sources. Most of these he himself had collected. Dr. Esarey spoke often of completely rewriting the work, but never got around to it. With all its defects it is still the best history of the state and the best one-man history of any of the states of the Old Northwest. All who have written since have drawn heavily from it.

In 1916 came the state's centennial celebration. The main event was a pageant. William Chauncy Langdon, expert producer of pageants, was imported from the East to provide the scenario; and many hours were spent in consultation with the Indiana historian. Main performances were staged in Bloomington, Corydon, and Indianapolis. For three days illustrative scenes from the state's history, from French explorers to the day of the automobile, were staged by a large troop of townspeople, faculty, and students. Indians, scouts, pioneer farmers, circuit riders, and politicians got all mixed up with the nymphs, dryads, butterflies, and zephyrs. The unscrambling process was not completed even hours after the last scene. It was quite a show. Esarey was a scout or hunter, for which part he needed little make-up besides coon-skin cap, leggings, rifle gun, and pouch. He had lots of fun approaching the cabin in the clearing and yelling "Hallo-o the

house!" according to the best frontier etiquette. For months afterward the greeting resounded over the campus.

By 1918 the university had been turned over to the S.A.T.C. and the war effort.

I very well remember the heyday of 1918 when the patriots, along with the stay-at-home rangers flooded the campus and almost wrecked the University . . . and how we broke up the football field and cut down our apple orchard east of the big gymnasium and sowed the whole blooming four or five acres in wheat. How in due course of time we reaped that wheat and hauled it to a threshing machine, and after the turmoil we had about five bushels of Number Two wheat, worth two dollars a bushel, but it had cost us something like twenty dollars.

There was then in our midst a most distinguished educator, . . . who with some assistance, evolved a magnificent dream of a nation wide course in War Aims. We signed up something over one hundred per cent . . . every one on the campus regardless, was required to take it [for a year] . . . I lectured alternately to one of these classes made up of four companies of S.A.T.C. . . . I have lectured to that class when a little over three hundred of them were sound asleep.¹⁹

When Uncle Sam decided he could use even over-age college professors without technical training as instructors for student army training corps, half a dozen signed up. Among them was Esarey. The military interlude at Camp Sheridan was, by all reports, not too strenuous. On one occasion, when the outfit was lined up for grenade throwing practice, they were ordered to go through the motions but not to throw. There may have been some bets down at the end of the line. Some claimed they did not hear the order. At any rate, several let loose with fine heaves—and so did the officer. From here on accounts vary. Esarey maintained that an innocent look saved the day, though admitting that he threw his grenade farthest. Dr. Clarence May, Indiana University chemistry professor, insisted that they all went on kitchen police, although they were squeezed out after a few hours by other criminals with more recent sentences.

On another occasion Esarey dropped out from a hike, sat on a stone, and, against orders, lighted a cigar, no one being in sight. When he looked up there was a captain standing right up against him. Whether, as he insisted, the captain accepted one of those vile war-time nickel cigars and

¹⁹ Logan Esarey to President Herman B Wells, Indiana University, April 16, 1942.

joined him is not established as a historical fact. But, after all, didn't Union soldiers drop out to eat blackberries when moving up to Bull Run? Anyway, Uncle Sam gave up in this project and sent the men home again.

When the turmoil quieted, Esarey was back in his room at the library, collecting the papers of William Henry Harrison. Trips to Washington and elsewhere followed. Historical materials of this type were not so available at Washington then as now; many documents were dug out of attics and basements. The two volumes of the *Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison, 1800-1811*²⁰ and the volume of *Messages and Papers of Jonathan Jennings, Ratliff Boone, William Hendricks*²¹ were published 1922-1924. The work was not absolutely complete; such works seldom are. The editor's idea was that such papers should be made available for use, even though a few documents were still missing. He assembled the items as he insisted the historian had to use them, that is, chronologically, regardless of whether they were written by or to his man, and provided the introductions and explanatory notes. Another two volumes of messages of the early Indiana governors following Hendricks were prepared but not published.

In 1927, Dr. Esarey resigned the editorship of the *Magazine*. The immediate and obvious cause was a difference of opinion regarding the statement, "Published with the Cooperation of the Indiana Historical Society," which had appeared on the title pages of the *Magazine*, and the meaning of that statement. In the argument things got somewhat confused and some University authorities even spoke of "further subsidy [of the *Magazine*] by the Society," depending upon the continuation of the statement. Others almost reached the conclusion that cooperation was impossible, because Dr. Esarey would "not cooperate with anybody." The editor had grown exasperated with the uncertain financial arrangements and what he regarded as the divided control and vacillating policy; so he remained obdurate, as he could on occasion. But the basic cause of Dr. Esarey's decision was a

²⁰ Logan Esarey (ed.), *Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison* (*Indiana Historical Collections*, VII and IX, Indianapolis, 1922).

²¹ *Idem*, *Messages and Papers of Jonathan Jennings, Ratliff Boone, and William Hendricks* (*Indiana Historical Collections*, XII, Indianapolis, 1924).

feeling that over a period of years the authorities, both state and university, who had the allotting of funds for work in Indiana history, were allotting the funds to one place, while the work was being done in another. As a matter of policy, whatever the reasons, the editor admitted their right to do this. Also, since all his editing work had been carried in addition to a full time university teaching schedule and without compensation, he felt he had a right to sever his connection with it.

One other factor no doubt had its influence. Dr. Esarey had realized for some years that, due to his editing and writing largely in the field of Indiana history, he had been labelled or "typed" as a local historian. This not only limited the demand for his services, but, far more important in his mind, his reputation as a historian. After all, the Middle West was his field; Indiana was merely his special patch in that field. At any rate he wanted to write the first volume of a projected three volume work on the Old Northwest from earliest times to the Civil War.

