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FOREWORD

This Centennial of Coe College will include speech making, the conferring of honorary degrees, and the dedication of buildings; all are worthy exercises from a commemorative point of view, but they are only superficially related to the main business of a college.

This Foreword could not presume to discuss the main business of Coe, except to suggest that such business is with people and with ideas. Indicative of real concern for both is the Coe College motto — VERITAS VIRTUSQUE — “Truth and Moral Excellence.” In the history which follows, there is recurring evidence that Coe has strongly felt this concern through its hundred years. History itself verifies the wisdom of such concern, for people with ideas make history.

In a world almost swamped by regimental thinking, Coe College is an island of independence. Coe has long held that the Truth has its own complexion. It is recognized, however, that Truth can be disguised and often is, by prejudice, but in the ultimate sense it cannot be altered. Through the years, the responsibility for presenting Truth has been the aim of the Faculty. They have given Truth prominence; they have focused the strong light of scholarship upon it; they have stripped Truth of illusion; and by selfless courage and personal honesty, they have sought to make their students unfailingly aware of Truth in contemporary life. This done, Truth will work its own good and will attract people of moral excellence to serve it. Such service will be humble and tolerant, for truthful knowledge unembellished is the important exponent in education and in life.

So it is that the Coe of today embodies the sinews formed by the thought and forceful actions of those who have served Coe by steadfast adherence to the principles of its Motto. These sinews are a heritage to be carried forward with determination and confidence. Sustained by this happy certainty, Coe will serve for the next hundred years.

OWEN ELLIOTT, President
Board of Trustees
PREFACE

When Coe's Centennial planning began, a lively sort of history was envisioned for publication in her hundredth year, one that would convey the mood and spirit of the college as well as a chronology of its historic events and the people who shaped them. This is the sort of history we have tried to write, a task considerably more involved than looking up a series of dates and copying them down in proper order.

Thus we offer this history, conscious that very restricted space and time have forced us to some limitation of the elaborations, illustrations, and conditions vital to the accuracy of untrammeled scholarship. There is much we have been forced to leave out, many people we have not been able to mention, and a complete absence of references obviously out of place in an informal work like this. The definitive work we leave to the scholar with years and hundreds of pages at his disposal. Ours is a brief panorama of events, colorful or drab; and of personalities, stodgy or sparkling, that have combined to produce Coe college.

To give the reader a vivid glimpse of the college halfway through her first century, we begin our first chapter with a bit of narrative history centering on the all-important endowment drive dinner of 1901. Imaginative in detail, this account is documented in its primary facts by contemporary newspaper accounts and in its embellishments of what-might-have-happened that evening by considerable research into campus lore of 1901. Though we abandon the narrative method after the first few paragraphs, we introduce each new chapter with a bit more information on the dynamic McCormick, who played a vital role in keeping the college alive at a crucial point in her history.

In the interests of historical objectivity, which is usually very difficult to achieve in dealing with recent events, we end our history at the close of the Gage administration in 1941, allowing ourselves only an occasional mention of campus events of the past 10 years. Our account of the first 90 years would have been impossible without the generous help of Lorraine Eckert Hahn in supervising production, Elizabeth Windsor and Doris Alexander in putting their library and their reference services at our disposal, and of Lois McBroome, invaluable for advice and encouragement as well as for assistance in the interminable business of note copying.

Thanks to the help of many others as well, the writing of this account has been one of the most thoroughly enjoyable pieces of work we have ever done. We hope that we have been able to communicate a bit of that enjoyment to those who will read this modest history of a remarkable institution.

Grace Hartzell Douma
Catherine Covert Stephanek

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Lights gleamed from Williston hall through the October dusk, outlining a group of portly figures picking their way through the campus sandburrs.

Velvet-collared gentlemen of means, these, and well aware of their roles as Cedar Rapids’ leading citizens. It was no light matter, giving up a comfortable evening at home for the struggling college on the edge of town, but they were frankly intrigued. The president of Coe had promised dinner and an announcement of importance to the whole community.

President Samuel B. McCormick, the past few years had clearly shown, was not a person to make light promises. The city fathers knew an astute businessman when they saw one, and they had heard rumors of a large gift he had recently obtained for the college. So this October 4 of 1901 found them hurrying up the boardwalk to find out what he had in mind.

They found the hall in a flurry of excitement. From the basement dining room came the clatter of silver and dishes. Drifting from upstairs were unmistakable sounds of feminine excitement, rapid chatter, and an occasional suppressed giggle. For it was Friday evening and in addition to the thrill of entertaining the town’s elite in their own dormitory, some of the young ladies were expecting more personal visitors of their own, young gentlemen making the “evening calls” permissible only twice a week.

The number of awkward lads waiting in the parlor was small, however, for many of the young women were pressed into service as the dinner began. As they served the successive heavy courses, green sea turtle, planked white fish, blue bill duckling, and neapolitan ice cream, the young ladies maintained a modest decorum noted with approval by the visitors. If women must be educated, it was well to insure such a genteel atmosphere. And the diners were impressed with the new electric lights, installed only the year before. McCormick was handling this place well. It might become quite an asset to a growing city.

It was in such an expansive mood that the guests waited for the evening’s program to begin. No gentleman would go so far, of course, as to light a cigar on the grounds of a Christian college, but they listened attentively over their coffee as Dr. McCormick arose at last to make the great announcement.

A blind gentleman from New Jersey, a Mr. Ralph Voorhees, he told them, had promised to give the impressive sum of $25,000 toward the long-hoped-for college endowment. There was a condition, of course. Dr. McCormick’s audience nodded expectantly. “Challenge gifts” were a favorite device of wealthy donors.

Should the planned campaign for $125,000 be completed by the following June, Mr. Voorhees would add his gift to complete the drive for one hundred and fifty thousand.

There was an approving murmur about the crowded dining room. Benign Dr. Burkhalter, vice-president of the board, looked particularly pleased with the
general response. So did Board Chairman Soutter. The trustees had planned this dinner well in an effort to enlist town support. With McCormick’s eastern contacts becoming profitable, things seemed to be turning out just as they had hoped.

It was, the gentleman from the *Cedar Rapids Republican* noted, a “very delightful evening.”

The reporter waited until the room had nearly cleared, then joined Dr. McCormick as he walked out the door. McCormick was plainly elated, sensitive face alight, hands gesturing, as he swept the reporter along with him, talking constantly meanwhile. Cedar Rapids and its people plainly pleased him immensely.

“Cedar Rapids is a beautiful town,” he told the reporter in the rounded phrases he liked to use in the *Coe Courant*, a monthly college publication he had started. “Its people are religious, intelligent and upright. Its home life is pure. Altogether Cedar Rapids is a very desirable environment for a college. And some of the most prominent citizens of Cedar Rapids are now giving their best effort, both in counsel and money, for the enlargement and permanency of the college.”

The reporter lengthened his stride to match McCormick’s nervous step as they passed Main hall. The windows of the president’s office were strangely dark tonight. They usually gleamed far past midnight as the president worked away at a tremendous pace inside. The whole town had heard of the fantastic energy that drove him to endless trips in behalf of the college, and prompted him to call faculty meetings at 3 a.m. the minute he got back into town.

The students had seen little of him lately. His whole existence had revolved about the new endowment drive. But they loved him devotedly and with good reason.

Four years before he had found the college at low ebb with a meager plant, 41 dissatisfied college students, squabbling faculty and trustees. By this year of 1901 his colossal supply of energy had produced a new society hall, a new field house, prospects for a substantial endowment, and increasing academic recognition. Now an athletic field with a cinder track stretched behind Marshall and Williston. This year’s college enrollment had reached 123, the faculty was loyal, the trustees generous and almost paternal. As he paused to shake a sandburn from his boot, President McCormick could reflect with satisfaction on the progress of the college he was building.

* * * *

Just fifty years before, the sandburns had reigned unchallenged on that unprofitable stretch of land. No one in 1851 thought of the embryo campus as anything but an unpromising tract owned by a far away Pennsylvanian. That year the predecessor of Coe college appeared in a modest Cedar Rapids house a mile away.

The birthplace of the college was the home of a parson, the devout Williston Jones. Looking to the future of the ministry, the Presbyterian pastor had persuaded young George Carroll to study with him before entering an eastern seminary. The project was promptly popular in a rough new community with no other preparatory schools, and 17 other young men followed George into Jones’ parlor-classroom.

Two years of patient teaching only proved that the ministry was still beyond them, financially and intellectually. So with his flair for injecting the practical into his preaching, the energetic Jones filled a Congregational pulpit in Durham, New York, one Sunday afternoon in 1853 and asked for money to send three of his Iowa boys to an eastern seminary.

Listening from the second pew was the answer to Jones’ problem, a remarkable farmer who sat in the Sabbath sunshine pondering an action that was to perpetuate his name through the next hundred years. Daniel Coe waited after the service to tell the Iowa preacher he should start his own seminary rather than spending the $1500 he was trying to raise on three boys alone.

With this shrewd advice came a gift of the entire $1500. Coe had to borrow some of the money to give to Jones, but the Catskills farmer saw a chance to try out some of his own unorthodox educational ideas. Part of the gift, he said, was to be used to buy a farm so that these “poor but pious boys” could help support themselves. He added another surprising stipulation, that the proposed institute should be “made available for the education of females as well as males.” From the generous impulse of an unlettered mountain deacon who left school when he was eleven came the beginnings of a college to produce preachers and teachers for the west.

**Birth Pangs**

Mr. Coe’s college took 31 years to turn out its first graduates.

Incorporated in 1853 by a group of Cedar Rapids citizens and property owners under the chairmanship of Judge George Greene, the struggling school operated sporadically as the “Cedar Rapids Collegiate Institute,” the “Parsons Seminary,” and the “Coe Collegiate Institute.” The trustees had used Coe’s money to buy two downtown lots for the school site and 80 acres at the edge of town for the specified farm; war, depression, the failure of the Iowa City presbytery to produce its promised support, and local indifference frequently interrupted the academy’s feeble existence.

In fitful spurs of interest the trustees hired a faculty, erected the first half
of a classroom building on the untitled eighty, optimistically baptized the structure
"Main Building," and then began to sell the downtown lots to pay for it. In 1871
the school failed again.

So the campus was deserted, the windows of its one building smashed by
vandals, and the classroom littered with fallen plaster in 1875 when Daniel Coe's
son-in-law arrived in Iowa on an ominous mission determined to recover the funds
Coe had invested in his "permanent Institution of Learning."

At this threat to a once-cherished project the presbytery bestirred itself to
reconsider the establishment of a college in Cedar Rapids and petitioned the
trustees to establish a "school of high order" which the presbytery promised again
to take under its care. Thus snatched from the brink of disaster, the revived ins-
titute functioned successfully for six years as a sort of college preparatory school
under the direction of the Rev. Robert Aaron Condit.

By 1879 the growth of the public schools was making increasingly obvious the
fact that Cedar Rapids needed a college for its young people more than a private
school to prepare them for college.

Recognizing its own inadequacy, the presbytery pressed responsibility for the
establishment of a college on a hesitant synod, the governing organization set up
by the Presbyterians for their church in Iowa. Already saddled with the responsi-
bility for Lenox college at Hopkinton, the Iowa synod reluctantly agreed to estab-
lish a college at Cedar Rapids on the seemingly impossible condition that the
Cedar Rapids Collegiate Institute be presented to the synod completely free of
debt.

Enabling the institute to meet this condition was its vice-president, a remark-
ably generous industrialist named T. M. Sinclair who personally liquidated the
school's debts and paved the way for its incorporation on Feb. 2, 1881, as Coe
college.

Three years later on an early June day in 1884 were graduated E. Belle Stewart
and Stephen W. Stookey, fledgling teachers and direct heirs of Daniel Coe's legacy
to the "educational wants of a great and growing West."
CHAPTER II: PHYSICAL PLANT AND FINANCES

Only the editor of a college catalogue could call the campus beautiful in 1901. Three neat buildings of anonymous architectural design were laced tightly by wooden walks at one corner of the grounds. Main had been planned as the "good substantial building of brick or stone" specified by Daniel Coe, and when the trustees had come to build Williston and Marshall they had found little reason and no money for elaborating on the founder's simple ideas.

