

# PRINCETON ALUMNI WEEKLY



*Orren Jack Turner*

## THE NEWEST OF THE PRINCETON DEANS

*The Reverend Robert Russell Wicks, D.D., who is now serving his first year as  
Dean of the University Chapel*

# PRINCETON ALUMNI WEEKLY

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## *A Sophomore of 1851*

HOW HE MADE USE OF PRINCETON'S FIRST SHOWER-BATH—HOW HE HELPED TO ESTABLISH THE WEEK-END HABIT—HOW HE "ROWLED" AND "FIZZLED"

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*Secretary of Princeton University*

THE Princeton Collection in the University Library has recently received from Mr. Howard L. Hughes '10, of Trenton, the college diary of Thomas M. Hall '53 for the year 1851—when he was a sixteen-year-old Sophomore at Princeton.

The little book is a valuable addition to our sources of information on campus life before the Civil War. For example, it was well known that there were no bath tubs on the campus in 1851; but young Hall reveals the presence of at least one shower-bath which he bought from another student. Just what this contrivance was we cannot tell except that, being portable, it must have been of open plumbing openly arrived at. But Hall's reference to it, unless the present writer is badly mistaken, constitutes the earliest mention of an indoor bathing equipment in Princeton.

As luxuries have always done, this shower-bath changed its owner's mode of life. Until its acquisition, his Sunday morning ablutions had the institutional importance of the Saturday night tub of a later generation, and his weekly record thereof sheds fresh light on the relation of voluntary cleanliness to compulsory godliness. Godliness first, if possible, for a minister's son (his father was the Rev. Dr. John Hall, pastor of the old First Presbyterian Church, Trenton), but cleanliness ever a close second, as the following entries prove. "Washed all over before breakfast," is the normal Sunday record before the shower came. Once he "intended to wash between prayers and breakfast," but a visitor interrupted, so he "washed after breakfast." One spring Sabbath morn he slept until nine o'clock, "missed prayers but washed all over before breakfast." The climax, or, if you prefer, the high-water mark, of his balneatory habits was recorded in these words: ". . . attended morning prayers. Did not get breakfast but washed all over." What Sophomore of our present

softer days would thus sacrifice his Sunday breakfast for a "wash all over"? With the purchase of the shower such entries ceased. Luxury crept in. Hall took a shower whenever he felt like it; sometimes after violent exercise outdoors, and once at least after a stuffy Bible recitation on a hot Sunday afternoon.

### ousting UNINVITED GUESTS

OTHERWISE, his quarters at 13 West College were not luxurious. The first thing he did, on returning in January 1851 from his Christmas vacation, was to have straw put under the carpet; and then he bought a shovel for the coal fire which was supposed to heat the room. He also bought a small lamp, and paid 62½ cents for a gallon of camphene, which, as every owner of a dictionary knows, was used in lamps before the introduction of petroleum; and he registers with silent approval the assertion of a young and progressive alumnus that the college ought to install "illuminating gas." One other thing he and his roommate lost no time in doing at the opening of the term, was to examine their beds, with the result: "Found a dozen or two bugs." Whatever remedies were applied served their purpose until the summer vacation. Returning after the vacation, Hall spent the first night or so on the lounge in a friend's room because "the bedbugs disturbed me," and "I was almost eaten up by bedbugs tonight."

Diaries like this are usually the source of data on undergraduate gastronomic taste, and the present document is no exception. Seldom an evening passed without a visit to Anthony Simons, the contemporary Renwick-Baltimore-and-Joe all in one, to consume amazing combinations of food. Hall and his friends were treated one Saturday night in May "to creams and to oysters and Btn cider." Evidently there was no embargo in those days against May oysters; and ice cream is and will be, world without end, the great

American food; but the addition of cider—? And, if one's hazarded guess at "Btn" is correct, why the Boston brand? Why not the local New Jersey product of which at least one manufactory of blessed memory was within appetizing proximity to the campus? The combination of oysters, ice cream, and cider did this imperturbable Sophomore no harm and he was up betimes next morning for his "wash all over." One September day he notes a digestive upset which he thinks is caused by "bile on the stomach"; but this valuable diagnosis did not prevent him from taking his friends out at 9 p.m. "to get oysters. Did not poll any more tonight." Doubtless not.

