

would now function as an intellectual, and not merely as the bearer of a certain conceptual and methodological baggage. He would still be free to do research in his own specialized way, but when it came to describing his findings he would have to make sense in intellectual terms. This would favor clarity in his own scientific thinking.

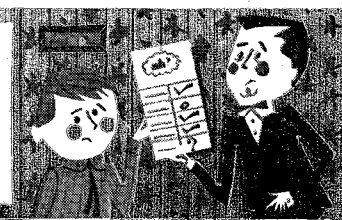
The group of collaborating scientists and scholars should include representatives of the humanities. Where the concern is with human problems, humanistic scholars become involved as readily as anyone else. In an institute, they could contribute insights that the psychologist or social scientist would turn into hypotheses; they could carry on investigations with the use of their own methods; and, perhaps most important, they could see to it that the scientists on the team did not take refuge in their specialized language and preoccupations.

For these institutes to succeed they must from the start be composed of a few particularly able scientists and scholars. This would not be so difficult to arrange as might be supposed. Many established men are restive under present conditions and would like to be working at something more interesting and important. Given an opportunity, some of the young specialists will turn out to be generalists at heart. To wear their professional cloaks they have to suppress a great deal of natural curiosity and imagination; they would flourish in the kind of setting I have described. Once a new institute got over its first hurdles there would be no question about the productivity of its members.

The vision that I have, then, is of a community in which scientists and scholars of different kinds of backgrounds and competencies work closely together on some of the problems of man in contemporary society, at the same time instructing undergraduates in the joys and virtues of general education. Graduate students could not at the present time be advised to join such a community, for they are under too much pressure to achieve a professional, that is, departmental, identity, but post-graduates—fresh Ph.D.s—would learn a great deal, even as they contributed to the ongoing research.

Actually, this sounds very much like the idea of a university, as it has been conceived in the past. Well that it should. But I am not contemplating any substitute for the vast super-universities of today; I am thinking rather of what at the most might be a new way of subdividing them into more meaningful and manageable units, and what at the least might be a new kind of sub-structure that can contribute uniquely to intellectual enterprise.

## Report Card



**“New York, Thy Name’s Delirium.”** There are times when the troubles of a school administrator seem almost too much for one man to bear, and James E. Allen, Commissioner of Education in New York State, has had plenty in recent months. Musing about them in a speech at the state school boards convention in Syracuse recently, he told the delegates: “You will not be surprised to learn that my recurring nightmare is of an overcrowded, racially imbalanced mathematics class, saying the fourth stanza of the Star Spangled Banner while its teacher, trained in the social studies, is out on strike.”

**You Can’t Tell the Players Without a Program.** People who use the statistics published by the U.S. Office of Education like to complain that they are seldom up to date, but a complaint of a different nature was made on the floor of the United States Senate recently by Senator Karl Mundt, Republican of South Dakota. Several months ago, the USOE published a rather comprehensive bibliography of books, articles, and other publications dealing with programmed instruction. One of the publications listed was *The Official Girlwatchers Manual*, a gentle spoof of programing. Nevertheless, the Senator thought it rather undignified, because it purported to offer instruction in how to recognize “adorables, desirables, availables, sociables, lovable, dependables, capable, flirtables, and unmentionables.”

**It’s Really Very Simple.** James Jackson Kilpatrick, segregationist editor of the Richmond (Virginia) *News Leader*, in an address on civil rights at Hampden-Sydney College recently, explained why the people of Prince Edward County in voting to close their public schools, acted in “complete obedience” to the Supreme Court decision of 1954: “The county no longer was denying admission to any child to any public school, for there were no public schools.”

**The Ancient Art of Fund-Raising.** It is commonly thought that American colleges and universities invented the honorary degree as a device for unlatching the purse of a prospective benefactor. Not so, according to a letter uncovered recently by scholars delving into the Genizah collection of ancient manuscripts in the library of the Jewish

Theological Seminary of America. The letter, dated 1007 A.D., is in the form of a progress report by Moses ben Barhum Taherti, head of a prominent family in Kairouan (now Tunisia), who had been named chairman of a committee to get the support of neighboring sheikhs in a fund-raising drive for the Talmudical Academy at Pumbedita, in Babylonia. Here is Taherti’s report:

“I told them: This matter requires cooperation and unity. Let us go to the sheikh Abi Yitzhak Ibrahim ben Ata that he should be with us (supporting the campaign) and the sheikh Abu Zikri, too.

“They told me: Sheikh Abi Yitzhak will not join us in this matter. I told them: I pledge you that he will, because through his joining us unity will be achieved and there will be general agreement.

“We did not delay. We developed a plan and we approached him. He refused. However, I awakened his interest through open and hidden ways until he accepted. And thus much money was collected.”

A subsequent letter indicates that one of the “hidden ways” was the promise of an honorary degree.

**No Comment.** A recent study of 6,750 Kansas high school seniors showed, among other things, that they listed the following factors, in order of importance, as the strongest influences governing their career choices:

1. Personal knowledge of their own interests and abilities.
2. Advice of parents.
3. Subjects studied in high school (other than guidance classes).
4. Talks with people not connected with the high school or college.
5. Advice of a high school teacher.
6. General reading in newspapers and magazines.
7. The program of the high school as a whole.
8. Books read in high school.
9. Advice of a high school counselor.
10. Working at the vocation after school or during a summer vacation.
11. Public library books or lectures.
12. Motion pictures.
13. Advice of a high school principal or superintendent.
14. Advice of a clergyman.
15. A guidance class in high school.