Just that year a little field house had been built behind Marshall and Williston at the edge of a new quarter-mile track and the football field that stretched over a quarter of the campus toward B avenue. Landscaping was out of the question as trustees shepherded meager funds for fuel and salaries; only the northeast corner of the campus was rescued from burrs and brush heaps by the grove of oaks that ringed the knoll.

Still, as President McCormick looked over the campus on that October evening of 1901, he could take pride in its contrast with the desolate prairie of 1881 that had confronted Coe's first president. The Rev. Stephen Phelps had arrived at a thinly populated campus to preside over sand, weeds, and half of Main. Erected in 1868 for a one-building college, that west half had incorporated under one roof all the classrooms, dormitory rooms, the principal's suite, and the furnace room. With the addition of a $30,000 second half in 1884, the sturdy structure housed all the administrative offices, laboratories, and the museum.

Students climbed the highest to the most important room in the building. The third floor library-chapel occasionally doubled as a basketball court and neatly symbolized the triple objectives of the fledgling institution. For long years Main's basement was devoted to a book store and the college print shop which was equipped with the ornate typefaces that graced all the publications of the college and many of those issued by the Presbyterian church. With subsequent expansion of the college plant Old Main relinquished many of its functions to become an administrative and classroom building, enlivened by editorializing from the office of the student newspaper in the basement, and by courting under the back steps.

A history almost as long and even more varied than that of Main was enjoyed by Williston hall, a remarkably angular red brick dormitory erected in 1882 to house the young ladies from out of town. Subsequently embellished with a veranda and hot and cold running water, Williston survived for 68 years as dining hall, barracks, rifle range, classroom building, and general butt of campus humor. Students of the teens hopefully prophesied its demise, but Williston continued to creak in every prevailing wind for almost 40 more useful years.

Third of 1901's campus triumvirate was a new but smaller building sometimes called "Society Hall" by the literary groups whose colors bedizened the second story rooms, but more formally christened by the trustees in 1900 to honor the second president of the college, the Rev. James Marshall. Possibly to encourage the Coe academy students who labored away on its first floor, the building was emblazoned with a Latin motto translated "No Day Without A Line," but the inscription remained to baffle the music students who by 1911 had taken over the building.

Even the classroom space afforded in Marshall and Main was taxed by the burgeoning student body in 1903, however. Harrassed professors lengthened the class day, held classes two in a room, opened their homes to student recitation, and increased their agitation for a Science building.

Thus it was a particularly festive April morning some six years later in 1909 when Prof. C. O. Bates actually turned the first shovelful of dirt on the southeast corner of the campus for the rectangular three story building. In addition to canvassing the usual donors, Coe's fourth president, William Wilberforce Smith, had bravely approached Andrew Carnegie to solicit funds for the project. Maintaining a sort of god-like detachment: from his Iowa petitioners, the Scots philanthropist through letters written by his secretary promised $45,000 and eventually
donated $63,500 which built Science hall according to plans drawn up by Prof. LeRoy D. Weld. The science professors emerged happily from Main’s cramped laboratory-lecture rooms into the 58 rooms, 12 laboratories, and two museums of the new building. The trustees claimed Science hall as the best in the state and retired from the construction of classroom buildings for the next 40 years.

Such respite implied no rest for the conscientious board member who had learned early in his trusteeship that classrooms do not make a college. The number of women on campus had outgrown the number of rooms in Williston by 1905, and the college had resorted to farming out its non-resident upperclass women in homes it assured their parents were “properly chaperoned.”

This shunting about of coeds came to a happy conclusion with the appearance of another financial angel, widow of the Ralph Voorhees who had contributed $25,000 to McCormick’s first endowment drive. She was successfully approached by Coe’s fifth president, the Rev. John A. Marquis, and by her $185,000 gift crowned the knoll with a gracious hall for women called “Voorhees Quadangle.” Voorhees was built in two parts completed in 1915 and 1918, and its drawing room, student suites, and swimming pool offered considerable contrast to the spartan living conditions imposed by Williston.

Matching Voorhees with a men’s dormitory was not so simple. Male students had traditionally foraged for their own food and lodging, and a residence hall for men classified as an educational afterthought. Some of the men happened on congenial surroundings, good boarding houses, or lucrative board jobs. Others went home every weekend for a bath and enough good food to carry them through another week. Growing in strength after World War I, many of the fraternities moved into their own houses and partially settled the problem. But the depression wrought havoc with fraternity finance and brought further delay to college plans for men’s dormitories that would answer the “crying need for housing for men” that plagued the Rev. Harry Morehouse Gage, Coe’s sixth president.

Finally in the eighteenth year of his administration Gage was able to report happily to the trustees that the cornerstone of Greene hall, new men’s dormitory and fraternity headquarters, would be laid on June 3, 1938. The building was named to honor the family of Judge George Greene, first board president. Extending two wings from a central commons, this complement to Voorhees marked an aesthetic advance as the first building on the main campus to match any other building in architectural style. (There was a resemblance between the library and the men’s gymnasium.) Subsequent college planners planned concealing vines to harmonize the buildings, but they never could make thirteenth century Gothic look like Georgian Colonial.

Representing this extreme disparity of style typical of many a campus were two buildings which formed the intellectual and religious axis for a Christian college. They were the chapel and the library. In practice this axis extended north to the gymnasium, for college administrators were devoted to the development of the body as well as to the cultivation of mind and spirit. During long years there seemed to be rather more emphasis on body and soul; at least the gymnasium and the chapel emerged long before the library from their crowded chrysalis on the third floor of Main.

It was in 1901 that Trustee C. B. Soutter and a group of alumni proudly presented the college with its first field house. The little structure remained until 1935 a campus landmark at the edge of Prof. Bryant’s track and football field.

The field had been fenced in by Bryant himself one lonely Friday night under the noses of the B avenue residents who had threatened a court injunction against such an eyesore. But Coach Bryant reeled gate receipts from his games, and the fence remained. So did the field until Greene hall was built, though only an Iowa sportswriter could see beauty in its proximity to chapel and classrooms.

The physical education program progressively expanded into the octagonal gymnasium built in 1903 and thence to an enormous gymnasium erected in 1929 a block north of the main campus. Including three basketball floors, cinder track, and locker facilities for 1,000 men, the field house reached a sheer size which established its reputation as one of the most complete in the midwest. The gym fronted on a new field and track after 1939.

The second institution to exit from Main’s top floor was the chapel, beloved by generations of students as the real heart of the college. The T. M. Sinclair Memorial chapel was built in 1911. Sinclair’s family gave $25,566 to honor the early college benefactor, and the trustees voted to raise an additional $25,000 for the chapel among themselves. Recessed between Main and Science hall on First avenue, the Gothic structure seating nearly 1,000 became the cultural center of the community as well as the site of the most significant events in college life. Compulsory daily chapel services were held there, of course, as were pep meetings (following a discussion as to whether it was proper to give yells within the sacred walls), lectures, concerts, stirring performances of The Messiah, and all of the baccalaureate and commencement ceremonies. Student and faculty couples were
married before the altar, fine plays were presented in the little theater, and many a memorable dinner was served from the kitchen in the basement.

Emancipation of the library from its third-floor confines was effected in 1929 by Robert W. Stewart, a Coe graduate of 1886 who after rising to considerable fame and fortune in the oil industry, remembered his alma mater with a gift of $200,000 which built a spacious library on B avenue north of Voorhees and Greene.

After long years of coping with one unbelievably crowded floor, Librarian Betty Pritchett expanded her library of 36,526 books into a building that could eventually shelve 144,000 volumes. She immediately set about to increase her collection to the 50,000 it reached on her retirement in 1942. Awed by its imposing new surroundings, the student body gave up its old habits of carving library tables and carrying on major social gatherings in the reading room and indulged in more serious study, and the new library became a stimulus to college scholarship as well as a monument to a generous and loyal alumnus. The architectural keynote for later campus development was set in the gracious lines of Georgian Colonial architecture, and the library enhanced the appearance as it dominated the intellectual life of the campus.

### Finances

Building this campus and maintaining a college required a hundred years of sacrifice, and a good deal of the begging for money usually necessary to the development of any independent college. Fund raising for an institution whose slender income rarely matched its expenses plagued Williston Jones and every college administrator after him.

Raising enough money for permanent endowment so that interest would help pay college expenses was the commonly accepted answer to the financial problem of such an independent college. A series of endowment drives was begun at Coe in 1892 with an abortive campaign for fifty thousand dollars which wound up unsuccessfully in the panic of 1893. Administrators and trustees continued the technique, however, through more productive drives begun in 1901, 1903, 1909, and 1915, and on Nov. 30, 1916 the endowment of the college reached a million dollars. The endowment raisers made an uncompleted drive for another million in 1918, but were prodded into more conclusive action in 1921 by President Gage and a set of statistics which typified the usual liberal arts college situation down through the years. Of the $265 it cost the college every year to educate one student, Gage said, $182 was contributed by the student and only $83 by the endowment income. The obvious way to raise the additional money necessary was to pile up more endowment.

The subsequent 20 years of strenuous money raising left the college with a $1,780,747 endowment in 1941 at the end of the Gage administration.

For contributions to the endowment drives and all the other campaigns to make ends meet, the college depended primarily on its friends in Cedar Rapids who recognized a community asset and gave generously over the years. The college administrators also besieged eastern contributors and occasionally attracted windfalls from a Rockefeller or a Carnegie. In 1919 the endowment was substantially increased by the merger with Leander Clark, a United Brethren college in Toledo, Iowa, that had been founded in 1856 as Western college in southern Linn county. Support received from the Presbyterian church was not major, and the college usually had to resort to borrowing or raising money in Cedar Rapids to meet the expected deficits. Varying from $148 in 1901 to $44,000 in 1930, the deficit appeared annually with a few exceptions. Rarely do liberal arts colleges operate on a balanced budget, and Coe's usual deficit typified problems to be faced by trustees of all such institutions.

With a sense of loyalty to the children of missionaries, ministers, and faculty as well as to worthy and needy students in general, the college granted extensive scholarship and tuition awards that were commendable but often unendowed. In 1905 almost 28 percent of the student body was attending tuition-free. In 1923 Coe was awarding a total of $23,014 in scholarships annually. Even for the student who received no aid, Coe's tuition and fees were not unusually high for a private liberal arts college. They ranged from $41 in 1881 to $250 sixty years later. Living expenses were equally moderate but a large percentage of Coe's student body found it necessary to sandwich part-time jobs between classes. Consistently eager to enroll students of fine minds and Christian aspirations regardless of their bank accounts, Coe's officials did everything they could to help students support themselves. In 1919 the college paper estimated that 85 percent of the men earned part of their way, and the college long continued as the "poor man's school" painted by that issue of the *Cosmos*.

Even the remarkable earning power of Coe's determined poor men was taxed by the depression of the thirties, which threatened alike the student and the college. President Gage and his business manager, S. N. Harris, adopted heroic measures to reduce expenses and pay salaries, but their task was made immeasurably easier by the wholehearted cooperation of the faculty. In 1931 when a full professor ordinarily earned less than $3,000, the faculty subscribed almost $11,000 to help pay running expenses. In 1932 they invested $16,000 in interest bearing notes,
and in 1933 when Coe faced a cash deficit of $89,000 the faculty produced $48,000 in loans and salary gifts.

Such sacrifice always typified the generous Christian spirit of Coe’s finest teachers, administrators, and trustees. Graced during its first hundred years by the membership of one woman, Coe’s board of trustees elected its own members. Trustees were usually Cedar Rapids businessmen, named to an initial three-year term and commonly retained for life. Typical of the finest Christian gentlemen on the board was Arthur Poe, a Princeton graduate who served as board chairman from the difficult depression days of 1933 until his death in 1951. Poe spent his time and his own money unselfishly to help the college without thought of personal power or gain. Such unflagging interest and generosity were characteristic of the devoted board members who enabled the college to surmount some of its most difficult financial problems, and to make a generous contribution over the years to the cause of liberal learning.

CHAPTER III: EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Energetic promoter that he was, Samuel Black McCormick rarely had time to bother with the niceties of educational philosophy. Since its founding, his school had been devoted to the giving of a liberal education in the atmosphere of the Christian spirit, and with that basic conception McCormick never tampered.

