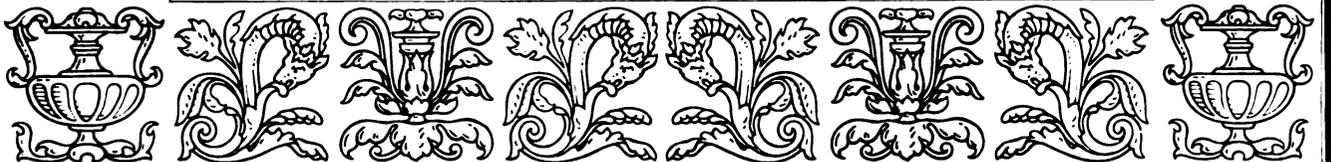


# PRINCETON ALUMNI WEEKLY



J. V. D. B.

WITHIN THE GRADUATE COLLEGE QUADRANGLE



# PRINCETON ALUMNI WEEKLY

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## Turning Back the Clocks

*A Glimpse of Princeton's History as Revealed Through the Many Interesting Happenings at the Nassau Inn During the Early Years of Its Century-and-a-half Service as a Hostelery*

By V. Lansing Collins '92

THE history of the Nassau Inn, prior to 1767, is hazy. The land on which the building stands was part of the tract, extending roughly from Witherspoon Street to Bayard Lane, which Judge Thomas Leonard bought in 1740 or thereabouts, and which he speedily improved. In a survey made in 1745 by John Dalley of Kingston, of the road from Perth Amboy to Trenton, passing through Princeton, Judge Leonard's properties in the neighborhood are indicated, and, not far from the corner of Nassau Street on what approximates the modern Witherspoon Street and the road to Rocky Hill, is shown "Thos. Leonard Esq's. Seat at Grove Hall," and further along on the same road is "Thos. Leonard's Mansgrove."

Grove Hall must have been a substantial place to have earned the title Dalley gives it. It appears to have been unknown to Mr. Hageman when he wrote his "History of Princeton." Mr. Hageman says that in 1756-1757 (he gives both years) Judge Leonard erected for his private residence the building now known as the Nassau Inn. If these dates are correct, obviously the house could not have been Grove Hall which was on the Dalley map of 1745. Why should Judge Leonard have built a new residence so near to Grove Hall and so late in life? He had written his will in 1755; in 1756 and 1757 he erected his new house; in 1758 he resigned from the New Jersey Provincial Council on account of his "great age and infirmities" (so his petition reads); and before November, 1759, he died.

Grove Hall is not mentioned by name in the will (although Mansgrove is), and does not seem to be referred to at all in the entire document. Why not? The only conjecture that answers this question and also explains the erection of the new residence is that Grove Hall had been disposed of by sale or gift or had been destroyed by fire; and the latter is the

more satisfactory conjecture, for, if Grove Hall had been disposed of, we would in all probability have heard of the estate again in subsequent history, just as Morven, Prospect, Castle Howard, Mansgrove, and Maybury Hill have come down through Princeton annals.

### A PUZZLING PHRASE

HOWEVER that may be, among the various properties disposed of in the will is a house and lot in Princeton "where Samuel Hornor lives." This, too, could not have been the house the Judge was building a year or so later, i.e., in 1756 and 1757 (again assuming the dates are correct).

But the reference to Samuel Hornor brings us a little closer to known facts. He was a younger brother of John Hornor of Princeton (not his son as Mr. Hageman asserts); he served awhile in

the British Army; his wife, whom he married in 1744, was Mary Leonard, a Stony Brook girl and a favorite niece of the Judge; and in 1765 he bought land near Kingston from the Judge's brother. Possibly as early as 1753, and certainly in 1766, he kept a tavern in Princeton.

For in September, 1753, a house and lot in Princeton were advertised for rent, the house being new and used as a tavern, and enquirers were to address themselves to Samuel Hornor; in May, 1766, creditors of a group of insolvent debtors were asked to meet at "the house of Samuel Hornor" (the word in contemporary advertising almost invariably meant "public house" or tavern); in June, 1766, land belonging to George Campbell, unlucky proprietor of the Hudibras Inn further down the road, was sold "at Samuel Hornor's" by the sheriff; and on September 11, 1766, *The New York Gazette* carried an advertisement that "the noted tavern at Princeton where Samuel Hornor now dwells" was for rent.