### DELVING INTO THE VERNACULAR

THE diary is fairly rich in Princeton slang. To "fizzle," meaning to fail, is not new; but to "fizzle blue" was a Princeton refinement according to B. H. Hall's *College Words and Customs*. The word was also used as a noun. "To rowl" was to succeed: "called up at recitation—rowled." The word rhymed with "howl"; it was a verb at Princeton but a noun elsewhere. It was no longer used at Princeton by 1880, says a pencil note in the Library copy of *College Words and Customs*. A speaker at an oratorical contest "lammed the crowd," whatever that may mean. To "poll," or "pole," was a Princeton and Union term and is still used here, as is the word "polar." Young Hall speaks of "toting the girls around" in the sense of escorting them, which is a variation of the eighteenth century Americanism first recorded by Dr. Witherspoon. To "toss" or to "throw" for treats is a common phrase. Whether with dice or a coin, is not recorded. The word "tare" is interesting: "made about the only perfect tare that I have made." The word is spelled "tear" in *College Words and Customs* and is noted as a Princeton word meaning a very superior recitation, better than a "rowl." But Scharff and Henry's *Col-*

*lege as It Is*, the contemporary Princeton authority, spells the word as Hall gives it. The word was used later at Princeton in the phrase "to tear one's shirt" in the same sense of success. Just when or how this sartorial variation came in has eluded investigation. Slang with the sartorial note is not found in *College Words and Customs*, nor in Scharff and Henry. But thirty years later, under Dr. McCosh, at least one example was common enough on the Princeton campus though unfamiliar to the President, who possibly never reached an adequate understanding of campus dialect. At all events, it is said that on a Washington's Birthday in the early eighties, before the occasion was entirely delivered over to undergraduates, and Dr. McCosh still presided at the exercises, he protested against the disturbance created by the underclassmen. Whereupon a voice retorted, "Oh, pull your vest down, Jimmie!" (i.e., "keep calm"). The good Doctor glanced hastily over his attire and then replied with emphasis: "Me waistcoat is properly adjusted, sir-r!" This delayed the main proceedings a little longer.

#### INTRAMURAL SNOWBALL THROWING

**B**UT to return to what Hall calls our "chit chat." Well known Princeton terms used by him in 1851 are "seminole," the "large triangle," "Jugtown," and "South campus." He also refers frequently to the elm-lined back-road through the woods, from the campus to the railroad station on the canal-bank. What is left of this is the present Elm Drive. Exercise was obtained by frequent walks and by "running around." Football, handball, and shinny (ground hockey) were the games played. When the snow began to melt in 1851 East challenged West College to a snowball fight and was badly beaten. Indoor sports were checkers, whist, loafing in one another's rooms, and endless talking about trivialities.

"Barring out" had long been a popular practice in Nassau Hall and was to remain so until the fire of 1855 changed the internal arrangements of the building. In 1851 there was a barring out on April Fool's Day and one in December. On April 1 the students barricaded the third floor of Nassau Hall and began to ring the bell at 8 p.m. and rang it until 4:30 a.m., with regularly organized relays of bell ringers, watchers, etc. The Faculty dismissed seven students, suspended five, admonished four and wrote to their fathers.

On December 4 the third floor was barred again, and as a result fifteen students were suspended. No damage was ever done in a barring out, except perhaps to sensitive eardrums, and if the Faculty had simply ignored the annoyance the proceedings would have soon lost their charm.

Another old custom is noticed when

Hall says the Seniors passed their mathematical examination and "burnt their books in the evening." This was the "calculus funeral" ceremony, time and again forbidden because of the riotous proceedings and the blasphemous orations that were features of the solemn rites.

#### THE WEEK-END 78 YEARS AGO

**W**EEEK-ENDS were not unknown in 1851. Young Hall spent several Saturdays and Sundays at home in Trenton where his father's ecclesiastical prominence gave the boy valuable social contacts. He spent the week-end harmlessly enough—having his daguerreotype made, calling on friends, buying ribbon for his society badge, walking "up the canal," or "along the power creek," or even in the dry river-bed in which unromantic spot pleasant adventure sometimes lurked: "met Miss Anne Dayton on the gravel," is the entry for one golden Saturday afternoon in October.