In 1925 he began the unfinished and unpublished manuscript on *The Old Northwest to 1815*. Lighting right into the middle of things, he began with Braddock's Campaign in 1755 and carried through to about 1790. This period, which entirely antedates the history of Indiana as a state, was his favorite period. Probably no one knew it as intimately as he. Using mainly the published sources—colonial documents, military papers, journals, correspondence of participants, and the accounts of contemporary historians—it was truly a job of "re-search." The work was not intended to be all-inclusive. Where good treatments already existed, the account was minimized. But around certain important topics, such as Braddock's defeat, Pontiac's Conspiracy, the Ordinance of 1787, and the Whisky Insurrection, new presentation and conclusions were built. For the first time it appears that not Pontiac but Parkman made Pontiac a famous Indian; that Washington and Hamilton did not appear foolish but very foresighted in raising an army as big as that which defeated Cornwallis, to save the country from a few score disgruntled whiskey boys; that the whiskey fracas was a convenient camouflage behind which to make preparations for more dangerous contingencies. Washington had already lost two armies to the Indians in the Northwest and the third, Wayne's,



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then in the field, might have to fight the British as well. Throughout is presented the impact of the French and Indian wars and the War of Independence upon the frontier. That this was total war for its time, that more civilians than soldiers lost their lives, is impressed upon the mind by the sheer weight of the chronicle of the border wars which continued after the "war" had ended. Above all is the emphasis on the viewpoint of the West, of the men who bore the brunt of the struggle, a viewpoint frequently at variance with that of those in power at the time, as well as that of many of our historians. Considerable documentary material has been made available since this manuscript was written, but it changes the picture in no essential part.²²

Although Esarey, like Turner, published relatively little in the field of the history of the Middle West, his contributions were large. In both cases the contributions were largely indirect, that is, through the seminar teaching and the work of their students. Turner, Alvord, Paxson, and Esarey all have their own "intellectual offspring," but their "grandchildren" and even "great-grandchildren" are far more num-

²² It is the hope of those familiar with the importance of the scholarly contributions of this work to be able to finish it and make it available for publication.

erous.²³ Turner and Alvord had the start in point of time, but all were working parallel and independently on the same basic problems. On a number of occasions the Indiana historian was able to help both Turner and Channing clear up some situation which, on the evidence they had, did not make sense. As a historian of the Middle West Esarey will certainly rank among the leading half dozen or so scholars of our day.²⁴

Impressive and sound as was the work of Dr. Esarey in writing and editing Indiana history, it was equalled if not surpassed in lasting importance by two other cherished labors. Most of what he wrote in Indiana history can, and probably will, be better done within twenty years. But this will be largely because of his own collecting and teaching.

Collecting of materials on Indiana and the Middle West began simultaneously with his writing. In this work Indiana had been almost criminally negligent. Much valuable historical material had gone outside the state into other libraries. Worse still, much had been destroyed after years of storage, simply because no one seemed interested in collecting and preserving it. On more than one occasion Esarey arrived a week or a year after valuable newspaper files or other materials had been burned, given to the Salvation Army for scrap, or used for packing. Separating historical materials of public value from people is often a delicate as well as a fascinating task, particularly so when little or no money is available for purchase. In this work Dr. Esarey had three outstanding assets, one almost peculiarly his own: patience, sincere and unselfish interest in the history, and a personality and appearance which enabled him to establish intimate contacts with and gain the confidence of all classes of people. His was the natural "travelling man's disposition," though he had nothing material to sell. He just liked people. He did not have to "meet" people; they were friends before they spoke.

²³ Including, as Esarey said, a few books of doubtful parentage.

²⁴ It has been the writer's good fortune to have studied with four of these scholars; he knows the others fairly well. Although comparisons are entirely futile, it seems fair to state that Esarey had one advantage over most of them. He was by nature, type, personality, and environment a bit closer to, more in rapport with, the people of the period in which he worked. It is a hard thing to get at. Put it this way: Drop Esarey back into the period 1760-1825, he could with no essential change (often not even of dress) have been accepted outright as a Scout on Bouquet's or Clark's expeditions, as a keel boatman or barger, as a school teacher, small farmer, banker, editor, fence viewer, or member of Congress.

On the one hand, he could convince the owners of a large newspaper that a hundred-year file of their publication was in a way public property and should be turned over in indefinite loan to the state libraries, even though outsiders might offer thousands of dollars. On the other hand, he could win the confidence of the backwoods farmers, suspicious of "city fellers" with too glib a tongue. Though he spoke not their grammar, he spoke their language; they considered him one of them. In many instances, individuals, whether well-to-do and educated or poor and illiterate, gave their possessions to the man rather than to the Historical Survey, the university, or the state.²⁵ It is impossible to measure the value of such collections in dollars; many items are unique. Suffice it to say that \$200,000 would not now duplicate the mid-west Americana added to the Indiana University Library by Esarey. Probably no one in the field since Draper did so much with so little. The library spends now, in a single year, as much as was available for this work over a period of twenty-five years.

Teaching, like writing or clowning, is an art. It is not something one learns by formula from a book on pedagogy or a teachers' college. No great teacher is ever aware of what "method" he uses. Besides knowledge and scholarship (still *sine qua nons*, modern educational theory to the contrary notwithstanding), successful teaching is built upon an understanding of people, patience, versatility of interests, graphic and dramatic ability, humor, wit, and common sense. So it was with Esarey. Mix portions of all usable "systems" from Socrates' to the latest psycho-physio-bio-chemic, emphasize the logical, the chronological, and the unlogical, add an inexhaustible supply of graphic illustrations, and compound with equal parts of the man—it cannot be described, it can only be experienced. If any definite features could be picked as outstanding, they would probably be the unconscious Socratic technique—getting the student to develop his mind by pulling one brain muscle against another—and the graphic. The man could come nearer to drawing the picture of an abstraction on the blackboard than any teacher his students had ever known. Such a teacher enjoys teaching, can teach at any level, will always be teaching. Whether

²⁵ The most valuable single document now in the Indiana University Library was so given.

teaching his youngsters to read and think at pre-school age, or his grandchildren the marvels of nature or how to use a gun, or leading his colleagues in discussion on the nature of history, it was all the same to Esarey. He would need no "lesson plan" at his finger tips; the historian would not be certain as to what is the plan of life.

Although the three "courses" usually taught at Indiana University by Dr. Esarey were pitched at different levels, the underlying goal was ever the same. The Indiana history he regarded as general and cultural. It drew heavily from all types of students. Many took it who never had any other course in history. In every section there were usually three distinct groups: students, possible students, and loafers (athletic and otherwise), who were looking for an easy two hours' credit. The teacher worked on all three; he felt they were equally important. An instance or two may illustrate. Two very prominent athletes were finding the ordinary books quite too formidable opponents. The teacher provided them with a simple but contemporary story-book on pioneer life. The students read it and reported for conference. The first dozen questions he asked were primary. A child could have answered them. But gradually they were led into contradictions; they were caught "swallowing yarns." "Go read it again!" Hours were spent in conference. Several readings were made. A small rudiment of a critical sense was developed; the boys got to the place where they could discard the evidence that razorback hogs and buffalo could climb trees. Another time an innocent young thing, who had identified *Poland-Chinas* as "recent immigrants" and *Merinos* as "ministers of a religious sect on the frontier," was taken through an individual course of instruction on hogs, sheep, chickens, and the like, which looked quite kindergartenish to the outsider. But step by step the discussion got around to the tariff, and the student began to realize that this was not (as the instructor had related an old pioneer had thought) a disease of sheep. In both cases the students were quite proud of themselves. They passed the course with as good grades as some better students who had not made similar intellectual efforts on much more advanced problems.