“Veritas Virtusque” had been framed as the Coe college motto to indicate the “truth and moral excellence” which served as ultimate objectives for most of the independent American colleges established before 1900. At Coe the concern for Virtus often took precedence over the search for Veritas. T. M. Sinclair had set a pervasive faculty pattern in 1876 when he appointed as institute principal the venerable Robert A. Condit. A widely traveled Presbyterian minister with a Princeton education, Condit nevertheless impressed students with his kindliness, gentleness, and generosity even more than with his erudition. His apparent educational philosophy centered entirely on the teaching of Christian virtues by precept and example.

Condit’s precepts were echoed by Dr. Edward R. Burkhalter, a trustee for 47 years and pastor of the First Presbyterian church of Cedar Rapids where he told graduating seniors in 1909 that the college was “founded to give an education that has its basis . . . in Christian faith, and has no other conception of knowledge than that compatible with . . . moral values.”

Alumni read approvingly in 1914 when the Coe College Courier asserted officially that “any attempt to train young men and women to clear thinking without developing . . . ideals of Christian service is to make them lopsided, weak and inefficient.” That same publication insisted, however, in 1909 that “Coe College stands for sound scholarship. It aims at the highest intellectual standards.” And the double concept of classical study in a Christian environment reached a peak at Coe in 1910, to be threatened by a rising tide of vocationalism which did not subside until the decade of the forties.

The demand that the colleges offer something “practical” was increasingly difficult to withstand as early as 1901. At the turn of the century, points out Henry Steele Commager in The American Mind, the typical American wanted a college to equip him to earn a living, and to pay dividends in a very tangible way. “The common school and the college are not practical,” thundered the Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette in 1902, demanding that colleges add business, mechanical and technical courses to their curricula.

McCormick made no obvious response to this challenge in his seven-year administration ending in 1904. His successor, William Wilberforce Smith, maintained so narrow and unpopular a policy as envisioning Coe as a junior college that his three-year administration from 1905 to 1908 made negligible impression on college philosophy.

The college did not bow to the Gazette’s demand until the appearance of John A. Marquis, who became the first president to formalize a philosophy of education during his administration from 1909 to 1919. One of the strongest and most popular of Coe presidents, Marquis characterized the five goals of education as the
acquisition of knowledge, the ability to think, the ability to express one's self well, the development of character, and the cultivation of quick, decisive action.

A shrewd administrator who concluded that as a product of its environment Coe should "minister... to the needs... of (the) community," he was convinced that the college could combine the functions of the liberal arts college and the technical school. While allowing the catalogue to insist that Coe "subordinates a living to a life," Marquis encouraged vocational courses wherever he could, and suggested an extension division to provide "technical and scientific subjects for men working in factories and stores."

One of the most popular vocational courses over the years produced scores of successful athletic coaches to underline another cardinal principle of early college policy. The consistent emphasis laid on health, sports, and physical education can be credited largely to George Bryant, Latin professor from 1899 to 1941, athletic coach, and college vice-president. His influence was probably responsible for the prestige enjoyed by athletics that put "a sound body as well as a trained mind," in a 1913 Courier list of college objectives together with "higher education," "education that is useful and practical," and "education that is Christian."

Effectively characterizing Coe's primary aims for her first 40 years of corporate life, these objectives were amplified no further until Harry Gage became president in 1920.

Dr. Gage held the Coe presidency from 1920 to 1941—twice as long as any other chief executive before him. Gage was the first genuine educator to become president. Stephen Phelps had been a lovable old minister who presided over the college from 1881 to 1886 against his better judgment; James Marshall, an unpopular disciplinarian; McCormick, a successful money raiser and promoter. Though Marquis had been a capable administrator who contributed greatly to the development of the college, his heart belonged to his denomination. For the last half of his administration his primary efforts were devoted to the Presbyterian church, and he was not on campus much of the time.

Gage also brought to Coe a fine reputation as a churchman. Primarily an educator, however, he made clear in numerous reports to the trustees a very real concept of the purposes of a liberal arts college. That philosophy in addition to numerous executive positions in major educational organizations established him as one of the Midwest's pre-eminent educators and a representative of the highest standards in Christian liberal arts colleges.

Gage's educational philosophy was founded on three major premises: the importance of Coe's religious heritage, the significance of her liberal tradition, and the necessity for endowing her with a faculty ideally to be composed of genuine scholars and able teachers.

His first two major convictions were clearly expressed to the board on May 9, 1925: "The mission of Coe is intellectual and spiritual. It is to produce men who are prepared and disposed to minister to every form of human need because they can think well for themselves and others... No complications of education problems, no additions of vocational studies... no pre-vocational emphasis should... divert us from this purpose of a liberal arts college."

While Gage made no concerted attempt to purify the curriculum of its vocational courses, he fully appreciated the richness of the liberal studies, particularly in the humanities. There was a dying demand for the humanities, he lamented in 1922, "partly due to the desire to 'prepare for life' and largely due to pure intellectual laziness." The purposes of a liberal, Christian education were cataloged by Gage as preparatory, cultural, vocational, moral and religious, healthful, and aesthetic. A liberal education, he summarized, involved the development of a sense of values.

To develop this sense in his students he assembled a remarkably well qualified faculty at Coe and kept them there. Conscious of good scholarship to the point of introducing sabbatical leaves at Coe, Gage saved his warmest praise for his best teachers. Extremely loyal to all its faculty, however, Gage gave deep meaning to the phrase "our Coe family." He became what one professor called a "sheltering presence" for his faculty, and they rewarded him with their loyalty in turn.

Even a faithful faculty cannot save their president from problems. To continue in his presidential chair Gage developed a talent for diplomacy that occasionally involved a statesmanlike refusal to sharpen issues. Ideological dispute did not characterize the two decades of presidency which marked him as one of the most consistently capable educators to serve the college.
CHAPTER IV: THE FACULTY

"Moved and carried," ran a terse notation in the faculty minutes for April 11, 1904, "that the Pres. be asked to withdraw his son James from college because he has constantly ignored instructions from the faculty."

Any doubts President McCormick might have entertained about the firmness or the independence of his faculty were undoubtedly laid to rest when he got that message. They would capitalize his title in the minutes, but they would stand no nonsense from his boy.

Neither did this independent group hesitate to express their feelings forcibly to the trustees on occasion. They stoutly voted to eject Trustee Burkhalter's son, Louis, when he threw sausages in the library, and their opposition helped unseat President Smith in 1908 over the protests of Board Chairman C. B. Souther who finally resigned. This sturdy band represented authority on campus, and they took their responsibilities seriously. "The immediate government of the College and the direction of its affairs," were vested in the faculty, declared the catalogue of 1902, and that meant student conduct, study hours, entertainment, athletics, examinations, scholarship, attendance, and student living quarters.

Discipline worried them the most. It was no simple matter to corral a spirited batch of students who threw eggs in their classrooms and staged interclass fights perilously near the edge of Main's roof. Many of the faculty could remember clearly the unfortunate handling of an earlier case which prompted the entire classes of 1889 and 1890 to leave school for good. In September of 1887 President Marshall, newly arrived from the prairie, was moved to announce that from now on coeducation at Coe meant that men and women were permitted to recite in the same classes and only that. There were to be no social affairs or other frivolous commingling of the sexes. Fresh from the easy discipline of President Phelps, the students reacted violently.

They made away with the bell that rang for classes. They hung President Marshall in effigy right on First Avenue. They wrote a complaining letter to the board of trustees. Incensed, the faculty expelled all the men in college except the freshmen and were confounded when irate upperclass women all promptly packed their trunks for home too. The next fall found only a pitiful handful of freshmen and sophomores on campus, the sophomores usurping their senior prerogatives to strut about grandly in the Prince Albert coats, silk top hats, and canes usually reserved for their elders.

A good deal of undergraduate horseplay was common to the nineteenth century, and such an exodus was not peculiar to Coe. But the faculty wanted no part of any repeat performance, and labored long to be fair about discipline, meanwhile referring frequently to a strict set of rules and regulations second in authority only to the Bible every student was expected to possess.

A less exuberant as well as a larger student body was necessary to move the faculty to the delegation of their disciplinary powers to the faculty advisers for each class and eventually to deans of men and women. By 1923 the faculty was considering the less exciting if more academic questions of intelligence testing, methods in freshman English, the group system of study, and ways of establishing friendly relations with foreign students.

Absorbed with such college problems Coe's faculty rarely voiced an official opinion on extra-campus affairs. They did rise in some indignation when one of their favorite graduates was ousted in 1900 from the Leland Stanford University faculty by the trustees for his opposition to the gold standard and the importation of cheap Chinese labor. He was Edward Alsworth Ross, a Coe graduate of 1886 destined to become a figure of world renown in the field of sociology and the most famous scholar Coe produced. This clear invasion of his academic freedom moved Coe's faculty to add it's commendation of his bravery to that of hundreds of college professors all over the country. The Coe faculty praised Ross for "your earnest pursuit of knowledge and steadfast adherence to your own convictions."

Aside from petitioning President Woodrow Wilson in 1916 to prevent sales of liquor around army camps, and endorsing proposed Iowa legislation to "enforce the anti-cigarette law" in 1917, the faculty generally kept to its own affairs. In later years opinions on general questions were expressed primarily through Coe's chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

If they were indifferent as a group to the problems of outsiders, Coe's teachers cherished their students and joined with them to form a warm and friendly college family characterized by the contagious "Coe spirit" that was a campus hallmark even through the distractions of the forties. "It seems as though our college has ever been a tiny democracy," reminisced Dean Alice King in 1912, "wherein the joy or sorrow of one was the joy or sorrow of all."

Until World War I the faculty entertained the students yearly at a gay "Pow Wow," presented hilarious skits for homecoming audiences, or reached into worn
billfolds for such projects as repayment of a loan made to a desperately poor student who died suddenly in 1924.

Slender means rarely justified such expenditures. “In Christian colleges we have too long traded upon the devotion of Christian men and women,” Gage told the synod in 1921, four years after the yearly minimum for a male professor with 10 years service had been raised from $1,500 to $2,000. Women received considerably less. Members of a proverbially underpaid profession, Coe professors continued to find their principal rewards in the joys of a full teaching schedule and sporadic research.

It was not uncommon for professors to teach 15 to 20 hours a week, and the handful of books and articles of note published by Coe professors attests to their lack of time for research and the minor emphasis placed on it by every president except Gage. Until 1941 many of the older professors did not have the extensive graduate work necessary to equip them fully with research techniques. Of the 296 men and women who served on the college staff from 1856 to 1930, 20 had doctorates. In 1931 the board ruled that no courses might be taught by a teacher without graduate training, but in 1940 there were only 18 of the 63 faculty members who had attained the Ph.D. degree, considerably short of the 40 percent President Gage considered a proper minimum.

Though Gage was not able to divert as much money as he could have desired to the support of further faculty study, such lack of independent research on the part of the professors quite possibly insured the students more personal attention and consequently better teaching than from a faculty concerned primarily with their own contributions to original scholarship.

Good teaching did receive primary emphasis and Coe’s teachers were unusually well qualified in terms of teaching experience. Gage reported in 1936 that with respect to faculty experience Coe ranked in the top 10 percent of the colleges and universities in the 20 states of the North Central area. “Furthermore the average term of service of teachers at Coe is 15 years,” Gage added proudly, remarking that Coe was in the top two percent in point of tenure.

Many a faculty member possessed only of the B.A. or the M.A. was a teaching veteran, outstanding in the classroom. Prime example was Professor Ethel Outland who after writing a brilliant master’s thesis for the University of Wisconsin became the pioneer woman teacher of college journalism and proceeded to scatter successful English scholars and journalists from San Francisco to Berlin.

“There is no classroom on this campus,” wrote a subsequently prominent public relations man, John Moninger, in 1929, “where such a scholarly atmosphere is apparent. Students are not allowed . . . to forget that they are here for learning, and Miss Outland has given many of them their initial thrill . . . in liberal knowledge.”

A counterpart in producing outstanding graduates was Prof. Ben Peterson, a Coe graduate of 1917 who held the Ph.D. in chemistry but devoted primary attention to teaching rather than to his own research. Peterson’s recommendations came to be honored enthusiastically by prominent graduate schools and research centers all over the country, and the list of his graduates who have contributed materially to scientific progress is impressive.