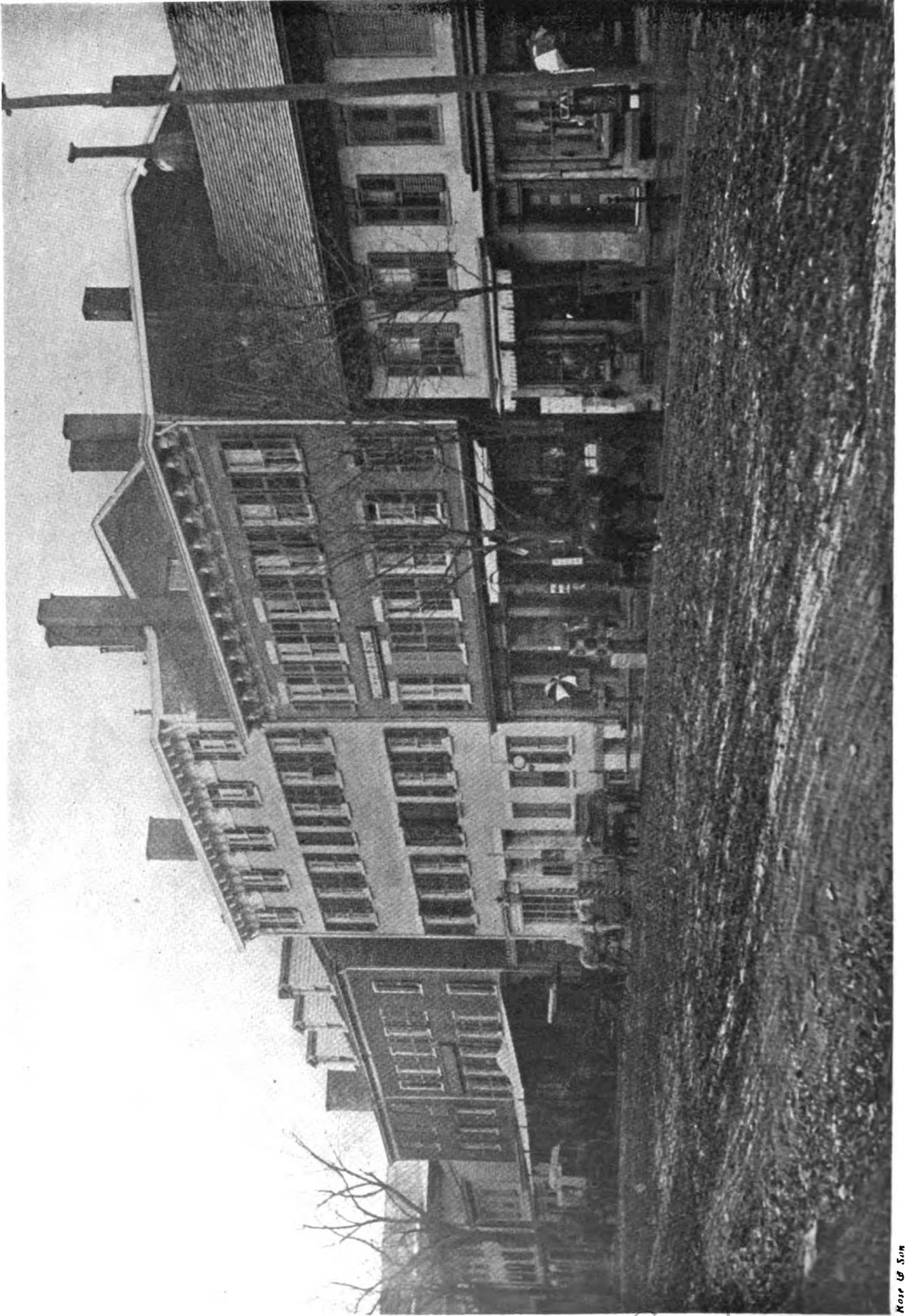
He was presumably a sick man at the time, for he wrote his will in September and died a few weeks later at the age of forty-two, his will being probated on November 14, 1766. In August, 1767, *The Pennsylvania Chronicle* announced that William Hick had taken "the tavern at Princeton nearly opposite to, and at the Sign of, the New Jersey College." This is the earliest occurrence of the name that the writer has found; but the language of the advertisement suggests that the name was not new even in 1767.

One wishes, of course, that the notice had added the phrase "lately occupied by Samuel Hornor"; but as it does not, we are left again with unanswered questions: Was this Samuel Hornor's "noted tavern" of 1766? Was it the residence Judge Leonard was building in 1756-57 which Mr. Hageman says became a tavern in 1769? At present it appears to be impossible to say. But no other tavern

### Pardon Us, But—

THE plans of Princeton Municipal Improvement, Inc.,—outlined in detail in the *Weekly's* issue of February 22, 1929—call for the reconstruction in the near future of twelve blocks in the heart of Princeton, and hence for the razing of the Nassau Inn. Protests over the latter feature of this proposal have been rife among Princetonians, and a discussion of the antiquity of the Inn has arisen—much of it founded on legend and fiction.

In order to provide an historical, factual, and sound basis for this discussion the Princeton *Herald* has published the accompanying article by Secretary V. Lansing Collins '92 of the University, recognized authority on Princeton history. So much of the material presented is of general interest to the alumni that the *Weekly* is pleased to avail itself of the opportunity to reprint the same herewith.—  
EDITOR



*NASSAU STREET, PRINCETON, IN 1873: The Nassau Inn is the dark-colored, three-story building beyond the left-hand portion of the thoroughfare's quagmire*

ROSE & SON

in Princeton seems to have carried the Sign of the College over its door, and excepting Nassau Hall, no building in Princeton has had so continuously picturesque a history.

**THIS IS THE QUESTION**

**A**DMITTING then that Grove Hall was destroyed; that therefore Judge Leonard built another residence; that Samuel Hornor and his wife (the Judge's favorite niece) kept tavern in it, named it the Sign of the College and built up its reputation; and that in 1767 Mr. Hick took over the proprietorship, the question inevitably is asked—how much is left today of the original building? Only architects and builders can accurately answer; but it is permissible to give an unprofessional opinion for what it is worth.

