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# PRINCETON ALUMNI WEEKLY



HENRY VAN DYKE'S PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE

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THE G.O.P. SCORES ON THE "PRINCE"

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INTRODUCING DR. RAYCROFT'S SUCCESSOR

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# PRINCETON

## ALUMNI WEEKLY

Vol. XXXVII, No. 4

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### Cross-Section of America

*Princeton Receives Henry van Dyke's Remarkable Collection of Private Papers*

By William C. Ackerman '31

**T**HE enormous files of correspondence, manuscripts, notebooks and other personal papers accumulated by Dr. Henry van Dyke '73 in his long and varied career have been presented to the University Library by Dr. van Dyke's literary executors, the Rev. Tertius van Dyke (his son and biographer), Struthers Burt '04, and Dr. John H. Finley, associate editor of the *New York Times*.

Several thousand letters from persons in all sorts and conditions of life and from all parts of the world give a new revelation of Dr. van Dyke's place in the life of his time. The correspondence is studded with many of the most notable names in American literature in the last half-century. Letters from six presidents of the United States and from titled persons in many countries are preserved in the files, along with hundreds of letters from grammar-school children and other "complete strangers."

Outside the circle of Dr. van Dyke's intimates it has probably not been known how assiduously he maintained his immense correspondence, whether with the high or with the humble. Likewise, few persons have been privileged to know that he carefully preserved nearly everything which he wrote or which was written to him.

FROM 1869 TO 1933

**H**E BEGAN keeping a scrapbook in 1869, while preparing at Brooklyn Polytechnic. Down the years he diligently preserved all letters, newspaper clippings, etc., adding a *Daily Princetonian* article on "The Princeton Spirit in Athletics" in February 1933, some six weeks before his death. It was only in his earlier years that he took time to systematize the clippings in scrapbooks, but through other hands the record has been brought up to date.

The files reveal that this habit of keeping papers extended throughout the entire range of his many-sided life. As a result Princeton now possesses a rich body of material on the literary, religious, and political life of which he was a part, as well as a documentary history of one of its most celebrated sons.

His correspondence with literary figures reveals many insights and sidelights. A letter from Mark Twain discusses his difficulties in arriving at the right plan in writing a story. Two notes from Rudyard Kipling, while Dr. van Dyke was U.S. minister at The Hague, sought information about his "boy," who was missing

at the front. William Dean Howells was a frequent correspondent, and, in a note from Madrid in 1911, revealed that he had taught himself Spanish while a boy and in his visit was fulfilling the oldest dream of his life.

Some of the other names found in the files indicate the character of the literary correspondence, as well as its extent and variety. Such a list, selected at random, includes Lyman Abbott, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Irving Bacheller, John Bigelow, Edward Bok, Robert Bridges, the poet laureate, and Robert Bridges '79, James Boyd '10, Struthers Burt '04, John Burroughs, George W. Cable, Willa Cather, Wilbur L. Cross, Abbé Dimnet, Edward Dowden, Dr. Finley, Richard Watson Gilder, Hamlin Garland, Ferris Greenslet, Paxton Hibben '03, Robert Underwood Johnson, Brander Matthews, Edwin Markham, Thomas Nelson Page, Bliss Perry, James Whitcomb Riley, Charles Scribner '75, Arthur Scribner '81, Hamilton Mabie, Edward S. Martin, Robert

ter from Tennyson, an autograph, and two lines which the English poet sent to his American admirer. Other members of the Tennyson family, including the poet's son, Hallam, wrote to Dr. van Dyke several times following the visit. Dr. van Dyke's personal impressions and his correspondence with Tennyson and with the poet's family become an important supplement to the Tennyson collection which Dr. van Dyke bequeathed to the University.

The collection contains the manuscripts, usually in his handwriting and done in pencil, of many of his best-known stories and poems, addresses, literary lectures, and sermons. His earliest poem, written when he was twelve, was saved by Henry Jackson van Dyke Sr. to become a part of his son's life record. The documents which marked a new direction for his varied talents are preserved, among them his call to the United Congregational Church in Newport and to the Brick Presbyterian Church in New York; his "calls" to Princeton in 1899 and again in 1919; the eight-word telegram with which Woodrow Wilson tendered the post of U.S. minister to the Netherlands and Luxemburg in 1913; and the formal commission signed by William Jennings Bryan, as secretary of state.