Sometimes the teacher lectured, quietly, logically, effectively. More often it was informal discussion, background-

building and thought-provoking. The teacher often took great delight in demolishing his own *History* when cited by a student in support of some point. He had no faith in text books and wanted his students to be satisfied with nothing less than first-hand evidence. Students were endlessly startled by the teacher's detailed knowledge of their home town, its people and history, their ancestors, and local customs. It was not unusual to hear one say, "Why I've lived next door to that all my life and had to come to college to learn about it."

In the course on the Middle West a more advanced group presented. Here the students were dumped without ceremony into the vast literature of the subject: published documents, personal records, chronicles of border wars, constitutions, monographs, general histories, historical periodicals, even newspapers. The reading lists were purposely unorganized. It was part of the student's task to learn, under guidance, what was what and how to use it. One of the things the instructor watched for was the beginning of realization on the part of the student that the history of any region or period, however limited, is a body of knowledge far beyond the individual's capacity to comprehend in its entirety. At times the class period would be given to sweeping views of the "stream of history." At others the whole hour would be consumed testing the evidence regarding Major Samuel McCulloch's famous leap down the rocky precipice and into the creek with his rifle and accoutrements (the Indians were after him). Many such problems were never solved. Some students never knew what it was all about; they wanted some definite "information" which they could memorize and hand back on examinations. Frequent brief oral reports on an infinite variety of subjects were a regular part of the program. When a student, allotted fifteen minutes, spent all the time leading up to the subject, the instructor would like as not say, "time is up, Mr. Smith," and then ask the class what the report was about. When no one could guess, Mr. Smith was sometimes slightly embarrassed. As a rule it never happened again to him.

The course on the Far West was offered in alternate years. Dr. Esarey never pretended to be a specialist in this field, yet so omnivorous was his reading that few had a

better grasp of the subject, from Spanish explorers to the Grand Coulee. If he had any hobbies in the Far West they were the cow country, cowboys, and the Mormons. If at times irreverent students referred to the course as "cowboy history," there were also times when their lack of preparation on the geography, Indian wars, transportation—to say nothing of cows—made them feel caught off base.

During the years from 1913 to 1930 when there were regularly half a dozen or so graduate students in the Mid-West seminar, students and instructor worked in the same room, often at the same table. Problems were discussed whenever they came up. No work the instructor was engaged in took precedence over constant interruptions by the students. His patience in listening to the same old jokes which the students discovered in the old newspapers was remarkable. For years he worked at the rusty old print of newspapers by the light of an obsolete yellow bulb eight feet overhead, and made gentle fun of those who had to have a better light. He surrendered in time, however, and got not only a closer lamp, but spectacles as well. In the preparation of theses or studies the student was expected not only to be able to find and use the evidence, but to present it in a correct and readable manner. The instructor had as keen an eye for wandering sentences, dangling participles, and antecedentless pronouns as any English expert. In the early years he was also insistent regarding the use of footnote references and other "scholarly appurtenances." He was never as good a critic of his own writing as of that of others; and in later years he not only became indifferent to, but revolted against, what he called the "paraphernalia of scholarship." The graduate seminar produced, besides those previously mentioned in connection with the *Magazine*, studies of Indiana counties, educational institutions, roads and railroads, reform movements, constitutions, and many other topics.²⁶

²⁶ Among Indiana University theses not previously listed are the following: Ezra E. Macy, *The Gerrymander in the History of Indiana's Legislative and Congressional Appointments* (A. M. thesis, 1927); Ralph J. Blank, *Early Indiana Railroad Building, 1832-1850* (A. M. thesis, 1916); Ruth E. Brayton, *The Constitution of 1816* (A. M. thesis, 1929); Katharine B. Page, *Some Early Chapters in the History of Peoria, Illinois* (A. M. thesis, 1935); Geneal Prather, *The Building of the Michigan Road* (A. M. thesis, 1941). Doctoral dissertations include: Arthur Deen, *Frontier Science in Kentucky and the Old Northwest, 1790-1860* (Ph. D. thesis, 1938); Willard H. Smith, *The Political*

Regardless of what course, period, or region Dr. Esarey was teaching, he was always teaching the methods, processes, and uses of history. Most of his more mature students rated this teaching as his *forte*, above all others. More or less regularly in the advanced classes, "blue Mondays" were devoted to this subject. An unscheduled seminar met around the instructor's desk in classroom or office and continued the discussion of interesting problems through the next free period.

History was presented in its broadest sense as everything that has ever happened in the life of man—the sum total of human experience; in its narrower sense, as that part of this experience on which we have direct evidence. He emphasized the continuity of history, chronology, and evidence.

Time is the most stable concept we have, the widest, most definite of concepts. Time is a convention which holds the fabric of history together. An infinite number of things, crossing an infinite number of times, makes an infinite number of events.

Of systems of chronology he was a close student. At times, in order to impress the point, he had to catch students up before the class for accepting as bona fide a document which was dated by a calendar not yet in use.

Evidence is, in a sense, the foundation of history. Evidence offers the historian more leeway than chronology. He seldom has all the evidence. A case at law is essentially an historic investigation, but there the interested parties *select* the evidence. This is argument. The historian should merely clarify and present all useful evidence on the case of life, and leave the verdict to the reader. The interpretative historian presents a verdict.

This last point was not only fundamental in Esarey's concept of history, but was one and the same with his concept of democracy. "Take away the one [the individual's right to have the evidence and to render his own verdict on it], and the other can not exist." Merely presenting the evidence did not assure a correct verdict. A critical sense was necessary on the part of the juror. But a critical sense could be de-

Career of Schuyler Colfax to His Election as Vice-President in 1868 (Ph. D. thesis, 1939); and Donald F. Carmony, *Indiana Public Finance, 1800-1826* (Ph.D. thesis, 1940). On October 29, 1942, according to a decision made at its founding several years ago, the Graduate History Club of Indiana University became the Logan Esarey Club. Thus was established a living monument in tribute to Dr. Esarey's work in his seminar.

veloped in a child. After all, there are ways of determining whether the cart is pushing the horse or the horse pulling the cart. Then there is always logic. Woe to the student caught reasoning (like some of our popular historians) *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, or finding causation of two or more events from each other, when they all stemmed from a common cause.

He was equally insistent on one other fundamental, that is, that the historian could not find any law (general meaning) in history.