Of the exterior, probably not much beside the west wall and portions of the front wall, not including the balcony, are original; in the interior, the remaining original portions are the foundations certainly, as examination readily shows, a few hand-hewn beams and lintels in the front cellar, and a low brick ledge or parapet running around the wall of the old wine cellar on which probably kegs and barrels were stored. The rest of the house has been altered and rebuilt several times as advertisements in the newspapers show, the front and the lobby having been remodelled within the last twenty years. It is to be understood of course that the Mansion House, now a part of the Inn, dates only from 1836 and has had no separate history worth mentioning.

**GOLDEN EXPECTATIONS**

**W**ILLIAM HICK, who took the Sign of the College in 1767, was an Englishman and had settled in Princeton in 1763 as an inn-keeper. What tavern or taverns he managed in the next four years is not recorded; but there can be no doubt of his good intentions and golden expectations on assuming control of his new venture; he fully intended to make his tavern outrival the famous old Hudibras, a stone's throw away.

With Postmaster Plumb of Princeton he agreed to serve as agent for that lively Philadelphia sheet, *The Pennsylvania Chronicle*, thus making sure that his patrons could obtain regularly at least one leading newspaper. At the Sign of the College, so his advertisement reads, "all gentlemen, and others, may depend on being treated with the greatest Respect, and good accommodations for themselves and their Horses." The "flying machine" of John Barnhill, which twice a week made the Philadelphia-New York run in two days (three in winter) chose the Sign of the College for its halfway halting place.

The fare was ten shillings to Princeton either way, and three pence a mile for any intermediate distances. Goods could be sent to Princeton in Mr. Hick's care for local delivery, and he ran a store next door to his tavern, thus making it possible for Princeton patrons to order on three days' notice articles which were "not commonly kept in a country store." In November, 1767, the New Jersey Medical Society held its annual meeting at Hick's tavern and voted to hold the 1768 meeting there also. The Sign of the College became a common and convenient meeting place for transactions requiring elbow room and public facilities.



Students' Photo Service

**THE NASSAU INN AS IT APPEARS TODAY**

*Fifty-six years have brought but little change in the general aspect of the three buildings which constitute the hotel*

**TRUSTEES DINED—AND WINED**

**T**HUS creditors of the late Thomas Leonard received their final notice in June, 1769, to settle accounts at the Sign of the College with his executors, and in July creditors of the late William Whitehead met there to receive dividends on his estate. The trustees of the College also, (and naturally) favored with their patronage a dining place that bore the college name on its swinging sign and maintained a high standard of service; and they cheerfully paid the bills Mr. Hick presented for the official dinners served to them and their guests at Commencement. At least three of these bills have sifted down to us through the century and a half since they were drawn up in 1769, 1771 and 1772.

Dr. Witherspoon had just completed the opening year of his long and brilliant administration when the first bill was incurred, and the increasing attendance charged on the next two Commencement dinners testified not only to their generous quality but also to the growing popularity of the College and its new president.

**The Trustees of New Jersey  
College Dr.  
to Wm. Hick**

1769 Sept. 27th	s d
To 31 Dinners	£2. 6. 6
To 11 Bottles of Madeira @ 5/ pr. B.	2.15. 0
To 6 Bottles of Claret @ 6/ pr. B.	1.16. 0
To 4 double Bowls of Punch @ 3/ pr.	0.12. 0
To 6 Bottles of Beer @ 1/6	0. 9. 0
To 1 double bowl of Toddy	0. 2. 0
	£8. 0. 6

**The Trustees of New Jersey  
College Dr.  
to William Hick**

1771 Sept. 27th	s d
To 37 Dinners	£4.12. 6

To 23 bottles of wine @ 5/	5.15.
To 8 bottles Porter	16.
To 8 bottles of Beer	9.
To 3 double bowls of Punch	9.
To 3 bowls of Toddy	6.
To Tea for 13 gentlemen	13.
	£13. 0. 6

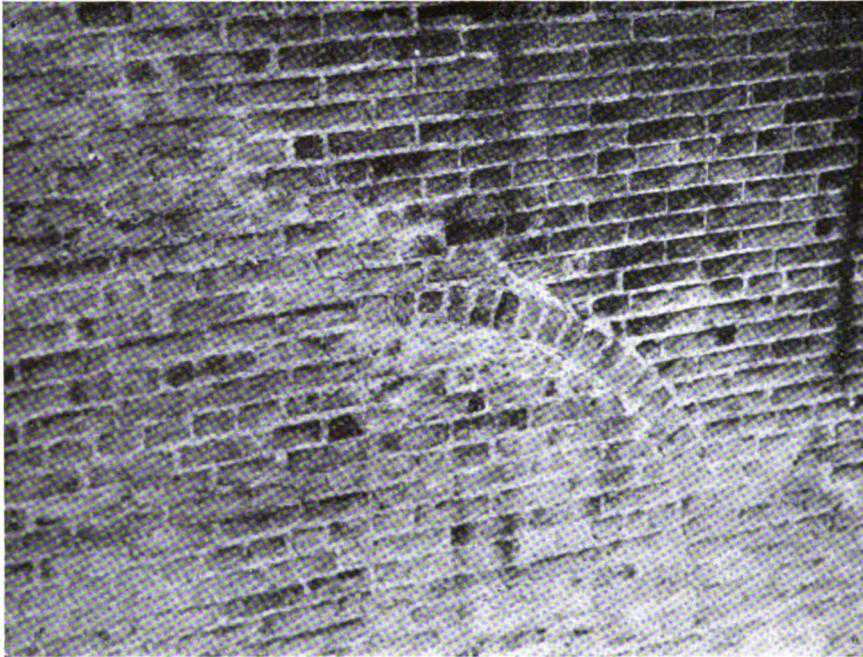
**The Trustees of New Jersey  
College Dr.  
to William Hick  
Princeton 30th Sept. 1772**