Peterson joined in building a division of study which typified Coe’s finest contributions to liberal learning. The science department was reinforced for the 41 years after 1902 by Dr. LeRoy D. Weld, probably the most outstanding scholar attracted to the Coe faculty and a brilliant physicist recognized nationally for original research and subsequent publications, including a pioneer glossary of physics terms. Gage called Weld the ideal faculty member, “intelligently Christian, a persistent personal worker and counsellor of students, and a scholar and teacher of recognized ability.”

Both Peterson and Weld followed a pattern early laid down for competent teachers by a pair of devout scientists, Stephen Stookey and Bert Heald Bailey. An objective geologist who would not tolerate careless thinking among his students, Stookey returned to his alma mater in 1891 as professor of science and remained to serve as dean of the faculty and acting president. Serving his college until his retirement in 1933, Stookey maintained a firm belief in the divine law and order of natural phenomena and attempted through his teaching to show the existence of God and the truth of the Bible. Bailey was a scholarly biologist who quoted the 104th psalm to students on early morning field trips and collected the material which enabled him to write a book on Iowa birds and to start the Coe museum which bears his name. It may have been his sweet personality that enabled him to avoid discord about evolution in a period when it was difficult for a conservative Christian to teach biology. Certainly his colleague Weld came out in 1914 with an assertion that evolution was an evidence of divine order, typifying the college scientists who maintained religious conviction without compromise to scholarly objectivity.

Though the difficult lectures of Weld and Prof. LeRoy M. Coffin of the mathematics department were avoided by students of uncertain talents, these brilliant men together with such other able scientists as Dr. Karl Stiles, Dr. Leonard.
Wilson, and Dr. Alfred Meyer established a science department of such excellence that its fame spread throughout the midwest.

Across campus the social science department under Dr. Charles T. Hickok was blossoming into a complementary asset to the college. Coming to Coe as a peppy little prep school principal in 1905, Hickok was soon graduated to the chairmanship of the college social science department, and in spite of numerous attractive offers from other schools, remained at Coe until his retirement in 1940. Stimulating teacher and witty friend to scores of fledgling social scientists, Hickok saw a new social science building christened Hickok hall in his honor 10 years after his retirement from active teaching.

Hickok had gathered around him such able teachers as Dr. C. Ward Macy, Dr. Alice B. Saltor, Prof. Lynn Garwood, Prof. Alice Page, Prof. John Henry, and Dr. Myron Koenig.

A graduate of Grinnell college, Macy came to Coe in 1921 for an influential stay of 27 years, was Hickok’s choice as chairman of the social studies division in 1933, and inspired many of the outstanding economists, bankers, and businessmen who comprised a large percentage of Coe’s outstanding graduates at the end of his first century. Dr. Saltor, brilliant Coe graduate who joined the faculty of her alma mater in 1929 to become one of its outstanding woman scholars, was a splendid teacher able to make even shorthand interesting and to endow sociology with fascinating significance.

Most controversial figure in the social sciences was the purposefully irritating Lynn Garwood who arrived in 1918. Garwood questioned previously sacred subjects to prod students into finding out why they believed what they did. In pursuing this course Garwood provoked intellectual activity to such an unaccustomed pitch that he earned the affectionate moniker, “campus mustard plaster,” from Dr. Gage.

Bringing early prominence to Coe as the second college in the country to offer anthropology was Prof. Frederick Starr who taught such classes in 1887. Prof. George Fracker pioneered in psychology at the turn of the century. The campus has known many other fine teachers in strong departments, but in a school where fine teaching was emphasized, these were among the people traditionally recognized by students and faculty as outstanding.

Something besides inspired teaching of theorem and principle characteristically stuck in alumni memories. “When they come back,” editorialized the Cosmos at homecoming in 1940, “you don’t hear complaints about that famous architectural pile, Williston hall, but rather questions on whether Professor Coffin still runs to class, Professor Perkins still throws chalk out the window, or Dr. Gage still takes off his glasses periodically during a chapel address.”

Such inquiries marked the affection as well as the respect with which old Kohawks remembered a remarkable group of dedicated men and women, the faculty of Coe.

CHAPTER V: CURRICULUM AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

The year 1901 found President McCormick briskly fending off attacks from those who would dilute the classical curriculum, advising students who wanted business training that Coe’s literary course would better prepare them for “life in general” and for the business course which they could “complete quickly later on.”

The college had already adopted the necessary defense that her traditional subject matter would ultimately prove more practical than courses downstairs vocational in the first place. “Feed your thinker and it will feed you,” exhorted college admissions pamphlets, quoting voluminous statistics to prove that the man who went to college would eventually make more money than the man who did not.

Caught in the crossfire of the classicists and the practical men, McCormick might well have envied Williston Jones, knowing in 1851 exactly what he would teach to prepare boys for the ministry, and why. Thirty years later the preparatory school Jones began was forced to become a college in order to flourish next to growing public schools, though the Coe academy the college maintained until 1909 prospered considerably more than did the college under Phelps and Marshall. Neither of these sincere divines displayed a precise idea of what courses the college should offer in addition to pre-theological training. Coe struggled feebly for life under Phelps and under Marshall nearly died.

In such straits the college desperately needed the support of Cedar Rapids, a practical community recently converted from a pioneer village where classical learning fell few trees. Residents who admired the classical subjects usually sent their children to eastern schools, and with difficulty Coe maintained a varying liberal curriculum adulterated by a normal course first offered in 1881, a civil engineering course tried unsuccessfully from 1892 to 1895, and a department of pedagogy established permanently in 1899. Until 1912, however, Coe’s chief contributions to vocational training came in the pre-professional curricula common to all liberal arts colleges.

Increasing community pressure helped sway Marquis to add a two-year teachers course and a home economics department in 1912, a journalism course in 1913, and a five-year liberal arts and engineering curriculum to be offered by Coe with the University of Iowa and Iowa State College beginning in 1914. That year a similar combined nursing and arts curriculum was instituted with St. Luke’s hospital in Cedar Rapids, and at the suggestion of the Cedar Rapids chamber of commerce a department of commerce and finance promptly appeared in 1919.

Gage erased few vocational courses from the curriculum and added a secretarial course in 1926. Believing that courses could be “cultural and useful at the same time,” he emphasized the liberal aspects of vocational courses such as home economics and required a majority of liberal courses for the vocational majors. Usually the student succeeded in attaining the Gage goal of balance between courses to cultivate “breadth of mind” and to prepare for “life’s work.” By the addition of practical courses for children of practical mid-westerners Coe was financially able to maintain its original purpose as a college of liberal arts.
Most popular of these liberal arts were the sciences and the social sciences, due partly to the increasing importance of these fields in American life. History had been a standby at the college since 1882; jurisprudence was taught as early as 1892, but political science was not offered as a course in itself until 1915. Sociology, scarcely recognized as a formal field in 1901, became tremendously popular after the arrival of Garwood in 1918; economics, offered by McCormick in 1902, did not appear permanently until 1917.

Considerably predating the offering of social science, natural science had been given by David Blakely in the Cedar Rapids Collegiate Institute in 1853. In 1893 the faculty offered chemistry, physics, biology, zoology, geology, comparative anatomy, astronomy, botany, and histology. These subjects were typical of scientific offerings through 1941.

In contrast to such consistency the language curriculum shifted its emphasis entirely in a hundred years from the Greek and Latin, drilled into Williston Jones’ prospective preachers, to the German, French, and Spanish which inherited the prominence of the classical languages. Robert Condit first offered French and German in 1876 or 1877, and the four languages jostled one another in the college curriculum of 1881. In spite of Trustee Soutter’s 1902 suggestion that Greek and Latin be elective for all curricula, the faculty replied firmly that “the times are not ready for such a movement.” They continued to require both Greek and Latin of the prospective bachelor of arts until 1915 when the Greek requirement was dropped. Latin followed Greek into oblivion thereafter; Hebrew had been stillborn in 1898, and the field was won by the modern languages.

In October of 1911 the trustees established a department of German, headed by Prof. Wilfred Perkins who also doubled for many years as student secretary in charge of enrolling new students. A department of French was established in
the same year and headed by D.: Anna Heyberger. A laureate of the Institute of France, a Ph.D. from the University of Paris, and one of the more exotic scholars to join the Iowa college faculty, this talented linguist also offered Bohemian, Russian, and Italian. Voted acceptable for the B.A. and the B.S. degree in 1914 was Spanish, last of the presently popular triumvirate to enter the curriculum.

One of the natural cornerstones of the arts curriculum was English literature, offered with grammar, rhetoric and orthography in 1881. With its requirements sliced to six hours for graduation by 1918, the English department still retained title as the largest on campus. Devoted to the traditional patterns of classical study, the department suddenly found itself under attack in 1924 from William L. Shirer, crusading editor of the *Cosmos* who condemned the "victorian swamp of college literature" and called for Lewis, Dreiser, Wharton, and Mencken. Such agitation eventually leavened Shakespeare and Milton with liberal doses of modern writing that would have scandalized Miss King and Miss Vaulx in 1901.

An exciting development at the turn of the century was the inauguration of psychology, taught with logic and philosophy under the redundant title, "Mental Philosophy," by the energetic and capable George Cutler Fracker. Campus interest was stimulated to such a point that a 1903 *Cosmos* reporter predicted "very few will graduate hereafter without the full course given at Coe." The trustees were forced to curb this blooming interest in 1906 by a recommended cut in funds, Fracker subsequently departed, and his department was taken over by Walter S. Newell in 1909. A decade later philosophy found a particular champion in President Gage. He told his board that "without philosophy a liberal arts curriculum is a misnomer," and was particularly proud of bringing the brilliant James B. Hodgson to Coe in 1935.

**Academic Standards**

The faculty of 1881 felt that the easiest way to promote college scholarship was to weed out prospective freshmen of doubtful training. Entrance examinations in English, mathematics, Latin, and Greek were inaugurated in 1881, and by 1885 requirements included "the ability to read intelligently any ordinary English with distinct articulation and natural expression." These examinations disappeared by 1910 with the raising of high school standards, though the hapless student without 15 credits of admissible high school work was admitted "on condition" that he do acceptable work in college. In 1913 the trustees reported proudly that of 131 freshmen, 86 had entered "without any condition whatsoever" but the catalogue continued to mention conditions as late as 1932.

The faculty voted expansively in 1924 to accept all graduates of accredited four year high schools, and the elimination of scholastic undesirables was left pretty largely to the "free-for-all" of the freshman year regretfully described by President Gage. Rigid entrance requirements were established in 1941 with a trustee recommendation that applicants in the lowest quarter of their high school classes be refused. If a student was rarely turned down because of poor scholarship, never was he officially barred by race, color, sex, or creed; the campus became particularly distinguished as an oasis of democratic understanding and Christian tolerance rare in the outside world.

Life was made unhappier for poor students of any color during the administration of Marquis. First president to emphasize scholarship, he tightened standards considerably and criticized the men for poor scholarship in 1915. He attributed their low grades to too much outside work, social activity, smoking, and going to the theater. The grade point system introduced in 1924 only made it more obvious that men were still outranked by women in spite of the number of coeds who had begun to smoke.

Until 1916 there was no record of a student dismissal for poor grades, but a faculty decision to drop any student who did not pass 50 percent of his work resulted in the dismissal of four to 15 students per semester for the next 10 years. With enrollment at a record high of 964 in 1924-1925, the faculty further tightened its scholastic standards to sacrifice 94 more paying students in June of 1926. This sacrifice of income to scholarship prevented the college enrollment from becoming so large again, but Coe was a better institution academically as a result.

Untroubled by grade requirements, candidates for graduation before 1921 had only to earn the number of credit hours required, including those in specified subjects. In an academic innovation, the 1920-1921 catalogue stated that at least 93 credits of a required 124 must carry a grade of 70, which was C, or better. Three years later the grade requirement was a flat C average, and in 1924 students...
were required to complete 55 credits of the 124 in advanced courses. It was not difficult to enter Coe from 1851 to 1941, and after 1881 not difficult for the moderately conscientious student to graduate.