A fascinating delusion of history has always been that by looking down the trail by which we have arrived at the present we will be enabled to prognosticate the future. This we have termed the philosophy of history.

After discussing the achievements of historians in organizing the vast amount of historical materials, he continued:

The "How" and the "Why" in history lead us into much more difficult grounds. In the ordinary meaning of the word, "How" refers to the means used in accomplishing an end and so comes in the field of historical investigation. "Why" is usually understood to refer to the motives in men's minds and these can only be approximated on the basis that men intend to do the things their actions would naturally lead to. This is historical interpretation and never can be settled absolutely by any methods now known to historians.

If a theological determination is implied in the "How" and "Why," that is, How or Why life was first begun on this planet, we are led into a field where the documents fail us utterly. Mr. H. G. Wells in his *Outlines* traversed this field with apparent confidence but so far as history is concerned it is only another illustration of the fools and angels. The problem is clearly within the fields of Biology and Geology and it will scarcely make it history to print it under such a title. Of course polliwogs have a history but it is doubtful if it will throw much light on human conduct.²⁷

Nor would he accept any particular form of "determinism," economic or otherwise. Philosophers, sociologists, and theologians could play with such ideas. Even the historian, in his private capacity, might philosophize, but there was no "philosophy of history." "There is *history*, and there is *philosophy*, but there is no philosophy of history. The two may be opposite sides of the same shield, but they are not the same." Sometimes he resented the restriction of his chosen discipline and spoke of "The poor old club-footed

²⁷ The Outlook for History, an unpublished paper which he read at historical meetings.

historian, held down from flights of fancy and grandiose ideas by the facts of life." But if at times he felt inclined to jump the traces, he was always checked with a jerk by those who were seeking to pervert and prostitute history for a purpose. No matter how good the end in view—whether good citizenship, character building, morality, or patriotism—it made no difference. He insisted that history itself is no more moral or immoral than a proposition in mathematics or a biological form, and on those who sought to make it so by some hocus pocus he could vent not gentle satire but blunt ridicule. When a well-meaning preacher sought to add to Lincoln's stature by making of him a great lover as well, the historian wrote:

Lucy [Lincoln's grandmother] is thrown into probable contact with soldiers, she attended probable balls, made probable journeys along probable roads, saw probable sights, held probable amours with probable suitors and finally became the probable mother of a probable daughter by a probable man. . . . One might question the title of the volume outright—Did Lincoln love all these women or any one of them? He saw his grandmother Sparrow a few times when he was a small child. May never have seen his grandmother Lincoln, certainly not often enough to "love" her much; the girl in the covered wagon was a pipe dream of Lincoln—and he had many; Katie Roby was at a spelling match with Lincoln; Caroline Meeker was present at a trial where Lincoln was a party and perhaps sympathized with him, may even have told him so; Polly Warnick was one of the six daughters of Sheriff William Warnick for whom Lincoln worked as a day laborer. She was of marriageable age at the time—further evidence of love, none. That Lincoln exceeded in filial devotion all other boys born or reared in southern Indiana at that time is a reflection which thousands will resent; that thousands of other children were left orphans at a similar age in early Indiana is a commonplace; that Nancy Hanks was the only "Angel Mother" that ever inhabited southern Indiana is gratuitous; that Abraham Lincoln was more than ordinary as courtier or husband is doubtful. Lincoln was great enough and Indiana glories in his greatness but such balderdash as the volume under review will not add to his fame.²⁸

Such brief extracts from lecture notes and conversations give but an inadequate idea of Dr. Esarey's work in this important subject, to which he gave more profound thought than to any other. It was the often-expressed regret of his advanced students that he never wrote a much needed volume on History, particularly as they saw not only Croce but Breasted and others build outstanding works around the

²⁸ *Indiana Magazine of History*, XXIII (1927), 470-71.

themes developed by their teacher.²⁹ Perhaps it was just as well. As with Dr. Johnson and Mr. Justice Holmes, the man came out better by way of his talk than his writing.

* * * * *

As vital a part of the man's mind as were his thoughts on history—and fascinating mental exercises are such problems in themselves—they were still not the core of his intellectual interest. They were but ancillary to, instruments for, the achievement of his foundation goals—education and democracy, in the end one and the same thing.

Much strange raiment has been draped upon Jefferson's "handmaid" in our day, much of it about as effective (and as diaphanous) as a cellophane wrapper in the Arctic. "Education as training for life" is perfectly checkmated by the practice of withholding from the pupil anything that isn't "delectable." "Frames of reference" and catechisms are drawn up and the pupils are indoctrinated with the "correct attitude." Teachers are trained on the theory that "content knowledge" is a handicap. History as a content subject, the storebin whence come the facts on which are based not only economics, government, law, and sociology, but life itself, is largely eliminated. And without the facts there can be no thought process, no verdict. Even universities are occasionally told that the intellectual objective is certainly not one of the main objectives.

Democrat that he was in education, Dr. Esarey reluctantly admitted that at times it appeared that a century of free public education had hindered, rather than helped, the people to do straight thinking in government, religion, and education. But he never surrendered the idea that it was the duty of the state, and of the teachers, from primary grades to the university, to accept what pupils or students were the current output of the populus and to do the best by them that was humanly possible. A state university in his

²⁹ Benedetto Croce, *History, Its Theory and Practice* (New York, 1923) and James H. Breasted, *The Dawn of Conscience* (New York, 1934). It was no mere coincidence that, at the American Historical Association meeting in 1933, when Charles A. Beard began his scholarly presidential address, "Written History as an Act of Faith," (*American Historical Review*, XXXIX [1933-1934], 219-31), Dr. Esarey nudged a colleague and presented him with an outline, step by step, of a discourse he had never seen before. Beard leaned heavily on Croce, and as for Croce, Esarey's students had had all his essentials before his work was written.

mind had no more right to select its clientele than a football coach had to buy good players. He did not accept Jefferson's idea that only the best were worth the investment at the top levels, for he was not sure at just what level the "natural aristocracy" would break out. As for condemning some, by means of those "terrible weapons, intelligence tests" or otherwise, to become hewers of wood and drawers of water, it was anathema to his democratic soul. He wrote in 1917:

No one has less sympathy for strictly utilitarian teaching than I have I revolt at the idea that any man, even myself, or any group of men, however well qualified, have any shadow of right to step into the public schools and condemn my children to any form of vocational work which does not permit of the highest development from the humanitarian standpoint. I am entirely satisfied personally when the schools have turned out first rate men and women morally, and I am entirely convinced that these same men and women will be able to earn an honest living in the world.³⁰