To 60 Dinners @ 2s/ each	£ 6. 0. 0
To 12 double bowls Punch @ 3s/ each	1.16.
To 17 Bottles Beer at 1/6 each	1. 5. 6
To 21 bottles Port wine at 5/- each	5. 5. 0
To 16 bottles Madeira at 5/- each	4. 0. 0
To 6 single bowls Toddy at 1s/- each	0. 6. 0
	£18.12. 6

**NO PLACE FOR A LOYALIST**

**B**UT Mr. Hick's tongue was the proverbial unruly member and he was a hasty writer besides; while in Philadelphia he had had acrimonious correspondence not only with newspaper editors but with Governor Franklin himself. He lasted at the Sign of the College until January, 1774, when he advertised that he had taken the Kings Arms Tavern at Perth Amboy and the Sign of the College was once more for rent.

Part of Hick's difficulty at Princeton seems to have had its origin in the fact that he was a loyalist, and although matters had not gone very far yet in New Jersey generally by the end of 1773, they had gone far enough on the Princeton Campus to make the village uncomfortable for a loyalist Englishman with a careless tongue. It will be remembered,



Daily Princetonian

PART OF THE ORIGINAL WALL OF THE NASSAU INN, ERECTED IN 1757

*As the picture indicates, remodeling has brought the bricks, imported from Holland for the original building, into contact with newer materials*

for example, that the Princeton Tea Party took place in January, 1774.

Mr. E. Alfred Jones (*Loyalists of New Jersey*) says that Hick was virtually driven out of Princeton for his pro-British sentiments. In July, 1776, he was arrested at Perth Amboy and taken to Trenton with other prisoners under Washington's orders, and gave his parole not to leave Trenton without permission of the New Jersey Provincial Congress. A little later he was allowed to return home on a bond of \$500. He died on his passage back to England in 1780, leaving four children on whose behalf compensation was claimed for the father's losses in America.

In April, 1774, Hick had been succeeded at the Sign of the College by William Whitehead as a newspaper notice informs us, and Whitehead was still there in September, 1776. Soon after this, however, Jacob G. Bergen became proprietor.

#### WAR-TIME ACTIVITIES

MEANWHILE the Revolution had swept over the village. The New Jersey Committee of Safety met at Princeton in August and September, 1775, and in January, 1776; but no hint as to where they sat has been preserved. The Committee of Safety's successor, the Council of Safety, also met at Princeton many times in 1777 and 1778, and the minutes show that a Mrs. Lott was paid for the use of her room and firewood and candles. But, like her Biblical namesake, this lady has left only her name to local history.

In October, 1777 Princeton's two leading tavern keepers received attention; to Mr. Bergen of the Sign of the College was ordered full payment for the provisions he had supplied to a squad of prisoners caught on the road to Staten Island and brought to Princeton jail; and to Colonel Hyer of Hudibras Inn was ordered a receipt for the bread, flour and fish he had supplied to the prisoners.

The first New Jersey Legislature under

the State Constitution met at Princeton August 27, 1776. The minutes show that on the 30th the college library room in Nassau Hall was offered to the Assembly and accepted. The Minutes of the Council indicate that this body must have occupied a nearby room in the building, but there is no definite allusion to it.

#### MEETINGS AT THE INN

SPEAKER Hart of the Assembly being indisposed one day, the Assembly went over to his lodgings and held its session there; but this occurred only once. When all members were present the Assembly numbered 39, and the Council 13.

Joint sessions of Council and Assembly were at first held in the College library room but later were transferred to the "old meeting house," i.e., the First Presbyterian Church.

Joint committee meetings were held at the taverns—Colonel Hyer's "Hudibras," William Whitehead's, Joseph Haight's, Mrs. Lott's, and Jacob Bergen's "Sign of the College," the latter being the most popular.

Writing his reminiscences of Princeton, Mr. Henry Clow, former steward of the College and Mayor of the Borough, said in 1850 that at the Nassau Inn "Congress sometimes assembled." This is an old man's confused recollection. No Congress ever sat in the Nassau Inn. The Provincial Congress of New Jersey never sat in Princeton at all, if its minutes are to be trusted; and the Continental Congress sat at Prospect and in Nassau Hall, and not in any tavern. And there were no other congresses.