Coe proudly presented its first bachelor of arts degree to Belle Stewart in 1884. The bachelor of science was awarded for the first time by Coe that same day to Stephen Stookey, and the B.S. remained the most persistent competitor of the arts degree except for a period of eclipse after 1927. A curriculum in constant flux for some 25 years after 1881 presented students with a colorful array of degrees from which they might also choose at various times the bachelor of literature, civil engineering, didactics, philosophy, or music.

Taking a long look at degree requirements in 1917, the faculty drastically reduced the number of required subjects, and voted to increase electives. In 1927 the successful candidate for a B.A. presented eight hours of Bible, six each of English, foreign language, history, social science, and mathematics or "material science," plus six in an additional laboratory science and four in physical education. Equipped with a B.A. or a B.S., a Coe graduate also might earn a master's degree in mathematics and physics, biological sciences, chemistry, psychology and philosophy, or Latin. President Gage felt that Coe was not the type of college to offer graduate work, and the last master's degree was awarded in 1928.

Although the faculty never sanctioned a course or a degree that was not legitimate, they early displayed a blithe disregard for the time involved in earning such degrees. They granted a two-weeks vacation on petition of the seniors in 1899, and in delightful recognition of the season, shortened afternoon classes in the spring of 1903 to dismiss school at 3:30. Such leniency was frowned on by Marquis, and in 1916 the faculty dutifully adopted the 36-week academic year to conform with requirements of the North Central Association of Colleges.

In addition to accrediting this organization in 1907, Coe also was accredited by the Association of American Colleges and ranked on the approved list of the Association of American Universities and the American Association of University Women. Phi Kappa Phi, national scholastic fraternity, chartered its Coe chapter in 1925, preceding the arrival of Phi Beta Kappa by some 24 years. Thus while maintaining moderate admissions and graduation requirements, Coe has consistently enjoyed a reputation as one of the better independent colleges in the state.

CHAPTER VI: THE FINE ARTS

President McCormick often remarked wistfully that he seldom heard any singing on campus, reported the Cosmos of November, 1901, in bewailing the "lack of that general musical spirit which generally prevails among student bodies."

Coe had no songs of her own. That anonymous perennial, "I Want To Go Back to Coe Again" would not appear for several more years, and students of 1903 could only sing gospel hymns in Williston parlors after Sabbath tea, and "Working on the Levee" during the week. Students might elect vocal and instrumental training from Prof. E. M. C. Ezerman of the Cedar Rapids College of Music "associated" with Coe. Bands, orchestras, and glee clubs led ephemeral lives, however, springing up every fall and quietly perishing before Christmas. Only the twangs of the Mandolin club echoed persistently over the campus.

Though Coe had offered modest musical instruction as early as 1868, a formal department of music was not organized until 1910 under Earl G. Killeen. Extravagant, ambitious, and immediately successful, Killeen boosted department enrollment from 12 to 89 in its first year, and in 1911 launched his most spectacular contribution to college and community life, the May festival. Featuring first Walter Damrosch and the New York symphony, early festivals attracted enormous audiences with such prominent soloists as Amelita Galli-Curci, and were held each May until 1927.

All eyes focus on Professor Paul Ray as he directs the a cappella choir
Famed Conductor Walter Damrosch drew a huge crowd to the first Coe May festival in 1911

The chapel was similarly packed for monthly vesper services by Risser Patty, successor to Killeen and more intensely interested in campus music than the energetic promoter of festivals. When Patty resigned in 1924 he composed the Coe Loyalty song and dedicated that college anthem to Coe’s faculty and students.

Choral groups sprang to immediate life under Killeen, and glee clubs continued to embark on extensive tours throughout the midwest under Patty’s direction. It remained, however, for Prof. Paul S. Bay, who succeeded Patty in 1926, to organize a 45-voice a cappella choir in 1934. His choir rose to heights of musicianship that evoked favorable comment from critics as distinguished as Olin Downes of the New York Times. A particularly successful season in 1939 impelled the June Courier to comment on the “profound impression upon all lovers of good music” that “made a name for the college comparable to that achieved by the Coe Military band.”

Grandfather of all college musical organizations, the band had been first organized in 1900. That year the unfortunate number of musicians who doubled in brass and backfield put an end to horn tooting until the conclusion of the football season. The band did not rise to real prominence until the campus appearance of Prof. Stanley Vesely. An aggressive and capable musician appointed “temporary director” of the band in 1926 by Cage, Vesely remained to make his military band nationally famous as the only college band invited to play for four presidential inaugurals in Washington, D.C. His excellent concert bands always warmed up with extensive tours for the annual Palm Sunday engagement at Chicago’s Orchestra hall.

With additional stimulus provided by the orchestra, madrigal group, a devoted faculty, and college-sponsored concerts by such artists as Paderewski, Kreisler and Schumann-Heink, students who loved music could find congenial haven at Coe.

Though offered intermittently as an extra-tuition course from 1868, art was not formally incorporated as a college department until after the arrival of Marvin Cone in 1919. A young artist of promise, Cone had joined the faculty to teach French but almost immediately proposed an art department to the faculty. The trustees concurred with a $150 appropriation, and authorized Cone to give instruction in art.

Cone’s increasing reputation as a painter and his own engaging personality brought authority as well as charm to his teaching of drawing, painting, and art appreciation. By 1941 a session in Cone’s classroom or his airy studio on Main’s third floor was a “must” urged by one student generation on another.

Back to Wil-lis-ton Hall once more. The Chapel and the old book store
CHAPTER VII: RELIGION

An educator who could preach sermons or teach economics with aplomb, the versatile McCormick had relinquished his classes in Bible by the fall of 1901. A new Bible professor, the Rev. William McClung Evans, had been hired in 1900 and McCormick freed to raise money for, among other things, endowment of a chair in Bible.

The new arrangement implied an even greater emphasis on religion in a college always devoted to Christian precept and practice. There were daily prayer meetings before the annual Day of Prayer, prayers in Williston each evening, and prayers to open faculty meetings, classes, and board meetings. Students were required to attend daily chapel services during the week as well as the “church of their choice,” on Sundays. The Courier of November, 1902, could report with pride that 77 percent of Coe’s men and 73 percent of her women students were “members of evangelical churches,” mostly Presbyterian.

Such a religious spirit apparently stemmed more from the tenor of the times and the nature of faculty and administration than from the legal connection maintained between the college and the Presbyterian church until 1907. Every president from 1881 to 1941 except Smith was a Presbyterian minister. The college had been established under the auspices of the Iowa synod of the Presbyterian church, made annual report to the synod, and submitted the names of all trustees for synod approval. The synod in return passed resolutions expressing pleasure with the progress of the college, attended Coe chapel services in a body, but never was able to give the college any money.

In 1907, Coe was interested in the teacher pension plan offered by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to certain colleges of high standards independent of denominational controls. The synod recognized that Coe “will be greatly strengthened by availing itself of the privileges of this foundation,” and gave up its right to approve trustees so that Coe teachers might have Carnegie pensions. Even after legal connections had been thus severed, the trustees maintained an “affiliation” with the Presbyterian church, continued their reports to the synod voluntarily, shared Marquis with the church when he was elected moderator of the Presbyterian general assembly, and listened sympathetically when Gage advocated emphasis on “our close and intimate relations with the Presbyterian church.”

The religious emphasis of Ike Bryant, Stookey, Bailey, and Weld had probably more direct influence in keeping Coe Christian than formal trustee action. For many years the faculty were all, as a matter of course, professing Christians, although their approach to religion differed. Bryant was a sincere fundamentalist who supported William Jennings Bryan’s attitude toward evolution. Weld, on the contrary, asserted eight years before the Scopes trial that any conflict between religion and science was due either to dogmatism among the specialists or to ignorance of both religion and science. The Bible, he asserted, gives only the results of creation, not the detailed process. Science is the study of God’s methods and the laws of science are but the habits of God.

The first Sinclair Memorial Chapel, before its destruction by fire in 1947
Such faculty interest in religion was reflected in the four years of Bible study required of every student beginning in 1881. The freshmen plugged away at Old Testament history, while sophomores invaded the New. Juniors progressed to "Evidences of Christianity" and seniors wrestled with a history of philosophy and "Science and Religion." Presiding over the Bible department from its beginning in 1903 to 1923 was Dr. Evans, a man whose Christian sweetness influenced students even more than the words he spoke in the classroom. His successor in 1923 was Dr. Harry Kremers, who had helped to complete a campaign for $100,000 in 1918 to endow the chair of Bible. Thus financially entrenched, Bible continued as an important prerequisite to a Coe degree. By 1939 when Cosmos Editor Carl Koehn could accuse college men and women of being so "cocky as to deny the existence of an omnipotent force in the universe," Coe students were still required to take four hours credit in Bible and go to chapel three times a week.

Held originally on Main's top floor, chapel services varied from the inspirational to the boring even after they were transplanted to the new chapel building in 1911. The difficulties in mustering regular programs of consuming interest prompted Cosmos Editor William Shrier to complain in 1925 that "aside from the rare appearance of an outside speaker, the musical numbers, and the occasional talks of the president, there is nothing to mar your peaceful slumbers or awaken in you any signs of intellectual activity. Coe's average chapel service consists in the reading of the scriptures usually without comment, the singing of a hymn, and the reading of a list of announcements."

Further attention devoted to the problem prompted another editor, Arie Poldervat, to comment favorably in 1931 that the chapel programs "now offered real intellectual stimulus ... a good chapel program means ... a better student morale."

It was in this creation of student morale that the chapel always played a primary role. Gathering students and faculty together in a way impossible at any other time, the chapel not only stimulated religious thought but gave the school a spirit and unity never achieved on campus or in the classroom. Students collected on the chapel steps to distribute mail, compare assignments, and begin romance. "Verily, the college skies would fall and darkness would cover the campus," intoned the 1922 Cosmos, "were it not for the minute before chapel."

Chapels headed a host of religious observances encouraged by the college including prayer meetings held weekly until 1910, vespers services prominent during the Gage and Marquis administrations, ministers' conferences, religious emphasis weeks, days of prayer, world fellowship weeks, and a 1909 Billy Sunday revival in Cedar Rapids where, it was reported, "sin had been hit hard."

Many more services were sponsored by student religious organizations like the Young Men's Christian association and the Young Women's Christian association. Organized in 1883, the Y.W.C.A. inaugurated many religious and charitable projects to build its reputation as one of the strongest organizations on campus. Two years older than its related organization, the Y.M.C.A. had a more difficult history and after reaching its peak from 1908 to 1926 in sending "Gospel Teams" to preach in surrounding towns, descended to temporary inactivity in 1933.

Religious feeling was subject on campus to the same pressures that moulded educational philosophy. A strong admixture of utilitarianism was evident even to the case of a day of prayer, accounted "helpful because it was in every way practical," by a coed reporter for the Cosmos. President Gage assured the trustees in 1922 that "study of the Bible by a devout Christian student will prepare for life. The Bible is the world's best treatise on 'Pushing to the Front,' or on 'Getting on in the World'."

In a college where love of athletics was second only to concern for Christianity, the two values were often blended and the "strong man to run a race" became an ideal sermon illustration. An earnest young lady could tell a Y.W.C.A. meeting in 1920 that "health is not a luxury or a private convenience but a religious requisite," and then ask, "Do we, as college women, play every game in such a way as to give Christ, the umpire, the pre-eminence?"

However it was worded, a sincere religious conviction characterized the typical Coe student into the thirties, and many young men and women were prompted to devote their lives to parish or mission field. Even those who graduated gratefully from required chapels could remember with satisfaction a campus life distinguished by emphasis on moral principle and religious practice.
CHAPTER VIII: STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Dr. McCormick may not have known it that brisk October evening of 1901 but the first fraternity at Coe was organizing secretly right under the noses of his disapproving faculty.

The sub-rosa appearance of Delta Phi Epsilon fraternity that year irked the powerful literary societies, upset the faculty, and sparked a campus controversy which flared for a decade. The literary societies had reigned supreme as custodians of culture and the social graces since the founding of Alpha Nu society for men in 1882. The first society was joined by Olio for men, and Sinclair and Carleton societies for women; the four endowed their separate rooms in Marshall hall with elaborate draperies, fancy cushions and “Cozy Nooks.” Many a burst of impassioned oratory rang from the staid halls of Marshall after 1900; debates, oratorical contests, and public programs were the pride of the societies. Inter-society debates provoked campus wide interest, and on several occasions, fisticuffs; there was no doubt that society spirit dominated campus politics, dictated friendships, and occasionally threatened to spoil what a 1903 Cosmos editor called “the whole unity and oneness of college life.” For the most part, however, the little society kingdoms were peaceable, members paired happily off on picnics, sleigh rides and parties, and for the enormous banquets and society “graduation exercises” which were long anticipated climaxes to the social year.