The diary is a Trenton and Philadelphia social directory for 1851; guests were constantly coming to Princeton and being "toted around" to see the sights, or to drink tea, or to attend speaking contests. Social life in the village centered around the Stocktons and the Fields whose names occur often enough. Commodore Stockton in particular was a royal host, as well became his public character. Washington's Birthday in 1851 was not celebrated by any college exercises if Hall's silence may be trusted; but in the evening "Darberry's house was open at Commodore Stockton's expense." So the day was not a total loss.

The only organized extra-curriculum activity in college had its shortcomings even as such activities have now. One exciting meeting of the American Whig Society attended by young Hall lasted until 5:30 a.m., which equals (if it does not surpass) the worst of modern managerials, Triangle rehearsals, and football practices. The weekly meetings of the Societies are carefully recorded and here and there a mysterious symbol  $\Psi\Delta$  occurs without comment. Hall belonged to D.K.E. later, but the fraternity was inactive at Princeton in 1851. Was Psi Delta another fraternity?

#### P. T. BARNUM PICKS THE WRONG TOWN

**A** GALA day in May witnessed the visit to Princeton of Mr. P. T. Barnum's famous "Menagerie." Professor Giger, scenting trouble, tried to prevent the Sophomores from attending the matinee by scheduling an examination in Greek. He should have known better. The class took in both the examination and the show. "It was a fizzle," says Hall. But the sequel was no fizzle. "The fellows ran off with Barnum's Car of Juggernaut and threw it into the canal." How far this vehicle approximated the famous and much-maligned car in which the God

Vishnu rode each June from his Temple to his summer house, surrounded by thousands of pious Hindu pilgrims struggling for the honor of pulling on the ropes, is hard to say. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* declares that the original was 45 feet high and 35 feet square and ran on wheels 7 feet in diameter. Certain is it that the Princeton pilgrims who pulled the Barnum replica down a steep place into the canal were not less enthusiastic than their Hindu brothers, though probably a good deal less pious.

As a result of this adventure young Hall overslept next morning and missed both prayers and breakfast. Meanwhile Mr. Barnum's mermidons had been working in the canal and later in the day Hall "went to the Car of Juggernaut and saw them start. There were a great many fellows at the canal. Just before it started we commenced yelling at it." The campus being still in riotous mood, an effort was made that evening to get up a horn-spreed, which "fizzled." An attempt to set fire to "South Campus" was, as usual, entirely successful. This series of excitements so exhausted our gay young Sophomore that he noted the next day: "I was so lazy that I did not poll up spherics and so when Duff called me up at 11 I fizzled blue but afterward got excused." This is neither the first nor the only reference to Professor John T. Duffield '41, the mathematician, but it is characteristic. "Called up by Duff at 11. Fizzled but got excused"; "Duff had me up this morning. Fizzled but got excused," are specimen entries. Dr. Duffield at this time was a young adjunct professor of mathematics, only ten years out of college; but he had already won the hearts and confidence of Princeton undergraduates, though perhaps (let us admit) at the expense of their mathematical training. He was the first member of the Faculty to attempt to rule the campus by friendship rather than espionage and penalty. Whether he always succeeded or not is immaterial: the great South Window in the University Chapel is his well-deserved memorial; teachers like him may not have greatly enriched pure science—that was left to investigators like Joseph Henry, John Torrey, and Arnold Guyot; but they built up in the affectionate memory of generations of alumni a store of associations to which modern Princeton owes an incalculable debt.

#### SOMETHING OF PRESIDENT MACLEAN

**V**ICE-PRESIDENT John Maclean was another famous Princeton Victorian of whose methods Hall's diary furnishes eloquent illustration. One morning, having overslept, the boy found himself aroused at eight o'clock by Dr. Maclean in person and ordered to report after breakfast for explanations. "Johnny has been prowling around this entry" is another note. "John made Halsted and I

go into Boss's study this morning because he found us sitting at lazy corner after study bell had rung." "Lazy corner" was the west gate of the front campus, just east of the present Dean's House. At that time this was the President's house. Here resided President Carnahan, nicknamed "Boss," and his study was the room which opens directly onto the walk leading to Stanhope Hall. It was at this door that a Southern student, showing visitors the sights, fired his pistol, and, when the startled President appeared on the threshold, calmly said: "And there is Boss himself."