—JOHN SCANLON.

# THREE MYTHS ABOUT THE COLLEGE TEACHER

By BRUCE DEARING, *Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, University of Delaware.*

**A** GROWING impatience compels me to address myself to three threadbare myths that continue to muddy academic thinking about the nature and function of the American college professor. The first is the appealing myth of St. Mark Hopkins in single and simple communion with THE STUDENT in primitive surroundings. A second is the myth of the ideal teacher as curmudgeonly critic—the unsung and unsinging Socratic scholar. A third is the myth of the teacher-scholar as off-hand administrator.

“The ideal college is Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other.” How often have we heard or echoed this old saw, sometimes merely underlining the central importance of the gifted teacher in quality education, but often also in deprecation of libraries, laboratories, teaching machines, independent study, and large classes? But what is really being asserted? Who was Mark Hopkins? At what college, to what students, and in what manner did he actually teach what subject? When it recently occurred to me that I could answer these questions but uncertainly, I sought out Professor Frederick Rudolph’s admirable book (*Mark Hopkins and the Log: Williams College 1836-1872*, Yale University Press, 1956) and Carroll A. Wilson’s witty monograph (“Familiar ‘Small College’ Quotations, II, Mark Hopkins and the Log,” *The Colophon*, new ser. 3 [1938], 194-209). I was unprepared for what I found.

As more sophisticated educators than I may have known already, this statement ascribed to James A. Garfield was uttered in peculiar circumstances, and in somewhat other words. According to Rudolph and Wilson, the episode seems to have developed somewhat as follows. The occasion was a Williams College Alumni dinner at Delmonico’s in 1871. As often happens at such convocations, there appeared among the alumni assembled to speak well of themselves, one another, and their *alma mater*, a representative of the institution; Professor John Bascom had come

down from Williamstown to address the gathering. His speech was a bombshell. He asserted bluntly that Williams College was in a deplorable state. The faculty was disintegrating, the students were obstreperous, the libraries and laboratories already essential to genuine higher education in 1871 were nonexistent. Professor Bascom made it clear that he attributed the desperate plight of the institution to the anti-intellectualism, provincialism, indolence, and general laxity of the man who had been for thirty-five years President of Williams College—Mark Hopkins.

It was in response to this attack upon an idol that Garfield coined his famous aphorism. According to Mr. Wilson’s persuasive reconstruction, what Garfield actually said was probably “A log cabin in the woods, with a pine bench in it with Mark Hopkins at one end and me on the other is a good enough college for me.”

**I**T appears from Professor Rudolph’s account that Hopkins’ preparation for his academic career was a meagre miscellany in the study of law and medicine. Though he lectured principally in moral philosophy and held appointment as professor of philosophy, he was proud of the fact that he had read little philosophy. He used Kant only as an example of unintelligibility to hold up to his students’ scorn. He had never read either Darwin or Huxley, but nevertheless conducted a thirty-year campaign against what he believed to be their ideas. Despite the enthusiasm of his students—and doubtless Garfield spoke for great numbers of them—the evidence suggests that Mark Hopkins, even by the standards of his day, was anti-intellectual, doctrinaire, unread, unlearned, and unashamed.

It is doubtless ungenerous so to assail the reputation of a man whose name has come to symbolize excellence in teaching. It is my purpose to suggest more appropriate models for our emulation. An ideal college of the mid-twentieth century needs an image other than Mark Hopkins or anyone else on one end of a log and a passive student sitting like a bump on the other. I am not quite ready to settle for Frank Baxter on one end of a coaxial cable and



—Bettmann Archive.

Mark Hopkins

5,000 students on the other, or for a continental classroom making relatively unimaginative use of available teaching resources and devices for an audience of thousands of early risers. Neither do I propose, or fear, that we are headed toward a teacher-student relationship which provides only the confrontation of Skinner teaching machines and students ready to be conditioned.

Even now in our best institutions, libraries provide records, tapes, microfilms and other resources far beyond the capacity of any individual teacher to absorb or purvey. Students in language laboratories learn some things more effectively from tapes and records than they could from an unaided classroom teacher, however gifted. In laboratories infinitely more elaborate than those Garfield and Hopkins thought so unnecessary in 1871, teaching and learning is taking place on a plane neither could have conceived. In countless classrooms able teachers are calling upon knowledge of the learning process, and upon their own learning and experience, far beyond anything Mark Hopkins even valued, let alone achieved. In several striking examples, skillful and imaginative instructors in the revolutionized field of mathematics are demonstrating that one teacher can deal effectively with as many as three hundred students on the other end of a logarithm. Garfield’s aphorism was at best a half-truth in 1871. Ninety years later, and particularly when used as an argument against visual aids, large classes and laboratory instruction, it approaches total absurdity. It was and is academic atavism.

To pervert a well-known and still arresting phrase, “A spectre is haunting the academies—the spectre (alas, not the spirit) of Socrates.” In an essay in the *New York Times Magazine* several