#### PRINCETON PRESIDENTS

**D**R. VAN DYKE'S Princeton connections are fully recorded, including his resignations in 1907 and in 1910 and the outpouring of requests that he continue; his stand in the "Quad" controversy; and many other evidences of his close relations with the life of the University. There are many letters from the presidents under whom he studied or taught. Dr. McCosh, ever alert to the value of proper publicity, wrote in 1883 to congratulate him for his "discourse on the reopening of your church," and to suggest that "you should use the public press from time to time." A brief note from Woodrow Wilson refers to a conversation a few hours before regarding the "honour system," and expresses the hope that Dr. van Dyke will "pray forgive the bluntness" with which he fears he had voiced his views. A letter from President Hibben in 1913, anent Dr. van Dyke's appointment to The Hague, suggests that he not resign from the faculty but accept a leave of absence without salary. There are many other communi-



Haven Schaufler '02, Edmund C. Stedman, William Lyon Phelps, William Winter, George Woodberry, and his Princeton colleagues.

In August 1892, Dr. van Dyke was a guest of Lord Tennyson at Aldworth, and one of his notebooks preserves his detailed record of their visit and literary conversation. The collection also includes a let-

# PRINCETON ALUMNI WEEKLY

CONTINUING THE *Alumni Princetonian*, FOUNDED 1894

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The purpose of the *Princeton Alumni Weekly* is to record briefly news of the alumni and at the same time to review without partiality the achievements and problems of the Administration, the Faculty, and the student body of Princeton University.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1936

## HANDING ON THE TORCH

EVERY community has someone who is known as the local historian, but no other town or university has had an historian remotely like V. Lansing Collins '92, former secretary of the University, whose death last week is mourned by alumni everywhere. His high service in discovering and recording the facts of Princeton's past will be remembered as long as the University exists, and he had special claims on the gratitude of Princetonians of the present time.

We have referred elsewhere to his part in the long campaign to give music its rightful place in the Princeton curriculum. Older alumni will recall his service as reference librarian and as preceptor in French. And it must not be forgotten that for nearly twenty years he had charge of University scholarships. Especially in recent years, when there were too many applicants for the meager funds in hand, administration of scholarships was a heartbreaking job, and it undoubtedly contributed to his illness and consequent retirement from active work.

Mr. Collins knew more about Princeton than any other person, and his books and articles give the final and most accurate word on the town, the University, and the sons of each. He was officially the keeper of the University archives and unofficially the custodian of University tradition. He was the last authority on form and protocol for academic occasions. He compiled the monumental *General Biographical Catalogue of Princeton University* which, although published thirty years ago, is still the only printed biographical record of alumni. He has told the story of the Continental Congress at Princeton, and he is the biographer of John Witherspoon. His books, articles, and monographs on Princeton subjects are numbered by the dozens, and he knew the story of every square foot of campus ground.

In all of this the remarkable thing is not the mere volume of work, large as that is, but the fact that he displayed both the zealous persistence of an antiquarian and the broad humanity of a social historian. He was impatient

of factual error, but his historical writings were bright and witty, belying the effort required to produce them. Called up by his pen, the Princetonians of old days came to walk the campus once more, and Mr. Collins, more than any other person, has given us a sense of Princeton's living continuity.

## DEAN GAUSS WINS AGAIN

SEVERAL times in recent years the *Weekly* has announced that the *Nassau Lit* had been revived and would shortly regain, if not its ancient place of glory, at least a position in campus life more important than that it held in the 'twenties and early 'thirties. Without exception these statements have resembled the announcements of Harry Lauder's "farewell tours" in that they did not conform to the facts as later divulged.

Thrice shy, therefore, we printed without editorial comment and with the sharpest suspicion Dean Gauss's statement of a year ago that the *Lit*, under the new auspices of Whig-Clio, was coming to life again after a slumber of two decades. Poor Dean Gauss, we thought, had allowed his kindness to take advantage of his devotion to truth. You couldn't fool us; we had been taken in too many times before.

With extremely mixed feelings we now report that under the vigorous leadership of Richard R. P. Goheen '36 the *Lit* built up a subscription list of 350—which is a respectable circulation for a college literary magazine under any circumstances but is especially noteworthy in view of the previous number of subscribers, which was *seventeen*. The scope of the magazine was broadened to include political articles as well as *belles lettres*, but there has been no lowering of standards. The arrangement with the Halls is an obvious success, and Dean Gauss has shown once more than he knows what he is talking about.

## CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE

A COMPILATION of alumni holding or running for high political office is being made by the *Weekly*. If you know of alumni who should be included, especially those in distant states, please advise us.



MR. COLLINS (CENTER) AS CHIEF FACULTY MARSHAL  
 LEADING AN ACADEMIC PROCESSION