The invasion of this unsophisticated Eden by the Greek letter societies met with righteous indignation from the societies and mixed feelings on the part of the faculty. Some of the professors firmly opposed the new secret fraternities on religious grounds; others felt that chartering by national groups would raise standards of the local organizations and increase college prestige. By a tense vote the 1905 faculty decided that sororities and fraternities would not be recognized at Coe.

A resolute little band of girls meeting secretly in the women’s toilet rooms of the unfinished chapel in 1911 seemed oblivious to this faculty pronouncement. Or at least they laid their groundwork well to defy it, confidentially enlisting the support of influential faculty members for the organization which announced itself to an astonished campus as the new Alpha Gamma chapter of Kappa Delta national sorority. Following suit was Tri Sigma which affiliated with national Delta Delta Delta sorority in 1912 after 10 years of secret existence as a local. Bowing to the tide of the times, the faculty recognized the pair but voted cautiously “not to mention the names of the two national sororities in the 1913 catalogue.”

By 1920 four more chapters of national sororities had been chartered: Chi Omega, Alpha Gamma Delta, Alpha Xi Delta and Beta Phi Alpha. All but the last are now active on campus.

In contrast to the measured growth of sororities, fraternities mushroomed and died at Coe from the teens to the thirties. Not until 1933 was the permanent fraternity pattern set, and the 1934 catalogue could list charters of two national groups, Tau Kappa Epsilon and Alpha Delta Alpha, and two locals, Delta Phi Epsilon and Chi Beta Phi.

The societies tottered along for years, stripped of their social prowess by the Greeks, and of their exclusiveness by a 1913 faculty ruling which required them to pledge any student who wished to join. Only Coedan literary society survived very far into the forties.

After World War I the Greeks dominated politics and social life as well, endowing their members with self-proclaimed prestige and pushing them into campus office. The most ardent campaigning was devoted to electing a student council president wearing the proper pin, and the independent rarely toppled the fraternity and sorority coalitions to achieve this office. Founded in 1911, Coe’s student council was accorded a measure of authority not always relinquished by faculties of sister colleges. The council pushed a feeble honor system, but years of judicial committees, painful confessionals, and authorized tele-bearing did not implant the honor system firmly in campus soil. By 1925 the professors were all proctoring again.

The recurring failures of the honor system were only one stimulant for wrathful outbursts from a whole series of Cosmos editors. First published in 1890 as a monthly magazine, the fledgling publication displayed two columns, “Local,” and “Personal,” and if the news was stale it imparted an intimate family air to the periodical. “Mrs. Bryant...visited her son George. George has been happy ever since.” The editorials, however, were not curbed by campus boundaries. One young journalist in 1896 urged Christendom to stop the Turks, advised freshmen to join activities, and commiserated with the Spanish who were dying of the fever in Cuba, all in one issue. The editor of the Cosmos for 1897-1898 could be as...
passionate about cheating in examinations as about capital punishment. He was also vehement about the enthronement of reason.

Some of his successors were indignant about more delicate issues. Perhaps the most outspoken of all Cosmos editors was the discerning John Shrirer who presided in 1926-1927 over the paper's tumultuous fortunes, 14 years after it became a weekly. He deplored a "lack of intellectuality at Coe," and wondered audibly why "so few (speakers) of unconventional social or esthetic philosophies are ever brought to Coe?" His editorials were biting, his judgments penetrating, and at the end of his year's term he was not invited to serve again.

In his last editorial he confided: "we are in no position to convey to the students any idea of the pressure exerted on us in the past few weeks." Even the unusual pressure brought to bear on the younger Shrirer did not extend to censoring material he printed before it was published. Technically faculty censorship of the Cosmos and of plays always existed, but the privilege was exercised in varying degrees. The first issues of the Cosmos were regularly submitted to faculty censors, but by 1909 Professor Bryant assured the editors that only "something scandalous" would invoke censorship. In 1921 the faculty was incensed about repeated advertisements for Sunday movies which appeared in the paper, and temporarily suspended the editor and business manager. Censorship tapered gradually after this contretemps, and by 1935 Editor Don MacKay could write "no interference in policy or choice of staff is made by the Cosmos board of control or the faculty. Not one bit of copy is sent to the printers under compulsion or after censorship of any kind." Due primarily to the high standards of the paper's adviser, Professor Outland, the paper achieved an excellence that was rewarded on several occasions by "All-American" ratings in national contests.

Other college publications of note included the yearbook Acorn first published in 1902 under the euphonious title, Zis Boom Gee; and the Caravan, a literary magazine begun in 1927.

Speech activities have always held peculiar interest to Coe Students, and during the eighties and nineties oratorical battlegrounds were much more important than playing fields. The champion orator was more likely to be the girls' favorite than the football hero. Prodded by his literary society, the Demosthenes of 1901 could enter the Home oratorical contest, the society debates, the Bever oratorical contest, inter-collegiate debates and finally, the State oratorical contest (which he never won.) Formal speech instruction was offered by Prof. Laura Pearle Stewart beginning in 1902. DeWayne Silliman came to build a strong debate team in 1923, and the winning tradition was continued by Prof. J. Dale Welsh who came in 1937. Professor Welsh installed a radio workshop and inaugurated a remedial speech clinic for Cedar Rapids children. His speakers earned recurring laurels in district and national contests, and in 1941 the speech department was one of the strongest and most successful in the college.

Student speakers through the years might pattern themselves to the variety of visitors who spoke, declaimed, or hurangued from the chapel rostrum including William Jennings Bryan, Clarence Darrow, William Howard Taft, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Alfred Noyes, or Norman Thomas. (Miss Millay proved more interesting to the 1924 Cosmos for "flaunting bobbed hair," than for "reading fantastic verse.")

Until the chapel was built in 1911 there was no theater for the popular dramatic skits, stunts and plays. College productions were staged in the public high
CHAPTER IX: PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ATHLETICS

"Never have the prospects for athletics been so bright as they are this year at Coe," exulted the Cosmos editor in October, 1901. "The new material is unusually good considering the fact that unlike some of our neighbors we have not sought high and low for star athletes."

That editorial set the keynote for the next 50 years in a college that dearly loved competitive sport, but struggled to keep athletics free from commercialism in the face of the increasing pressure to win which came from alumni, students, and local businessmen.

The faculty ruled firmly in 1898 that a Mr. Challed could not play football at Coe because he was not a regularly enrolled student, this in spite of the rarity of eligibility rules in that era of untrammeled athletic prowess. In May of 1903 the faculty required a B average of every student competing in inter-collegiate contests, and restated its official policy of control over athletics, "not only as to scholarship and morals, but also as to extent of schedules, methods of securing athletes, and all other essential matters."

The year 1905 saw the forward pass legalized and a purity code embraced by the Iowa conference with Coe enthusiastically welcoming both. In May of that year the Cosmos editor could note scornfully that "a few enterprising youths ... write for prospects of financial assistance in return for rendering the football team valiant assistance. Coe doesn't pay students for athletic service." And the Courier put the quietus on any gambling or professionalism in a proud assertion that Coe students "have neither the means nor disposition to engage, and idly watch and bet upon, a set of players, essentially professional, albeit registered as students, and tacitly incited to win games by cunning brutalities."

When the Iowa conference collapsed, the Coe faculty supported the founding of the new Midwest College conference in 1922, instructing its representative that under no circumstances would it approve a conference "which does not embody in its eligibility rules faculty control of athletics, and satisfactory residence and scholarship rules of a minimum of one full semester of work."

The faculty contributed George Bryant as the first president and subsequent commissioner of the new conference for not only was Bryant known as the "Father of Athletics" at Coe, but he was also influential in maintaining the faculty's grip on the athletic program. An enthusiastic athlete and an outstanding track man before his graduation from Coe in 1894, Bryant returned to his native heath in 1899 as professor of Latin and director of athletics. He found, upon his return, that attempts to support a football team had been pitiable, and that there were no teams in baseball, basketball, track or tennis. Ten years later the Courier editor could claim that "all these teams not only existed, but were among the top in the state."

Fondly remembered as the very embodiment of Coe by hundreds of college alumni, Bryant built a football team and a track team, supervised the building of
new tennis courts, gave free lectures on football, badgered the trustees for money, and sparked interest in all competitive sports.

Much as he wanted to win, however, the Reverend Mr. Bryant also believed in the “clean playing” of the “truly Christian athlete” and he did not condone those faculty members who would “permit desires for a winning team to place their principles in the background.”

“Intensely religious men make the very best kind of football players,” Bryant remarked in 1903, “and atheists a rather indifferent lot. Let football then be made a religious game, and let our college men make their religion a football game.”

Football certainly became a religion at Coe, but perhaps not in the precise way Bryant meant at the moment. It had begun inauspiciously enough in 1891, eliciting no great support from students or administration. By 1895 President Marshall could report to the synod with admirably restrained enthusiasm that “we are not without athletics. The college teams practice, they challenge, they contest, they are beaten and they beat. But defeat inspires to closer practice, and keeps our athletes humble.”

In spite of complete collapse of the sport in 1896 when parental objections to “the most barbarous of all games” forced disbanding of the team, humble pie was not a large item in the athletic diet by 1901. In that year the football team enjoyed a fairly successful season although one game with the Wapello Indians was called on account of roughness. “The Wapello players,” chronicled a Cosmos sportswriter in pained surprise, “were not gentlemen in the true sense of the word.”

The on-side kick furnished many of the thrills later usurped by the forward pass and all 10 men were wont to get behind the runner, pushing and dragging him as many yards as possible after he had been tackled. Bryant had pioneered in developing an open style of play featuring his beloved double-tandem, and produced criss-cross plays, double passes, and long end runs.

Bryant’s teams achieved creditable successes but the crowning triumphs were reserved for the reign of the “Old Fox,” Moray Eby. Arriving on campus in 1914, Coach Eby soon brought renown to the college with his famous point-a-minute team. This team produced 294 points in 282 minutes, including a score of 115-0 against Highland Park which contributed substantially to the total. Called “one of the greatest coaches in the west” by Notre Dame’s Knute Rockne, Eby had chalked up an .800 average for his teams by 1923. Ten years later the Cosmos editors hailed the fifth Midwest conference championship achieved by the Kohawks since the organization of the league. It was in those years that Eby coached his powerful eleven to athletic immortality in what fond alumni recalled as the golden age of football at Coe.

One Cosmos writer was certain that students would remember football longer than anything else about the college, but legions of Kohawks sprinted and dashed to produce even more championships on the track than on the football field. Coached for nearly 40 years by the indomitable Bryant, track teams produced two graduates who were Olympic contenders in 1904, but Coe itself was not represented in the world-famous games until 1912 when the legendary Clement Wilson won the and gold to Stockholm. Coe track teams consistently won Iowa conference laurels, and produced many championships after the organization of the Midwest conference.

Popular with the students, basketball did not provide the spectacular successes of football and track at Coe. Born inauspiciously in 1900 in the Y.M.C.A. gymnasium where Coe players were limited to 10 minutes of practice three times a week,
the basketball team won the Iowa conference title in 1912 and 1916, but did not share a Midwest conference crown until 1941.

Baseball was the first sport to come to Coe and various haphazardly organized teams found opponents in the days of the Coe Collegiate Institute. Princetonians Calvin Greene and John Ely of the trustees were responsible for the appearance of a field in the wilderness behind Williston. An oak forest was laid low, roots grubbed out, sand dunes leveled, and a live spring filled in. The college officially entered the inter-collegiate baseball arena in 1889, but until 1901 uncertain batters still had to cope with a tree on the right foul line. Although Coe won the Iowa conference baseball crown in 1915 and sponsored teams throughout the twenties, the depression took this unprofitable pioneer sport into eclipse at Coe until 1936. Meanwhile, tennis, golf, and rifle teams made intermittent appearance over the years to strengthen Coe's reputation as a sports conscious campus.