#### FACILITIES INADEQUATE

PARTLY because of war conditions, accommodations at Princeton were terribly inadequate in 1776 and 1777. How inadequate, may be seen from a message sent by the Council to the Assembly December 10, 1777, on hearing that the Assembly was contemplating adjournment. As Princeton was not only the general

hospital for New Jersey troops, "but is by much too small, even when unencumbered by troops, properly to accommodate the members of the Legislature, and as the want of convenient and proper accommodations must greatly retard the publick Business and in proportion augment the publick Expense," the Council earnestly hopes the Assembly would "not think of adjourning to meet again in this place," and Council suggests adjourning to some more convenient place and sitting there from time to time until the permanent seat of State government be located.

Adjournment was taken a couple of days later to meet at Trenton in February, 1778, but in April the Legislature was back again at Princeton and sat there through May and June. Presumably the previous arrangement with the College was renewed; committee meetings at any rate were held at the taverns as previously. In June adjournment was taken until September when the Legislature met at Princeton again for a month.

Major Morford, a Princeton Revolutionary hero, stated that in June, 1778, Governor Livingston was at Princeton and the New Jersey Assembly sometimes sat in the tavern later "known as Joline's" (the Nassau Inn), and the dancing room of the tavern was the court of chancery. As in the case of Mr. Clow, the Major is in all probability confusing joint committee meetings with full sessions of the Legislature. There would be plenty of room in Nassau Hall for daily meetings of the 30 or 40 members of the Legislature. They could not have met in a tavern without virtually monopolizing the building. Significant also is the fact that no tavern rental is ever shown on the expense account of the Legislature and Council.

In April, 1779, Mr. Bergen announced he had left the Sign of the College and had moved across the street to a tavern which he named the "Sign of the Thirteen Stars" or the "Sign of the Confederation" and he took much of the stage coach trade with him. He was succeeded at the Sign of the College by Christopher Beekman; just how soon we do not know, but at least before May, 1781.

#### CELEBRATING THE FOURTH

IN JULY, 1781, Princeton had one of its best celebrations of the Fourth of July. The town was decorated with greens and flowers and at noon "the principal Gentlemen of the town met at Mr. Beekman's tavern at the Sign of the College" where His Excellency the Governor joined them. "After a few drafts of good punch" they repaired to a tree on the green in front of the Beekman house from the top of which a "union flag" was displayed. All the people in the town here assembled with the local field piece and thirteen toasts were honored. After these exercises the Governor and a large number of gentlemen had "an elegant dinner at Mr. Bergen's." The evening was concluded with a great parade of the students and the militia, which was reviewed by His Excellency and twice thirteen rounds were fired.

The State Legislature had been sitting in Princeton since May and presumably had renewed its arrangement with the College. In September, 1781, when the New Jersey Medical Society wished to restore itself to its former usefulness and dignity, a meeting was called at Mr. Beekman's for October 3.

When the news of Cornwallis' surren-

der reached Princeton in October, 1781, "most of the reputable gentlemen of the town and several in the neighborhood" met at noon at Beekman's "and enjoyed the occasion awhile over some good punch and wine." Then they repaired to the green in front of the house where a field piece was drawn out and after an address by one of the professors of the College, thirteen rounds were fired and a public dinner followed—presumably at Beekman's—at which thirteen toasts were drunk and the company broke up "with decency" at six o'clock.

In December, 1781, the officers of the Jersey Brigade who had been overlooked in the arrangements for the army made February, 1779, met at Beekman's for adjustment.

#### WHOOPEE IS MADE, 1783

**I**N April, 1783, the town outdid itself in celebrating the return of peace, and the reporter of the occasion wrote the following account:

Princeton, April 21, 1783

"The gentlemen of this town and neighborhood having fixed on the 19th of April (as being the memorable Aera of the commencement of hostilities in America in 1775) to celebrate the peace so happily concluded, His Excellency the Governor, a great number of the inhabitants of this town and neighborhood, together with several gentlemen of the adjacent villages, met about 12 o'clock on Saturday last at the flag-staff (on which the American flag was beautifully displayed) where the Governor's proclamation, declaring a cessation of hostilities, was publickly read, which was succeeded by the discharge of 13 cannon and the acclamations of the people.

"At 1 o'clock the company met in the College Hall, where an excellent discourse, suitable to the occasion was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, to a very numerous audience. Entertainments having been provided at the houses of Mr. Hyer and Mr. Beekman, at 3 o'clock the company divided and repaired to each house; where, after dinner, the following toasts were drank, severally accompanied by the discharge of cannon. [Here follows the list of thirteen toasts.]

"At 7 o'clock in the evening the houses in the town were splendidly illuminated, and in many great taste was displayed in the arrangement of the lights.

"At 8 o'clock the infantry company of the town fired 13 platoons with great regularity and exactness; after which the company retired, having spent the day with that festivity, decency and good order, which we hope will ever characterize a free and virtuous people."

Mr. Beekman was still presiding over the Sign of the College in 1784, but by 1787 he had moved down the street to the Washington House.