This was the general theory. In practice Esarey did emphasize the intellectual objective above all others. At times he did recommend frankly to students that they try to be happy horse traders rather than unhappy lawyers or teachers. He believed that the best way to administer most disciplinary cases—absences, "activities," and the like—was by way of the scholastic requirements. And when it came to moral lapses—cheating, lying, or hypocrisy—he could drop a student like a hot coal. He was vastly distrustful of and impatient with anything—administrative topheaviness, too many rules, revolutionary curricular changes, or reforms—which seemed so frequently to lose sight of the main idea. When the university in the 1930's went through the throes of a curriculum revision, he said, "The mountain labors . . ." He felt it did not face the major fact, the need of more work of better quality. And again, more recently, when after scores of committee and faculty meetings and two years of effort, the university produced a self-survey report of some thousand pages, he wrote:

The only book I can think of now, that was more humorous in the original reading . . . was Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad*. Verily what would we do without the reformer in the land! If he were a farmer, he would plant his corn and go the next day and take it up and readjust it in some particular way. But I trust the University

³⁰ Logan Esarey to President William Lowe Bryan, Indiana University, October 4, 1917.

has received no serious damage, and I am sure it has been a great relief to most of the faculty as well as a pleasure to some, just merely to give voice, or rather pencil, to their marvelous skill in administrative lines. Incidentally, I do not recognize a single suggestion of any importance but was lifted bodily from some other university catalog. In one of the few talks I have ever attempted at a faculty meeting, I argued for an Indiana University to suit Hoosier children and develop along Hoosier lines. I am still of that opinion. Yale is a great university, but we don't want a Yale in Bloomington. Neither do we want a Columbia any closer to us than New York City. . . . If I were to mention one thing that Indiana University needs, and has needed for many years, it is about fifty first class liberal arts teachers. What is worse, such men are not on the market. It is hard to pick one before he is developed and impossible to buy him after he is developed. . . . You no doubt have heard of the terrible danger of what they call inbreeding. I merely suggest that along that line, it is barely possible that Indiana men and women, trained in our own institutions may possibly understand Indiana better than some wandering Jew from Vienna, or even Jerusalem.

Looking back over the last forty years to the time, when Indiana University was a very insignificant affair, it seems to me that the burden of making Indiana what it is has been borne by Indiana men, and in that forty years, I think I can safely say that if one were to pick out fifty leading men on the campus, at least fifty of them would be "of the manor born."³¹

Educational "reforms," "socialization of the curriculum" in the name of democracy, nor even war should be permitted to lead us away from the fundamentals. In fact he hoped that war might help us realize how far we had strayed from them. In April, 1942, he gave his last written advice to President Wells of Indiana University:

I don't doubt that you will have endless suggestions for the reform of the University. We have always had these cattle with us, and you are farmer enough to know what happens when they find a gap in the fence. In the thirty years I have been acquainted with the University, I have never known one of these reformers, but what in some way intended to lessen the time required for a student to get through school. Regardless of the fact that scores of new subjects have been put in to enrich the curriculum, many of them in times of stress or distress, all of them have led toward the primrose path. It was a rather long call from calculus to ring around the rosie bush, but in the course of our reforms there, the ring around the rosie bush has been made equal in educative value to Homer or Logic or some such frivolous study of the old days. One would think, looking back over the period and noting just the general features, that attendance at college was a penalty inflicted on a more or less innocent generation.

³¹ Logan Esarey to President Herman B Wells, Indiana University, November 1, 1940.

The universities in the long run set the patterns of life. The reformers invariably attempt to cut those patterns more and more narrow.³²

Such was the loyal Hoosier's idea of a great mid-western or provincial university as contrasted to the great metropolitan or international university. The power to run such a university he would grant no more to an administrative bureaucracy than to a sectarian, political, or personal clique, but only to the agents of the people, advised by a faculty of responsible teachers and scholars. When, as often happened, great teachers and scholars were not consulted, the state as well as the university lost. There should be no men who were in the university but not of the university. On deans (always his personal friends) his classic comment was, "There are too damned many deans and there are too many damned deans!"

Politics, the business of organizing and running the state, is an important part of history. In fact, despite the de-emphasizing efforts of "social historians," it furnishes as good a thread as any around which to organize history. It has to draw upon all history for its being.

The historian is usually interested in politics; Dr. Esarey, unusually so. Always a serious student of political philosophy, his deepest interest centered in the principles and processes upon which the American republic was founded and operated. His belief in a proper balance between liberty and authority, the states and the nation, and between the different branches of the governments, in a "government of measures not of men," and in the essential dignity of the individual was a deep-seated conviction; it was founded on faith as well as reason. He was a democrat by environment and instinct. He had the frontiersman's penchant for deflating any person who put on airs or assumed importance, whether because of wealth, power, or superior intelligence. Yet he envied not wealth and greatly respected intelligence. That he was never seen in dress clothes, and in academic costume but two or three times in his life, was not due to a personal whim. Like Jefferson and John Adams, he believed that government and society should be run by the "natural aristocrats democratically selected"; and he had faith that, by and large over a period of time, the people had gumption

³² Logan Esarey to President Herman B Wells, Indiana University, April 16, 1942.

enough not only to select their best leaders, but to think soundly on basic problems. In both philosophies, of course, "the people" in mind were those who had a real stake (spiritual, not material) in the country and some centuries of experience in self government behind them. As Jefferson emphasized education and local self-government as the hooks upon which democracy hung, Esarey emphasized *critical ability* and *integrity*. The puritan in him revolted at dishonesty and hypocrisy. He often argued about which was more dangerous to representative government, the "honest ignoramus or the intelligent but not hypocritical crook." As between the two evils, he preferred the latter. He came nearer manifesting personal hatred toward those who robbed the people of their "mother wit" (a far greater loss than their money) than toward any others.³³

Developments of our times cast a doubt as to whether this quality—mental and moral integrity—the pivot on which democracy depended, was holding up. On no other topic did he dwell so often or speak with such intense seriousness in later years. He often emphasized the point that humor was a critical quality, that as long as the people could "laugh it off" there was still hope for them, in spite of all their derelictions and turpitude. The most brilliant lecture he ever delivered on this subject was unrecorded and unprintable.