Because of this affection for physical combat, many of Coe's strongest traditions grew up about her playing fields. The victory bell, a gift of the class of 1913, rang out countless athletic triumphs behind the old gymnasium. The class of 1913 also provided the newest of the alumni who returned for the first "Home Coming day" in the autumn of 1914 when Grinnell was soundly defeated 85-0.

Dearest tradition to generations of victory-thirsty students was the rivalry with Cornell college in Mt. Vernon. The competition began informally enough on a fateful November day in 1891 when a conglomerate batch of students was corralled by a future congressman, James W. Good. He persuaded Bryant, Fred Murray and several other stalwarts, most of whom had never played football before, to buy round trip tickets to Mt. Vernon where Cornell was waiting. On the trip over in a freight train these innocents donned their unpadded canvas, fluffed their heavy hair in lieu of helmets, hastily looked at a rule book, and decided on their positions for their first football game.

The field was a cattle pasture with a creek running along the 50 yard line. Bryant recalled later, and the cows had to be driven off before the game could start. The Coe eleven braced themselves for a Cornell plunge through the line, but while the Methodists gaily ran up a score of 82-0, Coe learned the hard way that there was such a thing as an end run. After this unsettling experience, the players reread the rule book and set a time for their first practice.

That defeat was avenged by the turn of the century, but the rivalry persisted. In 1903 the faculty of Cornell felt compelled to apologize for the behavior of Cornell students at a Coe-Cornell game in Mt. Vernon. The lily-white partisans from Coe primly accepted this apology, but did not maintain their pristine innocence long. The next half century saw red paint splotched on Cornell's campus, Cornell's purple atop the Crimson flagpole, and supporters from both sides seized, bedecked in rival colors, and barbecued the scalp any unwary invaders from the opposing school. Such mischief as this promoted more college "loyalty" than was ever engendered by Risser Patty and his solemn song.

The fiery little Kohawk made his appearance in 1922 after generations of Coe backs grew weary of being called Rabbits or Cereal Eaters and sportswriters got equally tired of pecking out "Crimson aggregation." Professor C. W. Perkins suggested the intriguing label to the Cosmos, combining the Indian words "ko" meaning "also like," and "Mohawk" as suggestive of the Indians in the eastern part of the country. The moniker stuck, the little bird appeared to symbolize Coe's fighting spirit, and the Kohawks presided over: sports headlines for the remainder of Coe's first century.
Physical Education

Coe’s great fortune in being located in Cedar Rapids was always stressed by trustees who considered the city a “healthful and delightful location.” A small pamphlet of 1880 assured worried mothers that “young ladies who have come to us in feeble health have had their constitutions built up and their health wonderfully improved.” This same pride in the good health of students was marked all during Coe’s history, and a 1904 Cosmos editorial asserted that “the general health six weeks to two months after the opening day is always better than at the beginning of the season. The aggregate increase of avoirdupois in the student body would aggregate several tons.”

A series of able instructors in physical education for women was begun with Charlotte Poynor who arrived in 1904 to preside over a formidable course in Swedish gymnastics with the young ladies attired in bloomers and blouses of heavy black serge. Playing hockey outdoors was a sore trial for the times; for hockey skirts were six inches from the ground and everyone’s ankles were exposed to the public gaze.

Miss Mable Lee and her successor, Miss Ethel Ryan, kept the physical education program for women strong, untainted by commercialism, and strictly intramural. In 1911 Miss Lee initiated two of Coe’s most delightful traditions in the Colonial ball and the May fete, and after 1925 Miss Ryan presided over the new Alumni Fieldhouse for women.

Begun by Bryant, the men’s physical education program was designed to prepare students “to engage in their life work without the hindrance of a diseased or under-developed body.” Unfortunately, major attention was given to developing the undiseased bodies of candidates for inter-collegiate sport, and the round-shouldered boys bounced a basketball about the gym without much attention in later years.

Through 1941 physical education was required, but football, basketball, and track were beloved; down the years Coe students traditionally equated the joys of a sound body with the more sedentary pleasures of an informed mind.
CHAPTER X: COLLEGE AND COUNTRY

President McKinley's war in Cuba did little to excite President McCormick's campus in Iowa. The Cosmos stopped feeling sorry for the feverish Spaniards and did little to revive its spirit, but by 1901 the Spanish-American war was forgotten in the excitement of rescuing the music department from insolvency and staging the first inter-collegiate debate.

The days of this blissful insularity, however, were numbered. The prophet of militarism at Coe, H. E. Moffett, had asserted from the eminence of the Cosmos editorship in 1894 that "military drill makes the most of a man. It teaches him to walk erect. It overcomes the tendency of his shoulders to stoop. It teaches him to act properly. Should not Coe strive to secure a U. S. Military officer?" This voice in the wilderness was accorded the usual rewards of a hometown prophet, and nobody acted on his recommendations until 25 years and two wars later.

In 1903 the ardent patriot Hubbard Henry Maynard arrived at the Coe campus as field secretary and fund raiser. An enthusiastic member of the G.A.R. and vice-president of the National Bureau for the Advancement of Patriotism, Maynard set about to promote his pet ideas. By 1911 he was working vigorously to endow a lectureship for the teaching of patriotism especially as "experienced by the deeds of the Civil war." This noble objective opened the purse strings of the local G.A.R. post, and by 1916 Maynard had raised enough money to establish a new department of history and patriotism as a part of the regular academic curriculum.

Maynard thought his department was the only one of its kind, and its curriculum certainly appears to have been unique. The department embraced not only American history and government but also a course in "The Evolution of Patriotism" in its "psychological, sociological, philosophical, ethical and religious aspects." There was, in addition, a course called "Development of the International Mind" in which Dr. Marquis proposed to teach the development of patriotism from "tribal warfare through the period of nationalism to the federation of nations."

International idealism was characteristic of some of Coe's outstanding leaders. The catalogues of 1917 and 1918 announced the inauguration of "The Northfield Plan" to interest students in a study of world problems during and following the war. In 1834 at a time of rampant isolationism, Professor Charles T. Hickok asserted to a Grinnell college conference that the United States could no longer be regarded as an isolated unit of the world, and that an international economy would be more enduring and productive of national happiness and prosperity.

Seventeen years earlier, President Marquis had expressed his responsibility to the international scene by sending his students to a war he assured them was to be waged between autocracy and democracy. "I'm glad that America has this opportunity to go into war to fight for these ideals," he said. "I want to lay before every young man and every woman to let nothing stand in the way of giving his fullest measure to his country."

The student body had already been inflamed by a more militaristic patriotism. An ardent civilian soldier, Judge C. B. Robbins of Cedar Rapids, met with all the men in the college one February day in 1916 and at the close of his fiery speech

Men of Battery E in 1917 wound up on the Mexican border

20 Coe students signed up for Captain Robbins' Company D of the National Guard.

"It was something like a volunteer Fire Brigade," reminisced one of its members, Professor Ben Peterson, in later years, "a bit of pretense, a few implements, uniforms and the opportunity to play a different role once a week. Leggings were the lace-up variety, the pants were peg-topped, and the blouses were designed for a 20-inch chest and a 22-inch neck. Hats were available in two sizes, five and five-eighths, and seven and seven-eighths.

"Bayonet practice always took the place of combat. It was about as dangerous. With what was supposed to be sort of rebel yells, swinging and jabbing with those instruments would always result in a few of them flying off the end of the rifle. It was only by the merest chance that a soldier wasn't pinned. The Charge was the most fun. It was the approved Skirmish Type. This consisted in sliding across the floor, sliding to a stop either top cr the reverse, and starting to shoot. Captain Robbins would coldly ask if we knew which end was facing the enemy. About all he could do was to assume that we were completely surrounded."

In four months this civilian army was surprised to find itself on the Mexican border. The boys had been back on campus just two months after this Mexican interlude when the United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, and the men of Company D were again called to the colors.

Most of the men on campus followed them. The college mobilized hastily, instituting compulsory military drill, adopting war orphans, sewing for the Red Cross, and contributing thousands of dollars to war and relief funds. Professors Gist and Kitchen went to war as did Trustees Robbins, Murray and Broekema. German class enrollment dropped to 11, and the membership of the athletic team
to one. By the spring of 1918 there were 227 Coe men in service and only a dozen lone males left on campus. Robbins, now a major, had done his work well.

In the fall 180 men of the Student Army Training corps swarmed over the campus, detailed by the U.S. Army to Coe for 11 hours of military training a week and 14 hours of academic instruction. The simultaneous advent of the S.A.T.C. and the flu epidemic completely upset the campus. Smoking, dancing, swearing, and eager for a crack at the Kaiser, men of the S.A.T.C. were probably the only inhabitants of the college who could restrain their ecstasy over the Armistice in 1918. Around the campus marched “Dad” Meyers, Coe’s head janitor, beating his snare drum in the cold dawn of November 11 and ringing the victory bell to awaken the students. The campus was soon filled with jubilant men and women, a parade was formed, and down First Avenue it marched to join other parades and mill about the downtown. Only the S.A.T.C. was disgruntled because the war was over before they could get into it.

The end of the war did not mean the end of command and cadence at Coe. The faculty petitioned the government for a Reserve Officers Training corps to replace the S.A.T.C., and in January of 1919, the war department dispatched Capt. Robert J. Shaw to organize the new student unit. All men who had not served for 18 months were required to complete the basic course. The R.O.T.C. promptly endeared itself to the townspeople by patrolling the grounds of the Douglas starch works after its explosion in 1919, but for the 126 veterans and most of the other male students at Coe military life had lost its glamour.

Beginning with a murmur, student opposition to compulsory military training mounted through the early twenties. Neither taking the men out of burdensome khaki breeches in favor of long pants, nor installation of a chapter of Scabbard and Blade military fraternity, nor inauguration of the Robbins gold medals for proficiency in military drill could stem the rising crescendo of opposition to compulsory training.

Finally, President Gage recommended to the trustees that military training should be put on a voluntary basis. On May 9, 1925, a motion that both physical and military training should not be required of the same student was put before the trustees. Before its passage, however, the vigilant Trustee Robbins (now a lieutenant colonel) amended it to provide for compulsory military training in the freshman and sophomore years.

This action enraged a highly vocal portion of the student body, and in January of 1926 the student council officially urged voluntary training and commended President Gage for his stand. The resulting controversy shook the town. Gazette Editor Verne Marshall attacked the student council president for favoring abolition of compulsory drill. Coe men approved voluntary training in a referendum that the determined R.O.T.C. cadets tried to call off. John Shirer felt called upon to denounce “those three outstanding academic iniquities,” compulsory military training, compulsory chapel attendance and compulsory Bible classes. The American Legion labled the students as slackers, and the townspeople joined vociferously in the battle.

The trustees stood firm, and two years of military training were required of every male student through 1941. Though hotly contested in Cosmos columns through the thirties, R.O.T.C. gradually became accepted at Coe during the tenure of Major Carl A. Russell as professor of military science and tactics from 1931 to 1935. Russell gained the respect of both students and townspeople, and transferred a good deal of that respect to his student unit.

The last concerted opposition to Coe’s compulsory drill came in May of 1939 from some of the Presbyterian ministers of the Iowa synod who requested the board to abolish enforced military training. The board replied stoutly that “the national defense is an obligation which rests on all male citizens” and the offending requirement remained. Editor Earl Hall of Mason City “intertwined patriotism and religion” as Coe’s educational ideals in a campus speech, and Coe continued its traditional expressions of allegiance to Bible and sword. Approaching war magnified the importance of the R.O.T.C., 83 students signed up for civilian flight training under Professor Alfred W. Meyer, and by 1941 the campus military establishment held a position of unprecedented authority and prestige.
CHAPTER XI: MANNERS AND MORALS

“It having been brought to the notice of the Faculty that Misses Hughes and Poyneer . . . were walking between the hours of eight and nine with Mr. Granble and Mr. McFarland without the permission of Miss King . . . the President was directed to express the disapproval of the Faculty of this action and warn them against its repetition.” The faculty comfortably shifted a good deal of this discipline onto the shoulders of Dr. McCormick. He was also requested to investigate card playing among the men in 1898, and in 1899 forced to report to the Ohio society a faculty feeling against presentation of “Death of Petronius,” the appearance of that sturdy pagan apparently judged rather inappropriate to a public program in a Christian college.