#### A TEMPTATION RESISTED

**T**HE temptation is great to pin on to the Sign of the College the public meeting of January, 1793, in celebration of the founding of the French Republic, and especially the Franco-American ball and supper of July 14, 1793, in celebration of which so delightful an account has been preserved in the letter of Miss S. S. Gilson of Princeton to her friend, Betsey Meredith of Philadelphia, daughter of the United States Treasurer. But no account of these two occasions names the tavern where they were held—although there are strong indications that the ball was given at the Sign of the College. Sim-



Daily Princetonian

LOOKING INTO THE NASSAU INN'S OLD WINE CELLAR  
*This feature of the establishment has fallen perforce into a state of innocuous desuetude*

ilarly the student ball which marked the Fourth of July in 1797 and about which General Washington and his ward, G. W. Parke Custis, had correspondence, almost surely took place at the Sign of the College.

But if these occasions cannot be definitely credited to it, at least the Sign of the College can claim the crowning touch of the Fourth of July Celebration in 1798 which seems to have been particularly fervent. Beginning at 9 a.m. the "inhabitants" decorated their houses with flowers and boughs and (charming phrase) "met one another with high and mutual congratulations." Every one wore an American cockade with a metal eagle in its center.

At 11 a.m. orations were delivered in Nassau Hall which was decorated with green and wreaths, the Peale portrait of Washington being crowned with laurel. A student orchestra in the gallery played the "president's march" at the beginning and the end of the program. There was more firing of salutes by the artillery and light infantry company of the town, and

then dinners at Ferguson's and Jones, with toasts innumerable. At 5 p.m. more oratory in Nassau Hall and in the evening the College was splendidly illuminated, and the day was concluded by an "elegant ball at Mr. Godwin's."

#### 18TH CENTURY ADVERTISING

**D**AVID GODWIN had become proprietor of the Sign of the College in the middle 1790's, but the Fourth of July ball is the only significant item we have. Even General Charles C. Pinckney's visit to Princeton on his triumphal progress from New York to Philadelphia in the autumn of 1798, returning from his diplomatic post in France, cannot definitely be given to the Nassau Inn. He was honored with an address framed in a town meeting which was certainly held at a tavern, testifying to the town's approval of his course as Envoy to France and his reply was in kind. Both were printed in *The Trenton Federalist* of November 5, 1798, but apparently the exercises took place outdoors.

Late in 1799 Captain John Gifford succeeded Godwin, signaling his Princeton



Joline, going to investigate, finds a room full of students celebrating, each trying  
*"To sing as loud as he could bawl,  
 Such is the custom of Nassau Hall."*

Called upon for a song he obliges, and as he finishes the door flies open and with the blind fiddler enters

*"A buxom, witching merry crew  
 Of many lads and lasses too"*

who have come from the country round "to dance the livelong night away"—which they proceed to do.

So congenial is the place that the old fiddler and his faithful dog stay on in the village and

*"—close by Princeton College gate  
 Even to this day he holds his state."*

The students gather around to hear him talk, and

*"Once a year he deigns to play  
 First fiddle on Commencement Day  
 When in Joline's high stately hall  
 Is held the Students' Annual Ball."*

LAFAYETTE NOT A PATRON

THE Sign of the College had only the slightest part in the incidents connected with the visits of Lafayette in 1824 and 1825. On the morning of the Marquis' arrival from Trenton in September, 1824, Richard Stockton, son of the Signer, and Chairman of the Borough Council, gathered his colleagues into the tavern and read to them the address he proposed to make to the Marquis at the exercises on the campus. When in the following July the visitor passed through Princeton a second time, he spent the night, so it is believed, at the home of his war comrade, Colonel Erkuries Beatty.

Mr. Joline's health failed, and in *The Princeton Whig* of May, 1835, Daniel Brown announces that he has taken over the "well known establishment kept by John Joline" which at this time was called the "Nassau Hall Hotel." The advertisement assures us engagingly that not only was the hotel in the immediate neighborhood of the post office, the church, and other public institutions, but "it was under the same roof with the Bank." The house, moreover, had within a few years under-

gone considerable alteration and repair and a number of new rooms had been added.

Coaches for the convenience of New York and Philadelphia passengers via the Camden and Amboy Railroad left the house daily in the winter and twice a day in the summer. The stables were extensive and in charge of experienced hostlers; and there was a well-filled ice house on the premises. At Christmas, 1835, a "new and splendid 4 horse Line of Troy Safety Coaches" began its regular daily trip to Trenton from Brown's hotel to make connection with the Trenton and Philadelphia railroad trains.

THE IRON MONSTER COMES

BUT it is quite evident, as of course it must have been from the beginning, that the advent of the railroad meant disaster to the kind of hotel business which had prevailed at Princeton since Colonial days. A new economic era had dawned and until adjustments had been made, the old tavern fell upon evil days. Meanwhile Mr. Brown appears to have tried to keep his house in the public eye by resorting to spectacular advertising.

In February, 1836, a "strictly Moral and Scientific" exhibition of Ventriloquism by Mr. Cudworth, "the National Ventriloquist," was given "at the Hall of Mr. Daniel Brown." He was also a Fire King; he licked red hot iron, ate melted lead, drank boiling brandy, and "to the surprise of the audience" ate a quantity of "Tar in a Burning Flame," concluding with "a number of comic songs and a Hornpipe." A fine exhibition for a quarter; and yet, not quite the sort of thing one expected of the old Sign of the College.