Back in the "era of the red flag—SLOW MEN WORKING," Dr. Esarey contracted for a small WPA outbuilding at his little refuge on White River. He needed amusement and felt that the project would furnish a quantity for some period of time. As he sat and studied nature and human nature, he would report progress to the "office seminar" from week to week. But he had not foreseen the final effect. When, in due course, the job was finished, and a detailed and intimate set of government instructions was furnished for its use, it was too much. The ensuing discourse was more than satire. It was an annihilating and devastating Philippic. He out-Lincolned Lincoln at his best (or worst) and out-Rileyed Riley. He drew upon the philosophy of the

³³ Although Dr. Esarey was opposed to heroes and hero worship and frequently pointed out the dangers of emphasizing the idea in our schools, nevertheless, he had, if not his heroes, at least his great examples. In our political history the first rank included Washington, Lincoln, Cleveland, and Hoover, selected on the basis of their intellectual integrity and bravery. The Adamses never achieved first rank, probably because they violated his democratic idea of modesty.

ages and all the barnyard metaphors of three nations. It ended with a two-word exclamation in keeping with the subject. History missed a classic.

In more dignified, but not more serious vein, he wrote in 1942:

I infer that nothing much can be expected in the way of education until this little war of ours is over. I don't need to tell you my attitude and appreciation of the whole business, but if we can get out of it with any kind of government or any kind of commercial set-up short of flat bankruptcy I think we should be thankful for it. If we were looking back 2000 years I think we would call it the Roosevelt Tyranny which illustrates almost perfectly the line of progress laid down by Plato for all popular governments. Whether we can extricate the old republic from this mob rule is a grave question. There are very few instances in history where a people have been able to retrace such a fatal trip. It might have been salvaged after '36 and possibly part of it after '40 but by '44 a numerous part of our population will have had no appreciation or experience of representative government under a written constitution.

It seems to me we might very well do without the supreme court and congress since each has so far as possible divested itself of all power and therefore all reason for existence.

But why discuss it, will be your inquiry and I have no answers for you, except that there is a certain amount of rather doubtful pleasure in recounting the pleasures of the past. More especially is this true when there is less reason for discussing the possible pleasures of the future. There is not much possibility, judging from examples we have had in the past for many years, for a nation that has gone bankrupt.³⁴

In politics Dr. Esarey was a life-long Republican, and in no wise was this inconsistent with his sincere democracy. His family and immediate community were strongly anti-slavery and, during the post Civil War period (though they could hardly be accused of being capitalists), staunch opponents of cheap money, inflation, free-silver, and repudiation. The community was a sort of island of Republicanism in the old Jacksonian triangle of Democracy. (Spencer County next door voted for Breckenridge, the secession candidate, in 1860). He believed, along with Uncle Joe Cannon and others, that without party discipline there could be no responsible government under the representative system. "If all were Mugwumps, who would ever get a majority?" Only once did he ever slip from the straight and narrow path: in 1912 he voted for Roosevelt. Like the fellow in World War I, who,

³⁴ Logan Esarey to R. Carlyle Buley, February 5, 1942.

when on leave in Paris, spread-eagled himself through a plate glass window, he was later never able to explain it, but at the time "it seemed like a hell of a good idea." Unlike the fellow who was able to extricate himself from the hollow log which was slowly swelling and crushing him, by recalling that he voted for Bryan in 1896, he was never able to find any practical use for the dereliction.³⁵ He, like Jackson (in his words, if not always in his deeds), felt that the legislature should be given the benefit of the doubt as against the executive. He never approved of the presidents who did too much carrying of the ball. He had a notion that the best presidents on the whole had been those who had served apprenticeship in Congress and had learned that no single man is indispensable, any time, any place. He disliked very much a cynical attitude toward politics on the part of students or citizens. Such an attitude he considered an indictment against the majority of the people.

* * * * *

Many people knew Logan Esarey, not as a historian or teacher, but just as Logan Esarey, a character, a personality. His widest circle of acquaintanceship centered around his activities as humorist at large and in fraternal work. He has been variously referred to as a Hoosier Will Rogers, as an educated Abe Martin, and as an "onery old cuss." If there be such a thing as "marginal uniqueness," he had it; the margin was wide and merged with the whole page. His humor was distinctive yet inseparable from the personality. It was dry, whimsical, shot through with a streak of mischievousness, never biting. The characteristic was no doubt inherited but, since it was appreciated, was also cultivated. "Life is a high comedy," said he, "so why not play a part?"

Some facets of this humor are easily delineated. There was the same knack for using the homely, sometimes salty, metaphor of the Lincoln type. Such allusions came naturally to both. There was the Mark Twain tall tale—but not too tall—strain, also the double-level effect of a Swift or Lewis Car-

³⁵ On more than one occasion the writer, finding himself on the bad end of an argument, could always pull out this joker card. Whereupon Dr. Esarey would hang his head, throw up his hands, and pretend to give up. It is only fair to relate, however, that the dirty infighting was not all one-sided, as Dr. Esarey frequently inferred (entirely without documentary evidence) that the writer had suffered a similar lapse about twenty years later.

roll. There were the resources of a classical as well as historical-philosophical education to draw upon. Puns played no part, nor, strangely enough, was there any tendency towards the practical joking dear to the pioneer; but the "wise crack" in its better form was prominent. Permeating all, and most distinctive, was a drollery and whimsicality, which to be effective needs not only a slant of mind but also a cast of countenance.

Humor of this type comes not from a reservoir, to be drawn from upon occasion; it seeps and trickles, ebbs and flows. Whether the audience be one or a thousand makes no difference; its anticipation in the barber shop is no less keen than at the rise of the toastmaster at the big banquet table or on the lecture platform. When a person approached Esarey he expected something. Maybe he got a squint and a chuckle, and soon both were chuckling—about what, nobody knew. Something outside or inside of them was mildly funny. They might sit and observe a dog. If the dog cocked an eye or frowned, the humorist might begin to speak "Old Dog's" thoughts for him, and they would be plausible thoughts. The conversation might turn to the merits of the weather, what constitutes a cigar, or whether the carp is a fish.³⁶ It would be solemn, the observations profound, and the meaning almost nil. It was the art of small talk without personalities, highly developed. Some went to Esarey, as they expressed it, "to get a lift when feeling low"; others went to sharpen their wits in another round of an argument which had been running for years—yet which no one knew for certain what it was about.