Since student life at Coe was hedged with a set of proper rules, students devoted almost as much time to circumventing the regulations as to participating in the forensic activities and the Christian associations. Young ladies were permitted to leave Williston hall in the evening only for such approved events as Thursday prayer meeting. Prayer meeting was very popular, but the young ladies who departed for Marshall Hall with that piously expressed intent did not always appear there to chime in on the amens. The stolen sweets of a walk in the dark were brief, however; prayer meeting only lasted an hour.

Though the well behaved young lady took down her hair and was fast asleep by 10 o’clock, her daring roommate could probably awaken her by throwing stones against the window and persuade her to open the front door. She might also steal down to the kitchen to appropriate sugar for a midnight spread, and all sorts of edibles were compounded over the ubiquitous kerosene lamp. As the scholarly Professor E. A. Ross remarked in later years, there were “just as many pretty girls and just as many girls willing to raise Cain then as today.”

Since the men lived in rooming houses until 1939 they were deprived of the pleasure of circumventing dormitory rules, but a number of the college regulations had been thoughtfully framed with masculine temptations in mind. All students were “forbidden to attend places of amusement on the Sabbath day,” “to enter any saloon or billiard room in Cedar Rapids or elsewhere,” “to use any kind of intoxicating liquor, tobacco or to engage in any form of betting or gambling.” Profanity also distressed the faculty. The Courier of 1904 proposed expulsion from the game of any “criminal who used profanity” on the football field, and in 1911 the faculty devoted a serious discussion to swearing in the chemistry laboratory.

Beleaguered professors were nonplussed on emerging from chapel one bright spring morning in 1911 to find halls and campus strewn with glaring green posters admonishing students “for physiological, biological, and psychological reasons, pause in your mad rush for knowledge and give your intellectual organs a respite.” Students promptly abandoned class for picnic ground and canoeing on the Cedar. It was Coe’s first Flunk day. Struggling vainly with this mad new tradition, faculty members debated the severity of Flunk day penalties until 1919 when they gave up and began beating rugs for their wives each year on the day the student council president decided the grass was a grab-and-a-half high.

The faculty had eased the problems of inter-class fights in 1908 by proposing a freshman-sophomore tug of war on a school holiday specified for the purpose, but the equally important question of dancing was not so easy to dispose of. While officially prohibiting this evil practice, the professors recognized that this sort of thing was going on among students in private homes and even in public dance halls. In 1912 they hit upon the happy solution of forbidding dancing except on receipt of written permission from parents of each student. This fortunate compromise eased the transition to the college-sponsored dances begun in 1921 and smoothed over a problem that was magnified by more inept faculties into a painful issue at some other Iowa colleges.

The countrywide revolution in manners and morals of the twenties did not detour around Coe, but an air of gay abandon sat a bit awkwardly on the serious brow of Iowa farm lads. Harbingers of the new era were the men of the Student Army Training corps stationed on campus in 1918. These brash boys smoked openly; no Coe man had dared to light a cigarette on campus. The S.A.T.C. held a dance at the college that was approved by the faculty; undergraduate pressure for legalized dancing had moved no farther than Cosmos editorial. By 1921 Harry Gage was admitting “signs of moral sag, confusion and emotional unrestraint,” and coeds were bobbing their hair and shortening their skirts. By 1923 the sophisticated college woman smoked, danced at Manhattan Beach, and petted in the closed car her date could rent from a Cedar Rapids agency.

Such a flapper was considered “fast” by the prim majority, however, and most of the men canvassed in a 1923 Cosmos poll frowned on bobbed hair, short skirts, and feminine smoking. At Coe flaming youth flickered a bit.

Miss Maria Leonard, dean of women, asserted with unconscious humor in 1922 that “the flapper style of girl is passing out,” and in 1924 reminded her
charges that "the morals of Coe girls will not permit their frequenting dark corners; that the traditions of Coe do not encourage canoeing, picnicking, going to movies . . . if these activities be on Sunday." Bridge was forbidden, as was playing jazz on the piano in Voorhees' drawing room. Fifteen girls "confessed" attending public dance halls in 1924 and were restricted to their rooms for 10 evenings. The "evils of dancing and petting" were adopted by the 18 Coe students who attended a student conference in Des Moines that year, and several couples were expelled from school after thoughtlessly neglecting to ask permission before getting married.

The intellectual quickening of the twenties was not pronounced on a campus whose newspaper in 1923 could cite the well-known campus maxim that "high-brow tendencies will be suffered only at the penalty of ridicule and derision." Only the Shirer brothers raised their voices editorially to assert that "after all, Buildings and Programs and Winning Teams and High Paid Coaches and Large Endowments are not worth a great deal unless there is intellectual development to keep pace."

The scholarship sought by the Shirers became a treasured commodity six years later with the sobering effect of the depression. In 1932 only the top students could get jobs, and Cosmos Editor Hubert Coffey could observe the emergence of "a student who will rebound to the uncertainty of our system with a resolution for greater scholastic effort."

More books were borrowed from the library, and more money from friends. More laundry bags were mailed home, more shoes resoled, and the depression-ridden Cosmos was allowed for the first time to accept lucrative advertisements displaying women with cigarettes in their hands. By 1933 students owed the college $17,000 in tuition, but the college banned on student promises and ordered no dismissals. Bridge was cheap and popular, though movie money could sometimes be scraped together for such gems as "Her Wedding Night" with Clara Bow.

Even after the depression wore away, pressures from the outside world never permitted a return to the happy campus isolation students enjoyed before World War I. Typical controversy raged over the stuffing of the ballot box in student elections of 1938, and there was quiet celebration as students happily smoked faculty-sanctioned cigarettes for the first time in the new Greene hall grill in 1939, but men registered for the draft in 1940, and the fall of 1941 inaugurated far more serious events than the new feminine tradition of becoming an official coed by a kiss under the victory bell.

Shocked students heard about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on the Sunday afternoon of December 7, and next day listened silently in the chapel's most somber service as President Franklin D. Roosevelt broadcast his request for

a declaration of war. In Coe's ninetieth year the student body braced itself again for battle and prepared to send its men to war.

**Status of Women**

One of the primary causes of faculty concern with manners and morals was the presence of young ladies on campus, though no one ever denied their right to participate equally in all the classwork with the men. In 1880 the sponsors of the Coe Collegiate Institute asserted that young women had "all the advantages of young men," and this announcement, couched in somewhat more fortunate terms, continued to figure prominently in college advertising.

It did not occur to the faculty for some years that women should be given jurisdiction over women's affairs, and it was not until 1905 that a dean of women, Miss Alice King, was appointed to supplement the efforts of the lady principal of Williston in "surrounding the life of the students with elevating influences daily." Until the Marquis administration the dean struggled heroically without benefit of much prestige or authority, and as late as 1917 the entire faculty mediated in full dress conclave over the wisdom of such procedures as allowing young women to enter downtown restaurants after 10 p.m. Such strong deans as Maria Leonard who arrived in 1912 and Florence Nicholson who came in 1923, however, enjoyed the respect of the faculty as well as the friendship of the girls. Their status was also bolstered by President Cage who thought women deserved recognition and was willing to reward feminine ability in his administration and on his faculty. A supplementary service to the college was performed by Dean Mary Bell who came in 1929, and in addition to her work as dean performed nobly in admissions work, thereby keeping the women's dormitory filled even during the depression.

As the women's deans received more authority, so did the women students who evolved a respected and effective form of self government in the Voorhees house council and the Associated Women Students. The women calmly ran these organizations, the sororities, and the Y.W.C.A. in creditable fashion, but rarely competed vigorously for position in coeducational affairs. In 1915 a club for women suffrage appeared briefly, and in 1927 Coed Grace Bryant could complain bitterly in the Cosmos that women rarely held "important and remunerative offices," because "it has never been done."

Most of the women who went to Coe were looking for husbands rather than high office, however, and most of the campus plums were conceded without contest to the men. Few of the avant garde ever appeared on Coe's faculty or in her student body, and the issue of rights for women smoldered peacefully down through the years. Men and women enjoyed comfortable friendship rarely inter-
Conclusion

For long years no one at Coe College took the time to formulate and articulate the purposes of that school. Originally, Williston Jones had held his classes because he wanted to prepare young men for theological training and so the initial purpose was primarily religious. As time went on, the faculty and trustees followed a pattern typical of many small midwestern church-related colleges all of which, consciously or not, attempted to give their students a liberal arts background in an atmosphere of the Christian spirit. This pattern, which had its limitations as well as its virtues, was divided into several facets.

Perhaps the most glaring limitation was the lack of financial resources. Few, if any, of these small midwestern colleges had patrons who were both very wealthy and very generous and so for their presidents there was a constant search for additional funds. Each endowment drive at Coe was an extreme necessity and the college always needed a greater endowment. Each new building was a major triumph. Through most of the Coe history faculty salaries were meager and library and laboratory facilities limited.

Furthermore, Coe students, for the most part, did not come from wealthy homes and many of the students were partially or entirely self-supporting. This meant that the college, far from collecting full tuition and perhaps additional gifts from prosperous parents, was itself helping to support indigent students through work grants and scholarships. No college is a financial success for the commodity it sells is too precious for most students to afford were they to pay for its total worth, and Coe annually knew the full truth of this situation.

Partly in an effort to ease the financial situation and partly in response to a general trend toward vocational education, the faculty began instituting vocational courses about 1910. In this effort to attract students to Coe the faculty deviated somewhat from the established curriculum of a liberal arts college, but the liberal arts courses did not suffer from this intrusion and Coe’s reputation as a liberal arts college continued to grow.

Obviously, one of the most prominent characteristics of a church-related college is the accent on religion. At Coe the religious theme was ever present and was manifested in many ways. Throughout the years many Coe graduates have been interested in the work of the church and if they did not actually enter the ministry or go into some phase of religious education, they became active and loyal supporters of their local churches and church-related organizations. This activity was a logical outgrowth of their home and college training. Most Coe students came from Christian homes and this early training was carried further in their college work. Through the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., regular chapel services, and missionary projects the students were encouraged to support and participate in religious activities. Furthermore, until 1941, with one exception, the president of Coe was a Presbyterian minister. There have always been a few ordained ministers on the faculty, and the study of the Bible has consistently been required for graduation. The religious motif was ever in evidence.

It is a truism that the strength of a college lies in its faculty. Coe College
has been fortunate in having a faculty of sincere and devoted teachers who taught because they liked to teach, because they enjoyed their fields of study, and because they were interested in their students. This spirit in the professor made for excellent student-faculty relations and the students liked and respected their faculty. This spirit of warmth and fellowship between professor and student was carried into the student body itself and Coe students have always shown great friendliness toward each other. The feeling of family has consistently been one of Coe's greatest assets and stems directly from an interested faculty.

Coe College has deviated from the pattern of the small liberal arts college in two ways. In the first place, coeducation was made a part of the Coe tradition from the beginning, thanks to the willingness on the part of Williston Jones to include girls in his initial classes, and to Daniel Coe's stipulation that women should be educated equally with men. Both men were pioneers in this respect.

Coe was different also in that the citizens of Cedar Rapids were sufficiently prosperous and generous to support the school to a very great extent. They supported the college financially, patronized its programs, served as trustees, fundraisers, or advisers, and altogether have demonstrated in concrete fashion their faith in the functions and purposes of the college. Although Coe was considered the crowning jewel of Cedar Rapids, the community would have prospered without it; if Coe had been located anywhere else, however, the college administration would have had to look for different financial resources. To Cedar Rapids the college owes much.

The Coe faculty have consistently attempted to train their students to think critically, to act as intelligent and responsible citizens, and to behave as Christians. To what extent they have succeeded only the individual students can testify, but the faculty could have had no higher goals.
Back to Coe — Back to her ivied walls,
Her shaded walks and towering trees,
Her friendly doors and steps well-worn.
Back to her halls — to haunted corridors
Peopled by memory. Back to Coe.

Back to Coe — to greet anew old friends,
Old tales to tell — to feel
The glamour cast by unremembered joys.
Back — but more, as in the long ago,
To know her Spirit, bold, undaunted, proud,
Unshaken, true. Back to Coe.

—Marvin Cone
From the October, 1922, Courier