It was the irony of fate that in the hotel a town meeting was held in March, 1836, to consider asking the Camden and Amboy Railroad to construct a line from New Brunswick which should pass as near to Princeton as was practical.

INN GOES ZOOLOGICAL

IN May, 1836, from the Zoological Institute of New York to the rear of Brown's Hotel came a Mammoth Zoo-

Council Meets May 3, 4

THE Spring Meeting of the Graduate Council will be held in Princeton on Friday and Saturday, May 3 and 4, with a formal business session taking place in the Freshman Common Room, Madison Hall, on the first of these days at 8:00 p.m. At this time Andrew C. Imbrie '95, active alumnus, Class Secretary, and Council member, will lead the gathering in a discussion of the subject: "Tuition Charges at Princeton—Should They be Increased to Approximate the Per Capita Cost of Education?"

On Saturday morning the Council's committees will meet, and at 11:00 a.m. the entire body will adjourn to Guyot Hall, where the Department of Geology will be inspected and where luncheon will be served at noon. A buffet supper will, as usual, precede the meeting on Friday evening.

logical Exhibition of "rare Beasts and Birds from Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America" embracing the most extensive variety of animals "ever offered to an American Public." The thrilling woodcuts in *The Princeton Whig* show 28 animals, among them such unheard of creatures as an emeu, an eland, a zebu, a quagga and a gnu—which alone were surely worth the price of admission, likewise 25 cents. [Were all admissions 25 cents in those days?] The celebrated "National Band of Music" (12 pieces) accompanied the exhibition and announced the arrival of the "Grand Cavalcade."

The whole exhibition was arranged in a "Splendid Pavilion, adequate to contain 10,000 persons at one time," which strains one a bit to believe, inasmuch as it was pitched in the hotel's back yard. At 3:30 in the afternoon Mr. Van Amburgh entered the "formidable cage of Animals with Master Hayman, a boy 9 years of age, and a Young Lamb"—this being a thrilling novelty never attempted by any person but himself. The animals were fed at 4.

PRESIDENT-TO-BE AVOIDS BUSTLE

GENERAL William Henry Harrison should have stayed at the Sign of the College when he reached Princeton on Commencement Day in September, 1836. A Committee of the Trustees invited "the People's Candidate" for the presidency, to attend the dinner of the National Alumni Association which he gladly did. He took tea and spent the evening with Dr. Samuel Miller in his house (now the Nassau Club) and returned for the night to the home of his friend, Captain Thomas White, "preferring," says the loyal *Princeton Whig*, "the quiet retirement of a private family to the bustle of a hotel."

We have had a glimpse of the hotel during the Commencement gayety and we can well sympathize with the General. The next morning he left Princeton in a "Barouche and four, furnished by Mr. A. Cumming in his best style," and accompanied by an imposing retinue. Mr. Cumming was in charge of the coaches and horses of the Nassau Hall Hotel, and his equipment was famous and of the best.

But Mr. Brown appears to have been unable to capture the preference of the public. Noticeably in 1837, meetings of various sorts were set, not at the Nassau



Daily Princetonian

WHERE ONCE THE BEER-FILLED HOGSHEADS VIED FOR SPACE  
 Today an inoffensive looking pail finds storage room to spare on  
 the Nassau Inn's untenanted keg shelves

Hall Hotel as formerly, but elsewhere; and in December of that year Brown was sold out by the sheriff. Here this fragmentary history of the early years of the Nassau Inn may end.



## Universities Ridiculous?

Editor, the *Weekly*  
Sir:

Not being as wise as Plato and Aristotle presumably were, I read the letter of Mr. Struthers Burt '04 [*Weekly*, April 12, 1929], not with weariness but with interest—also amusement. For, though "ridicule is a half-baked attitude" to Mr. Burt, he himself seems not averse to adopting that attitude while engaged in the attempt to demonstrate that "satire"—instead of ridicule—"... is the mature attitude."

Much of what Mr. Burt writes is obvious, not to say platitudinous common sense. For example, "people the world over are horribly the same." Of course. What educated person doubts it? Sportsmanship among the British is tremendously overrated. Likely enough. Both European and American systems of education have many faults and many virtues. True. Yet such facts are the merest commonplaces to anyone who appreciates both systems and is interested in comparing them.

Being unknown to Mr. G. H. Harper '27 and happening to live at a distance of some four thousand miles from that gentleman's present whereabouts, I have no means of knowing whether he is "unaware of the massive literature written by thoughtful Englishmen" relative to the shortcomings of English education. For my own part, I have read no small part of that literature. Unhappily, a good many of those who produced it impressed me as being the reverse of thoughtful.

However, all these likenesses and differences in background and point of view are not strictly relevant to the point under discussion. To press them too far would not greatly illuminate what Mr. Harper and I were writing about. To be sure, it might serve to exemplify "war, which is the spirit back of armies" (I have Mr. Burt to thank for that expression), but it would be scarcely amiable.

What Mr. Harper deprecated—and my experience as a teacher led me to agree—was the topsy-turvy condition of present-day American educational thought, as that condition is evidenced by the expenditure of "millions for athletics and a mere pittance for the brains of the academic world." Surely one of the most important functions of a university is to lead the people intellectually; to exhibit in its actions a wisdom transcending that of the masses,—so far, at least, as its own line of business is concerned.