Esarey's humor is not to be found in his formal writing and only to a degree in his letters and fugitive essays. A few samples only are at hand. In a business letter from Florida to Mr. Ward Biddle, financial vice-president of the university, he goes on a tangent, as follows:

By the way, I promised to recommend one of my good brothers down town for a janitorship in one of your buildings. He should be good. He has never worked at anything else. His wife has supported him successfully now for some thirty or thirty-five years. He told me he was not able to do the regular work, but if he could get

³⁶ For years Esarey carried on serious arguments against "high falutin'" fishermen who had to have a lot of paraphernalia to go hunt sissy fish such as trout and bass, which couldn't take care of themselves but had to be cultivated.

the supervision of a building he could do that very nicely. So you put him in as supervisor of some of the buildings and I will be very much obliged. Sorry I have forgotten his name just now but that doesn't make any difference.³⁷

And from Florida a few months before his death, in a letter to Miss Estella Wolf, thanking her for some books, he wrote:

I wish you would wrap up Alec [William A. Alexander, Librarian] somewhat like you did those books and fire him down here. Mark him C.O.D. if you don't have the postage and I will pay the expenses down here. He has no business urgent enough to suggest to him, even, to get out in such weather as you describe. Of course, down here, we are close to the path of the submarines and they might blow him up but like myself, I expect he is worth just as much blown up as he is flat.

Incidentally if you laid in an extra pair of rubber heels for your shoes, I would suggest also an extra galosh,—one that would fit either foot so if you have a blow-out with one foot you will still have a pair. I wouldn't undertake to get a whole extra pair, of course, in this emergency.

You know our friend Willkie says we have got to travel the hard road from here on. He may know. At any rate my little granddaughter and I go barefoot as much as possible out in the yard and along the adjacent streets so as to toughen our feet. I don't know whether that will be regulated or not in time, but maybe not. . . . Ain't we in a hell of a fix?³⁸

On the margin of the paper of a correspondence student who was copying passages liberally from his textbook (Esarey's *History of Indiana*) he wrote: "At times you show a very brilliant style. Continue to cultivate this." On entering a class in the 1920's to face a front row of short skirts and silk stockings (students wore them in those days), he, a life-long temperance advocate, remarked: "It will be understood by this class from the beginning that my weakness is whiskey, not women!" When during the same period the rumor got out (he probably started it himself) that he was a Ku Klux Klanner, and negroes disappeared from his classes for several years, he enjoyed it immensely and teased his negro friends about it. In a class in Indiana history he bore down on the Methodists and the Republicans until par-

³⁷ Logan Esarey to Ward G. Biddle, February 5, 1939.

³⁸ Logan Esarey to Miss Estella Wolf, February 20, 1942. For years Dr. Esarey and Miss Wolf maintained a running argument in the library which at times, in its pseudo-seriousness, had the students frightened. Both enjoyed it tremendously.

tisans of each, who did not know his own predilections, squirmed. Purpose: unknown for certain. In the late summer of 1942 an old friend greeted him on the campus, "Hello, Logan, . . . where you living now?" (He then had two homes, one in Florida and one in Bloomington.) "Oh, I hain't got any home, just wander around." "Don't you still live on South Henderson?" "Yes, sometimes, but there's a little red devil, with pitchfork and sharp tail, living over there.—Don't know what we can do about it, unless the government will come over and straighten things out!" The friend at first thought he was losing his grip, but soon found out otherwise.

As a *raconteur* Esarey had all the qualifications—de liberation, dialect, the art of mimicry, and the ability to impress the importance of the story. Aside from the earthy stories of the Lincoln type, he never told a story not acceptable to mixed company of the Victorian era. Favorites most often related were of an old timer, who, overcome by excitement, bad liquor, and political oratory in the campaign of 1912, broke up the meeting by rising and yelling, "'Ray fer Ga-a-rfield! 'Ray fer Ga-a-rfield!" Or of old Uncle Jake, well along in years but young in spirit, who went to the doctor for a check-up. Nothing was wrong, but the doctor and the boys, deciding to have fun, told him he would have to lead a calmer life. A bit later, after having been seen looking on at a barn dance, Uncle Jake was called in by the doctor. Examination now revealed a heart palpitation. Further inquiry brought to light the barn dance. "Do ye think that's what causin' it, doc?" "Certain of it." A pause and a bit of calculation, "Well, doc, if you're sartin that's what's causin' it, gawd dammer, jist let 'er palp."

Around such a person accumulates a volume of anecdote of considerable proportions. And most of it is true. One or two examples must suffice for illustration. No one looked neater than Esarey when haircut, shave, and suit-pressing happened to coincide. Perhaps it was the contrast. At other times trousers and coat of heterogeneous color, no tie (or else a shoe-string bow set northwest by southeast), and ten days' growth of beard made it impossible to distinguish him from the laboring man or farmer. One day he dropped in for Rotary lunch at a neighboring town. Seated next to him was a young man in an olive green uniform.

Esarey inquired whether he was in the army. The young man explained that he was a forester and resettler. Further questions brought out quite a little speech on the nature and importance of his work in rehabilitating southern Indiana. Esarey manifested a naive interest and implied that he would like to have such a job. Whereupon the young man explained that one would have to be a college graduate, be able to handle much paper work, as well as people, and know a lot about trees; in general he deprecated the prospects of a plain farmer's making the grade. Then without previous warning Esarey was called to the speakers' table. There he repeated his conversation with "that young squirt," asked him a lot of questions about Indiana trees, their habits and uses, explained how many trees he had cut down and worked up before the young man had even had a diaper, and admonished him in general about the immorality as well as the futility of trying to educate the hillbillies of southern Indiana in the Tugwell idea. For forty minutes he entertained the group in the true after-dinner style of which he was master. At the end the young man came up, laughingly shook hands, and said, "You sure had me fooled."

During the early years of the depression, when university salaries were cut and an appropriation reduction was feared, university speakers at Foundation Day meetings over the state were expected to emphasize the direness of the situation. Those in charge in a certain town drew Dr. Esarey. Quite a build-up followed and a respectable crowd assembled. When the speaker appeared it was in mud-splattered leggings, a more or less out-at-the-elbows coat, and other articles in keeping. He talked of starving Armenians and Hindus, of American humanitarian instincts and generosity. Then he brought the picture closer home—told of starving Hoosiers right under our eyes—good, honest, upright, moral, hard-working college professors at the state university. It was a sad and doleful picture that he described. According to one report, those in charge were apologizing and explaining for weeks. There was probably no necessity for this. Esarey seldom misjudged his audience—certainly not a Hoosier audience. Likely the audience knew someone's leg was being pulled—and whose leg it was.