Another entry says "Johnny ran around college at three this morning seeing who was out of their rooms." He even tracked his students to the depot on the canal, a favorite undergraduate haunt. A crowd went down one June evening, and "John attempted to send all the fellows back but a large row of boats prevented the bridge being turned." But Dr. Maclean was usually successful in his efforts to check the undergraduates; many an attempted horn-spree and gate-spree "fizzled" because of his eternal vigilance.

Young Hall was not a poor student; he records hours spent almost every day "polling," and he took advantage of all extra-curricular lectures such as those of William Wilberforce Lord, and Professor John Torrey, and particularly those of Professor Hugh McCulloch on "Electrical Light." His casual mentions of books he is reading are numerous and varied. Few modern Sophomores could tabulate in one year a longer list of unrequired reading than the following: Read's *Life of Frederick the Great*, Sparks' *Washington*, Hume's *Queen Elizabeth*, Mitchell's *Reveries of a Bachelor*, Milne's *Life of Keats*, d'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation*, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, *Poor Richard*, a volume of Reese's *Encyclopedia*, and one of the *American Cyclopaedia*, and a volume of U.S. public documents. His periodicals were the *New York Observer* and the *Presbyterian*. He was no prig about his reading: a club, which four of his friends and himself formed for reading aloud, bravely began at its first meeting Eliot's *Rise of Liberty*; but decided that the book was "not suitable and so gave it up," adjourning *sine die* for treats all 'round at Anthony's.

Most of the books listed above were borrowed from the Whig Hall Library; but on one occasion the diarist mentions the fact that he asked Professor Giger, who was college librarian, for something on the Mexican War and that afternoon the professor himself brought the book to his room. This surpasses present-day library service.

Much more in this little record might be noticed, but enough has been quoted to indicate its quality as a mirror of campus life in the fifties.



Students' Photo Service

GOING! GOING!! ———!!!

*Fire, the first agency of the destruction of the School of Science, has been succeeded by the wrecking crews which are now busying themselves about the premises. The cars in the picture do not indicate that the automobile ban has been lifted, but rather that all those who come to the campus are not undergraduates.*

After graduation Hall studied law and began to practise in Philadelphia. In 1862, although far from robust, he joined the 141st Pennsylvania Volunteers as a First Lieutenant, remaining in active service until 1864 by which time he was the regiment's commanding officer. With health shattered, he resigned in May 1864 and returned to Philadelphia where he died six months later, in his thirtieth year.



## Grad Council Dines Alumni Trustees

THE annual dinner given by the Graduate Council to the Alumni Trustees was held at the Princeton Club of New York on January 10, 1929. As at these affairs it is customary to discuss subjects of special interest to the alumni, Chairman W. L. Johnson '97 called attention to the fact that no minutes were to be kept and no resolutions passed so that the discussion might be free and untrammelled by fear of any publicity. Several interesting talks were given by members of the Council, after which the Alumni Trustees present also spoke.

The Chairman announced that he would present a drawing of "Three Tigers Drinking," from the work of the Austrian artist, Norbertine Bresslern-Roth, to the member of the Council who made the most interesting and stimulating remarks. Mr. Alexander Leitch '24, who won a similar trophy last year, was appointed judge and awarded the prize to Dr. Edward McP. Armstrong '04.

The guests of the occasion were Charter Trustee John Stuart '00; Alumni Trustees Paul C. Martin '98, John H. Brooks '95, Frederick H. Scott '00, David Lawrence '10, and Thomas A. Wilson '13; Philip Brasher '06; and Alfred S. Dashiell '23.

The hosts were the following members of the Graduate Council: Edward McP. Armstrong '04, William G. Barr '03, H. Langedon Bell '27, Dickson Q. Brown '95, C. Fred Buechner, Jr., '20, Robert C. Clothier '08, Elroy Curtis '00, Joseph A. Dear '93, James D. Dusenberry '10, George F. Havell '23, Charles H. Higgins '03, Andrew C. Imbrie '95, Walter L. Johnson '97, Frederick P. King '00, John A. Laird '14, Francis G. Landon '81, Phillip LeBoutillier '00, Alexander Leitch '24, Sayre MacLeod, Jr., '26, Charles C. Nicholls, Jr., '06, Laurence G.