Yet, one sees American universities doing precisely the opposite,—needlessly, at that, in the case of those which are

privately endowed and are therefore economically independent of the *mores* temporarily in the saddle. I am not talking of the students; I mean the authorities of our universities. They yield too easily to all sorts of popular clamors and crotchets. Witness the naïve "unit" system of admission, election of studies (not courses of study), the fate of Latin and Greek and of literary and philosophical studies generally, the undue importance attached to being able to put "Ph.D." after your name—no matter how inspiring or uninspiring a teacher you may be. Making due allowance for exceptions,—Princeton offends least often,—and with all requisite qualifications, the fact remains (as I believe) that, by and large, the rôles of our universities and of the rest of society have been reversed. The

masses of the people call the tune; the universities dance to it.

Mr. Burt believes that "American universities seem ridiculous to uncultured foreigners, just as foreign universities seem ridiculous to uncultured Americans." He adds (truly enough) that there are not many cultured persons on either side of the Atlantic. However, my own experience leads me to conclude that *all* universities are ridiculous to all or most uncultured persons of whatever nationality, and that the tail-wag-dog plight of our own universities must make them appear ridiculous, or, if you prefer, preposterous, to cultured Europeans,—i.e., to Europeans who understand the proper purpose of universities.

P. J. BENRIMO '19  
Marion, Ala., April 16, 1929.

## Marshal Foch, of the Allies

*Something About One of Recent History's Great Men—by One Who Was His Close Friend, and Who Was His Personal Aide During His Visit to America*

By Franklin D'Olier '98

IT is not of the great soldier or the great military leader that I would speak; but rather of Ferdinand Foch the man, the devout Christian; of his true human understanding, of his great simplicity of character, of his deep appreciation of the finer things of life.

Shortly after the War a group of American soldiers went over to France to invite him to visit this country. After meeting him in Paris, we journeyed together to Metz, and after a strenuous day of ceremonies there we were told that the next day he would be unable to be with us, because it was the anniversary of his son's death; and that he always on that day visited his son's grave, a young lad, eighteen years old, a Corporal in the French Army, who was killed in the first ten days of the War in 1914.

We went to him to explain that we understood why he could not be with us and asked if he would object if we were to send up with him a wreath to be placed on his son's grave as a tribute from the American Soldier. He paused a minute and said, "I think so much of the American Soldier, of what he was and what he did, that I would consider it an honor if he would share with me in my grief over the loss of my only son. Let three of you come with me." Who but a Frenchman with such fine sensibilities could pay such a great honor to the American Soldier?

And so, the next day we travelled a hundred and fifty miles by motor to the north of France to the little village of Longwy. Outside of the village we were met by the Priest and the Mayor and conducted to a special service which was held in the little village church. Afterward, through wind and rain, we walked about a mile outside of the village to the little cemetery where the Marshal's son and those other French soldiers had been buried where they had fallen. His father had never permitted the son's body to be moved. We had brought down with us from Coblenz, from the Army of Occupation, an American soldier, a color sergeant, and placed him at the head of the son's grave. After a few remarks by the village Priest, the Marshal, dressed in civilian clothes, knelt at the foot of the son's grave, a symbol of a Frenchman who had made the greatest possible sacri-

fice for his country—had given his only son. Such was his simplicity of character.

I doubt if it had ever entered the Marshal's head what place he would occupy in history. He always was accustomed to refer to his success as simply "the success of an idea—the idea of unity of purpose and unity of command." And so it was rather appropriate that he should make the following remark when he was once asked, "Would it not have been better had the Allies marched into Berlin?" The Marshal, forgetful of the great military glory that would have been his had he marched into Berlin at the head of the victorious army, forgetful of the revenge that some of the French people wanted for the occupation of Paris in 1870, replied: "The object of war is to impress one's will on one's adversary; having accomplished that, further fighting is useless slaughter." Having made his own great sacrifice, he was unwilling, for personal glory, that there should be any useless sacrifice of a single French, English, or American soldier.

During his three or four months' visit to this country he covered over fifteen thousand miles, visited practically every state in the Union, and talked with men and women of every walk of life. I doubt if any foreigner ever learned so much about this country in so short a time. To be with him, to hear the questions that he asked, the way he sought after facts, you could tell why he was a great military leader. He was interested in securing facts as they were, not as he wished them to be. You knew that his military success was due simply to the fact that he knew what conditions were when he made decisions. And so, as he was leaving, his last remark was most significant; he turned to us and said, "Before I came to this country I knew that although young you were a giant, industrially, economically, and financially; but having seen much of your country, I now realize also what a great moral force you can be in this world."

And so we do not doubt what young America can be industrially, economically, and financially; but let us ever be alive to that great ideal of Marshal Foch, to the fact that also we should be a moral and a spiritual force in this world.

### Memorials Available

**F**ORTY-SEVEN pews in the new Princeton Chapel are still available as memorials to Princeton men, their relatives, and friends. Alumni or friends of Princeton who wish to reserve a memorial pew are asked to communicate with President Hibben.