Esarey enjoyed the friendliness and informality of Rotary. If at times he got his motto confused and solemnly

announced that "He serves best who profits most," it was all in fun. His interest in Masonry, however, was much more than social. The principles of Masonry were his religion. He often called himself "a doubting Methodist, an unregenerate Republican, and a Mason." For years he was a faithful worker in the order and a student of Masonry. Here, too, he was probably the teacher, also. He worked regularly with the Eastern Star and, on the outside, with many young men studying for their degrees and offices. For years he was not only the fraternal faculty sponsor of the Acacia chapter on the campus, but father, step-father, and even "Dutch Uncle" to the boys. In his mind a Mason, like Caesar's wife, had to be beyond suspicion. In 1932, the year of the Washington bicentennial celebration, Esarey was much in demand with his speech on Washington and Masonry, and, despite the fact that that was one of his years of bad health, he spared not himself, but travelled from the Appalachians to the Rockies. He was a thirty-second degree Mason. Masonry played a far more important part in Esarey's life than is here indicated, but it is a chapter which cannot well be covered in a general sketch.

In addition to his fraternal interests Dr. Esarey had the usual number of side interests. Reading, of course, is hard to separate into work and pleasure units, particularly in a historian's life. Classics were ever at hand and, unlike most, he renewed old acquaintances by regular though sketchy re-reading. Historical fiction, especially with American settings, he read in quantity. Modern novels and detective stories did not interest him, though he often sampled the "pulp" magazines for their portrayal of the Far West. Newspapers and periodicals of all types were one of the main props of his current as well as historical knowledge.

Up to mid-life, college sports were more than a perfunctory interest. Football, basketball, and track he followed and attended, in part for themselves, in part because some of "his boys" were engaged. But baseball, his first love—professional and amateur—remained to the end. When, with a pocket full of cigars, Esarey sought a sunny or shady seat on the bleachers, kindred souls gravitated around, and the game would be played with suitable comments and contributions.

Hunting and fishing carried over from youth. Rabbit

and bird hunting revived when it came time to teach the youngsters. He indulged in a coon hunt now and then when some local friend promised a good one, but his own choice was a fox hunt. Many a night he travelled the hills to listen to the music of hound dogs—a music with which no other can compete in the minds of some. In the art of Ike Walton, Esarey never advanced so far. It was largely a matter of drowning worms. He always pretended, at least, that trying to catch a tarpon on a light line was silly, when good carp could be had with a piece of clothesline and a sapling.

In music likewise his tastes were simple. His own output, likely to break out almost any time, consisted of the old hymns. After the radio came, the ballads and “mountain music” of the Saturday night “Grand Old Opery” were the favorite program. The Saturday evening card games and the music went together; it was not a good combination for those who took both their bridge and music seriously. Cards had a double attraction: the game itself and the people who played the game. The older games (euchre, seven-up, etc.) were played with certain friends to the end, but bridge probably ranked first in later life. In this as in some other things, Esarey refused to be bound by too many rules. He had card sense, a fine memory, and a philosophical attitude, and he enjoyed matching his wits with others.

Family life for the Esareys was simple in its externals. As five children grew up, a system of parental *laissez faire* prevailed in ordinary things—unless someone got seriously out of bounds. Beyond a grounding in the life of the outdoors and good literature read aloud, the members were encouraged to try out different talents. The household abounded with musical instruments, tennis rackets, ball bats, guns, and what not. There was little coddling; self-reliance was the rule. As the youngsters reached high school age they were given the privileges of the family check book on their own responsibility. No attempt was made to influence choice of careers. The five children received ten college degrees, no two in the same subject. (All told, the Esarey's had almost forty years of regular work at Indiana University.) Others than the immediate family were also helped through college. As the grandchildren came along, their grandfather began to establish in the minds of the third generation the love of the outdoors and the continuity which ran back to their pioneer

ancestors. Many hours he spent with them in the woods and in the telling of tales. His best single bit of writing is a simple account prepared for his grandchildren of the round-the-calendar activities of young people in the woods two generations ago; under the title "My Indiana Home" it exists in various lengths. It was read to historical groups and used as a manual in C.C.C. camps. It has been described as a prose-poem on Indiana life. He also wrote several shorter essays and recorded a number of tales handed down from the pioneers.³⁹ Former students corresponded with their old friend from all over the world. When they came to Bloomington, a personal call was a matter of course. Some of the "boys" became wealthy, famous, important. When they talked to their former teacher, it was inevitably on the old basis—not as master and student, but as minds expecting to give and take.

The thought naturally arises, how did anyone who so enjoyed people and loafing ever get any work done? (Once, when Esarey left a barber shop, a man who had known him for years remarked, "There goes the biggest loafer in town.") The answer is probably two-fold: the loafing was partly an illusion; and the work was efficient, regular, and unspectacular. Esarey could give the impression of having done a lot of loafing in the six blocks and fifteen minutes between the library and home. For many years he averaged about nine hours a day in the library, in addition to classes and other work. The ordinary social distractions drew but little upon his time; holidays and Sundays were work days too. Then he had the ability to utilize the fragments of time wasted by most. A half hour between a class and a committee meeting might produce the book review or speech outline which he had been mulling over in his mind while "loafing."

Dr. Esarey's health was never robust; years of work among the dusty newspaper volumes did not help it. By the mid-1920's he was beginning to show the serious effects of pulmonary trouble. He had had some lots in West Palm Beach since Vincennes days, so he built a small home and took a leave and a rest when energies ran low. By the late 1930's such leaves of necessity became more frequent. The

³⁹ Plans are under way for early publication of a memorial volume of these essays.



Later Life

enforced idleness was more or less irksome; there was so much unfinished work to be done. In 1939 he was forced to discontinue active teaching. He officially retired and became professor emeritus, on July 1, 1941.⁴⁰ Interest in university affairs and history never wavered. Summers were still spent in Bloomington, and friends and graduate students found that "shop talk" was the one thing that could not be avoided. Though his mind energy was high, his voice energy was low. When last seen by the writer in the late summer of 1942, he said, "Ain't it funny that anybody who has been as prodigal of hot air as I have should suddenly run out of it?" A premature cold snap in September brought a hasty retreat to Florida sunshine. "For a feller that's been avoid-

⁴⁰ In 1917 he had been made assistant professor, in 1919 associate professor, and in 1926 professor.

ing it all his life, it seems strange to have to go look for it." It was the last retreat. Complications developed and he died on September 24, 1942.

Logan Esarey was the last of the Hoosier historians. He bridged the gap between the pioneer and the modern. In him the traditions and virtues of an earlier period were deep rooted; of inclinations to adapt to the "new order" there were none. He was historian, teacher, humorist, and friend; individualist, non-conformist, Hoosier. As Mr. Justice Holmes said in 1886:

The power of honor to bind men's lives is not less now than it was in the Middle Ages. Now as then it is the breath of our nostrils; it is that for which we live, for which, if need be, we are willing to die. It is that which makes the man whose gift is the power to gain riches sacrifice health and even life to the pursuit. It is that which makes the scholar feel he cannot afford to be rich.